

**BE AFRAID... BE VERY AFRAID: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FEAR OF
VICTIMIZATION**

by

Callie Clark Hartman

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the

Criminal Justice

Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

August, 2011

Be Afraid... Be Very Afraid: Factors Influencing the Fear of Victimization

Callie Hartman

I hereby release this thesis to the public. I understand that this thesis will be made available from the OhioLINK ETD Center and the Maag Library Circulation Desk for public access. I also authorize the University or other individuals to make copies of this thesis as needed for scholarly research.

Signature: _____

Callie Hartman, Student

Date

Approvals:

Dr. Christopher M. Bellas, Thesis Advisor

Date

Dr. John M. Hazy, Committee Member

Date

Professor Susan W. Clutter, Committee Member

Date

Peter J. Kasvinsky, Dean, School of Graduate Studies & Research

Date

ABSTRACT

The media often portrays an inner city overcome with violence. This research investigates whether citizens are emotionally responsive to this attention, as well as the self protective measures they utilize based on where they reside. Because the press devotes so much of its media coverage to violence, the main hypothesis to be tested here is that the more one is exposed to the media, the more they will be fearful of crime. The demographic variables included in this survey will be as follows: age, gender, race, average household income, and level of education. The predictor variable is the amount of media consumed, with the dependent variable being one's level of fear of violent victimization. Conclusions were drawn from data obtained from students attending a midsized urban university (N=134) in the Midwest in order to see what impact the media has on fear. The hypothesis that high media exposure would increase levels of fear and increase precautionary measure was unsupported. However, support was found for the hypothesis that respondents who were themselves a crime victim or knew the victim of a crime are more aware of the threat of victimization. Future researchers may want to operationalize media by other means such as specifying source of media and if this influences fear of crime.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....		iii
DEDICATION		vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT		vii
LIST OF TABLES		viii
 CHAPTERS		
I. INTRODUCTION		1
Statement of the Problem.....		1
Purpose of this Study.....		1
Hypotheses.....		3
Thesis Organization.....		4
II. LITERATURE REVIEW		5
Perceptions of Crime.....		5
The Media and Fear of Crime.....		6
Gender and Fear of Crime.....		9
Age and Fear of Crime.....		10
Race and Fear of Crime.....		10
Income and Fear of Crime.....		12
Education and Fear of Crime.....		13
Preventative Measures and Lifestyle Choices.....		14
Visual Perceptions of Neighborhoods.....		15

	Closeness of High Crime Neighborhoods and Fear of Crime.....	15
	Summary.....	16
III.	METHODOLOGY.....	19
	Purpose.....	19
	Hypotheses.....	20
	Research Design.....	20
	Sample.....	21
	Sampling Procedure.....	22
	Summary.....	22
IV.	RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	24
	Design.....	24
	Demographics.....	24
	TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics.....	26
	Hypothesis #1.....	27
	TABLE 2: Hypothesis #1- Fear of Crime in Your Neighborhood v. Surrounding Neighborhood.....	27
	Results for Hypothesis #1.....	27
	Hypothesis #2.....	28
	TABLE 3: Hypothesis #2- Daily News Consumption and Levels of Fear.....	29
	Results for Hypothesis #2.....	29
	Hypothesis #3.....	29

TABLE 4: Hypothesis #3- Daily News Consumption and Precautionary Action.....	30
Results for Hypothesis #3.....	30
Hypothesis #4.....	30
TABLE 5: Hypothesis #4- Awareness and Victimization/Indirect Victimization.....	31
Results for Hypothesis #4.....	31
Summary.....	32
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	33
Contributions to the Literature.....	33
Limitations to the Present Study.....	34
Recommendations for Future Study.....	36
Conclusion.....	38
REFERENCES	40
APPENDIX A: Human Subjects Committee Approval.....	41
APPENDIX B: Instrument.....	42
APPENDIX C: Verbatim Responses to Question #17.....	46

DEDICATION

To my mother and my father; without your constant love, dedication, and passion for life, this would not be possible. I am forever grateful. I love you both so very much.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This endeavor would not be possible without the following people:

My fellow graduate students and graduate assistants- your guidance and support throughout the years have been nothing less than extraordinary. You deserve happiness and success.

My thesis committee advisor and mentor for several years, Dr. Christopher M. Bellas, words cannot express my deep gratitude for everything you have done for me. You are truly an inspiration. Thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

My thesis committee members, Dr. John M. Hazy and Professor Susan W. Clutter, your recommendations and devotion to my education have touched my heart. Thank you for giving me such an opportunity.

The entire faculty and staff of the Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences Department, there are no words to express how deeply I love our department and everything we represent. I will hold you forever in my heart.

Last, but certainly not least, are my friends. Though I cannot mention every single person, there are those who deserve special recognition for their constant support. Janina Gasior, Morghan Hanni, and Jason Nelson, my oldest friends. You have never let me down. I owe you my life. Lindsay Allison, you will never know how many times you saved my life, thank you. Jason Ludban, Racheal Pesta, and Zack Bowen- my dearest friends in graduate school, thank you for years of support, love, and laughter. I am so blessed to have you in my life. Joel Hartman- my little brother, find your dreams and run with them. I will always be there for you.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics.....	26
TABLE 2: Hypothesis #1- Fear of Crime in Your Neighborhood v. Surrounding Neighborhood.....	27
TABLE 3: Hypothesis #2- Daily News Consumption and Levels of Fear.....	29
TABLE 4: Hypothesis #3- Daily News Consumption and Precautionary Action.....	30
TABLE 5: Hypothesis #4- Awareness and Victimization/Indirect Victimization.....	31

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Victimization bears an emotional and psychological effect, and depending on the person, could be forever present. For those who have been victimized, the continuum of fear may be constantly evolving. As stated in the Bureau of Justice statistics, “In 2009, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced approximately 20 million crimes, according to findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey; 78% (15.6 million) were property crimes; 22% (4.3 million) were crimes of violence; 1% (133,000) were personal thefts.” It is no wonder why citizens often feel the need to constantly look over their shoulder and distrust those around them. The numbers can be overwhelming to anyone who sees that violent crime occurs millions of times a year. Victimization also highlights the crime-fear paradox. “Groups who appear most fearful of crime are those least likely to be victimized; those most likely to be victimized are less fearful” (Will and McGrath, 1995). It is important to understand the crime-fear paradox because it may explain where high levels of fear develop in populations who are least likely to be victimized. Similarly, it underscores the need for the younger population to take precautions, since they are more likely to be crime victims (Will and McGrath, 1995).

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the fear of victimization. By further understanding perceptions of victimization, we are less likely to

focus on the random victimizations highlighted in the media and become more focused on rational awareness. Rational awareness means separating the emotion of fear from the logical reaction of awareness.

People react to fear of crime differently. This difference can be influenced by a number of factors from demographic to situational. The victimization literature highlights several demographic items which are influential regarding crime and fear such as: age, race, income level, and level of education. One very important situational factor, which is the focus of this study, is the amount of exposure to the media and how that exposure impacts fear about victimization. "We all live under the spell of media representations of crime and violence. It is impossible to turn on our TV sets or browse through newspapers and magazines- and, more recently, the Internet, without coming upon a morbid story about the latest heinous crime, accompanied by a detailed report of the suspected criminal and viciousness of the act" (Madriz, 1997 p.4). The news media may be influential in how we perceive crime in our world. Though we have our own personal experience and the experiences of others to further enhance our perceptions, we also may be influenced by what happens to people we do not know personally. Sensationalized news stories grasp our attention daily. Some are even played out for months or years on television right before our very eyes. As a society, we are aware of crime, partially because of what is provided via the various media outlets.

The news media is not the only source by which we receive our information about crime and victimization. We are social creatures who share stories of what we have experienced and what those around us have experienced. Sharing a personal experience about victimization with a close friend or relative may increase that person's fear of

crime or encourage them to take precautions. With this in mind, several hypotheses were developed to examine the impact, if any, of both demographic and situational factors and their influence on one's fear of crime.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be examined here are as follows:

1. People feel safer within their own neighborhood than when they are adjacent to an unfamiliar neighborhood.
2. People who spend each day watching or reading more than one hour of the news will be more fearful of crime than people who don't read or watch as much news.
3. People who spend each day watching or reading more than one hour of the news are more likely to take precautions in their daily life to avoid becoming a crime victim than people who don't read or watch as much news.
4. People who have been the victim of a crime or know the victim of a crime are more aware of their risk of victimization than those who have not been the victim of a crime or do not know the victim of a crime.

Since each person has a different perception of the world, we should seek to find some similarities among individuals in order to better understand the influences of fear. To inquire about such topics, a survey instrument was developed based on reoccurring themes within the literature about victimization. The survey was distributed in Introduction to Criminal Justice courses, and asked students about their age, gender, average household income, race, ethnicity, and the ways in which they receive their

news. Central to this research was to understand how much news they consume daily and its impact on their perception of criminal victimization.

Thesis Organization

The following chapter presents a literature review which includes the works of various scholars to further enhance the reader's understanding of this research in the light of the literature regarding victimization and fear of crime. It is followed by an explanation of the methodology used, such as the research design and the analysis of data. Also included is a chapter which explores the results and findings, determining the supported and unsupported hypotheses. The final chapter will discuss limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceptions of Crime

Those who have been the victim of a crime are more aware of vulnerabilities that place someone in a potentially dangerous situation. However, these are not the only individuals that are influenced by such fear. “Crime also affects those persons who are not direct victims, but who are fearful of becoming victims. This second form of victimization has been called indirect victimization, and fear of crime develops out of this indirect victimization (Toseland, 1982, p.199). Even if the fear of crime outweighs the actual risk of victimization, it plays a direct role in the way we choose to live our lives. Avoidance of certain places or behaviors is the most common reaction to this fear and can be seen in cultural representations in our society. “Our fear of crime, however, is not shaped by the official statistics. It is, rather, influenced by the personal experiences of ourselves and others and by cultural representations embodied in bedtime stories, fairy tales, media images, everyday conversations, code words, and polarized concepts of good/bad, black/white, men/women, rational/irrational, and victim/offender” (Madriz, 1997, p.2). Every person’s perception of crime varies. What concerns one person may be of minimal risk to another. There are also various factors that influence these perceptions. The purpose of this research is to highlight the potential factors that may play a role in the fear of crime and victimization.

The Media and Fear of Crime

Numerous factors can be associated with fear of crime. The media utilizes various outlets to share current news stories. These stories do not have to be localized for an impact to be made. Daniel Romer, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, and Sean Aday state in their 2003 paper, *Television, News and the Cultivation of Fear of Crime*, that “although the news source presumes to give viewers factual stories about their region, it relies heavily on sensational coverage of crime and other mayhem with particular emphasis on homicide and violence” (p.89). Local news stations may share stories that are in the national spotlight with the intent to grasp viewer attention and gain ratings. Sensationalized crime stories certainly have an impact on how the viewer begins to fear crime, even if the chances of being brutally victimized are minimal. “Fear of crime and its impact on the general society have arguably become a problem as serious as crime itself. A criminal incident that has one or two victims can frighten scores of people and alter the way they live and the way they relate to other members of society. Fear of crime weakens the sense of community, decreases social solidarity among its members and creates suspicion of strangers and erosion of mutual trust and cooperation” (Madriz, 1997, p.6).

The random acts of violence so often shared in the media are poor examples of the crime that citizens should be truly concerned with; common crimes committed generally by people they know. “Repeated exposure to stories showing ubiquitous and unpredictable crime can affect judgments of both personal and societal risk” (Romer, Jamieson, and Aday, 2003, p.90). The crime that citizens might fear is related to the amount of believability they place into the accuracy of the news media. Though citizens

would like to assume that crime reporting mistakes are not made by the media, this is not the case. There may not be a specific intent to mislead the public, but there have been instances where a story was sensationalized as being a random act of violence that wasn't random at all. For example, in 1991, the *Washington Post* published a story of a soldier who had just returned home from the Gulf War. Army Specialist Anthony Riggs was a soldier who had come home to a once pleasant neighborhood which had turned into a city riddled with "crime, crack, and occasional bursts of gunfire" (Glassner, 1999, p.23). Riggs was shot and murdered one night shortly after returning home from Iraq in a "random and senseless" act of violence. National attention had much of its focus on crime, the war on drugs and the increase of gang violence. Pressure from citizens to discover the perpetrator led police to find a gun belonging to the brother of Riggs' wife in a nearby trash can. The brother had confessed to committing the killing because of a promise from Riggs' wife to share a life insurance policy. There had been feuding between the couple for some time, which was the possible motive for the man's death (though charges had been dropped due to lack of evidence). "Reporters cannot be blamed for failing to possess this information prior to its discovery by the police, but had they been a little skeptical or made a few phone calls they almost would have certainly stumbled on at least some aspects of the truth" (Glassner, 1999, p.25). Information obtained from the media is often taken as the whole truth from the public when in fact the evidence points in a different direction.

Television, newspapers, and the internet are some common sources where citizens gain information about crime. If every single news story was taken at face value without follow up and validation, then it is possible the fear of crime faced by citizens would

increase. Also, reporters and television news personalities should carefully choose their wording as well as understand the weight of their words. Madriz (1997, p.159) suggests that, “crime has, indeed, become code language for race, gender, and class. The general public should be made aware of the way in which such vocabulary is derogatory and stigmatizing. Because of their influence on the audience; reporters, editors, TV and radio commentators must be held especially responsible for their language. Images of criminals and victims have a profound unconscious and emotional influence on the public, shaping people’s fears; influencing and reinforcing everyday discourse about crime, criminals, and victims; and eventually, shaping criminal justice practices.” The world portrayed by these news sources are chaotic and dangerous to everyone, not just those living in deteriorated urban cities.

Level of fear can also be influenced by where we inhabit. “People who live in cities tend to hold higher levels of fear because cities and other urban areas tend to have higher crime rates than rural areas” (Howard, 1999 p.3). Those who live in or close to urban neighborhoods will certainly hear more about inner city violence and therefore may become more fearful of victimization. Similarly, those who live farther from areas with relatively low crime are still fearful of victimization for they too have been witness to the news stories which portray the possible random and violent victimization in the inner city. Understanding the impact that the media has on citizens may help us explain if levels of fear are associated with their exposure to violence in the media.

Gender and Fear of Crime

Demographic factors may contribute to the fear of crime. Some research even suggest that the “fear/news relationship varies by social circumstances, such as sex, race, age, income, and education” (Chircos, Padgett, and Gertz, 2000 p.756). There is a “possibility that men and women experience fear for different reasons” (Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum, 2006, p.285). Women are often more fearful of crime for they believe they are unable to defend themselves against an attack, however, males are much more likely to be the victims of crime. The literature on feminism may shed light as to why women are more fearful of crime. This fear may come from gender role assignments. “For women, the fear of crime has the unique ability to organize consent or unify views around ‘proper’ gender roles: women cannot engage in certain activities because it is dangerous for them to do so, whereas men have no such limitations” (Madriz, 1997, p.2). If women are constantly told throughout their lifetime that they aren’t able to or should not engage in certain activities due to possible victimization, then their sense of independence is somewhat diminished. For example, when a woman is walking alone at night, it is often a male who suggests he should walk her to her vehicle. The dependency upon masculinity to protect her from criminals is culturally induced. Being fearful of crime and being cautious are very different concepts. A person should take measures to prevent the chances of victimization. However, when a woman begins to feel that no ordinary task can be accomplished without some form of protection or preventative measure, then the fear of crime has overwhelmed her life.

Age and Fear of Crime

A second demographic variable is age. “Advanced age is related to increasing chances of being fearful of crime” (Toseland, 1982, p.203). There are many reasons why this is possible. The elderly tend to become frail with the passage of time and their ability to defend themselves during an attack is lessened (Toseland, 1982). Unlike a person in their 20s or 30s, most elderly persons will lack the physical strength to fight back during an attack. The fear of physical injury alone would perhaps increase fear among the elderly. Victimization is also medically costly, physically painful, and emotionally traumatizing. Also, “the elderly, frequently lacking a household traveling companion and the financial resources to purchase protective devices and avoid dangerous sites, may respond to fear by constraining their social behavior more than do younger people” (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed, 1988, p.828). The fear of victimization often inhibits those who feel they are unable to protect themselves in certain situations. The elderly will avoid leaving home by themselves for fear of victimization.

Race and Fear of Crime

Race, as in many academic discussions, is controversial. While people do not want to admit that they are fearful of certain races when it comes to crime and victimization, some research suggests that there is a racialization of crime. “The racialization of crime means associating criminality with races which increases fear of victimization” (Mears & Stewart, 2010, p.34).

The media can be held accountable for the racialization of crime. There has been a “growing body of research that indicates that local news relies heavily on a ‘crime news

script' that casts minority group members- and African Americans in particular- in the featured role of violent perpetrator" (Mears & Stewart, 2010, p.34). The perception of minorities can therefore influence fearfulness, regardless if the claims can be substantiated.

The racial composition of a neighborhood is also thought to have an impact on fear of crime. David Eitle and John Taylor discovered that respondents reported a greater fear of crime when residing in places with relatively higher proportions of African-American residents (2010, p.1103). This could possibly be related to the "racialization of crime" where minorities are viewed as a perceived threat. Often referred to as the minority group threat theory, this notion seeks to explain why some citizens associate crime with race, which in turn could influence fear. Research thus far on the idea of a "minority threat" has revealed that perceived risk of crime is associated with the relative size of the minority population" (Eitle & Taylor, 2008, p.1104). Therefore, the minority population of a particular city has a two-prong effect: first, on the perception of crime in a community, and second on levels of fear based on that perception.

Minority group threat theory suggests that minorities are viewed as a threat to safety. Whites may view African Americans, Hispanics, and other racial minorities as causes of crime, which in turn increases their fear of victimization. There is, however, research to the contrary. Some scholars have found that "non-white men feel less safe than white men, possibly suggesting that because a disproportionately high number of minorities live in impoverished and segregated areas, their victimization is higher" (Jordan & Gabbidon, 2010, p.282). Neighborhoods suffering from social disorganization may produce citizens who are more fearful than those who live in neighborhoods with a

relatively low crime rate and a low minority population. Minority neighborhoods with high crime may have more fearful citizens because of constant victimization. By taking into account the perceptions of race and crime, we may gain a better understanding of the causes of fear.

Income and Fear of Crime

In terms of income, research conducted by Jeffery Will and John McGrath (1995) suggest that, “the poor (and near poor) are significantly more likely to show levels of neighborhood fear than those who are not poor” (p.166). One explanation could be the limited housing options available to those in financial distress. “Higher levels of fear among persons with lower incomes may be attributed to the neighborhood context under which they reside, especially if these areas are plagued by disorder and crime” (Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, Lucas, and Alarid, 2010, p.819). Minimal security, little lighting, and unfavorable residents are some of the concerns that may increase fear among those living in lower class neighborhoods. “For example, physical disorder (e.g., litter, graffiti and vandalism) and ‘suburban incivilities’ (e.g., presentation and upkeep of properties) can amplify feelings of insecurity and these negative visual cues can deter residents from engaging in physical activity” (Foster, Giles-Corti, and Knuiman, 2010, p.1156). This specific aspect should have nothing to do with race but rather the income level alone. Income places people within a certain range of living. Without the luxuries of security systems and safe housing options, low-income citizens are vulnerable to victimization. If citizens are aware of their higher risk of victimization, then they will essentially become more fearful. For example, a person who does not know, or care to know, the current crime situation in their neighborhood will most likely not take the time

to take precautions because they have little fear. However, a person who is very aware of the crime situation in their neighborhood may have a higher fear of crime and therefore may want to take more precautions, yet financial resources may not make this possible. Most disheartening is the fact these residents are often trapped within such a lifestyle. Most of these citizens are unable to choose better housing based on their low income. Furthermore, if they were to become the victims of crime they would lack the means to move away from that neighborhood, further increasing their fear of re-victimization.

Education and Fear of Crime

Education may also play a role in the fear of victimization. It's hypothesized in this study that people with some form of higher education may be less fearful of crime. Researchers suggest that, "it seems reasonable to assume that education, as an indicator of life style, affects the level of socializing or entertainment outside of the home" (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed, 1988, p.830). Level of education is related to income; those with a higher income have the ability to avoid certain situations or establishments if they choose to do so. They will often opt to avoid those neighborhoods or activities which would place them in danger. If they are avoiding such areas because they have the means to do so, then they may be less fearful of victimization. It is also possible that because of a person's higher education they are able to reasonably deduce the actual dangerousness of a situation. Though they may gain information about crime from the media or the experiences of others, they may refuse to accept it at face value, instead, relying on multiple sources to confirm their suspicions about victimization.

Those with higher levels of education generally have more of an income to utilize on protective measures, and they may fear crime less because they have taken those measures. “While surveys show that people purchase various devices, such as guns, extra locks, outside lighting, watch dogs, anti-burglary equipment and insurance, as well as learning self-defense, to protect themselves and their homes from crime, those who fear crime the most are not necessarily the most protective” (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed, 1988, p.828). It is possible that those who fear crime the most are unable to afford preventative tools, and therefore become fearful of their vulnerability. Therefore, lack of education and income may be predictors of increased fear of crime.

Preventative Measure and Lifestyle Choice

Urban areas with high crime are inhabited by citizens that are aware of the potential risks of crime and victimization. However, there are also citizens who are constantly fearful of victimization. Fear and awareness are distinguishable concepts. The former is an emotional response, while the latter is a logical attempt to avoid victimization (Jordan & Gabbidon, 2010). Fear of crime may cause a person to avoid certain activities and locations all together. They may also take preventative measures to an extreme, such as carrying a concealed weapon. Their perception of crime is heightened by media influences as well as social interaction with others. Their level of fear is somewhat unreasonably high. A person who is aware of potential risks is not a person consumed by fear, but conscious of placing themselves in less safe situations (Jordan & Gabbidon, 2010 p. 35). They do not live in fear but do take notice of the potential threats that certain situations have. For example, a citizen in fear would avoid the urban downtown nightlife all together while the person aware of potential risks would

still attend the downtown nightlife scene but take precautions such as parking in a well lit area, walking with a group of friends, and attend only those establishments where one can feel safe.

People differ in how they react to crime (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed, 1988).

Taking into account the various life style choices, levels of education, amount of income, age, gender, and amount of faith placed in the media of each person would be impossible. All of these various demographics coupled with our own personal perceptions, experiences, and interactions with others in social groups influence the way we perceive crime and how we will react to it.

Visual Perception of Neighborhoods

The visual perception of the neighborhood itself may also increase levels of fear. “Visual cues of disorder such as graffiti, public intoxication, garbage, and abandoned cars can signify to criminal offenders that residents are indifferent to what goes on in the neighborhood or lack the social cohesion needed to thwart these and more serious threats to the community such as violent crime” (Wilson and Kelling, 1982; Scarborough, et al. 2010, p. 821). If citizens feel that these cues indicate low levels of safety then they are more likely to become fearful. Even if the people that reside in those neighborhoods are well-intentioned, their perception of the neighborhood signals negativity.

Closeness of High Crime Neighborhoods and Fear of Crime

The proximity to a high crime neighborhood may also increase levels of fear. It may be possible that the closer one gets to the center of a dangerous neighborhood, the more fear these residents will have. Citizens are worried about the increase of crime as

their city broadens; they are concerned with an infiltration of criminal activity. These citizens may be apathetic with the high levels of crime that occur in other neighborhoods as long as it does not spread into their own territory. They may feel safe in their own neighborhood but as they begin to enter potentially dangerous neighborhoods, their fear begins to increase. There may be a “mistrust of others, anxiety, perceived risk, fear of strangers, or concern about deteriorating neighborhoods or declining national morality (Scarborough, et al. 2010, p.820).

For citizens living in a safe place, going to a neighborhood with a reputation for high crime may cause them some fear and even cause them to increase their preventative measures. They may not take preventative measures such as locking their car doors to make a quick trip into their local gas station but may do so in a neighborhood that they feel is unsafe. People will avoid going to these areas, which further enhances the negative reputation of the neighborhood. There are economic consequences for neighborhoods plagued by fear. Restaurants, theaters, and other establishments will have fewer patrons resulting in financial foreclosure. If we are to understand the implications that proximity of crime have on citizens, we may be able to encourage people to leave their fears at home, and the effect could prove beneficial for the economic vitality of the neighborhood.

Summary

The literature thus far has demonstrated that the following variables (gender, age, race, income, and education) are related to the fear of crime and perceptions of victimization. Other considerations associated with fear of crime would be the

preventative measures taken by citizens, perceptions of crime via news sources, visual appearance of the neighborhood in which citizens reside, and proximity to high crime neighborhoods. There are various reasons why people fear crime. Gender certainly plays a role in the fear of crime as research has repeatedly demonstrated that women are much more fearful of victimization. This can possibly be attributed to gender role assignments.

Age and fear of crime can be explained via lack of guardianship and potential physical weaknesses that the elderly may encounter if victimized. As the literature on victimization points out, senior citizens are the least likely to suffer violent victimization rather than those in their teens and twenties who are far more likely to be victimized because of lifestyle choices.

Race also influences fear. Some citizens feel that certain races are more likely to commit crime, which results in the fear of a minority group. The racial composition of a neighborhood may also cause citizens to associate criminality and victimization with that particular neighborhood. Race is not an indicator of criminality but the racialization of crime via the media and other sources may be one of the causes for such a phenomenon. Income of a particular person may enhance the fear of crime due to the choices available for personal safety and housing options. Those in poverty are not able to afford the luxuries of home security systems and are not able to choose from a housing market outside of their economic means. This leaves the person often choosing to live in a neighborhood that is affordable to them, but not necessarily safe from victimization. A lack of choices based on income may increase one's fear.

Another demographic that may influence fear of victimization is education. Those with a higher level of education may reasonably calculate their possible victimization which may reduce fear. Also, those with a higher level of education tend to take in more income which allows them to choose to live in safer neighborhoods and avoid areas with high crime. People take steps daily to avoid becoming the victim of crime. These preventative measures do not necessarily mean that they are fearful of crime. It may mean that they are aware of potential risks and therefore take precautions such as buying home security systems and avoiding “unsafe” neighborhoods.

Finally, the appearance of a neighborhood can influence a person’s fear. If the neighborhood is riddled with abandoned buildings and lack of security, then people are more likely to avoid those areas. Avoidance is one preventative measure that people take to escape the possibility of becoming a crime victim.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the possible relationships among the different factors that possibly influence one's fear of crime. Specifically this thesis focuses on the amount of media one exposes themselves to, past experiences with direct and indirect victimization, if an individual takes precautions to avoid becoming a victim, and if an individual feels safer in his/her own neighborhood compared to surrounding neighborhoods.

The demographic variables that could potentially influence fear of crime would be: age, income, race, education and sex. As previously discussed, the wide reaching influence of the media on many different audiences has the possibility to increase levels of fear among residents. It may increase fear of their neighborhood or fear of surrounding neighborhoods. Citizens with a higher level of education, and subsequently a higher income, may be less fearful of victimization for they have the means to avoid such neighborhoods. Those with a lower income may be more fearful of crime because they do not have the means to take preventative measures. They are also most likely to live in a development or a neighborhood that lacks proper security and may house people with criminal tendencies.

This chapter is a description of how the data were obtained as well as the design of the survey instrument, the sample, and the analytic plan. The following hypotheses

were crucial in determining how to create an instrument that would be most beneficial in gathering data for this project.

Hypotheses

There are four hypotheses tested to determine what if any factors influence one's fear of crime.

1. People feel safer within their own neighborhood than when they are adjacent to an unfamiliar neighborhood.
2. People who spend each day watching or reading more than one hour of the news will be more fearful of crime than people who don't read or watch as much news.
3. People who spend each day watching or reading more than one hour of the news are more likely to take precautions in their daily life to avoid becoming a crime victim than people who don't read or watch as much news.
4. People who have been the victim of a crime or know the victim of a crime are more aware of their risk of victimization than those who have not been the victim of a crime or do not know the victim of a crime.

Research Design

A survey was composed to query students about their fear of becoming a crime victim. The survey included demographic questions such as: age, gender, race, education, and income. Other questions asked how participants receive their source of news, how often they watch news programs/read news sources, and how news regarding crime affects their perception of their own possible victimization. The instrument also

included a set of questions asking participants about precautions they take to prevent victimization, how safe they feel in their own neighborhood compared to surrounding neighborhoods, and their direct and/or indirect experiences with victimization coupled with their level of awareness based on such experiences. The questions are set up to differentiate the perceived risk of crime from actual fear of crime.

The predictor variable in this case is the media and its influence on levels of fear. To that end, the survey inquired about where students receive the majority of their news and how much time they invested in their chosen news source. The survey also asked if students thought that news coverage increased their awareness of becoming a victim and if they took precautions in their life to avoid victimization. The instrument then asked if the participant had ever been the victim of a crime or personally known someone to be the victim of a crime.

Questions ten through fifteen were demographic; specifically, age, current major in college, gender, race/ethnicity, class rank, and household income. Lastly, students were asked to specify what crime was like in their neighborhood in comparison to surrounding neighborhoods. The final question called for a qualitative response, which gave respondents the opportunity to explain what causes them to fear crime the most. The statements received from this final question were recorded and the other questions from the instrument were coded for data entry in SPSS.

Sample

The unit of analysis for this study are students enrolled in four sections of Introduction to Criminal Justice courses at Youngstown State University (n=134). Class sizes ranged from twenty-one to sixty-four students. The sample was limited to the

students who were in class on the day that the instrument was administered and volunteered to take the anonymous survey.

Sampling Procedure

The four Introduction to Criminal Justice classes were chosen based upon sample convenience. Students were given an anonymous survey which was distributed by the professor or teaching assistant of that class. This was to give students the opportunity to feel no pressure by the researcher to complete the survey. After the instrument and purpose of the research was explained to the class and the informed consent had been understood by the participants, the researcher left the room. The instrument was comprised of seventeen questions with a range of possible responses and a qualitative question at the end. The surveys were then brought to the researcher in a sealed envelope to ensure anonymity. Once all surveys had been collected, they were numbered to maintain organization for future reference. The surveys had no names and there was no way to determine who had completed the survey or which class they had come from. The surveys were kept confidential and only the researcher had access to the data.

Summary

The methodology was designed to explore the relationship between (a) the closeness of an unfamiliar surrounding neighborhood and fear of crime, (b) the amount of time an individual watches or reads the news and fear of crime, (c) the amount of exposure to the news and if the individual takes precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization, and (d) if knowing a victim of a crime or being the victim of a crime would influence an individual to be more aware of potential victimization. The instrument was developed to address the hypotheses as well as gain a better understanding of the

demographics of those who fear crime and victimization. The following chapter will explain the results and the findings derived from the instrument.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Design

Questionnaires were distributed in four Introduction to Criminal Justice classes at a medium sized university in northeastern Ohio. There were 142 surveys total and 134 were validated (a 94% response rate). The instrument was coded and then entered via Excel. This information was then transferred over to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 15 for analysis.

Demographics

The youngest participant was seventeen years old and the oldest was sixty-two, with the average being nineteen. Females comprised 54.2% of the respondents and 45.8% were male (four respondents did not answer). The race/ethnicity of the students surveyed were 68.9% white, 20% African American, 5.3% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian, and 1.5% other. A few of the surveys included missing data regarding the questions about race/ethnicity or gender. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the sample for race/ethnicity, gender, household income, class rank, and college major.

Almost half of the students were criminal justice and nursing majors while the remaining students were from other majors. Introduction to Criminal Justice is an elective class for most majors therefore it is open to students from any field of study. However, many of the students in the class were criminal justice majors (23%) with the second largest major being nursing and EMT students, 17% of respondents surveyed. Following this group were students majoring in the sciences (6.7%), specifically majoring in biology or chemistry. The selection “other” was 48.1% of the remaining respondents. The

responses for “other” included undecided majors, Theatre, Art, History, Mathematics, English, Engineering, Business, Political Science, Fashion and Merchandising, Psychology, and Sociology.

The majority of students who participated in the study were college freshman (45.2%) followed by college sophomores (26.7%). College juniors and seniors were each 12.6% of the students. Only one graduate student (0.7%) participated in the study.

The economic status of participants was diverse. The students were asked to estimate to the best of their ability their total household income. Those respondents who stated their total household income was less than \$10,000 were 16.3% of those sampled; next were those who responded that their combined household income was between \$10,000-\$29,999 which was 11.1% of those sampled; those who stated their combined household income was \$30,000-\$49,999 were 16.3% of the sample; lastly, 17.8% reported an average annual income of \$50,000-\$69,999. Over 60% of students surveyed noted an annual family income of below \$70,000. Not surprisingly, for an economically deprived area, as the annual household income approached \$100,000, the percentages decreased. The following is a table for the demographics of the sample:

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics

Demographics (n=134)		Frequency	Percent
Gender			
	Females	71	52.6
	Males	60	44.4
Race/ Ethnicity			
	Caucasian	93	68.9
	African American	27	20.0
	Hispanic	7	5.2
	American Indian	0	0.0
	Asian	2	1.5
	Other	2	1.5
Major			
	Criminal Justice	31	23.0
	RN	23	17.0
	Science (bio/chem)	9	6.7
	Other	65	48.1
Rank			
	Freshman	61	45.2
	Sophomore	36	26.7
	Junior	17	12.6
	Senior	17	12.6
	Graduate Student	1	0.7
Income			
	Less than 10,000	22	16.3
	10,000-29,999	15	11.1
	30,000-49,999	22	16.3
	50,000-69,999	24	17.8
	70,000-99,999	19	14.1
	100,000-119,999	10	7.4
	120,000-149,999	7	5.2
	150,000 or more	1	0.7

Hypothesis #1

This research focuses on four hypotheses. The first hypothesis was, “People feel safer within their own neighborhood than when they are adjacent to a surrounding neighborhood.” This was analyzed by comparing the two Likert scale questions to determine the median level of fear. It was predicted that people would be less fearful in their own neighborhood and more fearful in surrounding neighborhoods they believe could be high crime areas. The rationale for this prediction was that people fear areas that are unfamiliar to them. As previously stated, this often comes from the perception of crime illuminated by the media.

TABLE 2: Hypothesis #1- Fear of Crime in Your Neighborhood v. Surrounding Neighborhood

Hypothesis # 1		
<i>Your Neighborhood, N=134</i>		<i>Surrounding Neighborhood, N=133</i>
Median = 4		Median = 4
1, Very Fearful = 1.5%		1, Very Fearful = 2.3%
2, Somewhat Fearful = 6.0%		2, Somewhat Fearful = 5.3%
3, Slightly Fearful = 18.7%		3, Slightly Fearful = 29.3%
4, Little Fear = 26.1%		4, Little Fear = 26.3%
5, No Fear = 47.8%		5, No Fear = 36.8%

Results for Hypothesis #1

Those who were considered to be “overall fearful” in their own neighborhood included those who were “very fearful” 1.5%, “somewhat fearful” 6%, and “slightly fearful”, 18.7% (responses of 1, 2, and 3). Possessing fear in their neighborhood represented 26.2% of respondents. Therefore, the findings suggest that 73.8% of

respondents are not fearful in their own neighborhood. The median was 4, which suggests that the majority of people have little fear concerning fear in their own neighborhood.

When it came to surrounding neighborhoods, those who were considered to be fearful were condensed from responses 1, 2, or 3, just as before. Those who indicated they were “not fearful” comprised responses 4 and 5 on the Likert scale. The sum then of those who were considered fearful of surrounding neighborhoods was 36.9%; the remaining 63.1% of responses were considered not fearful of surrounding neighborhoods.

Hypothesis one was not supported. People were not more fearful of surrounding neighborhoods than their own. Though people were slightly more fearful in a surrounding neighborhood, it was not a large difference. The feelings of safety were almost equal with 63.1% being not fearful in a surrounding neighborhood and 73.8% being not fearful in their own neighborhood.

Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis was, “People who are more exposed to the media will be more fearful of crime.” This was analyzed by using a cross-tabulation of the amount of time spent watching or reading the news and their fear of crime. It was predicted that those individuals who watched (or read) more than one hour of news coverage daily would have an increased fear of crime. The rationale for this hypothesis was that those individuals who spend more time watching or reading the news would be more aware of the crime problem, which in turn would increase their fear.

TABLE 3: Hypothesis #2- Daily News Consumption and Levels of Fear (n=134)

Hypothesis # 2		
<i>Level of Fear</i>	<i>News Consumption Per Day</i>	
	Low (less than 1 hour)	High (1 hour or more)
No to Low Fear	63%	64%
High Fear	37%	36%

Results for Hypothesis #2

News consumption was identified by asking respondents how much media they are exposed to on a daily basis. Those who were exposed to lower amounts of news had no to low levels of fear. Statistically, this was 62.8% of the sample. Those with high levels of fear and consumed less than one hour of news daily were 37.2% of the sample. Participants with no to low levels of fear in this category were 64.1% of the sample population while the remaining 35.9% reported having high levels of fear. Those who consumed high levels of news media daily were not significantly more fearful of victimization than those who consumed low levels of news. The influence of news media in this study were not as large as suggested in the original hypothesis.

Hypothesis #3

The third hypothesis was, “People who spend each day exposed to news media of more than one hour take precautions in their daily life to avoid becoming a victim of crime”. This was determined by comparing the responses to the question asking the amount of time one is exposed to the media, and if the person takes precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization. This was also investigated by using a cross-tabulation. It was predicted that those who spend more than one hour a day watching or reading about the news would take extra precautions in their daily life. The rationale for this prediction

was that individuals who spend more time watching the news or reading about the news would become fearful for their own safety and take precautionary measures to avoid victimization.

TABLE 4: Hypothesis #3- Daily News Consumption and Precautionary Action (n=134)

Hypothesis #3		
	No or Low News	An Hour or More News (High)
Take Precautions	75%	67%
Do Not Take Precautions	25%	33%

Results for Hypothesis #3

Of the participants who reported no to low levels of news consumption, 75% reported taking precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization. The remaining 25% of respondents with no to low levels of news consumption did not take precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization. Of the individuals who were classified as consuming high amounts of news daily, 67.5% reported taking precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization while the remaining 32.5% did not take precautions. The hypothesis was not supported. People who had higher daily news consumption did not take more precautions than those who had lower levels of news consumption. There was no statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis #4

The last hypothesis was, “People who have been the victim of a crime or know the victim of a crime are more aware of their risks of victimization.” This was determined by analyzing the responses to the question asking those who had been or had known

victims of crime if this increased their awareness about potential victimization. It was predicted that those respondents who had been the victim of a crime or had known the victim of a crime would be more aware of the risks of victimization. The justification for such a hypothesis was based on the notion previously discussed that those victimized or had known other victims would fear a second victimization and therefore be more aware of the risks of crime. These would also be the participants who take more precautions in their everyday life to avoid a second victimization.

TABLE 5: Hypothesis #4- Awareness and Direct/Indirect Victimization

Hypothesis # 4	
	Know a Victim or Have Been a Victim
No More Aware of Crime	21.10%
More Aware of Crime	65.40%
This does not apply to me	13.50%

Results for Hypothesis #4

The respondents who had reported being the victim of a crime and/or knowing the victim of a crime were asked if this has made them more aware of potential victimization. This hypothesis was supported, in that 65% of respondents stated they were more aware when they were victims or knew someone who was a victim. Of the sample, 21.1% of participants reported that being a victim and/or knowing a victim of crime did not make them more aware of crime and did not change their perception about crime. The data has showed that 65.4% of people in this survey who had been a victim or had known the victim of a crime were more aware of the possibility of crime and victimization. Of the sample, 13.5% of respondents did not know a crime victim or were not crime victims in

the past. It appears that the media had little to no influence on precautionary measures, while personally knowing a victim or being a victim mattered greatly. There seems to be a higher emotional response to fear of crime if it is on a personal level rather than stories heard through the media.

Summary

This chapter discussed the demographics of the sample as well as the results and findings for the hypotheses of this research. Hypothesis #1 was not shown to be statistically significant in this research; people felt just as safe in surrounding neighborhoods as they did in their own neighborhood. Hypothesis #2 was also not shown to be statistically significant in this research; people who consume high amounts of news daily were not more fearful of crime. Hypothesis #3 also lacked statistical significance; people who consume high amounts of news daily did not take extra precautions in their daily life to avoid victimization. However, hypothesis #4 was supported. Individuals who had known a victim of a crime or had been the victim of a crime were more aware of the risks of victimization and crime. The following chapter will present the discussion and conclusion from this research.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to determine if exposure to news media had an impact on fear regarding crime. Other factors taken into account were precautionary measures by individuals and awareness of those who had been victimized or had known a crime victim. Fear of victimization is perceived differently by each individual. Personal experiences influence the way we view the world around us. What one person perceives as a serious threat may only increase awareness of victimization in another.

Four hypotheses were tested in this thesis. The hypotheses were created specifically to focus on levels of fear in one's own neighborhood and unfamiliar surrounding neighborhoods, exposure to news media and increased levels of fear, and the link between fear and direct/indirect victimization. Only one of the four hypotheses was supported: individuals who have been victims or have known victims are more aware of crime than those who have not been victims or have not known victims. Media appeared to have little influence on the fear of victimization. Further, the qualitative responses to question #17 have shown that only six of the 134 respondents felt that the media was an influence on their fear of crime. The remainder of this chapter will discuss limitations to this research and recommendations for future research.

Contributions to the Literature

While not all hypotheses were supported, this endeavor helps researchers to build a better foundation for future research. Those who are fearful of victimization often live a compromised lifestyle. It is hoped that this research emphasized the need for citizens to

know the risks of potential victimization and not to rely on assumptions portrayed in the media.

Fear may come from a lack of knowledge and exaggerated tales within the media. Fear coupled with misinformation means we are not utilizing our capital effectively and efficiently. When we are not utilizing our resources effectively, we are essentially wasting what precious capital is available to the criminal justice system.

Hopefully this research will also influence law enforcement to communicate with their community about the real risks of crime, and how to avoid victimization instead of relying on the media's sensationalized cases. Enhancing our understanding about fear of victimization may contribute to previous methods of research such as focusing on the personal experiences of direct and indirect victimization as a major factor which influences the fear of crime. This research may encourage citizens to be more aware and protective instead of fearful. Ultimately, emotions that inhibit the daily life of citizens is important to examine.

Limitations to the Present Study

There are limitations to this study as with any research. The sample size was limited to college students in Introduction to Criminal Justice classes at a mid-sized university in northeast Ohio. While the sample size was acceptable for this project, these results cannot be generalized. The sample size was limited to students enrolled only in Introduction to Criminal Justice classes and to those students who were present and volunteered to complete the survey on the day it was distributed. The classes selected were a convenience sample: random sample may have reported different results.

A second limitation to the study is the demographic diversity of the participants. While the university in this study has both traditional and non-traditional students, diversity in age was much lower than expected (that is, there was not much variation in age). Some studies suggest that as one gets older, their level of fear regarding victimization increases (Toseland, 1982, p.203). However, there was only one subject who was identified as sixty-two. The majority of subjects fell within the ages of 18-22. The response of this one individual, though important, is not enough to generalize any connection to fear of crime and age. The majority of respondents in this study were young and more likely to be victimized due to lifestyle choices, rather than fear alone. Similarly, there is a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the sample. While the sample produced some variation, it would be beneficial if there were a more diverse student population. The overwhelming majority of students surveyed were Caucasian and African American. The level of other races and ethnicities were minimal. As stated in the literature review, the minority population (which could include Asians, Hispanics, and others) are much more likely to be victimized than whites. This may be a factor that increases levels of fear. Also in terms of demographics comes the issue of gender. Men may be less likely to answer about their true fearfulness of crime due to cultural expectations of masculinity.

Another limitation to this research was potential bias. First, the instrument used was a self-assessment. Due to this, some students may be bias in how they chose to respond to certain questions on the survey. Also, students sampled for this survey were enrolled in an introductory criminal justice course. Although some students enrolled in this course chose it as an elective, the majority of participants were Criminal Justice

majors. Those individuals interested in the field of criminal justice or those who have chosen it as their major may already be predisposed via personal experience and media outlets to the fear of crime. It may be possible that personal experiences have influenced their beliefs. It also may be possible that they learned more about crime and victimization from their Introduction to Criminal Justice class since the survey was administered at the end of the semester.

A final limitation may be accuracy. While some questions required the participants to make assumptions to the best of their ability, some students may have answered untruthfully. There is no way to truly know if all 134 responses were honest since it was an anonymous survey.

Recommendations for Future Study

The sample population for a future study should be more robust. Future studies would be more reliable the greater the number of respondents. One recommendation for future research would be to conduct a comparative analysis with a sample population more geographically diverse. This research had a sample population of students from a single university. While somewhat diverse, it would be interesting to conduct the same study at a university with demographics very different from the ones involved here. To survey an area with a more diverse minority population may yield different results when it comes to levels of fear.

Another recommendation is to include students of all majors. Criminal Justice students may be predisposed to direct and indirect experiences involving the criminal justice system. It would be interesting to see if students in other majors view crime

differently. Students involved in other majors may be less aware of the true risk of victimization and may have increased levels of fear. As stated previously, the Introduction to Criminal Justice students surveyed for this study were given the instrument in week fourteen of the semester (there are only fifteen weeks per semester). There is a possibility that even without much experience or education in criminal justice, these students may have a better understanding of the true risks of victimization. It may also be beneficial to survey the students on fear of crime at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end of a semester to see if perceptions of crime and victimization have changed substantially.

Next, we may yield different results if we were to separate the sources of news by type. For instance, allowing the participant to choose from local news and national news instead of condensing the two sources may further explain why participants are more emotionally responsive to one source of news over the other. Since hypothesis #4 was supported, future researchers may find that the impact of local news is more influential than the impact of national news. Another suggestion for future researchers is to allow the respondent to explain which precautions they take in terms of self protective measures. If those who have been victims or have known crime victims are more aware of the risks of victimization, then it may be beneficial to understand which precautions they take in order to avoid a second victimization.

Perhaps future research should go beyond surveying just college students. Distributing the survey to a wide array of individuals may yield different results about levels of fear and precautionary measures. College students lead a much different lifestyle than their older counterparts. Younger persons are much more likely to be the

victims of crime. College presents many scenarios where someone can be victimized. Parents and universities emphasize the dangers on and around campus. College students may therefore be more aware of potential threats. By increasing the amount of participants from various ages, geographical locations, and races/ethnicities with diverse majors, we may gain a better understanding of what causes different levels of fear regarding crime.

Conclusion

Three of the four hypotheses were not supported in this thesis. It was determined that people do not feel less safe in unfamiliar surrounding neighborhoods than in their own neighborhood. Though hypothesis one was not supported, it may be possible to find different results with a different and more diverse population. This research also found that those students who had higher exposure to news media were not more likely to be afraid of crime and did not increase precautionary measures in their daily life. Hypothesis four was supported; students who had been the victim of a crime or had known the victim of a crime were more aware of potential victimization.

It appears as though the media does not have a strong influence on increasing levels of fear among college students, yet being the victim of a crime or knowing the victim of a crime increases awareness of victimization. Personal experience is the greatest indicator of how we perceive the world. While the media is constantly present in our daily lives, it does not mean that it will change the impact of personal experiences. We are exposed to crime every time we turn on our television or when we open our internet browser. The mind-set that “it won’t happen to me” may be applicable to those

who have never been or never known the victim of a crime. However, for those that have been victimized, being fearless was lost the moment victimization hit home. Fear should not be something that consumes one's life. Awareness, not fear, should be the driving force in how people perceive crime. Awareness is being perceptive of your surrounding and taking normal precautions. It is the emotional, and sometimes irrational, response to a situation unfamiliar to us. While fear is a natural emotion and necessary for survival, it should not be binding. The cliché of, "be afraid... be very afraid" should not apply to the way one chooses to live life.

REFERENCES

- Chiricos, T., Padgett, K., & Gertz, M. (2000). Fear, TV news, and the reality of crime. *Criminology*, 38(3), 755-786.
- Crank, J.P., Giacomazzi, A., & Heck, C. (2003). Fear of crime in a nonurban setting. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31, 249-263.
- Eitle, D., & Taylor, J. (2008). Are Hispanics the new 'threat'? Minority group threat and fear of crime in Miami-Dade county. *Social Science Research*, 37, 1102-1115.
- Foster, S., Giles-Corti, B., & Knuiaman, M. (2010). Neighborhood design and fear of crime: a social-ecological examination of the correlates of residents' fear in new suburban housing developments. *Health & Place*, 16, 1156-1165.
- Howard, J. (1999). Fear of crime. *Society of Alberta, University of California*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Jordan, K.L., & Gabbidon, S.L. (2010). Race/ethnicity and perceptions of safety among a national sample of Americans. *Criminal Justice Review*, 35(3), 281-294.
- Liska, A.E., Sanchirico, A., & Reed, M.D. (1988). Fear of crime and constrained behavior specifying and estimating a reciprocal effects model. *Social Forces*, 66(3), 827-837.
- Mears, D.P., & Stewart, E.A. (2010). Interracial contact and fear of crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 34-41.
- Madriz, E. (1997). *Nothing bad happens to good girls*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Romer, D., Hall Jamieson, K., & Aday, S. (2003). Television news and the cultivation of fear of crime. *International Communication Association*, 88-104.
- Scarborough, B.K., Like-Haislip, T.Z., Novak, K.J., Lucas, W.L., & Alarid, L.F. (2010). Assessing the relationship between individual characteristics, neighborhood context, and fear of crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 819-826.
- Schafer, J.A., Huebner, B.M., & Bynum, T.S. (2006). Fear of crime and criminal victimization: gender-based contrasts. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 285-301.
- Toseland, R.W. (1982). Fear of crime: who is most vulnerable. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 10, 199-209.
- Will, J.A., & McGrath, J.H. (1995). Crime, neighborhood perceptions, and the underclass: the relationship between fear of crime and class position. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 23(2), 163-176.
- Wilson, J.Q., & Kelling, G.L. (1982, March). Broken windows. *The Atlantic*, p. 1-9.

Youngstown
STATE UNIVERSITY

One University Plaza, Youngstown, Ohio 44555
School of Graduate Studies and Research
330.941.3091
Fax 330.941.1580
graduateschool@cc.yzu.edu

April 4, 2011

Dr. Christopher Bellas, Principal Investigator
Ms. Callie Hartman, Co-investigator
Department of Criminal Justice
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 131-2011
Title: "Be Afraid. . . Be Very Afraid": Factors Influencing the Fear of Victimization


Dear Dr. Bellas and Ms. Hartman:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 2 exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,


Peter J. Kasvinsky
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research
Research Compliance Officer

PJK/cc

c: Atty. Patricia Wagner, Chair
Department of Criminal Justice

APPENDIX B- INSTRUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear student:

We are conducting a study to determine fear of crime in college students. In this study, you will be asked to give details about your perceptions of fear of crime. Your participation should take about five minutes.

There are no risks to you.

All information will be handled in a strictly **anonymous** manner, so that no one will be able to identify you when the results are recorded/reported.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Your professor will have no knowledge of your involvement or non-involvement. There is no pressure to participate. If you wish to withdraw at any time during the study, simply leave the survey blank when it is collected.

By completing and returning this survey, you are consenting to the information you provide to be used in our research project.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Christopher M. Bellas if you have any questions about the study. Or, for other questions, contact the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU.

Media and Crime Survey

1. Where do you receive most of your news about local, national, and/or international news?
(Choose only one--the source from where you receive most of your news.)

- a) I prefer not to watch programs on local, national, and/or international news.
- b) Television
- c) Newspaper
- d) Internet
- e) Friends/ family/ co-workers
- f) Other, please explain _____

2. How much time do you spend each day watching, listening to, or reading about the news?

- a) I do not spend any time watching/listening to/reading about the news.
- b) Less than one hour
- c) One to two hours
- d) Three to four hours
- e) Five hours or more

3. Select the statement which most applies to you:

- a) News coverage about crime highly increases my awareness of becoming a victim of crime.
- b) News coverage about crime slightly increases my awareness of becoming a victim of crime.
- c) News coverage about crime does not influence my awareness of becoming a victim of crime.

4. Select the statement which most applies to you:

- a) I take precautions in my daily life to avoid becoming the target of a crime.
- b) I do not take precautions in my daily life to avoid becoming the target of a crime.

(Precautions meaning you carry mace, you avoid unlit areas at night, you avoid unpopulated areas, you avoid “unsafe” neighborhoods, etc...)

5. On a scale of 1 being “very fearful” to 5 being “not fearful at all”, how fearful do you feel within a mile of your neighborhood? (Circle the appropriate number. Select only one.)

1 2 3 4 5

6. On a scale of 1 being “very fearful” to 5 being “not fearful at all”, how fearful do you feel in your surrounding neighborhoods? (Circle the appropriate number. Select only one.)

1 2 3 4 5

7. Have you ever been the victim of a crime?

- a) No, I have never been the victim of a crime that I am aware of.
- b) Yes, I have been the victim of a crime.
- c) I would prefer not to answer this question.

8. Has someone you personally know been the victim of a crime?

- a) No, I know no one who has been the victim of a crime.
- b) Yes, I have known people that have been the victim of a crime.
- c) I would prefer not to answer this question.

9. If you have answered YES to question #7 or #8, do you feel that you are more aware of the possibility of crime?

- a) No, it has not changed my perception of crime at all.
- b) Yes, I am more aware of the possibility of crime.
- c) This question does not apply to me.

10. What is your age? _____ years old

11. What is your gender? a) Female b) Male

12. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? (Choose only one.)

- a) Caucasian
- b) African American
- c) Hispanic
- d) American Indian
- e) Asian
- f) Other, please specify: _____

13. What is your current major in college? _____

14. What is your class rank?

- a) Freshman b) Sophomore c) Junior d) Senior f) Graduate student

15. What is your total household income? (Choose the category to the best of your knowledge.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Less than \$10,000 | e) \$70,000- \$99,999 |
| b) \$10,000- \$29,999 | f) \$100,000- \$119,999 |
| c) \$30,000- \$49,999 | g) \$120,000- \$149,999 |
| d) \$50,000- \$69,999 | h) \$150,000 or more |

16. What is crime like in your neighborhood?

- a) Crime in my neighborhood is lower than in my surrounding neighborhoods.
b) Crime is the same in my neighborhood as in my surrounding neighborhoods.
c) Crime is higher in my neighborhood than in my surrounding neighborhoods.
d) I don't know.

17. What causes you to fear crime the most? Please explain.

Thank you for your valuable time and responses.

APPENDIX C- VERBATIM RESPONSES TO INSTRUMENT QUESTION #17

Causes of Fear; Responses on Returned Surveys

1. Not knowing if someone will randomly choose me or anyone around me as a target.
2. The fact that anyone and everyone is capable of crime, and you cannot trust anyone.
3. If I hear about it in my town.
4. Blank.
5. I don't want to die no time soon.
6. Wouldn't want to get hurt.
7. Statistical reports in news or current reported news that happened in my city (Youngstown).
8. My neighbors.
9. None.
10. Blank.
11. Being murdered.
12. Ignorance, financial status.
13. Blank.
14. Crack heads.
15. Fear to lose things that I earned or worked for like money.
16. Stories- my parents are both Columbus police officers so I've heard a lot of bad things.
17. Blank.
18. Blank.
19. Blank.
20. Blank.
21. Blank.
22. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time.
23. Blank.
24. Blank.
25. When I see and hear about crime on the news locally and nationally.
26. Crack heads, burglaries.
27. Suspicious people: because you never know what they will do or what they are capable of doing.
28. The fear of being a victim again. I take all the precautions I can.
29. When it involves my family.
30. Blacks/YSU
31. Youngstown
32. All of the news coverage and how they only tell stories that involve crime.
33. Minorities in my neighborhood.
34. Blank.

35. The way we hear about it in the media.
36. All the media coverage and negative stories in the news about murders, rapes, etc. Also previous experience.
37. Blank.
38. Blank.
39. Blank.
40. My surrounding neighborhoods.
41. No fear. From the ghetto- I'm used to it.
42. People act before thinking about the consequences.
43. Blank.
44. N/A
45. N/A
46. All the talk about how bad Youngstown is. I have no problem in Salem at all!
47. Blank.
48. Dying; because I don't want to die early.
49. Crime rate in the neighborhood I am currently in.
50. Being the victim of a violent crime.
51. I don't.
52. I have no fears.
53. The street activity you see daily.
54. N/A
55. Rape.
56. Blank.
57. Being hurt.
58. Blank.
59. Blank.
60. Crime shows scare me.
61. Blank.
62. When I know something happened in a place that I am frequently at.
63. Nothing. I distance myself.
64. I fear things like assault in my home (not as much now since I moved). I fear attacks on a walk. I fear this because it's reality and the surrounding areas like Youngstown are amazingly dangerous.
65. You don't know what is going to happen.
66. The knowledge of it being everywhere.
67. Blank.
68. Blank.
69. The fact that it can happen to me and you don't even know it's happening.
70. Blank.
71. Blank.

72. Being in unknown areas.
73. Blank.
74. Recent activities on campus- shooting, robbery in the parking deck.
75. Nothing really because when crime happens so much around you, you'll eventually get used to it.
76. Being away from family.
77. I'm not really afraid of crime because I refuse to live my life in fear of other people.
78. Losing personal information.
79. Blank.
80. Knowing there is always someone watching for the opportunity.
81. When I am alone in public places.
82. Friends who were victims or news stories.
83. The fact that someone can be completely unpredictable in their actions.
84. When I am in an area that I am unfamiliar with and when I'm walking to my car during night.
85. Ignorance-people don't think about the things they do that bring harm to themselves and others.
86. Shootings.
87. If it happens to someone I know.
88. I don't really fear it because living in fear makes your life less full and fun.
89. Not fearful of it. Good luck to them if they try to commit a crime on me or to me- it won't happen.
90. Just the thought of losing my personal possessions and the ones I care about to be hurt or become victims.
91. Feeling like you are being followed and feel like someone might attack you.
92. Nothing makes me fear crime.
93. When it's happening to someone I know.
94. Blank.
95. Blank.
96. IDK- all!
97. Blank.
98. Blank.
99. Threat of dying.
100. Dying.
101. Loss of friend or family member.
102. Blank.
103. African Americans.
104. None.
105. Rape. My car being broken into.
106. Television stories about local crime.

107. Cops arresting people with drugs.
108. My neighborhood is bad and cops constantly circle the street across from me.
109. Robberies, rapes.
110. Weapons and the strength of the person committing the crime.
111. Blank.
112. Don't know.
113. I don't want to die yet.
114. Blank.
115. Blank.
116. Blank.
117. Blank.
118. Petty crime.
119. Blank.
120. Blank.
121. Blank.
122. Blank.
123. Blank.
124. Blank.
125. My uncle being killed in 2003. I wouldn't want to put my family through that again.
126. The violent crime in Youngstown.
127. That it can happen anywhere at any time. You never know when you or someone you know may be a victim of crime so it leaves you feeling uneasy about being a victim of crime.
128. Blank.
129. Blank.
130. Blank.
131. Blank.
132. The crime that I see or hear about.
133. Criminal incidents.
134. Burglary.