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## Female undergraduate's perceptions of intrusive behavior in 12 countries

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[10.1002/ab.21711](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworkspost2013/3633)

This is an Author's Accepted Manuscript of: Sheridan, L., Scott, A. J., Archer, J., & Roberts, K. (2017). Female undergraduate's perceptions of intrusive behavior in 12 countries. *Aggressive behavior*. 43(6), 531-543. Article Available [here](#).

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# **Young Women's Experiences of Intrusive Behavior in 12 Countries**

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## **Abstract**

The present study provides international comparisons of young women's ( $N = 1,734$ ) self-reported experiences of intrusive activities enacted by men. Undergraduate psychology students from 12 countries (Armenia, Australia, England, Egypt, Finland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Scotland, Trinidad) indicated which of 47 intrusive activities they had personally experienced. Intrusive behavior was not uncommon overall, although large differences were apparent between countries when women's personal experiences of specific intrusive activities were compared. Correlations were carried out between self-reported intrusive experiences, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures. The primary associations were between women's experiences of intrusive behavior and the level of power they are afforded within the 12 countries. Women from countries with higher GEM scores reported experiencing more intrusive activities relating to courtship and requests for sex, whilst the experiences of women from countries with lower GEM scores related more to monitoring and ownership. Intrusive activities, many of them constituent of harassment and stalking, would appear to be widespread and universal, and their incidence and particular form reflect national level gender inequalities.

**Keywords:** stalking, harassment, cross-national, gender empowerment, Hofstede.

## **Young Women's Experiences of Intrusive Behavior in 12 Countries**

Most work on the intrusive behavior commonly referred to as stalking has been conducted in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Only a small number of studies have been conducted in non-English speaking countries, including Finland, Iran, Japan, Portugal and Trinidad. Even fewer studies have made cross-national comparisons. The present study examines women's personal experiences of 47 intrusive activities and compares data from female psychology undergraduate students living in 12 countries.

### **Stalking and Partner Violence**

Stalking is not a specific offence in many countries, and neither is it outlawed in a majority of non-Western countries (the most comprehensive overview may be found at Stalking Risk Profile, 2011). Even where official figures do exist for stalking, they are not comparable. The folly of comparing crime statistics across nations is well illustrated by the Canadian figure on kidnappings. According to figures on the per country incidence of kidnapping compiled by the United Nations, Canada has the second highest number of kidnappings in the world. The primary reason for this high number is that low-level parental disputes over custody are included in the figures (Harrendorf, Heiskanen, & Malby, 2010).

Studies of stalking experiences derived from non-English speaking countries generally produce similar findings to those from English speaking countries, and Table 1 provides a brief overview of some of the most pertinent works. Incidence rates vary, largely because of variation in the definitions employed by individual studies and the nature of the samples used. Student samples tend to produce higher incidence rates than more generally representative samples, and it appears that young, unmarried individuals attending university are the population most vulnerable to stalking victimization (e.g., Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Thoennes & Tjaden, 1998). Routine Activity Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) provides an

explanation for this finding, as a relationship has been identified between environmental and lifestyle factors such as employment, alcohol and drug use, residing off campus and stalking victimization (see Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999).

---Table 1 about here---

Relating to definitional differences, 52% of Björklund, Häkkänen-Nyholm, Roberts, and Sheridan's (2010) Finnish female students were said to have experienced stalking, compared to 22% of Chapman and Spitzberg's (2003) Japanese female students. Björklund et al.'s sample responded to a question concerning whether they had experienced "persistent, repeated and unwanted attention or behavior" (p. 687), whilst Chapman and Spitzberg's sample responded to a more specific question concerning whether they had experienced "...being followed and/or harassed and/or obsessively pursued by someone" (p. 96). Because studies of stalking from non-Western countries are a relative rarity, few cultural differences have been identified. One difference, however, is provided by Kordvani (2000) who found that 12% of Iranian victims were stalked by family members. Corresponding figures for Western samples tend to be lower. For instance, Finney's (2006) analysis of British Crime Survey data found that less than 5% of stalkers were non-spousal family members of the victim. Kordvani (2000) concluded that the higher Iranian rate was rooted in a perceived 'duty of protection', wherein the stalker felt that he should physically prevent unsuitable relationships. The higher familial rate may be further explained by Iran's collectivist culture and honor-based violence (see e.g., Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013).

Following a meta-analysis of 175 studies of stalkers and their victims, Spitzberg and Cupach (2007) indicated that women are more likely than men to experience stalking victimization (29% lifetime risk for females, 11% lifetime risk for males). Nonetheless, given

this high prevalence rate for stalking, male victimization experiences are not uncommon. Further, recent work that compared stalking experiences in four sex dyads (male stalker-female victim, female stalker-male victim, female-female dyads, and male-male dyads) revealed minimal differences in a range of impacts and outcomes across the dyads (Sheridan, North, & Scott, 2014). The current work focuses on female victimization as the modal stalking victim is a woman and the modal stalker is a man (see e.g., Bjerregaard, 2002; Meloy, 1999) but we note that male victimization and female perpetration should be integral to future works.

There are few cross-national comparisons on issues relating to stalking. Chapman and Spitzberg (2003) collected data in Japan from 233 students that they compared with previously gathered data from a U.S. sample of 143 students. A fifth of the Japanese university students (male and female) said they had been ‘persistently pursued’, and over half considered this pursuit to be threatening. A third considered it ‘stalking’. The U.S. students were more likely to have been pursued (48%) but were less likely to consider it threatening (41%, cf 45%). The difference in perceptions of threat was particularly marked between males, with just 11% of U.S. men stating that they had viewed being pursued as threatening, compared with 40% of Japanese men. This difference appeared to be most attributable to the nature of the behavior experienced, as the Japanese men were more likely to be the targets of physical threats, actual physical harm, and sexual coercion. In the absence of official corroboration, such figures must be treated with caution.

Jagessar and Sheridan (2004) compared the experiences of intrusive behavior between samples of 348 British and 354 Trinidadian women. The women responded to a questionnaire that listed 42 intrusive activities representing a continuum from behavior commonly observed in harassment and stalking cases to more everyday innocuous behavior. Overall, the Trinidadian women experienced only marginally more intrusive activities than the British

women, but were more likely to experience the most serious intrusive activities. The authors concluded that this finding was most likely to be related to the generally higher violent crime rate in Trinidad, particularly in regard to partner violence. It should be noted that around half of all stalking victimization occurs within the context of partner violence (e.g., Ornstein & Rickne, 2013).

Between 2000 and 2003 the World Health Organisation interviewed 24,097 women across 15 sites in 10 countries about their experiences of partner violence victimization (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). The interview was based on the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979), an inclusive measure of physical aggression. Self-reported lifetime prevalence of physical partner violence ranged from 61% in a Peruvian province down to 13% in a Japanese city. For most countries the range was between 23% and 49%, with the prevalence of partner violence tending to be significantly lower in industrialized nations. The study asked the women about individual acts of violent behavior, and experiences of being slapped or having something thrown at them ranged from 4% to 49%. Between 2% and 42% said they had been struck with a fist, kicked, dragged or threatened with a weapon. Acts of controlling behavior (see Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2009) were also recorded. Examples include: being prevented from seeing friends (3% to 31%), insisting on knowing her whereabouts at all times (7% to 58%), and getting angry if she spoke with others (14% to 71%). Anger in this context would relate to sexual jealousy, which is a mediator of male controlling behavior (see Archer, 2013). Importantly, sexual jealousy and controlling behavior are strong predictors of stalking following the termination of an abusive relationship (e.g., Davis, Ace, & Andra, 2000).

## **Gender Empowerment and Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultures**

Informed by the literature on gender-neutral partner violence and by family interaction research, Archer (2006) examined physical aggression between partners in heterosexual relationships in 16 nations. This work supported earlier meta-analytical findings (see Archer, 2000) indicating that women in non-western nations were less likely to engage in partner violence, and were more likely to be assaulted, than were women in developed western countries. Further, these differences were highly correlated with the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). This measure was introduced by the United Nations Development Programme in 1995 (see United Nations Development Programme, 1997) and attempts to measure gender inequality and women's relative empowerment between countries, based on estimates of the relative financial income of women, levels of female participation in high paying positions with economic power, and access to professional and parliamentary positions. Although the associated Gender Development Index reflects additional factors (e.g., equality of access to healthcare), the GEM is regarded as a purer measure of equal participation in a nation's economic and political spheres (Eagly & Wood, 1999).

Archer (2006) found that the GEM is strongly related to individualism rather than collectivism. Individualism and collectivism are the most commonly used measures along which differing cultures have been contrasted (Hofstede, 1979). As noted by Shavitt, Lee, and Johnson (2008), individualistic cultures are characterized by people who prefer independent relationships with others and prioritize their own personal goals over the goals of their ingroups. In contrast, collectivist cultures are characterized by people who prefer interdependent relationships with others and prioritize the goals of their ingroups over their personal goals. The individualistic versus collectivist measure may be made more sophisticated by reflecting the extent to which a culture is organized horizontally, in which the equality of people is emphasized, versus vertically, in which the position of people in



social hierarchies is emphasized (see Triandis, 2001). Cultures, therefore, can be identified as vertical individualist, horizontal individualist, vertical collectivist, or horizontal collectivist. A large number of studies have revealed systematic variations in cognitive, emotional, and social functioning between respondents from individualist societies and those from collectivist societies (see Kim, Triandis, Kagitçibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002, for reviews). Fischer and Manstead (2002), Archer (2006), and Thornhill, Fincher, and Aran (2009) all found gender empowerment to be higher in individualist than in collectivist nations (correlations of  $r = .62$  for 37 nations,  $r = .79$  for 31 nations, and  $r = .62$  for 57 nations respectively). Archer (2006) concluded that for women, individualism and higher levels of societal power are closely related, as are collectivism and lower levels of societal power. So, the more women are empowered, the less likely they are to experience partner violence. The present study asks whether the same holds true for intrusive behavior by comparing women's experiences of 47 intrusive activities in 12 different countries and relating them to both the GEM and to Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures.

Other Hofstede dimensions that will be examined in the current work are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity. Power distance is the extent to which people who occupy lower status positions in a social hierarchy accept the uneven distribution of power. Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which members of a culture are prepared to tolerate uncertainty or ambiguity. Masculinity/femininity refers to the extent to which a culture values stereotypically masculine roles (e.g., assertiveness, striving) or stereotypically feminine roles (e.g., caring, emphasis on interpersonal relationships). Again, the aim is to explore whether similar relationships exist between these dimensions and women's experiences of intrusive behavior.

## **Present Study**

The present study examines women's personal experiences of 47 intrusive activities, and compares data from women living in 12 countries. It is based on convenience samples of similarly aged psychology undergraduate students. Stalking appears to be a universal behavior, as suggested by historical accounts and its encapsulation in fiction (see Kamir's [2000] numerous examples from ancient mythology, medieval folklore and classic literature), and findings from the work cited in Table 1, but culturally influenced differences are to be expected (as evidenced by Chapman & Spitzberg, 2003; Jagessar & Sheridan, 2004; Kordvani, 2000). Cultural diversity is known to be associated with different patterns of behavior (Moghaddam, 1998). Women's empowerment is also known, on a global scale, to increase their vulnerability to violence by men (Archer, 2006). As such, this study seeks to identify whether young women's self-reported experiences of intrusive activities are related to their relative gender empowerment and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures. Based on the available evidence on partner violence, we predicted that women residing in countries with lower measures of gender empowerment and individualism will report higher levels of intrusive experiences.

The study did not use a direct measure of stalking because stalking is notoriously difficult to define (see e.g., Sheridan & Davies, 2001). Furthermore, within some of the countries included in this study, stalking is not in the common parlance and is not legislated against (the first legislation in the world was introduced in California in 1990). As such, asking women about their experiences of 'stalking' would not produce useful or generalizable findings. Instead, women were asked about their personal experiences of intrusive behavior, much of which represents forms of harassment and stalking.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A combined sample of 1,734 female psychology undergraduate students participated in the present study, comprising 12 individual samples of young women from Armenia, Australia, England, Egypt, Finland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Scotland and Trinidad. Average ages for the 12 countries are provided in Table 2.

---Table 2 about here---

In most cases, all respondents were lifelong residents of the country in which they resided. Exemptions included Finland, India, Portugal and Japan where 98%, 98%, 93% and 92% of respondents respectively were lifelong residents.

### **Materials**

The study employed a modified version of the 'Stalking: International perceptions and prevalence' questionnaire (Sheridan, Davies, & Boon, 2001). The original version of the questionnaire containing 42 intrusive activities has been used in four previous studies (Jagessar & Sheridan, 2004; Sheridan et al., 2001; Sheridan, Gillett, & Davies, 2000, 2002); and the modified version of the questionnaire containing 47 intrusive activities has been used in three previous studies (Björklund et al., 2010; Chiri, Sica, Roberts, & Sheridan, 2009; Pereira, Matos, Sheridan, & Scott, 2014). The samples that these works were based on may be summarized as follows: community sample of 354 Trinidadian women, community sample of 348 British women, community sample of 80 British women, community sample of 210 British men, student sample of 615 Finnish women, student sample of 195 Italian women and a student sample of 91 Portuguese men. All samples were non-representative.

The questionnaire comprises three sections. In the first section, respondents were asked to provide demographic details including their age, sex, nationality and country of birth. In the second section, respondents read through a list of 47 intrusive activities, and selected all those that they personally considered to be unacceptable. They were asked to consider themselves as the target of the activities, and of the activities being enacted by men. The most widely used measures of stalking are the Unwanted Pursuit Behavior Inventory (UPBI, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Palarea, Cohen & Rohling, 2000) and the Obsessive Relational Intrusion scale (ORI-P, Cupach & Spitzberg, 1998). The present questionnaire includes most of the intrusive activities that form these two scales as well as more innocuous activities. The 47 intrusive activities were designed to represent a continuum from behavior commonly observed in harassment and stalking cases to more everyday innocuous behavior. In the third section, respondents were asked to read through the list of 47 intrusive activities a second time and select all those that they had personally experienced. Some of the intrusive activities would be likely to cause suffering to the individual (e.g., confining someone against their will, physical assault). Others represent the opposite end of the continuum and would be likely to be considered routine and harmless in most cultures (e.g., seeing someone at the same time each day, a stranger initiating a conversation in a public place such as a bus stop). The list of activities was designed so that it would be unrealistic for a respondent to have never experienced *any* of the 47 intrusive activities.

## **Procedure**

Potential international research partners working in university psychology departments in different countries were e-mailed. Of 124 e-mails sent, 67 replies were received. All e-mails were sent in English and it is not known how many recipients were English speakers. Thirty-two potential partners agreed to participate in principle, and 10 eventuated. The

authors collected two further sets of data (in England and Scotland). The e-mails invited fellow academics to collaborate in a study of international perceptions of and incidence of harassment and stalking. An outline of the nature of harassment and stalking was provided, along with a summary of current international legislation and research on stalking. If a positive response was received then a research-briefing document, providing a series of questions and answers, was forwarded.

It was explained that the authors could cover postage and photocopying costs, and provide data entry into Excel or SPSS. The international research partners translated and then back translated the questionnaires in order to maintain conceptual equivalence (see Straus, 1969). Research partners had the exclusive right to use the data they had gathered for articles reporting the results from their own site. The authors retained the right to use the data for articles reporting cross-national comparative analyses.

International research partners were required to give the questionnaire to a minimum of 100 female psychology undergraduate students. Participation for all students was voluntary and anonymous, and based on informed consent. Students were informed that some questions would ask about their experiences of victimization, including being the target of unwanted intrusive behavior, including physical and sexual aggression. The mean response rate across sites was 89%. Country leads were required to meet ethical standards and these included adhering to the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009). The full Code was provided as was an ethics sheet that was created specifically for this research. Country leads completed and returned the tick sheet to the first author. The sheet required country leads to demonstrate that they had met ethical standards, for instance by signing the following statement: "I have verbally and in writing informed respondents of local sources of support." and providing details of local relevant support organizations. Questionnaires were administered during class time to undergraduate students of psychology (some students were

studying only psychology, others were studying psychology with additional subject areas). As far as possible, identical methodologies were employed at each site. Reported differences were minor. For instance, in some sites students dropped completed questionnaires into a box whilst in other sites a nominated student collected the questionnaires and shuffled them prior to returning them to the country lead.

No explanation or definition of stalking was included on the questionnaire in an effort to avoid priming effects. Respondents were debriefed following their participation and reminded of the anonymity of their responses. They were informed that their data would be compared with data from psychology undergraduate students in other countries to try and establish whether the 47 intrusive activities were universal and whether their incidence differed between different nations.

## **Data Analysis**

Following an examination of the strength of the results of a sample of cross-cultural works, Franke and Richey (2010, p. 16) asserted that “some confidence can be placed in results that indicate strong relationships between variables based on seven to ten or more countries.” The 12 country leads provided summaries of the data concerning the proportion of women who indicated they had personally experienced each of the 47 intrusive activities. Three country leads returned questionnaires so that the authors could input the data. Others only returned descriptive statistics and frequency data. The nature of the data restricted the range of statistical analyses that could be employed. Consequently, Spearman rank-order correlation analyses were performed to examine the relationships between country-level experiences of the 47 intrusive activities, the GEM, and Hofstede’s (1979) dimensions of national cultures.

## **Results**

### **Experiences of Intrusive Behavior**

Based on the average proportions for the 12 countries, the five most frequently reported intrusive activities were: Having a stranger initiate a conversation in a public place (69%), having a man ask the student's family and acquaintances about her (65%), being asked out on a platonic date (63%), receiving unwanted phone calls (55%), and being telephoned after a single meeting (54%). These activities are generally benign. In contrast, the five least frequently reported intrusive activities were: having belongings secretly taken (12%), receiving strange parcels (11%), having property vandalized (11%), having a loved one physically hurt (9%), and having mail intercepted (8%). These activities are more sinister in nature. The proportion of respondents who reported experiencing each of the 47 intrusive activities is provided in the Appendix.

### **Gender Empowerment and Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultures**

Table 3 displays the GEM and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures for the 12 countries, and Table 4 details the correlations between the GEM and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures.

---Tables 3 and 4 about here---

The overall pattern and directions of significance produced by the correlation analyses are consistent with those identified by previous works. For example, Archer (2006) also found a positive correlation between the GEM and the individualism index, a negative correlation between the GEM and the power distance index, and no significant correlation

between the GEM and the masculinity index. However, the current  $r$ -values tended to be lower than those identified by previous works.

Table 5 displays the correlation coefficients for the GEM and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures with the proportion of respondents who reported experiencing each of the 47 intrusive activities. For full details of how Hofstede's index scores (originally based on a survey of 117,000 employees of IBM) are calculated, see Hofstede (2011).

---Table 5 about here---

Overall, five intrusive activities were significantly correlated with both the GEM and two or more of Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures: 'Multiple telephone calls which you don't want to receive' and 'A man at a social event such as a party asks you if you would like to have sex with him' were both correlated with the GEM, the power distance index and the individualism index; 'Sending you unwanted letters, notes, e-mail or other written communications' and 'Acting in an angry manner when seeing you out with other men (your friends or romantic partners)' were both correlated with the GEM, the power distance index, the individualism index and the long-term orientation index; and 'Taking photographs of you without your knowledge' was correlated with the GEM, the power distance index, the individualism index and the long-term orientation index.

These five intrusive activities were not the most frequently reported activities (ranking 4<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> respectively), nor are they the most or least severe. Rather, from our list of 47 intrusive activities, these five best illustrate how differences in women's intrusive experiences relate to national differences in gender empowerment.

**Gender empowerment.** Respondents from countries with lower GEM scores were significantly more likely to report experiencing 9 of the 47 intrusive activities. These tended



to be severe and included forced sexual contact, being spied upon, and multiple unwanted communications. Respondents from countries with higher GEM scores were significantly more likely to report experiencing just two of the intrusive activities and these were relatively innocuous: being offered a social drink by a stranger and being asked for casual sex at a social event. These findings support those of earlier works (see Archer, 2006) and suggest that women with less power relative to men, are more likely to experience violence and unwanted intrusions.

**Power distance index.** Respondents from countries with higher power distance index scores (e.g., Egypt, India and Indonesia, all scoring 70 or more) were significantly more likely to report experiencing multiple unwanted phone calls, communications and gifts, being repeatedly asked to go on a date, and being spied upon and photographed. They were also more likely to report experiencing men reacting angrily when seeing them out with third parties, visiting places to try and find them, trying to get to know them better via talking to the woman's friends, and changing offices or classes to be in the same location. Respondents from countries with lower power distance index scores (e.g., Australia, the United Kingdom and Finland, all scoring under 40) were more likely report experiencing offers of casual sex and being verbally abused.

**Individualism index.** In countries with higher individualism index scores (e.g., Australia, the United Kingdom and Italy, all scoring over 70), respondents were significantly more likely to report experiencing being asked out by a man as 'just friends', being offered a drink by a stranger, being wolf-whistled at, and having casual sex suggested. In countries with lower individualism index scores (e.g., Egypt, Indonesia, Portugal and Trinidad, all scoring under 30), respondents were more likely to report experiencing multiple unwanted phone calls, written and typed communications, being furtively photographed, having forced sexual contact, and having a man act angrily when seeing them out with a third party.

**Masculinity index.** In countries with a lower masculinity index scores (e.g., Finland and Portugal, both scoring under 40), respondents were more likely to report experiencing emotional hurt and being confined against their will. None of the 47 intrusive activities were significantly associated with higher masculinity index scores.

**Uncertainty avoidance index.** In countries with lower uncertainty avoidance index scores (i.e., countries that are less reliant on rules and plans, and less likely to enforce procedures regardless of circumstances), such as the United Kingdom and India (both scoring 40 or less), respondents were more likely to report experiencing a man agreeing with all that they said and having someone regularly stand outside their home. Respondents from countries with higher uncertainty avoidance index scores (e.g., Egypt, Italy, Japan and Portugal, all scoring over 70), were more likely to report experiencing having mail intercepted.

**Long-term orientation index.** Respondents from countries with lower long-term orientation index scores (i.e., countries that tend to hold historically short-term western viewpoints), such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Italy and Portugal (all scoring under 40) were more likely to report experiencing wolf whistling. Respondents from countries with higher long-term orientation index scores (e.g., India and Japan, both with scores over 60), were more likely to report experiencing unwanted written and typed communications, being photographed, having a man act angrily when seeing them out with a third party, and having forced sexual contact.

## **Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that intrusive activities, many of them constituent of harassment and stalking, are not uncommon. Experience of intrusive behavior varies widely between different countries, indicating that intrusive activities are not inevitable, and the

variation of reported experience corresponds with levels of gender empowerment.

Some of the intrusive activities perpetrated by men that were included in the research instrument were sufficiently severe to warrant concern when considered in isolation. For instance, 12% of the young women across all 12 country samples (average age 20.75 years) said they had experienced forced sexual contact, 13% reported having experienced death threats, 13% reported physical harm, and 18% said they had been spied upon. Between-country differences in reported experiences are well illustrated when countries with low and high GEM scores are compared. For example, Egypt has the lowest GEM score of the 12 countries included in this work, at .29, whilst Finland has the highest GEM score, at .90. Of the Egyptian women, 19% said they had experienced forced sexual contact, compared with 9% of Finnish women. Comparisons for two of the other severe intrusive activities follow a similar pattern: 15% of Egyptian women reported death threats and 34% reported being spied upon compared to 6% and 7% of Finnish women respectively. These findings support earlier works that illustrate vast differences in attitudes towards women in countries located at the lower and higher extremes of the GEM (e.g., World Health Organization, 2002).

Large proportions of our female psychology students had also experienced less sinister but nonetheless unpleasant intrusive behavior. Over half (55%) of the sample had received unwanted multiple telephone calls from a man, 51% had been verbally abused by a man, and 42% had experienced a man reacting angrily when seeing them out in public with another man. Again, enormous variation existed between countries. For example, individual sample rates of being pressed into an inappropriate, personal and intimate discussion ranged from 9% in Portugal to 70% in Armenia. Although there may be other barriers (such as ease of access to technology) that will have influenced the results to some degree, the broad continuum of intrusive activities examined by the study would indicate that the differences reflect national levels of gender empowerment.

The analyses using Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures add further value to the claim that cultural influences impact on the incidence of intrusive behavior. For both power distance and individualism, the significantly associated intrusive activities would seem to be explained by higher gender empowerment (with subsumed greater sexual freedom) versus lower gender empowerment (with a subsumed greater emphasis on chastity and an increased perception of women as chattels). Similarly, countries with low uncertainty avoidance and short-term viewpoints were associated with intrusive activities suggesting greater sexual choice for women and an acceptance of basic courtship behavior. Women in countries with high uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation were more likely to be monitored and treated as though they were (and/or should be, at least in the eyes of the perpetrators) controlled by men. The seven intrusive activities that may be considered key associates of the more extreme ends of Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures (as they were correlated with two or more Hofstede scores) are worthy of attention. They capture the schism between countries with lesser and greater gender empowerment of women, the former being illustrated by being photographed furtively, experiencing an angry reaction from a particular man when seen out with third parties, and receiving multiple unwanted phone calls and communications; and the latter being illustrated by wolf whistling, requests for casual sex and forced sexual contact. Given the gender stereotyped nature of at least two of these activities, it is anticipated that replication of this work with male respondents (if asked about their experiences of the 47 intrusive activities as performed by women) would produce somewhat different findings. We would expect that men, particularly in countries with lower levels of gender empowerment, would be less likely to report requests of courtship, surveillance, requests for sexual activity, and physical threats and harm. It is also anticipated that male-female reporting rates would generally be less pronounced in countries with higher

GEM scores (as gender empowerment for women is related to greater levels of female perpetration of partner violence, see e.g., Archer, 2006).

Limitations of the study include a non-random sample, the use of self-reports and substantial variation in the study sites. There may also have been issues related to individual recall, interpretation of the activities, and cultural biases in terms of disclosure. Some of the activities were ambiguously worded, and future work should explore culture-specific influences on behavior interpretation via pilot work that includes focus group discussion among target sample representatives. Furthermore, it is possible that those who had experienced these intrusive activities would be more likely to agree to take part in the study. In the WHO multi-country study of partner violence (World Health Organization, 2002), lower educational level was found to be a risk factor in most sites, and similar findings have been identified in relation to stalking (e.g., Jones et al., 2003; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The present study only included university students as respondents, so the incidence of intrusive behavior may be artificially low and non-representative of the wider population within each country (particularly in the poorer countries given that cities usually tend to produce lower partner violence rates than rural areas; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). Furthermore, university educated women are more likely to possess more financial and interpersonal power than many other women in their countries and communities. A further problem inherent to student samples is highlighted by Archer's (2006) work. In Archer's study, GEM and the individualism index correlated very highly ( $r = .80$ ), whereas the correlation viewed in the current work was weaker ( $r = .60$ ). It has been proposed that reports from students should not be taken as representative of the culture to which they belong (see Archer, 2006). Archer's calculations were based on community samples. Straus (2003) who explored dating violence among students in 14 nations, also identified a lower correlation between GEM and the individualism index.

Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures have been criticized on various grounds. For instance, gender differences are not considered. In the present study, Hofstede scores provided a simple framework to ascertain whether results from the 12 countries examined could be meaningfully divided. The relationships between Hofstede scores and the most significant intrusive activities in this work would suggest that it is not Hofstede's dimensions themselves that may best explain the associations, but rather the association between intrusive experiences and the gender empowerment women are afforded within the 12 countries. Women in countries with higher GEM scores were more likely to report being offered a social drink by a stranger and being asked for casual sex at a social event, whilst those in nations with the lower GEM scores were more likely to experience monitoring and controlling behavior (e.g., being spied upon and experiencing an angry reaction from a particular man when seen out with third parties). These individual activities are born of belief systems that are manifested as societal levels of gender empowerment (see Archer, 2006, for a fuller explanation).

In Chapman and Spitzberg's (2003) comparison of students in Japan and the United States, the former were more likely to be the targets of physical threats, actual physical harm, and sexual coercion. In the current work, which did not include a sample from the United States, the Japanese students had a relatively low risk of experiencing the more severe intrusive activities. This demonstrates the importance of comparing a wide variety of cultures and considering broad factors such as national wealth and levels of industrial development. The present findings would appear to support those of Garcia-Moreno et al. (2006) who found that partner violence is generally lower in industrialized settings. This may also be true for stalking and other forms of inter-gender harassment and violence. At the very least, the present study further confirms that constituent activities of stalking are widespread and universal. The WHO work on partner violence revealed that across a wide range of settings in

10 different countries, women were at greater risk of violence from an intimate partner than from any other perpetrator subtype (see Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). The present study did not determine the perpetrator of the individual intrusive activities it examined, but the nature of many of the activities strongly implies a former, current or potential partner. The next stage of this work should gather information regarding the context and the perpetrator of the behavior, as well as the co-occurrence of individual activities to provide an estimate on the incidence of actual stalking. Do rates of stalking accord with GEM scores, or is this the case only for some forms of intrusive behavior? The present study should also be replicated with a male sample being asked to report on their experiences of the 47 intrusive activities as perpetrated by females. Any further work should seek to obtain full datasets from country leads so that meaningful factors can be calculated as these may vary between countries and sex dyads.

To conclude, the great majority of research on stalking and its constituent intrusive activities has been conducted in Western individualistic societies. As far as the authors are aware, the present study is the first cross-national analysis of this topic that has examined more than two countries. University students from Western countries are not good representatives of the global population (and, in fact, may be outliers in terms of many psychological attributes, see e.g. Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010). Although this work did not employ community samples, we did at least employ students from some highly collectivist countries and countries with relatively low GEM scores. As is the case for partner violence, self-reported experiences of intrusive activities were strongly tied to women's power within their country of residence, suggesting that although intrusive experiences may be universal, they are tempered by beliefs concerning gendered power and freedom.

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Table 1. Summary of works on stalking from non-English speaking countries

Authors	Country	Sample	Incidence	Other main findings
Stieger, Burger, & Schild (2008)	Austria	Convenience sample of 400 men and women	17% females, 3% males	Lifetime risk of being a stalking victim was associated with currently impaired psychological well-being.
Björklund, Häkkänen-Nyholm, Roberts, & Sheridan (2010)	Finland	615 students	52% females, 23% males	Victims reported a mean number of 10 different intrusive activities.
Dressing, Kuehner, & Gass (2005)	Germany	Stratified random sample of 679 men and women	17% females, 4% males	Victims reported a mean number of five different intrusive activities.
Kordvani (2000)	Iran	100 reports to police, only female victims selected	N/A	48% of stalkers were ex-partners, 12% were male relatives.
Chapman & Spitzberg (2003)	Japan	233 students	22% females, 18% males	Japanese students viewed intrusive activities as more threatening than did students from the United States.
van der Aa & Kunst (2009)	Netherlands	1,027 attendees at a funfair	21% females, 13% males	Victimization was negatively related to age (for both lifetime and past year risk).
Narud, Friestad, & Dahl (2014)	Norway	Cross sectional case controlled sample of 1,422 men and women	12% females, 4% males	The effects on male and female victims were commensurate.
Ferreira & Matos (2013)	Portugal	107 females stalked by former intimates	N/A	Violence pre break-up predicted a more severe stalking experience.
Dovelius, Holmberg, & Öberg (2006)	Sweden	Random telephone sample of 4,000 men and women	9% (three quarters were women)*	Women were three times more likely to experience violence than were men.

Jagessar & Sheridan (2004)	Trinidad** Convenience sample of 354 women	24%	Trinidadian women were more likely to experience a range of intrusive activities than British women, but both populations judged the behavior similarly.
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*Note.* Where more than one study has been conducted in a country, just one study has been included in the table.

\* Precise figures not provided; \*\*English is Trinidad and Tobago's official language, but the main spoken languages are Trinidadian Creole and Tobagonian Creole.



Table 2. Average ages for the 12 countries

Country	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Armenia	100	21.87	3.29
Australia	100	20.78	2.01
Egypt	100	22.76	4.86
England	100	20.51	3.25
Finland	386	21.56	4.78
India	100	20.02	.90
Indonesia	102	20.29	1.08
Italy	195	21.78	3.11
Japan	98	19.39	.60
Portugal	253	20.23	.91
Scotland	100	20.76	2.01
Trinidad	100	21.67	3.55

Table 3. The Gender Empowerment Measure and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures for the 12 countries

Armeni a	Australi a	Egyp t	Englan d	Finlan d	Indi a	Indonesi a	Ital y	Japa n	Portuga l	Scotlan d	Trinida d
1. Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)											
.41	.87	.29	.79	.90	.59	.41	.74	.57	.75	.79	.80
2. Power distance index (PDI)											
N/Av	36	70	35	33	77	76	50	54	63	35	47
3. Individualism index(IDV)											
N/Av	90	25	89	63	48	14	76	46	27	89	16
4. Masculinity index (MAS)											
N/Av	61	45	66	26	56	46	70	95	31	66	58
5. Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)											
N/Av	51	80	35	59	40	48	75	92	104	35	55
6. Long-term orientation index (LTO)											
N/Av	31	N/Av	25	41	61	N/Av	34	80	30	25	N/Av

Note. N/Av = Not available.

Table 4. Correlations between the Gender Empowerment Measure and Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures

	GEM	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
GEM	–	-.82**	.60*	.04	-.23	.78
PDI	-.82**	–	.73**	-.16,	.28	.53
IDV	.60*	.73**	–	.33	-.42	-.54
MAS	.04	-.16,	.33	–	.06	.44
UAI	-.23	.28	-.42	.06	–	.32
LTO	.78*	.53	-.54,	.44	.32	–

*Note.* GEM = Gender Empowerment Measure, PDI = Power distance index, IDV = individualism index, MAS = Masculinity index, UAI = Uncertainty avoidance index; LTO = Long-term orientation index. \*  $p \leq .05$ . \*\*  $p \leq .01$

Table 5. Correlations for the Gender Empowerment Measure and Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultures with the proportion of respondents who reported experiencing each of the 47 intrusive activities

Intrusive behavior	Dimensions					
	GEM	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
A stranger engaging you in a conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop or in a cafe	-.14	.40	.29	.25	-.16	-.01
Asking your friends, family, school or work colleagues about you	<b>-.68*</b>	.54	-.16	-.01	-.41	-.26
Asking you out ‘as just friends’	.17	-.12	<b>.67*</b>	.41	-.59	-.64
Multiple telephone calls which you don’t want to receive	<b>-.59*</b>	<b>.69*</b>	<b>-.62*</b>	-.51	.10	.16
Telephoning you after one initial meeting	-.41	.54	-.13	.02	-.23	-.11
Finding out information about you (phone numbers, marital status, address, hobbies) without asking you directly	-.30	.53	-.31	-.31	-.38	-.47
Doing unrequested favors for you	-.31	.57	-.26	-.09	-.43	-.23
Asking you for a date repeatedly	<b>-.73**</b>	<b>.61*</b>	-.20	-.02	-.21	-.20
Verbally abusing you	.36	<b>-.69*</b>	.29	-.06	-.40	-.29
Talking about you to mutual friends after meeting you just once	-.19	.22	.34	.37	-.48	-.15
Sending or giving you gifts	-.25	<b>.68*</b>	-.31	-.01	-.12	.01
Sending you unwanted letters, notes, e-mail or other written communications	<b>-.60*</b>	<b>.64*</b>	<b>-.65*</b>	.01	.41	<b>.95**</b>
A man engages you in an inappropriate personal and intimate discussion	-.11	-.34	.39	-.15	-.57	-.34
Hurting you emotionally (verbal abuse, ruining your reputation)	-.21	.07	-.35	<b>-.62*</b>	-.16	.00
Driving, riding, or walking purposefully past your residence, school or work place	-.29	.48	-.31	-.16	-.44	-.22

Acting in an angry manner when seeing you out with other men (your friends or romantic partners)	<b>-.68*</b>	<b>.73*</b>	<b>-.81**</b>	-.26	.39	<b>.85*</b>
Coming round to visit you, uninvited, on a regular basis	-.14	.25	.15	-.05	-.56	-.30
Trying to get to know your friends in order to get to know you better	-.41	<b>.74**</b>	-.31	-.30	-.02	-.06
'Wolf-whistling' in the street	.46	-.52	<b>.84**</b>	.36	-.51	<b>-.78*</b>
Agreeing with your every word (even if you were wrong)	.44	-.28	.30	.17	<b>-.94**</b>	-.59
A stranger offering to buy you a drink in a café, restaurant or bar	<b>.65*</b>	-.52	<b>.68*</b>	.12	-.30	-.68
Visiting places because he knows that you may be there	-.26	<b>.72*</b>	-.38	-.06	-.07	-.01
Refusing to accept that a prior relationship is over	-.38	.50	-.53	-.37	.16	.13
Standing and waiting outside your home	-.06	.02	-.05	.21	<b>-.64*</b>	-.61
Following you	-.39	.33	-.32	-.22	-.41	-.29
Seeing him at the same time each day	-.52	.46	-.18	-.05	-.54	-.37
'Outstaying his welcome' in your home	-.54	.51	-.35	-.19	-.31	.10
Making arrangements without asking you first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant)	<b>-.62*</b>	.57	-.33	-.12	-.20	-.25
Standing and waiting outside your school or work place	-.35	.52	-.42	.01	-.04	-.04
Trying to manipulate or force you into dating him	-.30	.34	-.35	-.48	-.29	.14
A man at a social event such as a party asks you if you would like to have sex with him	<b>.80**</b>	<b>-.74*</b>	<b>.76**</b>	.28	-.30	-.54
Taking photographs of you without your knowledge	<b>-.59*</b>	<b>.69*</b>	<b>-.91**</b>	-.30	.36	<b>.74*</b>
Changing classes, offices or joining a new group to be closer to you	-.39	<b>.72*</b>	-.34	-.37	-.20	-.31
Spying on you	<b>-.59*</b>	<b>.67*</b>	-.53	-.39	-.01	-.07
Confining you against your will	-.38	.29	-.53	<b>-.78**</b>	-.14	-.09
Threatening to kill himself or hurt himself if you refused to go out with him	.03	.30	-.21	-.08	-.21	-.22
Threatening to physically hurt you	.11	-.30	.11	-.21	-.30	-.32

Harming you physically	.03	-.07	-.18	-.44	.01	.26
Leaving unwanted items for you to find	-.21	.20	-.22	.52	-.18	.42
Making death threats	-.09	.09	-.05	-.02	.05	.36
Forced sexual contact	<b>-.58*</b>	.47	<b>-.61*</b>	-.15	.06	<b>.77*</b>
Trespassing on your property	-.29	.22	-.36	-.35	-.21	.14
Secretly taking your belongings	-.39	.40	-.48	-.27	-.39	.20
Giving or sending you strange parcels	-.44	.13	-.46	.17	-.21	-.22
Criminal damage/vandalism to your property	-.11	.01	-.54	-.32	-.04	.57
Physically hurting someone you care about	-.41	.45	-.49	-.57	-.10	.26
Intercepting mail/deliveries	-.13	-.01	-.54	-.06	<b>.66*</b>	.58

*Note.* GEM = Gender Empowerment Measure, PDI = Power distance index, IDV = individualism index, MAS = Masculinity index, UAI = Uncertainty avoidance index; LTO = Long-term orientation index. \*  $p \leq .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . Correlations for GEM include all 12 countries; correlations for PDI, IDV, MAS and UAI include 11 of the 12 countries (excludes Armenia); correlations for LTO include 8 of the 12 countries (excludes Armenia, Egypt, Indonesia, Trinidad).

Table A1. Proportion (%) of respondents who reported experiencing each of the 47 intrusive activities

Intrusive behavior	Armenia	Australia	Egypt	England	Finland	India	Indonesia	Italy	Japan	Portugal	Scotland	Trinidad
A stranger engaging you in a conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop or in a café	46	90	72	62	42	85	83	86	72	76	78	39
Asking your friends, family, school or work colleagues about you	78	62	82	76	22	81	79	70	43	61	67	62
Asking you out 'as just friends'	40	84	70	80	23	72	66	75	50	62	76	59
Multiple telephone calls which you don't want to receive	81	41	86	32	41	75	78	58	25	47	36	59
Telephoning you after one initial meeting	35	61	82	54	23	68	73	72	30	46	60	51
Finding out information about you (phone numbers, marital status, address, hobbies) without asking you directly	25	43	86	62	28	81	78	53	24	55	58	54
Doing unrequested favors for you	39	50	85	57	18	87	81	46	32	41	43	54
Asking you for a date repeatedly	65	43	67	53	25	65	61	64	27	46	55	45
Verbally abusing you	85	57	47	47	71	41	36	42	28	22	61	76
Talking about you to mutual friends after meeting you just once	67	62	44	50	14	62	60	65	32	48	51	49
Sending or giving you gifts	29	45	55	37	11	72	70	70	18	42	32	57
Sending you unwanted letters, notes, e-mail or other written communications	64	21	59	15	40	61	56	55	62	31	12	60
A man engages you in an inappropriate personal and intimate discussion	70	48	52	61	50	49	44	36	20	9	50	31
Hurting you emotionally (verbal abuse, ruining your reputation)	76	29	49	43	58	46	44	37	21	33	36	45

Driving, riding, or walking purposefully past your residence, school or work place	58	55	58	40	10	70	62	36	7	22	36	62
Acting in an angry manner when seeing you out with other men (your friends or romantic partners)	70	20	73	15	23	60	60	37	37	29	18	62
Coming round to visit you, uninvited, on a regular basis	61	63	57	57	7	64	52	27	4	14	45	53
Trying to get to know your friends in order to get to know you better	32	50	76	41	10	54	67	42	17	43	33	36
Agreeing with your every word (even if you were wrong)	11	40	17	57	37	54	56	32	21	31	87	41
'Wolf-whistling' in the street	36	49	27	69	31	39	22	56	25	39	62	28
A stranger offering to buy you a drink in a café, restaurant or bar	17	76	15	65	33	27	31	59	8	51	49	31
Visiting places because he knows that you may be there	18	34	48	29	17	61	56	56	21	47	23	52
Refusing to accept that a prior relationship is over	67	34	45	26	28	40	36	40	21	36	29	50
Standing and waiting outside your home	44	22	40	45	9	42	36	32	13	22	51	60
Following you	70	32	46	34	20	41	37	23	16	19	27	44
'Outstaying his welcome' in your home	47	23	61	29	26	56	45	29	9	11	22	32
Seeing him at the same time each day	89	20	47	24	2	53	39	16	11	14	41	33
Making arrangements without asking you first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant)	42	17	49	29	15	45	39	41	14	17	21	30
Standing and waiting outside your school or work place	52	26	38	9	6	44	46	47	6	16	11	54
Trying to manipulate or force you into dating him	44	24	37	14	21	38	32	15	10	13	19	33



Taking photographs of you without your knowledge	30	7	32	8	11	25	28	13	14	13	4	68
A man at a social event such as a party asks you if you would like to have sex with him	17	41	2	37	30	7	4	37	6	10	28	30
Changing classes, offices or joining a new group to be closer to you	16	19	38	16	3	39	31	10	5	23	20	17
Spying on you	33	14	34	8	7	26	31	14	4	13	12	20
Confining you against your will	22	4	56	9	16	21	54	4	1	8	4	14
Threatening to kill himself or hurt himself if you refused to go out with him	7	14	34	15	9	23	13	14	6	11	11	39
Threatening to physically hurt you	31	22	27	11	14	14	8	9	4	6	19	28
Harming you physically	33	9	16	8	18	11	8	9	5	8	7	24
Making death threats	24	5	15	5	6	8	3	7	4	3	3	70
Leaving unwanted items for you to find	9	3	6	6	3	12	8	13	11	3	9	69
Forced sexual contact	26	10	19	7	9	11	17	8	11	7	9	13
Trespassing on your property	24	16	22	5	10	12	17	6	3	2	8	13
Secretly taking your belongings	20	8	16	4	9	17	20	9	4	4	11	17
Giving or sending you strange parcels	12	4	19	11	4	8	17	10	8	1	9	29
Criminal damage/vandalism to your property	21	3	10	6	21	7	12	5	8	2	6	22
Physically hurting someone you care about	14	5	20	2	6	16	19	5	1	3	3	9
Intercepting mail/deliveries	17	1	5	1	12	2	4	7	14	5	3	19