



Fear of victimization among college students in Bozeman, Montana
by Mara Lynne Mayer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science In
Applied Psychology
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The current study investigated factors which affect fear of crime and victimization. Among the factors examined were: media influence, previous victimization experience, gender, age, previous and current community, racial and ethnic background, social networks, and socioeconomic status. Data were collected by surveying 218 volunteer MSU-Bozeman students. Consistent with initial hypotheses, findings indicated that individuals who moved to the Bozeman area from a more rural community feared criminal victimization more than individuals from urban communities. Previous victimization experience was shown to significantly impact fear of crime. Additionally, participants who reported higher levels of perceived risk of victimization also reported engaging in protective behaviors. Finally, individuals who reported higher levels of fear of crime also reported that they believed police protection in the Bozeman area was inadequate and vice versa. Findings from this study suggest that fear of crime and victimization is complex and impacted by many factors. Furthermore, the characteristics of the community in which an individual lived also determined how he/she viewed crime and victimization.

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated factors which affect fear of crime and victimization. Among the factors examined were: media influence, previous victimization experience, gender, age, previous and current community, racial and ethnic background, social networks, and socioeconomic status. Data were collected by surveying 218 volunteer MSU-Bozeman students. Consistent with initial hypotheses, findings indicated that individuals who moved to the Bozeman area from a more rural community feared criminal victimization more than individuals from urban communities. Previous victimization experience was shown to significantly impact fear of crime. Additionally, participants who reported higher levels of perceived risk of victimization also reported engaging in protective behaviors. Finally, individuals who reported higher levels of fear of crime also reported that they believed police protection in the Bozeman area was inadequate and vice versa. Findings from this study suggest that fear of crime and victimization is complex and impacted by many factors. Furthermore, the characteristics of the community in which an individual lived also determined how he/she viewed crime and victimization.

INTRODUCTION

The current study examined how various factors influence an individual's fear of crime and victimization. Among the factors studied were: media influence, previous victimization experience (i.e., both personal and second hand knowledge), gender, age, community size (i.e., urban vs. rural), racial and ethnic background, social networks (i.e., family and friends), and socioeconomic status. Fear of criminal victimization was investigated with regards to both an individual's current community and campus influence.

Researchers have established certain criteria about how the preceding factors influence an individual's fear of criminal victimization. However, the findings upon which the criteria are based are mainly grounded in research focusing on individuals from extreme backgrounds (e.g., urban vs. rural, low socioeconomic status vs. upper-middle socioeconomic status, etc.). The current study aimed to determine if the previously established criteria could be applied to individuals living in a small to medium size community, individuals from a predominately middle class socioeconomic status, and individuals belonging to a primarily homogenous racial and ethnic background. In order to test specific hypotheses a survey was distributed to Montana State University-Bozeman (MSU) college students. This population was selected because of the unique social structure that exists in Bozeman, Montana. Characteristics of Bozeman will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections. Before discussing the related literature it is important for the reader to understand what is an individual's actual risk of becoming a victim of crime, what differences exist between crime in the United States and crime in Montana, some of the characteristics of crime victims, and the crime rates for college universities compared to crime rates for MSU.

An Individual's Objective Probability of Criminal Victimization

Using crime statistics, researchers are able to determine both the type of individual that is at risk of becoming a victim of crime and the subgroups of our population that should be fearful of victimization. Furthermore, crime statistics can influence an individual's fear of victimization as well as the behaviors he/she may engage in, in order to decrease his/her risk of victimization. Retailers use crime statistics to increase sales productivity for burglar alarms, weapons, automobile anti-theft mechanisms, insurance policies, etc. (Karmen, 1996).

In 1994, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) made public the yearly Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for 1993. The UCR released the following statistics as depicted by the current FBI crime clock: a murder occurs every 21 min, a rape every 5 min, a robbery every 48 s, an aggravated assault every 28 s, a burglary every 11 s, a larceny/theft every 4 s, and a motor vehicle theft every 20 s (Karmen, 1996). These statistics can be very frightening to the average person. Thus, it is apparent why retailers exploit current crime rates in order to increase the sale of items that are manufactured for the purpose of protecting individuals from criminal danger. However, no one tells the average person that these statistics are misleading. For instance, many of the attempts failed, some of the crimes were committed against businesses rather than individuals, and the wrong formula was used to determine an individual's risk of victimization (Karmen, 1996). The FBI's formula does not account for the population, only the number of crimes committed divided by the number of min/s in a year. When the population is taken into consideration an individual's chances of being victimized greatly diminishes from the reported rates.

Unlike the FBI, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) takes into account the population of the United States when determining crime and victim statistics. Instead of someone being robbed every 48 s, as reported by the FBI, the BJS concluded that 6 out of

every 1,000 individuals will be robbed during the year (Karmen, 1996). Statistics further suggest that if crime rates stay constant, "during their entire lifetimes, 700 out of every 1,000 persons now twelve years old probably will never be robbed" (Karmen, 1996, p. 51). These statistics are dramatically different than those reported by the FBI's crime clock and thus portray a much safer environment.

Despite the actual amount of criminal activity that takes place in our society, certain individuals do become victims of crime and as a result they suffer physical, emotional, and financial repercussions. Hence, it is important for society as a whole to understand which subgroups of our society are at risk for victimization. This knowledge will help determine an individual's fear of crime, the behaviors he/she engages in to protect him/herself from victimization, the methods law enforcement agencies implement for the purpose of keeping the public safe from danger, how researchers create models and theories to help explain an individual's fear of crime, etc. Researchers have been able to assess what types of individuals are at greater risk for being victimized by analyzing victim statistics with regards to specific crimes. The following information pertaining to both perpetrators and victims of crime will be broken down by several main categories of crime. In the upcoming sections all statistics were reported by BJS (1998) unless otherwise specified.

Violent Crime

Violent crimes represent a unique condition in American society. The victim/perpetrator relationship varies depending upon the type of crime committed. In 52% of the offenses, which did not result in death and where the victim/perpetrator relationship could be determined, victims did not know the individual who had victimized them. Most violent crimes are committed during the day. In fact, 54% of all violent crimes occur between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. However, some of the more

violent crimes like rape and sexual assault occur more frequently at night, between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The location in which the criminal act transpires is unique to violent crimes. A fourth of all the violent crimes that took place during 1995, occurred in the victim's residence or near his/her home. Statistics indicate that almost 50% of the violent crimes that occurred in 1995 took place within a mile of the victim's residence. Seventy-three percent of individuals reported that they were within five miles of their home when they were victimized. In contrast, only 4% of the victims reported being victimized more than 50 miles from home. Other common locations where victimization takes place is on road systems away from the victim's neighborhood, schools, and commercial establishments. In 23% of the cases, the victims were engaged in leisure activities outside of their residence and in 21% of all violent crimes the victim was at home. Another 21% reported being victimized at work or on the way home from work.

The use of weapons is characteristic of violent crime. Statistics indicate that in a fourth of all violent offenses the perpetrator was armed. For example, a weapon was used in the commission of 95% of all aggravated assaults, in more than 50% of all robberies, and in 5% of rapes and sexual assaults.

Another factor that is commonly found among violent crimes is alcohol. According to the BJS (1998) "about 3 million violent crimes occur each year in which victims perceive the offender to have been drinking at the time of the offense. Among those victims who provided information about the offender's use of alcohol, about 35% of the victimizations involved an offender who had been drinking." Furthermore, alcohol is a leading determinant of violence among individuals who know each other. Alcohol was the major contributor in two-thirds of the cases where the victim was victimized by an intimate (i.e., spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend). In situations of victimization by a spouse, 3 out of every 4 incidents involved alcohol. In 31% of the crimes in which a stranger was

the perpetrator, the offender was intoxicated. Drugs play an additional role in determining the onset of violence. In one of every five incidents of violence the victim perceived the offender as being under the influence of both drugs and alcohol.

Overall, with the exception of rape and sexual assault, males are victims of violent crime more than females. In 1996, statistics indicated that the following subgroups were at highest risk for becoming victims of violent crime: teenagers and young adults, African Americans, and males. Individuals between the ages of 12 and 15 years old have a 1 in 11 chance of becoming a victim of violent crime compared to 1 in 200 for individuals who are 65 years old or older. Teenagers, between the ages of 12 and 19, constitute a third of all individuals victimized by violent crime. In fact, half of all victims of violent crime are 25 years old or younger. This is compared to the 35.3% of the general population who are under 25 year of age (United States Census Bureau, 1998). There is a 1 in 19 chance for African Americans to become victims of violent offenses compared to a 1 in 25 chance for Caucasians. Males have a 1 in 20 chance of being victimized compared to females who have a 1 in 25 chance. Furthermore, individuals belonging to lower socioeconomic groups are at greater risk for becoming victims of violent crime than individuals who have higher incomes.

Murder. Murder, unlike most crimes, usually occurs when an individual acts upon immediate violent impulses which arise out of conflict (e.g., in an argument; Karmen, 1996). Therefore, in most murder cases the perpetrator did not premeditate the act. In fact, 45% of all murder victims were killed either by a relative or by an acquaintance. Of that 45%, 12 to 14% of the victims were killed by family members (Karmen, 1996). Only 15% of the victims were killed by a stranger and in 40% of the murder cases, the victim/perpetrator relationship was unknown. Furthermore, murder rates tend to fluctuate depending on the "geographic location, area of residence (i.e., urban or rural), gender, race, and age" (Karmen, 1996, p. 83). For example, individuals who live in the southern

regions of the United States are at greater risk for becoming victims of murder than individuals who live in the Northeast or Midwest.

In addition, researchers have discovered that individuals residing in urban communities are at much higher risk than individuals living in rural areas. This is due to the fact that urban communities are associated with a larger population density thus, creating crowding effects. Furthermore, both poverty rates and divorce rates are higher among individuals living in urban communities compared to rural residents. There are also more people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds in urban areas resulting in greater social inequality (Karmen, 1996). All of these factors combine together to create an environment that is conducive to increases in the level of violence.

Gender is another determinate for both the victim of murder and the perpetrator. Statistics indicate that 78% of all murder victims are male. In fact, males are four times more likely to become victims of murder than their female counterparts. The gender of the victim is also associated with the gender of the offender. In 88% of the cases in which a male was murdered, the perpetrator was also male. However, this is not the case for female victims. In 90% of the incidents which resulted in the death of a female, a male was the perpetrator.

Most victims of murder tend to be minorities. In 1993, statistics revealed that half of all murder victims for that year were African American (Karmen, 1996). In 1998, the UCR released the following statistics for murder victims: 48% were African Americans, 48% were Caucasian, and 3% were Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. Like gender, race not only determines who is a likely victim but also who is a likely perpetrator. Most murders are intraracial. Therefore, the race of the victim tends to be indicative of the race of the offender. In 84% of the murder cases in which a Caucasian was murdered the perpetrator was also Caucasian. For African Americans this percentage increases to 94% (Karmen, 1996).

An additional factor for determining who is at risk for becoming a victim of murder is age. The UCR for 1998, indicates that 64% of all murder victims tend to be younger than 35 years old and 12% are under the age of 18. However, teenagers between the ages of 15 and 24 years old tend to be at the greatest risk for becoming victims of murder than any other age group (Karmen, 1996). In fact, the risk for becoming a murder victim peaks at the age of 25.

Aggravated Assault. An individual's risk for becoming a victim of assault is high compared to other violent crimes. It seems logical that almost everyone will be victimized by some form of assault during their lifetime. In fact, statistical findings suggest that 3 out of every 4 individuals will be involved in a physical confrontation sometime during his/her life (Karmen, 1996).

Males and minorities tend to constitute the majority of victims of physical assault. Findings suggest that 82% of males are likely to be assaulted compared to 62% of females (Karmen, 1996). In addition, African Americans are at greater risk for being physically assaulted than any other race and ethnic group.

Rape and Sexual Assault. Sex crimes are unique compared to other violent and property crimes. The characteristics of a rape or sexual assault victim are very different than the individual who is murdered, physically assaulted, robbed, etc. Rapes and sexual assaults tend to produce more female victims than male victims (Karmen, 1996). In fact, sexually deviant crimes are the only violent crimes that target the female population more than males. Interestingly, unlike most crimes, the race and ethnicity of an individual does not significantly impact his/her risk of becoming a victim of rape or sexual assault. The key components for determining an individual's risk for becoming sexually assaulted is his/her age and physical prowess. Most women who become victims of rape are either teenagers or young adults in their early twenties (Karmen, 1996). Furthermore, the perpetrator must view his/her rape victim as weak and unable to protect him/herself.

There are two main categories of rape victims. Individuals can be raped either by a stranger or by someone they know (i.e., acquaintance rape or date rape). Statistical evidence suggests that most rapes are committed by an acquaintance or a relative. Only 3 out of every 10 rapes and sexual assaults are committed by a stranger. In fact, the BJS (1998) determined that only a little more than a third of all rapes and sexual assaults were perpetrated by individuals who were not related to the victim. Most rapes committed by a stranger occur in public settings (e.g., parks; Karmen, 1996). Stranger rapes tend to be more dangerous to the victim's health. Most incidents in which a stranger was the perpetrator, a weapon was used and the victim was more likely to be physically injured. In contrast, acquaintance rapes usually take place in the victim's home or near his/her home (Karmen, 1996). In many of these cases the assailant does not use a weapon during the commission of the crime. However, the perpetrator is usually under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Victims of acquaintance rape are less likely to report the offense than individuals who have been victimized by a stranger.

In general, even though rape and sexual assault crimes tend to target females, their actual risk of victimization is small (Karmen, 1996). During a lifetime the average female has an 8% chance of being sexually assaulted. This risk is only slightly higher among the African American population. The risk for African American females increases from 8% to 11%. Furthermore, 1 out of every 100 African American females who will be victimized during her life by either rape or sexual assault will suffer this violation twice (Karmen, 1996).

Property Crime

Robbery and Theft. Illegally possessing someone else's property by means of robbery, burglary, theft, etc. are among the most common forms of property crime. Individuals who are victimized by property crime tend to have similar attributes. In fact, minorities, individuals living in urban communities, and individuals who rent their home tend to

become victims of property crime more than any other subgroup in our society. Unlike murder and rape cases, the victim usually does not know the offender. In general, perpetrators victimize strangers because it is more difficult for the victim to identify his/her assailant (Karmen, 1996). This is probably why 7 out of every 10 robberies is committed by a stranger. Furthermore, perpetrators victimize individuals he/she believes are vulnerable and isolated from help. Perpetrators must also view their potential victim/s as possessing items of wealth and desire (Karmen, 1996).

Researchers have established several characteristics that are commonly shared among victims of property crime. Gender, racial and ethnic background, age, socioeconomic status, and life style all influence an individual's risk of victimization. Statistics indicate that males are victimized by robbery twice as often as females (Karmen, 1996). As observed with most crimes, members of minority groups are at greater risk for becoming victims of property crime than Caucasians. This is especially true for African Americans. Hence, African Americans are victimized by robbery at twice the rate of Caucasians. Furthermore, individuals between the ages of 12 and 24 are at greatest risk for victimization than any other age group (Karmen, 1996). Also, as an individual's income increases his/her risk for becoming a victim of robbery and/or other property crimes decreases. Statistics revealed that individuals who make a yearly income less than \$15,000 are more likely to be victimized by both violent crimes and robbery than individuals who make more than \$15,000 a year.

An individual's lifestyle further impacts his/her chance of becoming a victim of robbery. Individuals who live in urban communities are at greater risk for victimization than individuals who live in more rural areas (Karmen, 1996). Moreover, as an individual's level of education decreases, his/her risk for becoming a robbery victim increases. An individual's occupation also influences his/her likelihood of victimization. Individuals who hold jobs such as a taxi driver, newspaper delivery person, construction

worker, etc. tend to be victimized more than individuals who work as a bank teller, farmer, elementary school teacher, etc. (Karmen, 1996). Individuals who are single, separated, or divorced are also more likely to be robbed than individuals who are married.

Montana Characteristics and Statistics

Montana has several unique characteristics both in terms of geography and population. The geographical area for Montana is 147,138 square miles (Ponten, 1997 as cited in Population and Habitat Committee, 1998). In 1990, the total population was 799,065. It was estimated that by 1996, the population would have increased by 10%.

Economists and geographers at the University of Montana-Missoula conducted several polls and determined that 60% of individuals who move to Montana from out-of-state have relatives or additional ties to the state (Population and Habitat Committee, 1998). They also determined that most individuals are moving from California and Washington and tend to be between the ages of 45 and 65. An additional 40% of individuals, aged 18 to 34 years old, are simply moving from one region of Montana to another. Forty percent of the individuals moving to Montana from out-of-state and 16% of the individuals returning to Montana reported that they decided to move to Montana for the "quality of life". The following areas of Montana are experiencing the bulk of the population growth: the area between Helena and Butte, Flathead Valley, Gallatin County and Beartooth Area (Population and Habitat Committee, 1998). In fact, in the last six years the population for Western Montana has increased by 17%. Although Montana as a whole is growing, Eastern Montana is experiencing a decline in population. At present, death rates are exceeding birth rates and the median age of the population is over 45 years old.

Furthermore, Montana's population is quite homogenous. According to the United States Bureau of Census (1997) the population estimates for the following races are roughly: 91.5% Caucasians, .37% African Americans, 6.2% American Indians, Eskimos,

and Aleuts, .58% Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 1.7% Hispanics. Thus, Montana is mainly inhabited by Caucasians and American Indians.

Crime Rates

Crime rates for Montana are low compared to other states. This is especially true for violent crimes. In 1988, the total rate of violent crime was 123.6 per 100,000 population (Basic Statistics Montana, 1998). When violent crimes are broken down by type, the following crimes and incidents occurred at the rate per 100,000 people: murder at 2.6, sexual assault at 17, robbery at 23, and aggravated assault at 81. Property crime occurs at a much higher rate in Montana than violent crime. There were 4,144 incidents of property crime per 100,000 people in 1988 (Basic Statistics Montana, 1998). Burglary occurred at a rate of 704 incidents per 100,000 people and larceny and theft occurred at a rate of 3,224 incidents per 100,000 people. Furthermore, motor vehicle theft incidents occurred at a rate of 216 per 100,000 people.

Commonly Shared Characteristics of Victims

Stafford and Galle (1984 as cited in Moeller, 1989) determined that an individual's fear of crime is positively correlated with his/her previous victimization experiences. Furthermore, minorities, especially African Americans as a result of their statistical risk for victimization, females, and the elderly are more afraid of crime than any other subgroups of our society. Even though statistics suggest that females and the elderly tend to be victimized at lower rates than other subgroups, collectively these three groups of individuals are at greater risk for victimization when living in or visiting environments that are conducive to crime (Moeller, 1989). In fact, with the exception of rape and sexual assaults, the typical victim of crime is a male, minority, between the ages of 12 and 24, single or divorced, not highly educated, living in an urban community, and coming from the lower income earning portion of society (Karmen, 1996).

Thus, individuals must exhibit a variety of attributes in order for them to become victims of crime. There are three crucial factors in determining an individual's risk of victimization. They are: gender, racial and ethnic background, and age (Karmen, 1996). Additional influences are: economic status, occupation, marital status, area of residence, education, and physical prowess. All of these factors comprise an individual's lifestyle. Researchers have concluded that the key determinant of becoming a victim of crime is exposure (Karmen, 1996). For example, a married individual is less likely than a single person to engage in activities that may result in victimization. Limiting personal exposure to possible risks decreases an individual's likelihood of possible victimization. Furthermore, males are more likely to be outside engaging in recreational activities by themselves compared to females. This increases the males' risk of victimization.

Another determinant for risk of victimization is whether or not an individual engages in routine activities (Karmen, 1996). By maintaining a set schedule an individual allows a possible perpetrator to learn his/her habits, thus increasing his/her risk of victimization. Furthermore, certain crimes are more prevalent in certain seasons of the year than others. For example, household larcenies, unlawful entries, and rapes occur more in warmer months than cooler months (Karmen, 1996). This is due to the fact that most individuals change some of their behavioral patterns in warmer months. People tend to spend more time outdoors and away from their home. Individuals may also be more inclined to leave doors unlocked or windows open. Robberies and personal larcenies slightly increase in December (Karmen, 1996). This may be due to the holiday season and a perpetrator's need for gifts or money to buy gifts. Another example of time related crime is homicide. Homicide is referred to as a leisure activity (Goetting, 1988). Most homicides occur during recreational hours, especially on weekends. Of all homicides, 56.6% to 80% occur on weekends and peak on Saturdays. Furthermore, half of all homicides occur between 8:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. (Goetting, 1988).

Research Focusing on University Students

College campuses for a long time were viewed as sanctuaries from modern day problems and danger (Karmen, 1996). However, this is no longer the case. In 1990, Congress passed a Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act making it mandatory for universities which receive federal funding to make public annual crime reports. Campus residents are not only victimized by other students but also by outsiders (Karmen, 1996). The following are some of the crimes students must contend with: physical assault, rape, hate crimes, stolen bicycles, stereos, computers, etc. "According to statistics collected by the Department of Education, during 1991, 30 murders, almost 1,000 rapes, more than 1,800 robberies, 32,000 burglaries, and 9,000 car thefts took place on 2,400 of the nation's college and university campuses" (McLarin, 1994 as cited in Karmen, 1996, p. 45). Figures may not be representative of the true scope of campus crime and security problems. For example, many students never report offenses to either local or campus police, crimes which take place in the surrounding areas of campus are not taken into consideration, administrators may downplay incidents to keep student enrollment up, and cases involving date rape, assault, or threats with a weapon do not have to be reported if they are handled solely through the campus judicial system (Karmen, 1996).

Additional studies have found that between 1971 and 1980, there was an 89% increase in reported crime on college campuses (Lunden, 1983 as cited in Nasar & Jones, 1997). Between the years 1985 and 1990, Frost (1993 as cited in Nasar & Jones, 1997) determined that violent crime increased 13% among university populations. Towson State University Campus Violence Prevention Center conducted a survey in 1990, using 450 college campuses in which they tried to determine the amount of actual crime. They found that among these universities there were 18,000 incidents of crime, of which 4,000 were violent crimes (Nasar & Jones, 1997). Bowsell & Maloy (1990 as cited in Nasar &

Jones, 1997) found that when students were asked about prior campus victimization, 40% of a 10,000 person sample indicated that they had been victimized sometime during their college experience. Furthermore, a national poll reported that 40% of all United States college students worried about crime on campus or in immediate surroundings (Gallup Poll, 1989 as cited in Nasar & Jones, 1997). An earlier study conducted by Nasar, Fisher, and Grannis (1993 as cited in Nasar & Jones, 1997) found that 50% of all campus residents interviewed reported feeling unsafe and 73% avoided areas they viewed as unsafe at night. This is especially true among female college students. Grabmeier (1991 as cited in Nasar & Jones, 1997) conducted a study using 616 graduate and undergraduate students; findings suggest that crime and violence were major concerns for these students.

Not unlike most universities, MSU also has a problem with crime. Due to the fact that MSU is located in a more rural setting, the number of incidents is less than for universities located in more urban communities. According to security reports for October 1996, MSU experienced the following crime rates for 1995: there were 0 murders, 2 forcible sex offenses, 0 non-forcible sex offenses, 0 robberies, 2 aggravated assaults, 3 burglaries, and 6 motor vehicle thefts (Security Report, 1998). Furthermore, 6 arrests were made for liquor law violations and 1 drug abuse violation. It is important to keep in mind when examining these statistics that there exists a predisposition for underreporting.

After examining an individual's actual risk of victimization, the characteristics of a typical victim, and reported crime statistics, it is important to understand what fear of crime and victimization is and where it stems from. The subsequent sections will answer both of these questions by examining the nine factors which influence an individual's fear of crime.

Background Information Concerning Fear of Crime and Victimization

Fear is one of many powerful emotions that is experienced by every human being sometime during his/her life. The onset of fear often stems from the occurrence of a novel event or object (Warr, 1990). Even animals can be seen exhibiting neophobia, fear of novel environments, and object neophobia, the reluctance of an animal to go towards a new object even when it is located in familiar surroundings (Warr, 1990). Not unlike other animals, humans display various behaviors that reflect fear for a particular environment, object, or situation. Researchers have studied an individual's fears with the hopes of better understanding what factors must exist for a particular fear to occur. Among the types of fear an individual can express is fear of crime and victimization.

It seems logical that fear of criminal victimization would affect almost everyone in our society. Fear of crime can be thought of in four ways. The first three concepts explain fear from a cognitive perspective. The first concept of fear of crime is concern. Concern focuses on the individual's ability to assess the degree to which crime is a problem in the current community or in the society as a whole (Skogan, 1993). Concern refers to "a judgment about the frequency or seriousness of events and conditions in one's environment" (Skogan, 1993, p. 132). The second concept, risk, alludes to an individual's perceptions with regards to his/her likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. The third concept, threat, refers to the feelings an individual possesses about the nature of crime and if he/she will actually suffer harm as a result of criminal activity. The last way in which fear of crime can be conceptualized is behavior. Behavioral concepts try to estimate to what degree an individual fears crime by examining the actions he/she engages in to minimize risk of victimization (e.g., not walking at night; Skogan, 1993). It is reasonable to conclude that the degree of sensitivity to fear of crime and victimization varies among individuals. However, cumulative research has shown that fear of criminal victimization is not limited to one race, gender, or age group. It seems logical that almost

every human being in our society fears criminal victimization to some extent. One could speculate that individuals in our society have been socialized to fear crime and more importantly, have been taught to fear the possibility of becoming a victim of crime. For example, small children are taught to "never talk to strangers" and "don't take candy from a stranger".

The word victim dates back to ancient cultures. It was first used to personify and articulate the notion of sacrifice (Karmen, 1996). Today, the word victim refers to any individual who has suffered injury or loss. Victim is defined as "someone or something killed, destroyed, injured, or otherwise harmed by, or suffering from, some act, condition, or circumstance" (Guralnik, 1984, p. 1582).

Criminal victimization occurs when a conflict of interest emerges between two or more individuals. The relationship that evolves between these individuals is "asymmetrical, parasitical, abusive, destructive, and unfair" (Karmen, 1996, p. 2). Furthermore, the perpetrator must view the victim as "weak". Thus, not everyone is equally susceptible to victimization (Karmen, 1996). Such a theory of criminal victimization further supports the idea that crime is not random. This idea will be discussed in greater detail in upcoming sections.

Not only is crime not random but there exists two categories of victims when evaluating individuals who have suffered some type of victimization. The first type of victim is the direct victim. Direct victims are individuals who experience the criminal act firsthand (Karmen, 1996). The second type of victim is the indirect victim. These individuals suffer loss (e.g., emotional) but they do not experience the criminal act itself. Indirect victims tend to be family members or friends of the direct victim (Karmen, 1996). Another example of indirect victimization is an individual's fear of becoming a victim of crime. This is because fear can both impede behavior and affect an individual's emotional well-being. Researchers have reported that fear of crime results in

"psychological discomfort (McIntyre, 1967; Conklin, 1971; Brooks, 1981), reduced opportunities for free movement, recreation, and sociability (Conklin, 1971; Garofalo, 1979), and diminished faith in the stability of the social order (Brooks, 1981)" (Moeller, 1989, p. 208). Thus, it is important for researchers to determine what factors must be present in order for an individual to feel vulnerable to possible victimization.

The literature calls attention to several key factors that may further the development of an individual's fear of criminal victimization. Among these factors are: media influence (e.g., Bridges, Harnish, & Korber, 1987), previous victimization experience (i.e., both personal and second hand knowledge; e.g., Saltiel & Gilchrist, 1992), gender (e.g., Sacco & Glackman, 1987), age (e.g., Karmen, 1996), community size (i.e., urban verses rural; e.g., Saltiel & Gilchrist, 1992), racial and ethnic background (e.g., Karmen, 1996), social networks (i.e., family and friends; e.g., Pfeiffer, 1993), and socioeconomic status (e.g., Sacco & Glackman, 1987). The current study examined how these factors influence an individual's fear of crime and victimization in the context of both an individual's current community and campus influence. To better understand the impact of these factors on an individual's fear of crime and criminal victimization some of the more prominent factors will now be discussed in more detail.

Media Influence

Media plays a significant role in American society. Thus, many theories and findings related to media's impact on our behavior are contradictory. Not only does media act as entertainment but it also relays fictional and non-fictional information. Our society relies on news and newspapers to provide us with information about current events. It is through these media sources that society learns about government laws, crime policies, and criminal activity (Elias, 1993). Media acts as a canvas on which current crime wars and their success and failure rates are painted. Often times the media creates images that are not true to life. For example, when addressing the problem of crime and criminals,

the media tends to portray the image that all perpetrators are "bad" and all victims are "good" (Elias, 1993). This is not always the case. Many times the victim is also "bad" (e.g., the victim may have their own criminal record). This unrealistic portrait of events may be very misleading to the average viewer or reader. Thus, it is possible that an individual may feel that he/she is susceptible to becoming a victim of a particular crime, when in fact, his/her likelihood of becoming an actual victim may be minute.

Not only do Americans of all ages rely on the media for information but they also utilize television for the purpose of entertainment and/or as a baby-sitter for small children (Donner, 1990): Researchers have established that television possesses the capability to both influence and change an individual's behavior. Thus, changes in an individual's behavior can be both negative and/or positive. For this reason, subsequent findings will be discussed in terms of media's influence on perpetrators of crime as well as media's influence on the fears and behaviors of possible victims. One illustration of how media can impact an individual's behavior is the finding which suggests that altruism and prosocial behaviors can increase as a result of television viewing, especially with children (Pierce, 1984). This example is exemplary of the principles that underlie behaviorism's modeling theories. In fact, a study commissioned by ABC, found that 22 out of 100 juvenile offenders reported that their crimes implemented criminal techniques they had seen on television (Waters, 1977 as cited in Donner, 1990). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that some degree of observational learning is taking place. Pierce (1984) suggests that the amount of violent television watched by a 9 year old may be a good predictor for determining how much aggression that individual will assert by the age of 19. It is important to keep in mind that information received from the media is continually processed and cognitively interpreted (Gunter, 1988). People form judgments and comparisons concerning the programs they view and newspapers they read based upon their understanding of the world. Thus, it is easy to see why an individual's

behaviors and thoughts are modified to incorporate information collected from various media sources.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reported in 1982 that exposure to violence on television can promote aggressive behavior (Pierce, 1984). In the average home the television is on for more than 7 hr a day and the average child, between the ages of 2 and 11, watches television for more than 3.5 hr a day (Donner, 1990). This means that by the time a typical child graduates from high school he/she would have spent over 20,000 hr watching television (Donner, 1990). When you also consider that a typical child will watch at least 3,000 episodes of violent media per year, it appears that children are being exposed to a great deal of violence at a very early age (Pierce, 1984). This not only affects his/her fear of crime but also his/her level of aggression. As television becomes more graphic, society must ask itself what is the "true" impact? Does the media promote fear of criminal victimization? Does it desensitize today's youth about violence and death? Are there other unknown effects?

There are many schools of thought that address media's role in American culture. One of the more general models is the effects model of cultivation analysis (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gross & Morgan, 1985 as cited in Gunter, 1988). This model can be used to explain behavior resulting from both violent and non-violent media. The effects model states that television, utilizing fictional images of our society, distorts social reality and misleads viewers about the "true" nature of events that occur in our day-to-day lives (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gross & Morgan, 1985 as cited in Gunter, 1988). Even as early as the 1960's television aired programs that contained violence. A study inspecting violent media determined that in 1967 and 1968, 80% of televised programs contained violent content and in 60% of the programs the major characters were involved in violence (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979 as cited in Gunter, 1988). Furthermore, violent media depicted certain social groups (e.g., gender, age,

socioeconomic status, race, etc.) as being more susceptible to criminal victimization (Gerbner et al., 1979 as cited in Gunter, 1988). For example, researchers found that between 1967 and 1979, the media portrayed the image that there were more victims than perpetrators and that males were likely to engage in violence but females were at greater risk for victimization (Gerbner et al., 1979 as cited in Gunter, 1988). During this time, the media portrayed children, unmarried women, and elderly women as the types of individuals who were at greatest risk for victimization. Gunter (1988) called attention to the fact that by reinforcing sex-role stereotypes in the media there exists the possibility that viewers will incorporate these stereotypes into their own belief systems. From the previous example it may be possible to conclude that women are weak, simply because the media tends to portray women as victims of crime. This theory can be expanded to include additional stereotypes. For instance, media sources often portray minority groups as the major perpetrators of crime. Consequently, viewers may begin to associate individuals who are African American, Hispanic American, etc. with being the main perpetrators of crime in our society.

Not only did Gerbner et al. (1979 as cited in Gunter, 1988) conclude that violent media has an impact on a viewer's behaviors and perceptions of the "real" world but that media actually influences fear of criminal victimization. They conducted a study which examined an individual's fear of walking at night in his/her neighborhood. The participants included New Jersey school children and individuals who had participated in one of two national surveys. Gerbner et al. (1979 as cited in Gunter, 1988) discovered that the more hours of television an individual watched, the more afraid of crime he/she was. In an earlier study, Gerbner (1973 as cited in Donner, 1990) determined that heavy viewers of television (i.e., watching television for more than 4 hr a day) tend to overestimate their likelihood of becoming a victim of an assault. In general, both heavy and light viewers of television estimate their risk of criminal victimization as greater than

actual crime reports indicate. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980 as cited in Bridges et al., 1987) concluded that as television viewing increased, viewers displayed an exaggerated sense of vulnerability. At the same time, individuals reported feeling at greater risk for victimization as well as exhibiting more generalized fear.

Another study which is illustrative of the impact media has on our perceptions of society was conducted by Gunter and Wober (1983 as cited in Gunter, 1988). They established that media which depicts crime not only teaches individuals about social dangers but it also relays messages about social justice. Elliott and Slater (1980 as cited in Gunter, 1988) concluded that generally, individuals who watched greater amounts of television related to law enforcement had higher levels of perceived personal safety. However, if the individual viewed the program as very realistic, then he/she exhibited a higher level of perceived personal danger. In addition to these findings, Elliott and Slater (1980 as cited in Gunter, 1988) determined that if an individual had experienced negative interactions with police he/she tended to view law enforcement programs as more realistic than individuals who had not had negative interactions with the police.

The next four models address media's role in society with regards to violence and aggression. The catharsis model suggests that aggression will decrease among individuals who view violent media (Feshback & Singer, 1971 as cited in Suppasarn & Adams, 1984). It is thought that by watching violent programs the individual no longer needs to express his/her own violent behavior. The second model of aggressive cues asserts that aggressive cues are relayed to the public through media sources. This model implies that media, especially violent media, acts as a stimulus and therefore, predicts that there will be an increase in aggressive behavior among viewers (Berkowitz, 1962, as cited in Suppasarn & Adams, 1984). The third model is observational learning. Researchers of this position claim that violent media not only stimulates the viewer but that it teaches the viewer how to act out aggressively (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961 as cited in

Suppasarn & Adams, 1984). The reinforcement model states that media is one of many social influences that combine together to foster aggressive behavior among viewers (Klapper, 1960 as cited in Suppasarn & Adams, 1984). Regardless of the model used to explain media's influence on American society, it is evident that media has an impact on our society and culture.

Previous Victimization Experience

Previous victimization experience appears to have the largest impact on an individual's fear of crime and criminal victimization. Individuals can experience crime and violence in one of two ways. First, the individual can be personally victimized (i.e., a direct victim; Karmen, 1996). The second method in which an individual can gain knowledge about criminal victimization is through indirect experiences. Usually the individual knows someone who has been victimized by crime. Both types of experiences can influence an individual's fear of criminal victimization. However, research has suggested that personal victimization has the strongest influence on an individual's fear. Tyler (1980; Tyler & Cook, 1984 as cited in Gunter, 1988) concluded that an individual's beliefs about his/her risk for becoming a possible victim of crime stemmed mainly from direct personal experiences rather than media influence. Interestingly, Weaver and Wakshlag (1986 as cited in Gunter, 1988) discovered that among individuals who had been direct victims of crime there existed a positive relationship between concern for safety and the quantity of crime oriented television viewed.

It is thought that the reason why previous victimization experience has such a large influence on fear of victimization is because it infringes upon several basic human ideologies. Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983 as cited in Biernat & Herkov, 1994) proposed that when direct victimization occurs three commonly shared concepts are destroyed. Most individuals believe that they are invulnerable to endangerment. However, after an individual suffers direct harm he/she may begin to realize that he/she is

mortal and vulnerable to danger. Many times individuals will also lose self-confidence as a result of direct victimization. Individuals may feel vulnerable, weak, even guilty as a result. Last, individuals who have suffered direct victimization tend to no longer view the world as a place of organized structure and interactions (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983 as cited in Biernat & Herkov, 1994). Criminal victimization is detrimental to an individual's perceptions about society and his/her place in it. Thus, direct victimization has the greatest impact on an individual's fear of crime and victimization.

Gender

When investigating the topic of fear of criminal victimization it is important to take into consideration an individual's gender. People tend to assume that if an individual expresses fear of crime then that individual must be highly susceptible to victimization. This is often not the case. In actuality, research and crime statistics have shown that males are at greater risk for becoming victims of crime than their female counterparts even though females tend to be more fearful of victimization (e.g., Sacco & Glackman, 1987). In general, females are among the least likely social groups to become victims of crime (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978 as cited in Sacco & Glackman, 1987). However, when females live in high risk environments that are conducive to crime, they are more susceptible to victimization than males (Stafford & Galle, 1984 as cited in Moeller, 1989). It has also been suggested that both the physical and psychological traumas incurred during victimization are much greater for female victims.

Consequently, researchers examining fear of criminal victimization must consider the individual's background, his/her personal characteristics, and his/her social circumstances rather than focusing solely on the actual risk of victimization (Sacco & Glackman, 1987).

In order for someone to be fearful of crime he/she must feel vulnerable or at risk for becoming a victim of crime. Researchers have used the concept of vulnerability to explain why some social groups (e.g., women, elderly, etc.) fear criminal victimization

more than other social groups and more than crime reports suggest is realistic (Sacco & Glackman, 1987). Vulnerability can be defined as the belief that an individual has concerning his/her personal susceptibility to future misfortunes (Perloff, 1983 as cited in Sacco & Glackman, 1987). Many times members of these social groups feel that they possess physical, social, and economic characteristics that increase their likelihood of victimization (Sacco & Glackman, 1987). If an individual believes that he/she controls his/her own destiny then he/she tends to feel less susceptible to criminal victimization and vice versa. For example, Cohn, Kidder, and Harvey (1978 as cited in Sacco & Glackman, 1987) conducted a study which proposed that women who take self-defense classes build their self-esteem with respect to their physical prowess, thus reducing their fear of criminal victimization. Risk pertains to how individuals view themselves in their current environment and how they feel about their likelihood of becoming a victim of crime in that given location (Block & Long, 1973 as cited in Sacco & Glackman, 1987). Research suggests that females tend to overestimate their level of risk for victimization compared to males. Therefore, researchers must take into consideration an individual's gender when exploring topics that are closely related to fear of victimization. Gender differences represent an apparent factor in an individual's determination of whether or not he/she is vulnerable or at risk for criminal victimization.

Age

Age is another factor that must be taken into consideration when studying fear of victimization. When examined in the context of fear of crime, age is very similar to gender. Once again there exists a paradox. The elderly are among one of the least likely social groups to become victims of crime, yet they have one of the highest levels of fear for possible victimization. Similar to women, the elderly tend to feel they possess various physical, social, and economic characteristics that may increase their likelihood of victimization (Sacco & Glackman, 1987). Many of the elderly lack the level of mobility

and adequate social networks necessary for them to make accurate judgments about their current surroundings. Pfeiffer (1993) found that when compared to other age groups, the elderly held perceptions about violent crime trends that were extremely unrealistic. In fact, he determined that as age increases, perceptions concerning crime continually become less realistic. Pfeiffer (1993) also concluded that individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 tend to possess views concerning crime in their current communities that are more realistic and accurate than any other age group. Why does fear of criminal victimization increase with age and why is fear of victimization among the elderly so unrealistic when compared to actual crime statistics?

As humans age they lose some of their physical agility. Thus, the elderly population tends to be less physically mobile than other age groups. In addition, growing older entails major changes and losses for the elderly. Becoming older means that individuals face the possibility of losing their spouse, relatives, friends, job, income, etc. (Pfeiffer, 1978 as cited in Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983). All of these dramatic changes can lead to detachment from society, depression, and more problematic, the loss of a social network (i.e., family and friends). Some of the elderly are forced to rely on limited information to make judgments concerning the world around them, including judgments about criminal activity. To a large extent, the less mobile an elderly person is the more he/she has to rely on the media to gather information about the social reality in which he/she lives (Pfeiffer, 1993). If the media falsifies or sensationalizes a story about crime, the elderly individual reading the newspaper or watching the television can be severely misled. The following is one representation of falsified and sensationalized media taken from an actual newspaper: "... A burglar rang at Paul (88) and Elisabeth L's (96) home. When these old people opened the door they were immediately stabbed with a kitchen knife... The criminal's inhibitions are falling... Be careful when the doorbell rings - it could be your murderer!" (Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 5). It seems logical that an elderly person who has minimal

social interactions with his/her community and has a small social network may become extremely fearful of becoming the burglar's next victim.

Social networks play an important role in determining to what degree an individual fears crime and victimization. As implied earlier, social networks provide information about our society and current events that take place around us. Without adequate social networks an individual is forced to make judgments about society based upon limited, and often times biased, information.

Crimes Against the Elderly. The elderly are mainly victimized by the following types of crime: personal crimes of violence (e.g., assault), personal crimes of theft (e.g., wallet or purse stolen), and household crimes (e.g., burglary; Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983). Although property crimes against the elderly are more prominent than other types of crime their rates for property victimization are much lower than those for individuals who are under 65 years of age. For example, statistics indicate that the most common crime against individuals who are under 65 years old is household larceny. Rates for household larceny among this age group is 140 incidents per 1,000 individuals (Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983). The rate of household larceny for the elderly is a third of that. Furthermore, violent crimes occur at a 5 to 1 ratio when comparing young adults to the elderly. Despite the statistics, the elderly population is among the various social groups who fear crime the most.

The typical elderly victim is a minority male. Statistics indicate that elderly males are victimized at twice the rate of their female counterparts (Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983). Furthermore, elderly African Americans are victimized more than Caucasians and other racial minority groups.

Perpetrators who target the elderly population tend to be strangers (Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983). This makes it more difficult for the victim when identifying his/her assailant. Furthermore, statistics suggest that if the victim is Caucasian then the

perpetrator tends to be a young, African American male. Most victimizations occur within the elderly adult's home. This further increases fear among the elderly, promotes feelings of being unsafe, and the notion that they are not protected in their own homes. Research has indicated that even elderly individuals who are at lower risk for becoming victims of crime are afraid of victimization and thus, have modified their behaviors in order to decrease their risk of possible victimization (Clark, Adler, & Adler, 1983).

Community Size

The size of the community in which an individual lives further affects his/her perceptions and fears concerning crime. Humans form judgments about society based mainly upon their previous experiences and knowledge of their current surroundings. Individuals also incorporate additional information about other communities to make inferences about our society as a whole. As the size of the community varies so does criminal activity, some social norms and laws, demographics of the population, etc. It is the differences that exist between many of the communities that allow individuals to make judgments and assertions concerning different cities in the United States. For example, if someone grew up in a town that had a population of 100 people and had little crime he/she may view a place like New York City as dangerous and violent. This also holds true for individuals who grew up in metropolitan areas and moved to small towns that have little crime. This individual may believe that he/she is virtually safe from crime and violence in his/her new community. This belief is due to the commonly held assumption that crime is an urban phenomenon (Lab & Stanich, 1993). It has been argued that even when crime does occur in more rural settings the criminal act tends to be minor (e.g., disturbing the peace, DUI, etc.; Dinitz, 1973 as cited in Lab & Stanich, 1993). Even though these observations are important and may have some validity, fear of criminal victimization is not limited to individuals residing in urban communities. Carter (1982 as cited in Lab & Stanich, 1993) used data collected for the UCR to show that

between the years 1959 and 1979, rural crime rates increased 450%. This increase was found to be larger than the increase in crime rates among urban communities.

Furthermore, Donnermeyer (1982 as cited in Lab & Stanich, 1993) discovered that rural victimization statistics are similar to those found for the national average in terms of per capita and violent crime. In fact, Gibbs (1979 as cited in Lab & Stanich, 1993) determined that males living in rural communities are more likely to be victimized than either rural females or rural elderly. In fact, the rural victim tends to share similar characteristics with the urban victim.

Belyea and Zingraff (1988 as cited in Saltiel & Gilchrist, 1992) reported that fear of crime was greater among individuals who lived in farming communities than individuals who lived in small towns. Bankston, Jenkins, Thayer-Doyle, and Thompson (1987 as cited in Saltiel & Gilchrist, 1992) concluded that individuals who lived in rural communities tended to be less fearful of crime than individuals who lived in more populated communities. They also reported that individuals who lived in rural areas were more perceptive about their actual risk of victimization than individuals who lived in more urban communities. It was thought that an individual's sensitivity to the risk of victimization may be due to the fact that farming populations are more isolated than other communities and therefore, are further away from help.

Research indicates that there are three major factors that directly impact an individual's fear of crime. They are: "previous victimization, distance from law enforcement offices, and the extent to which police are viewed as patrolling sufficiently" (Saltiel & Gilchrist, 1992, p. 541). It has been determined that previous criminal victimization impacts an individual's fear of crime more so than any other factor. However, the other two factors aid in explaining why individuals living in rural communities are more sensitive to the risk of possible victimization. Saltiel and Gilchrist (1992) concluded that the distance between the law enforcement agency and the

individual's home greatly influences the individual's fear of crime. If an individual lives near a law enforcement agency he/she is more likely to fear possible criminal victimization. However, if an individual lives further away from the law enforcement agency he/she tends to be more concerned with the police's ability to provide adequate patrols and supervision rather than possible victimization. It appears that the immediate presence or lack of presence of people is determinant of whether the individual is fearful of criminal victimization or if he/she is more concerned with the police's ability to protect him/her effectively.

It has been suggested that the number of people living in a particular community may be indicative of the way an individual perceives criminal activity and police protection. Kennedy and Silverman (1985 as cited in Krannich, Berry, & Greider, 1989) found evidence to support the hypothesis that fear of crime is grounded in an individual's uncertainty of his/her environment and his/her perceived risk for victimization. Their findings coincide with the notion that not only animals, but also humans, fear novel environments and situations. Fear of unfamiliar social environments can also be considered. If an individual resides in a highly populated region of the country, he/she will know fewer people. Krannich et al. (1989) suggests that as the number of acquaintances decrease and the number of strangers increase, the more fearful an individual will become of criminal victimization. Furthermore, they determined that the more an individual is integrated into his/her social surroundings, the less afraid he/she will be of crime and victimization. This illustrates the importance of a strong social network in order to help provide individuals with more realistic information about the community in which they live.

Even when individuals are familiar with their surroundings and people in their immediate environments, events can take place which disrupt social order. When social order is disrupted it produces a climate that is conducive to anxiety, stress, fear,

uncertainty, etc. The disorder model helps explain why an individual's feelings with respect to fear of crime can change as a result of changes in the environment. The disorder model is a contextual model which implies that fear of criminal victimization is derived from the uncivilized actions that take place in neighborhoods (Covington & Taylor, 1991; Ferraro, 1995; Greenberg, Rohe, & Williams, 1985; LaGrange, Ferraro, & Supancic, 1992; Lewis & Salem, 1986; Skogan, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Taylor & Hale, 1986 as cited in St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). It has been suggested that deviant behavior may be a result of the large number of diverse individuals living in one neighborhood or closely together (Lab & Stanich, 1993). As neighborhoods lose social control, communities fail to assimilate new members. Thus, individuals residing in such neighborhoods lose their faith in social order and safety making them feel like they are more vulnerable to victimization.

One thing is certain, fear of crime is positively correlated with actual crime rates (Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967 as cited in Moeller, 1989). As the size of the community and the population increases so does the crime rate. It seems logical then that individuals who live in larger communities should report higher levels of fear for crime and victimization. Moeller (1989) examined which factors strongly correlate with increased levels of fear for safety at night in an individual's neighborhood. He found that gender, racial composition, and community size were the best predictors for estimating an individual's fear for personal safety. Moeller (1989) conducted phone interviews with 764 Illinois residents. He discovered that women, African Americans, and individuals who lived in more urban areas of Illinois reported higher levels of fear for personal safety. Furthermore, as education and income increased, fear decreased. It appears that despite the numerous opposing theories concerning community size and its impact on fear of crime and victimization, many factors must exist for an individual to be fearful of victimization.

Race and Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of an individual represents a unique obstacle in our society, particularly when one explores fear of crime and victimization in terms of minority influence. Not only does the race and ethnicity of an individual influence his/her perceptions about possible victimization but the race and ethnicity of individuals living near him/her may affect his/her beliefs and fears concerning victimization.

The racial and ethnic background of an individual can determine both fear of crime and potential risk for victimization. Some minority groups have a higher predisposition for becoming victims of crime than other social groups. It is important to maintain a clear distinction between statistical risk and perceptual risk. Although some minorities are at greater statistical risk for victimization they maintain lower levels of fear. In addition, both the gender and the race of an individual needs to be taken into consideration when investigating which social groups are at higher risk for victimization and what type of individual fears crime.

The racial composition of a neighborhood can impact the degree to which fear of crime and victimization is felt by individuals living in or near the neighborhood. The heterogeneity model suggests that the mere presence of racial and ethnic minorities in a neighborhood is positively associated with fear of crime and victimization among Caucasians (Covington & Taylor, 1991; Lizzotte & Bordua, 1980; Liska, Lawrence, & Sanchirico, 1982; Merry, 1981; Moeller, 1989 as cited in St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). Moreover, this holds true when crime rates and other variables that may influence fear of crime have been controlled. This finding supports the assumption that minorities are more inclined to commit crimes than other social groups (Burisk & Grasmick, 1993 as cited in St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). Thus, the mere presence of minorities in any given neighborhood can potentially change the resident's perceptions concerning crime

and victimization. Thus, individuals tend to believe that they are more susceptible to victimization as a result of increases in racial and ethnic diversity in their communities.

St. John and Heald-Moore (1995 as cited in St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996) conducted a study to determine the effects of race on an individual's fear of victimization with regards to public encounters. Using vignettes, the researchers varied the race of the individual that was encountered. They determined that African Americans, more than any other social group, aroused the greatest amount of fear among Caucasians. Furthermore, young African American males induced the most fear among Caucasians when encountered in social settings (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1995 as cited in St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). This study and the theory of heterogeneity are characteristic of how fear of crime and victimization escalates as a result of the commonly held assumption which implies that the majority of African Americans engage in criminal behavior (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). This idea is deep-seated in social psychology theories that deal with prejudice and stereotyping. As members of society begin to incorporate inaccurate beliefs about various minority groups into their knowledge of the "real" world there exists the potential for that individual to express negative emotions and thoughts towards members of minority groups. People's prejudicial ideas and stereotypes about particular social groups may increase their fear of crime and victimization.

Hypotheses

It was necessary in the current study to take into consideration that Montana's population is rather homogenous compared to other states and that the factors which constitute an individual's fear of crime and victimization are interdependent. Therefore, the primary hypotheses for this study focused on the following topics with regards to fear of victimization: area of prior residence (i.e., urban verses rural), gender, media

influences, socioeconomic status, social networks (i.e., friends and family), previous victimization experiences (i.e., direct and indirect), risk-taking behavior with regards to personal safety, and risk-taking behavior in terms of recreational activities. The current study also examined the effects of previous community size on an individual's perceptions concerning the police's ability to provide adequate protection. The following are specific topics related to this study.

Previous Community Size

As discussed earlier, the size of the community in which an individual resides greatly impacts his/her fear of crime and victimization. Previous research suggests that if an individual lives in a more urban community his/her likelihood of victimization increases (Karmen, 1996). Thus it seems logical that if an individual resides in a more rural community his/her fear of victimization may be less. Based on this knowledge two hypotheses were possible. First, if an individual moved to Bozeman from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would be heightened. Second, if an individual moved to Bozeman from an urban community he/she would express less fear of possible victimization. In order to test these hypothesis the following dependent variable (DV) was measured: fear of crime in current community. The independent variables (IV) were: the size of community an individual was raised in and previous community size (i.e., the size of the community an individual lived in prior to moving to the Bozeman area).

Gender

This study examined the effects of gender with regards to an individual's fear of crime and victimization. Statistical findings and prior literature suggest that males are at

greater risk for victimization than females; however, females are more fearful of criminal victimization (e.g., Karmen, 1996). Therefore, it was hypothesized that females would be more fearful of victimization than males. The DV used to test the hypothesis was fear of crime in current community. The IV was gender.

Media Influence

Researchers have disagreed about the effects of media on an individual's fear of crime and victimization. Elias (1993) concluded that media does influence how an individual views both criminals and victims. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that media aids in the determination of both the amount of crime that occurs in our society and how an individual perceives him/herself as a likely target of criminal victimization. In contrast, Tyler (1980 as cited in Gunter, 1988) found that media has no effect on an individual's judgments concerning personal safety. Thus, many different hypotheses were formed to take into account both the contradictory findings that exist in prior literature and Bozeman's unique characteristics. First, it was hypothesized that high exposure to violent media would increase an individual's fear of possible victimization. Second, high exposure to violent media does not influence an individual's fear of victimization but instead, it desensitizes the individual. Third, it was hypothesized that by watching a great deal of news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper, an individual's fear of victimization increases. Finally, due to Bozeman's unique characteristics, watching news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper would lead an individual to feel safe from possible criminal victimization. The DVs used to test the hypotheses were: fear of crime in current community and personal feelings of safety in current community. The IV was media influence (i.e., news related and violence content).

Socioeconomic Status

An individual's socioeconomic status is another predictor of fear of crime and victimization. Researchers have determined that the lower an individual's income and economic status are, the more afraid of victimization he/she becomes (e.g., Karmen, 1996). Based on these findings it was hypothesized that due to Bozeman's low to middle class economic structure, an individual's socioeconomic status would have little impact on his/her fear of victimization. This hypothesis was based on the fact that most college students come from middle class backgrounds. The DV was fear of crime in current community. The IV was an individual's socioeconomic status.

Social Network

An individual's social network (i.e., friends and family) is very important in determining an individual's fear of victimization. It can be inferred from Pfeiffer's (1993) research that if an individual has a small social network, his/her fear of victimization will be high compared to an individual who has a larger social network. It was hypothesized in the current study that a small social network would be associated with increased fear of victimization and vice versa. In order to test the hypothesis the DV used was fear of crime in current community. The IV was the size of an individual's social network.

Previous Victimization Experience

Saltiel and Gilchrist (1987) determined that an individual's previous victimization experiences (i.e., direct or indirect) greatly impacts his/her fear of future criminal victimization. Thus, three hypotheses concerning prior victimization experience were constructed. First, if an individual had been exposed a great deal to a particular type of crime (i.e., violent vs. property), his/her fear for that type of crime would be increased.

Second, if an individual has experienced indirect victimization as a result of the direct victimization of a family member and/or close friend, his/her fear of possible victimization will be greater than an individual who has experienced indirect victimization as a result of the direct victimization of an acquaintance. Third, the less victimization experienced by an individual, the less likely he/she would feel about becoming a possible victim of crime and vice versa. The DVs used to test the hypotheses were fear of crime in current community and perceptions concerning risk of possible victimization. The IV was previous victimization experience.

Risk Taking Behavior

Another factor that influences fear of crime and victimization is risk taking behavior. Risk taking behavior can be examined in one of two ways. First, an individual may engage in risk taking behavior that will affect his/her personal safety. For example, someone may leave his/her doors unlocked, his/her windows open, his/her car running while he/she runs into the store, etc. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the more an individual fears possible victimization the less likely he/she is to engage in behaviors that increase an individual's risk of victimization and vice versa. Thus, the DVs used to test this hypothesis were fear of crime in current community and perceptions concerning risk of possible victimization. The IV was protective behavior.

Risk taking can also be viewed as behaviors that may result in possible physical harm. For example, if someone engages in free rock climbing, his/her likelihood of becoming physically harmed if he/she falls increases. It seems logical that this type of risk taking would decrease with age. In order to test this hypothesis the DV used was physical activities an individual engages in. The IV was age.

Additional Hypothesis

Finally, an additional hypothesis was formed in order to test a secondary focus. Inferred from Saltiel and Gilchrist (1987), if an individual views police protection as inadequate, his/her fear of possible victimization would increase and vice versa. The DVs were fear of crime in current community and perceptions concerning risk of possible victimization. The IV was perception concerning police protection in current community.

METHODS

Participants

Two hundred and twenty-three MSU students volunteered to participate in the current study. Due to either an incomplete survey or failure to correctly fill out the survey, data from five participants were not used in analyses of the study. In order to insure gender, age, education, and racial background diversity, sampling was taken from both lower division courses (i.e., 100 and 200 level courses) and upper division courses (i.e., 300 and 400 level courses). However, in this study gender diversity was not representative of the MSU population. There were more female participants than males. It is speculated that females tend to participate in research studies more than males and that females have a higher return rate for surveys than males. Nevertheless, the analysis included 108 participants from lower division courses and 110 participants from upper division courses.

In 1997, MSU had 6,437 males and 5,225 females enrolled for Fall semester (MSU, 1998). The average age of undergraduates was 22.4 years old and 32.7 years old for graduate students. The following is a break down of students by race and ethnic backgrounds: there were 32 African Americans, 88 Asian Americans, 113 Hispanic Americans, 242 Native Americans, 9,543 Caucasians, 19 other, 1,294 unknown, and 331 international students. In the current study descriptive characteristics for participants in lower division courses were as follows: there were 84 females and 23 males, their mean age was 20.58 years old, 55.5% were freshman, 28.2% were sophomores, 9.1% were juniors, 3.6% were seniors, 91.8% were Caucasian, 0.9% were African American, 1.8% were Asian, and 3.6% were Native American. The following are characteristics for participants in upper division courses: there were 69 females and 37 males, their mean age was 24.17 years old, 0.9% were freshman, 8.2% were sophomores, 38.2% were

juniors, 46.4% were seniors, 1.8% were graduate students, 94.5% were Caucasian, 1.8% were African American, 0.9% were Asian, and 2.7% were Native American.

All participants were entered into a drawing upon completion of the survey. One participant from lower division sampling and one participant from upper division sampling were given the opportunity to win one of two \$25 gift certificates at the MSU Bookstore. In addition, Psychology 100 students received one extra credit point for participating in the study. The extra credit was given to Psychology 100 students in order to fulfill course requirements as outlined in his/her syllabus.

Materials

The measure used in the current study was a survey consisting of 107 questions. It was comprised of both original questions and modified questions taken from the Social Relations in Western Communities survey conducted by the Institute for Social Science Research on Natural Resources at Utah State University in Logan, Utah (Krannich, personal communication, 1997). The survey contained both multiple choice questions and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Design and Procedure

A pilot study was performed in order to check clarity of the questions. Eighteen participants from an upper division Psychology course took the survey and made statements concerning the clarity of the survey. Additional questions were asked to ensure that the participants would feel comfortable answering the majority of the questions. Furthermore, the 18 participants were allowed to make any additional comments they believed would be beneficial to the quality of the survey. Participation was voluntary and their data were not used for analysis purposes.

The survey used for analysis was distributed to volunteer MSU college students in both lower division courses (i.e., 100 and 200 level courses) and upper division courses (300 and 400 level courses). Depending upon the course surveyed and the needs of the

professors, participants either completed the survey in class, out of class, or made an appointment to take the survey. If the survey was completed out of class the participants were given the survey in class and allowed to complete the survey on his/her own time. All completed surveys were collected during the next class meeting. Participants who made an appointment to take the survey were allowed to complete the survey during the appointed time.

Scoring

Since the survey had both multiple choice questions and fill-in-the-blank questions several questions had to be recoded. Most questions were recoded to allow for consistency among scales. The fill-in-the-blank questions of primary interest were recoded from words to numerics. Thus, allowing for a quantitative analysis. The following questions were recoded: former community, current community, length of time lived in current community, and what newspaper he/she reads on a regular basis.

In order to recode the question dealing with an individual's former community it was necessary to know the population of the city. Population estimates were taken from the 1990 United States Census Bureau, the 1994 Rand McNally Atlas, or the 1990 Montana county population census. The following scale was used for recoding: 5 = metropolitan (more than 100,000 population), 4 = medium city (25,000-100,000 population), 3 = small city (24,999-5,000 population), 2 = town (2,500-4,999 population), 1 = country (less than 2,500 population), 0 = other or unknown.

Due to the fact that the current study is interested in Bozeman, Montana and its surrounding areas it was necessary to take into consideration travel time between communities. Since, Montana's communities are separated by great distances the scale used to reflect an individual's current community is limited to Bozeman and Belgrade. This is because the distance between Bozeman and Belgrade (approximately 10 miles) is

smaller than most distances between Bozeman and additional communities. Therefore, Bozeman was coded as a 3, Belgrade a 2, and additional communities were coded as 1.

It was important to know how long an individual lived in Bozeman or its surrounding areas. Therefore, the following scale was used to quantify an individual's response: 7 = less than 6 months, 6 = 6 months-1 year, 5 = 13 months-2 years, 4 = 25 months-3 years, 3 = 37 months-4 years, 2 = 49 months-5 years, and 1 = more than 5 years.

Finally, to quantify an individual's response to what newspaper/s he/she reads on a regular basis the following scale was implemented: 2 = any newspaper written outside of Montana, 1 = a Montana newspaper, and 0 = none.

RESULTS

Since this study covers many topics which are affiliated with fear of crime and victimization, findings are discussed by hypotheses.

Previous Community Size

It was hypothesized that if an individual moved to Bozeman, Montana from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would be heightened. Second, if an individual moved to Bozeman from an urban community he/she would express less fear of possible victimization. The DV was fear of crime in current community (i.e., property crime and violent crime). The IVs were the size of community an individual was raised in and the size of community an individual lived prior to moving to the Bozeman area. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed the following: a significant difference was found for fear of property crime in current community and the size of community an individual was raised in, $F(4, 215) = 3.38, p < .01$. Most participants reported only slight levels of fear of property crime. However, individuals from smaller communities reported higher levels of fear of property crime than individuals from larger communities. This finding supported the hypothesis that if an individual moved to Bozeman, Montana from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would be heightened. No significant difference was found for fear of property crime and the size of community an individual moved from to the Bozeman area, $F(4, 196) = 1.96, p > .10$. A significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual lived in prior to moving to the Bozeman area, $F(4, 196) = 3.06, p < .02$. Most participants reported no fear to slight fear concerning violent crime in their current

community. However, individuals from small towns or medium size communities reported slightly higher levels of fear for violent crime. This finding further supported the hypothesis that individuals from rural communities would fear crime and victimization more than individuals from urban communities. No significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual was raised in, $F(4, 215) = 1.642, p > .17$. This finding suggested that the last community an individual lived in directly before moving to Bozeman had more impact on fear of violent crime in his/her current community, as opposed to the size of the community an individual was raised in.

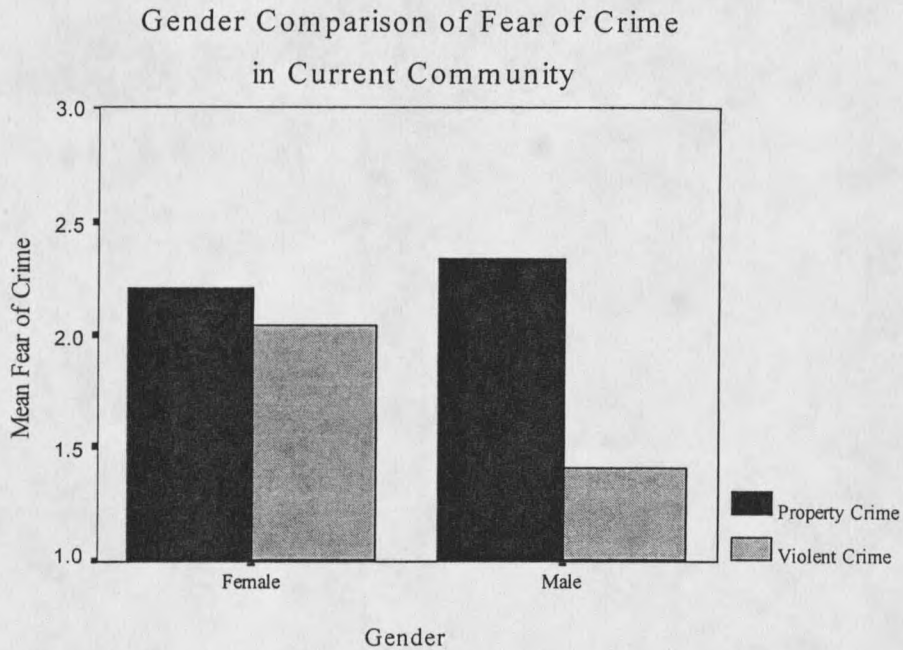
An ANOVA revealed that for females the size of community an individual was raised in affected fear of property crime, $F(4, 151) = 2.45, p < .05$. Most female participants reported no fear to slight fear concerning fear of property crime in their current community. However, females from very rural communities reported higher levels of fear than females from more urban areas. This finding supported the hypothesis that if an individual moved to Bozeman, Montana from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would be heightened. No significant difference was found for fear of property crime and the size of community an individual lived in prior to moving to the Bozeman area, $F(4, 138) = .97, p > .43$. Fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual lived in prior to moving to the Bozeman area was significant for females, $F(4, 138) = 2.93, p < .02$. Most females reported only slight levels of fear of violent crime, however, females from towns and medium size communities reported higher levels of fear of violent crime in their current community. No significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual was raised in, $F(4, 151) 1.54, p > .19$.

An ANOVA revealed no effect for fear of property crime and the size of community an individual was raised in, $F(4, 58) = 1.67, p > .17$. A significant difference was evident for fear of property crime and the size of community an individual lived in prior to moving to the Bozeman area, $F(4, 54) = 2.755, p < .04$. Most male participants reported slight levels of fear of property crime in their current community. However, males from small communities and males from other countries reported higher levels of fear of property crime in the Bozeman area than males from larger communities. This finding supported the hypothesis that if an individual moved to Bozeman, Montana from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would be heightened. No significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual moved from to the Bozeman area, $F(4, 54) = 1.587, p > .19$. No significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and the size of community an individual was raised in, $F(4, 58) = .740, p > .57$.

Gender

It was hypothesized that females would fear crime more than males. The DV was fear of crime in current community (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was gender. A Pearson Correlation revealed a relationship between fear of violent crime and gender, $r(217) = -.302, p < .01$. Results indicated that males were less fearful of violent crime in their current community than females. No significant correlation was found for fear of property crime and gender. These findings are shown in Figure 1. (Using a 5 point scale where 1 = not afraid at all, 2 = slightly afraid, 3 = moderately afraid, 4 = somewhat afraid, and 5 = very afraid).

Figure 1



The figure shows that females feared violent crime more than males but males feared property crime more than females. However, the overall trend suggests that in general, females did fear crime in their current community more than their male counterparts.

Media Influence

Due to contradictory findings in previous literature four hypotheses were tested. First, it was hypothesized that high exposure to violent media would increase an individual's fear of possible victimization. Second, high exposure to violent media would not increase an individual's fear of possible victimization but instead would act as a desensitizer. The DV was fear of crime in current community (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was media containing violent content. No significant correlations were found for fear of crime in current community and media containing

violent content. Thus, the second hypothesis was supported. Violent media appeared to have no significant correlation with fear of crime in current community.

Third, it was hypothesized by watching a great deal of news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper an individual's fear of victimization would increase. The DV was fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was news related media. No significant correlations were found for fear of crime in current community and news related media.

Finally, it was hypothesized that due to Bozeman's unique characteristics, watching news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper would lead an individual to feel safe from possible criminal victimization. The DV was personal feelings of safety in current community and the IV was news related media. No significant correlations were found for personal feelings of safety in current community and news related media.

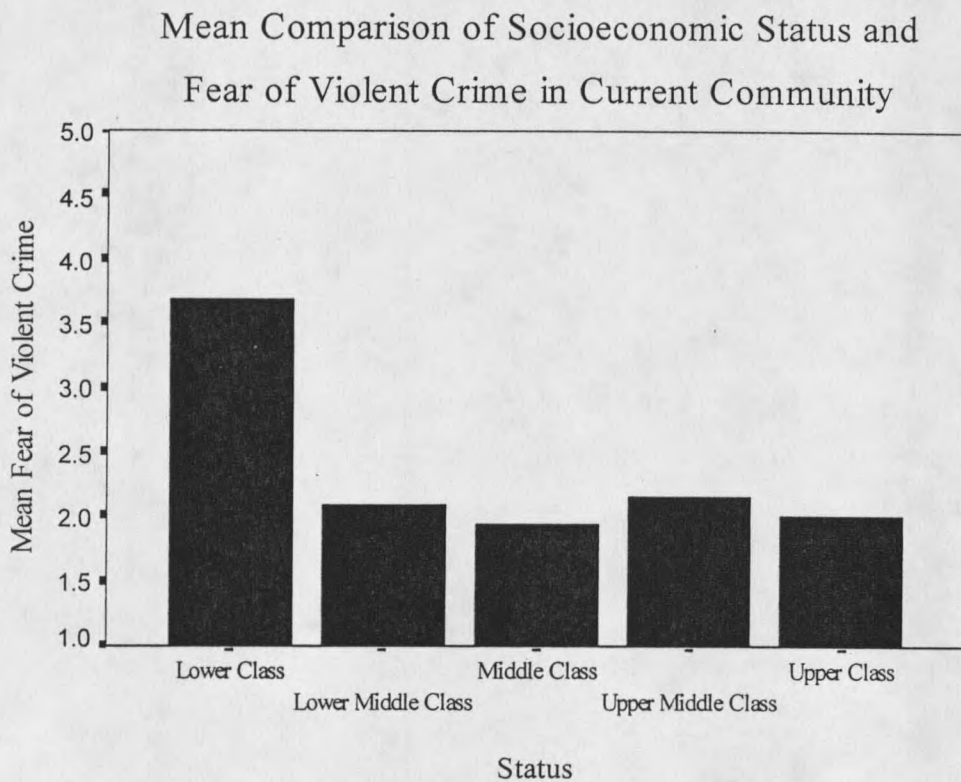
Socioeconomic Status

Previous literature suggested that an individual with a lower socioeconomic status would be more fearful of criminal victimization (e.g., Karmen, 1996). However, it was hypothesized that due to Bozeman's low to middle class economic structure, an individual's socioeconomic status would have little impact on his/her fear of victimization. The DV was fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was socioeconomic status. An ANOVA revealed no significant difference for fear of property crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 215) = .850, p > .50$, and no significant difference for fear of violent crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 215) = 1.288, p > .28$. Thus, findings supported the hypothesis that due to Bozeman's low to middle class

economic structure, an individual's socioeconomic status has little impact on his/her fear of victimization.

An ANOVA revealed that for females there was no significant difference for fear of property crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 151) = 1.859, p > .12$. However, a significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 151) = 2.605, p > .04$. For further interpretation please refer to Figure 2.

Figure 2



Results indicated that females from lower socioeconomic classes fear violent crime more than females from upper socioeconomic classes. This finding supported the previous literature.

An ANOVA revealed that for males there was no significant difference for fear of property crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 58) = .917, p > .46$, and no significant difference was found for fear of violent crime and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 58) = .755, p > .56$.

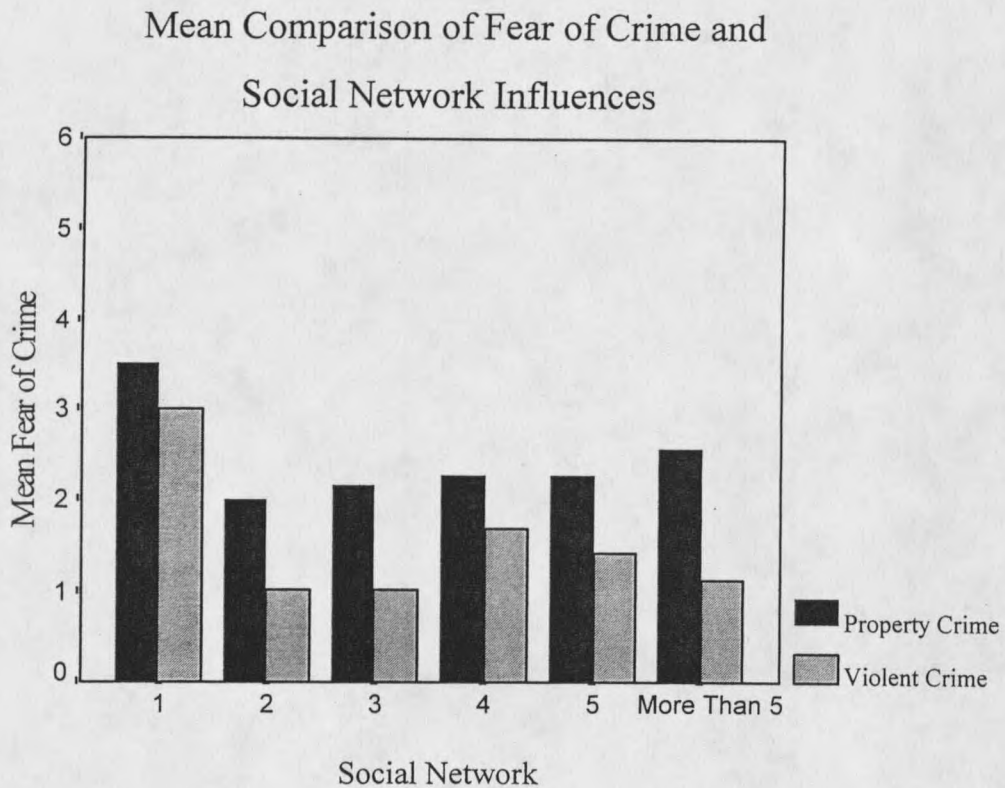
Social Network

It was hypothesized that a small social network would be associated with increased fear of victimization and vice versa. The DV was fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was size of social network. An ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between fear of property crime and size of social network, $F(20, 213) = 1.496, p > .09$. Nor was there a significant difference for fear of violent crime and size of social network, $F(20, 213) = 1.567, p > .06$.

An ANOVA, examining females only, revealed no significant differences for fear of property crime and size of social network, $F(20, 150) = 1.266, p > .22$, nor were there significant differences for fear of violent crime and size of social network, $F(20, 150) = .806, p > .70$.

However, an ANOVA indicated that for males fear of property crime and size of community was significant, $F(20, 57) = 2.175, p < .02$, as well as fear of violent crime and size of community, $F(20, 57) = 2.953, p < .002$. Please refer to Figure 3 for further interpretation. The numbers for social network refer to the number of individuals the participant feels comfortable in asking for help.

Figure 3



Previous Victimization Experience

It was hypothesized that if an individual had been exposed a great deal to a particular type of crime (i.e., property vs. violent), his/her fear for that type of crime would be increased. The DV was fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and the IV was previous victimization experience with regards to property crime and violent crime (i.e., direct and indirect). Analysis revealed a significant correlation for females for fear of property crime and previous property crime victimization experience, $r(152) = .170$, $p < .05$. Thus, the more indirect victimization a female experienced for property crime the

more fearful she became of property crime in her current community. No significant correlations were found for males.

Second, it was hypothesized that if an individual had experienced indirect victimization as a result of the direct victimization of a family member and/or close friend, his/her fear of possible victimization would be greater than an individual who has experienced indirect victimization as a result of the direct victimization of an acquaintance. The DVs were: fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and perceptions concerning risk of victimization in current community. The IV was previous victimization experience with family and/or close friends and acquaintances. A significant correlation was found for an individual's perceptions concerning his/her likelihood of becoming a victim of property crime in his/her current community and previous victimization experience with family and/or close friends, $r(217) = .137, p < .05$. Results indicated that the more an individual has experienced indirect victimization through a family member and/or close friend, the more likely he/she believed that he/she was at risk for becoming a victim of property.

Gender analysis did not find any significant correlations for females. However, a significant correlation was found for males. The likelihood of becoming a victim of violent crime was related to previous victimization experience of family and/or close friends, $r(59) = .295, p < .05$. Thus, the more indirect victimization experience a male had experienced through a family member and/or close friend, the more likely he was to feel at risk for becoming a victim of violent crime in his current community.

Finally, it was hypothesized that the less victimization experienced by an individual, the less likely that individual believed he/she would become a victim of crime and vice

versa. The DV was an individual's perceptions concerning risk of possible victimization in his/her current community and the IV was previous victimization experience with regards to property crime and violent crime (i.e., direct and indirect). A significant correlation was found for an individual's perceptions concerning the likelihood of becoming a victim of property crime and previous property crime victimization experience, $r(217) = .172, p < .05$. Results indicated that the more indirect property crime victimization an individual has experienced, the more likely that individual believed he/she was at great risk for property crime. This finding supported the hypothesis.

Another correlation was found for an individual's perceptions concerning the likelihood of becoming a victim of property crime and previous direct property crime victimization, $r(217) = .142, p < .05$. Thus, the more previous direct property crime victimization experienced by an individual, the more likely that individual believed the risk for property victimization. This finding further supported the hypothesis. No significant correlations were found for gender.

Risk Taking Behavior

As stated earlier, risk taking can be examined in two ways in terms of personal safety behaviors and risk taking behaviors. First, risk taking behaviors can be viewed as behaviors that jeopardize an individual's personal safety. Thus, it was hypothesized that the more an individual feared possible victimization the less likely he/she would be to engage in behaviors that would increase his/her likelihood of victimization and vice versa. The DVs were fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and perceptions concerning risk of possible victimization in current community. The IV was protective behaviors. As fear of property crime increased individuals reported that it is

important to lock doors when they are not home, $r(217) = .206, p < .01$. Furthermore, as fear of property crime increased individuals reported that they are less likely to leave their car running while they run into the store, $r(217) = -.171, p < .05$. Further, as fear of violent crime increased individuals reported that they are more likely to engage in protective behaviors such as locking their doors when not home, locking their doors at night before going to bed, etc., $r(217) = .183, p < .01$. As fear of violent crime increased individuals reported locking doors before going to bed more frequently than an individual who do not fear violent crime as much, $r(217) = .159, p < .05$. As fear of violent crime increased individuals reported that they were less likely to leave their car running while they run into the store, $r(217) = -.177, p < .01$. Furthermore, as an individual's perceptions concerning risk of property victimization increased he/she was more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(217) = .147, p < .05$, and as an individual's perceptions concerning risk of violent victimization increased he/she was more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(217) = .218, p < .01$.

Significant correlations were also found for females. As fear of property increased females reported locking doors more when they were not home, $r(152) = .211, p < .01$. Additionally, as fear of violent crime increased females reported that they were more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(152) = .203, p < .05$. Further, as a female's perceptions concerning risk for becoming a victim of property crime increased she was more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(152) = .187, p < .05$. Furthermore, as a female's perceptions concerning risk for becoming a victim of violent crime increased she was more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(152) = .164, p < .05$. Finally, as a female's perceptions concerning risk of victimization by violent crime increased she

was likely to own a gun, pepper spray, etc. for the purpose of protection from danger, $r(152) = .170, p < .05$. These findings further supported the hypothesis.

Two significant correlations were found for males. First, as fear of property crime increased males reported that they would be less likely to leave their car running while they ran into the store, $r(59) = -.296, p < .05$. Second, males reported that as their perceptions concerning their likelihood of victimization by violent crime increased they were more likely to engage in protective behaviors, $r(59) = .264, p < .05$. These findings supported the hypothesis that the more an individual fears possible victimization the less likely he/she would be to engage in behaviors that would increase his/her likelihood of victimization and vice versa.

Risk taking can also be examined in terms of recreational activities. It was hypothesized that as an individual gets older, activity related risk taking would decrease. The DV was what type of physical activities an individual participates in and the IV was age. Age was recoded into the following categories: 1 = 17 to 20 years old, 2 = 21 to 25 years old, and 3 = 26 years old and older. No significant relationship was found. Thus, findings do not support the hypothesis that states activity-related risk taking would decrease with age.

Additional Hypothesis

An additional hypothesis was tested in the current study. It was hypothesized that if an individual viewed police protection as inadequate, his/her fear of possible victimization would be increased compared to an individual who viewed police protections as adequate and vice versa. The DVs were fear of crime (i.e., property crime and violent crime) and perceptions concerning risk for possible victimization in current

community. The IV was perceptions concerning police protection. A significant correlation was found for fear of property crime in current community and perceptions concerning adequate police protection, $r(217) = -.135$, $p < .05$, and fear of violent crime in current community and perceptions concerning adequate police protection, $r(217) = -.198$, $p < .01$. Results indicated that as fear of property crime and fear of violent crime increased perceptions concerning adequate police protection decrease and vice versa. Thus, the findings did support the hypothesis.

Results indicated that for females, as fear of property crime, $r(152) = -.208$, $p < .05$, and fear of violent crime increased, $r(152) = -.218$, $p < .01$, perceptions concerning adequate police protection decreased. Findings supported the hypothesis that if an individual viewed police protection as inadequate his/her fear of possible victimization would be increased compared to an individual who viewed police protections as adequate. No significant correlations were found for male participants.

Due to the fact that the current study investigates a wide range of factors that may influence fear of crime and victimization it is necessary to review some of the more prominent theories related to this topic. It is also important for the reader to understand where fear comes from and who is afraid of crime and victimization. In addition to discussing these areas of research and the current findings, suggestions will be made concerning how an individual can change his/her fear of victimization.

Fear of crime stems from the unique situational and environmental characteristics that are associated with criminal victimization (Stinchcombe, Adams, Heimer, Scheppele, Smith, & Taylor, 1980 as cited in Sacco & Glackman, 1987). Interestingly, an individual's fear of crime and victimization is not necessarily a good predictor of his/her "true" risk for becoming a victim of crime. For example, males tend to report that they feel very safe from crime and violence compared to their female counterparts, however, statistically they are at greater risk for victimization (Stanko, 1990). "Young men who are single, spend most evenings out and engage in social drinking, are, according to surveys, most likely to be victims of crime. While men who reside in higher crime areas do report higher levels of fear, even men who say they worry about violence do so at levels 1/3 that of women" (Stanko, 1990, p. 5). Why is this the case? It may be helpful to understand what constitutes fear of victimization.

When talking about fear of crime and victimization, one is simply referring to an individual's attitudes or emotions concerning crime and victimization. Thus, fear is derived from our mental capabilities. Using cognitive theories one can help explain how an individual's attitudes and emotions are developed. First, it is necessary to examine attention. Studies have shown that in order for perceptual processing to occur the fundamental element of attention is required (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). Attention acts as a filter so individuals can respond to the most important perceptual information by limiting

the amount of perceived information placed into the consciousness. It is this idea of selected attention that affects our ability to comprehend information. People tend to comprehend the gist of the material rather than the complete information given (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). If one can relate to or make an association between one event and something of meaning to them they are more likely to remember that event. This process of integration is necessary for comprehension to take place. Unfortunately, it is often at the expense of accuracy (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). When individuals remember the gist of the information they have just gained, it can leave room for error. Furthermore, when receiving perceptual information that is highly emotive such as crime and victimization reports, the individual may access his/her own emotions and prior experiences concerning crime and violence and taint the reality of the situation.

The idea of incorporating information is related to how an individual accesses information with regards to his/her memories and prior knowledge. Knowledge allows humans to interpret and organize information and is gained in part from prior experiences (i.e., episodic memories; Ellis & Hunt, 1993). Individuals may gain their knowledge about crime through many facets such as being a direct victim of crime, knowing someone who has been victimized (i.e., indirect victimization), reading the newspaper or other literature that contains information about crimes, etc. Prior knowledge is accessed when an individual hears or reads about current crime. Our comprehension of the events taking place around us is put into context based on these guidelines set forth by our prior experiences. Knowledge about crime, an act which results in injustice, adds to our prior experiences of hardships, loss, and/or strain (Bilsky, Pfeiffer, & Wetzel, 1993). Furthermore, feelings evoked by this classification process are strong. It may be this association that allows individuals to fear crime and victimization regardless of their actually statistical risk.

Another determinant of how individuals perceive information is mood. Mood is the center stone of irrational beliefs and fears. Studies have revealed various ways in which mood can affect encoding, organization, and retrieval of new information (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). Researchers have found that many times fear is associated with stress. It may be possible to conclude that like stress, fear may have similar affects on the processing of information. It is also probable that when an individual reads a news article about a violent, heinous crime, our emotion of fear elicits prior memories of fear. The literature suggests that emotional states produce a prevailing pattern of thought (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). This concept may be linked to principles which underlie the theory of mood-congruency effects. For example, if you are happy and you read a story, you are more likely to remember the happy events that occur throughout the story than the unhappy events. Mood can also effect an individual's ability to make judgments (Ellis & Hunt, 1993). It may be possible to connect irrational fear of victimization to an individual's inability to make realistic judgments concerning his/her own fate.

By keeping these theories in mind, the results for this study may be more coherent. Like most studies, some of the hypothesis were supported and others were not. This was to be expected based on the unique characteristics of Bozeman, Montana. In order to give the reader a better understanding of the findings some of the more significant results will now be discussed relative to the hypotheses.

Previous Community Size

Results indicated that most participants reported only slight levels of fear of property and violent crime; however, individuals from smaller communities reported higher levels of fear of property and violent crime compared to individuals from larger communities. These findings supported the hypothesis that if an individual moved to Bozeman, Montana from a more rural area, his/her fear of criminal victimization would

be heightened. It suggests that the last community an individual lived in before moving to Bozeman had the greatest impact on determining his/her fear for violent crime in his/her current community, not the size of the community an individual was raised in.

Additionally, both males and females from very rural communities reported higher levels of fear than those from more urban areas. These findings may be reflective of both an individual's preconceived notions concerning crime and violence and current crime rates for the Bozeman area.

Gender

It was hypothesized that females would fear crime more than males. Results indicated that females fear violent crime more than males but males fear property crime more than females. However, the overall trend suggests that in general, females do fear crime in their current community more than do males. Thus, the hypothesis was supported.

Media Influence

No significant correlations were found for fear of crime in current community and media containing violent content. The hypothesis that high exposure to violent media would not increase an individual's fear of possible victimization but instead act as a desensitizer was supported. However, it is important to note that by supporting the null, the analysis failed to determine whether or not media containing violent content acts as a desensitizer. Further research needs to be conducted in order to determine the complete effects of violent media.

It was hypothesized that by watching a great deal of news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper an individual's fear of victimization would increase. However, this was not supported.

Finally, it was hypothesized that due to Bozeman's unique characteristics, watching news, factual shows, and reading the newspaper would lead an individual to feel safe from possible criminal victimization. No significant correlations were found. Findings or lack of findings for media influence may be reflective of the participant pool. College students may be watching other forms of media such as comedies or they may be engaging in additional extracurricular activities. Further research is needed.

Socioeconomic Status

Previous literature suggests that individuals with a lower socioeconomic status are more fearful of criminal victimization (e.g., Karmen, 1996). However, it was hypothesized that due to Bozeman's low to middle class economic structure, an individual's socioeconomic status would have little impact on his/her fear of victimization. No significant differences were found, thus supporting the hypothesis.

Additional analyses for females found that females from lower socioeconomic classes fear violent crime more than females from upper socioeconomic classes. This finding supported the previous literature.

Findings which supported the hypothesis that in Bozeman an individual's socioeconomic status would have little impact on his/her fear of victimization may be a result of the participant pool. Most college students come from middle class backgrounds, not lower class backgrounds.

Social Network

It was hypothesized that a small social network would be associated with increased fear of victimization and vice versa. Significant results were found only for males in that both fear of property and violent crime was correlated with size of community. This finding supported the hypothesis that a small social network would be associated with increased fear of victimization and vice versa. This especially holds true for violent crime. Non-significant findings may be a result of a college student's interaction with his/her peers and family. College students may interact with people differently than the average person due to their unique social environment (e.g., dormitory life, classroom settings, etc.).

Previous Victimization Experience

Results indicated that the more indirect property crime victimization a female experienced the more fearful she became of property crime in her current community. This finding supported the hypothesis that if an individual had been exposed a great deal to a particular type of crime (i.e., property vs. violent), his/her fear for that type of crime would be increased. No significant correlations were found for males and no significant correlations were found with regards to violent crime and previous victimization experience.

Second, it was hypothesized that if an individual had experienced indirect victimization through a family member and/or close friend, his/her fear of possible victimization would be greater than an individual who had experienced indirect victimization through an acquaintance. Results indicated that the more an individual had experienced indirect victimization through a family member and/or close friend, the more

likely he/she was to believe that he/she was at risk for becoming a victim of property crime in his/her current community. Thus, the results supported the hypothesis.

Gender analysis did not find any significant correlations for females. However, a significant correlation was found for males. Results indicated that the more indirect victimization experience a male has through his family members and/or close friends, the more likely he was to believe that he was at risk for becoming a victim of violent crime in his current community. Thus, results further supported the hypothesis.

Finally, it was hypothesized that the less victimization experienced by an individual, the less likely that individual believed he/she would become a victim of crime and vice versa. Results indicated that the more previous indirect victimization experience an individual had with regards to property crime, the more likely that individual believed he/she is at great risk for property victimization in his/her current community. This finding supported the hypothesis. Another significant correlation was found for an individual's perceptions concerning his/her likelihood of becoming a victim of property crime in his/her current community and previous direct victimization experience with regards to property crime. Results indicated that the more previous direct victimization experienced by an individual with regards to property crime, the more likely that individual believed he/she is at great risk for property victimization in his/her current community. This finding further supported the hypothesis. No significant correlations were found for gender.

Risk Taking Behavior

Risk taking behaviors can be viewed as behaviors that jeopardize an individual's personal safety. Thus, it was hypothesized that the more an individual feared possible

victimization the less likely he/she would be to engage in behaviors that would increase his/her likelihood of victimization and vice versa. As fear of property crime increased individuals reported more protective behaviors. As fear of violent crime increased individuals reported that they are also more likely to engage in protective behaviors. These findings supported the hypothesis that the more an individual fears possible victimization the more likely he/she would be to engage in protective behaviors such as locking doors, etc.

Additional Hypothesis

Finally, it was hypothesized that if an individual viewed police protection as inadequate his/her fear of possible victimization would be increased compared to an individual who viewed police protections as adequate and vice versa. Results supported the hypothesis that as fear of property crime and fear of violent crime increased, perceptions concerning adequate police protection decreased and vice versa. Findings may be reflective of crime rates in Bozeman.

Despite some contradictions between current findings and findings found in previous studies it is important to ask ourselves whether irrational fears of victimization can be modified and if so, how can this be accomplished? If one considers all the relevant information it seems plausible that fear of crime and victimization can be modified. In order to attain this modification, individuals must elicit change in their attitudes concerning crime and victimization. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task. Education appears to be the first logical step in the process. However, it is not always effective and it is difficult to assess the target needs of each individual. Consequently, education is only one small step in the process. However, it is necessary for individuals to know their

“true” risk for becoming a victim of crime. By educating society about their statistical risk of victimization there may be some break down in the unrealistic notions concerning crime and victimization.

Individuals must become more active in the community. As stated earlier, this is especially important for the elderly population. As a whole, this sub-population has very unrealistic perceptions concerning their risk for criminal victimization (Pfeiffer, 1993). In many cases this is due to the elderly individual's lack of mobility and small social networks. However, if an elderly person begins to socialize with individuals who frequently interact with the community this interaction may help abate some of his/her fears. Increasing knowledge and an individual's social network may be accomplished using volunteers for individuals who are too ill or too afraid to leave their homes. In addition, workshops for which transportation is provided for the elderly may also stimulate a growth in their current social networks.

Workshops should not solely be limited to the elderly. Workshops can be a great benefit to the community as a whole. If educational workshops are implemented through various police and legal agencies it could feasibly open the door for many opportunities. Police and law agencies may be able to create greater support networks within the community and citizens may feel more responsible with regards to community safety. Thus, citizens may be more inclined to initiate ways in which they could help law enforcement agencies protect their community from crime and violence.

Probably the most important step necessary for a change in attitude would be to train individuals in precautionary techniques (e.g., do not follow strict routines, lock your car and house doors, etc.). If individuals believe they have control over the situation, they

tend to exude an air of confidence. Therefore, they are no longer perceived as "weak" by a potential perpetrator. The best defense for not becoming a victim is to displace the perceived level of weakness on to someone else (Karmen, 1996).

Researchers and policy-makers tend to view fear of crime and victimization as destructive (Stanko, 1990). They believe that fear of victimization interferes with an individual's participation in everyday life. This is not necessarily true. Fear of crime and victimization may not be a bad emotion to possess. For example, women and elderly populations tend to report high levels of fear of victimization, however, they are among the least likely groups to become victims of crime. This may be due to the fact that women and the elderly incorporate into their day-to-day activities behaviors that reduce their risk for victimization (Karmen, 1996). Fell (1991) concluded that in general, women, particularly elderly women, and some minorities believe that they must restrict their behavior in order to prevent possible victimization. Hence, they remove themselves from dangerous situations; reducing their risk of victimization. Furthermore, the National Crime Survey in 1978, found that 46% of individuals reported that they have altered their behavior to account for their fear of crime and victimization (Warr, 1990).

There are three methods in which individuals can reduce their risk of becoming a victim of crime. First, individuals can engage in avoidance tactics. This limits an individual's personal exposure to risk of victimization (Furstenberg, 1972 as cited in Karmen, 1996). For example, individuals may choose to stay home at night. Second, individuals should practice risk management. Risk management decreases an individual's likelihood of being harmed if exposed to danger and possible victimization (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981 as cited in Karmen, 1996). For example, individuals should

never walk alone at night, they should carry a weapon for protection, etc. Last, environmental design should be implemented to decrease risk of victimization. This allows an individual to create "defensible space" by improving door locks, surveillance techniques, etc. (Newman, 1972 as cited in Karmen, 1996).

Another method which may allow an individual to change his/her perceptions concerning crime and victimization would be to modify the media. In an ideal world, if legislation passed strict guidelines in which media agencies had to report the "true" facts involved in or related to criminal situations perhaps individuals could comprehend the gist of the "real" day-to-day events surrounding crime and violence in our society. Unfortunately, this will not be a likely occurrence. In fact, viewers of television may have begun to notice that media is portraying violence more frequently and more graphically. This may cause some viewers to become desensitized to crime and violence. Other viewers may feel that they are at greater risk for victimization. It is obvious that the portrayal of violence on television does affect an individual's perceptions of crime and victimization. Until more accurate or realistic programs can be aired, it appears that educating individuals on the reality of who is victimized, giving them a sense of power by informing them about how to protect themselves, and developing greater social networks for those individuals who can not access the community on a regular basis seem to be the best solutions at present.

Despite the current findings and possible methods of changing an individual's attitudes and emotions concerning fear of victimization it is necessary to take into consideration that anytime a survey is implemented, researchers must rely on self-report. Two common flaws related to surveys are participant underreporting and participant

overreporting. Underreporting usually occurs when participants experience memory decay or when participants purposely suppress information (Karmen, 1996).

Overreporting takes place when an individual has an error in memory recall. For example, an individual may report that he/she has been a victim of theft in the past when in fact, the item in question was simply misplaced. Sampling can also influence data bias. Even the order of questioning can influence results. With regards to the current study, the return of incomplete surveys may have been a result of fatigue effect. Not only was the survey long but similar questions were asked close together.

Future studies concerning fear of crime and victimization should examine in more detail why some individuals report lower levels of fear of victimization. What other factors play a role in determining an individual's perceptions concerning personal risk of victimization? For example, physical appearance, sexual orientation, etc. It may also be helpful to determine whether or not the participant engages in illegal activity. As stated earlier, not all victims are innocent. In many cases the victim plays a role in his/her own demise (Elias, 1993). Thus, if the participant engages in illegal activities, he/she may realize that his/her risk of victimization is greater than an individual who does not engage in illegal activity. Furthermore, "individual (internal) indicators should also be used when trying to explain systematic variance in fear of crime. Variables such as trait anxiety (Hodapp, 1989; Laux, Glanzmann, Schaffner, & Spielberger, 1981), perceived coping competencies and coping styles (Krampen, 1991; Laux, 1983), critical life events (Filipp, 1990), interpersonal trust and attitudes toward crime and justice (Ouimet & Coyle, 1991; Wrightsman, 1991), loneliness (Russel, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980; Stephan & Fäth, 1989) should be considered as possible predictors" (as cited in Bilsky, 1993).

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