



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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IN BOZEMAN, MONTANA

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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

