Summary
Stalking: Definition and Its Relationship with Social Psychological Variables

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Stalking may appear in violent film scenes in which an obsessive, mentally ill and frightening stalker uses violence against women. Similarly, in real life, stalking is observed in 76% of women killings and 67% of intimate partner violence incidents (Logan & Walker, 2009; McFarlane et al., 1999). Persistent and repetitive actions which are unwanted by the target such as repetitively calling or sending online messages, constantly visiting the target can be considered as acts of stalking (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004; Douglas & Dutton, 2001). A meta-analysis (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004) revealed that 26.29% of women and 10.22% of men have been stalked in their lives. Similarly, a recent study in Turkey found that the ratio of people who have been stalked is higher in women than men (Başar, 2019). Even though both genders can be affected by stalking; the repetitive, unwanted and violent nature of stalking has negative consequences especially for women (Korkodeilou, 2017). Consequently, the aim of the present paper is to review the literature on stalking, usually taking women as victim. In this review, first of all, definitions of stalking by different disciplines are presented. Then, the associations among stalking and some social psychological variables such as romanticizing stalking, relationship status with stalker, method used for stalking, sexism, gender difference, honor, manhood, and cultural differences are discussed. Lastly, consequences and negative outcomes of stalking are presented, and then a general summary is given. This review can be useful for understanding and clarifying the description of stalking, and for showing its relationship with social psychological variables.

Definition of Stalking

Stalking has been covered by various disciplines such as law, gender and women studies, sociology and psychology as well as women organizations. In Turkish culture, the press, law, women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations have started paying attention to stalking. Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı) in Turkey defines stalking as a way of dating violence. Although some countries legalized stalking and specifically defined it as an offense, there is no specific legislation on stalking in Turkey, but it is mentioned in "Law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence Against Women (Law No. 6284).

From the social sciences perspective, stalking is a one-sided behavior which means it is motivated and performed by the stalker. Victims do not want to get the unwanted attention, communication or physical contact. Stalker may stalk the victim by using various ways such as following, uninvited visiting, asking friends, sending present even though the victim says this is not appropriate. The victims feel fear, sad, and depressed during the stalking events. The literature on stalking suggests that it is sometimes hard to differentiate courtship from stalking. Stalking may occur when one person seeks to start a relationship or in the process of ending the relationship (Lyndon et al., 2012). These romantic relationship efforts may transform into stalking when the behaviors become excessive and unwanted by the target and evokes fear and anxiety (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2000; Lyndon et al., 2012; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003). Briefly, stalking may be defined as a set of repetitive behaviors directed toward a target that perceives those behaviors as unwelcome and intrusive (Acquadro Maran, & Varetto, 2018).

Relationship among Stalking and Social Psychological Variables

Stalking may be associated with various psychological variables such as associating stalking with courtship, relationship status with stalker, method used for stalking, sexism, gender difference, honor, manhood and honor endorsement.

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Associating Stalking with Courtship. One of the main motivations behind stalking can be relevant to courtship. Stalkers might normalize their persistent communication efforts as romantic relationships, and affection (Mullen et al., 2006). People who observe stalking behavior may also perceive them as love, and romantic initiation acts. Gender stereotypes about romantic relationship may indicate that men have to be assertive and persistent to start and to maintain a romantic relationship (e.g., Sakallı & Curun, 2001; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003). If stalker and observers perceive the stalking behaviors as romantic relationship, stalking behavior may continue, and the persistent efforts of men to protect and control their partners can be perceived by somehow favorable. The gender stereotypical expectations put women in such a position that even though they do not want the relationship they are perceived as "playing hard to get." Similarly, a woman who refuses a man's romantic proposal or leaves her partner might be perceived negatively by the society (Sinclair, 2012).

Relationship Pattern between Stalker and Victim. A stalker might have former relationship with the victim (former partner, spouse or an acquaintance) or can be a total stranger (Sheridan, Blaauw, & Davies, 2003). 77% of the stalking victims reported having a romantic relationship history with their pursuers (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004). Researchers found that victims who have been stalked by their former partners showed high stress. Ex-partners have more access to the victim's personal life due to their history and they can use more stalking tactics which becomes more intimidating (Logan & Walker, 2009; Roberts, 2005; Sheridan & Davies, 2001). Current partner stalking might be hard to recognize, however; when a person's persistent efforts to control his/her partner becomes frightening it can be considered as stalking.

Stalking Methods. With regards to the methods of stalking, it can be classified into face-to-face (or physical) stalking and cyberstalking (Spitzberg, 2017). As indicated earlier, stalking behaviors may include unwanted verbal communication, harming, following, spying, waiting outside of victim's house and school. It is also possible to observe cyberstalking behaviors such as sending frequent online messages, and revealing the private information about the target online (Ellison & Akdeniz, 1998; Morewitz, 2003). Cyberstalking also has motivation of control and creating threat, and it can be as fearful as face-to-face stalking (Morewitz, 2003; Mullen, Pathé, & Purcell, 2002). It is suggested that, in the future, stalking cases will include more cyberstalking incidents and this subject will be a specific research interest (Mullen et al., 2002).

Gender Differences. Studies show that women are subjected to stalking more than men (Başar, 2019; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003, 2007). Similarly, women detect stalking behaviors more than men (Miglietta & Acquadro Maran, 2016). Further, intrusive behaviors are classified as stalking mostly by women (Dennis & Thomson, 2000; Phillips, Quirk, Rosenfeld, & O'Connor, 2004). As victims, women feel much more anxiety than men (Hills & Taplin, 1998; Magyarics, Lynch, Golding, & Lippert, 2015). On the other hand, men tend to hold stalking myths more than women (Sinclair, 2012). These findings show that gender difference plays an important role in recognition of stalking and attitudes towards stalking.

Sexism. Sexism is the ideology that encourages inequality between genders (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001) Research shows that sexist attitudes and attitudes towards gender-based violence are related. For instance, sexist people tend to endorse rape myths more than non-sexist people (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Chapleau et al., 2007); and they tend to blame the victim in sexual assault incidents (Viki & Abrams, 2002). Similarly, studies also show that stalking and sexism are related. People who have high hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes tend to minimize the actions of stalkers and psychological distress of victims (Miglietta & Acquadro Maran, 2016). In a recent thesis study conducted in Turkey, Başar (2019) showed that hostile sexism, benevolent sexism and gender-based violence attitudes mediated the relationship between honor endorsement and attitudes towards stalking.

Masculinity and Manhood. The literature on stalking presents that men show more stalking acts than women do (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004). It is very easy to imagine a male stalker who follows a woman in a search for a romantic interest. Precarious manhood concept proposes that (Vandello et al., 2008; Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019) manhood is a hardly won but easily lost status. Men can perform dangerous and aggressive behaviors to reaffirm their manhood (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver & Wasti, 2009; Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, & Burnaford, 2010). In romantic relationship context, when a romantic partner or spouse leaves the man, it is possible that this situation becomes a threat to his manhood. Especially in Turkish culture men may feel and act as if they own their partners. The sayings like "you are not a man enough to have your wife, she left you" may support the arguments. They may experience the precarious manhood; and consequently, in order to regain their power, they might stalk their ex-partners obsessively to earn their attention back. Thus, stalking can be highly related with manhood ideologies.

Culture, Honor Culture & Endorsement of Honor Codes. Gender-based violence is visible in al-

most every culture but its practices and attitudes are influenced by norms and beliefs of the cultures (Leung & Cohen, 2011). There are strict gender differences and norms in honor cultures; and it can be accepted to use violence against women in the name of honor in these cultures (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). People in honor cultures might have different motivations for stalking as well as violence against women. Men might believe that they still have the right to follow or control their ex-partners even if they break up. As Miglietta and Acquadro Maran (2016) mentioned, one of the main motivations of stalker is to control the victim. In a new study conducted in Turkey (Başar, 2019), it is found that stalking is in a positive relationship with honor beliefs and sexism.

Negative Outcomes of Stalking

Stalking obviously causes many negative consequences for victims' social, psychological and physical lives. It restricts victim's social life and leads to some psychological problems such as self-blaming, depression, anxiety, loneliness, and depression (Kuehner, Gass, & Dressing, 2012; Korkodeilou, 2017). Victims of stalking might use different strategies to deal with the events such as ignoring the stalker; reasoning with the stalker (confrontation or warning); empowering themselves with self-defense techniques; and seeking help, social support, and guidance from their family or friends (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004).

Further, if stalking continues, the next step usually is physical violence against women (Logan & Walker, 2009; McFarlane et al., 1999). When the frequencies of stalking increase the damages to women also increase (Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2004). Not only psychological health but also physical health of women is affected by the stalking acts. Additions, appetite, sleep disturbances are few examples of consequences for the victims (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

General Conclusion

In this article, first of all, stalking is defined by using explanations from different disciplines. Then, social psychological studies about stalking are given. The association among stalking and some social psychological variables such as gender differences, romanticizing stalking, sexism, manhood, and honor ideologies are discussed. The aim of the review paper is to raise awareness about stalking issue and make it socially visible. In social sciences, stalking has been covered from clinical or social (relational) perspectives (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003). Clinical approach has mainly focused on the individual profile and psychological history of stalkers. They have also presented health consequences of stalking for the victims (Meloy, 1996; Mullen et al., 2006; Spitzberg, 2002). On the other hand, in social perspective, researchers have focused on relationship patterns between the target and the perpetrator; attitudes towards stalking, and its relationships with different social motivations (Sinclair, 2012). From social perspective, stalking acts include unwanted verbal communication, unwanted attention, harming, following, spying, waiting outside of victim's house or school, sending strange gifts, persistent courtship and obsessive information seeking (e.g., Mullen et al., 1999; Ybarra, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Mitchell, 2017). With recent development in technology and wide use of the internet and social media, a stalker can also try to reach and bother their target via online platforms (Ellison & Akdeniz, 1998). Social perspective usually covers feminist perspective. Logan and Walker (2009) defines stalking as a result of a control mechanism over the victim. Feminist literature addresses stalking as an issue of power relations, control and patriarchy (Spitzberg & Cupach 2003). As other forms of gender-based violence or intimate partner violence, stalking is a way of expressing the dominance over a specific person (generally women). According to Sallan Gül (2013), feminist movements had significant role of recognizing domestic violence as a social issue.

Social science researchers in Turkey should examine and clarify stalker's characteristics; victim points of view (e.g., responses to stalking and perception of it); and attitudes of others toward the stalking issues. There might be many variables that may influence how Turkish people perceive stalking. For example, sexism level and honor issues may be the most important variables influencing the perception of stalking and reactions to it in Turkish culture. In addition, legal and political aspects of stalking should be clarified and necessary legal precautions should be taken. Research findings specific to our culture might be beneficial for applied researchers to create necessary prevention and intervention programs.