GENDER, PLACE, AND FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION ON CAMPUS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY
AND RISK IN SUBURBAN AND URBAN SETTINGS

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

GENDER, PLACE, AND FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION ON CAMPUS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND RISK IN SUBURBAN AND URBAN SETTINGS

By SHANNON KERRY JACOBSEN

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Dr. Jody Miller

One of the most important predictors of fear of crime is gender, in that women are more fearful of crime than men despite their lower risks for victimization. Given that crime on campus has become one of the nation’s most pressing social problems, it is important to investigate the impact of perceived risk and fear of crime on students’ routines, in addition to how these vary by gender and campus context. As such, this study aims to answer the following questions: First, how does the community context and the presence of the campus police shape women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fears of victimization on campus? Second, how and when do gender and campus context influence students’ ideas about who the most likely victims and perpetrators of crime are? And third, how does the adoption of precautionary strategies impact women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization?

Through analysis of in-depth interviews with 70 undergraduates at a suburban \((N=36)\) and an urban university \((N=34)\), this study challenges previous research attributing women’s higher levels of fear to the notion that their concerns about sexual assault “shadow” their fears of other crimes, regardless of campus context. Although the
shadow was present in both women’s and men’s remarks on the suburban campus, such that nearly all participants explicitly related the limited concerns they had to the possibility of women being sexually assaulted by non-students, it was largely absent on the urban campus where all students instead noted being most concerned about robbery committed by residents of the city who were poor and African American. Further, and contrary to existing research, gender shaped the precautionary measures that students used to minimize their risks in the two settings in different ways.

Overall, this study emphasizes the need to consider context when examining how gender influences students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime on campus, particularly since it has been central to investigations of residents’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime within neighborhood settings. This study’s findings aim to inform policy discussions at institutions of higher education, as administrators and campus police departments attempt to make students feel safer while also ensuring that women and men have equal access to the opportunities that will make their futures successful.
DEDICATION

For my mom – for getting me here and always encouraging me to pursue my dreams.
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First, thank you to the Suburban and Urban U student participants whose voices and experiences are reflected in this dissertation. You each took time out of your busy schedules to speak with a graduate student you had never met, and you all pushed me to think about theory, my research, and policies at institutions of higher education in new ways that will continue to influence my work for years to come.

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you have challenged me to think critically about theory and how it shapes what we think we know, especially about fear of crime. To Dr. Bonnie Fisher, my outside reader: It has been a true honor to have you on my committee as one of the leading experts in the field on fear of crime on college and university campuses, particularly as it relates to the shadow of sexual assault. Your insights and perspectives have challenged me to think critically about the methods we use to examine this important area of study, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract of the Dissertation</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Statement of Purpose</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Research Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Outline of the Dissertation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Defining Fear and Perceived Risk</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1. Personal versus Altruistic (or Vicarious) Fears</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2. Constrained Behavior as a Reaction to Fear</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Fear of Crime and Gender</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1. The “Shadow” of Sexual Assault</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. The Role of Context and Place in Fear of Crime</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1. Personal and Vicarious Victimization Experiences</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2. Social Disorganization and Broken Windows Theories</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3. Examining the Disorder-Fear Nexus in Urban Areas</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4. Race, Perceptions of Disorder, and Fear</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Routine Activities, Lifestyles, and Fear of Crime</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6. Gendered Fear of Crime on College Campuses</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1. Does Sexual Assault Shadow Women’s Fears on Campus?</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7. Fear as a Form of Social Control: The Perpetuation of Gender Inequality</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8. Chapter Summary</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Introduction</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Methodological Approach</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Study Settings</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.1. “It’s More of a Girl Thing”: Victimization Risk and the Shadow of Sexual Assault ................................................................................................................. 146
6.2.2. The Victimization Risk of Racial and Ethnic Minorities .............................. 153
6.2.3. The Role of Sexuality in Victimization Risk ................................................. 155

6.3. Perceived Crime Threats and Factors Influencing Victimization Risk at Urban U ................................................................................................................................ 158

- 6.3.1. “You Don’t Know What Their Intentions Are”: African Americans and the Shadow of Robbery .............................................................................................. 159
- 6.3.2. “Judging a Book by Its Cover”: Physical Size and Victimization Risk ........ 167
- 6.3.3. Race and Victimization Risk ....................................................................... 169
- 6.3.4. ‘Most of These Kids Never Grew Up in the Hood”: Naïveté and Victimization Risk in the Urban Setting ...................................................................................... 171

6.4. “Anybody Could Come on This Campus”: Evaluations of Outsiders versus Students at Suburban U ................................................................................................................................ 173

6.5. “You Can Tell Who Doesn’t Belong”: Distinguishing Urban U Students from Outsiders ................................................................................................................................ 177

6.6. Chapter Summary ............................................................................................. 184

Chapter 7: The Role of Precautionary Behaviors in Alleviating Students’ Perceptions of Risk and Fear of Crime ................................................................................................. 186

7.1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 186

7.2. Precautionary Behaviors at Suburban U ................................................................................................................................ 186

- 7.2.1. Staying Aware and Alert ............................................................................. 187
- 7.2.2. Practicing Safety in Numbers ..................................................................... 188
- 7.2.3. Using Defensive Strategies ......................................................................... 192
- 7.2.4. Equal Access to Higher Education?: Gender and the Use of Avoidance Behaviors ............................................................................................................. 196

7.3. Precautionary Behaviors at Urban U ................................................................................................................................ 199

- 7.3.1. Being Aware and Concealing Valuables ..................................................... 200
- 7.3.2. Using Defensive Strategies ......................................................................... 204
- 7.3.3. Practicing Safety in Numbers ..................................................................... 206
- 7.3.4. (Not) Making Eye Contact and Crossing the Street to Avoid City Residents 208

7.4. Chapter Summary ............................................................................................. 210

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions .................................................................. 212

8.1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 212

8.2. Review of Key Findings ................................................................................... 212

8.3. Methodological and Theoretical Contributions to the Literature ................. 220
8.4. Directions for Future Research ................................................................. 224
8.5. Policy Implications ............................................................................... 226
References ..................................................................................................... 231
Appendix A: IRB Approval for Urban University ......................................... 248
Appendix B: Screening Survey for Urban University ....................................... 249
Appendix C: Consent Form for Urban University ............................................ 250
Appendix D: Interview Guide for Urban University ......................................... 254
Appendix E: IRB Approval for Suburban University ....................................... 267
Appendix F: Screening Survey for Suburban University ................................... 268
Appendix G: Consent Form for Suburban University ....................................... 269
Appendix H: Interview Guide for Suburban University .................................... 272
Appendix I: Summary Sheet Template for Suburban U Participants ............... 286
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Selected Empirical Studies Examining the Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis on Campus ................................................................. 53
Table 2: Characteristics of Study Settings, by City and County ..................... 72
Table 3: Characteristics of the Undergraduate Student Body and Study Sample, by Institution ........................................................................................................ 89
Table 4: Crimes Mentioned by Suburban U Students ...................................... 144
Table 5: Crimes Mentioned by Urban U Students ............................................ 159
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: Terms Used by Suburban U Students to Describe the Suburban City</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Terms Used by Suburban U Students to Describe the Suburban Campus</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Terms Used by Urban U Students to Describe the Urban City</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Terms Used by Urban U Students to Describe the Urban Campus</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Over the past two decades, crime on college and university campuses has become recognized as one of the nation’s most pressing social problems (Sloan & Fisher, 2011). A recent op-ed in The Boston Globe even argued, “The campus sexual assault panic – one of many runaway social epidemics in our nation’s history that have ruined innocent lives and corrupted justice – has now reached its peak” (Silvergate, 2015). It is rarely possible to read the news without learning about another incident of violence on campus. Even if we assume that this “campus sexual assault panic” was socially constructed by the media, we still must ask the question: What effect do these news reports have on male and female students’ fear of victimization and perceptions of their own safety on campus? And how do these threats of victimization, which I anticipate will be gendered, limit students’ engagement while pursuing higher education? This is of particular relevance when considering how mounting concerns about rape and sexual assault on campus hinder the possibility of equal opportunity and advancement for women both within the realm of higher education and beyond.

According to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (2014c), there were just over 3,000 violent and approximately 78,700 property crimes reported to campus law enforcement agencies at colleges and universities across the United States in 2013, which is the year the data collection for the present study began. This is nearly double the number of crime reports received five years before in 2008, when about 1,060 violent and

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1 Throughout this dissertation I alternate between the following three terms: fear of crime, fear of victimization, and fear of crime and victimization. I use fear of crime to refer to students’ general fear of crime, while fear of victimization refers to their concerns about being personally or vicariously harmed, which tends to be the primary focus of this study’s findings. Finally, I use fear of crime and victimization to encompass both of the aforementioned concepts when appropriate.
41,000 property crimes were reported to the campus police (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). Approximately 470 (about 16%) and 230 (about 20%) of the violent crimes reported were for the rape\(^2\) of a student in 2013 and 2008, respectively, indicating that the number of reports for sexual assault on campus have also increased over this five-year period. These increases in aggregate reports of sexual assault on college campuses are illustrative of trends in reports of rape at individual institutions across the country (Anderson, 2014; Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010). According to recent estimates from the analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey, approximately one in four to one in five college women are raped or sexually assaulted\(^3\) (Anderson & Svrluga, 2015; Anderson, Svrluga, & Clement, 2015; Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher et al., 2010; Ford & England, 2015; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007), and in about 80-90% of these assaults, the student victim knew the offender (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). These trends regarding college women’s experiences with rape and sexual assault are not new, but have instead remained relatively consistent over time (see Koss, 1993; Koss & Oros, 1982).

It is imperative to consider the impact that these realities of risk for sexual assault and other crimes have on female and male students’ fear of victimization and perceptions of safety on campus. Additionally, it is important to investigate how students’ fears and perceptions of risk might vary based on the specific context in which the campus is located.

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\(^2\) For the purposes of comparison at these two time periods, rape is defined here using the FBI’s (2014b) “legacy definition,” which defines rape as “The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.”

\(^3\) However, Cantor and colleagues (2015) caution against using these as “global rates,” arguing that such estimates can be overly simplistic and misleading because “rates vary greatly across institutions” (p. xv).
1.2. Statement of Purpose

The central purpose of this study is to investigate the linkages between gender and students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus while also understanding how the university setting influences students’ perceptions of safety and risk. Over 10 years ago, Fisher and Wilkes (2003) made the call for researchers to examine the role of campus context, suggesting that:

This examination might include examining how demographic (e.g., total student enrollment, percent males enrolled), physical (e.g., location of the university), and security (e.g., size of campus security department, existence of crime prevention measures) characteristics of the campus influence the risk of different types of on-campus victimization. (p. 541)

After comparing rates of victimization on campuses in the United States and England, they concluded that similar settings in the two countries produce very different levels of risk.

Because of this, I anticipate that perceptions of victimization risk and fear of crime will vary by context as well. Thus, data were collected on two different campuses, including one suburban and one urban university on the east coast. In addition to investigating perceptions of risk and fear, the present study assesses the precautionary strategies that students in the two contexts use to ensure their safety on campus, along with how the campus setting might influence their perceptions of and experiences with the campus police. This study is comparative in nature in order to determine whether and how the campus setting and community context influence students’ perceptions, behaviors, and willingness to engage with the campus police.

I am particularly interested in examining how students’ perceptions of safety and risk on campus are gendered, along with how this might differ between the two university contexts. For instance, how is women’s fear of victimization similar to or different from
that of men, and are students’ fears dependent on the environmental setting of the
campus? Are women and men comfortable with the same kinds of spaces on and around
campus in the urban versus suburban contexts? And in what ways, if any, do they limit
their behaviors on and around campus due to concerns about their safety? This aspect of
the research seeks to inform policy discussions at colleges and universities about how to
make students feel safer as they pursue higher education so that they can engage in the
activities that will enhance their future success without worrying about their safety.

Additionally, I am interested in analyzing the assumptions students make about
the race and gender of perpetrators of different types of crime on both the suburban and
the urban campuses. That is, whom do students think they are most likely to be
victimized by? Do male and female students have different perceptions about who is
liable to victimize them with regard to race and gender? Do these assumptions about the
race and gender of would-be perpetrators vary based on campus context? And lastly,
how closely do these assumptions align with what we know about the realities of
students’ risks in university settings?

Finally, it is difficult to discuss the victimization of college students without also
acknowledging those whose job it is to keep them safe while enrolled at institutions of
higher education – the campus police. Research in this area is quite limited, in that it is
both outdated and has tended to focus solely on students’ satisfaction with police services
(e.g., Gelber, 1972; Griffith et al., 2004; Miller & Pan, 1987). Because of the findings
that emerged in my previous research regarding students’ perceptions of the legitimacy of
the campus police at a suburban university on the east coast (see Jacobsen, 2015), I am
interested in comparing the ways in which institutional security measures and policing
practices function to alleviate or exacerbate students’ concerns on campus, in addition to how this might be dependent on institutional context. That is, will students at an urban university, where crime is more common, view the campus police as a more helpful and comforting presence than those at a more suburban institution, where serious crime committed on campus by those outside of the university is a rarer occurrence? These findings will have implications for campus policing strategies, particularly in terms of how officers may forge more effective relationships with college students at institutions of higher education.

In sum, the purpose of this project is to examine the ways in which gender and campus context shape students’ fear of victimization while enrolled at institutions of higher education. Further, it will assess whom male and female students believe they are most likely to be victimized by with regard to race and gender on the urban and suburban campuses. Finally, it will evaluate the precautionary and avoidance strategies that students adopt to alleviate their perceptions of risk in the two campus contexts.

1.3. Research Questions

As mentioned above, the main goal of this study is to understand the relationships between gender and students’ fear of victimization at colleges and universities by comparing two different campus contexts – one that is suburban versus one that is urban. Because urban settings are generally characterized by higher rates of property and violent crime (Duhart, 2000; Ferraro, 1995; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), one would expect that there would be different, and perhaps more frequent, threats of victimization for students attending an urban university than for those attending a suburban university.
To address this overarching research goal, I have three objectives reflected in the following research questions:

1) How does the community context, as well as the presence of the campus police and other security measures, shape women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization on campus?

2) In what ways, if any, does gender influence students’ ideas about who the most likely victims and perpetrators of crime are in the two different campus contexts?

3) How does the adoption of various precautionary strategies impact women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts?

1.4. Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth review of the existing literature on fear of crime, paying particular attention to existing research investigating: the distinction between the concepts of perceived risk and fear of crime; fear of crime and gender, along with the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis; the role of context and place in fear; the influence of individuals’ routine activities on their subsequent fear of crime and vice versa; fear of crime on college campuses; and the ways in which fear might function to perpetuate gender inequality. Chapter 3 details the methodology that was used in this study. Specifically, this chapter explains why qualitative methods were appropriate for this project, in addition to discussing the development of the interview guide, the characteristics of the two study settings, and the sampling strategy and recruitment method. Additionally, this chapter describes the
process of conducting the interviews and how they were analyzed and coded, before concluding with a discussion of the study’s limitations.

The next four chapters present the study’s findings in the order of the three guiding research questions, which were outlined above. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the ways in which community setting and location shape students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization on the suburban and urban campuses, respectively. Both chapters include a discussion of the role that students’ experiences with the campus police play in their perceptions of risk in the two campus settings. Chapter 6 explores the ways in which gender influences students’ perceptions of potential victims and offenders – or those they perceive as being most likely to cause them harm – on the urban versus suburban campuses. Chapter 7 then investigates how students’ use of precautionary behaviors functions to alleviate their perceptions of risk and fear of crime in the two campus contexts. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a closing discussion of the findings, situating them within the extant literature on this topic and suggesting implications for policy and future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

There has been much debate in the literature on fear of crime about the distinction between the related concepts of fear and perceived risk, with the discussion generally focusing on the subtle nuances in the operationalization and measurement of the two terms. This chapter will begin by defining the concepts of fear and perceived risk before discussing two types of fear, including fear for oneself (or personal fear) and fear for others (or altruistic fear), and the different behavioral reactions that individuals use as they attempt to alleviate their fear of crime. Next, I assess the empirical literature on the relationship between fear of crime and gender, which has consistently been shown to be one of the strongest predictors of individuals’ fear of victimization. Specifically, women tend to report having higher levels of fear than men, despite having lower rates of victimization in official crime statistics. In this section, I also review one of the leading explanations of this gender-fear paradox, which has been termed the “shadow” of sexual assault hypothesis.

Because the present study seeks to understand whether the fear of crime is context-dependent, the next section of this chapter will examine the role of place and context in the fear of crime. That is, given the focus of my research, how do suburban versus urban areas impact residents’ fear of crime? Previous work has concluded that urban residents have higher levels of fear as a result of three factors: the higher objective crime rates in these areas; the more widespread experience of both personal and vicarious victimization; and the higher degrees of social disorganization, disorder, and visible signs of decay that tend to plague urban areas. As such, this section will focus on studies that
have examined these three characteristics, as well as the conclusions that they have made about these factors. This discussion is followed by a review of the relationship between individuals’ routine activities and their fear of crime.

The concluding sections of this chapter will specifically examine fear of crime and victimization on college campuses, along with the gendered nature of this fear with regard to the existence of the “shadow” of sexual assault. The final section then explores the ways in which gender inequality is perpetuated through women’s fear, both by limiting their access to opportunities within institutions of higher education and by inhibiting equal chances for success in society more broadly.

2.2. Defining Fear and Perceived Risk

Previous research has indicated that fear of crime affects the lives of more individuals in the United States than crime victimization itself (Addington, 2010; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; Rountree & Land, 1996; Warr, 1994, 2000). But what exactly is fear? Although scholars have been examining the causes of fear, including why some individuals are more fearful than others, since the 1960s, discussions about the concept’s meaning have been more recent.

Researchers started questioning the measurement of fear beginning in the late-1970s. This criticism largely centered on the survey items that had claimed to assess levels of “fear” over the previous decade (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Garofalo, 1979). These items generally asked respondents, “Is there any area near where you live—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?” One of the main issues with these types of measures was that they often did not mention anything about
crime and when they did, they only made generic references without specifying certain types of crime. Further, these items tended to require respondents to consider hypothetical situations, as opposed to drawing on actual experiences, and they were ambiguous with regard to their geographic frame of reference (e.g., “within one mile of here,” “your neighborhood”) (DuBow, McCabe, & Kaplan, 1979; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Garofalo, 1979; Garofalo & Laub, 1978; also see Hinkle, 2015, for a review of these issues).

In the mid-1990s, this discussion continued as scholars questioned whether these measures were actually capturing “fear” or some other construct altogether (e.g., Farrall, Bannister, Ditton, & Gilchrist, 1997; Farrall & Ditton, 1999; Ferraro, 1995; Miethe, 1995; Rountree & Land, 1996; Warr, 1994; also see Hale, 1996, for a review). While scholars are still grappling with the measurement of fear and its related notion of perceived risk well into the 2000s, many researchers now suggest that previous studies “have likely overestimated the level of emotional fear...as a result of not specifically asking about fear of crime” (Hinkle, 2015, p. 150; also see Farrall, 2004). This section provides an overview of these discussions, highlighting those who produced key contributions to our current thinking about the fear of crime.

Among the first to notice the variety of ways in which the term was being used were Garofalo and Laub (1978), who questioned whether the “fear of crime” that was being measured and assessed in studies was actually the fear of crime. They concluded that it was not, but instead was capturing “something more diffuse than the perceived threat of some specific danger in the immediate environment” (Garofalo & Laub, 1978, p. 245). Garofalo and Laub (1978) suggested that what had been measured by uses of “fear
of crime” during that period was individuals’ anxiety about strangers, outsiders, and unknown others, as well as their reactions to a disrupted sense of community in their neighborhoods. Concerns about the community often arise from people moving away, the unpredictable behaviors of new neighbors, and increasing crime rates. They argued that these were the phenomena and worries that were being captured by surveys claiming to have measured residents’ “fear of crime,” rather than the fear of crime itself.

In an attempt to come to terms with the wide array of interpretations about the meaning and use of the concept of “fear of crime,” Garofalo (1981) sought to better understand the causes and consequences of fear. In his influential text, he explicitly defined fear as “an emotional reaction characterized by a sense of danger and anxiety,” though he restricted his definition in the article to fear of the threat of physical harm (Garofalo, 1981, p. 840). When studying the impact of fear of crime on individuals’ lives and behaviors, he argued that it is important to distinguish between the mutually reinforcing concepts of actual and anticipated fear. Specifically, Garofalo (1981) asserted that actual fear is an emotional response prompted by cues in the immediate environment that an individual associates with crime, such as other people, physical structures, poor lighting, or the presence of police. The circumstances that trigger actual fear can produce anticipated fear in similar settings in the future (Garofalo, 1981). In other words, anticipated fear is when an individual believes there is reason to be afraid given their past experiences with a similar situation that generated actual fear.

While most scholars tend to agree that fear is an emotional reaction to stimuli in the physical environment, Warr and Stafford (1983) were interested in determining why different people are afraid of different types of crimes. They developed a multiplicative
model of fear, based on their survey of a random sample of residents in Seattle, which
required respondents to rank 16 offenses with regard to their fear of victimization,
perceived risk of victimization, and the perceived seriousness of the offense. Warr and
Stafford (1983) suggested that both perceived risk and seriousness work together to
produce individuals’ fear of victimization, concluding that:

High perceived risk and seriousness are both necessary conditions for fear,
meaning that fear is high only if perceived risk and seriousness are both high, and
is low if either perceived risk or seriousness is low…Among types of offenses,
fear is a multiplicative function of perceived risk and seriousness. (p. 1035)

According to this model, an offense that is perceived as serious, but not likely, will not
generate as much fear as one that is perceived as both serious and as having a high
likelihood of occurring (also see Warr, 2000). This was one of the first studies to
theorize that perceived risk of victimization must precede an individual’s fear of crime in
a given situation.

Subsequent studies on the fear of crime were largely based on the concepts
developed by Garofalo (1981) and Warr and Stafford (1983), and specifically focused on
understanding the factors that influence individuals’ perceptions of risk, fear of crime,
and their behaviors. These are the three components that comprise Ferraro’s (1995) risk
interpretation model, which highlights how individuals’ perceptions (or fear) and
behavioral changes are shaped by their perceived potential for victimization. In this
model, Ferraro (1995) defined these individual perceptions or *fear of crime* as “an
emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with
crime,” either against themselves or others (p. 4; also see Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987).
Like Garofalo, Ferraro (1995) asserted that to produce fear, “a recognition of a situation
as possessing at least potential danger, real or imagined, is necessary” (p. 4). This sense
of potential danger or victimization is what Ferraro referred to as perceived risk. In other words, perceived risk stems from an individual’s interpretation that victimization is likely in a given situation, and fear is a reaction to that perceived risk (Addington, 2010; Ferraro, 1995; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Warr, 1984, 1985; Warr & Stafford, 1983). Like Warr and Stafford (1983), Ferraro (1995) viewed the two terms as conceptually distinct, asserting that “a person may judge his or her risk of crime to be high but not necessarily be afraid” (p. 23). Thus, while perceived risk is a necessary precursor to fear, the emotional and physiological response of fear does not always follow an individual’s cognitive perception that the risk of victimization exists in a given situation.

In his study, Ferraro (1995) attempted to predict individuals’ fear of crime by examining the impact of various ecological (e.g., official crime rate, region, community type), neighborhood (e.g., incivility, cohesion, crime watch programs), and personal (e.g., age, gender, race, education, health, time in current residence, recent direct and indirect victimization experiences) factors. To test his risk interpretation model, Ferraro used responses from a telephone survey conducted in 1990 of over 1,100 adults in the United States, along with official measures of risk by linking crime counts (from the Uniform Crime Reports) in a given area to respondents’ specific zip codes. When examining the factors that influence residents’ assessments of risk of both crime in general, as well as violent and property crimes, Ferraro (1995) found that the strongest predictor of perceived risk is neighborhood incivility. He reported:

Signs of social and physical incivility such as disruptive neighbors, unsupervised youth, vacant houses, and unkept lots are generally associated with higher perceived crime risk. These phenomena are signals to residents that more vigilance is needed to avoid crime in their daily activities, regardless of how long they have lived in the neighborhood. These results lend considerable support to
the “broken windows” thesis when predicting perceived risk. (Ferraro, 1995, p. 51)

This finding is particularly important when considering the role of context in individuals’ perceptions of risk and subsequent fear of crime. Because social and physical incivilities are more likely to be present in urban areas, it seems plausible to assume that perceptions of risk and fear of crime will vary (both with regard to levels of concern as well as reason for concern) based on the context under study. However, Ferraro (1995) did not find in his analysis that neighborhood incivilities are a strong and direct predictor of fear.

Additionally, Ferraro (1995) found that those who have experienced indirect victimization are likely to have higher perceptions of risk, and that women have higher levels of both perceived risk and fear. Each of his main findings regarding the predictors of perceived risk and fear will be discussed, in turn, in the coming sections in this chapter. They each have strong implications for the present study, and particularly for the gender and contextual comparisons that it intends to make with regard to students’ fear of crime and victimization on college campuses.

Despite his contributions to this area of inquiry, some critics have argued that Ferraro’s treatment of fear blurs the line between fear itself and other emotions like sadness or anger. Warr (2000), for example, argued that “fear is not a perception of the environment (an awareness or experience of sensory stimuli), but a reaction to the perceived environment…Fear is an emotion, a feeling of alarm or dread caused by an awareness or expectation of danger” (p. 453, emphasis added). He asserted that fear is when an individual reacts to an immediate danger in the environment, causing a variety of physiological changes. Further, Warr (2000) viewed perceived risk as a completely different concept that generally has not been treated as such. He defined perceived risk
as the “subjective probability of victimization,” suggesting that “fear is not perceived risk; by all indications, it is its consequence” (Warr, 2000, p. 454). In other words, fear is produced when an individual perceives that their likelihood of victimization is high, based on cues in the surrounding environment.

As proposed by Ferraro (1995) and later refined by Warr (2000), it is these more recent definitions of fear and perceived risk that were utilized in the present study when crafting the interview guide and conducting the interviews themselves. More specifically, perceived risk is defined as an individual’s perception of the potential for victimization in a given situation, while fear is defined as the emotional response that arises when an individual’s perception of risk is high.

2.2.1. Personal versus Altruistic (or Vicarious) Fears

When attempting to define the concept of fear, some scholars argue that it is important to differentiate between the concepts of personal fear and altruistic fear, as the latter is much more prevalent than the former despite being under-examined in the literature. Personal fears refer to those concerns we have about our own personal safety, while altruistic fears refer to those concerns we have about others, including partners, children, family members, friends, coworkers, or others who are close to us (see Drakulich, 2015; Drakulich & Rose, 2013; Haynes & Rader, 2015; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 2000; Warr & Ellison, 2000). Despite the wide use of the term “altruistic fear” in the literature, Snedker (2006) suggested that “vicarious fear” may be a more appropriate term for capturing the concern that one person feels for another, particularly if they do not make changes in their own behavior that directly benefit the person they are concerned about.
Just as there are gender differences in levels of personal fear (with studies consistently demonstrating that women are more fearful than men, which will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.3 below) there are also gender differences in levels of altruistic fear, with men consistently reporting higher levels of fear for their wives than women do for their husbands (Gilchrist, Bannister, Ditton, & Farrall, 1998; Haynes & Rader, 2015; Rader, 2010; Snedker, 2006; Warr & Ellison, 2000). Haynes and Rader (2015), for instance, were interested in understanding how both individual- and contextual-level factors impact individuals’ personal fear of crime, as well as their concerns about others. After combining a telephone survey of adults in the U.S. with data from the U.S. Census and Uniform Crime Reports, they confirmed that women have higher levels of personal fear, while men have higher levels of concern for others. Additionally, they found that respondents were most concerned about their families, followed by friends, romantic partners, and themselves. More specifically, men were most likely to report being concerned about their spouses or significant others, while women tended to be more concerned about their families and themselves (Haynes & Rader, 2015; also see Gilchrist et al., 1998).

Drakulich and Rose (2013) expanded on the gendered findings of previous work to include those in same-sex partnerships, concluding that “fear for one’s partner appears to be entirely a function of the sex of the partner…Female partners inspire more concern than male partners regardless of whether respondents are male or female” (p. 1791; also see Drakulich, 2015). In other words, not only do women harbor higher levels of personal fear about their own safety, but they also evoke higher levels of altruistic fear in their romantic partners, irrespective of whether those partners are men or women.
Drakulich (2015) suggests that individuals’ altruistic fears about their loved ones may be based on their own personal experiences with victimization and perceptions of danger, as opposed to the occurrence of actual crime in the surrounding environment.

### 2.2.2. Constrained Behavior as a Reaction to Fear

Previous research has found that two of the main responses people have to fear of crime and perceptions of risk are to engage in either avoidance or precautionary behaviors, and sometimes a combination of the two. Avoidance behaviors are those in which individuals completely avoid and remove themselves from situations that they perceive as being potentially risky and dangerous, as a means of decreasing their likelihood of victimization (DuBow et al., 1979; Garofalo, 1981; Miethe, 1995; Skogan, 1981). Such behaviors might include not traveling to certain areas during specific times of day or night, avoiding certain people, never leaving one’s home, or moving out of an area if one has the resources to do so. These avoidance behaviors that are provoked by fear can impact neighborhoods, as community cohesion becomes fractured with fewer people being active at certain times of the day and others moving away, potentially increasing fear and crime as a result (Drakulich, 2015; Hale, 1996; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Skogan, 1990; St. Jean, 2007). Avoidance behaviors can also limit individuals’ freedom of movement as they withdraw and restrict their activities outside of their homes. This is an issue that most often affects women (see Cobbina, Miller, & Brunson, 2008; May, Rader, & Goodrum, 2010), which will be reviewed in greater depth later in this chapter.

Protective or precautionary behaviors also function to decrease individuals’ likelihood of becoming victims of crime. These types of behaviors refer to the strategies
that individuals use to reduce their vulnerability and probability of being targeted for
crime (DuBow et al., 1979; Garofalo, 1981; Miethe, 1995). Examples of protective or
precautionary behaviors include locking one’s doors, carrying mace or a weapon, not
going out alone, or practicing safety in numbers by only going out with others.

In their examination of young women and men living in an inner-city
neighborhood in St. Louis, Missouri, Cobbina and colleagues (2008) found that youths’
use of constrained behaviors, including both avoidance and precautionary strategies, were
largely shaped by gender. Specifically, young men were more likely to describe
engaging in some of the protective behaviors outlined above, while young women were
more likely to adopt avoidance strategies. For instance, boys mentioned “staying within
the informal boundaries of their neighborhoods, traveling or hanging out in groups, and,
in some cases, carrying weapons,” and girls were more likely to “withdraw from public
life and stay in or nearby to their homes” (Cobbina et al., 2008, p. 528). Thus, not only is
fear of crime gendered, as has been established in previous research and will be discussed
in the next section below, but Cobbina and colleagues (2008) discovered that the
adoption and use of constrained behaviors is also gendered.

With regard to the impact of these behaviors on individuals’ management of risk,
there have been mixed findings. For instance, Ferraro (1996) found that the use of
constrained behaviors increases fear, while Garofalo (1981) concluded that avoidance
and protective behaviors may decrease one’s perceptions of risk and – as a result – their
actual fears (also see Miethe, 1995). However, he argued that these behavioral changes
may have little to no impact on individuals’ anticipated fears since these are based on
past experiences with actual fear (Garofalo, 1981).
Rader and Haynes (2014) also sought to test the link between constrained behaviors and increased levels of fear. They did this by using a national survey of over 1,200 adults in the U.S. to examine the impact of demographic characteristics and three different types of constrained behaviors on individuals’ levels of both personal and altruistic fear. Rader and Haynes (2014) were specifically interested in assessing the independent effects of avoidance behaviors (e.g., staying away from specific areas during certain times of the day, changing daily routines), protective behaviors (e.g., carrying mace, taking a self-defense class, adding locks to one’s home), and weapons behaviors (e.g., carrying a knife or a firearm) on fear for oneself and fear for others. They found that women, those with higher perceptions of risk, and those who constrained their behaviors had higher levels of both personal and altruistic fear. Specifically, those who engaged in avoidance behaviors had higher levels of both types of fear, while those who used protective or weapons behaviors only had higher levels of altruistic fear (Rader & Haynes, 2014).

Rader and Haynes’ (2014) findings are in opposition to Garofalo’s (1981) predictions, which assumed that avoidance behaviors would decrease fear. Further, their conclusions suggest that individuals who engage in any type of constrained behavior to ensure their safety will have higher levels of fear for both themselves and others. One of the most consistent findings regarding this topic is that women are more likely than men to engage in constrained behaviors, and particularly avoidance strategies, which may be one way that they attempt to manage their greater perceptions of risk and fear – a topic that is discussed in the next section.
2.3. Fear of Crime and Gender

It is difficult to talk about fear of crime without also discussing the role of gender, as research has consistently shown the two to be somewhat inseparable. Ferraro (1995), for instance, found that one of the most important predictors of fear of crime is gender, whereby women are more fearful of crime and victimization than men (also see Addington, 2010; Haynes & Rader, 2015; Haynie, 1998; Lane & Fisher, 2009; Lane, Rader, Henson, Fisher, & May, 2014; Koss et al., 1994; May & Dunaway, 2000; May, Rader, & Goodrum, 2010; Rader, 2004; Stanko, 1992, 1995; Warr, 1984, 1985). This is intriguing when considering the fact that women have lower rates of crime victimization (at least in official crime statistics) than men (Addington, 2010; Baumer, 1978; Britton, Jacobsen, & Howard, 2017; Hale, 1996; Riger, Gordon, & Le Bailly, 1978; Stanko, 1992; Young, 1992).

A number of explanations have been provided to account for this apparent gender-fear paradox. Some argue that this paradox could be attributable to more “hidden” forms of victimization that are not captured in official statistics and that are more likely to affect the lives of women, including being victimized by family members in the home or being catcalled, stalked, touched, or harassed in other ways outside of the home (Britton et al., 2017; Cobbina et al., 2008; Elchardus, De Groof, & Smits, 2008; Lane et al., 2014; MacMillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000; Madriz, 1997b, 1997a; Pain, 1997; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995; Scott, 2003; Stanko, 1992, 1995; Walklate, 1997; Young, 1992). With regard to the latter forms of hidden victimization, the vast majority of women report that they have been the recipients of such unwanted attention in public spaces in the past. For instance, Schwartz and Pitts (1995) revealed that in a survey of university women, nearly
half reported experiencing uncomfortable and unwanted advances on the streets. Similarly, MacMillan and colleagues (2000) found that as many as 85% of the women in their sample had experienced some form of sexual harassment by a stranger, including receiving an obscene phone call, getting unwanted attention (e.g., catcalls, whistling, leering, blowing kisses), being followed, or experiencing indecent exposure. Further, they concluded that this was one of the main factors contributing to women’s perceptions of safety. Regarding the types of harassment and threatening behaviors that women face on a daily basis, Lupton and Tulloch (1999) aptly explained, “Women’s fears should not, therefore, be discounted as ‘irrational’ but rather be viewed as rational responses to lived situations they find frightening” (p. 509; also see Madriz, 1997b). Thus, the hidden victimization of women is an extensive problem that likely contributes to the presumed gender-fear paradox, whereby women are more fearful than men of crime.

Although women most often cite that their biggest concern is strangers in public spaces, it is important to note that one of the greatest threats to women is violence that takes place in private spaces and is perpetrated by people they know (Madriz, 1997b; Pain, 1997, 2001; Scott, 2003; Stanko, 1992, 1995; Valentine, 1992; Warr, 1990). Pain (1997, 2001) refers to this contradiction as the “spatial paradox,” recognizing that both physical and sexual violence (beyond the forms of street harassment mentioned above) at the hands of strangers is relatively rare yet tends to be what women express being most fearful of. Because of the fact that offenders who are often known to the victim perpetrate these incidents of violence, they are more likely to go unreported and thus remain hidden from official crime data.
Others have adopted the vulnerability perspective to explain women’s higher levels of fear. This is the notion that those who perceive themselves as having little or no control over a situation and as being socially or physically vulnerable and unable to defend themselves will be more afraid (Hale, 1996; Jackson, 2009; Lane et al., 2014; May & Dunaway, 2000; Riger et al., 1978; Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, Lucas, & Alarid, 2010; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Stanko, 1992). The vulnerability perspective’s assumptions about women’s and men’s perceptions of self are strongly rooted in individuals’ gender socialization as children. Specifically, physical strength, dominance, independence, and fearlessness are traits that are encouraged for boys, while physical weakness, passivity, fearfulness, and dependence on men are traits that are reinforced for girls (Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Day, 2001; Franklin & Franklin, 2009; Goodey, 1997; Hollander, 2001; Lane et al., 2014; Madriz, 1997a, 1997b; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Riger et al., 1978; Walklate, 1997).

As a result of this, in the 1980s and 1990s, scholars who were trying to make sense of the gender-fear paradox argued that women were more fearful because they “were smaller and felt less able to fend off attackers.” Alternatively, “men feared crime at such low levels because they felt physically capable of protecting themselves from an attack” (Lane et al., 2014, pp. 94–95; also see Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; Killias, 1990). This same line of thinking has also been used to account for the high levels of fear among the elderly4. Related to these arguments, some have even argued that the gender gap in fear of crime exists because it may not be socially acceptable for men to admit their fears; therefore, men are not as willing as women to report being fearful to researchers on

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4 Although there have been mixed results in studies examining levels of fear among the elderly, many scholars have argued that “age differences vary depending on how the concept [of fear] is measured” (Miethe, 1995, p. 19; also see LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989).
surveys and during interviews, largely in an effort to maintain their masculine persona (Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Goodey, 1997; Sutton & Farrall, 2005).

Alternatively, Baumer (1978) proposed that the link between gender and fear of crime may not be a paradox as many have suggested. Instead, he asserted that women’s lower rates of victimization may be attributable to their higher levels of fear, which cause them to take more precautionary measures to keep themselves safe. This is also known as the exposure to risk hypothesis (see Skogan, 1987). This hypothesis posits that women’s greater fear is actually beneficial, as it keeps them from becoming victims of crime by reducing their exposure to risk.

Similarly, Balkin (1979) tried to account for the fact that certain population groups, including women and the elderly, have historically had higher levels of fear, despite their lower rates of victimization. Many have argued that women’s fears are “irrational,” pointing to their lower rates of victimization; however, Balkin (1979) suggested that these rates must be adjusted to account for women’s exposure to risk before we can adequately understand their fears. He stated, “We should not cavalierly interpret fear of crime as an irrational response,” but instead “should look to behavioral responses to fear of crime as well as to the causes of the fear of crime” (Balkin, 1979, p. 357; see Stafford & Galle, 1984, for a similar argument). That is, fear of crime is not irrational, once individuals’ differential exposure to victimization risk has been accounted for.

According to Haynie (1998), women’s higher levels of fear have remained relatively stable over time. In her study examining trends in the gender gap in fear over a period of 20 years from 1973-1994, she also discovered men’s levels of fear had
gradually been increasing with the violent crime rate from 1988 onwards, slightly narrowing the gender gap in fear. Despite this insight, Haynie (1998) concluded that gender remains the strongest predictor of fear of crime, such that women are nearly five times as likely as men to report being fearful of crime.

Alternatively, Reid and Konrad (2004) hypothesized that the gender gap in fear may be attributable to the fact that scholars have not differentiated between certain types of crime in their research. Based on telephone surveys of about 270 adults in New Orleans, Louisiana, they found that women and men do not differ in their levels of fear for burglary, which is a crime that they argue is gender-neutral and impacts both women and men relatively equally. Consistent with previous research, Reid and Konrad (2004) also discovered that women have higher levels of fear of sexual assault, a crime that they are more likely to be victimized by than men. However, the relationship between gender and fear of robbery, which Reid and Konrad (2004) expected men to be more afraid of, is a bit more complex. They found that “perceived risk has a greater cumulative impact on men’s fear than on women’s fear…In fact, at the highest levels of perceived risk, men’s fear of robbery actually surpasses the level of women’s fear at the same level of perceived risk of victimization” (Reid & Konrad, 2004, pp. 417–418). Thus, they concluded that the presumed gender gap in fear is a result of the measurement of crime, as well as the failure to distinguish between different types of crime, in previous research.

Other scholars like Hinkle (2015) have been unable to identify an explicit link between gender and fear of crime. In his examination of three different proxies of fear, which included emotional fear (i.e., “In the past 6 months, have you felt afraid of becoming a victim of crime on your block?”), perceived safety (i.e., “How safe do you
feel when walking alone at night on your block?”), and perceived risk (i.e., “In your opinion, how likely is it that you will become a victim of the following crimes sometime in the next 6 months?”), Hinkle (2015) found that women were more likely than men to report feeling unsafe, as well as higher perceptions of risk (pp. 154-155). However, he found no significant difference between women and men when considering their feelings of emotional fear. He suggested that this contradiction between his findings and those of prior research could be attributable to issues of inconsistent measurement and operationalization when he stated, “the gender gap discussed in much of the ‘fear’ literature could be due to studies most commonly using measures of perceived safety as proxies of fear” (Hinkle, 2015, p. 160). That is, prior work has relied on various combinations of the constructs of perceived risk, perceived safety, and emotional fear that Hinkle (2015) utilized, referring to them all under the broad label of “fear.”

While the gender gap in fear has historically been attributed to processes related to socialization, and particularly to essentialist assumptions about women’s and men’s behaviors and emotions, recent work has attempted to identify the specific sources of women’s higher levels of fear. Most relevant to the present study, one of the leading explanations that has emerged from this debate about the gendered nature of perceptions of risk and fear of crime is the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, which was initially proposed by Warr (1984, 1985) and further developed by Ferraro (1995, 1996).

2.3.1. The “Shadow” of Sexual Assault

Despite inconsistencies in the measurement of fear, it is widely understood that women are more fearful than men. Aside from those noted above, one of the explanations that is most commonly used to account for gender differences in fear is the
shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. Drawing largely on the work of Warr (1984), who asserted that “rape may be the ‘master offense’ in fear of victimization among women,” in that “fear of crime is fear of rape” (p. 700), Ferraro (1995, 1996) is credited with the development of this hypothesis. Both Warr (1984, 1985) and later Ferraro (1995, 1996) viewed rape as a “perceptually contemporaneous offense” for women, such that rape and sexual assault are perceived as crimes that will likely accompany or follow other offenses. More specifically, in his survey of Seattle residents, Warr (1985) found that women’s fear of rape was correlated with 15 other offenses, which suggests that “rape is not viewed as an isolated event, but rather as an event that does or may include other serious offenses” (p. 245). As such, according to this theory, women’s fear of rape is expected to predict their fears of other types of crime.

After surveying and interviewing women in three cities, Gordon and Riger (1989) came to similar conclusions as Warr and Ferraro. They ultimately referred to rape as “the female fear” because it is one that is said to affect all women’s lives on a daily basis and contribute to their higher levels of fear (Gordon & Riger, 1989; also see Koss et al., 1994; Riger et al., 1979; Stanko, 1992, 1995). As such, the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis states, “Sexual assault may ‘shadow’ other types of victimization among women. Rape may operate like a ‘master offense’ among women, especially younger women who have the highest rate of rape, heightening fear reactions for other forms of crime” (Ferraro, 1995, p. 87). In this way, the central tenet of this theory is that women perceive that any crime against them will culminate with sexual assault, which is the offense that overshadows their fears of all crimes and ultimately renders them more fearful than men.
There have been various attempts to assess the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. Although the majority of these efforts have taken place on college campuses, due to the large concentration of young women (i.e., those with the highest rate of sexual assault) in college populations, there have been some empirical tests of this theory with other adolescent and adult populations. May (2001), for instance, was interested in assessing the link between fear of sexual assault and fear of nonsexual victimization (e.g., fear of being attacked with a weapon, being shot, having money or other possessions stolen). To do this, he utilized a sample of 725 adolescents enrolled in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in public high schools across Mississippi. Consistent with previous research, he discovered that girls were more fearful than boys of both sexual and nonsexual victimization. Further, he found support for the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. Not only were adolescent girls more fearful of all types of victimization, but also “when fear of sexual assault is controlled for or excluded, females are no more fearful of criminal victimization than males. Thus, it appears that the shadow of sexual assault thesis applies to adolescents as well as adults” (May, 2001, pp. 159–160). These findings for adolescents reflect those of Ferraro (1995, 1996), who examined this theory using a sample of adult women. However, May’s (2001) contributions extend beyond simply confirming the shadow hypothesis for adolescent girls, lending support to its existence when accounting for boys’ fear as well. Specifically, fear of sexual assault was also found to predict adolescent boys’ fear of nonsexual victimization.

In their examination of the influence of sexual and nonsexual assault on adult women’s and men’s fear of gang crimes, Lane and Meeker’s (2003) analysis revealed

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5 These studies will be reviewed in section 2.6, which specifically focuses on fear on college campuses.
more complex findings. Like many scholars before them, they found that women are significantly more fearful of crime and victimization than men (e.g., Ferraro, 1995, 1996; May, 2001; Warr, 1984, 1985). Lane and Meeker (2003) also discovered that women’s fear of sexual assault accounts for their fear of gang-related crimes, and especially those that cause physical harm. However, when fear of gang assault was included in the analysis, they found that “the physical component of the harm explains more variance in fear for both women and men than does the sexual component of the assault” (Lane & Meeker, 2003, p. 365). Lane and Meeker (2003) suggested that a more general measure of fear of physical harm may be more appropriate than one capturing only the fear of sexual assault when attempting to account for individuals’ levels of fear, at least as these pertain to fear of gang crime.

More recently, Hirtenlehner and Farrall (2014) sought to test whether women’s fear of burglary in the United Kingdom can be explained by their underlying fear of sexual or physical assault. Like Lane and Meeker (2003), they initially found that women’s fear of sexual assault has a positive impact on their fear of burglary and can even account for the differences between women’s and men’s fear of burglary. However, “once the physical assault component is controlled for, the threat of sexual intrusion adds little to the understanding of the magnitude of fear of burglary” (Hirtenlehner & Farrall, 2014, p. 1181). In other words, their findings provide further confirmation for those of Lane and Meeker (2003), suggesting that a general shadow of physical harm may be more appropriate when accounting for women’s and men’s fears than one that focuses specifically on sexual assault.
Despite these mixed findings in tests of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, both Lane and Meeker (2003) and Hirtenlehner and Farrall (2014) admitted that their conclusions may be attributable to the fact that they were investigating the phenomenon with regard to fear of gang-related crime and burglary, respectively. As noted above, the bulk of the empirical work on this subject has been conducted in relation to college student populations. As a result, this theory will be revisited in greater detail in section 2.6, where it will specifically be discussed in the context of women’s fear of crime and victimization on college and university campuses.

2.4. The Role of Context and Place in Fear of Crime

In addition to gender playing an influential role in individuals’ levels of fear, characteristics of the areas in which they live have also been shown to be important. Specifically, fear of crime varies significantly based on the size of the city, in that those living in more densely populated (or urban) areas tend to be more fearful than those living in areas where people are more dispersed (Baumer, 1978; Clemente & Kleiman, 1977; Haynie, 1998). Further and as mentioned previously, Ferraro (1995) found that signs of neighborhood incivility (i.e., disruptive neighbors, vacant houses and buildings, empty lots), which tend to be more prominent in urban areas, are highly influential in residents’ perceptions of risk and subsequently, their fear of crime. In sum, explanations for these differences in fear in urban versus suburban and rural areas have largely rested on objective crime rates, which tend to be higher in urban areas; individuals’ prior victimization experiences (both personal and vicarious); and the presence of physical
incivilities and visible disorder (Baumer, 1978; Haynie, 1998). The latter two of these explanations will be discussed in more detail below.

2.4.1. Personal and Vicarious Victimization Experiences

Previous work has consistently demonstrated that victims of crime have higher perceptions of risk and are more fearful than non-victims (e.g., Baumer, 1978; Bennett & Flavin, 1994; Box, Hale, & Andrews, 1988; Elchardus et al., 2008; Hinkle & Yang, 2014; Skogan, 1987; Warr, 2000); although some have suggested this may be a gendered phenomenon, such that victimization only makes females more fearful and does not have the same effect on males (e.g., Ferraro, 1995; May & Dunaway, 2000). Skogan (1987) conducted surveys of residents in various high-crime neighborhoods in Newark, New Jersey, and Houston, Texas, to better understand the impact of victimization on fear of crime. He found that recent victimization influenced respondents’ subsequent worry and concern about crime and caused them to engage in more defensive behaviors to prevent future victimization. This was particularly true for those who had recently been victimized by property crime (also see Bennett & Flavin, 1994), as personal victimization (i.e., rape, theft, robbery) was not as common among those in his sample.

Using data from the British Crime Survey, however, Box and colleagues (1988), found it important to distinguish between differences in fear for victims living in neighborhoods with low versus high levels of incivilities6. They found that respondents who had previously been victimized and were living in areas characterized by low levels of incivilities were less fearful than those who had never been victimized. Alternatively, respondents who had previously been victimized and who perceived their neighborhoods

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6 The impact of incivilities and disorder on individuals’ fear of crime will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.
as having high levels of incivilities were much more fearful than non-victims (Box et al., 1988).

Others report that the relationship between victimization and fear is more complicated, arguing that it is necessary to also consider the impact of indirect or vicarious victimization on perceptions of risk and levels of fear. Indirect, or vicarious, victimization refers to knowing someone who has been the victim of crime, and some studies have found that those who have experienced this form of victimization tend to report even higher levels of fear than those who have been personally victimized (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Drakulich, 2015; DuBow et al., 1979; Ferraro, 1996; Miethe, 1995). Baumer (1978) argued that this is because “victims of crime spend a lot of time recounting their experiences to others.” As such, “it appears that victimization does affect the fear of crime indirectly through the experiences of others. One event may affect many individuals” (Baumer, 1978, p. 258; also see Skogan, 1987, who refers to this exchange of information as “rumor networks”). Box and colleagues’ (1988) study confirmed this assertion, as their findings revealed that respondents who knew someone who had been victimized in their neighborhood were more likely to be fearful of crime than those who did not know a victim. Further, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) suggested that the impact of vicarious victimization could be even more detrimental to communities than personal victimization because:

Accounts of such experiences can spread throughout the local relational networks of a community, thereby creating a “shock wave” that spreads the impact of the victimization. Therefore, the degree to which one is embedded in local community networks affects the amount and nature of crime-related information to which one is exposed. (p. 97)

They suggested that it is the act of hearing individuals in their social networks recounting their victimization experiences that makes people afraid. In this manner, vicarious
victimization impacts the lives of many more individuals than does personal 
victimization because the stories work their way through the “rumor networks” (Skogan, 
1987), creating “shock waves” (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993) that reverberate and elevate 
levels of fear (also see Gilchrist et al., 1998; Miethe, 1995; Riggs & Kilpatrick, 1990; 
Taylor & Hale, 1986).

2.4.2. Social Disorganization and Broken Windows Theories

It is well established in the literature that disorder – whether actual or perceived – 
breeds fear in communities, and much of this work has its roots in social disorganization 
theory. Building on the work of Park (1925) and Burgess (1925), who developed a 
model of concentric zones to theorize about patterns of growth in urban areas, Shaw and 
McKay (1942/1972) specifically sought to understand how delinquent behavior is 
spatially distributed throughout the city and its surrounding areas. They found that 
delinquency is prevalent in the areas closest to the center of the city, largely due to the 
ecological conditions that exist in those locations. This was true in Chicago, where they 
first conducted their analysis, and also in other cities across the country including 
Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Richmond. As predicted by Park (1925) 
and Burgess’s (1925) model, Shaw and McKay (1942/1972) consistently found that rates 
of delinquency and crime were highest in the inner city and gradually decreased as one 
moved away from the central areas, having the lowest rates in the areas that were the 
farthest away from the central zones. They concluded that higher crime rates in these 
locations could be attributed to three key structural issues that plague urban areas: 
residential instability, racial and ethnic heterogeneity, and poverty. Each of these 
characteristics undermine social ties among neighbors within urban communities,
preventing residents from “organizing collectively against groups migrating into neighborhoods, or from adequately controlling the antisocial behavior of area residents” (Taylor & Covington, 1993, p. 375; also see Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kornhauser, 1978; Shaw & McKay, 1942).

Scholars who later examined the role of changing environmental and community characteristics in crime expanded on social disorganization theory, postulating that crime is contagious in the inner city, such that disorder fuels more disorder. Building on the work of Hunter (1978), who argued that social disorganization in communities triggers signs of both physical and social disorder, which causes residents to question their safety, Wilson and Kelling (1982) are credited with the development of broken windows theory. This theory suggests, “if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken” (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, p. 30). They argued that this is because disorder that goes unfixed and unpunished signals to residents that no one cares. This ultimately causes a breakdown of informal social control as residents retreat indoors, avoid one another, and change their behaviors as a result of their growing fear of crime in their communities (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kelling & Coles, 1996; Lewis & Maxfield, 1980; St. Jean, 2007; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). In this way, unchecked disorder produces more disorder because residents are not around to stop it from occurring (whether through formal or informal means) and outsiders may be attracted to the neighborhood, knowing that there are opportunities to commit crime there without

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7 Fisher (1991) also provided an examination of the negative effects that both social and physical disorder can have on local businesses. As previous studies about disorder in residential neighborhoods have found, crime and disorder increase the public’s levels of fear, which ultimately impedes levels of social control in communities as owners are forced to close down their shops due to the financial impacts of low business.
consequence (Kelling & Coles, 1996; Skogan, 1990, 2015; St. Jean, 2007; Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

2.4.3. Examining the Disorder-Fear Nexus in Urban Areas

In his influential book, Skogan (1990) found empirical support for the broken windows hypothesis, concluding that there is a link between disorder and fear (also see Kelling & Coles, 1996; Taylor, 2001). Further, he argued that disorder has a critical role in the decline and decay of urban communities because it leads to the destabilization of neighborhoods, as well-positioned residents move out and social controls erode. In his study, Skogan (1990) distinguished between two types of disorder; that which is social and that which is physical (also see Hunter, 1978; Lewis & Maxfield, 1980; Wilson, 1975, who are among those first credited with developing these concepts). More specifically, he defined social disorder “as a matter of behavior: you can see it happen (public drinking or prostitution), experience it (catcalling or sexual harassment), or notice direct evidence of it (graffiti or vandalism)” (Skogan, 1990, p. 4). He described these types of behaviors as episodic, in that they tend to be single events, as opposed to an ongoing disruption (also see Skogan, 2015). Physical disorder, on the other hand, is more ongoing in nature and “involves visual signs of negligence and unchecked decay: abandoned or ill-kept buildings, broken streetlights, trash-filled lots, and alleys strewn with garbage and alive with rats” (Skogan, 1990, p. 4). Through surveys of residents living in 40 inner city neighborhoods across the U.S., Skogan (1990) found that fear is strongly associated with both social and physical disorder. Residents interpret the presence of these two types of disorder as “signs of crime” and perceive that they have higher levels of risk of victimization. Similarly, there has been recent longitudinal,
empirical support for broken windows theory, as Robinson and colleagues (2003) discovered that residents who perceived their neighborhoods as being disorderly became less satisfied, felt more vulnerable, and were more concerned about crime in the following year.

Following Skogan’s (1990) important contributions about the disorder-fear nexus, other studies have focused on specifying the causal mechanisms involved in this relationship. LaGrange and colleagues (1992), for instance, were among the first to assert that the relationship between incivility and fear of crime is presumed to be causal and direct, with incivility preceding fear. However, they argued that the link is likely more complex, given the fact that researchers were beginning to distinguish between measures of fear versus measures of perceived risk at that time. Using data from over 1,000 telephone interviews of adults across the U.S., LaGrange and colleagues (1992) tested models that independently examined the effects of perceived social and physical incivilities on both fear and perceived risk. They found that higher levels of both social and physical incivilities are independently associated with fear and perceived risk, although each type of incivility serves as a better predictor of individuals’ fear and perceived risk of property crime (e.g., being begged for money, being cheated or conned, having one’s car stolen, being vandalized, getting robbed) than they do of personal crime (e.g., being raped, murdered, attacked with a weapon, having one’s home burglarized) (LaGrange et al., 1992). When attempting to specify the causal link between disorder and fear, they reported:

Social and physical incivility do have an important direct effect on perceptions of risk; risk, in turn, has a powerful effect on fear of crime…Incivilities are fear inducing only if they first elevate perceptions of risk—in the absence of
heightened perceptions of risk, neighborhood incivilities do not have a strong direct link with fear of crime. (LaGrange et al., 1992, p. 326)

Thus, they concluded that neighborhood incivilities indirectly impact residents’ fear of crime, as the relationship is mediated by their perceptions of risk, which directly influence fear.

Among the most common criticisms of broken windows theory is that it was immediately translated into practice with the implementation of new policing strategies before undergoing empirical tests to assess its central concepts and validity (Gau, Corsaro, & Brunson, 2014; Hinkle & Yang, 2014). Gau and colleagues (2014) did exactly this in an attempt to understand if disorder has a direct effect on residents’ fear of crime or is mediated by other social factors, including social cohesion and social control. Using a survey of over 450 residents living in Peoria, Illinois, combined with data covering about 30 Census tracts, they found support for the central tenets of broken windows theory and particularly those suggesting that disorder changes the way residents feel about their neighborhoods (Gau et al., 2014). However, Gau and colleagues’ (2014) findings challenge the notion that disorder directly influences fear, instead concluding that “a nontrivial portion of the total effect of disorder on fear is attributable to disorder’s corrosive impact on social mechanisms of social cohesion and social control” (p. 585).

They further argued that “if disorder causes people to question their neighbors’ values, as the present results suggest it does, then it undermines public safety in a way independent of its effects on fear” (Gau et al., 2014, p. 585). Their findings are similar to those of Markowitz and colleagues (2001), who found that disorder exhibits an indirect effect on crime through both cohesion and fear. This occurs through a feedback loop, in which lower levels of social cohesion increase the occurrence of crime and disorder,
subsequently increasing fear, which further decreases cohesion. In other words, the existence of disorder in neighborhoods contributes to the erosion of both social control and cohesion, which alters residents’ views of their neighbors, their willingness to work together to prevent future disorder from occurring, and ultimately their levels of fear, the presence of more disorder, and the occurrence of crime (Gau et al., 2014; Markowitz et al., 2001).

Other scholars have been critical of past attempts to assess broken windows theory. They argue that when empirical tests of the theory have been conducted, they have produced mixed results, largely because of the various ways in which fear has been measured that tend to confound it with perceived risk and safety (Ferraro, 1995; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Hinkle, 2015; Hinkle & Yang, 2014; LaGrange et al., 1992; Taylor, 1999, 2001; Warr, 2000). Hinkle (2015), for instance, recently conducted a study that utilizes measures of each of these concepts, including fear of crime, perceived risk, and perceived safety, all in an effort to better understand the utility of broken windows theory. To conduct this analysis, he relied on a telephone survey of residents and business owners in three cities that are just east of Los Angeles, California. Hinkle (2015) ultimately found that the perceived presence of social disorder was significantly associated with all three proxies of fear in the expected directions. That is, social disorder increased levels of emotional fear, lowered perceptions of safety, and increased perceptions of risk. Physical disorder, on the other hand, was only statistically associated with perceptions of safety and risk, exhibiting no impact on levels of emotional fear (Hinkle, 2015; also see St. Jean, 2007, for similar findings). To make sense of these findings, Hinkle (2015) explained:
Physical disorder apparently sends signals that an area may be unsafe, or a place where criminal victimization may occur, but does not directly heighten emotional fear of crime. Social disorder, on the other hand, appears to send signals that directly increase fear—perhaps due to the presence of disorderly individuals who may be perceived as immediate and salient threats. (p. 162)

In other words, he argued that physical disorder may indirectly impact emotional fear by first affecting perceptions of safety or risk, which then influence emotional fear. Aside from this one finding about physical disorder, Hinkle (2015) concluded that his other findings support the propositions of broken windows theory.

One of the main questions that has been generated by studies finding a link between disorder, perceived risk, and fear is whether people perceive disorder in the same ways (e.g., Hinkle & Yang, 2014; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Skogan, 1990; Taylor, 1999; Yang & Pao, 2015), since the bulk of these studies have used measures of perceived disorder rather than objective disorder with only a few exceptions (see, for example, Brunton-Smith & Sturgis, 2011; Hinkle & Yang, 2014; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Taylor & Covington, 1993). One such exception is a study conducted by Taylor and Covington (1993) that sought to understand the effects of rapid neighborhood change on the racial composition of the neighborhood, physical incivilities, unsupervised teens, and fear of crime. They combined surveys of over 1,600 residents living in 66 neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland, with objective measures of physical disorder in those neighborhoods, as judged by teams of trained raters. Counter to Skogan’s (1990) findings, Taylor and Covington (1993) concluded that “the effects of rapid neighborhood change do not operate directly on fear” or “spawn a host of unrelated detrimental consequences including increased fear” (p. 389). Rather, they argue that fear is higher in disorderly neighborhoods, not because of rapid changes in the racial composition of the neighborhood itself, but because of the disorder (e.g., unsupervised
teens) that accompanies and follows these changes (Taylor & Covington, 1993). In other words, there is an indirect link between disorder and fear.

More recently, Hinkle and Yang (2014) also used a measure of objective (or observed) disorder in their work, combining it with measures of perceived disorder to see how the two relate. Their rationale for doing this is based on the premise that “how disorder is perceived varies by the preconceived behavioral expectations a person has for an area…Disorder is a social construct rather than a concrete social or physical condition that is perceived consistently across individuals in a similar manner” (Hinkle & Yang, 2014, p. 27; also see Harcourt, 2001). Stated differently, the perception of both physical and social disorder by residents is subjective and would presumably have a larger impact on fear and decline than “disorder” observed by outsiders (Harcourt, 2001; Hinkle & Yang, 2014; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Yang & Pao, 2015). The results of Hinkle and Yang’s (2014) study examining the relationship between perceived and observed disorder reflects this, as they concluded that there is little overlap between researchers’ observations of social disorder and those of residents. However, they also found that observable physical disorder does play a role in residents’ perceptions of social disorder in their communities, while race has no impact, contradicting the findings of previous research (e.g., Harcourt, 2001; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). As broken windows theory predicts, Hinkle and Yang (2014) did find that the presence of social disorder heightens residents’ perceptions of risk, but only when that disorder is perceived by the residents themselves and not measured by outside researchers.

Similarly, in their experimental study of college students and police officers in Taiwan, Yang and Pao (2015) also discovered that individuals’ perceptions of disorder
vary. They showed 100 photos in random order to a sample comprised of 120 police officers and nearly 250 students and asked their respondents to indicate if they felt the photos were consistent with Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) concept of disorder. Yang and Pao (2015) found that police and students only gave similar ratings when signs of physical disorder were clearly apparent in the photos. However, the discrepancy among all respondents came once people were included in the photos and individuals’ stereotypes came into play. They concluded that perceptions of disorder are not as uniform for everyone as broken windows theory would assume. More specifically, Yang and Pao (2015) asserted:

We do not find evidence supporting the perception invariant assumption behind the broken windows thesis. When respondents view photos without social actors, the consistency of ratings is very high. However, when the stimuli contain both social and physical elements, rating agreement among respondents declines to the extent that the accuracy is no better than chance. (p. 556)

While perceptions of physical disorder appear to be somewhat clear-cut, once individuals from minority groups enter into the picture, these perceptions become much less apparent.

**2.4.4. Race, Perceptions of Disorder, and Fear**

Other studies have also examined the role of race in individuals’ perceptions of disorder and victimization risk. Sampson and Raudenbush (2004), for example, sought to better understand the factors that predict individuals’ perceptions of disorder, based on Harcourt’s (2001) contention that perceptions of disorder are socially constructed and subjective. After combining questionnaire and census data with that from police records and the systematic social observation of nearly 500 different block groups in Chicago, they found that neighborhood racial composition does function to shape residents’ perceptions of disorder, even when controls are in place for disorder observed by trained
researchers. The discrepancies between perceived disorder (by residents) and observed disorder (by outside researchers) when attempting to predict perceptions of risk and fear are consistent with the later findings of Hinkle and Yang (2014) and Yang and Pao (2015), as discussed above. Specifically, Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) found that black residents report lower levels of disorder than whites; however, when considering predominantly black neighborhoods, both blacks and whites are likely to perceive that these areas have high disorder. They attribute this finding to the notion that “residents supplement their knowledge with prior beliefs informed by the racial stigmatization of modern urban ghettos” (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004, p. 336).

Following the contributions of Sampson and Raudenbush (2004), later scholars aimed to expand upon their conclusion, with the goal of understanding how racial stereotypes influence individuals’ perceptions of disorder, risk, and fear. Some have argued that the perceived racial composition of a neighborhood impacts residents’ perceptions of risk and fear, and they often attribute this relationship to individuals’ stereotypes of blacks as criminals (Chiricos, McEntire, & Gertz, 2001; Pickett, Chiricos, Golden, & Gertz, 2012). Pickett and colleagues (2012), for example, concluded that residents’ perceptions of their neighborhood’s racial composition increase their perceptions of victimization risk, with beliefs about the percentage of black residents having the second largest effect on risk after respondents’ gender.

This relationship largely has to do with individuals’ deep-seated racial stereotypes and prejudices that link African Americans to crime and criminal behavior (Chiricos et al., 2001; also see Mears & Stewart, 2010, for a discussion about how interracial contact

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8 It is important to note that individuals’ perceptions of the racial composition of their neighborhoods often have little to do with the actual racial composition. Further, the former consistently serves as a better predictor of perceived risk and fear than does the latter.
and friendships can perpetuate racial stereotypes and increase fear). For, as Wickes and colleagues (2013) argued, “‘Seeing’ disorder is, at least in part, influenced by enduring biases that associate particular minorities with criminality” (p. 521; also see Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). In other words, they suggested that the disorder individuals perceive in their communities is strongly influenced by their assumptions about particular people and places (Wickes et al., 2013). This was based on Wickes and colleagues’ (2013) finding that residents’ under- and over-estimations of the minority presence in their neighborhoods are significantly tied to their perceptions of disorder, in that those who perceive a higher minority composition “see” more disorder and those who perceive a smaller minority composition perceive less disorder. As discussed above, previous work has found a link between individuals’ perceptions of disorder, perceptions of risk, and their subsequent fear of crime.

Each of the studies discussed throughout this section have considerable implications for the consideration of context when examining students’ fear of crime on campus. As has been shown, perceptions of disorder are subjective, but are often tied to particular contexts (i.e., urban areas), and have strong effects on individuals’ subsequent perceptions of risk and fear of crime. It is critical for studies investigating the fear of crime on campus to compare students’ perceptions of risk in various contexts to better understand the similarities and differences, as well as the impact that these perceptions have on students’ daily routines. This is exactly what the present study seeks to do.
2.5. Routine Activities, Lifestyles, and Fear of Crime

Despite the abundance of research examining the relationship between perceptions of risk, fear of crime, and the adoption of constrained behaviors, there have been fewer studies – relatively speaking – that investigate the role of individuals’ lifestyles on their fear of crime and vice versa. Much of the work that has been done in this regard has utilized routine activities theory. This theory was initially formulated by Cohen and Felson (1979) with the central purpose of reconciling the increase in crime in the United States since the 1960s, which they attributed to changes in the structure of individuals’ routine activities. The theory proposes that in order for a crime to occur, the following three elements must converge in time and space: “an offender with both criminal inclinations and the ability to carry out those inclinations, a person or object providing a suitable target for the offender, and absence of guardians capable of preventing violations” (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 590). Further, if one of these elements is missing, no criminal act will occur; they all must be present.

Cohen and Felson (1979) suggested that changes in the routine activity structure since the 1960s have led to an increase in suitable targets and a decrease in capable guardians (i.e., ordinary citizens, police officers), subsequently increasing the occurrence of crime. They argued that this has largely been due to activities that remove individuals (i.e., capable guardians) from their homes and make them more suitable targets to potential offenders, such as increases in “college enrollment, female labor force participation, urbanization, suburbanization, vacations and new electronic durables” (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 605). These points are particularly important for the present study as it takes place on two college campuses – one suburban and the other urban –
where students tend to carry valuable items, including laptops and smartphones, that might make them attractive targets to potential offenders. Some have even argued that young men and those living in urban areas are at greater risk of crime because they have higher levels of exposure to risky situations and potential offenders (see Mustaine, 1997). As a result, it is entirely possible that the convergence in time and space of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and incapable guardians might vary between these two particular campus contexts, where a disproportionate number of young people are often located.

One of the few studies that has attempted to explicate how individuals’ routine activities influence their perceptions of risk and fear of crime was conducted by Mesch (2000). Using data from a 1994 telephone survey of about 500 residents in Haifa, Israel, he was interested in understanding the relationships between residents’ perceptions of risk, fear of crime, and nighttime leisure activities. He concluded that “the higher the perception of crime risk, the less likely the individual was to go out for leisure activities at night…Individuals who perceive their places of residence as dangerous constrain their behavior” (Mesch, 2000, p. 59). Additionally, those who engaged in fewer leisure activities at night were less likely to report being fearful, perhaps because they had voluntarily removed themselves from potentially risky situations.

One of the main limitations of Mesch’s (2000) study is that only two types of routine or leisure activities were assessed. Specifically, individuals’ willingness to go out at night was based on the number of times they had gone to a café or the movies in the past month. Survey respondents who may not have engaged in either of these two activities within the recall period specified may have been analyzed as though they were
constraining their behavior when this was not necessarily the case; rather, they simply had not done these things in the past month (perhaps due to limited finances) or may have participated in other leisure activities at night (e.g., attending sporting events, going out to dinner, taking an evening walk, going shopping). This highlights the need for qualitative research on this subject, as quantitative surveys and questionnaires are often unable to capture the intricate layers of nuance in individuals’ perceptions, behaviors, and rationale for their actions.

Rengifo and Bolton (2012) sought to account for the complexities involved in various types of routine activities and, in particular, how these activities are shaped by perceptions of risk and disorder. They utilized items on the 2007-2008 British Crime Survey to distinguish between two separate constructs of compulsory and voluntary routine activities. Their measure of compulsory activities included the amount of time individuals spend away from home during the day, as well as their employment or student status. Their measure of voluntary activities resembles that used by Mesch (2000), in that it focuses only on leisure activities that take place at night, including visits to bars and nightclubs. Rengifo and Bolton (2012) discovered that individuals’ engagement in voluntary or leisure activities (i.e., those things they do by choice) are influenced by their perceptions of risk and disorder, but that compulsory activities (i.e., those things that are more obligatory) are not. Further, higher levels of perceived risk

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9 Rengifo and Bolton (2012) disclose that their measure of voluntary routine activities has weak construct validity (based on Cronbach’s alpha; $\alpha = .41$) and, as a consequence, may have biased the results. They argue that this is due to the fact that voluntary activities “are more likely to include a greater set of independent and more heterogeneous patterns reflecting broader individual choices and resources. Thus, the development of more complex, multidimensional accounts of activity spaces…may be significantly limited by the nature of available data” (Rengifo & Bolton, 2012, p. 108). This was also discussed in relation to the study conducted by Mesch (2000) above and is an issue that has plagued the limited (quantitative) research in this area, particularly with regard to the operationalization of nighttime leisure activities.
and lower perceived disorder are found to be associated with more engagement in voluntary routine activities. They argued that one explanation for this could be that these individuals who spend more amounts of time doing leisure activities away from home may be more aware of the possible risks of doing so.

Research that specifically examined the role of students’ routine activities in their subsequent victimization on college campuses has found that the high consumption of alcohol (Dowdall, 2013; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998, 2013; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001), drug use (Cass, 2007; Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2013; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001), participation in student organizations and sports teams (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002, 2013), and proximity to other students who function as motivated offenders (Cass, 2007; Fisher et al., 1998; Fisher & Wilkes, 2003; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995) are associated with victimization. However, each of these studies has reported mixed conclusions as to whether the three central tenets of routine activities theory (i.e., the presence of a suitable target and motivated offender, and the absence of capable guardians) can help explain victimization on college campuses. Despite this, these findings are important to mention when discussing fear of crime on campus because actual victimization likely has an impact on students’ perceptions and daily routines. This is an area that relatively few studies have examined.

One exception was Tewksbury and Mustaine’s (2003) examination of how students’ lifestyles influence their guardianship measures. Recognizing that the guardianship component of routine activities theory can include both external (e.g., official and institutional) and personal (e.g., self-protective behaviors) measures, they
were interested in understanding how college students’ lifestyles affect their use of self-protective behaviors. According to this study, a student engaged in self-protective behaviors if they reported carrying a gun, club, body alarm, knife, or mace with the purposes of defending themselves from crime. The authors concluded that increased exposure and proximity to potential offenders are better predictors of students’ self-protective behaviors than their perceptions of risk and fear of crime (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003).

However, others have argued that self-protective behaviors like those measured by Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003) are not actually indicators of guardianship, but instead measure target hardening or whether an individual is, in fact, a suitable target (Hollis-Peel, Reynald, Bavel, Elffers, & Welsh, 2011). For instance, in their extensive review of the literature investigating the operationalization and measurement of guardianship, Hollis-Peel and colleagues (2011) explained, “Guardianship is exercised by individuals who deter potential criminal acts by watching over potential targets of criminal activity, while target hardening is decreasing the suitability of the target for crime…to make them less attractive to the potential offender” (p. 58). Thus, they treated the notion of guardianship as though it is external to potential targets of crime in the form of protection that other individuals or groups can provide, rather than something they can do for themselves.

Although not explicitly testing the components of routine activities theory, Lee and Hilinski-Rosick (2012) investigated the impact of students’ lifestyles and victimization experiences on their perceptions of risk and fear of crime. They found that women are less fearful than men of becoming victims of both theft and aggravated assault
but are more fearful of sexual assault. Most important to the present discussion, they uncovered that students who engaged in more risky behaviors, such as partying and drinking, along with those who used avoidance behaviors, tended to be less fearful of the crimes of theft and aggravated assault. While it makes sense that those who adapt their behaviors would be less fearful, due to the fact that they are not placing themselves into potentially dangerous situations, the former finding is less clear. Lee and Hilinski-Rosick (2012) argued, “The lifestyle characteristics that influence fear of crime suggest that the nature of the fear of crime is related to certain behaviors that typify the youthful nature of the college and university student population” (p. 663). Further, they asserted, “the personality of the college-aged population is more carefree than other segments of the general population” (Lee & Hilinski-Rosick, 2012, p. 633); thus, they are able to engage in behaviors (like partying) that are commonly associated with college students and not perceive that they are placing themselves in any danger.

While studies examining the relationship between routine activities, perceptions of risk, and fear of crime are limited, there is general agreement that young men, those living in urban areas, and those who use drugs and consume heavy amounts of alcohol are at greater risk of victimization. That is, these individuals are more likely to be in dangerous situations that increase their exposure to motivated offenders, diminish the presence of capable guardians, and make them suitable targets for crime. These are important concepts to consider when discussing fear of crime on college campuses, as well as whether students’ fear varies by context and gender. College campuses tend to be spaces that are predominantly comprised of young people, who are likely consuming alcohol, which may influence their perceptions of risk and ultimately their levels of fear.
2.6. Gendered Fear of Crime on College Campuses

Like studies examining the predictors of fear in the broader population, empirical works that have taken place on college campuses have come to similar conclusions. Specifically, they have found that the strongest correlates of fear and perceived risk on campus are: gender, in that women are more afraid than men (e.g., Fisher & May, 2009; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Jennings, Gover, & Pudrzynska, 2007; McConnell, 1997; Starkweather, 2007; Tomsich, Gover, & Jennings, 2011; Ugwu & Britto, 2015); time of day, whereby higher levels of fear exist at night, particularly among women (e.g., Brantingham & Brantingham, 1994; del Carmen, Polk, Segal, & Bing, 2000; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; McConnell, 1997); previous victimization experiences (e.g., Fox, Nobles, & Piquero, 2009; McConnell, 1997); and the use of constrained behaviors (e.g., Day, Stump, & Carreon, 2003; del Carmen et al., 2000; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Rader, Cossman, & Allison, 2009; Starkweather, 2007; Tomsich et al., 2011; Woolnough, 2009).

Interestingly, Wilcox and colleagues’ (2007) findings are unique in that they indicate no general association between victimization experiences and fear of crime or the use of constrained behaviors on campus. They were specifically interested in understanding students’ perceptions of risk, fear, and precautionary behaviors for the crimes of sexual assault, physical assault, and stalking, as well as how these measures related to students’ previous victimization experiences. Based on survey data from over 1,000 women enrolled at a university in the southeastern United States, they found that the majority of the women reported having no prior experience with victimization. However, those who had been victimized by strangers felt that there was more danger on
campus than those who had been victimized by acquaintances or who had not previously been victimized (Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007). Despite this finding, Wilcox and colleagues (2007) concluded that there is no significant relationship between women’s past victimization experiences and their fear of crime or use of constrained behaviors (whether avoidance or precautionary) on campus.

In one of the few studies examining students’ perceptions of safety and fear of crime on an urban campus, Tomsich and colleagues (2011) distributed surveys to about 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Colorado Denver. Similar to Wilcox and colleagues (2007), they found that personal victimization was a relatively rare experience for those in their sample, reported by less than 8% of respondents, while vicarious victimization was reported by about one-quarter of respondents. They also discovered that students’ perceptions of risk at night were nearly double their perceptions during the day, and that constrained behaviors were not a popular strategy for minimizing risk on the urban campus (Tomsich et al., 2011). Consistent with previous research conducted on suburban campuses, Tomsich and colleagues’ (2011) study also revealed that women had significantly lower perceptions of overall safety on the urban campus than men, as they were more likely than their male counterparts to have higher levels of fear at all hours of the day and to engage in constrained behaviors.

Noting that women are more fearful of crime on campus than men, Fisher and May (2009) were among the first to try to understand exactly what students are afraid of and whether these fear-provoking cues vary by gender. After distributing a survey to over 600 students at a large university in the southern United States, they discovered that there was no significant difference between female and male students’ rank ordering of
fear-provoking cues (i.e., poorly lit parking lots and sidewalks, groups congregating or loitering, visibility of police, overgrown shrubbery). Related to previous work on masculinity and fear, Fisher and May (2009) found that overgrown or excessive shrubbery increased men’s fear of aggravated assault, while groups congregating increased their fear of larceny-theft (also see Day et al., 2003; May, 2001). These works have suggested that such situations may make men feel powerless and with little control, thus challenging their masculine gender identities.

This is a concept that Day and colleagues (2003) explored in one of the few qualitative studies examining men’s fear of victimization on campus. Based on interviews with over 80 undergraduate men at the University of California, Irvine, they wanted to understand how men’s masculine identities shape their perceptions of safety and fear. Broadly speaking, their findings revealed that men fear situations in which they have no control because they pose a direct threat to their masculinity and sense of bravery (Day et al., 2003; also see Day, 2001). Such situations include being in an unfamiliar place where one might get lost, being in large crowds or surrounded by strangers, being physically or verbally confronted, and being alone. Interestingly, whereas women have been found to practice the precautionary strategy of safety in numbers to prevent personal harm, research suggests that men view this strategy as a way to bolster their masculinity and presence in physical space (Cobbina et al., 2008; Day et al., 2003).

This selection of studies illustrates that empirical investigations of fear of crime on campus have produced gendered findings like those conducted among adults in the broader population. Similarly, attempts to understand the gendered nature of fear on
campus have also turned to the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis to determine if it can account for college women’s higher levels of fear.

**2.6.1. Does Sexual Assault Shadow Women’s Fears on Campus?**

Given that studies have consistently found that female students are more fearful of crime on campus than male students, it is important to revisit Ferraro’s (1995, 1996) shadow of sexual assault hypothesis in this particular context. In his influential test of the shadow hypothesis, Ferraro (1996) concluded that “fear of rape is very high among younger women, reflecting national victimization data. Younger women, who move often during educational, career, and family transitions, are especially afraid of crime when they are in new environments” (p. 687). Because he asserted that the shadow of sexual assault may be more prevalent for younger women in educational settings, coupled with growing concerns about sexual assault on college and university campuses, it is necessary to determine how fear of sexual victimization operates among students at institutions of higher education. Table 1 provides a summary of the empirical studies that have examined the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis on college campuses\(^\text{10}\), including the methods used (i.e., quantitative versus qualitative techniques), the size and composition of the sample obtained, the type of campus (or campuses) on which the study took place, and the conclusions drawn about the theory.

Fisher and Sloan (2003) were among the first to examine the validity of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis on college campuses. They concluded that their results generally supported the thesis, such that “college women’s fear of rape is an

\(^{10}\) This summary table only includes those studies that were either explicitly testing Ferraro’s (1996) shadow of sexual assault hypothesis on college campuses or made specific reference to this theory in the discussion of their results. Studies that implicitly found support for this theory by concluding that women are fearful of sexual assault, but did not specifically refer to the theory, are generally not included, with the exception of Day (1999).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type of Campus*</th>
<th>Support for the Shadow Hypothesis?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook &amp; Fox (2012)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>282 undergraduates</td>
<td>A large university in the southeast</td>
<td>No – They found that the fear of physical harm has a greater impact than the fear of sexual assault on both women’s and men’s fear of home invasion, robbery, and murder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day (1999)</td>
<td>Mixed methods; participant photography, interviews, survey to capture demographic information</td>
<td>38 women total; 19 undergraduate and graduate students from the two campuses</td>
<td>Two urban campuses in the Midwest (12,000 students enrolled at All Saints University and 3,000 students enrolled at City Engineering School)</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of sexual assault impacts women’s movement on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobbs, Waid, &amp; Shelley (2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>961 students total; 454 from southwestern, 242 from southeastern, and 265 from western campuses</td>
<td>Three campuses in three different regions of the country</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of rape was found to shadow other types of crime (both property and violent offenses) across all three campuses. They did, however, find differences on the campuses with regard to gender and the specific types of crime that were feared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher &amp; Sloan (2003)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>3,472 undergraduate and graduate students</td>
<td>12 randomly selected 4-year colleges and universities from 4 different enrollment and 3 different location strata (i.e., rural, suburban, urban)</td>
<td>Yes – College women’s fear of sexual assault shadows their fear of other crimes on campus, regardless of the time of day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilinski (2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>375 undergraduate and graduate students</td>
<td>A medium-sized university in the northeast</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of sexual assault consistently predicts women’s fear of nonsexual crimes across temporal situations (day vs. night) and victim-offender relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilinski, Pentecost Neeson, &amp; Andrews (2011)</td>
<td>Qualitative; analysis of open-ended survey items</td>
<td>123 college women</td>
<td>A medium-sized university in the northeast</td>
<td>Yes – Overall, most women’s responses indicated that their fear of sexual assault affects their fear of other crimes (e.g., theft, robbery, assault), though there were a few who did not feel this way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Type of Campus*</td>
<td>Support for the Shadow Hypothesis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lane, Gover, &amp; Dahod (2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>449 undergraduates</td>
<td>A large suburban university in the southeast (University of Florida)</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of sexual assault was a strong predictor of other types of fear for both women and men, though the effect was stronger for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee &amp; Hilinski-Rosick (2012)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>3,472 undergraduate and graduate students</td>
<td>12 randomly selected 4-year colleges and universities from 4 different enrollment and 3 different location strata (i.e., rural, suburban, urban)</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of sexual assault increases fear of theft and aggravated assault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Özascilar (2013)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>1,051 undergraduates</td>
<td>Lund University, the largest university in Sweden with about 47,000 students located in a suburban setting</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of sexual assault was found to be the strongest predictor of nonsexual violent crimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riggs &amp; Cook (2015)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>666 undergraduate and graduate students</td>
<td>A small university in the southeast</td>
<td>No – They argued that there is a shadow of physical harm, whereby the fear of murder is more important than the fear of sexual assault when trying to account for fear of other types of crime. Despite this, they argued that fear of sexual assault is still significant in estimating other fears, but fear of murder is more important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugwu &amp; Britto (2015)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>1,196 students</td>
<td>No details disclosed, aside from mentioning that the majority of respondents live in Washington state</td>
<td>Mixed – Women’s fear of rape does appear to account for the gender-fear paradox; however, fear of physical harm (i.e., assault) was found to be a better predictor of fear of other crime for both women and men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcox, Jordan, &amp; Pritchard (2006)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>1,010 college women</td>
<td>A large university in the southeast</td>
<td>Yes – Fear of stranger- and acquaintance-perpetrated sexual assault were both associated with increased fear of other crimes (i.e., stalking and physical assault).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolnough (2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative; surveys</td>
<td>776 undergraduates</td>
<td>An urban university in the mid-Atlantic region with about 9,500 undergraduates</td>
<td>Yes – Fear and perceived likelihood of rape predicted women’s use of protective behaviors to keep themselves safe from harm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All campuses are located in the United States, unless noted otherwise.
inseparable companion to fear of other offenses while on campus during the day and at night” (Fisher & Sloan, 2003, p. 651). However, when focusing on women’s fear during the daytime, their results did not support Ferraro’s (1995, 1996) claim that younger women will be more fearful of rape than older women. More recently Lane and colleagues (2009) also found support for Ferraro’s (1995, 1996) theory, arguing that fear of sexual assault is not only a strong predictor of the fear of other violent crimes for women, but for men as well (also see May, 2001, who came to similar conclusions in his study of adolescents).

Others have argued that it is critical to examine whether students are more afraid of offenses perpetrated by strangers or acquaintances, concluding that these victim-offender relationships do matter when predicting fear of rape and sexual assault on campus (Hilinski, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2006). Wilcox and colleagues (2006), for example, attempted to address Fisher and Sloan’s (2003) call for research investigating the role of the victim-offender relationship in college women’s fear of crime on campus. Specifically, they sought to understand whether the shadow of sexual assault is perpetrator-specific, whereby women are more fearful of being harmed by strangers or acquaintances. While they discovered that fear of both stranger- and acquaintance-perpetrated sexual assault tended to increase and exhibit shadow effects on women’s fear of other crimes, Wilcox and colleagues (2006) concluded, “it is stranger-specific sexual assault and other stranger-perpetrated crime fears that are the most noticeably correlated or ‘perceptually contemporaneous’” (p. 367). Thus, their findings add to the discussion about the shadow of sexual assault on college campuses, indicating that it might be a
specific type of perpetrator that women fear; those who are strangers, even though data shows that acquaintances pose the greatest risk.

Hilinski (2009) embarked on a similar study using quantitative survey methods; however, she reached different conclusions than Wilcox and colleagues (2009). Specifically, Hilinski (2009) found that the shadow hypothesis was consistently able to explain women’s higher fear of crime across times of day and victim-offender relationships better than any other factors. Further, she suggested that the victim-offender relationship does not actually play a role in accounting for the gender-fear paradox, as the fear of sexual assault consistently increases women’s fear of other crimes.

Recently, there has even been support for the existence of the shadow of sexual assault on college campuses beyond the United States. Özacilar (2013) attempted to test the theory at Lund University in Sweden by distributing a survey to over 1,050 undergraduates. She ran two models for each of the following offenses: assault, murder, burglary while home, burglary while away from home, robbery, bicycle theft (the most salient crime at this particular institution), and being conned or cheated. To determine whether there is a shadow of sexual assault for these offenses, one of the two models controlled for respondents’ fear of rape, while the other did not. Özacilar (2013) ultimately found support for the shadow hypothesis, concluding that students’ fear of sexual assault was the strongest and most consistent predictor of their fear of other violent crimes.

Building on Wilcox and colleagues’ (2006) prior finding that there may be a shadow of physical harm for some types of crimes, such as stranger-perpetrated stalking, Riggs and Cook (2015) were interested in determining whether the fear of sexual assault
or the fear of murder shadows students’ fear of robbery, aggravated assault, and home invasion. They discovered that:

Fear of physical harm (of which murder is the most severe type) is more important than fear of sexual assault in estimating fear of other crime...For women, fear of sexual assault is still significant in estimating fear of other violent crime, although fear of murder is more important. (Riggs & Cook, 2015, pp. 2401–2402; also see Cook & Fox, 2012; Ugwu & Britto, 2015)

While these studies are not attempting to disregard the fact that women are afraid of sexual assault, they have uncovered that there may potentially be a greater explanatory factor that can account for the gender-fear paradox. This factor has most often been found to be the fear of murder, assault, or some other form of attack (Cook & Fox, 2012; Riggs & Cook, 2015; Ugwu & Britto, 2015; also see Hirtenlehner & Farrall, 2014, and Lane & Meeker, 2003).

Due to the recent developments in this area of research, and particularly attempts to account for students’ gendered fear of crime on college and university campuses, it is important for studies to continue to investigate this topic using different methodological techniques and a more diverse range of campus settings. As illustrated in Table 1, the vast majority of these studies have used quantitative methods by relying on survey and questionnaire data. There are only two exceptions. In one, Hilinski and colleagues (2011) qualitatively coded women’s open-ended survey responses to two items that “asked women to describe their fear of rape and sexual assault in relation to their fear of other crimes,” including theft, robbery, simple assault, and aggravated assault (p. 116). Not only were these questions very specific and direct, but this method also did not provide Hilinski and colleagues (2011) with the important opportunity to probe these women’s responses for further detail, as they would have been able to do using in-depth interviews. Despite these limitations, they determined that overall, most of the women’s
responses indicated that their fear of sexual assault affects their fear of other crimes; however, this was not true for all in the women in the sample.

The second study, conducted by Day (1999), was initially groundbreaking in this area of research, but is now over 15 years old. Using a sample of 38 women from two urban university campuses in the Midwestern United States, Day (1999) engaged in participant photography, conducted interviews, and collected demographic data through questionnaires. Most relevant to the present study, she found that women’s fear of sexual assault limited their freedom of movement on campus. Although her findings support the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, Day (1999) made no reference to this concept in either her literature review or the discussion of her findings.

2.7. Fear as a Form of Social Control: The Perpetuation of Gender Inequality

Although individuals’ assessments of risk and fear of victimization can produce behavioral modifications in the form of avoidance and protective strategies, some scholars suggest that we would never actually want to eliminate fear, as it leads people to take precautions to try and keep themselves safe. However, there is a fine line between the notion that fear is productive and that it is potentially harmful (Garofalo, 1981; Hale, 1996; Warr, 2000). For instance, Garofalo (1981) asserted:

The complete absence of fear is dysfunctional because the individual is not motivated to take reasonable cautionary measures…. A small amount of fear is functional because it is sufficient to produce reasonable caution. However, increases in the intensity of fear quickly become dysfunctional again because responses, both behavioral and attitudinal, go beyond what is necessary to prevent victimization and produce effects such as unnecessary avoidance of potentially rewarding social interactions and unwarranted distrust of others. (p. 856)

In other words, the complete elimination of fear from individuals’ lives would be just as dangerous as having an excess of fear. As Garofalo (1981) stated, the absence of fear can
cause individuals to venture into potentially risky situations by not taking the necessary precautions to keep themselves safe.

Despite these advantages to fear, it is important to understand that “while fear may be protective and the behaviors taken to prevent fear warranted, such behaviors have serious implications in the lives of Americans which may not always be positive” (Rader & Haynes, 2014, p. 208). This is particularly true for women, who report higher levels of fear than men. Specifically, too much fear can actually be counterproductive, as it may cause people to withdraw from beneficial social activities with others, decrease levels of trust and personal well-being, and have “adverse emotional effects upon people, inducing a feeling of isolation and vulnerability” (Hale, 1996, p. 80). As a result of people retreating indoors, communities are negatively impacted (as discussed in section 2.4.2 above), further eroding trust and levels of social control in the community and possibly increasing crime and fear (Hale, 1996; Sampson et al., 1997; Skogan, 1990; St. Jean, 2007).

As mentioned above, previous research has consistently found that women report being more fearful of crime than men despite having lower rates of victimization (e.g., Addington, 2010; Britton et al., 2017; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Hale, 1996; Madriz, 1997b; Stanko, 1995; Warr, 1984, 1985). Warr (1985), for instance, sought to examine the impact of fear of rape among women living in urban communities. To do this, he conducted a survey of Seattle residents and asked them to rate their fear of victimization, perceived risk, and perceived seriousness of 16 different offenses using an 11-point likert scale. Warr (1985) discovered that fear of rape was prevalent among women of all ages, but that young women fear rape more than any other offense (also see Ferraro, 1995,
1996). Most relevant to the present discussion, he also found that there were very significant gender differences in the specific behavioral consequences of fear for men versus women. He states, “While only 8 percent of men indicate that they have ‘avoided going out alone,’ 42 percent of women report this precaution. And whereas 9 percent of men have ‘avoided going out at night,’ 40 percent of women have done so” (Warr, 1985, p. 248). Given the fact that previous research has found young women to be the most fearful of crime (and particularly of rape) and most likely to restrict their activities to prevent their own victimization through the use of various constrained behaviors (e.g., Cass, 2007; May et al., 2010; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995; Stanko, 1995), it is important to consider the impact that this might have on their ability to freely pursue higher education.

Although women are now pursuing higher education in greater numbers than men (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), the question remains as to whether they have truly equal access to all of the benefits of higher education once they are enrolled. Some scholars have suggested that fear functions as a form of social control to preserve patriarchal power structures that maintain women’s subordination to men (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975/1993; Day, 1994; Madriz, 1997a, 1997b; Pain, 1991; Riger & Gordon, 1981; Stanko, 1992, 1995). This is one point that Madriz (1997a) argued when she stated, “Fear of crime is one of the most oppressive and deceitful sources of informal social control of women,” as gendered and racialized images of victims and offenders increase inequality between women and men and limit women’s daily activities (pp. 343-344). Following in-depth interviews and focus groups with 140 women from various race, age, and socioeconomic groups about their experiences with fear, Madriz
(1997a, 1997b) discovered that fear of crime functions to structure women’s lives on a daily basis. Not only does fear cause women to engage in a variety of precautionary measures, such as not walking alone at night, but it also stops them from taking certain jobs, enrolling in night classes to further their education, and may cause them to completely avoid leaving their homes (Madriz, 1997b). Madriz (1997b) concluded:

Fear of crime is a fundamental element in the social control of women because it organizes consent around a strict code of behavior that ‘good women’ need to follow…The coercion imposed by the fear of crime upon women is structural, because it is rooted in the multiple and overlapping hierarchies of power. (p. 155; also see Day, 1994)

The main hierarchy of power that women’s fear may serve to reinforce is that of gender inequality, as their fear prevents them from engaging in economic, educational, and social opportunities that are ultimately more accessible to men.

Fear of crime and victimization should not be something that students worry about, as it can inhibit the types of activities they engage in and avoid on campus that would otherwise help them develop professionally and socially for their future careers. It is probable, however, that recent news reports about violence on college campuses have pushed concerns about the victimization and safety of college students into the forefront of these young peoples’ minds. This is a topic that this dissertation seeks to expand upon by studying the impact of fear of crime on students’ daily routine activities, including the ways in which they limit their behaviors, in two different educational settings.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the literature, particularly with regard to the factors that influence individuals’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime. I began with a discussion of the distinctions between these two overarching concepts and
then focusing on the specific areas of research that are most relevant to the present study, including gender and fear, the role of context, and routine activities.

First, this chapter reviewed the findings regarding the relationships among gender, perceptions of risk, and fear of crime. These studies have tended to conclude that women are more concerned about their safety and are more fearful of crime and victimization than men. One of the main explanations for this is the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, which suggests that women’s higher levels of fear can be reconciled by accounting for their prevailing fear of sexual assault. That is, women’s fear of other crimes can be attributed to the fact that they believe any other offense will ultimately culminate with sexual assault.

Second, because the present study is an examination of the ways in which students’ fear of crime is gendered and context-dependent, this chapter also considered the relevant literature about the impact of place on perceptions of risk and levels of fear. This included a review of social disorganization and broken windows theories, as well as empirical evaluations of the role that social and physical disorder – both as perceived by individual residents and as objectively measured by trained researchers – have in fear and perceived risk. Despite the different approaches used to measure neighborhood disorder, these studies tend to be in agreement that higher levels of disorder, which are commonly found in urban areas, are associated with higher perceptions of risk.

Third, this chapter assessed the limited literature examining how individuals’ routine activities and lifestyles affect their perceptions of risk and fear. Studies aiming to evaluate the central propositions of Cohen and Felson’s (1979) routine activities theory have found that young people (especially men), those in urban areas, and those who
engage in more risky behaviors like drinking and using drugs have greater exposure to potentially dangerous situations. Because college campuses are primarily populated by young people, who might be more likely to consume heavy amounts of alcohol (while both underage and unsupervised) than those in the general population, this theory may be important for understanding college students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization. Theoretically, students who engage in these behaviors will be more suitable targets and are likely in the absence of capable guardians and in the presence of motivated offenders (i.e., other college students). Overall, the scant amount of research in this area has found that students who engage in risky, partying behaviors tend to have lower perceptions of risk, despite their higher likelihood of victimization.

Next, this chapter focused specifically on literature regarding fear of crime on campus, as well as tests of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis among college students. In general, this work has confirmed the findings of studies conducted among the broader population, in that college women are more fearful than college men. As a result, the majority of research attempting to reconcile female students’ higher fear of crime on campus has utilized Ferraro’s (1995, 1996) shadow of sexual assault hypothesis as a possible explanation. As indicated in Table 1, about 85% (or 11 out of 13) of studies have used quantitative survey methods and have rarely been comparative in nature, often ignoring the influence of campus context in fear. Overall, these studies have found support for the shadow hypothesis, in that women’s fear of sexual assault can account for their higher fear of other crimes.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a section exploring how fear may function as a form of social control, perpetuating gender inequality both on the college campus and
beyond. Drawing on explanations accounting for the gender-fear paradox, as well as routine activities theory, these feminist arguments center on the notion that women’s lives are largely controlled and limited by their fear of being victimized, mainly by men. Some have postulated that women’s higher levels of fear may prevent them from engaging in a variety of economic, educational, and social opportunities that are otherwise available to their male counterparts.

This dissertation seeks to expand upon the contributions of previous research in each of these areas by qualitatively examining students’ gendered fear of crime in two different campus contexts; one in a disadvantaged, urban area that is characterized by relatively high crime rates, and the other in an affluent, suburban area with comparatively lower rates of crime.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

As an overview, this study utilizes data from in-depth interviews with a total of 70 undergraduates; 34 were enrolled at an urban university and 36 were enrolled at a suburban university, both on the east coast. These two settings were selected in an attempt to understand and compare the ways in which students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus is context-dependent. As I will discuss at the beginning of this chapter, there are several reasons qualitative methods are appropriate for this research. In addition to explaining how this study seeks to make a contribution to the extant literature on this topic by utilizing qualitative methods, this chapter will also detail the two specific study settings where the research took place, the development of the interview guide that was used, the sampling and recruitment strategies, the characteristics of the final sample, the analytic strategy, and the study’s limitations.

3.2. Methodological Approach

Given the findings of previous work investigating students’ gendered fear of crime on campus, it is important to note that the majority of these studies have been conducted using surveys and quantitative analyses (e.g., Dobbs, Waid, & Shelley, 2009; Fisher & May, 2009; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Hale, 1996; Hilinski, 2009; Jennings, Gover, & Pudrzynska, 2007; Lane et al., 2009; Rader, Cossman, & Allison, 2009; Tomsich, Gover, & Jennings, 2011; Wilcox et al., 2006; Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007; Woolnough, 2009). Although the bulk of these studies have been survey-based, there has been much debate in the literature regarding the measurement of fear. In general and as
mentioned in Chapter 2, these criticisms have largely focused on the challenges posed by using global measures of fear that fail to refer to specific types of crime, as well as the tendency to conflate individuals’ fear of crime with their perceived risk of crime (Addington, 2010; DuBow et al., 1979; Ferraro, 1995; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Garofalo, 1979; Garofalo & Laub, 1978; Hale, 1996; Hinkle, 2015; LaGrange et al., 1992; Warr, 1984). Due to the fact that these works have been quantitative, they are missing students’ gendered and qualitative narratives about their fears and perceptions of risk, the steps they take to confront their concerns on a daily basis, and how these concerns align with actual reported threats of crime on campus. Further, little attention has been given to the ways in which the community context of the campus (i.e., suburban versus urban setting) influences students’ concerns about specific types of crime and victimization. The present study aims to fill these gaps, as it is primarily a qualitative examination of students’ gendered fear of victimization on an urban and a suburban university campus, along with who they perceive as posing the greatest threat to their safety.

In an attempt to uncover some of the nuances in students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus, including how their fears might be gendered and contextually bound, this study utilizes qualitative methods. Specifically, this study relies on data obtained from in-depth interviews. In general, interviews are a helpful technique for gaining insight into individuals’ daily behaviors, experiences, and understandings about their social worlds through the rich detail and personal examples that they can provide about a given topic or issue (see Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Esterberg, 2002; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Miller, 2011). As such, Miller (2011) asserts that:
Qualitative research is oriented toward the creation of contextual understandings of social worlds, emphasizing complexities in the meanings and social processes that operate within them. Interview data, in which people describe and explain their behaviors and experiences, help us identify and understand social processes and patterns at the interactional and situational levels, as well as the meanings people attribute to their experiences and behaviors. (p. 51)

This is particularly important when attempting to understand students’ perceptions of risk on campus in two different settings. It is anticipated that interviews will provide student participants with the opportunity to not only share their experiences with discomfort, fear, and possibly even victimization on and around campus, but they will also allow them to make meaning out of their experiences and behaviors.

Miller (2011) argues that interviews are particularly useful for studying complex social processes, including the social construction of gender, because they can give us “insights into the cultural frames that people use to make sense of their experiences” (p. 50). Further, Silverman (2011) explains that during interviews, participants “use culturally available resources in order to construct their stories,” suggesting that we should view interviewees’ responses as “cultural stories” (p. 188; also see Miller & Glassner, 2011). Because I am trying to understand the ways in which students’ fear of crime and victimization is gendered, interviews seem to be a well-suited method for exploring this possibility. Gender is a pervasive social construct that is created and reinforced by individuals and social institutions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). As a result, it seems likely that the assumptions students make about those who are most likely to be victimized and fearful of crime on campus will be inherently gendered since they will be using cultural frames of reference to make sense of their experiences and opinions.

Additionally, Miller and Glassner (2011) argue that qualitative interviewing can be useful in comparative research, as it “allows for some specification of similarities and
variations in social process and meaning systems across groups, settings and/or over time” (p. 145; also see Miller, 2005). This comparison is one of the central purposes of this research. I am interested in comparing students’ perceptions of safety and risk in two dissimilar settings to see how their concerns, fears, and precautionary behaviors might be similar or different. Although the two settings will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, broadly speaking, they consist of an urban campus that is located in a city that tends to be characterized by crime, and a suburban campus that is located in an area with relatively low rates of crime. Due to the comparative nature of this study, qualitative interviewing is appropriate, in that it will allow me to see if there are any parallels or variations in students’ narratives about safety between the two different campus contexts.

Another benefit of qualitative research is that it is more flexible than traditional quantitative survey methods. Specifically, Weiss (1994) argues that quantitative studies are useful for collecting numbers and for having standardized precision, in that every respondent is asked the exact same questions in the exact same order. However, he also suggests that this uniformity comes with a cost. One of the benefits of conducting interviews is that:

We can learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affected their thoughts and feelings…There are, of course, no observers of the internal events of thought and feeling except those to whom they occur. Most of the significant events of people’s lives can become known to others only through interview. (Weiss, 1994, pp. 1–2)

Interviews allow researchers to ask their participants open-ended questions that can often be taken in a variety of directions based on the participant’s subjective experiences. Further, researchers can follow-up on their participants’ responses, should they need clarification and additional detail, or even be interested in exploring new avenues of
inquiry. To this end, Corbin and Strauss (2008) note, “Qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables…It is the endless possibilities to learn more about people that qualitative researchers resonate to” (pp. 12-13). Because of the possibilities that are afforded by qualitative research, no two interviews will be alike and the types and order of questions that are asked will vary based on participants’ experiences. This is particularly important when asking students about their perceptions of safety and risk on campus, as well as whether they have ever had any personal or vicarious victimization experiences. Specifically, by conducting qualitative interviews with students, I will be able to better understand the nuances and variations across their perceptions and experiences, providing a level of detail that is not always possible to obtain when using quantitative survey methods with pre-set questions and responses.

3.3. Study Settings

In order to determine if students’ fear of crime on campus is context dependent, this study was conducted in two distinct settings – those of an urban and a suburban university on the east coast. The demographic characteristics (e.g., race and class composition) and crime rates of these two contrasting settings are discussed in greater detail below, zooming out from the particular contexts of the institutions themselves to also examine the cities and counties that they are situated within.
3.3.1. The Urban University

The university that served as the first of two research settings in this study is located in an urban area in the northeastern United States. According to the university’s Office of Institutional Research, there were just over 11,200 total students enrolled at the time of this study11, with over 7,200 undergraduates and about 4,000 graduate students. *U.S. News & World Report* (2015) consistently cites Urban U as being among the most racially and ethnically diverse campuses in the country, based primarily on the demographic characteristics of its student body. More specifically, and according to fall 2013 enrollment data, about 25% of undergraduates at Urban U were white, 23% were Hispanic or Latino, 22% were Asian, 18% were African American, and 12% were classified as some other category (e.g., 6% were of an unknown race, 3% were bi- or multi-racial, and 3% were foreign). There were approximately equal numbers of females and males enrolled as undergraduate students at Urban U, with about 50.4% and 49.6%, respectively, and about 71% of students were under the age of 25 years old. Further, 95% of undergraduates were attending the school as in-state residents. As a result, about 85% of the undergraduate student population commuted to school from off-campus residences, while about 15% lived in the residence halls on campus.

In 2013, 27 violent crimes were reported to Urban U’s police department, 26 of which were robberies, while one was an aggravated assault (*U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation*, 2014c). All of these incidents involved Urban U students and took place either on the physical campus or in the nearby areas surrounding campus. Additionally, about 135 property crimes were reported to the campus police; 113 of which were for

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11 The majority of the interviews at the urban university were conducted during the fall 2013 semester, thus the student demographic and community characteristics reported above are from this time period.
larceny-theft, 16 were for burglary, and six were for motor vehicle theft (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). Campus law enforcement agencies at institutions with similar numbers of students enrolled (i.e., between 8,000-14,000 total students) across the United States received an average of four reports of violent crime and 86 reports of property crime in 2013 (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). When compared with other similarly sized institutions, it is clear that there are higher levels of crime at Urban U.

The university’s campus is located on 38 acres of a larger urban city in the northeast. According to the American Community Survey, the city consisted of about 24 square miles and 278,400 residents in 2013. As shown in Table 2, approximately 52% of these residents were black or African American, about 34% were Hispanic or Latino, and about 12% were white (non-Hispanic or Latino) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). It is estimated that just over 29% of the city’s residents lived below the poverty line in 2013, with a per capita annual income of just under $17,000 and a median annual household income of $33,960 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). These numbers stand in stark contrast with those of the urban city’s county as a whole, which has both a lower percentage of residents living in poverty (about 18%) and a median household income that is over $21,000 higher than that in the urban city. Further, only about 13% of city residents who are over the age of 25 have earned their bachelor’s or a higher degree.

The city in which Urban U is located is often referred to as one of the “most dangerous” cities in America (Christie, 2013; Duplantier, 2014). Specifically, just over 3,500 violent and about 8,970 property crimes were reported to police departments within the city in 2013, both of which were more than double the number of crimes reported to
Table 2: Characteristics of Study Settings, by City and County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BROADER U.S. CONTEXT</th>
<th>CONTEXT OF URBAN U</th>
<th>CONTEXT OF SUBURBAN U</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size and Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land area in sq. miles</td>
<td>3,531,905.4a</td>
<td>24.2a</td>
<td>126.2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population per sq. mile</td>
<td>87.4a</td>
<td>114,582b</td>
<td>6,211.5a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>316,128,839b</td>
<td>278,427b</td>
<td>789,565b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% black or African American</td>
<td>13.2%b</td>
<td>52.4%a</td>
<td>41.9%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Asian</td>
<td>5.3%b</td>
<td>1.6%a</td>
<td>5.1%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>17.1%b</td>
<td>33.8%a</td>
<td>21.7%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% white</td>
<td>62.6%b</td>
<td>11.6%a</td>
<td>32.7%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% foreign-born</td>
<td>12.9%b</td>
<td>27.2%a</td>
<td>24.8%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of households</td>
<td>115,610,216b</td>
<td>92,363b</td>
<td>277,302b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in poverty</td>
<td>14.5%b</td>
<td>29.1%b</td>
<td>17.7%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$53,046b</td>
<td>$33,960b</td>
<td>$55,095b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median per capita income</td>
<td>$28,155b</td>
<td>$16,972b</td>
<td>$32,181b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with high school diploma or higher</td>
<td>86.0%b</td>
<td>70.8%b</td>
<td>83.5%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>28.8%b</td>
<td>12.7%b</td>
<td>32.0%b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total violent crimes</td>
<td>1,163,146c</td>
<td>3,516c</td>
<td>5,914d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent crime rate (per 1,000)</td>
<td>3.7c</td>
<td>12.6c</td>
<td>7.5d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total property crimes</td>
<td>8,632,512c</td>
<td>8,965c</td>
<td>19,806d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property crime rate (per 1,000)</td>
<td>27.3c</td>
<td>32.2c</td>
<td>25.1d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014); based on 2010 estimates because 2013 estimates were unavailable.

*b Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014); based on 2013 estimates. Where 2013 estimates are available, any differences from 2010 estimates are less than 1%.

*c Source: U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (2014a); crime rates calculated by author.

*d Source: Based on 2013 crime data obtained from the respective counties’ state police departments. Crime rates calculated by author.
law enforcement in any other city in the state (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014a). This is equal to a rate of about 13 violent and 32 property crimes per 1,000 residents. According to the state police department, this particular city accounts for more crime in the county than any other city, contributing nearly 60% of all violent crime and about 45% of all property crime to the county’s total. Relative to the crime rates of other cities in the state, it is clear why this particular urban city has been labeled as one of the most dangerous in the country, as well as why Urban U serves as such a unique setting and an appropriate site for comparison for the investigation of students’ perceptions of safety and risk on campus.

3.3.2. The Suburban University

The second research site in this study is another institution on the east coast, but is instead located in a suburban area in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Nearly 21,500 undergraduate and 10,500 graduate and professional students were enrolled at Suburban U at the time of this study\(^\text{12}\), according to the university’s Office of Institutional Research. Like Urban U, Suburban U is continually listed among the most ethnically diverse campuses in the country (U.S. News & World Report, 2015), making the two institutions particularly well suited for comparison by campus context. About 54% of the undergraduates enrolled at Suburban U during the 2013-2014 academic year were female, while about 49% were white, approximately 14% were Asian, around 10% were Hispanic or Latino, and about 9% were black or African American. Further, over three-quarters (or 77%) of undergraduates were under the age of 25. Approximately 81%

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\(^{12}\) Interviews were conducted at Suburban U over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year, spanning from September 2014 through February 2015. All data reported here (i.e., student demographics, community characteristics, and crime data) are from the 2013-2014 academic year because this was the time period that was used to construct the eventual sample as depicted in Table 3. It should be noted, however, that these data and campus characteristics did not change significantly from 2013 to 2014.
of all students were attending Suburban U as in-state residents, with the remaining 19% comprising students from outside of the state and representing around 120 different countries.

In the past five years, Suburban U has transitioned from being classified as a nonresidential campus to being one of the top five residential campuses in its state (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2015). Specifically, as of the fall 2013 semester, over 6,000 students (or nearly 18% of the total student body) were living in on-campus housing. At the time that data collection efforts occurred at Suburban U, the campus was becoming increasingly residential (with additional new residence halls under construction), had a relatively diverse student body, and was disproportionately comprised of students who already resided within the state.

In 2013, four violent crimes were reported to the Suburban U Police Department; two of which were for aggravated assault, one was for rape, and one was for robbery (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). Additionally, 188 property crimes were reported to the campus police; 179 were for larceny-theft, seven were for burglary, two were for arson, and two were for motor vehicle theft (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). Relatively speaking, Suburban U is a low-crime setting. Campus law enforcement agencies at institutions across the United States with similar numbers of students enrolled (i.e., between 31,000-37,000 students) received an average of 11 reports of violent crime and 355 reports of property crime in 2013 (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c).

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13 The remaining 82% of the student body resided off-campus and commuted to school.
The university’s main campus is located on close to 700 wooded acres of land in a suburban setting in the mid-Atlantic region of the east coast, about 20 miles southwest of a major U.S. city. According to the American Community Survey, the city that contains Suburban U consists of just over six square miles and had nearly 24,000 residents living in close to 5,000 households in 2013 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Although the city in which Suburban U is located is about four times smaller in land mass than the city where Urban U is located, Suburban U’s county is about three times larger than Urban U’s county, as shown in Table 2. Of this population, over 61% of residents were white, 16% were Hispanic or Latino, 15% were Asian, 5% were black or African American, and 25% were foreign-born. Further, about 92% of residents over the age of 25 have earned their high school diplomas, with more than half pursuing higher education and earning a bachelor’s or advanced degree. Nationally, about 20% fewer people over the age of 25 have received college degrees at 29% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). It is important to note that both the racial composition and educational attainment of residents in the suburban city closely resemble that of those in the county that encompasses it.

With regard to family earnings, just over 7% of the city’s residents lived in poverty in 2013, with a per capita annual income of over $44,300 and a median annual household income of $97,242 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). These incomes are more than double those earned by residents in the city that houses Urban U. Like the urban city, the suburban city’s county also has a lower percentage of residents living in poverty, as well as a higher median outcome, than the city itself. More specifically, only 6% of the county’s residents were living below the poverty line in 2013, which was less than half of the national average (14.5%), and the median household income for the county was about
$13,000 higher than that for the suburban city at approximately $110,300. Nationally, the median household income was just over $53,000 in 2013 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). When compared with the community surrounding Urban U, it is evident that the social setting of Suburban U is more privileged with regard to household income and the percentage of households that are not in poverty, and that its most dominant racial group is white.

The rates of crime in the suburban city and its surrounding county are relatively low compared to those in other cities and counties across the United States. Specifically, for every 1,000 residents, approximately one violent crime and about 17 property crimes were reported to city police departments in 2013. During the same year, the suburban county also had similar rates of crime with less than one violent crime and about 14 property crimes per 1,000 residents, compared with a rate of four violent and 27 property crimes per 1,000 residents nationwide (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014a). In addition to being set in a relatively affluent suburban setting, it is also clear that Suburban U is situated within a context that has lower rates of crime than other cities and counties across the United States.

3.4. Developing the Interview Guide

The interview guide for this project was initially developed during the fall 2013 semester as part of Dr. Jody Miller’s graduate-level qualitative methods course, following IRB approval that was secured in July 2013 (see Appendix A). Historically, Dr. Miller has taught this course as a hands-on workshop, in which students engage in the activities of data collection and analysis outside of the classroom in a community setting, while
learning about the techniques involved in qualitative research inside of the classroom. As such, students enrolled in the fall 2013 course (including myself) went into the community to investigate students’ perceptions of safety and risk on an urban university campus, which also happened to be my dissertation topic.

As a class, our first collaborative task was to develop and refine an interview guide with questions that focused on the overarching theme of the class project and that could uniformly be used during each of our interviews. Charmaz (2012) suggested that the act of “simply thinking through how to word open-ended questions helps novices to avoid blurting out loaded questions and to avert forcing responses into narrow categories” (p. 18). This assignment not only provided us with training about how to ask questions that would elicit thorough responses during our interviews, but it also created a script that we could all use with our interview participants.

To begin this process, an assignment for one of our initial class meetings was for each of us to write a set of four to five questions that we would be interesting in asking during the interviews. As a class, we then divided ourselves into three different groups to generate preliminary lists of questions to add to the interview guide. The task of these three groups was to select and refine questions focusing on the following themes:

1) Students’ daily routines;

2) Perceptions of safety and risk on campus; and

3) Knowledge of services offered by the campus police department, as well as students’ experiences with the campus police.
Dr. Miller then revised and compiled each group’s questions into a draft of our class interview guide, which we had the opportunity to add to and further refine through email and then again in class after we had all conducted our first interviews.

The prompts included in the final interview guide focused on: respondents’ experiences at Urban U, including the reasons they initially decided to attend the school; respondents’ daily schedules and co-curricular activities; spaces on campus where respondents typically spend their time, are most comfortable, and that they avoid; their perceptions of safety and risk on campus; their experiences with crime on campus, as well as their friends’ experiences with crime on campus; their awareness of the services and programs offered by the campus police department; and their perceptions of and encounters with the campus police. The same prompts were later adapted and used to conduct interviews at Suburban U.

3.5. Sampling Strategy

As mentioned above, this study utilizes qualitative interview data collected at two different institutions of higher education to understand how students’ perceptions of safety and risk on campus are gendered, the role that race plays in their fear of victimization, and how the specific contextual setting of the campus might influence these perceptions. Quota sampling, which some scholars also refer to as stratified purposive sampling, was used for this project, as every attempt was made to construct samples at both institutions that closely resembled those of their respective undergraduate student bodies on most dimensions.
Quota sampling (or stratified purposive sampling) is a type of non-probability sampling that attempts to be representative of the various demographic groups in the broader population, despite the fact that participants are not selected randomly (Daniel, 2012; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Henry, 1990; Jupp, 2006; Maxfield & Babbie, 2009; Robinson, 2014). Utilizing this sampling technique, “the population is divided into mutually exclusive subcategories, and interviewers or other data collectors solicit participation in the study from members of the subcategories until a target number of elements to be sampled from the subcategories have been met” (Daniel, 2012, pp. 102–103). In the case of the present study, the elements or variables of interest in the target population and eventual study sample included: gender (e.g., female, male), race or ethnicity (e.g., African American or Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, Pacific Islander, White or Caucasian, bi- or multi-racial), class level (e.g., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), and age (e.g., under 25, 25 to 29, over 30).

With purposive strategies such as quota sampling, researchers make the assumption that “certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured” (Robinson, 2014, p. 32; also see Maxwell, 1996). This is particularly important when examining the contextual basis of the gendered fear of crime and victimization at two different university campuses that continually receive recognition for the racial and ethnic diversity of their respective student bodies (see U.S. News & World Report, 2015). In addition to the four variables of interest noted above, students who reported previously seeking the assistance of the campus police by approaching an
officer, using the phone, or visiting the campus police station\textsuperscript{14} were intentionally oversampled to allow for stable comparison between those who had such experiences and those who did not. This strategy helped build a sample that included students with personal or vicarious victimization experiences.

According to Daniel (2012), there are six steps involved in selecting a quota sample, which I have adapted and expanded on below to reflect the process used in this study.

1) \textit{Define the target population.} There were two target populations in this study, which included undergraduates enrolled at one urban and one suburban university on the east coast.

2) \textit{Identify inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sample.} All undergraduates who were over the age of 18 and enrolled for study at one of the two institutions of interest were eligible for participation in this study. Students who were under the age of 18 were not eligible to participate in this study due to their legal status as minors and the additional need for parental consent.

3) \textit{Determine the quota controls or variables to be used.} In a non-probability sample, once the target population has been defined, participants are then selected for inclusion in the study based on a set of criteria that have been established by the researcher (Daniel, 2012; Maxfield & Babbie, 2009; Miner-Rubino & Jayaratne, 2007). As mentioned above, these criteria (or quota controls) included gender, race and ethnicity, class level, and age. Initial information about these variables was collected through the use of a screening.

\textsuperscript{14} Overall, nine Suburban U students (or 25.0\%) and 15 Urban U students (or 44.1\%) had contacted the campus police for assistance. Their reasons for doing so ranged from reporting a crime (e.g., robbery, theft, assault hit and run) to requesting an escort.
survey, which was distributed on both campuses and will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Scholars recommend only using a small number of quota controls (generally around three) to ensure that the project is manageable (Daniel, 2012).

4) Determine the sample size. The desired sample size was 35-40 students from each institution, for a total sample size of 70-80 undergraduates. As many researchers have noted, qualitative research typically involves the use of small samples because “the goal is to look at a ‘process’ or the ‘meanings’ individuals attribute to their given social situation, not necessarily to make generalizations” about the broader population (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 119). Because of this, sample sizes in qualitative research often depend on the nature of the research question and the project itself, the resources available to the researcher, and the point at which theoretical saturation is reached (Charmaz, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Patton, 2002; Robinson, 2014). Charmaz (2012), for instance, argued that in qualitative research, the saturation of the researcher’s theoretical categories should be privileged over any focus on the ultimate size of the sample. She asserted that saturation has been achieved “when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories” (Charmaz, 2012, p. 113; also see Bowen, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1995; Robinson, 2014). In this study, I sought to balance this desire for
theoretical saturation with a sample that was large enough to make comparisons across core demographic categories, such as gender and race.

5) **Determine the number of elements to be selected for each quota control category.** It is important to note that proportional quota sampling was used in this study, meaning that “the allocation of the number of elements to be selected for each quota category is based on their proportions in the target population,” whereby the “distribution of certain characteristics of the sample is equal to their proportional distribution in the target population” (Daniel, 2012, p. 104; also see Henry, 1990; Maxfield & Babbie, 2009). Further, for this study, I used what Daniel (2012) referred to as “noninterlocking quotas,” in which the quotas for the four variables of interest (i.e., gender, race and ethnicity, class level, age) were all considered separately when selecting interview participants. That is, one interview participant could satisfy different quota elements in the target sample. For example, at Suburban U, 54% of undergraduates are females and 46% are males. In a sample of 35 participants, this means that approximately 19 women and 16 men should be included in the study. Similar quotas existed for race and ethnicity, age, and class level, and it was not specified as to which of the other quotas these male and female participants should simultaneously fulfill. Thus, the quota elements were all considered separately, as opposed to being a part of an interlocking matrix.

6) **Select the targeted number of participants, based on the desired quota controls, using purposive sampling.** This step was achieved in the actual
execution of the sampling strategy during the recruitment phases of the study, which will be discussed in greater depth below.

Although a quota (or stratified purposive) sample is not representative of the broader population, thus making it difficult to make generalizations about the population from the sample, the technique carries a number of benefits. Daniel (2012) argued that the stratification of the sample allows for those in different subpopulations to be represented in the study, and that there are fewer opportunities for selection bias to occur on the part of the researcher due to the quota controls that are in place. Despite this, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) asserted that a disconnect between the sample and the population will always exist, particularly on those variables or elements that were not included as quota controls in the sampling strategy. More specifically, while this sampling method may allow researchers to fill their desired quotas, the segment of the population that is hard to reach may still be underrepresented in the data (Henry, 1990).

3.6. Recruitment and Data Collection

Because two different research sites were involved in this study, the recruitment and data collection at each institution proceeded in two distinct phases, with phase one taking place at Urban U and phase two taking place at Suburban U.

3.6.1. Phase One: Recruitment and Data Collection at Urban U

At the same time that we were finalizing our class interview guide in the qualitative methods course, we also began generating ideas about how we would recruit undergraduates at Urban U for interviews. This involved creating a screening survey (see Appendix B) that Dr. Miller then distributed to students in a large, introductory
psychology course at Urban U. The rationale for targeting an introductory psychology class is threefold. First, introductory psychology is typically a general education course. This means that students from a variety of majors and programs of study will be taking the course and could subsequently be included in our sample. This is important when interviewing students about subjects like fear of crime and perceptions of safety because it would not be desirable to have a sample that is entirely comprised of psychology or criminal justice students. Instead, a blend of students from the sciences, humanities, and social sciences would be preferable in order to obtain a sample that is most generalizable to the broader student body. Second, because introductory psychology is a general education course, students of all class levels (i.e., freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors) are likely to be represented. Lastly, introductory courses are typically large, lecture-style classes, allowing us to reach more potential interview participants.

The screening survey that was distributed in the course of interest included spaces for students to write their names and email addresses so that they could be contacted by a graduate student to schedule an interview, along with questions about their gender, race and ethnicity, age, place of birth, time at Urban U, current living arrangements (whether living on- or off-campus), and previous experiences with the campus police. Over 55 students in the psychology course completed the initial screening survey and were later contacted for an interview, based on their demographic characteristics and previous experiences. As mentioned above, we attempted to construct a sample that most closely matched the demographic characteristics of undergraduates at Urban U, particularly with regard to class level, gender, race and ethnicity, and age. In addition to recruiting Urban U undergraduates through the screening survey, four students in our class chose to find
their own interview participants through the use of snowball sampling, as three were most interested in interviewing students from the LGBTQ community and one was interested in speaking with reporters from the student newspaper to investigate how they write about crime on campus.

When we exhausted all of the possible participants who had responded to the initial screening survey in the psychology course, either because students were successfully interviewed or never responded to our attempts to schedule interviews with them, a few of us volunteered to distribute screening surveys in criminal justice courses that we were teaching, including Introduction to Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Research Methods\textsuperscript{15}. The implications of this strategy are discussed in section 3.9 below.

Participation in the first phase of the study was voluntary, and respondents were provided with a $10 Starbucks gift card and a list of safety resources on campus upon completion of the interview. Participants were informed before the interviews started that their responses would be confidential and that they would be assigned a unique pseudonym. Further, each participant was provided with an informed consent form, which had previously received approval from Urban U’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to sign the consent form and to indicate if they were comfortable with being audio-recorded. With the exception of one student, who was in a leadership position with the student officers that assist and support the efforts of the campus police, all participants were comfortable with being audio-recorded. This particular student was not comfortable with being recorded, due to concern that her words

\textsuperscript{15} It is important to note that none of us interviewed students who were enrolled in our own courses. Rather, we recruited undergraduate participants that other graduate students in our class could interview.
could somehow be used against her, the campus police force, or the institution; thus, detailed fieldnotes were taken during the interview, including some verbatim quotes.

Interviews were semi-structured, in that open-ended prompts were provided through the use of our class interview guide (see Appendix D) and participants’ responses were probed for additional detail by individual interviewers as needed. Interviews at Urban U ranged from 30 minutes to three hours in length and were generally conducted in offices or conference rooms at the university. Each graduate student in our class was expected to interview at least two undergraduates using the class interview guide, which produced a final class sample size of 28 students. Following the course, I interviewed six additional students at Urban U during the fall 2013 and fall 2014 semesters. The six participants I interviewed included four student officers who assist Urban U’s campus police force, as well as two students who had recently been the victims of an armed robbery on campus. This produced a final sample size of 34 students at the urban institution.

3.6.2. Phase Two: Replicating the Process at Suburban U

Once the data had been collected at Urban U, it was time for the process to be replicated at Suburban U. Following the receipt of IRB approval for the second phase of the project (see Appendix E), recruitment and data collection were initiated at Suburban U during the fall 2014 semester. In early August 2014, I searched Suburban U’s fall schedule of classes and identified a large, introductory psychology class that I could potentially use to recruit interview participants. I contacted the instructor of the course via email, explained that I was a doctoral student at Rutgers-Newark and that I was interested in interviewing undergraduates at Suburban U about their perceptions of safety
and risk on campus. To the email, I also attached a copy of the screening survey that I was interested in distributing to the students in her course (see Appendix F). I asked for permission to come to her class on September 11, 2014, speak to her students about my dissertation research, and invite them to participate through the use of the screening survey. The instructor responded very enthusiastically and agreed to help, mentioning that she had 310 students enrolled in her class.

Just as Dr. Miller had done at Urban U, I attended the psychology class, spoke to the students about my research, shared what would be expected of them if they agreed to participate, informed them that they would receive a $10 Starbucks gift card to thank them for their participation, and invited any questions. I then distributed the screening survey (see Appendix F), which was adapted from the one that we used to recruit students at Urban U. The survey again included spaces for students to write their names and email addresses so that they could be contacted at a later date, along with questions about their gender, race and ethnicity, age, place of birth, time at Suburban U, current living arrangements, and previous experiences with the campus police. Over 182 students completed the initial screening survey and were contacted via email for an interview, based on their demographic characteristics and whether they had disclosed any previous encounters with the campus police.

While there were students who expressed interest in participating in the study on the screening survey, but did not respond to my attempts to schedule an interview with them, I did not need to recruit any additional students beyond those who had completed the initial screening survey at Suburban U. Students who completed the survey and who matched the demographic characteristics needed in my desired sampling frame were
contacted via email and asked to provide their availability through a private online Doodle scheduling poll.

Like the first phase of the study at Urban U, participation in the second phase at Suburban U was also voluntary. Respondents were again provided with a $10 Starbucks gift card and a list of safety resources on campus upon completion of the interview. Each participant was provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix G) and told that their responses would be confidential. Participants were asked to sign the consent form and to indicate if they were comfortable with having their interview audio-recorded. All participants at Suburban U agreed to be audio-recorded.

Using the same interview guide that was used at Urban U, with only minor modifications to questions referring to specific locations on campus (see Appendix H), the interviews at Suburban U were also semi-structured. Open-ended prompts were provided and participants’ responses were probed for additional detail as needed. Interviews with students at Suburban U tended to be shorter than those with students at Urban U, ranging from 30 minutes to over one hour in length, often because they had fewer experiences with personal and vicarious victimization to share. All interviews at Suburban U were conducted in conference rooms or small classrooms, and a total of 36 undergraduates were interviewed.

3.7. Sample Characteristics

A total of 70 undergraduates participated in this study; 34 were enrolled at the urban university and 36 were enrolled at the suburban university. The characteristics of the study samples at both institutions are presented in Table 3. As mentioned previously,
Table 3: Characteristics of the Undergraduate Student Body and Study Sample, by Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>CHARACTERS OF SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Undergraduate Students</td>
<td>% of Interview Participants (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderqueer/Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races/ethnicities</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Statistics for both institutions are based on fall 2013 enrollment data.

*One participant interviewed at the urban university had recently graduated and was pursuing their master’s degree there at the time of the interview.
all attempts were made to construct study samples at both universities that closely aligned with the demographic profiles of the undergraduate student body, particularly along the characteristics of class level, gender, race and ethnicity, and age.

With regard to the sample obtained at the urban university, about 32% (or 11) of the students interviewed were freshmen, about 24% each were juniors (eight students) or seniors (eight students), and about 21% were sophomores (seven students). Of the broader student body at Urban U, about 34% are seniors, 26% are juniors, 18% are freshmen, and 17% are sophomores. The gender composition of the study sample closely mirrors that of undergraduate students at Urban U. Specifically, 47% of the sample (or 16 students) identified as female and 50% (or 17 students) identified as male, compared with 48% and 52% of undergraduates at the institution, respectively. Further, one student in the sample (or about 3%) identified as genderqueer\(^\text{16}\). The racial and ethnic composition of the sample is also similar to that of undergraduates at Urban U, particularly when considering the largest two racial groups. Nearly 30% of the sample (or 10 students) identified as Hispanic or Latino and about 24% (or eight students) identified as white or Caucasian. At Urban U as a whole, one quarter (25%) of undergraduates are white or Caucasian and 23% are Hispanic or Latino. The two racial groups in the sample that did not closely match their proportions at the broader university were Asians and those who identify as bi- or multi-racial. Asians comprise 22% of the undergraduate student body; however, only 6% (or two) of the students in the sample identified as Asian. Alternatively, students who identify as bi- or multi-racial were overrepresented in the sample at about 15% (or five students), compared with only 3% of

\(^{16}\) For the purposes of the analysis, this student will be grouped with the female students because the ways in which this student presented their gender was most consistent with that of other female students.
undergraduates at the institution. Finally, about 82% of those in the sample (or 28 students) were under the age of 25, 12% (or four students) were over 30, and 6% (or two students) were between the ages of 25 and 29 years old. At Urban U as a whole, 71% of undergraduates are under the age of 25, 15% are between the ages of 25 and 29, and 14% are over 30 years old.

Focusing on the sample at Suburban U, about 64% (or 23 students) were freshmen, 19% (or seven students) were sophomores, and about 8% each were juniors (three students) and seniors (three students). At the institution as a whole, 33% are seniors, 29% are juniors, 19% are freshmen, and 17% are sophomores. Freshmen are overrepresented in the sample, while juniors and seniors are both underrepresented. Similar to the urban university, the gender composition of the sample at Suburban U was quite consistent with that of the broader student body. Specifically, 58% of the sample (or 21 students) identified as female and 42% (or 15 students) identified as male, compared with 54% and 46% of students at the institution, respectively. The racial and ethnic composition of the sample also mirrors that of undergraduates at the suburban institution. About 47% of the sample (or 17 students) identified as white or Caucasian, 19% (or seven students) were Asian, 17% (or six students) were African American or black, 11% (or four students) were Hispanic or Latino, and about 3% each were Pacific Islander (one student) and bi- or multi-racial (one student). Similarly, the top four racial groups at the broader institution are white or Caucasian (49%), Asian (14%), Hispanic or Latino (10%), and African American or black (9%). Lastly, all 36 of the participants in

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17 This is mainly due to the recruitment strategy that was used. The implications of this are discussed in the study limitations below.
the sample from the suburban university were under the age of 25 years old, compared with about three-quarters (77%) of undergraduates in the institution’s student body.

3.8. Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, all interviews were audio-recorded with the exception of one with Jimena, a female student who was in a leadership position with the campus police at Urban U. Following each interview at the urban university, each graduate student in the qualitative methods course was responsible for transcribing the audio-recordings of the two interviews they conducted, writing ethnographic fieldnotes that detailed their interview experiences, and sharing their data with the rest of the class. I followed a similar procedure for the extra interviews I conducted at the urban university, transcribing the audio-recordings of the interviews and writing ethnographic fieldnotes about my interview experiences. At the suburban university, I also wrote detailed fieldnotes following each interview. Additionally, I hired and trained three undergraduate criminal justice students from Rutgers-Newark to transcribe 33 of the 36 Suburban U interviews, and I transcribed the remaining three. As the undergraduate transcribers submitted their work, I checked their files for accuracy by reading their transcriptions as I listened to the corresponding audio-recording for that particular interview, correcting any errors as needed.

To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, all interview participants were assigned a unique pseudonym to protect their identities, and all personally-identifiable information was removed during the transcription process. Further, all information that could potentially reveal the names or locations of either study setting was also removed.
during the transcription process. This included the names of: both schools, as well as neighboring schools; the counties, cities, or states in which the schools are located; streets; and nearby locations or establishments.

The transcripts were analyzed inductively using the constant comparative method, which was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their seminal work on grounded theory. This comparison is integral to every stage of the analysis from reviewing and revisiting interview transcripts to coding and identifying key emergent themes in the data (see Boeije, 2002). Glaser (1965) argued that the constant comparative method consists of four main stages, which include: “1) comparing incidents applicable to each category; 2) integrating categories and their properties; 3) delimiting the theory; and 4) writing the theory” (p. 439). Because I was interested in making comparisons across gender about students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus, their assumptions about the victims and perpetrators of campus crime, and how the campus police and the adoption of precautionary strategies help to alleviate students’ concerns, I analyzed and coded the interview transcripts separately by gender. That is, I carefully reviewed each of the 69 transcripts (and, in Jimena’s case, detailed fieldnotes with many verbatim quotes) and compiled excerpts that were relevant to each of the three research questions into files, separately by gender and by institution. This resulted in two separate datasets per institution (i.e., one dataset for males and one for females), or four data files total. In other words, there were four separate data files for: 1) female students attending Suburban U; 2) male students attending Suburban U; 3) female students attending Urban U; and 4) male students attending Urban U.
To engage in this process of constant comparison, I adapted Boeije’s (2002, p. 395) step-by-step approach, which consisted of the analytic sequence outlined below.

1) *Comparison within a single interview.* This step involves the analysis of one interview by itself to understand “any difficulties, highlights, and inconsistencies” (Boeije, 2002, p. 395). It focuses on comparing the content of various portions of one single interview through the process of open coding, which “entails a close reading of the data” and being “open to all possible theoretical directions” throughout the reading of the transcripts (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). This is precisely what I did during the preliminary open coding of my data. I closely read each interview transcript, jotting down any initial concepts, categories, and ideas in the margins of the documents. This process resulted in broad themes that were related to my three overarching research questions, including the role of community and campus context (e.g., social disorder, physical disorder, environmental beauty), the campus police, offenders, victims, types of victimization, and precautionary strategies. After engaging in the initial open coding process and gaining an idea of the general patterns in the data, I revisited and re-coded the excerpts in each of the four datasets a second time to determine if there was enough evidence in the data to support the common themes that had emerged in the initial coding process. These focused codes, which again were organized around the three guiding research questions, formed the basis of color-coded summary sheets that I created for each interview participant in this study. The summary sheet template I used can be found in Appendix I. Green focused
codes are codes that generally relate to the first research question, while red relate to the second question, and blue relate to the third and final research question. As I revisited each interview transcript, I placed phrases, ideas, and verbatim quotes that were relevant to each focused code into the table for future comparison. I printed each summary sheet and organized them in a three-ring binder with four tabs that were labeled for the four datasets.

2) *Comparison between interviews within the same group.* The next stage in the analysis was to compare data within the same group, analyzing various fragments of data to look for similarities, differences, and possible explanations (Boeije, 2002). For example, this means that females at Suburban U were compared with other females at Suburban U to determine if the same themes were present in their remarks, as well as where there were any variations across women in that particular subsample of the study. This included looking for any deviant (or negative) cases in the sample that did not necessarily appear to fit the theory or explanation being developed and attempting to account for those divergent perspectives (see Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1995). In fact, Glaser (1965) argued that the constant comparative method “includes a constant search for negative cases or falsifying evidence that would refute the emerging theory” and it “serves to test concepts and themes with a view to producing a theory grounded in the data” (p. 139). The summary sheets created in the previous step facilitated this process by allowing me to compare quotes and ideas from different interviews within the same group that dealt with the same general theme.
Focusing on each research question and group separately, I sorted the summary sheets into piles by theme, noting on the sheets themselves where there were any similarities or differences in the codes, as well as possible explanations for these variations.

3) *Comparison of interviews from different groups.* The next step in Boeije’s (2002) interpretation of the constant comparative method was to compare interviews from different groups. In the case of the present study, which focused on understanding whether there are gender differences in perceptions of risk and fear of crime in two campus contexts, this meant comparing two gender categories at one institution against each other. Specifically, at this stage, I again sorted the summary sheets into piles by theme and compared the focused codes and data of Suburban U females with Suburban U males to identify any similarities, differences, and possible explanations. The same procedure was used to compare Urban U females with Urban U males.

4) *Comparison of interviews at the level of the university and campus context.*

The final step in my adaptation of Boeije’s (2002) step-by-step approach to the constant comparative method was to compare interviews with students attending the two different universities. This involved comparing the focused codes and data of Suburban U students with Urban U students, while simultaneously understanding whether women in the different contexts described their perceptions of risk and fear of crime in the same ways and whether any variations could be attributed to context. The same procedure
was used for the men in the sample. The summary sheets were again sorted into separate piles by theme to facilitate this step of Boeije’s (2002) method.

The results presented in the chapters that follow are organized by the themes that emerged in the course of the analysis I have outlined above, which also correspond with the three guiding research questions mentioned previously.

3.9. Study Limitations

This study has two key limitations that can generally be attributed to the recruitment strategies used at both institutions, as well as the fact that the study began as a class research project to train graduate students in the techniques of qualitative methods.

First, one of the main limitations of this project is that a little over one-third of the interviews were conducted in the context of a graduate-level qualitative methods course. Although we were all trained about the techniques of conducting interviews prior to entering the field, we all had different levels of experience with qualitative research and varying levels of interest in the research topic (i.e., students’ perceptions of safety and risk on an urban campus). As a result, it is possible that there was a lack of consistency across the interviews with regard to how they were conducted. Understandably, we all have different interests and – despite having a common interview guide – we were likely to follow-up with our participants in different ways. For instance, one of my main interests during these interviews was to explore the ways in which gender shaped students’ perceptions of fear, in addition to the gendered assumptions they made about who (whether men or women) they perceived as being most likely to be victimized on the
college campus. Other students were not as interested in following up on these gendered themes, but may have been more intrigued by discussions about where the students grew up or whether they were currently living on-campus. This is not to fault individual interviewers, but rather to say that a portion of the interviews in this study may have lacked consistency due to the types of follow-up questions that were (or were not) asked.

The second key limitation of this study can be attributed to the recruitment strategies that were used at both institutions. Due to a lack of responses from some of the students who completed the initial screening survey in the psychology class at Urban U, some of the graduate students in the qualitative methods course agreed to recruit interview participants through the criminal justice courses they were teaching\textsuperscript{18}. As a result, about one-third of the students in the sample from the urban university were criminal justice majors. It is likely that criminal justice students may have thought about the interview topics previously and could have answered the questions about crime and victimization in a manner that students from other disciplines may not have.

Similarly, the recruitment strategy at the suburban university also influenced the composition of the final sample. Specifically, more than half of the sample was comprised of freshmen and about 20% were sophomores. This is largely due to the fact that the sample was recruited through an introductory-level psychology class. One impact that this may have had on the data is that freshmen may have fewer campus-related experiences to talk about than those who have been enrolled at the institution for longer periods of time, such as juniors and seniors. Despite this issue, the undergraduates

\textsuperscript{18} None of these graduate students interviewed students in their own classes.
who participated in the study across all class levels shared a variety of experiences and there was also consistency in their opinions and perceptions of risk on campus.

As with any research study, it is possible that self-selection bias influenced those who agreed to participate and who were ultimately interviewed. In particular, students who were studying criminal justice or who had an interest in crime; had previously been victimized on campus or knew someone who had been; had a previous encounter with the campus police or knew someone who had; or regularly thought about safety issues on campus may have been more likely to agree to participate. With that said, however, the undergraduates who were interviewed had a wide range of experiences to offer, and there was considerable consistency in the opinions and concerns voiced by those who had experienced some form of victimization as compared to those who had not.

3.10. Chapter Summary

This study aims to investigate the role of gender and campus context in students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization by understanding:

1) How the community context and encounters with the campus police and other security features shape women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization on campus;

2) The ways in which gender influences students’ ideas about who the most likely victims and perpetrators of crime are in the two contexts; and

3) How women’s and men’s adoption of various precautionary strategies impacts their perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts.
The chapters that follow are organized by these three questions. To answer these guiding research questions and address the need for qualitative studies that examine how students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus might be context-dependent, this study relies on data from in-depth interviews with a total of 70 undergraduates; 34 of whom were enrolled at an urban university and 36 were enrolled at a suburban university, both on the east coast of the United States.
CHAPTER 4: PERCEPTIONS OF RISK IN THE SUBURBAN CONTEXT

4.1. Introduction

Before examining how students’ fears of victimization and the behaviors they used to cope with their fears might be context-dependent and gendered, it is first important to assess how students perceived the suburban and urban communities, in addition to the physical characteristics of the campuses themselves. This chapter focuses on students’ perceptions of risk in the suburban setting, including the role that the community context played in shaping their perceptions, their perceptions of risk on the Suburban U campus itself, and how the actions of the campus police influenced these views. Chapter 5 will then examine the similarities and differences between students’ perceptions of risk in the two settings by taking a closer look at the urban community setting and campus.

4.2. “It’s Not Even Close to a Rough Town”: Perceptions of Risk in the Suburban City

Overall, the majority of the students I interviewed at Suburban U viewed the suburban city as a low-risk setting and expressed feeling safe in the community around campus, both based on their own experiences, as well as those of their friends. Figure 1 provides a summary of the terms students used to refer to their perceptions of safety in the suburban setting when directly asked how safe they felt the community around Suburban U was. As illustrated in the figure, more than 83% of those in the suburban sample, including 16 women and 14 men, described the community as safe in their responses by using words like “very or really safe,” “rather or pretty safe,” “safe,” or “not
bad.” Of the remaining six students (or about 17% of the sample), three women said they were not sure how safe the suburban community was because they did not have a lot of experience with it, due either to not living on campus or simply having no reason to be in the areas around campus. Additionally, two women and one man used the word “sketchy” in their descriptions; however, all three were referring specifically to the shopping center across the street from Suburban U, which was under construction at the time of the interviews. Despite viewing this one location in the community as “sketchy” because of the renovations that were taking place, they still noted viewing the rest of the suburban setting as safe and did not believe it presented any immediate threats to their safety.

4.2.1. Evaluations of the Suburban City

As noted in Chapter 3, Suburban U is located in a relatively affluent setting with lower rates of crime than other cities and counties across the United States. Accordingly, when asked to briefly describe their perceptions of safety in the suburban community, the
majority of Suburban U students evaluated the setting as safe and did not indicate being too concerned about engaging in certain daily behaviors there. For example, Justin, a Filipino American man, explained that relatively speaking, “The community is rather safe compared to other places in the U.S. or just [the state] for that matter. Like we have our issues but they’re not as serious.” Deonte, a black student, also compared the suburban city to neighboring areas in his assessment of safety and risk, concluding, “It doesn’t seem bad, like I’ve been in worse areas like in [a nearby state] and stuff, so compared to that, like this is pretty good. Yeah, I don’t really see many bad things.” Similarly, Dylan, a white student, argued that the primary reason he generally felt safe at Suburban U was because of where it’s located: “I mean, it’s obviously not much of a rough town. [The suburban city] is not even close to a rough town.”

In addition, when discussing their perceptions of safety, students not only drew on their own experiences in the suburban community, but also sometimes expanded their personal assessments of risk to include those of their friends. For example, Landon, a white man, stated, “I’ve been to [the suburban city]. And [it] is I feel very, very safe. It’s very nice…I think pretty much everyone that I know feels safe at [Suburban U].” Similarly, Vanna, an Asian student, extended her perceptions of safety and risk in the community to include those of her friends, combined with the fact that no one she knew had ever been harmed in the suburban context. She asserted, “I think maybe it’s pretty safe. I mean, I just don’t feel threatened particularly. Maybe I’m lucky, but I actually never hear of anyone feeling like, ‘Oh my gosh, this happened to me and stuff. Someone tried to do this and that to me’…I don’t think there’s any issues.” Vanna later continued to express that she primarily felt safe because “we live in a pretty good area.” Thus,
Vanna explained that she and her friends perceived the community as safe because it is relatively safe and there don’t tend to be immediate threats to residents’ well-being. In fact, Odette, an African American woman, considered the areas close by as being a mere extension of the Suburban U campus. Asked about her perceptions of risk in the community, she replied, “I think it’s okay. At least it’s pretty much safe-ish. I think of it as a part of the campus.” In other words, in her evaluations of risk in both the community and on campus, Odette argued that they are basically the same physical place.

While the vast majority of students in the suburban sample viewed the community around campus as safe, some participants were more reluctant to label the campus as completely safe, although they did not specify any immediate threats to their well-being. For example, Omar, an Arab student, described feeling safe in the community around campus, but also mentioned that he felt safer on the suburban campus itself. He explained, “Compared to [campus], I would say it’s a little less safe, but generally the same.” Elena, a Hispanic woman, shared a similar sentiment when emphasizing that nowhere is completely safe, including the areas surrounding campus. She stated, “I mean, I always think—I don’t know. Anything can happen anywhere, so I really don’t think about this as an unsafe place. I mean, it probably is, it probably isn’t. I don’t know, that’s the way I think—that anything can happen anywhere.” Two other students noted that while they didn’t feel unsafe in the community around campus, they did not feel completely safe either. For instance, Savannah, a white woman, asserted, “I would say generally it’s pretty safe. I mean, I don’t see a lot of security in that area, but I also don’t feel like it’s unsafe there.” Although she didn’t feel “unsafe” in the community, she
seemed uncomfortable with labeling it as definitively safe, due to the lack of a security presence to stop any potential wrongdoing and crime from occurring.

4.2.2. Sources of Discomfort in the Suburban City

Despite stating that they generally felt safe in the community around campus (as illustrated in Figure 1 above), just less than one-third of those interviewed at Suburban U, including seven women and four men, also noted feeling uncomfortable at times by identifying specific situations and circumstances as a source of discomfort. Most frequently, this involved women students placing temporal restraints on their apprehensions about the area, as they explained that they only had elevated perceptions of risk when alone at night. Iris, a Latina student, stated that while she viewed the area as being “pretty safe” overall, she also noted that she would feel “iffy about it” late at night and with no people around. Tuyen, an international woman student from Vietnam, felt similarly and actively refrained from traveling into the areas around campus at night. When asked how safe she believed the community around campus was, she explained, “I actually can’t say because I don’t go out off campus at night. I kind of avoid it.” Likewise, Jenna, a white student, explained, “Occasionally I feel a little bit uncomfortable around there. I typically try to avoid going there at night time, but I don’t go there that often. I usually stay on campus or go around the mall or whatever….Sometimes really late at night, it seems a little bit sketchy to me.” Asked what specifically about it makes her feel uncomfortable, Jenna stated, “It’s just kind of a feeling.” These women were unable to label anything specific about the environment that made them uncomfortable, aside from the fact that it was dark outside.
In addition to those who avoided going into the community around campus after dark, other students referred to specific locations in the suburban city as being particularly risky at night. Lin, an international woman student from China, explained, “Every time I go to the supermarket, I always go there with my friends. I don’t like to go there at night and by myself. It will make me feel unsafe.” Kaylee, a white student, also referenced the same supermarket in her response: “I think [the shopping center] is really sketchy…very shabby, so I don’t like going over there. Occasionally I’ll walk over there for the [supermarket] or whatever. I think it’s very sketchy.” Kaylee later elaborated that “part of it is like the oldness of the building” and also that “there’s construction going on that adds to the creepiness.” Natalie, a Pacific Islander, echoed Lin and Kaylee’s concerns about the supermarket, which stemmed directly from her friend’s experience with having her bike stolen there. As a result, she explained, “I don’t know, [the supermarket] kinda freaks me out. I’m always afraid someone’s going to steal my bike when I bike out there, just like to go shopping.” Similarly, Parker, who was the only man to note a specific area in the community as making him uncomfortable, stated, “From times I’ve been to [the shopping center], it could seem a little bit sketchy…Especially for like the movie theater and the little restaurants and stuff that are in the back area, which is like under construction and a little, yeah. I don’t know, it’s just got that vibe to it, that’s all.” However, Parker explained that he continued to go to the shopping center anyway, despite the creepy feeling it gave him. Thus, these students felt uncomfortable at the shopping center near campus, due to the presence of certain physical characteristics (i.e., it being run down and under construction), and – in Natalie’s case – having a vicarious theft happen there.
Colton, a white student, seemed to sympathize with these other participants who described feeling safer on campus than in the suburban community, although rather than labeling those areas as sketchy or creepy, he was more specific about who exactly made him uncomfortable in the areas around Suburban U. He explained:

I don’t feel unsafe—I mean, of course I feel like I’d be safer on campus. That’s just because there’s people that you know are looking out for you. Compared to other places, the cops are scattered and stuff like that. It’s a neighborhood so anyone can really live there. You don’t have to be a student.

Although Colton mentioned that he did feel safe in the community around campus, the reason he felt safer at Suburban U was because he was surrounded by fellow students, whom he assumed were safe, did not pose a risk, and would look out for him in the event that he encountered any danger. As he noted, “anyone can really live there” in the suburban city, meaning that community members were not deemed as safe as college students and that students were automatically presumed to be harmless by their very status as students. The notion that students were skeptical of the motives of community members was consistent among those in the sample and will be discussed further in Chapter 6 in relation to students’ perceptions of risk on the Suburban U campus.

Interestingly, two men in the sample believed that the only possible threat against them was the high volume of traffic in the area, along with the aggressive way people were perceived to drive in the suburban city. In this regard, Ryan, a white man, explained, “I’ve walked down [to the suburban city] a few times. It’s a lot of traffic, but other than that, it doesn’t seem like it’s too much going on that would be too dangerous.” Similarly, when asked about his perceptions of safety in the suburban city, Wyatt, a white man, stated, “I would say like crime, probably not. [It’s] probably safe, but for like how small everything is and all the traffic, getting hit by a car could be a very likely thing that
could happen ‘cause people are crazy.’” Thus, both of these students agreed that while the threat of crime victimization was relatively unlikely in the suburban city, students were most at risk of being harmed by vehicles as pedestrians in that context.

4.3. “Nothing’s Ever Happened”: Perceptions of Risk on the Suburban U Campus

When discussing safety and risk on the Suburban U campus, students described how the location of the school and the physical characteristics (e.g., green scenery) of the campus enhanced their perceptions of safety on campus. Overall, there was uniformity in the terms that students in the sample used to describe the suburban campus itself. Figure 2 illustrates that all students in the suburban sample expressed feeling safe on campus; none stated that they felt unsafe. More specifically, nearly 39% of students described feeling “fairly” or “pretty safe,” one-third noted feeling “very” or “really safe” on campus, about 14% felt “safe,” and another 14% felt “generally” or “relatively safe.” Interestingly, the majority of women in the sample (N=13) described feeling “very safe,” “really safe,” or simply “safe” on campus with few qualifiers, while the majority of men (N=11) added other descriptors including “fairly,” “pretty,” “generally,” and “relatively,” indicating either that they only feel safe in comparison to other places or do not necessarily feel completely safe at all times. Such perceptions are further noted in their detailed responses, which are discussed below.
As mentioned in Chapter 3, Suburban U’s main campus is located on nearly 700 wooded acres of land in the mid-Atlantic region of the east coast and about 20 miles southwest of a major U.S. city. In comparison to other institutions of its size with regard to student enrollment, Suburban U is a relatively low-crime setting, as only four violent and 188 property crimes were reported to the campus police in 2013 (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). Over the course of their interviews, many students remembered how the suburban setting and the physical characteristics of the campus played a role in their decision when choosing where to attend college. While referring to the beauty of the campus in her remarks, Erin, a white woman, explained how Suburban U was her first choice for college and that she fell in love with the campus when she visited. She recalled, “It was basically like love at first sight...[Suburban U] was my top pick. And as soon as I stepped on campus, I was like this is where I’m going to school, no matter what happens.” Similarly, Faith, a white woman, talked about how much she liked the campus setting: “I really liked how [the campus] was set up and I like how green it is on campus—the tree green and the recycle green that they have. I really like
the environment.” The physical campus also played a role in Jenna’s decision: “It was really pretty to me. I liked how it was not too big, but it wasn’t too small.” Each of these students spoke in detail about the aesthetics and nice appearance of the campus as reasons they wanted to attend school there – something that was generally absent from the remarks of those in the urban sample.

Additionally, students who had grown up in the area and who were already familiar with Suburban U felt very comfortable and at home on campus. Nida, an Arab woman who grew up near the Suburban U campus, described how her familiarity with both the area and the school enhanced her perceptions of safety on campus: “I feel like we all just have that general feeling of like [Suburban U] is kinda like our backyard. It’s kinda like home, so it’s just like, I dunno, it’s just that safety zone I guess.” Accordingly, Nida noted that she feels safe on campus because it is so familiar to her. Dylan, a white man, echoed Nida’s sentiments about the role of his familiarity with the area when detailing his perceptions of safety on campus:

I first grew up in a townhouse [near the suburban city]. And then shortly after, my family moved to [the suburban city]. And we’ve lived there in that house for about 15 years now….I mean, I have kinda grown up around [Suburban U] for my whole life. Whenever there is lots of traffic, we all know there is a big event in [Suburban U].

As shown in Figure 2 above, when asked about their perceptions of safety on campus, students were uniformly positive in their responses. Landon, a white man, elaborated, “It’s a very safe campus….Most of the time I feel very, very safe on campus. There’s not a lot that makes me feel, ‘oh, I don’t wanna go down there.’ It’s well-lit, there’s no one I—yeah, I just feel safe.” Ryan, a white man, agreed. He, too, noted that he felt the campus was “pretty safe. I mean, I don’t see—it’s really well-lit, I’ve noticed at night. I don’t see too many people walking around without groups, so that’s nice to
see.” Like Ryan, the majority of Suburban U participants felt that the campus was safe due to environmental features like good lighting and the presence of other students.

Despite students’ overwhelming perception that the campus was safe and relatively free from any particular threat, a small minority still noted the need to exercise caution and pay attention to their surroundings. Erin stated, “I think it’s safe,” but acknowledged that “like any college environment, you have to be cautious just ‘cause you’re in college and anything can happen, but like, I don’t feel like I’m in a horror movie.” Likewise, Justin, a Filipino American man, agreed: “I think we’re relatively safe. Everywhere has their risks and their issues, but there’s no such thing as a perfect society. But I think we do fairly well about keeping people safe.”

In their discussions of safety on campus, other students attending Suburban U compared their campus to others they had visited in different settings and with higher crime rates. For example, Dylan stated, “I visited a bunch of college campuses and it’s certainly safer….I don’t feel like when it’s night time, like I never feel the need to like call the campus police and be like ‘I don’t feel safe or anything.’ Because usually there’s some well-lit way to go back.” Likewise, Grace, a white woman, said, “I think it’s safer than a lot of places. Like I feel really safe….We have like one of the safest campuses, I think, in the region.”

Adina, an international student from Ethiopia, expanded this discussion to refer to her own behaviors on the suburban campus, which would be considered unsafe in other contexts:

I think it’s really, really safe. There’s schools that I know of that like nobody would walk around at one a.m. I’ve done it countless times from the library. I mean, you might think, “Oh, she’s just brave,” but like a lot of people feel like this and so do my friends, like I have no fear at [Suburban U]. I don’t know,
maybe I’ve just built a lot of comfort, having been here a long time, but I’ve just—nothing’s ever happened.

Adina was a fourth-year student at the time of her interview and drew on her positive experiences at Suburban U when describing her low perceptions of risk on campus.

Vivian, an African American woman, expressed a similar sentiment: “To me, I think it’s a really safe school. I feel like I can walk at night in the dark, or sometimes maybe one or two o’clock in the morning, I feel like I can just walk across campus like if I need to.”

Thus, both Adina and Vivian justified what might be the risky behavior of walking around campus by themselves at night, due to their comfort with the suburban setting, as well as the apparent lack of personal and vicarious victimization experiences.

Alternatively, only three students were not as comfortable with walking around on campus after dark, despite their overall view that the campus is safe. For instance, Kaylee, a white woman, explained:

I mean, I think it’s safe overall, but I think at night during the week, just because we all have rehearsals that will go from 6:30 to 9:30, so then especially like when the weather changes like in the winter, it gets darker earlier. So you feel like you’re outside a lot at night when it’s dark. So I feel like the campus dwindles population-wise. There’s not—I mean, there’s always people. I’m never like walking for a stretch and there’s not another person around. But sometimes it’ll be like very sparse, so not that it doesn’t feel safe, it’s just like, “Oh wow, it’s dark and there’s not many people around,” kinda feeling… I don’t feel creeped out, I just notice it. I think it’s enough to be like, “Huh,” but I feel safe overall.

Max, a Hispanic student, also called attention to the role of nighttime and darkness in his perceptions of risk on campus. When asked if he usually feels safe on campus, Max replied, “During the day, yes. At night it can get a little like, you know, spooky. There’s like no one around and, you know, so many buildings people can come out of from anywhere…and it’s totally silent, so you never know what’s gonna happen.”

The notion that the campus was somehow riskier when it was deserted stemmed from students’
perception that their fellow students were safe and harmless, a topic that will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

4.4. The Role of the Campus Police in Perceptions of Risk at Suburban U

Overall, the students at Suburban U had relatively low perceptions of risk on campus due to the community in which it was located, which had low crime rates and thus was perceived as safe. In addition, students believed that the presence of their peers on campus would protect them from harm. Another common reason participants had low perceptions of risk at Suburban U was because of the presence and visibility of the campus police. Like other colleges and universities across the country, police officers at Suburban U are state-certified and have the power to enforce both state and local laws. Further, these officers have the authority to make arrests and carry firearms on all three of Suburban U’s campuses, which are located in neighboring counties within the same state.

At the time of data collection during the 2014-2015 academic year, Suburban U employed a total of 77 law enforcement personnel, of whom about 50 were full-time sworn officers (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). In addition to these full-time sworn officers, Suburban U also has a police cadet program, which consists of approximately 25 part-time student wage employees who work under the officers’ supervision. The student cadets are non-sworn personnel who support the activities of the campus police officers and are trained to staff the escort service, conduct security patrols, and provide back-up at campus events.

Overall, the vast majority of students at Suburban U expressed feeling safe on campus due to the presence of campus law enforcement and other security personnel. As
Hilda, a white woman, asserted, “I think it’s very safe actually because if you’re walking around, I can see like a cop car somewhere or a security car somewhere.” Likewise, Natalie, a Pacific Islander, reported, “I think it’s really safe. There are the campus police just about everywhere so if anything really bad happened, I know there’d probably be someone within yelling distance.” Savannah, a white woman, also felt safe on campus due to the visibility and presence of different types of security personnel. She explained, “I feel like if there is a place around like the security needs to be at, they normally are. Like the police cadets are normally around, normally available, and stuff like that. RAs come through the dorms all the time throughout the night to check on people. So I’d say overall it’s fine.” All three of these students agreed that the campus is safe because they regularly see the campus police, the student cadets, and other forms of security when they are out and about at Suburban U.

Parker, a white man, also described the impact of visible police and cadet presence on his perceptions of risk on campus:

“Overall, from my perspective, I feel that it’s pretty safe…I see a lot of the [Suburban U] PD or the cadets that are always walking around, so I mean, it’s constant too. I usually see, you know, three or four every day whenever I’m walking, so I feel like there’s always somebody there that can help. I mean, again from my perspective, I haven’t really seen any instances of danger yet, you know what I mean?

Later in his interview when discussing the efforts of the campus police, Parker continued, “At the moment, I personally feel safe, you know, walking around and stuff like that just because I know that there’s measures in place and people I can go to [for help].”

Similarly, Elena, a Hispanic woman, expressed that she felt “pretty safe” on campus because “if you need help, you call someone, they’re there. It’s always like there’s a lot of people, so it makes it safe. That’s how I feel about it. I don’t know how safe it really
is.” Both she and Parker believed that in a time of need, someone (i.e., a police officer) would be there to help them. In his discussion of risk on campus, Zach also highlighted the benefits of having a dedicated campus police force nearby:

I think it’s actually really safe considering that you have the police cadets and the police force right on campus. It’s quick response, you know? If there was a robbery and somebody ended up calling them, you know, police just will go down there and it will be, I don’t know, like one to two minutes, so it’s not like thieves can really go anywhere.

One of the main reasons Zach felt safer at Suburban U than on other campuses he had visited was because of the presence and proximity of the campus police and student cadets, which he believed would ultimately help to facilitate quick response times if there ever was an emergency.

A smaller minority of students noted feeling safe on campus, but also suggested that the police cannot stop all wrongdoing from occurring. When discussing her perceptions of risk on campus and the role of the campus police in keeping it safe, Odette revealed, “On a scale of one to ten…I’ll give it a seven. I mean, I feel like it’s safe, but it’s only so much they can do. They cannot be everywhere at all times.” Blake, a white man, also expressed this concern when he mentioned hearing about different crimes on campus. He said, “I’d say it’s pretty safe. I’ve only heard of like a couple incidents of like sexual assault, but I heard they like got the guy anyway. So, it’s better ‘cause I know the police are like actual police, right?” Blake implied that his confidence in the abilities of campus law enforcement came from his knowledge that they are trained police officers and not simply security personnel.

Interestingly, this finding is the opposite of what I found when I conducted a similar study on the same campus approximately six years prior to the current study. In the earlier study, students were overwhelmingly skeptical of the efforts of the campus
police, particularly when considering their legitimacy to enforce law-breaking behaviors on campus. Specifically, students did not view the campus police as “real” police officers, but instead as security personnel, and they believed that they were enforcing the wrong kinds of behaviors, which tended to include those that students felt they had a right to engage in like underage drinking (see Jacobsen, 2015). As a result of these findings and students’ prior tendency to question the legitimacy of the Suburban U police, I expected to come to similar conclusions in the present study. The analysis in the current study, however, revealed that students were more informed about the duties of the campus police and seemed to have greater respect for them as a law enforcement presence. Possible reasons for this change in students’ attitudes may be attributable to the fact that the school shifted from a commuter to a primarily residential campus over the course of the six years between the two studies. This shift led to the development of new training sessions for all Resident Assistants (RAs) in the residence halls, who were then charged with informing incoming freshmen about the duties of campus law enforcement, as well as a required orientation for all incoming students that included dedicated modules about the campus police.

In their remarks about the role and effectiveness of the campus police, the majority of students noted that there were no emergency call boxes on campus. These call boxes, which can be identified by their bright blue lights, are just one security measure that colleges and universities across the country tend to have in place. They are typically installed in strategic locations throughout a given campus, and when a button on the call box is pressed, it immediately connects distressed individuals to the campus police for help. In total, of the 36 students who were interviewed at Suburban U, 20
participants (or 55.6%) stated that they had never seen any call boxes on campus, while
four (or 11.1%) thought they had been removed.

Regarding the presumed removal of the call boxes, Chloe, a multi-racial woman,
theorized, “I thought that they did remove them because they say that it’s easier for
someone to call with their phone because they give everyone the [Suburban U PD]
number. And sometimes people may need to call and then leave instead of standing in
front of the pole.” However, three other students, including Deonte, Erin, and Grace, had
a different theory about the call boxes’ removal. For instance, when asked if she had
noticed the call boxes around campus, Grace replied, “Yeah, they’re the yellow ones?”
After I corrected her and said, “Blue, I think,” she continued, “‘Cause we don’t have
those ‘cause we don’t meet the crime quota for those…by law, you’re supposed to have
them after a certain crime quota, but we don’t have that so we don’t really need them.”
Deonte articulated this same idea. Erin expanded on both Grace and Deonte’s
explanation when she said, “I don’t think we have them anymore…‘cause it has to do
with the crime around the area. You have to have a certain percentage of crime in order
to have them on campus and stuff, so I’ve never seen them on campus.” All four of these
students knew that the call boxes had been removed, but had different reasons for why
that was so. Chloe’s theory is the one that turned out to be correct, at least according to
an article published in the student newspaper the year before data collection at Suburban
U began. That article stated that there were plans to remove the call boxes during the fall
2014 semester, mainly due to maintenance problems and the increasing prevalence of
personal cell phones. Therefore, the removal of the call boxes had nothing to do with the
number of crimes reported on campus.
Despite this fact that the call boxes had recently been removed, the remaining 12 students in the sample (or 33.3%) mentioned that they had seen the call boxes on campus. Perhaps this was because these students had once seen them and failed to notice that they had since been removed. For example, Zach stated that he had not noticed the call boxes on campus, but did recall, “When I went on the [campus] tour, they were like, ‘yeah, we have emergency call boxes all around campus.’” At the time of his interview, Zach was a first-year student who had heard about the call boxes when he came to visit the campus the previous year, just prior to their removal. The fact that these 12 students neglected to notice the removal of the call boxes may also be a result of the safety feature’s relative lack of importance in their lives, as well as a reflection of their low perceptions of risk and fear on the suburban campus.

Additionally, four participants (or 11.1%) stated that the (re)installation of call boxes would make them feel safer on campus. For instance, Robert, an Asian man, explained, “I think it’s pretty safe with the police cadets. I also feel like there should be like those blue boxes, you know, where there’s a pole and there’s a box and you have to press a button and it sends out an alert thing. I feel it’ll be safer with those.” Similarly, when asked how safe she felt the campus was, Iris, a Latina student, replied, “Overall, I guess maybe like [on a scale of] 1 to 10, I’d say maybe like 7 or 8.” Asked why she wouldn’t give it a perfect 10, she continued, “I guess because I notice how a lot of other campuses have like those blue light thingies where you can like call anyone like the police, and they don’t have that here…I feel like there’s not really that much presence of like security here.” Thus, Robert and Iris, who both mentioned never seeing call boxes at Suburban U, felt that the campus would be safer if this security feature was installed.
4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has illustrated the important role of context and place in shaping students’ assessments of risk at Suburban U. In the low-crime suburban city surrounding campus, the overwhelming majority of students agreed that the community was generally safe and free of threats, with students’ only complaints being about the old shopping center across the street and the high volume of traffic and aggressive drivers in the downtown area nearby. The majority of students at Suburban U also expressed feeling safe on the school’s physical campus, due to the pleasing aesthetics of the campus environment, as well as students’ familiarity with the area and the school. Despite this, men students tended to make greater use of qualifying terms (e.g., fairly, pretty, generally, relatively) when describing their perceptions of safety, while women were less likely to do so. One of the main reasons why the majority of students at Suburban U reported feeling safe on campus was because of the presence and visibility of the campus police and the student police cadets, whom they felt would be there to protect them in a time of need.
CHAPTER 5: PERCEPTIONS OF RISK IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

5.1. Introduction

Like Chapter 4, which focused on students’ perceptions of risk in the suburban community and on the Suburban U campus, this chapter will examine students’ assessments of risk in the urban community and on the Urban U campus. Specifically, the first section of this chapter will discuss students’ perceptions of the urban city, including how their initial views about the community were formed and how their ideas about the community changed once they started attending college there. Next, this chapter will investigate students’ perceptions of risk on the urban campus itself, as well as how their views were shaped by the context of the surrounding community that the campus is situated within. The chapter closes by discussing the role of the Urban U police and other security personnel in alleviating students’ concerns both on and immediately near campus.

5.2. “Just Like the Ghetto”: Perceptions of Risk in the Urban Community

Like students at Suburban U, those attending Urban U also demonstrated uniformity in their perceptions of the urban city. However, these views were notably different than those expressed by Suburban U students, with participants at Urban U often making direct references to the crime and physical disorder surrounding campus in the course of their discussions about risk. Figure 3 provides a summary of the terms students used to describe their perceptions of safety in the urban city when they were specifically asked how safe they felt the community around campus was. Over three-quarters (or 76.5%) of participants attending Urban U, including 9 women and all 17 men in the
sample, noted in their responses that the city has a bad reputation for its high crime rates; that it is not safe; and that is “the hood,” “dangerous,” and “sketchy.” As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, such descriptions reflected the levels of crime in this particular urban setting. At the time of data collection, it had more than double the number of both violent and property crimes reported to law enforcement in any other city in the state (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014a), and it is frequently referred to as one of the “most dangerous” cities in the U.S. (Christie, 2013; Duplantier, 2014). As Nikki, an African American woman, aptly observed, “[The urban city] is one of the most dangerous cities in the country and yeah. It’s just bad.” As was frequently illustrated in students’ remarks, it is important to note that crime is spatially distributed in unequal ways across the city, with the highest rates of serious crime occurring in sections of the city that are further away from campus.

Figure 3. Terms Used by Urban U Students to Describe the Urban City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th># Women</th>
<th># Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay/Not bad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad reputation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not safe</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hood/Dangerous/Sketchy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
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Interestingly, the eight remaining students in the urban sample who did not specifically label the community as dangerous all happened to be women, as indicated in Figure 3; all were from nearby areas in the northern region of the state; and all but one identified as a racial or ethnic minority. Four of them specifically said the city was safe in their remarks, and four said that it was either “okay” or “not that bad.” Although these eight students did not label the community as unsafe, they used disclaimers in their responses to note circumstances that would make them uncomfortable in this particular context. Specifically, four noted that their familiarity with the city generally made them feel comfortable, although the areas farther away from campus made them feel unsafe; two mentioned that they felt safe in the community, but only during the daytime; and two did not cite a reason for their assertion that the city was safe. The fact that seven of the students who did not specifically label the community as dangerous identified as racial and ethnic minorities and were originally from areas near the urban city is both compelling and consistent with previous research. For example, studies examining the impact of physical and social disorder on perceptions of risk have found that the presence of such disorder heightens residents’ perceptions of risk, but only when that disorder is perceived by residents themselves and not measured by outside researchers (Hinkle & Yang, 2014; also see Yang & Pao, 2015). In other words, we do not all “see” and react to disorder in the same ways. Rather, our reactions are dependent on our own backgrounds, as well as our familiarity with the physical and social characteristics of the contexts we find ourselves within (see Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004).
Students’ detailed observations about the urban city will be discussed in greater depth below, particularly with regard to the negative things they had heard, the presence of physical and social disorder, and the role of familiarity in their perceptions of risk.

5.2.1. The Reputation of the Urban City

Overall, the analysis revealed that the majority of participants attending Urban U believed the community surrounding campus was not safe and that they needed to exercise greater caution in those areas. In many cases, students’ concerns originated prior to them attending Urban U, as they detailed how the reputation of the urban city as a crime-ridden and dangerous place preceded their own direct experiences with it. For example, Quinn, a white student from a rural town in the southern part of the state, explained that before deciding to pursue his education at Urban U, he had heard “just that it’s filled with crime, basically. I mean, just that there’s like sometimes robberies and like occasional stuff like that.” As a result of everything he had heard, he also noted that he limited his interactions with the community around campus and did not consider himself to be a resident there, despite living on campus. He stated, “I don’t really involve myself with the community. I don’t really live here besides my direction with the campus.” Thus, he noted that he only attended school in the urban city and even restricted his grocery shopping to the weekends when he went back home to visit his mom, just so that he did not have to take what he saw as the risk of being out and about in the urban community.

Like Quinn, Lauren, a Hispanic student, had heard similar comments when she announced that she would be attending Urban U. She recalled:

They were just mainly afraid of me being in [the urban city]. Just because everybody was like, “Why are you going to [the urban city]? Why are you letting
her go to [the urban city]? She’s a small girl. Something’s gonna happen to her ‘cause it’s [the urban city].” So all the friends and like I said, all the media, were just feeding into that panic.

The reputation of the urban city as dangerous led Lauren’s friends and family to believe that she would be at heightened risk of victimization, while also questioning her ability to defend herself there. As she noted, these assumptions were mainly attributed to her small stature and the fact that she is a woman – two subjects that will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Micah, a multiracial student, also described what he had heard about the urban city as he grew up in a neighboring town: “You always hear like, you know, [the urban city is] one of the worst cities to live in. You always hear about crimes and stuff like that, so I didn’t really wanna come here. My friends would joke and I would joke like, ‘oh, you’re gonna get shot and, you know, robbed and things like that.’” Kamal, a Bangladeshi-American man, suggested that students know what they are getting themselves into when they attend school in the urban city. He explained, “No one comes to [the urban city] and says, you know, ‘You can just like whatever—[it’s] a wonderful and safe place to be.’ We all know we have to be on our guard. We have to be careful [and] take the necessary precautions.” In other words, Kamal surmised that everyone has the preconception that “the crime rates are horrible in [the urban city]” before they decide to attend Urban U, as a direct result of the things they have heard about the city from friends, family, and the media.

When asked how safe he felt the community around campus was, Wayne, an African American man, replied, “I wouldn’t say it’s that safe. I make it safe, I believe, by just not going certain places at certain times, but I definitely think it’s dangerous.” Though Wayne had only been attending Urban U for a couple of months at the time of
his interview, it was clear that he had already developed strong feelings about the risks he believed he faced while going to school in the urban city. Asked to expand on why he perceived the community around campus as dangerous, he continued:

I haven’t seen any crimes committed around here, so I guess I would definitely have to be going based on the perception of [the urban city]. You know what I mean, ‘cause it has its sort of negative perception. So that’s really [all] I’m going based on…and the fact that I remember getting an email or something about a girl getting robbed at like one o’clock p.m. in the daytime. Attempted robbery. That was ridiculous. I’m like are you kidding me? That’s crazy.

Just like Wayne, the majority of students also highlighted how their initial perceptions of the urban city as dangerous were largely informed by its reputation and further supported by the crime alerts they had received as students at Urban U.

Likewise, Xavier, a Hispanic student, explained that prior to attending Urban U, he had heard about the city’s reputation, but didn’t really understand the extent of what he heard people say until he experienced the place for himself. He said, “Initially, I would say my perception of [the urban city] was, you know, very crime-filled….To be honest, like you know, you hit [the urban city] and it’s like, ‘Ohhhh.’ It’s a pretty bad place that has its good parts, but I didn’t really fully grasp anything about it until actually coming here, you know?” Similarly, Christian, a Hispanic man, also noted that it is difficult to know what the city is really like until you have lived there. He explained, “There’s always crime. I never really went to [the urban city], so I never had experienced how it is, you know, until I first got here. I didn’t know anything about it. It’s got a reputation of a bad town, but until you’ve been there, you don’t know how it really is.”

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19 Throughout their interviews, students at both Urban U and Suburban U mentioned being informed about crime on campus through crime alerts, which were emailed to students, faculty, and staff from the campus police in accordance with the Clery Act. The crime alerts will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6, particularly in relation to how these emails functioned to reinforce and heighten students’ perceptions of risk at Urban U, including both who and what they were most concerned about in that context.
While Christian had heard about crime in the urban city, living there and receiving crime alerts from the campus police brought new meaning to how dangerous he thought the urban city was. It is important to note that even though most of the crime in the city tended to be concentrated in areas that were farther away from campus and not immediately near it, students still perceived the areas adjacent to campus to be just as dangerous as those areas where most of the city’s violence occurred. This finding is consistent with recent research suggesting that those who live closer in proximity to areas with high levels of violent crime are more likely to report being most fearful of violent crime themselves (see, for example, Barton et al., 2017). Interestingly, in reality and with few exceptions, Urban U students were not at risk of the kinds of serious violent crime that people in the city who reside in areas with high rates of violence face (Hart, 2013).

Although Owen, a white student, agreed that the community around campus had a bad reputation for crime, he argued that the Urban U campus is located in the safer part of the city. He explained:

I think there’s a lot of hype that [the urban city] gets. Even though with all the crimes and stuff that’s happened in the last few days, I’m sure you’ve seen them on [the local] news—there’s been more murders a little lately, but in this section [by the university], or as you get closer to [the area by the train station], it’s kind of like less susceptible to stuff like that.

Owen was referring to a recent uptick in homicides in the city around the time of his interview, which tended to occur in areas that were more distant from the Urban U campus. Many students echoed this notion that even though the city where Urban U is located was not safe, crime was something that generally happened as you moved beyond the borders of campus and into areas that were farther away. For instance, Brad, a white man, asserted that the areas off-campus felt less safe and like “you’re on your own” because there was not the same degree of police presence as there was on campus. One
of the reasons students typically felt less safe in the community beyond campus was because they saw fewer police officers, a topic that will be revisited later in this chapter.

5.2.2. Descriptions of Disorder and Areas of Risk

In spite of the fact that Urban U students had heard about dangers in the urban city long before attending school there, they soon learned how the place got its reputation as they became more familiar with the community around campus. This subject most frequently arose when participants shared their perceptions of the urban city, as well as their experiences with crime and disorder in the areas near Urban U. For instance, when asked how safe she felt the community around campus was, Isabel, a Latina student, replied, “I mean, it’s always a chance that…you know, I’m sure that there’s people that—this is not an area that is known for the gardens and the flowers, you know? So, of course I worry.” Interestingly, when sharing her perceptions of risk in the urban city, Isabel immediately referred to the aesthetics of the physical environment in her comments, noting that she naturally worries because it is not a pretty area. Similarly, Victor, a multi-racial man, described how the downtown areas are not as nice as the northern, more historical parts of the city. He concluded by saying that downtown is like the “hood” – a term used by 11 total students (or about one-third of the urban sample), including Alex, a Hispanic man, who explained how he “wouldn’t walk there alone.”

The majority of other students directly compared and contrasted their perceptions of risk on campus with those outside the borders of campus. This typically involved drawing on the types of physical and social disorder that they had witnessed in the community around campus, along with the impact they believed it had on elevating their likelihood of victimization. For example, Fahim, a multi-racial man, asserted:
I know for a fact that [the university a block away from Urban U] is safe…I know after [that], I wouldn’t step foot there in that neighborhood. That’s where the line is drawn. Once you pass [the university a block away from Urban U], like I said, it’s just again that whole community. Like when we came for orientation, the helpers or whatever, they had this little motto called “The Hood.” “If it looks like the hood, then it probably isn’t good.” So you had this little motto. So I abide by that in a way ‘cause again, I know the community and I know.

Not only was Fahim warned about exploring the community around campus by other students during his orientation visit at Urban U, but he was also taught about the visual cues to look for and be attuned to in order to avoid risks in the urban setting. In this case, he described areas that looked like “the hood,” which was something that Jayden, an African American man, also discussed and expanded on in his comments. He specifically spoke about how he avoided the areas outside of campus based on the ethnic and racial characteristics of city residents. Jayden explained, “I try to avoid there. I see that—I see a lot of, what’s the word? Demographic changes, I guess you could say? ‘Cause that’s when you start seeing the hood, and when you keep branching out further, that’s when you really see it.” Just like Jayden, the majority of students at Urban U associated the visual appearance of “the hood” with the demographic characteristics of those who reside in different areas of the urban city. In this regard, Jayden continued, “I can tell when like things start to change, if that makes sense….Some people you can tell, like damn, they’re hood.” Throughout his interview, Jayden referred to city residents as “crack heads” and “thugs,” which are terms that clearly draw on racial stereotypes of African Americans and illustrate who he deems to pose the greatest threat to his safety. The use of such terms was not limited to Jayden, however. Specifically, more than half of the sample (or 54%), including 11 men and 9 women, also referred to city residents using racial terms like “gangstas,” “junkies,” “crack heads,” and “thugs,” and as guys with “dreads, sweats, and hoodies.”
Tamara, an African American woman, described the types of people who can be found near Urban U versus in the community around campus. She explained:

This [area] is much more like students going to school, professional people come for work. You know, it’s totally a different environment. Outside, the outskirts, go towards the city, the downtown area, then you start to see, you know, people hanging around, doing what they are not supposed to be doing and stuff like that. This is like a close-knit community, but once you step out of it, you are just like, “oh my god.” You are worried about your safety and stuff like that.

In her observations, Tamara referred to the activities that people in both areas were engaged in when discussing her evaluations of risk. Near the Urban U campus, she typically saw students and people going to their jobs, whereas in the community, she tended to see people loitering, misbehaving, and contributing to the existence of social disorder in the city. These experiences led her to perceive the campus and the areas immediately around it as safe because the people appeared to be engaged in productive behaviors. Alternatively, Tamara assumed that the “outskirts” included people who were engaged in less predictable routines, which ultimately increased her perceptions of risk in those areas. Like Tamara, the majority of Urban U students often seemed to associate certain racial groups with suspicious or law-breaking behaviors that then contributed to their elevated perceptions of risk in the community around campus. Such accounts are consistent with previous research concluding that (white) individuals’ perceptions of disorder and risk are often shaped by the process of stereotype amplification, which heightens racial threat (and particularly that posed by the presence of African Americans) in ecologically “contaminated” spaces, such as the urban city where the present study took place (Chiricos et al., 1997; Quillian & Pager, 2001, 2010; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Skogan, 1995).
In addition to the racial characteristics and presumed activities of urban city residents, the overwhelming majority of participants – both women and men – referred to signs of physical and social disorder when discussing their perceptions of risk in the urban city. For instance, Eric, a white man, disclosed:

It looks too shady. I feel like something happens really often like when I go outside the borders of campus because the neighborhoods look like they’re just like the ghetto kind of. And like the streets that are around it, and all the shops that are around it, they look like really sketchy…Like the appearance of them on the outside. Because they look really old, like banged up sometimes and what not, so it just looks like something shady might go on.

Eric described the physical disorder (or ongoing signs of poverty and decay; see Skogan, 1990) in the community, in terms of how the buildings and stores looked “banged up,” which contributed to his interpretation that such areas were sketchy or unsafe. Further, participants like Paz, a Hispanic student, explained how she felt that the urban city was not safe due to its physical and social disorder (the latter of which includes different types of behavior, such as involvement in criminal activities and public intoxication; see Skogan, 1990): “You just see like bags of drugs and you see broken bottles. It just looks terrible. You see people just drunk on the sidewalks and stuff…and then kind of like shady people sitting around and watching you.” Overall, the vast majority of students agreed that visible disorder – both physical and social – in the urban city was one source of their elevated perceptions of risk.

Additionally, interactions with a small group of city residents who live in the areas surrounding Urban U appeared to contribute to students’ perceptions of disorder and risk. For instance, Amina, a South Asian woman, disclosed, “When you go to downtown, it’s just people passing comments and asking for money and sometimes cursing at you ‘cause you don’t want to give them money and maybe because you don’t
have cash on you.” Several additional students described experiences in which they were approached by a person who asked them for money and who later accosted and harassed them when told that they didn’t have any money. Thus, for students attending Urban U, such experiences came with the territory of attending school in the context of this urban city and further contributed to their perceptions of disorder and risk in the community.

Although many students attempted to differentiate the urban campus from its surroundings, some did not. As Lucas, a Hispanic man, cautioned, “Regardless of whether you’re on campus or off campus, it’s still [the urban city].” Likewise, Jimena, a Hispanic woman student who worked with the campus police, noted, “You can’t rely on the suburb mentality or you’ll be blindsided. No one’s safe. You gotta watch your back.” She later concluded her discussion about the risks she perceived in the urban city by asserting that it’s not “some la la land.” As both Lucas and Jimena suggested, students believed it was important to take necessary precautions to ensure their safety and lessen their risks for victimization whether they were close to campus or in the nearby “outskirts,” a term many participants used to refer to the surrounding community.

5.2.3. The Role of Familiarity in Assessments of Risk

As noted previously in relation to Figure 3 above, eight women (or about 24%) in the urban sample did not specifically label the community around campus as unsafe or dangerous. When asked about their perceptions of risk in the community, the majority of these students explained that their familiarity with the urban city made them less fearful of it, mainly because they knew what to expect and how to conduct themselves in urban settings. This finding resembles that of Carvalho and Lewis (2003), who concluded that continuous exposure to crime and disorder makes it seem more ordinary, which in turn
diminishes its impact on individuals’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime. In this regard, Yardley, a Haitian American woman who grew up in a neighboring town with similar crime rates, asserted, “I’m familiar with [the urban city], so I wasn’t like scared or anything. So it didn’t bother me that [the campus] was in [the urban city].” She also noted that she did not mind living in the area because she never had any negative experiences. She explained:

I don’t have any problem with it. Like I’ve never had, you know, anybody run up on me or anything like that. For me, I think it’s pretty safe. Like I haven’t encountered anything dangerous. I walk on the streets by myself a lot. I feel that there’s a lot of security and police presence when I’m walking around, so I don’t feel threatened or anything.

Not only did Yardley’s familiarity with the setting make her feel comfortable in it, but so too did the presence of the police in the area. Despite her view that the community was “pretty safe,” she noted, “I think I’m more cautious when I’m starting to go away from campus.” Thus, although Yardley was one of the eight students (or about one-quarter of the urban sample) to state that she felt safe in the urban city, she ultimately agreed with other Urban U students who mentioned taking extra safety precautions in the outskirts or avoiding them altogether.

Isabel, who was quoted above as worrying in the urban city because of the visible signs of disorder, also summarized her perceptions of risk in the community as “okay” because she was originally from the area. She asserted:

I always feel that in [the urban city], it’s okay to walk around. I am from [the urban city], so nothing’s ever gonna happen to me if somebody stops me or says something. I’m from [the urban city], you know? Like I can go up here. I went to school here, I played in that playground, like I have friends here, this is my hometown. It doesn’t matter if I move away for 30 years—I come back, I belong here. It’s like you have a certificate.
Isabel’s familiarity with the area, as well as her status as resident of the urban city, seemed to minimize her perceptions of risk and ultimately her perceived likelihood of victimization (also see Carvalho & Lewis, 2003). Ironically, such perceptions are not consistent with reality, given that urban city residents are the primary victims of crime in the city, as noted above.

Similarly, Chanté, a Haitian American student, discussed the role of familiarity in her assessments of risk and safety in the urban context. When asked if she felt safe in the areas around campus, she replied, “As long as I’m familiar with it, I feel safe.” Although she was not from the urban city and initially did not want to attend Urban U when she learned where it was located, Chanté believed the campus and the areas immediately bordering it were safe. She elaborated:

I find that people that don’t live in [the urban city] or don’t know anything about [it] say it’s dangerous….I’ve heard people that live here, like they would debate with other people that don’t that [the urban city] is dangerous and they would say, “no, you don’t know [the urban city] like that, it’s not that bad. You don’t know unless you’ve been around the people and you know your way like the back of your hand.” So people that don’t live here consider it dangerous. People that’s been here all their lives would say, “[It’s] my home, it’s not that bad, you know, there’s areas that you should stay away from.” But overall, like people don’t defend [the urban city] and say it’s not a bad place.

Chanté’s account is in keeping with research suggesting that one’s familiarity with crime and disorder makes it seem less dangerous and scary than it is to those who have never experienced it before (e.g., Carvalho & Lewis, 2003). To this point, Melissa, a white woman, explained, “Back home, they haven’t actually been to [the urban city], they just know from like past stories that [the urban city] isn’t a good place. I’m like, ‘Well, have you actually been there?’ ‘No.’ ‘I have, so it’s not that bad.’” Both Chanté and Melissa shared their beliefs that the urban city had a reputation that was much worse than it was in reality, which contributed to their perception that the community was not entirely
dangerous. In sum, they believed that their growing familiarity with the area made them feel more comfortable with it.

Likewise, Shaun, an African American man, concluded, “I don’t perceive it to be too safe. Some people who were raised here, they probably know how to navigate throughout the town, but I’m not one of those people. I don’t know the neighborhoods.” Unlike the students who were mentioned above, Shaun was not from the area, was not familiar with it, and perceived it to be unsafe because of that. He noted that if he had been raised there and knew the area better, he might view it differently. Overall, those who had the lowest perceptions of risk in the urban city were either residents of the city themselves or were familiar with navigating other similar urban settings.

5.3. “It’s Like No One Can Touch Us”: Perceptions of Risk at Urban U

Like those I interviewed at Suburban U, students attending Urban U also believed their campus was safe, despite having high perceptions of risk in the community around campus. Indeed, despite viewing both the city and the areas around campus as risky and dangerous, the vast majority of students at Urban U perceived the campus as safe and significantly less risky than the rest of the city. Specifically, and as shown in Figure 4, about 38% of students described feeling “fairly” or “pretty safe” on campus, approximately 38% felt “safe,” about 9% of students described feeling “very” or “really safe,” another 9% described the campus as “not safe” or “hood,” and nearly 6% felt the campus was “safer than other parts” of the city. Thus, the majority of participants did feel safe on campus, particularly in comparison to how they felt in the community surrounding campus.
As mentioned in Chapter 3, Urban U’s campus is located on 38 acres of a large 24-square-mile urban city in the northeast. When compared with other institutions of its size (i.e., between 8,000-14,000 total students), Urban U has higher levels of crime. Specifically, 27 violent and 135 property crimes were reported to Urban U’s campus police department in 2013, while institutions with similar numbers of students enrolled across the country received an average of four reports of violent crime and 86 reports of property crime that year (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c). When speaking about their decisions to attend Urban U, participants often referred to the ways in which they debated over the questionable location of the campus. For instance, Lauren, a Hispanic student, detailed how she came to Urban U for its good reputation as a school, and not for its location:

I just focused on the good that [Urban U] had and not so much where it was located because I felt like I wasn’t coming here because of [the urban city], I was coming here because of [Urban U]. So, I guess I didn’t pay too much attention to the whole fuss about there’s so much crime or whatever. There’s so many
opportunities, you know? It was just, I was affected by the media and the advertisements for [Urban U], but not in the [negative] way that my parents were affected.

Many students like Lauren noted that the location of the school was an important point of discussion as they were making their decisions about where they would go to college. Although participants were aware of the dangerous reputation of the urban city in which their campus was located, along with the disorder and crime that was associated with it, they still deemed the campus itself as safe and somewhat immune to the social issues that characterized other parts of the city. As Alex, a Latino student, described, “Around campus, there is like—how to explain it? There is like a barrier. The way I see it, the campus is safe. It’s very safe considering the areas that are around it. I just feel like there is no like leaking effect from what happens five blocks away.” Though he acknowledged the potential risks that he felt existed in the areas around campus, Alex also perceived that there was an invisible barrier that prevented these threats from making their way on to the Urban U campus, which he referred to as being very safe.

This notion of an invisible and protective barrier around campus was also mentioned by other students using different terms. Brad, a white man, contrasted the campus with the city around it in his remarks: “It’s like the perception of [Urban U] is very different because they have their own police department and all the cameras and security personnel. But as soon as you step outside that security bubble, it’s like everything just gets stripped away. You’re just on your own in the city.” Thus, Brad described feeling safe on campus due to the presence of campus law enforcement and other types of security that might be less visible in other areas of the urban city. Heather, a white woman, also described the campus as a bubble:
You’re kind of more secure here because there’s more people and you feel like it’s gated, even though it’s really not….On campus I feel fine. I actually kind of take advantage of it and I’ll like text when I’m walking when I really shouldn’t. So I feel there is no threat here to me really….I just feel like I have this bubble around me and I’m not, you know, vulnerable.

Heather described how she engaged in what would typically be considered risky behaviors by walking and texting on her cell phone, rather than concealing her electronics and paying attention to her surroundings. The security afforded by the campus environment – or its protective “bubble” – made her feel that she was safe to engage in such behaviors. This point was further articulated by Jayden, an African American man, who argued, “I feel like we’re almost in a bubble; it’s like no one can touch us. It’s when you go outside that bubble, you just—be cautious.”

Still other students used different descriptions to refer to the lower perceptions of risk they had on campus compared with the rest of the city, including the areas adjacent to campus. For example, Zofia, a white woman, explained, “It is safer than other parts of [the city]. I do feel safe here, I do. Like I mean safe. I do feel that when I come into campus, I do not have that mentality that something might happen to me. So I feel safe within the campus area, but not outside, like I guess, three blocks from campus.”

Similarly, Owen, a white man, described the Urban U campus as a “haven” in the middle of the city, noting, “I kind of like the way it’s centered in the middle of the town, so it’s like you got the campus and then you have everything else going on around. Sort of like a haven, I guess.” Owen later attributed the feeling of safety that he believed was afforded by the campus to his perception that the “campus offer[ed] security” that was not present in other parts of the urban city. Tamara, an African American woman, agreed with this assessment, stating, “Outside of [the campus], you have to have your guard up. Inside, you feel much more safe.” Thus, Urban U participants tended to concur that the
campus itself was safe, while the areas immediately beyond its borders were not. Overall, when students discussed why they perceived the campus to be safer than other parts of the urban city, they explicitly referred to the presence of the campus police and other security personnel around campus, which enhanced their perceptions of safety at Urban U.

5.4. The Role of the Campus Police in Perceptions of Risk at Urban U

Although they were attending school in an area with relatively higher rates of crime, participants at Urban U also mentioned feeling safer on campus due to the visibility and presence of the campus police. Like those on the suburban campus, police officers at Urban U are certified by the state, enforce both state and local laws, and have the power to make arrests and carry firearms. At the time of data collection during the 2013-2014 academic year, more than 30 law enforcement personnel were employed at Urban U, about 25 of whom were full-time sworn officers (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). Furthermore, Urban U had a program like Suburban U’s police cadets, which allowed part-time student employees to work with officers by conducting security patrols around campus, driving campus shuttles, and staffing the escort service.

When discussing the role of campus police officers in her perceptions of risk on campus, Danica revealed, “Even though I think [the urban city] is like one of the worst places out there, I still feel safe.” She attributed this sense of safety to the Urban U police. One of the reasons that the campus police instilled this level of comfort and confidence among those in the sample was because students tended to understand that they were trained law enforcement personnel, just like those they would find at the city, county, or
state levels. Shaun noted that after he spoke with a campus police officer in one of his classes, he “got to know that they are actually the actual police.” As a result of this experience, he asserted, “The police presence makes me feel safer.”

Other students agreed with Shaun’s statement that officers’ presence and visibility made them feel more comfortable on campus, particularly in comparison to the community surrounding it. After asserting that she felt safe on campus, Paz explained, “I feel like you always see a cop car, you always see somebody out patrolling or something…I also feel like they kind of make it have the reputation where people just can’t really come here and just wreak havoc, you know what I mean? Like people usually stay away from it.” Like many of her peers at Urban U, Paz believed the presence of the campus police functioned as a deterrent, preventing the outsiders students appeared to worry about – and sometimes fear – from coming on the campus. This visible police presence was also mentioned by Lucas, a Hispanic man, as one of the things that made him feel safer on campus. He stated, “They’re always present driving around…They’ll sit in the parking lots, and the plazas, and things like that. The plaza is not really well lit, so them sitting there with their lights on makes it a lot better to walk through.” Students like Lucas assumed that they would be safer walking through different areas on campus at night if the police were visible, not only as a deterrent, but also as a source of protection, should they encounter any trouble on the way to their destinations.

Students also reported that the police maintained their visible presence in a variety of additional ways. For instance, Brad, a white man, asserted, “I feel safe because there is always police walking around, there is always students around that you know. No one is gonna do something if there is any crowds of people. I just [see] plenty of security
people right around with little moped things.” Nonetheless, Brad recommended that the police could better “patrol these areas [near the perimeter of campus], walk around, make people feel comfortable, talk to students, introduce yourself. Just try to make your presence known and try to be aware of what crimes are happening and try to be there as a proactive method as opposed to reactive.” Quinn, a white man who felt the campus was “really safe,” described how he typically saw police patrolling the campus. He said, “I see the cops around constantly, whether it’s just either them walking around or like sometimes I’ll see them on their Segways or I’ll see ‘em on the horses.”

One of the reasons students regularly saw the police on and around campus was because four different police forces, including the Urban U police, the city police, and police from two neighboring universities, were located within the same vicinity. As a result, Nikki, an African American woman, reported that she perceived the campus to be moderately safe “since you have not only campus security, but [city] police officers and they’re highly trained. Anything can happen on campus…but I think with the amount of security that we have in places and how quick people are to react these days, it’s fairly safe.” Thus, Nikki assumed that having different types of security personnel present on and around campus would make them quicker to respond in the event of an emergency. She continued, “It creates a sense of safety to the students to know that they’re watching you, they’re keeping an eye out and everything in case anything goes wrong or whatever.”

This point was also raised by Xavier, a Hispanic man, as he discussed why it was safer on the Urban U campus than it was in the community around it. He speculated, “The more off-campus you get, the more unsafe it would be, I guess. The more off-
campus you get, the more you’re reliable [sic] on strictly [city] police. Here on campus you have [city] police, [Urban U] police, you have everyone. But [on] off-campus side streets, you’re at your own risk.” Xavier believed that one of the reasons students were safer on campus was because there were more frequent police patrols by officers on a variety of police forces, which would deter and prevent any potential crime against students from occurring. Likewise, Wayne, an African American man, noted feeling safer on campus because “you have [city] police, [Urban U] police, then you have [the neighboring university], and the county college police. I think it’s pretty safe around and I think it’s a lot of protection.”

Although some students believed they were safe and could be protected by the various police forces on campus, other students were more skeptical of the notion that the police could guarantee their safety in the urban context. In this regard, Alex, a Hispanic man, acknowledged that while the police can “keep it very safe,” he was worried that “they can’t be everywhere and they can’t stop everything.” Similarly, Kamal, a Bangladeshi-American man, asserted, “Your safety is not guaranteed here. No matter what is being said, you have all of these police that are telling you, ‘we’ll protect you, your safety is guaranteed.’ It’s really not ‘cause it’s not their fault, but you really can’t control the crime levels in this area. It’s just way too much.” Kamal felt that even with a heavy police presence on and around campus, it was still challenging for the police to keep students safe in the context of this urban city. Despite this, Amina, a South Asian woman, believed that it was the responsibility of the campus police to ensure her safety. She explained, “There is already a broad idea of [the urban city] not being safe, so I think it’s their job to make us feel that, ‘no matter what, it’s safe’—at least, ‘this place, we
really have under our control. [In] this place, nothing is going to happen. If you need help, we are always there.” Overall, the presence of the campus police at Urban U seemed to provide a source of comfort for the students I interviewed, even if they were not entirely convinced that they could prevent all wrongdoing from occurring.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has illustrated the important role of context and place in shaping individuals’ assessments of risk in the urban city. Overall, there was uniformity in students’ evaluations of risk in the urban community around campus, in that students tended to perceive the community as being unsafe due to the city’s negative reputation for crime, combined with the presence of visible physical and social disorder. Notably, those who did not label the community as dangerous were all women who were originally from nearby areas and tended to identify as racial or ethnic minorities. These students, as well as the majority of others in the urban sample, often referenced their familiarity with the city as having a direct influence on their perceptions of risk there.

Despite the vastly different contexts in which Suburban U and Urban U are located, the majority of students at both schools expressed feeling safe on their school’s physical campus. On the urban campus, students overwhelmingly reported feeling safe on campus, despite their apprehensions in the community around it. Nearly all voiced their perception that Urban U’s campus is located in the safest part of the city, which they tended to attribute to the presence and visibility of the campus police and other security personnel.
CHAPTER 6: GENDER, PERCEPTIONS OF RISK, AND FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION IN TWO CAMPUS CONTEXTS

6.1. Introduction

While Chapters 4 and 5 examined the role of community setting and campus context in shaping students’ concerns at Suburban and Urban U, this chapter will primarily examine whether and how gender influenced students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts. The first half of this chapter will explore the specific crimes that students were most concerned about on and near campus, along with the personal characteristics they believed may place some individuals at greater risk of being victimized. The remainder of the chapter will then focus on who students believed poses the greatest threat to their well-being on campus and in the community around it, in addition to the factors that informed their perceptions of threat.

6.2. Perceived Crime Threats and Factors Influencing Victimization Risk at Suburban U

All participants at Suburban U made assumptions about the crimes that students were most at risk of on campus, as well as who the most likely targets and victims of crime on campus would be. Table 4 shows the crimes that students mentioned during their interviews. As shown in the last row of the table, many students mentioned more than one type of crime, with the 14 crimes shown being mentioned a total of 99 times across the 36 students in the suburban sample. The three most frequently mentioned crimes included the sexual assault and rape of women students (by 35 participants, or 97.2% of the sample), property theft within school buildings (by 12 participants, or 33.3% of the sample), and someone impersonating a student on campus (by 11
participants, or 30.6% of the sample). Other crimes that were mentioned by seven or fewer students included underage drinking and/or substance abuse, physical assault, robbery or mugging, bomb threats, stalking, women being drugged at parties, murder, suicide, hate crimes, kidnapping, and hazing.

Table 4. Crimes Mentioned by Suburban U Students

| Crimes Mentioned                          | # of Men | # of Women | Total Students (%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault/rape of women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35 (97.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property theft in school buildings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone impersonating a student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11 (30.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underage drinking and/or substance use</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 (19.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery/mugging</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb threat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugging women at parties</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate crime</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL CRIMES MENTIONED**  39  60  99

*NOTE: Because many students mentioned more than one crime type during their interviews, the summed row for “Total Crimes Mentioned” at the bottom of this table exceeds the total suburban sample size of 36.*

As required by the *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998*, or the *Clery Act* for short, institutions of higher education must provide timely notifications about violent incidents on campus, as well as disclose the location of these incidents, to students, faculty, and staff (see Jacobsen, 2017; Sloan & Fisher, 2011). At both Suburban and Urban U, these notifications typically took
the form of emailed crime alerts, which students often referred to during their interviews. Interestingly, the crime alerts that students recalled receiving coincided with the three most frequently mentioned crimes shown in Table 4. For instance, regarding the occurrence of rape on campus, Savannah, a white woman, recounted, “We’ve gotten two or three emails this semester about possible rape cases….One of them was in the dorms, and the one that was recent was actually downstairs in [the student center]. Apparently, it was in a hallway and the girl said that like three guys tried to attack her and take advantage of her.” Indeed, my own investigation of the incident that Savannah described did uncover one crime alert sent out during the data collection period\textsuperscript{20} at Suburban U, which matched the details she provided.

Additionally, with regard to the occurrence of property theft in school buildings, Dylan, a white man, remembered, “I did get like some sort of alert thing on my computer, not my phone, that there were a few robberies in the student apartments area of computers. Again, lock your doors, people!” Perhaps the most unique crime that nearly one-third of Suburban U participants (or 11 students) mentioned during their interviews was when a man came on campus pretending to be a student and fraternity member. Julian, a Latino student, recalled, “They had one [alert] where this guy was coming on campus and he was impersonating a student. And [it] actually turned out that he was a registered sex offender. So they released his name, they released his description, and they told everyone to look out for this person.” I was also able to confirm the occurrence of this incident, which took place just prior to my data collection efforts at Suburban U.

It is important to note that students did not always provide direct reference to the crime

\textsuperscript{20} As noted in Chapter 3, data collection at Suburban U primarily took place over a period of two months during the fall 2014 semester, with six additional interviews occurring in February 2015.
alerts when describing the crimes that they were most concerned about on campus. In the case of the sexual assault and rape of women students, 16 participants (or 44.4% of the suburban sample) made reference to crime alerts in their remarks, and only the 11 students mentioned above (or 30.6% of the sample) made specific reference to the crime alert about someone coming on campus and impersonating a student. With the exception of the impersonator coming on campus, the crimes that students mentioned in their interviews were typically raised independently of specific crime alerts and more as risks that they perceived on the suburban campus.

In addition to the types of crimes that students perceived as being most probable on the suburban campus, participants also had ideas about who was most likely to be targeted or victimized. In general, students believed that those perceived as the easiest targets were women and individuals who were smaller in stature, while there seemed to be disagreement about the targeting of racial and ethnic minorities and students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). Each of these characteristics will be discussed, in turn, below.

6.2.1. “It’s More of a Girl Thing”: Victimization Risk and the Shadow of Sexual Assault

As noted in Chapter 2, previous research has argued that rape may be a “perceptually contemporaneous offense” for women, such that rape and sexual assault are viewed as crimes that will likely accompany or follow other types of offenses (Ferraro,
Thus, according to the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, women’s fear of rape is expected to predict and overshadow their fears of other types of crime. Previous research has found evidence of the “shadow” at colleges and universities located in different contextual settings, including those in rural, suburban, and urban areas (e.g., Day, 1999; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Hilinski, 2009; Lane, Gover, & Dahod, 2009; Lee & Hilinski-Rosick, 2012; Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2006; Woolnough, 2009). As shown in Table 4, all but one student at Suburban U explicitly mentioned sexual assault or rape as being a primary concern for women on campus. Yet even this student, who will be discussed further below, made an implicit reference to sexual assault. Thus, I found compelling evidence of the pervasive existence and influence that the shadow has for students (and especially women) in this particular suburban setting.

The overwhelming majority of Suburban U students, including both women and men, explicitly noted that women were most at risk of sexual victimization on campus. For instance, when asked if the risks of being a crime victim were the same for women and men, Julian, a Latino student, replied, “I think that [crime] generally tends to target women, so it’ll be like rape or a female student was assaulted or a female student was robbed in the garage. So I think generally I feel like it’s different – maybe I feel like people target women more.” When asked why he felt this was the case, Julian explained, “I think that people that are targeting people generally wanna pick on someone that’s gonna be an easy target.” Other men at Suburban U also noted that women were easier targets, pointing to their perceived lack of physical strength as a possible explanation. After stating that women were most at risk of sexual assault on campus, Omar, an Arab
man, attempted to account for women’s higher likelihood of victimization, suggesting, “Females tend to be a little more—they feel they’re more fragile. That’s the way I’d put it. And guys tend to take advantage of that for their own personal gain or benefits or such. Whatever they want. But yeah, that’s how I feel. That’s the sad truth, to be honest.” Thus, Omar argued that men take advantage of women because they know they will not be able to physically defend themselves.

Colton, a white man, expanded on Omar’s description of women as “fragile,” taking his comments a step further to discuss assumptions about women’s physical weakness:

I don’t wanna sound sexist or anything. Statistically speaking, there’s been more sexual abuse towards females than males, you know? I just feel like it’s more likely to happen, something like that, ‘cause in a lot of ways people view females as weak compared to males, so they might think it’s an easier opportunity to take advantage of a girl versus a guy.

Colton described the factors he thought impacted individuals’ risk of victimization, including “if you’re alone, your body type, your body size, your appeared strength.” These remarks serve to reiterate his previous argument that women are easier targets for crime as a result of their presumed physical weakness relative to men.

Likewise, Wyatt, a white man, also made gender-based assumptions about the physical strength of women and men in his response: “Men are more aggressive and they think they can get away with a lot of things, and girls, they don’t usually know how to protect themselves usually from what I’m thinking. So they’re a lot easier to take advantage of—strong guy, weak girl, there’s not much you can really do.” When asked if there was a specific crime he was referring to, he continued, “Usually sexually assaulting, rape, something like that.” Similarly, Zach, a white man, drew on cultural stereotypes about women’s physical strength and ability to fend off an attacker in his remarks: “I
think girls are more targeted…just in general. Like if you wanna rob, like usually girls are weaker. You know, they are rape victims and just everything. Like basically if you’re trying to pull something, you are gonna do it on a girl because they are portrayed as weaker.”

Importantly, such remarks about women’s assumed weakness and inability to defend themselves against male attackers were not only limited to men attending Suburban U. For instance, Kaylee, a white woman, asserted, “Most things I think usually happen to girls, like yeah, like being kidnapped or raped or all those things….It’s more of a girl thing.” More explicitly, Chloe, a multi-racial woman, argued, “Usually girls are weaker and so I feel like they are more targeted for crime.” When asked if this is true for every type of crime, Chloe replied, “Sexual assault. I don’t feel like there are many accounts of guys who are victims of sexual assault. I mean, there are some, but I feel like girls are more susceptible to that.” Odette, an African American woman, provided a more detailed explanation for why girls may be at higher risk for such crimes: “I think it’s more towards girls. They’re more victimized.” Asked whether she thought they were more likely to be victims of specific types of crime, she elaborated, “I’m thinking more of like rape and stuff like that…‘cause girls are like dumb, and naïve, and little, and feeble. I mean, I don’t mean to be lookin’ like sexist and stuff, but most crimes are committed by males.” In other words, Odette believed that women were most likely to be the victims, and men the offenders, of crimes like rape due to women’s gender characteristics, which inherently make them easier targets than men.

In sum, each of the women and men discussed above explicitly stated that rape and sexual assault are primarily women’s concerns, largely as a result of their gender
category and their perceived physical vulnerability. Such sentiments were representative of those voiced by the rest of the suburban sample. These gendered understandings about women’s presumed physical weakness and inability to defend themselves are consistent with the vulnerability perspective that has been discussed in previous research. This perspective ties assumptions about women’s and men’s perceptions of self to their gender socialization as children, which encourages physical strength, dominance, independence, and fearlessness in boys, while reinforcing the characteristics of weakness, passivity, fearfulness, and dependence on men in girls (Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Day, 2001; Franklin & Franklin, 2009; Goodey, 1997; Hollander, 2001; Lane, Rader, Henson, Fisher, & May, 2014; Madriz, 1997a, 1997b; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Riger et al., 1978; Walklate, 1997).

Further, and consistent with students’ remarks in the present study, previous research has suggested that those (namely women) who perceive themselves as being socially or physically vulnerable and unable to defend themselves will have higher perceptions of risk and levels of fear (Hale, 1996; Jackson, 2009; Lane et al., 2014; May & Dunaway, 2000; Riger et al., 1978; Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, Lucas, & Alarid, 2010; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Stanko, 1992).

Interestingly, only one student seemed to understand that college men posed the greatest threat to college women when considering the crimes of rape and sexual assault, while others explicitly seemed to assume that such crimes would be committed by male non-students coming on campus. Ayesha, a Middle Eastern woman, explained, “I’m not judging guys, but I feel like they like to do more dangerous kinds of stuff. Like women, just kind of like stay away from them. I’m not saying they’re all bad, but there’s some creepy freaky dudes here on campus, you know? Like I don’t wanna go near you!”
Asked to clarify whether she thinks men or women are more likely to be victims on campus, she continued, “Women are more likely to be victims of crime…[by] getting raped at night. Stuff like that.”

In addition to this pervasive concern among Suburban U students that women were at the greatest risk of victimization, particularly with regard to sexual assault or rape, some students referred to specific places on campus where they believed these crimes against women were most likely to occur. For example, Vanna, an Asian woman, briefly remarked, “I had a friend tell me that there’s a trail somewhere around [the gym] called the ‘rapist trail.’ I don’t know, I didn’t wanna mention it because I don’t know much. I don’t really know anything, but I heard something about that.” Similarly, Adina, an international student from Ethiopia, referred to the same wooded path that connects the student union to the freshman dorms and gym in her comments: “There’s this one trail here, [where] I heard like a lot of things happened to like girls my freshman year….It’s like a really tiny path…I just heard that’s where like some girls were raped there or something like that. That’s what I heard.”

Such comments were also made by men. When asked how safe he felt the campus was overall, Max, a Hispanic man, replied, “Medium.” Asked what he meant, Max continued:

Well, I’ve like heard things, like at night—I know there’s cops, but I feel like at night there’s passages that, you know, are unprotected….There’s a bridge that goes to the [student union]….Last year, it was like dark and I think that during my freshman year, they actually put lights there, but it was usually dark, so people call it the “rape bridge” or “sketchy bridge.”

When asked if he was aware of anything actually happening in that area, Max replied, “Well, they said that some girls get raped, but I don’t know if that’s just to scare freshmen or if it’s like a true thing.” Indeed, my own research into whether any rapes had
occurred on or near this particular path did not yield any results. However, this does not necessarily mean that no crimes had occurred there, as they may not have been reported to the campus police. Either way, such perceptions and stories about incidents of rape occurring on the path were influential in both women and men students’ evaluations of risk on campus. Later in our conversation, I directly asked Max if he believed the risks for being a crime victim on or near campus were the same for guys as they were for girls: “Maybe girls are a little more…You know, just going back to the rape bridge. I guess a lot of guys take advantage of girls than girls take advantage of guys.”

As noted previously, only one student at Suburban U did not explicitly mention sexual assault or rape in her remarks, only hinting at her fear of rape in her response. Nida, an Arab woman, is an example of a deviant case in the suburban sample. Although she didn’t explicitly mention women’s fear of rape in her comments, it was clear that the crime still shadowed her experiences on campus. When discussing the places where she felt uncomfortable on campus, Nida explained:

I don’t really feel unsafe in most of the places. When I’m going to different places that are like way too far, I’m usually driving, so I don’t feel too uncomfortable. The only place—I don’t even think I feel uncomfortable there—it’s just the parking lot, if I’m alone and it’s dark. It’s just kinda secluded, even though it’s really close to like the main part of campus, not many people park there so it’s kinda like cut off from reality…It’s not scary by any means. I mean, I like it, it’s close, but at night one time I was going back at like 10 and I was like, “uh, got my pepper spray!”

Although Nida didn’t specifically name sexual assault in her comments, her fear of rape was implied as she discussed her concerns with being alone and in the dark—remarks that are reminiscent of rape myths about strangers hiding in the bushes and waiting for unsuspecting women to walk by. This was not the only instance in which Nida
mentioned having her pepper spray in her hand and at the ready while traveling on the suburban campus by herself at night.

### 6.2.2. The Victimization Risk of Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Another factor that was presumed to influence students’ risk of victimization on campus was their race and ethnicity. However, participants were not always in agreement about the role of this characteristic in crime, with some believing that the campus’s diversity\(^{22}\) shielded racial and ethnic minorities from violence and others perceiving them as easier targets. Among those who took the former stance were Blake, Julian, and Chloe. For instance, when I asked Blake, a white man, if students who were racial and ethnic minorities were more likely to be victimized on campus, he asserted, “I wouldn’t say so ‘cause this is a really diverse campus, so I think a lot of people are treated equally here.” Similarly, Julian, a Latino student, argued, “We’re really, really diverse here, so I think that anyone that’s coming to campus to do something, it’s gonna be the luck of the draw as to who they pick. I don’t think that anyone’s more likely to be targeted.” Chloe, a multi-racial woman, both agreed with and expanded on this sentiment:

> I guess I think of like all races kind of as the same, but I think that there might be some people who have different perceptions of races. And if they are like a perpetrator or something and if they see a race who they kind of look down on, they might think that they are weaker or lesser and maybe target them.

In other words, Chloe argued that the most likely victims of crime were those who are perceived as weak – a theme that also arose in students’ discussions about the role of gender in victimization above – which makes them easier targets. Further, she also

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\(^{22}\) As mentioned in Chapter 3, Suburban U is consistently listed among the most ethnically diverse campuses in the country (U.S. News & World Report, 2015). Specifically, about 49% of the undergraduates enrolled during the 2013-2014 academic year were white, approximately 14% were Asian, around 10% were Hispanic or Latino, and about 9% were black or African American. Further, nearly 120 different countries were represented among those in the undergraduate student body.
suggested that racial prejudice may influence the likelihood that racial and ethnic minorities are targeted for crime.

Alternatively, there were other Suburban U students who described a different perspective. For example, when asked if minorities were at greater risk of victimization on campus, Hilda, a white woman, drew on her knowledge as a criminology major: “I actually read in my crim book that African Americans are targeted way more than whites are, and like Hispanics are right behind them.” When asked the same question, Adina, an international student from Ethiopia, replied, “Oh yeah! Way more. Especially with everything that’s going on in the news. It can’t be something you’re hearing from me for the first time! But yeah, I do feel minorities are at much more bigger risk than others.”

Similarly, Nida, an Arab woman who was Muslim and who was wearing a hijab during her interview, also referred to the influence of the news media, as well as her own experiences as a racial and ethnic minority:

I feel like it kinda depends on what the media is portraying at the moment. I mean, at my high school there wasn’t really that many kids who wore scarves, so if I went to a college where I was like one of the only Muslim people, or like one of the only obviously Muslim people, then I may feel more targeted. Here I don’t because everyone’s so different, so I don’t feel like it’s that bad. But I feel like if I were at a different university and there was a certain minority and things are being portrayed in the media as a certain way right now, I would not feel safe, definitely.

Nida referred to the ways in which Muslim individuals were consistently being presented as radicalized and as terrorists by the news media, negatively impacting how they were treated within the broader society. Despite this portrayal, Nida believed that the diversity of the student body at Suburban U protected her from experiencing this negative treatment on campus.
6.2.3. The Role of Sexuality in Victimization Risk

Like the role that students believed race and ethnicity played in victimization risk, there was also disagreement about whether those who identified as LGBT were more likely to be targeted for crime on campus. Nida did not believe that LGBT students at Suburban U were at heightened risk for crime on campus because “everyone’s so open” and “everything’s chill.” Similarly, Adina, an Ethiopian woman, explained:

[Suburban U] is such an open community. There’s like an office dedicated to that and they’re so welcoming....The people that I have encountered who are in the LGBTQ community haven’t said anything about bullying or anything like that…I feel like it kinda goes away once you get to college.

Thus, both Nida and Adina felt that the openness of Suburban U played a protective role in preventing LGBT students from being victimized.

Other participants felt that LGBT students were not likely to be targeted for crime because their sexual identity is not often immediately apparent. Odette, an African American woman, stated, “You can’t really tell when somebody is gay. I mean, unless they’re like walking around, ‘oh, I’m gay,’ or got like, ‘I’m gay’ on [their] shirt. So I don’t think it’s observable like that.” Colton, a white man, echoed this idea, speculating that potential offenders “might have the perception of gay guys being more feminine, more weak, but you could see a huge, buff guy who is completely gay. You never will have any clue, you know?” In other words, both Odette and Colton agreed that LGBT students did not face higher risks of victimization on campus because of the fact that their sexuality is not always visible to others. Further, Colton’s remarks again highlighted the recurring notion that it is those who are perceived as weak that are most likely to be targeted, regardless of their sexuality.
Alternatively, only a few students perceived LGBT students to be at higher risk of victimization on campus. For example, Julian, a Latino student, believed that LGBT students were more likely to be “assaulted because of their beliefs” and for being different. Wyatt, a white man, suggested, “I mean, people pick on other people just ‘cause they think it’s fun or funny, which it isn’t, and so I would say [their victimization risk is] probably increased at least a little bit.” Vivian, an African American woman, agreed with Wyatt’s perspective, particularly in the case of gay men who present themselves in a certain way. When asked if she felt that LGBT students were more likely to be targeted for crime on campus, she replied:

Probably. Especially like gay guys. I think not even just on campus, but definitely in general. They could be more targeted for a crime, especially from other guys ‘cause people are crazy, you know?....There are hate crimes or sometimes people feel like they’re weak because of the lifestyle they choose, you know? Or especially if they physically appear to be more feminine, that could make someone feel like, “oh, maybe I can attack this guy and it won’t be a problem.”

Here Vivian touched on the role that masculinity and femininity may play in such acts of violence, particularly in the case of guys attacking other men who present themselves in a more feminine way.

Interestingly, Iris, a Latina student, also highlighted how masculinity can often seem threatening to both women and men – whether they identify as straight or LGBT. After asserting that women are at greatest risk of rape, she recalled conversations she had had with her friends:

Sometimes there’ll be like a discussion where my friends are commenting about being women and how sometimes they feel a little concerned for their safety when they’re like the only women there and it’s like a lot of guys around. But at the same time, I’ve heard of a friend, he is—I wouldn’t say he’s less, well, maybe a little bit less masculine. Average guy. He’s not like gay, but he’s like a little bit more—I don’t know how to describe his attitude, but like sometimes he’s like
really nervous being around a lot of guys who are like much more masculine than he is.

In other words, Iris suggested that traditional heteronormative masculinity can be perceived as threatening to both women and men, regardless of one’s sexuality, which provides a compelling complement to Vivian’s remarks. This may be a result of masculine men’s perceived physical strength and less-masculine men’s perceived physical weakness, which resembles the physical vulnerability that women and LGBT individuals are also assumed to feel in the presence of straight or masculine men.

Tuyen, a woman from Vietnam, shared this belief about physical vulnerability and the possible targeting of LGBT students on campus: “They’re definitely being targeted. I have gay friends and they feel very, very vulnerable.” Students like Ayesha felt that LGBT students in particular were most vulnerable to being bullied: “I feel like gays, because some people are like bullies, they might bully gay [people] more and then like they might do something to harm them.” Deonte, an African American man, agreed and felt that such bullying was most likely to manifest in the form of social exclusion. Although he acknowledged that “a lot of the times, people don’t know anyway” about other students’ sexuality, Deonte also recognized, “They might be approached differently and I don’t know, some people are like solely against that. They can reject them in various ways so like I guess in groups, like just not allowed to join or very avoidant of them.” These three students believed that LGBT students were more vulnerable on campus, not necessarily to acts of physical violence, but to acts of bullying and social exclusion by their peers.
6.3. Perceived Crime Threats and Factors Influencing Victimization Risk at Urban U

Similar to those at Suburban U, students attending Urban U also had ideas about who was most likely to be victimized on campus, along with the crimes that posed the greatest risk to their safety in the urban context. Table 5 illustrates the crimes that students mentioned during their interviews. As shown in the last row of the table, individual students at Urban U also tended to mention more than one type of crime during their interviews, with the 14 crimes shown being mentioned a total of 86 times across the 34 students in the urban sample. The four most frequently mentioned crimes included robbery and mugging (by 34 students, or 100% of the sample); physical assault (by 11 students, or about 32% of the sample); the vandalism of cars, such as having one’s tires slashed, a window broken, or an object stolen (by seven students, or about 21% of the sample); and the visibility or use of drugs (by seven students, or 21% of the sample). These crimes were all reflected in students’ comments about crimes they had experienced, witnessed, or heard about at Urban U, as will be discussed below. Other crimes that were mentioned by six or fewer students included sexual assault or rape, gang activity, bomb threats, carjacking, murder, kidnapping, property theft in the dorms, women being drugged at parties, suicide, and underage drinking. Interestingly, 10 of these crimes were also mentioned by Suburban U participants, but in a different order with regard to frequency.

Along with describing the types of crimes they felt most at risk of on the urban campus, students also talked about the characteristics that they believed made certain individuals easier targets for victimization. The sections below examine students’
concerns about and experiences with robbery and whether victimization risk varies by gender, in addition to their beliefs about the role of physical size, race, and naïveté in crime victimization in the urban setting.

Table 5. Crimes Mentioned by Urban U Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crimes Mentioned</th>
<th># of Men</th>
<th># of Women</th>
<th>Total Students (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbery/mugging</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 (32.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism of cars</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 (20.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility/use of drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 (20.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault/rape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 (17.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 (14.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb threat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carjacking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property theft in dorms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugging women at parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underage drinking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL CRIMES MENTIONED 37 49 86

NOTE: Because many students mentioned more than one crime type during their interviews, the summed row for “Total Crimes Mentioned” at the bottom of this table exceeds the total urban sample size of 34.

6.3.1. “You Don’t Know What Their Intentions Are”: African Americans and the Shadow of Robbery

While students at Suburban U were primarily concerned about the rape and sexual assault of their female peers, both women and men attending Urban U felt more threatened by the possibility of being robbed in the urban context. This trend was uniform across gender, as indicated in Table 5, which shows that all 34 Urban U participants made references to robbery and muggings in their remarks. For instance,
Brad, a white man, reported, “There is a lotta strong-arm robberies. You know, like the popular one around campus, you always hear about people getting robbed.” Isabel, a Latina student, also specified the crimes that she was afraid of in the urban context, which were “being robbed, or being mugged. Or having your tires ripped. I don’t know, anything.” As a result of these crimes and his own experiences on campus (which are discussed further below), Eric, a white man, noted, “If I notice that someone is going somewhere I am, but like behind me, then I start to feel shaky like they’re gonna try to rob me or something.”

A primary reason that Urban U students consistently reported being most fearful of robbery is likely because they were frequently primed to have this concern by the university itself through the crime alerts that were distributed by the campus police. During the data collection period at Urban U, a total of 13 crime alerts were emailed to students, faculty, and staff. Each of these emails alerted the university community about a robbery that had occurred on or near campus against a man or woman student. The alerts always described at least one African American man suspect from the urban community, though these incidents were typically committed by groups of African American men. Importantly, none of these crime alerts named a suspect from another racial or ethnic group.

While all Urban U participants noted being concerned about robbery on and near campus, students did not always agree about whether women or men were most at risk. The majority of the sample did not believe that either gender was more likely to be targeted, arguing instead that everyone is at equal risk. For instance, Eva, a Latina

23 As noted in Chapter 3, data collection at Urban U primarily took place over a period of four months during the fall 2013 semester. Following an armed robbery near campus, two additional interviews took place in October 2014 with the student victims of the incident.
student, asserted, “I think it’s pretty even…like they would go after a guy or a girl, whoever they think is gonna be a good victim.” Similarly, Lauren, a Hispanic woman, observed, “I haven’t seen that concentration on gender when crimes happen here. Like it could either be a girl or a guy. It doesn’t seem to matter for the types of crimes that happen on campus. Like they’re phone robberies or whatever. Everyone has a phone, so everyone’s subject to being robbed.” Thus, because the vast majority of students on campus carried a cell phone – the item that was generally stolen during these robberies – Lauren believed that both women and men faced an equal probability of being victimized.

Other students provided more complex remarks regarding the gender of robbery victims at Urban U. When asked if the risks of being a crime victim were different for women versus men, Rosaria, a multi-racial woman, asserted, “Robbery, like even from the crime alerts, it seems like it varies…I think it depends on the ratio of robbers to victims…It doesn’t matter if it’s a guy or a girl. But if it’s only one person, then I feel like being a girl would look weaker.” In other words, Rosaria felt that a woman walking alone would be an easier target than students walking in a group – a subject that will be examined further in Chapter 7 when discussing students’ use of precautionary strategies on campus. Gavin, a white man, made a similar contradiction in his remarks, initially stating that women were more likely targets before suggesting that men may also be victimized:

I’m gonna sound like I’m stereotyping, but from my experience, usually females are the ones that get—‘cause they have like a giant purse so they carry their phones in their hands so someone just runs by them, grabs their phone, and just takes off. And the guys are also guilty of it, but the guys mostly put it in their pocket with the headphones on so they can’t tell someone’s coming up from behind them, so they get clocked.
In this way, Gavin’s comments resemble those of Lauren, above. Although he initially argued that women were easier targets because of their “giant purses” and tendency to carry their phones in their hands, he later acknowledged that men were guilty of engaging in similar behaviors.

However, there were several students who did explicitly state that women were more likely to be victimized in the urban setting because of how they carried themselves. For instance, Xavier, a Hispanic man, argued that “girls have a higher chance” of being victimized, providing a rather gendered explanation for his opinion:

If I see a girl with her handbag and high heels, she can’t run that quick, with the handbag she’s weighed down, then I would go for that option. But if it’s a guy, you know, I just wouldn’t….I’ve never worn high heels before, but I would assume you can’t run as quick as you could in sneakers. I’m not a criminal, but if I were to see a girl in high heels with the purse and with the coat and she has her earphones in, that is like—you know?

Likewise, Victor, a multi-racial man, agreed that women “get targeted more” for crime because of how they carry themselves in what he called “a female prissy little walk.” This walk includes the “clicking of women’s heels and...[they’re] probably wearing a miniskirt that can’t let [them] run very far and [they’re] small in frame.” He argued that offenders are “not gonna mess with someone who has a confident stride ‘cause you don’t know what the hell they’re packing.”

Others suggested that women were more likely targets because they lack physical strength. Nikki, an African American woman, explained, “Men, they’re not attacked as much because other men wouldn’t think that they could overpower another man, logically. As for a woman, they’re more victimized and they’re seen as weaker....We’re not physically as strong, you know, as built as [men].” Gayatri, a South Asian woman,
also agreed with this notion that women are weaker than men – at least physically speaking:

There’s more of a danger if you’re a girl. Just because, you know, we’re not seen as stronger or like we don’t have that on our side….If I were to come into a situation with some big guy, I obviously wouldn’t go straight to my physical strength. Obviously I’d try to, you know, rationalize it, try to talk him down, that type of thing.

Thus, Gayatri acknowledged that she wouldn’t resort to using her muscles or fists to escape a potential attacker, but would instead try to reason with him (a pronoun she used, which presumes the attacker would be a man and not a woman) to get out of a dangerous situation.

Of those in the Urban U sample, 10 students (or 29.4%) reported a personal victimization experience, 14 students (or 41.2%) reported a vicarious victimization experience, and eight students (or 23.5%) reported witnessing a crime\(^\text{24}\). All of these incidents occurred on or near campus, with robbery comprising the vast majority of the personal, vicarious, and witnessed crimes that students described experiencing. Interestingly – and perhaps not coincidentally, given the discussion above about gender – the five students who disclosed that they had been a victim of a strong-arm robbery on or near campus were all men.

Eric, a white man, was robbed the day before his first semester of classes at Urban U and attributed his subsequent discomfort on campus to this incident:

A day before the semester started, I got robbed…It was at like nighttime and that’s why I’m kinda shaky at nighttime up here….I was walking back to my dorm at the time and I was taking a short cut, and then three people came out of that short cut at the same time I walked through. So they stopped me and made

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\(^\text{24}\) One of the primary reasons for this range of personal and vicarious victimization experiences among those in the Urban U sample is that students with these experiences were intentionally oversampled during recruitment efforts.
me empty my pockets. And I was just like, “Oh crap, I’m just trying to get back to my dorm room without any problems.”

Owen, a white man, recalled being robbed one night while on the train at the nearby train station after working late on campus:

It was a Monday night—it was about 9 o’clock…I was on my way home, and the train was stuck in [the station] and I was standing there [and] I had my phone out, switching the songs I was listening to. According to the station security video I saw, the seven dudes that were part of the group that robbed me, got on at a door, then walked around past me, ripped my phone out of my hand, and started running. So, I chased after them and from there I called a couple of names again and stopped and then one of his buddies stopped and then we proceeded to get into a fight and then his other friends joined in. I got my backpack ripped off my back too.

Micah, a multi-racial man, was the only student in the sample who reported being the victim of robbery not just once, but twice. Both times he was walking from campus either to the nearby train station or to his car. Micah vividly detailed his experiences with being robbed the second time when he was with his friend Nathan, who was also interviewed for this study:

It happened on a Wednesday night around 10 o’clock-ish. I had to stay late to do a paper…. So, I had my friend walk with me to my car ‘cause it was late…. We were walking and I noticed two guys comin’ and I had a gut feeling like they were just, I dunno, like it’s just weird. The way they were walking…but I didn’t really wanna think about it ‘cause I didn’t wanna stereotype and I didn’t wanna be biased, so I just like brushed it off. And then that’s when they really came up to us, pulled out a gun, and they were like “gimme all your stuff.” So they ended up taking my jewelry that I had from like my grandmother, my mother, my baby pendants, a ring that I bought, what else? They took my cell phone, they took my wallet, they took my laptop that I had just put my paper on….And they took from my friend his cash and his cell phone.

In addition to these personal victimization experiences, students also described instances of vicarious victimization in which their friends or classmates had been robbed on or near campus. As previous scholars have noted, such experiences often have more impact on individuals’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime, as victims recount what
happened to them to others and these stories then circulate through “rumor networks” (Skogan, 1987, p. 138; also see Baumer, 1978; Box, Hale, & Andrews, 1988; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). For example, Lucas, a Hispanic man, detailed how his friends were robbed near campus:

Four of my friends last spring semester were jumped by a group of I think ten people, they said. And they had their phones stolen and a couple of other items stolen, like wallets and purses and things like that. They were coming out of one of the bars… and they said they were drunk and they approached them, and they said that they had stolen something from them originally and then they just proceeded to, you know, beat them and steal everything from them.

Such instances of vicarious victimization that students like Lucas experienced appeared to influence their perceptions of risk on campus, as well as their own fear of being personally victimized.

Additionally, the crime alerts that students received from the campus police seemed to function as a form of vicarious victimization, as they were incidents in which their fellow students were harmed, and such stories were often retold and circulated among Urban U students. For instance, Heather, a white student, mentioned a mugging and physical assault that she heard about through a crime alert: “[The victim] got tackled to the floor for her phone a few weeks ago.” With the exception of two students who had not seen any crime alerts due to not checking their school email accounts, nearly every student recalled alerts they had received that subsequently influenced their perceptions of risk at Urban U.

Further, students like Amina, a South Asian woman, disclosed that they had witnessed other people being robbed on or near campus:

I was walking back from the nail place and I was actually with my boyfriend at that time. Thank god I was….I had my phone out, I was walking like this [while looking at my phone] and I saw like three people cross me and like I turned around and I heard someone shout, like shout a girl scream, and I turned around
and a guy just ran away with her phone, which was out. That was the first time that I ever saw a robbery or a mugging take place in front of me….It never struck me that [the street adjacent to campus] in broad daylight could be unsafe.

Later when discussing the impact that this experience had on her behaviors, she revealed, “I’m scared of going [there] by myself alone. The next time I went to [that street], I put everything in my bag and chained it up.” Thus, students like Amina who witnessed another person being victimized – or who experienced personal or vicarious victimization – provided details about those incidents, the impact that they had on their perceptions of risk and fear of crime in the urban setting, and how they adapted their own behaviors to lessen their risks in the future.

Interestingly, the crime that was mentioned by all but one student at Suburban U – sexual assault or rape – was only mentioned by 6 of the 34 Urban U participants (or about 17.6% of the sample), as shown in Table 5. However, only one of these students, Danica, spontaneously mentioned being concerned about rape in the urban setting. Her gendered concern about sexual assault had been prompted by a recent news story she heard about, in which “some girls were like stopped at a red light or something, and [some guys] carjacked them and then took them and raped them.” Another student, Paz, disclosed that she was a survivor of rape, but noted that she was more afraid of being robbed in the urban setting – perhaps as a result of understanding that rape on college campuses is not a random crime and is typically committed by someone the student victim knows (see Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010; Sinozich & Langton, 2014).

The remaining four Urban U students who referenced rape in their interviews included one man and three women. None of these students raised this subject spontaneously and instead only did so when it was elicited by the interviewer. For
instance, when Lauren, a Hispanic woman, was specifically asked about whether she believed there are gender differences in crime victimization on campus, she stated that “it could either be a girl or a guy.” Later when discussing prevailing gender stereotypes about women’s physical vulnerability, Lauren continued:

The mindset that society has overall – girls would be more susceptible to being a victim for crime rather than a guy. But to me, I don’t think it matters that much. If they want to commit a crime, they’ll do it whether you’re a guy or a girl, probably depending on rape because most girls are the ones that get raped.

In other words, when pressed to discuss gender differences in crime victimization on campus, Lauren spoke about gender stereotypes and the crime that is most typically associated with women, which is rape. However, her remarks were not consistent with the predictions of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis because she did not mention being fearful of this crime in the urban setting. The other three students who generically mentioned rape – Micah, Rosaria, and Zofia – did so in a similar manner by explaining that gender does not typically play a role in victimization in the urban city, even though some might assume that women are more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted.

6.3.2. “Judging a Book by Its Cover”: Physical Size and Victimization Risk

One of the characteristics that many men in the sample believed influenced students’ likelihood of being victimized in the urban setting was their physical size and stature. Quinn, a white man, believed that women are more likely to be targeted for crime, as are small men. He explained, “Women are, unfortunately, perceived to be weaker and smaller and a lot of times that is true. I have a lot of [male] friends that are pretty short and aren’t that like muscular or anything, so I could see them being more victim[ized] than I would be.” Quinn later elaborated that anyone who is smaller in stature – whether a man or a woman – is more likely to be targeted for crime:
I definitely think size is a big thing and like judging a book by its cover, it’s just like, “alright, this guy looks like he weighs 100 pounds and can barely lift a 20 pound weight,” and it’s just like if you’re a big muscle gangster, you’d be like, “I can take him out easily” sort of thing, but if it’s a big, football player-type person, you’re gonna be like, “I’m not gonna mess with him because I’m not sure I could win this fight or intimidate him at all.”

In other words, offenders (whom Quinn believed were men) are most likely to select their targets based solely on physical appearance and whether they think that person would successfully be able to defend themselves.

Christian, a Hispanic man, expressed a similar sentiment while comparing himself to his brother: “I’m pretty concerned for my bro. We’re complete opposites. I’m 5’9” 250 [pounds], he’s 5’7” 120 [pounds]. When you look at me, I don’t look like a weak guy. Compared to my bro, I’d look at him and be like, you know, there are some concerns there, I’m gonna have to shield him.” Later he continued this discussion by talking about how his brother needed his protection, due to his smaller physical size, which Christian believed would make his brother a more likely target in the urban city: “When my bro starts going here, if we don’t buy a car, he’s gonna be walking with me. I would not put him out there. You know, outside of [Urban U] it’s like a jungle. I would not put him by himself there. There’s no way.”

Correspondingly, and despite his own experience with being robbed, described above, Owen felt that it was not typical for him to be targeted for crime, due to his larger stature. He explained, “I’m kind of a bigger guy, so I don’t think they would necessarily mess with me, but I guess I was wrong. I think for thefts like that, they try to prey on weaker people….I’m kind of a bigger dude, so I’m not the usual suspect I guess or usual victim type or whatever.” Later, when asked if women or men are more likely to be the
victims of crime, Owen reemphasized that those who were physically smaller and weaker were more likely to be robbed on or near campus:

This is going to sound super sexist, [but] I know it’s more honest than anything else. I think generally they want to go to, you know, smaller people, usually women or smaller-build men, just because it’s easier to rip whatever it is out of their hand—you know, strong arm them and they won’t put up much of a fight.

Again, Owen made these remarks despite his own experience with being robbed. His comments further highlight the ways in which men participants believed individuals’ smaller physical size increased their risk of victimization. For women students at Urban U, such remarks about physical size were typically made in the context of their discussions about gender differences in victimization, as noted previously.

6.3.3. Race and Victimization Risk

Some students also felt that race was influential in victimization, with whites facing the greatest risk of victimization in the urban setting. Brad, a white man, noted that he did not feel safe outside the borders of campus, “especially me being white, and just kinda a target I think.” Jimena, a Hispanic woman, agreed that “whites might have less of an advantage than minorities” because of the diversity of the city. She felt that whites were more likely to be targeted because she had not “heard of a black student being robbed.” Lauren, a Hispanic woman, expanded on this point, stating, “I mean, if race does play a factor, it might be white. They might be susceptible. To me, they seem more kind of like on their phones. I guess I would say maybe white people might get robbed easier.”

In the urban setting, Shaun, an African American man, agreed: “the perpetrator may feel that the white person is an easy target.” However, he provided an even more specific explanation for why whites may be targeted by thieves in the city:
[Whites] won’t retaliate or run after them. And they may not be used to fighting back or they may not have had to, whereas the black victim is probably more likely to fight back because he won’t be able to replace that item more easier than the white victim. So he has more to lose and less chance of recovering that stolen item that was taken away from him or he was robbed of.

Thus, Shaun felt that black students were less likely to be targeted for crime because (African American) offenders in the urban city would understand that they are not as privileged as white students and are more likely to fight for what little they have.

Alternatively, some students did not believe that an individual’s race heightened their risk of victimization, with a few arguing that an individual’s status as a student (as opposed to a non-student) played a more decisive role in their risk of victimization. For example, Zofia, an international woman student from Poland, argued, “This campus so diverse, so [many] different races here. I think we are all—if something happens, we have the same chances of getting [victimized].” Similarly, Yardley, a Haitian American woman, agreed that the risks for becoming a victim of crime do not vary by gender or race “because it could happen to anybody.” However, she did express her belief that college students in general are more likely to be targeted for crime than others: “I feel like the fact that we’re college students, other people think that, ‘okay, these kids have money, so we’re gonna target them as a whole.’ It doesn’t matter like black, white, or whatever. I feel like just ‘cause we’re college students, they’re gonna target us.” In other words, Yardley felt that all Urban U students were equally likely to be targeted for crime as a result of the fact that they were college students, whom potential offenders in the community would assume were privileged.
6.3.4. “Most of These Kids Never Grew Up in the Hood”: Naïveté and Victimization Risk in the Urban Setting

Urban U participants also believed that those who didn’t know how to act or who didn’t exercise the proper street smarts in the city were more likely to be targeted for crime. For instance, Alex, a Hispanic man, argued that the people who were most likely to be targeted for crime were not familiar with the urban city and therefore did not know how to carry themselves. When referring to the crimes that have occurred at Urban U, he explained:

I think it’s the fault of the people that are on campus, like usually people that don’t live around here and don’t know how to act or carry themselves around here. I’ve been here seventeen years. I know what happens in [the urban city]. I know where to go through, how to act, what I can do, what time of day it is, like I know what to do around here.

Fahim, a multi-racial man, agreed: “I know the area so I’m immune [to crime] in a way.” In other words, Fahim perceived himself to be an unlikely target in the urban context because he viewed his familiarity with the setting as making him more resistant to potential victimization.

Alternatively, Shaun, an African American man, felt that he was at heightened risk for victimization because he stood out as someone who was not from the urban city:

I’m the type who don’t try to look like a product of their environment. I’ve never been that type, so I usually wear a white shirt with a vest…and maybe jeans or some kind of other pants – khaki or whatever. I don’t wear hoods and all of those attires to seem like I fit in or to ward off an offender…For me to dress that way and then to enter in some area where that’s probably the norm dress code, it’s probably like you’re seen as an outsider, someone who’s not from around this neck of the woods.

Although Shaun was an African American, who easily could have “passed” as a city resident (see Goffman, 1964) and blended in to the urban setting, he intentionally chose not to by wearing certain types of clothes. As a result of his clothing choices, he
acknowledged, “If I’m not perceived as being from the neighborhood, if I’m maybe perceived as somebody who can’t protect themselves because I’m dressed a certain way in a certain hour of the day, [I] may be more vulnerable.”

Victor, a multi-racial man, took Alex’s statements from above a step further, arguing that such behaviors and general lack of awareness may be gendered:

You have to be aware if you’re a female. Don’t walk around alone. I see plenty of females walking around alone like they’re walking in their house and I’m aware of that, but who am I to tell these broads? “Hey, make sure you’re walking with someone and get those fucking ear buds out of your ears and making yourself a target”….People around here are just oblivious to danger. Remember where you’re going to school at. Most of these kids never grew up in the hood. I have.

Indeed, in Victor’s view, women were more susceptible to being targeted for crime because they were more likely to be naïve and less likely to engage in vigilant behaviors (e.g., by walking alone, not being aware of their surroundings) in the urban context.

Likewise, Brianna, an African American woman, argued that students’ lack of familiarity with the urban setting could work against them by making them greater targets. Alternatively, she argued that this lack of familiarity could make students more vigilant. In her discussion about the characteristics she believed influenced students’ likelihood of victimization, she asserted, “Someone who’s not from here, who doesn’t really know the area. You would think they would be a little bit more naïve to the setting or something. Or maybe not. Maybe because they’re not used to this, they’re just more I guess, guarded.”

Despite students’ sentiments about the factors that may make certain individuals more likely to be victimized in the urban city, some suggested that such occurrences can only be attributed to chance and that everyone is equally likely to become a victim of crime. Shaun speculated that when choosing their victims, offenders “take a lot of factors
into consideration. Depends on how the person looks – size, weight, what have you, and how they carry themselves. But anyone is likely to be victimized.” Micah, a multi-racial man, echoed this idea in light of his own victimization experience, noting that “anybody can get held up with a gun, anybody can get robbed.” Likewise, Gayatri, a South Asian woman, suggested that no one is more likely to be victimized than anyone else. When discussing instances of victimization at Urban U, she asserted, “Even the things that I hear, it’s not like, ‘oh, they could’ve been smarter about it.’ They couldn’t. You know, it’s almost like, are you caught in the probability today?” Thus, such factors as physical size, race, and naïveté in the urban setting may simply be students’ attempts to understand why some are victimized, while simultaneously easing their minds about their own personal risk of victimization as they pursue higher education.

6.4. “Anybody Could Come on This Campus”: Evaluations of Outsiders versus Students at Suburban U

While those at Suburban U generally felt that the campus and the community around it was safe and relatively free of risk, they often discussed – both explicitly and implicitly – the potential threats posed by outsiders (or community residents) versus their fellow students. Overall, the vast majority of participants at Suburban U viewed outsiders and non-students as a major threat to their safety on campus. In doing so, these participants typically deemed students as harmless and safe, while they viewed outsiders as unpredictable and potentially harmful to their well-being. Tuyen, an Asian woman, explained that while she enjoyed walking on campus, she had also come across a lot of potentially “sketchy areas”: “Literally, some of the campus path[s] that lead you right
through woods, right through like the middle of nowhere like a main street or something like that. Like whoa, so people can actually access the campus!” Although she had discovered these areas where outsiders could potentially enter the campus, Tuyen asserted that she still believed it was “very safe.”

Adina, an Ethiopian woman, expressed similar thoughts about outsiders, or non-students, from the suburban city when she explained that there was nothing stopping them from coming on campus. After expressing that she had no immediate concerns on campus, she stated, “It’s kinda weird though ‘cause it’s not like we’re gated or anything. Honestly, anybody can wander on to campus and I dunno if it’s the area we’re in that just happens to be really safe, but if people are really out to do harm, it’d be so easy to just walk into campus. Nobody questions you.” Max, a Hispanic man, reiterated this concern: “A lot of people can just come on campus, you know, and no one can really tell if they’re carrying something or if they’re here to do some harm or something.” Although the majority of participants at Suburban U felt that the campus was safe, they all believed that the only potential threat against them was posed by an outsider entering campus bounds.

This scenario was also articulated by Tasheka, an African American woman. She described the Suburban U campus as being “safe enough, but I feel like anybody could come on this campus….They have police everywhere—like no, they have police everywhere. You look over, there’s a police, but it’s just like there’s no like security gate or anything. Somebody can still come on this campus.” When I explicitly asked Tasheka what her primary concern was about the lack of a “security gate” on campus, she replied, “people from outside coming on campus.” Thus, like other students on the suburban
campus, it was non-students and community residents that Tasheka was referring to in her remarks. Suburban U students were repeatedly deemed as safe, and it was outsiders—or individuals who had no legitimate business on campus—who were believed to pose the greatest risk to their safety.

Similarly, when discussing his concerns about outsiders coming on campus, Julian, a Latino student, drew a more direct link between his feelings of safety on campus and that in the surrounding areas:

I think it’s generally safe. I dunno if that is a way to describe safety—generally safe. I don’t feel particularly unsafe on campus, but I also don’t feel it’s super lockdown or anything like that, so I feel like we’re enjoying a safety [on campus] that’s just because it’s generally safe in the area.

When asked what he meant about the campus not being on lockdown, Julian replied:

I feel like anyone can walk on campus, you know? It’s pretty easy to get in and out of the buildings. They’re usually unlocked….I’ve seen people that come here and they’re not even students here. I’ve just sat down and sometimes you talk to someone and they’re like, “I don’t even go here.”

Throughout his interview, Julian stated that his only concern was that anyone could come onto campus. Again, and as noted above with regard to Tasheka’s comments, it is possible that he viewed residents from the suburban community as “anyone” and as outsiders who do not belong at Suburban U.

Students’ perceptions of outsiders and the potential harm they could cause stands in stark contrast to their comments about their fellow students. Importantly, violence experienced by college students is equally likely to be committed by someone the student knows (perhaps another student, an intimate partner, or an acquaintance) as it is to be committed by someone the student does not know (Hart, 2013). When asked to describe the people, places, or things that made them feel most comfortable on campus, about one-quarter of the sample mentioned that the presence of other students made them feel safe.
For instance, Kaylee stated, “It makes me feel safer when I see all the other students.” Zoe, a white woman, agreed that other students made her more comfortable “when I’m walking somewhere alone [on campus], and I see other people around.” Furthermore, Odette, a black woman, asserted, “I guess when other people are around me, and I know that they’re students. That’s it, and like if I’m not by myself.” Interestingly, participants were not referring to other students they knew and had preexisting relationships with, but simply other Suburban U students. In other words, they automatically perceived other students as safe as a result of their shared student status, despite the fact that they were also technically strangers like the community residents they feared might come on campus.

In his discussion about how safe the campus was and how trustworthy he felt other students were, Omar, an Arab man, was the only participant to touch on the role of community  in his evaluation of other students as safe. He explained:

It’s very safe, actually – especially when I leave my belongings unattended. It’s just, everyone usually leaves their belongings unattended and no one touches it. It’s just like a friendly community and I kinda like that too. It’s very nice. So I dunno if it’s out of fear that, “Oh, they’ll see me take their stuff,” or it’s either that they respect it. But it’s a nice community. People wouldn’t really harm other people.

Indeed, many students like Omar viewed their fellow students as serving a protective function when evaluating risk and safety on campus. Overall, the participants at Suburban U seemed to assume that their fellow students would watch their backs and protect them, which may be attributable to this notion that they had a shared community at Suburban U – and by extension, trust in one another that naturally excluded outsiders.

25 The term “community” is used in this context to refer to the sense of community, or shared group identity, that Suburban U students felt.
6.5. “You Can Tell Who Doesn’t Belong”: Distinguishing Urban U Students from Outsiders

Like those attending Suburban U, Urban U students made a similar distinction between their fellow students and those they perceived as outsiders in their assessments of risk on campus. Interestingly, Urban U students’ perceptions of feeling safe on campus, but not in the community around it, coincided with this distinction between students and outsiders. Specifically, students believed that their fellow Urban U students (who could most often be found on campus) were harmless and would protect them from danger, and that outsiders in the community around campus (who tended to be African American city residents) were unpredictable and more likely to cause them harm.

Danica, a Hispanic black woman, asserted that one of the reasons she felt safer on Urban U’s campus than in the “red zone” around it was due to the presence of other students: “I feel like I’m mostly surrounded by students who are here for the same purpose as me, so that makes me feel pretty comfortable….Mostly surrounding me are students who hold no harm to me or couldn’t pose a harm to me really.” Paz, a Hispanic woman, also voiced this belief that students were harmless and played a protective role on campus: “You always just see the presence, and you just know if somebody’s gonna try to rob me right now, that person’s going to stop him….There’s always somebody else outside, you know what I mean, like a student or something.” Both Danica and Paz found comfort in being surrounded by their fellow students and believed that other students would come to their defense if an outsider tried to harm them.

In his explanation of why he felt that the presence of other students on campus made him feel safer, Xavier, a Hispanic man, observed:
Students—we’re all the same pretty much. We’re all sharing the same space, we’re all doing pretty much the same thing…As of right now I feel safe with the students….Everyone’s hanging out with their own groups of friends or acquaintances, the business of going to and from different buildings to go to different classes—we’re all pretty much in the same kind of scheme.

Based on Xavier’s comments, one of the reasons Urban U students may have felt safer around their fellow students was because they engaged in more predictable behaviors, while they perceived that the behavior of outsiders was less predictable. Specifically, students are expected to attend classes or meetings, study, and see their friends while on campus, among other things. Additionally, participants may have felt that they shared the social status of being students with their peers, which placed them on common ground with one another. Likewise, Isabel, a Latina student, agreed, “I feel safe because there’s a lot of people that can’t hurt me. Very cute, nice people. They’re just students…the most that they’re doing is dating each other. They’re really in a love mode. So that helps to feel safe….I feel the same vibe all around campus.” The adjectives Isabel used to describe her student peers imply that she viewed them as harmless and non-threatening. Such a view was effectively summarized by Jimena, who argued, “Other students are not the problem. They generally try to help each other out.”

Instead, the biggest problem – according to Jimena and other Urban U students – was city residents and being able to visibly distinguish them from other students and faculty. When discussing why she felt safe in various school buildings on campus, Gayatri, a South Asian woman, explained:

You can tell who doesn’t belong there and who does. You know, you can easily tell a student apart…like if they have their backpacks on, if they’re like, you know, on their way to class or something, or if there’s someone just like hanging out like not really doing anything, and you generally don’t see that because I think it would be too threatening to go into like a school building, you know?
Alternatively, Heather, a white woman, noted that she had never seen an outsider wandering around at Urban U: “People talk about how sometimes they see homeless people on campus. That’s never happened to me. Every time I am walking around I see someone with a backpack or someone who looks like a professor. Just people that you don’t get that vibe from.” Like Gayatri and Heather, the majority of those in the urban sample agreed that students were easy to identify and distinguish from city residents (or those they believed did not belong on campus) because they wear backpacks and tend to be traveling to and from classes.

The analysis also revealed how Urban U participants tended to differentiate between students and outsiders. For example, Shaun, an African American man, noted that he “perceive[d] a student to be a little cleaner looking and maybe groomed a little better, and some of the outsiders, they look like derelicts…they look like bums.” Wayne, an African American man, made similar remarks when contrasting Urban U’s open campus with another campus he had been to, which was gated. He noted his discomfort with this feature of the Urban U campus:

This is probably the only thing I’m scared of is I don’t like seeing—I’m trying to find what to call ‘em ‘cause I don’t want to call them what I’m gonna call them. I want to say junkies, but people who look like they’ve had past trouble with drug problems and could be homeless. I don’t want to say crack heads, but yeah, you see a lot of those. They’re a little unstable and they start asking you for stuff and if you don’t have it then they get angry. They’re a little unstable.

Chanté, a Haitian American woman, believed the campus was often used as a shortcut for non-students “to get to the other side of town,” and articulated her belief that the outsiders who came on campus were using drugs:

Sometimes I do see people on campus that I just know don’t belong, yet they’ll sit. They won’t harm anybody, but they’ll sit with their own people and play jokes. But I’ll look at them like why are they on this campus? I don’t know if they’re homeless or anything, or if they’re crack heads, but I do see them.
Each of these students seemed to agree that the non-students who came on campus were either homeless or using drugs, which likely amplified their perceptions that these individuals were unstable and unpredictable. In her comments, Chanté questioned why they were even there, insinuating that they clearly were not welcome at Urban U. Further, she highlighted that the campus was open to the public, which meant that even those who were not students, such as urban city residents (who she described as homeless and crack heads), could enter its borders.

This is a point that students like Tamara, an African American woman, discussed when describing why they did not feel safe on campus: “It is a public school, so it’s open access to anyone. Anyone can walk in.” Similarly, Lucas, a Hispanic man, said, “[Urban U] is like its own little internal part of [the city], surrounded by the rest of [the city], and it’s an open campus. So anybody can just come into the campus without I.D., they can walk the streets, and things like that.” Tamara and Lucas both emphasized that there was nothing to stop anyone from entering the campus – whether it was a gate around the perimeter, as mentioned above by Wayne, or the campus police checking student I.D. cards, which Lucas discussed. As a result, Urban U students came to expect that they would see outsiders on campus, and such occurrences were a great source of discomfort among study participants.

In addition to the presence of outsiders (or non-student city residents) on the Urban U campus, participants pointed to the campus crime alerts as another factor that contributed to their elevated perceptions of risk on campus. For example, Zofia, a white woman, talked about the impact that the crime alerts (and outsiders’ roles in them) had on her perception of risk as high at Urban U. She recalled, “If anything, when I was coming
to campus, I did not expect that, to be honest. I did not know that things would happen.

But then again, I’m forgetting it is a public university. Everybody has access to it; you know?” Rosaria, a multi-racial woman, echoed these concerns when describing the buildings and facilities on campus that lack the security to prevent outsiders from entering:

I think it’s probably not as safe as it could be in terms of virtually anyone has like access in a lot of places, except for like the dorms where there is security. But classroom-wise, [in] a lot of the buildings, they don’t check who goes in and out. So I think there is potential of it not being safe. But yeah, because it’s lacking like the whole walls around it. Like if it had walls around it, it would be a different matter.

Zofia and Rosaria were clear that non-students’ ability to come on campus made them question whether the campus was truly safe. Zofia referred to crime alerts with incidents that had been perpetrated by individuals who were not affiliated with Urban U, while Rosaria suggested that there was nothing preventing outsiders from entering the majority of the buildings on campus.

Overall, students highlighted how the accessibility of the campus to outsiders, as well as the lack of more stringent security enforcing the geographical boundaries of the campus, made them feel less safe and increased their perceptions of risk. In this regard, Yardley, a Haitian American woman, recounted:

Because our campus is so open, I witnessed something. I think it was like two semesters ago, where these two adult men were like threatening each other and chasing each other through our campus. And it got bad…they had to call the cops because the guy was threatening the guy like, “I’m gonna stab you” ….Our campus is so open that anybody could just walk in and do anything.

Similarly, Micah, a multi-racial man who was mugged at gunpoint while walking with his friend near campus, stated:

I don’t think [the campus] is safe at all. At all. I mean, just based on the events that happened to me, let alone the crime alerts that happen, you can go on
YouTube and find the fight that broke out in [the library]…When I first started here there was a crime alert about someone getting held up in the bathroom in [a classroom building] with a gun. Do I think it’s gotten better? Not really. I don’t think it should be open to the public. I really don’t. ‘Cause anybody can walk in here….That to me is like the biggest safety issue I have on campus. You let random people into our school.

There is no doubt that incidents like these had an impact on how students viewed outsiders, as well as the threat they believed outsiders posed. Notably, students’ perceptions of risk were shaped by their experiences either witnessing or hearing about outsiders misbehaving on campus. This presumed lack of security seemed to make them concerned that such events could and would occur again in the future.

Other students were more explicit about the racial characteristics of the outsiders that they believed posed the greatest threat to their safety both on and around campus. Such perceptions were largely informed by the campus crime alerts they received. For instance, regarding these crime alerts, Alex, a Hispanic man, argued, “I feel like it is the same guy all the time. The way they describe him is like I feel like it is the same person all the time.” Similarly, Zofia, a white woman, agreed, “The description of the suspect is pretty much always the same…I mean, it cannot be the same person all the time.”

Brianna, an African American woman, also observed, “I can name like 30 plus people on this campus that look like the descriptions [in the crime alerts]. It’s ones like, ‘6-foot black male, hoodie.’ I’m like, ‘well, that’s the whole basketball team! That’s everyone!’ Like every person looks the same when they describe the person.”

Additionally and in greater detail, Christian, a Hispanic man, discussed how the descriptions of the perpetrators in the crime alerts are always the same, along with how this has altered his perceptions of risk on and around campus: “If every time you get a crime alert, you see it’s a black dude, you know 9 out of 10 times, you gonna see a black
dude, you gotta be on high alert. You just don’t know them. You don’t know what their intentions are.” In other words, the descriptions of the perpetrators that were provided in the crime alerts functioned to further reinforce Christian’s negative perceptions of outsiders – or African American city residents. He later described how the crime alerts have impacted his behaviors and increased his distrust of those who tend to be identified as offenders:

Usually I’m very informed and I go extra measures. You take the address [from the crime alert] and Google it, and take a look at where it is exactly…If I’m in that place, like that general area, I’m gonna be more alert. You gotta look out for the signs. The statistics show that it’s mostly African Americans—black people. If you look at someone who is black, you gotta know they’re part of the statistics, you know? You gotta be on higher alert, compared to seeing a white guy walking. Most likely he’s not gonna do it. Of the time I’ve been here, it’s been one Hispanic one time. 5’8” to 6 feet, he’s black, he’s 17 to 20 years old, so you know who you’re looking out for.

As a result of the crime alerts that students received from the campus police, which typically told the same story of an Urban U student being robbed on or near campus by one or more African American men, participants at Urban U learned to become more aware of non-student outsiders who resided in the urban city. Further, they believed that such individuals posed the greatest threat to their safety because of all the incidents they had heard about in which their peers were victimized by residents of the urban city.

Similarly, Rosaria, a multi-racial woman, observed that “a lot of the descriptions of the aggressors, it’s kinda like 5-whatever-feet, African American male, black hoodie, like that.” These descriptions in the crime alerts also impacted Xavier’s perceptions of men who wear hoods in the urban city. After being repeatedly probed about why he was fearful of men in hoods, as well as how he detected if the hooded person was safe or not, Xavier exclaimed:
Shoot, this is like [asking] “why am I afraid of snakes?” I just am. I don’t know, I guess you could kinda like read the situation if, you know, the student’s walking with a backpack, got their coat on, and then the hood over, you figure he’s cold. But if I see a grown adult just standing there with his buddies with their hoods over, you know, very baggy clothing, it’s just…that general feeling of “watch out.”

As Xavier insinuated in his racialized remarks about hoods and “very baggy clothing,” African American men from the community were automatically perceived as threatening due to their status as non-Urban U students and, therefore, outsiders. Students were clearly evaluated as harmless, while grown adults from the community who happened to engage in the same behaviors were not.

6.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined whether gender influences students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in two campus contexts. At Suburban U, which is located in a relatively affluent community with low rates of crime, all participants – with the exception of one – explicitly stated that the greatest threat on campus was the sexual assault and rape of their female peers, especially by non-student outsiders. Further, some participants believed that racial and ethnic minorities and LGBT students faced increased risk of being victimized by hate crimes and bullying in the suburban setting.

Alternatively, at Urban U, which is located in a working-class community with relatively high rates of crime, every student in the sample perceived that they were most likely to be robbed in the urban city and generally knew someone who had been a victim of the crime, if they had not experienced it themselves. Urban U students also believed that those who were smaller in physical size and stature, white, and naïve about the risks in the urban city were more likely to be victims of robbery in that setting. Interestingly,
at both institutions, students’ perceptions of risk, as well as their fears about these risks, were consistent across gender and were typically informed by the crime alerts distributed at each university and the stories that students passed on to one another about crime on campus.

In addition to the specific crime threats participants believed they faced in these two campus contexts, both Suburban and Urban U students were most concerned about being harmed by non-student community residents, whom they perceived as outsiders. Participants felt safe in the presence of their student peers and assumed their fellow students would assist them in times of need. Quite differently, participants were clear that outsiders had no business on their campuses and did not belong there. As a result, students in both settings spoke about the variety of precautionary strategies they have adopted to cope with their concerns. This will be the focus of Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 7: THE ROLE OF PRECAUTIONARY BEHAVIORS IN ALLEVIATING STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF RISK AND FEAR OF CRIME

7.1. Introduction

The previous three chapters have examined how community setting and campus context influenced students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization at Suburban and Urban U, in addition to when and how their perceptions were shaped by gender. The present chapter will focus on the precautionary behaviors that students used in the two contexts, as well as how the adoption of such behaviors was both consistent with and contradictory to the risks they identified on and around their respective campuses. Further, this chapter will explore whether the adoption of these precautionary strategies appeared to be gendered among those in the sample.

7.2. Precautionary Behaviors at Suburban U

Despite generally feeling safe, students at Suburban U still reported using a variety of precautionary behaviors on and around campus to alleviate the risks they identified in Chapter 6. In doing so, some of the strategies they used included being alert and aware of their surroundings, particularly at night; walking with others; engaging in defensive behaviors (e.g., carrying a knife or pepper spray, holding their keys in a defensive manner, being prepared to fight); and completely avoiding certain activities or locations due to safety concerns. Interestingly, both women and men noted using these precautionary strategies, but women did so with higher levels of frequency than men and were more likely to report walking with men at night and engaging in avoidance behaviors. This is consistent with previous research finding that women are more likely to adopt precautionary behaviors due to their higher levels of fear and perceived risk,
particularly of sexual victimization (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Wilcox et al. 2007; Woolnough, 2009). Each of the strategies that Suburban U students mentioned using will be discussed further below.

7.2.1. Staying Aware and Alert

Although they felt that the campus and the community around it was safe, one of the primary ways that Suburban U students tried to ensure their safety on campus was by remaining alert and paying attention to their surroundings. Parker, a white man, noted that he tried to “look confident, just wherever you’re walking…It kind of just makes sense to me to carry yourself with confidence. It’s less likely that somebody will kind of single you out, I guess.” Similarly, Zach, a white man, explained, “If you pay attention, people aren’t gonna mess with you because you’re gonna be alert. If you’re not really alert, there’s more of a chance that people might mess with you.” Like Parker and Zach, half of the participants at Suburban U felt that displaying confidence and having a general awareness of their surroundings would lessen and potentially prevent any victimization against them.

Being alert and attuned to their surroundings was not just a strategy used by men at Suburban U but was also common among the women in the sample. For example, Vanna, an Asian woman, reported, “I’m always on guard…paying attention, being aware, like always just being near light, being around people.” Likewise, Kaylee, a white woman, described being much more vigilant and aware of her surroundings at night: “I’ll like look around, like I’ll check behind myself I guess, like I probably wouldn’t walk and be texting at the same time at night. I think I’ll just be walking and looking more.” In other words, Kaylee revealed that she altered her behaviors based on the time of day and
perceived the nighttime as being riskier, causing her to be more aware of her
surroundings. Overall, about half of the women in the suburban sample reported
engaging in such strategies.

7.2.2. Practicing Safety in Numbers

Another precautionary strategy that the majority of Suburban U students
(including 15 women and six men) talked about using was that of safety in numbers, or
intentionally trying to travel in pairs or groups. For example, Ryan, a white man,
explained, “If I have to walk far distances, usually I’ll try to find other people to go with
me, or if I notice other people going, then I’ll probably go with them.” Faith, a white
woman, mentioned that she and her friends have also adopted this strategy: “I always
travel in groups. Pairs are okay, but I like to be at least three or more, especially if we’re
just girls….I can walk to class by myself and around campus during the day, but once the
sun starts going down and [it] starts getting darker, I usually need someone with me or [I]
get back to my dorm.” When asked what it is about being with a group that makes her
feel more comfortable, Faith elaborated, “I think with a group, it’s more—there’s a lot of
us, so we have the one girl’s mace, but we like stick together so it’s harder to like break
us apart.” Faith felt that being with a group provided her with more protection than if she
were traveling by herself, as she knew that one of her friends carried pepper spray and
believed that a group was not as likely to be targeted as someone walking alone. Further,
she noted the importance of traveling in larger groups if only girls were present, perhaps
as a result of viewing women as more probable targets for crime than men.

A few participants extended this notion of safety in numbers to include other
individuals who happened to be around them, even if they had no preexisting relationship
with these other people. For instance, Grace, a white woman, emphasized, “As long as there is like a crowd, it tends to be safer” than if you were alone, whether you know the other people in the crowd or not. Omar explained, “I would feel more safe around more people, honestly…‘cause there’s just a few more people to watch me, and I can watch them.” Thus, Omar believed that other people – whether strangers or friends – would protect him from harm and that he would do the same. Asked if he felt more comfortable around people in general or other students specifically, he added:

If it’s students, yeah. I would trust faculty more…in comparison to other students…When you’re around adults—more older adults, you kind of feel more safe. I don’t know if it’s like something from childhood, but you tend to feel more safe when you’re around someone who’s more experienced.

Omar assumed that faculty members would be better equipped to help or know who to turn to for further assistance in an emergency.

Among those who preferred to travel with people they knew, Julian, a Latino student, noted that he and his friends always tried to stay in groups, particularly when they were with women. He reported, “We generally try to like stay together. If we’re gonna go to the car like, ‘oh, I’ll walk you to your car.’ We always walk our girlfriends to their cars too…like if they’re far away or something like that, you know, or if we’re going to the same area, we’ll walk each other to our cars.” Landon, a white man, also revealed that he often went to the on-campus arena, which was used for basketball games, concerts, and other events, to walk one of his female friends home when she got off work late at night. He reported, “One of my friends from downstairs, she was working at the [arena]. Sometimes we would go and meet her and walk her back just because she likes to have someone to walk with her. But I think she’s probably one of the only people I know that really likes to have someone.” Given the findings presented in Chapter 6 that
the overwhelming majority of Suburban U students believed the greatest threat against
them was the rape and sexual assault of their female peers, particularly when they were
alone at night, this could be one reason why some men in the sample found it necessary
and almost as their duty to walk with and try to “protect” the women they knew.
Moreover, it could also account for why women in the sample felt safer walking with
others, and especially men.

Correspondingly, some of the women in the sample described requesting that men
walk with them at night. For instance, Natalie, a Pacific Islander, revealed, “I almost
always hang out with my boyfriend, his brother, and his roommate. And for my night
classes, I always try and get one of them to walk me back because just when it’s getting
colder, it gets darker a lot sooner, and it’s just a comfort I guess.” Natalie noted feeling
less fearful about being victimized when in the presence of her boyfriend and his male
friends because she presumed they made her less of a target and would be capable of
protecting her if needed. This is also a point that Grace, a white woman, raised: “I
always walk with somebody. Like I have a boyfriend, so like I’ll have him walk with me
if it’s late.” If her boyfriend was not available to accompany her, Grace added, “One time
I was like on the phone with my mom or something while I was walking to the [dorms]. I
try to avoid just walking late at night.”

Like Grace, other women at Suburban U also adapted this strategy of safety in
numbers to include calling people on the phone to keep them company as they walked
alone at night, if no one was physically able to walk with them. Chloe, a multi-racial
woman, stated that she liked to “call someone just so that I’m on the phone with
someone, you know, like I just call like, ‘hey, what’s up?’ ‘Cause my mom is one of
those like safety freaks so like, ‘I’m just walking alone so I’m going to talk to you while I’m doing this.’” This strategy also brought Erin comfort and made her feel like she wasn’t alone:

If I’m like in the [student center] at night like studying or something and I’m like walking back to my room, I will call my parents or my boyfriend and just like have them talk to me when I walk back. Just because I just, I don’t know, I’m just like this is a security thing and it’s just something you do.

Likewise, Tasheka, an African American woman, stated that she always carried her fully charged phone and talked with a friend or her mom while she walked because “when I’m talkin’ on the phone, I’m in the zone! Can’t mess with me.” This strategy provided the women in the suburban sample with a sense of security, even though they were alone, as they knew the person on the other end of the line was there to both keep them company and monitor them should they run into trouble on the way to their destination.

Such was the experience of one of Vivian’s friends, who had recently been followed by a man on campus. She recounted:

I had a friend that told me she was walking from like the student apartments to [the other dorms], which [are] near the Starbucks. That’s kind of a far walk, and it was like one or two o’clock in the morning, and she said she felt like this guy was kind of like following her. So she, you know, got her phone out and tried to play it off, but she really did call someone and let them know, “Look, I’m on my way here. I’m just taking the precautions.”

Nearly one-quarter of women in the Suburban U sample believed that such precautions would protect them from possible victimization by showing that they were not truly “alone,” and by having someone on the line to hear or witness what was taking place.

A few others found it more useful to keep their roommates and friends informed about their plans via text message, rather than distracting themselves on the phone while walking. Robert, an Asian man, reported that when he did not have someone to walk with he would “text one of [his] friends from the dorm to say where [he was] going.”
Erin, a white woman, mentioned engaging in this safety practice as well. She explained that she and her roommates “have like a group message. We’ll just say we are walking back and stuff like that, and just make sure we really know where each other are.” Both Robert and Erin did this with their roommates in an effort to stay in touch and keep each other updated about where they were going and when they expected to return home.

7.2.3. Using Defensive Strategies

The third key precautionary measure that was mentioned by half of the participants at Suburban U – including 11 women and seven men – was the use of a variety of defensive strategies, such as carrying a knife or pepper spray, holding their keys in a defensive manner, and being prepared to fight and defend themselves against a potential attacker at all times (see Ferraro, 1995). Importantly, students’ use of these strategies did not appear to be gendered in the suburban context. For instance, Vivian, an African American woman, revealed that she combined several of the aforementioned precautionary strategies and was always ready to defend herself physically if she needed to. She stated:

I usually try to be with a group of friends or something like that, I always watch my back, [and] I always have my phone with me. I’m always prepared like if I have to fight someone, but I doubt that’s gonna happen. But I always like keep that mentally in the back of my mind, like you really have to watch your surroundings.

Despite suggesting that the risk of victimization was relatively low in the suburban context, Vivian still reported being alert and ready to defend herself in the event that someone might try to harm her.

Similarly, Colton also noted that he was always prepared to fight by carrying his keys defensively: “If I’m walking to my car at night, I make sure just to get there and not to mess around….When I was [attending a nearby community college], I would have my
hand in my jacket pocket with my key between my fingers ‘cause you just never know.”

Colton recalled receiving frequent alerts about assaults on that particular campus, which was his main reason for carrying his key between his fingers there, but he also noted that the wooded paths at Suburban U seemed like “if something shady were to go down it might be a place where it could happen.” Likewise, Zoe, a white woman, shared that “sometimes if I’m walking, I’ll carry my keys in my hand,” as she demonstrated how she held them between her fingers in the same way that Colton described. Interestingly, although the vast majority of Suburban U students reported feeling safe both on and around campus, as reported in Chapter 4, their descriptions of the defensive strategies they adopted to protect themselves from potential risks in the suburban context contradicted their assertions that the area was safe. Perhaps those in the sample recognized, as Colton did above, that one could never be completely free of the threat of victimization; therefore, it was necessary to take precautions in order to minimize any risks that might exist – no matter how small and improbable they may seem.

Indeed, a small minority of men reported carrying knives for self-defense on campus. For example, Justin, a Filipino American man, explained:

I keep myself aware and then I carry a legal defense mechanism…I looked up the law and I carry a knife with me…Ever since I started carrying, it’s just been comfortable to have on me. And whenever I don’t have it on me, like when you go to amusement parks or when you go to places where they have the signs like “no weapons of any kind,” it’s just like the weight and the feel of it not being there kinda throws me off and puts me a little more on edge.

In other words, simply knowing that he had a weapon with him and could defend himself if needed brought a level of comfort to Justin that he noted was absent at times when he was forced to leave the knife at home. Likewise, Julian, a Latino student, also revealed that he carried a pocket knife; however, he argued that the knife was for work and not for
the purposes of protection. He said, “Every now and then I’ll have a pocket knife, but I don’t think it’s like I make it a point to carry that at some times. Like I use it at work, so it’ll be like in my backpack or something or like I might have one in my pocket.”

Aside from relying on an actual weapon for self-defense, more than one-quarter of Suburban U participants were more dependent on their own bodies. For instance, when describing how he ensured his safety on campus, Dylan, a white man, stated:

I don’t drink. I remain in shape. What else? If possible, I usually like to walk and stuff with friends…All I really seriously do is stay in shape and remain vigilant….Besides my fists and my body and the occasional points where it’s snowing so I wear my father’s old combat boots, which happen to be steel toed—other than that, there’s not really any other protection I have.

Zach, a white man, articulated a similar sentiment, noting that he would fight to defend himself if anyone ever bothered him on or near campus: “I took Taekwondo. I stopped in high school just ‘cause I started marching band and it got really busy…So although I forgot some of it, I still remember some of it, so I’m able to protect myself with my hands.” Likewise, Iris, a Latina student, stated that she did not engage in any specific safety strategies in the suburban context while acknowledging, “I have been taught in karate though, so if I ever needed to—,” she would fight back.

Some men like Wyatt made more gendered remarks about their ability to defend themselves:

I feel safe [on campus]. I worry about my friends who are like girls walking by themselves, but I mean, I feel pretty safe. I feel like I can protect myself….I doubt I would ever be assaulted, but if I was, I actually might deal with that myself like confront them, depending on how scary they are. If they’re gigantic, I’ll probably get the cops.

Because he was a man, Wyatt felt that he faced a lower risk of victimization than his female peers. Similarly, when asked why he was not concerned about his safety on campus, Deonte, an African American man, drew on his physical strength: “If anything
happens, I’ll be able to take care of myself.” Interestingly, Zoe, a white woman, described a similar scenario as Wyatt and Deonte, asserting that “If someone tried to grab me, I’d hit him, like you know, elbow them or something.” Zoe’s use of pronouns again highlights who Suburban U students, and particularly women, perceived as being most likely to harm them on campus – men. Despite this, she made it clear that she would not be afraid to fight back if a man tried to harm her.

More than one-quarter of Suburban U women reported carrying pepper spray for self-defense both on and around campus. For example, Nida, an Arab woman, revealed, “Totally have one. My mom bought me one like, ‘Here—happy college!’ …If I’m scared, I’m like, ‘Okay, my pepper spray is in my pocket. I can just put my thumb on the latch and unlock it and spray it in someone’s face.’ But it’s never like a prominent thought.” Nida was not the only student who mentioned carrying pepper spray and feeling like she would be able to use it if she encountered trouble – all while admitting that such an instance was not likely to occur in the suburban context. Adina, an Ethiopian woman, stated, “I used to have pepper spray. Not anymore [laughs]! I never found that I used it or needed it…[laughs]…I just knew that if anything happened, I had something to protect myself.” Even though Adina noted that she previously carried pepper spray as a precautionary measure, she acknowledged that having it was not useful or necessary in the suburban context. Alternatively, a few women suggested that pepper spray could ultimately be used against them by potential male attackers. For example, Lin, a woman from China, recalled, “I [asked] my friends if I should bring a spray with me and they said, ‘If you brought a spray with [you], it will just be helpful for the male who want[s] to hurt you.’”
Tuyen, a woman from Vietnam, presented yet another perspective by arguing against the need to carry pepper spray or even a Taser for self-defense purposes on campus. She explained, “what I’m trying to do is when [victimization] happens, [I] know how to deal with it better” by not relying on a particular mechanism of self-defense. Drawing on the training she received in her country of origin, Tuyen continued, “Coming from a place where we were taught to use a gun in high school – it’s like [a] national defense class, so gun, knife, be it so. I can just use whatever I have—[my] hands, my purse, or anything to defend myself.” Thus, unlike more than one-quarter of her female counterparts, Tuyen did not find it necessary to carry a defensive object at Suburban U and was instead prepared to defend herself with her hands or anything she happened to be carrying in the event of an attack.

7.2.4. Equal Access to Higher Education?: Gender and the Use of Avoidance Behaviors

Despite women’s and men’s overwhelming agreement that the suburban context was generally safe, students still perceived that women needed men’s protection to shield them from potential sexual assault at the hands of male outsiders, as discussed in Chapter 6. As a result of their perceptions of how risk is shaped by gender in the suburban setting, it is critical to understand whether women miss out on educational opportunities that their male peers feel free to engage in. When I explicitly asked Suburban U students if they had ever not done anything on campus due to concerns about their personal safety, the majority of the women in the sample reported engaging in various avoidance behaviors, while none of the men did. One man, Omar, reflected on why this may be the case as he shared his perception of how gender protects him from potential harm: “I think
it might be because honestly, I’m a male. So maybe that’s one reason why I don’t feel like something like that would happen. But honestly, I don’t feel [there are] any kind of unsafe situations that would inhibit me from doing things that I would like to do on campus.”

Interestingly, Ayesha, a Middle Eastern woman, shared Omar’s perception that such avoidance behaviors might be gendered: “There was a night class I wanted to take. Like it was just a class I wanted to take, but it was til late, like 8:30 to 10:30 and my parents were like, ‘Don’t stay too late.’ I’m too scared to stay late too.” Ayesha also said that at night she preferred to “be with friends most of the time,” rather than alone because “that’s when it gets scary.” Similarly, Chloe, a multi-racial woman, explained, “When I’m out, it’s usually during the day. I do anything that I need to get done during the day and I don’t do it at night. I just do it in the day…If I ever go anywhere, I go close by…and usually what I do is I bring a friend. I usually go places with a friend if I’m gonna go out at night.” This point was also echoed by Faith, a white woman, who drew a more explicit connection between her use of avoidance behaviors and her gender: “I’m a short, tiny girl. I don’t like being out late at night or out where I’m by myself, far away from people, so I like to stay inside where I’m around a lot of people.” Like the majority of the women in the suburban sample, these students described limiting their behaviors on campus at night, and in some cases even avoiding taking a night class, as a result of their concerns about being by themselves.

Elena, a Hispanic woman, noted that she worried about her friends at night because, like other women in the sample, they have previously expressed being concerned about their safety:
They feel scared to walk at night, especially the females. I’m scared for them, I don’t know, just because they’re scared. They might think something might happen to them. They just, I guess, get scared because their car’s far or they have to walk by themselves or they get on their phone and just talk to somebody.

When I asked Elena what her friends were scared of, she continued, “One of them mentioned just somebody creeping up on them, just that’s not a student…. [It’s] just a concern because [there are] so many trees, or like some spots are darker than others at night…but nothing has ever happened. They’re just scared.” Thus, Elena noted that her friends were fearful and as a result, often limited their behaviors at night by engaging in precautionary strategies to protect themselves against possible outsiders on campus, a topic that was also discussed in Chapter 6.

While none of the men in the suburban sample spoke of instances in which they limited their behaviors or avoided certain situations, such remarks were very common among the women in the sample, with the majority sharing the avoidance strategies they used to keep themselves safe from potential harm – particularly after dark. As noted in previous research, these avoidance and precautionary behaviors are “not drastic changes in lifestyle but fairly subtle modifications in daily routines” (Ferraro, 1995, p. 103; also see Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978), which women (broadly speaking) are typically more likely to engage in (see Cobbina et al., 2008; May et al., 2010). Despite students perceiving the suburban campus and the community around it as safe, such conditions as nighttime and being alone clearly triggered the use of these behavioral responses, a point which is consistent with previous work investigating the use of constrained behaviors as a response to fear within community settings more generally (e.g., DuBow et al., 1979; Garofalo, 1981; Miethe, 1995; Skogan, 1981). Even though these behavioral responses may be “fairly subtle,” as Ferraro (1995) suggested, it is likely
that they still impact the extent to which women students – like those in my sample – can excel at institutions of higher education if they feel that they are unable to fully engage in the university communities of which they are a part.

7.3. Precautionary Behaviors at Urban U

Interestingly, at Urban U, women and men reported using the same kinds of precautionary behaviors to stay safe on both the urban campus itself and in the community surrounding campus. Furthermore, women and men were equally detailed in their descriptions of these strategies, along with their illustrations of the occasions when they have used them. Such a finding contradicts previous research, which has found that women are more likely to adopt precautionary behaviors – even in urban settings – because of their higher levels of fear and perceived risk of sexual assault and rape (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Wilcox et al. 2007; Woolnough, 2009).

As described previously in Chapters 5 and 6 about the role of context in shaping Urban U students’ perceptions of risk both on and around campus, participants mentioned preferring to stay on the actual campus and avoid unfamiliar areas in the city; walk familiar routes on campus and have a purpose; and read the campus crime alerts to be informed about where crime tends to occur. The sections that follow discuss other precautionary strategies that Urban U students also reported using. Specifically, participants described ensuring their safety on campus by being aware of their surroundings at all times of the day, but especially after dark; concealing their valuables; using defensive strategies (e.g., carrying a knife or pepper spray, holding their keys in a
defensive manner, being prepared to fight); walking with others; and avoiding city residents.

### 7.3.1. Being Aware and Concealing Valuables

Given the contextual setting of the Urban U campus and the fact that students received frequent crime alerts about their peers being robbed, all participants articulated the importance of being aware of their surroundings and keeping their valuables (e.g., phones, laptops, iPods, jewelry, wallets, and even purses) concealed while walking outside of school-related buildings. None of those in the urban sample seemed uncomfortable with describing the precautionary strategies they used, and men were just as detailed in their descriptions as women. For instance, Victor frequently compared the urban city to war zones he experienced while in the military and was among those who articulated the most vigilance while traveling in the community around campus. He explained:

> Learning from the military, I don’t do routine...People that are looking at you or watching you, they can time you, they can track you, know what I mean? So some days I take [one street], other times I take [another street], other times I weave through the streets. But as far as like big crowds coming my way, I walk right through them. I’m not bulletproof though...I try not to be predictable.

Further, he mentioned that he carried a lighter in his fist to make his punch stronger, he tried not to go out too late, and he was always aware of his “360,” or his complete surroundings, particularly in crowds. Victor’s descriptions of his precautionary strategies encapsulate the overall sentiment of students in the urban sample as they spoke about constantly being mindful of their surroundings and altering their behaviors (and oftentimes the way they dressed) in order to minimize potential risks they believed they faced. Furthermore, Victor’s characterizations of his emotional state regarding his
perceptions of risk on campus included being “worried” at particular times and in particular places, as well as having a “sense of urgency” and a “sense of guard.”

Like Victor’s description of monitoring his 360, Gavin, a white man, explained, “I just tend to be aware of my surroundings [and] try to see, you know, if someone could be hiding behind a car or something. I try to be vigilant. I try to always have like any escape points in my head. Yeah, I think very tactically.” Students’ perceptions of an ever-present threat of being robbed in the urban city meant participants like Victor and Gavin routinely made sure that they were keeping tabs on who was around them and whether they could potentially cause them harm. This is a sentiment that was also echoed by Eva, a Latina student, who noted, “I just try to like walk where there’s [the] most people and just don’t take out my phone and just be like aware I guess.”

Indeed, nearly all Urban U participants highlighted the need to conceal their belongings and valuables (e.g., phones, wallets, watches) in an attempt to minimize their perceived risk of victimization. For some, this meant simply hiding their belongings in their bag or on their person. Brianna stated, “I try not to put myself out there. Like some people, they just walk around with headphones in, with their phones out, so I try not to do that.” Similarly, Paz explained, “I’ll put like my phone and my wallet and just turn [the phone] on silent and just put it in [the waistband of my shorts] instead of in my pockets. So that way if somebody tries to rob me, it looks like I don’t have anything on me.” A couple of students also emphasized the importance of not texting or wearing headphones while walking because they believed that both behaviors would signal to others that they had valuables with them and that they were distracted. Micah, for instance, explained that while he was walking, “I don’t put my headphones in my ear. That leads to a
distraction in me and you [might] assume that I have my cell phone.” Instead, Micah’s strategy was to keep his headphones and phone hidden in his bag.

Owen, a white man, learned this the hard way when he was robbed one night on the train near campus. His victimization experience was discussed in Chapter 6. He cautioned, “Ultimately, people got to be careful, not like fearful but, you know, careful. You know, not have your phone flashing around and kind of just like being aware of your surroundings. That’s the mistake I made. I didn’t think I was going to get robbed on the train.” When Owen was robbed, he was standing near the doorway on a stopped train with his phone in his hand as he flipped through the songs he was listening to. A group of young African American men grabbed his phone out of his hand and ran off the train. In retrospect, Owen acknowledged that he should have been more aware and careful by keeping his phone concealed in this public space.

Beyond simply concealing their valuables, other students described taking a different approach by not even carrying certain items at all, ensuring that thieves would literally have nothing to take from them should they happen to be a crime target. In this regard, Tamara, an African American woman, noted:

I have a habit of walking around with my cell phone. Now with all the incidents that have been going around—even though I don’t own an iPhone—but you never know what people’s intentions are, so I put it in the bag. I don’t even carry a purse…I personally feel like I could be a target, so I try not to bring too much attention to myself.

Gayatri, a South Asian woman, also specifically reported that she did not carry a bag or purse in the urban setting, adding, “I try to not dress like a student, but I try to just look normal and like pretty modest, I guess. And then I’ll try not to like carry too many things, you know?” Likewise, Amina noted being cognizant of the items she had with her in the urban context: “I avoid carrying too much money on me or like if I don’t need [it],
I don’t carry my credit card or my debit card…If someone is not going to call me, I don’t carry my phone sometimes ‘cause it’s—I’m] just scared of losing my phone.” Contrary to women’s strategy at Suburban U of using their phones as a security measure to keep themselves safe as they walked alone at night, Urban U students stressed their inability to utilize this strategy as a result of the setting they found themselves within and the risks they believed they faced.

This precautionary strategy of leaving one’s valuables behind for safe-keeping was also common among the men in the urban sample. For example, Kamal commented, “I don’t show anything flashy, meaning I don’t wear a watch, I don’t hold my laptop with me. I give no reason for people to basically rob me because it doesn’t look like I have a lot on me.” Because of the precautions that he took, Kamal explained that he was “not too worried about being robbed.” Similarly, Eric, a white man, who had previously been mugged on campus, explained, “I don’t tend to bring my stuff with me when I go off campus, and I just put my hands in my pockets and what not. That’s about it.” Kamal and Eric’s remarks, combined with the precautionary strategies they described, illustrate the presumed ordinariness of crime and victimization in the urban setting (see Carvalho & Lewis, 2003). Such statements stand in contrast to those made by students at Suburban U, where participants uniformly perceived the setting as safe and understood that there were minimal threats to their safety, yet still incorporated precautionary measures into their daily routines.

In addition to concealing and not carrying valuables with them when traveling on and around campus, some students also applied this safety strategy to their cars in the urban setting. For instance, Shaun, an African American man, reported, “I don’t leave my
cell phone in the car at all. Even food, anything that could give an indication that I have money somewhere ‘cause if I have food there, then I had to have money to buy [it], or any electronic device, or anything that’s maybe considered valuable…I don’t have anything visible.” Because nearly all the students in the urban sample adopted this precautionary strategy of appearing that they had nothing of value, they were confident that even if they did happen to get robbed or if their car window was smashed, the thieves would not get away with any of their personal belongings.

7.3.2. Using Defensive Strategies

In addition to sharing their strategies for avoiding risk on and around campus, the majority of students – including 13 women and nine men – noted that they engaged in various types of defensive behaviors to ensure their safety on campus in the event that they were confronted. While women and men at Urban U appeared to utilize this strategy at a similar rate, they differed in their adaptation of these behaviors. Specifically, nearly half of the women in the urban sample talked about carrying pepper spray or holding their keys in a defensive manner as they walked to their destinations, while one-quarter of the men reported that they carried knives or tactical pens (which, according to Gavin, is a “hard, aluminum-style pen” meant for “pressure points”). In this regard, Amina expressed her gendered perception that “We girls don’t really carry knives; we really should. My cousin told me to carry pepper spray, but I really hope I don’t fall into a situation where I have to use it.” Other women who didn’t carry pepper spray simply resorted to holding their keys between their fingers to protect themselves from harm. For example, Heather asserted, “I always keep my keys like in between my fingers because I’ve seen a lot of people do that on like movies and stuff…I guess it kind of gives you
that [feeling] like ‘I have something sharp in my hand.’” As in the suburban setting, women attending Urban U were slightly more likely than men to mention carrying an item for self-defense. Further, women and men also differed in the types of items that chose to carry to protect themselves in the urban environment.

Interestingly, despite Urban U students’ heightened perceptions of risk, the majority of participants still saw no need to carry a form of protection. This was for a variety of reasons, such as concern that an assailant could use it against them, fear that they might hurt someone more than they intended to or not be able to use the weapon effectively, or just a preference to defend themselves with their hands. Nikki, for instance, joked that her father would not allow her to carry a weapon out of fear that she would kill someone and ruin her career prospects. Instead, Nikki shared that she would physically defend herself if needed: “I’m prepared for war.” Likewise, Isabel explained, “I think I can handle it. Like I will scratch the crap out of you. But no, I don’t carry anything. I think when you’re nervous, you’re not gonna be able to grab it….I’d just attack ‘em. Scratch ‘em.”

Men also discussed this strategy. When he was mugged on the train near campus, Owen shared that he chased his assailants and got into a physical fight with them in an attempt to retrieve his stolen items, though he ultimately was not successful. Similarly, Wayne shared that if he was ever physically assaulted on or near campus, “I’m not going to report getting beaten up; I’m going to find the person who beat me up,” implying that he would use physical violence to seek revenge on those who hurt him, just as Owen tried to do.
7.3.3. Practicing Safety in Numbers

Like their counterparts in the suburban sample, the vast majority of Urban U students – including 12 women and 14 men – also reported practicing the precautionary strategy of walking in pairs or groups and being around their fellow students. As Quinn, a white man, advised, “Stay with some friends if you have to go off campus. It’s like a power in numbers sort of thing…it’s like one on one, it’s like yeah, but if it’s one on two or one on three and you got the advantage, then you feel a lot safer with that kind of pack mentality.” In this vein, Brad, a white man, stated, “When everybody is around, I’m more comfortable ‘cause there is people around, so you just feel more comfortable because people are there. Everybody is kinda watching each other. Nobody is gonna attack you if you’re with other people.” More than three-quarters of students at Urban U echoed Quinn and Brad’s sentiments, arguing that this precautionary strategy would diminish their likelihood of being victimized, as well as make them feel more protected in the urban context.

Interestingly, and like those at Suburban U, Xavier, a Hispanic man, extended the strategy of safety in numbers to include others who happened to be around him and traveling in the same general direction, even if he did not know them. He explained that he liked to “stay on the road or the routes that are most traveled. If I see a group of people going one way and I need to go that way, I’m not gonna take the side streets around it or try to go my own way. I’ll just travel with them. That’s one way of keeping yourself safe.” Indeed, many students at Urban U reported using this strategy of changing the route they took to their destinations in order to avoid walking alone or finding themselves isolated in the urban environment. As Xavier aptly concluded, “I’m pretty
sure it is proven that, you know, you’re more safer in a group setting. But alone, yeah, you have to take more precautions.” This perceived need to take even more precautions, due to their understanding that being alone would potentially increase their risk of victimization, is precisely what Urban U students were trying to avoid.

Despite the overall lack of gender differences in Urban U students’ descriptions of their precautionary strategies, there is one important gendered caveat related to students’ strategy of walking with others on and near the urban campus. When about one-quarter of the women spoke about walking with others to ensure their safety, they stated that this strategy made them feel safer only if they were walking with men. For example, Zofia said, “Obviously I feel safe when I am with known male friends because in case something happens, they can protect me.” Similarly, Rosaria explained:

 Usually if I’m walking with a guy, like a taller guy, then usually I tend to feel a little safer…For some reason I feel like if someone sees me walking with a guy they wouldn’t try anything compared to if I was walking with my girlfriends…When I’m walking with a guy that’s taller than me, I don’t even worry about it.

Students like Zofia and Rosaria appeared to feel safer walking with men because they believed that a man could protect them from an assailant more effectively than a woman, and that men were less likely to be victimized in the first place, as discussed previously.

Isabel took this argument a step further by asserting that walking with other women may actually be more dangerous than walking alone. She described her version of this precautionary strategy when reporting, “I walk alone. I think it’s safer than if it was two girls. Then it’s flashing out, like it’s two unprotected girls…you know, because we’re chatting, and we can talk about millions of things in one subject so you get more distracted.” Overall, these women explicitly stated their preference of walking with men, due to the widespread belief that men were less likely to be harmed and were more
equipped to protect both themselves and their female companions. Additionally, this appeared to largely be based on the view that women (and smaller men) were more likely to be victimized than (larger) men; a perception that men also highlighted and that was discussed in Chapter 6. Such a finding resembles the vulnerability perspective’s assumptions about men’s physical strength and women’s physical weakness (see Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Day, 2001; Goodey, 1997; Lane et al., 2014).

7.3.4. (Not) Making Eye Contact and Crossing the Street to Avoid City Residents

In addition to the previously mentioned precautionary strategies, more than one-third of the urban sample – including six women and six men – detailed the steps they took to prevent any unwanted encounters with the African American city residents they perceived as potentially dangerous by crossing to the opposite side of the street and either making or not making eye contact. Of these students, one-quarter reported instances in which they were walking in the urban city and crossed the street to avoid specific people and lessen their perceived risks. For instance, Lucas, a Hispanic man, revealed:

I’m always extremely cautious of my surroundings, what’s around me, who’s around me. If anything is out of place, if anything seems kind of weird, I’ll definitely avoid it or try and, you know, get myself out of that situation. Even to the point where sometimes if I see people walking towards me on the street, I’ll actually cross the street until they pass, so I can go around, just so I can see what they’re doing from the other side.

In describing her strategies on city streets, Isabel also highlighted the need to be aware of those around her, as well as have an escape route should danger arise:

I pray. I give it to God. I tell him, you know, ‘Guide me on this street or to my destination,’ and that’s it. Like I say, I pay attention and to details. And sometimes people walk around and they don’t realize, like you are walking by yourself, you have to make your senses work at that time. And so that’s what I do—always try to watch. I’m walking and who’s walking with me, you know?
How can I quickly…cross the street somewhere that I can at least have five minutes to my advantage? …I don’t look down, but I always look around.

Christian, a Hispanic man, described a similar tactic, while adding details about exactly who he tried to avoid:

I make sure when I’m at my house I stretch. I’m a big guy, so my muscles are in good shape, so I don’t tire out after a block. But I make sure I walk faster and if I do see like—I know in my head, my thought process if I see a minority, most likely—yeah, I’m a minority myself, but at least I try to get educated. I try and cross the street. Don’t even look at them. And if they try and talk to you, just be like, “kay” and move on. That’s it.

Overall, Urban U students reported using this strategy of crossing the street to avoid potential encounters with suspicious city residents and maintain a safe distance from those they believed posed a threat. In doing so, a few others (like Christian) also noted that they avoided eye contact with those they passed on city streets in an effort to signal disinterest and prevent the possibility of being approached. As Lauren, an African American woman, argued: “I just try not to make too much eye contact with people….Like I look to see who’s around me, so like if something happens I can describe the person. But other than that, I just keep walking and try not to spend too much time alone outside or with people I don’t know.”

While some students felt that avoiding eye contact with city residents would minimize their risk of victimization, a few others argued that it was critical to make eye contact as a way of signaling to those they believed posed a potential threat that they were both vigilant and aware of their surroundings. Nathan, an African American man, emphasized the importance of keeping his head up on the streets of the urban city:

Make sure you know everything of your surroundings. If you’re like standing in one area, back to the wall ‘cause you don’t got eyes in the back of your head! You don’t know what’s goin’ on back there…Also make sure that you don’t look afraid. Just make sure you’re confident.
More explicitly, Jayden, an African American man, explained, “I just keep my eye on everyone….Someone got an attitude, I’ll turn around and give them the little evil face, like don’t try me.” Likewise, Jimena, a Hispanic woman who worked in a student leadership role with the campus police, reported that she always made eye contact with strangers. She further noted that this was a key defense mechanism, particularly when she was walking alone, and functioned as a “signal that [she’s] watching.” Each of these participants believed that students’ chances of being victimized would be considerably diminished as a result of such eye contact, as it showed would-be offenders that they were alert and ready to react if someone tried to harm them.

7.4. Chapter Summary

Just as there were no differences by gender in students’ perceptions of risk on the suburban and urban campuses, there was also no variation in the precautionary and avoidance behaviors that they discussed using to stay safe from harm. However, while both women and men at Suburban U described taking extra precautions on campus by being alert and aware of their surroundings, walking with others instead of being alone, and using various defensive strategies, women appeared to use these strategies more frequently than men. Additionally, some women and men on the suburban campus agreed that women had to restrict their behaviors more in order to avoid becoming a victim of crime – and especially sexual assault – in that context. These behavioral limitations that participants discussed raise questions as to whether women and men have equal access to all the opportunities offered at institutions of higher education, and in this case, at Suburban U. This question will be revisited in Chapter 8.
On the urban campus, there was also uniformity in the precautionary behaviors that women and men reported using; however, quite different than on the suburban campus, women and men were equally likely to engage in the strategies that students discussed. Specifically, Urban U students mentioned being alert and concealing their valuables, using various defensive strategies, walking with others, and trying to avoid African American city residents. Importantly, while the majority of women at Suburban U noted engaging in avoidance behaviors on campus, no Urban U students spoke about using these strategies on their campus. Though some women shared that they felt safer walking with men than they did with other women, this was largely based on the perception that women (and smaller men) were more likely to be victimized than (larger) men; a perception that men also highlighted and that was discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, some Urban U students emphasized the need to avoid African American city residents at all costs, whether by averting their eyes or crossing to the other side of the street to maintain a safe distance. Such behaviors are likely attributable to Urban U students’ perceptions that these city residents were the people who were most likely to cause them harm in the urban setting, due to the crime alerts they had received from campus law enforcement.
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the key findings that emerged in this study with regard to: how the community context and visibility of campus law enforcement functioned to shape students’ perceptions of risk at Suburban and Urban U; the role of gender in students’ fear of victimization on campus; the people they believed posed the greatest threat to their safety; and the ways in which the adoption of various behavioral strategies helped to alleviate students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime. Additionally, I will discuss the methodological and theoretical contributions that the study’s findings make to the literature, as well as propose a few possible directions for future research on this subject. Finally, I will conclude with the implications of the study’s findings for policies aimed at enhancing students’ perceptions of safety at institutions of higher education.

8.2. Review of Key Findings

In this study, I examined the relationships between gender and students’ fear of crime and victimization on campus while also accounting for the ways in which the university setting shapes students’ perceptions of safety and risk. In addition to investigating students’ gendered perceptions of risk, I sought to assess the precautionary strategies that women and men in the two contexts adopt to ensure their safety on campus, as well as how the presence and visibility of the campus police (and other forms of security) influence their perceptions and subsequent behaviors. To facilitate this comparison and interrogate the possible role of campus context, semi-structured
interviews were conducted with students attending two different institutions of higher education on the east coast of the United States. In total, 70 students were interviewed about their perceptions and experiences on campus – 34 of whom were attending a university in a relatively poor and high-crime urban setting, and 36 of whom were attending a university in a comparatively low-crime and more affluent suburban setting.

In order to understand the gendered dimensions of students’ fear of crime and victimization in these two campus contexts, this study had three guiding research questions:

1) How does the community context, as well as the presence of the campus police and other security measures, shape women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization on campus?

2) In what ways, if any, does gender influence students’ ideas about who the most likely victims and perpetrators of crime are in the two different campus contexts?

3) How does the adoption of various precautionary strategies impact women’s and men’s perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts?

My discussion of the study’s findings will be organized around answering these three research questions.

First, as illustrated by previous work examining the disorder-fear nexus (e.g., Kelling & Coles, 1996; Robinson et al., 2003; Skogan, 1990; Taylor, 2001), the present study found that context and place do indeed play an important role in shaping students’ assessments of risk, regardless of gender. Specifically, there was consensus among the majority of women and men attending Suburban U that the community around campus was generally safe and free of threats. The only concerns these students voiced were
about the old shopping center across the street (which underwent a complete renovation the year following data collection) and aggressive drivers in the downtown area. Though neither feature of the suburban environment provoked fear per se, both did function to elevate students’ limited perceptions of risk in that context.

While there was also consistency in Urban U students’ evaluations of risk in the urban city, both women and men tended to perceive the community around their campus as being unsafe. This assessment was largely due to the city’s negative reputation for crime, combined with the presence of visible physical and social disorder in the areas around campus. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted in neighborhood settings, which has found that signs of incivility including disruptive neighbors, vacant properties, and empty lots, are highly influential in residents’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime (e.g., Ferraro, 1995; Hinkle, 2015; Kelling & Coles, 1996; Robinson et al., 2003; Skogan, 1990; St. Jean, 2007; Taylor, 2001). Importantly, each of these characteristics tend to be more prominent in urban areas, such as the one where Urban U was located. Further, these features of the urban environment contributed to students’ persistently elevated perceptions of risk around campus, which transformed into fear under certain conditions, such as encountering residents of the city who were poor and African American or being alone.

Despite the vastly different contexts in which these two campuses were located, the overwhelming majority of students at both schools reported that they felt safe on their school’s physical campus. However, nearly three-quarters of the male students (or 11 out of 15) in the suburban sample used a variety of qualifying terms (e.g., fairly, pretty, generally, relatively) when describing their perceptions of safety, while women were less
likely to incorporate these words into their remarks, with only about 38% (or 8 out of 21) doing so. Such gender differences were not present among those in the urban sample, where the majority of students reported feeling safe on campus – mainly due to the visibility of campus law enforcement and other Urban U students – despite their apprehensions in the community around it.

Notably, students in both settings tended to attribute their perceptions of safety on campus to the presence of the campus police and other security measures. At Suburban U, students appreciated that the police were always visible, which they felt meant that officers would respond quickly if they – or anyone else – ever needed help. Despite this, the majority of the sample did articulate that they would feel safer on campus if emergency call boxes were installed. At Urban U, students also noted that the police were always visible, which they felt was facilitated by the presence of four overlapping police forces in the area including the Urban U police, the city police, and police from two neighboring schools. Nonetheless, some still felt that the police could not protect them from the threats that existed in the urban city.

The second research question aimed to understand when and how gender influenced students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts. At Suburban U, all but one participant directly asserted that the greatest threat on campus was the sexual assault and rape of women students, despite all participants perceiving the campus and the community around it as safe. Further, students believed that this crime was most likely to be committed by non-student outsiders from the community. This finding is consistent with the predictions of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis (see Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Warr, 1984, 1985), which will be discussed
in greater detail below. Some participants also voiced their perception that racial and ethnic minorities and LGBT students faced the greatest risk of victimization in the suburban context, especially for hate crimes and bullying.

Quite interestingly, the crime that was mentioned by all but one student on the suburban campus – sexual assault or rape – was only mentioned by about 18% (or 6 out of 34) of Urban U participants, and the subject tended to arise when participants were probed for additional detail during the course of their interviews. Instead, those at Urban U perceived that they were most likely to be robbed in the urban city and the majority knew someone who had been a victim of the crime, had they not been robbed themselves. There was also agreement among Urban U students that those who were white, smaller in physical size and stature, and naïve about the risks in the urban city were more likely to be robbed.

Notably, at both Suburban and Urban U, students’ perceptions of risk, as well as their fear about these risks, were consistent across gender. Their concerns tended to be informed by the crime alerts that were disseminated at each institution, along with the stories that students circulated amongst themselves about crime on campus. This is quite reminiscent of Skogan’s (1987) description about how experiences with crime work their way through “rumor networks” (p. 138), sending “shock waves” that spread the impact of victimization through social networks (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993, p. 97). This has led some scholars to suggest that vicarious victimization produces even higher levels of fear.

26 Urban U participants’ experiences with personal and vicarious victimization may be the result of intentional oversampling on these dimensions during the recruitment phase of this study. Specifically, 10 students (or 29.4%) reported being personally victimized in the urban setting, while 14 (or 41.2%) reported knowing someone who had been the victim of a crime. Even among the 14 students (or 41.2%) who had neither been personally nor vicariously victimized on or near campus, the pervasive threat of robbery still loomed.
than the experience of personal victimization, such that “one event may affect many individuals” (Baumer, 1978, p. 258; also see Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Drakulich, 2015; DuBow et al., 1979; Ferraro, 1996; Miethe, 1995). Indeed, there was evidence of this phenomenon in the present study, as the overwhelming majority of Urban U participants often referred to instances of victimization that they had heard about either from their friends or from the campus crime alerts (or both), which impacted their perceptions of risk and fear of crime on and near campus.

Despite differences in the specific types of crime that participants felt students faced in these two contexts, students at both institutions were most concerned about being harmed by non-student community residents. While participants felt safe in the presence of their student peers and assumed they would assist them in times of need, they perceived non-students as outsiders who were not welcome and did not belong on campus. As a result, and in an attempt to avoid any unwanted encounters with outsiders, students in both settings spoke about the variety of precautionary strategies they had adopted to minimize their perceived likelihood of victimization.

This was the focus of the third research question, which sought to understand how students’ use of precautionary strategies impacted their perceptions of risk and fear of victimization in the two campus contexts. In general, students at both institutions reported that their adoption of a variety of behavioral strategies helped to alleviate and minimize their concerns about their own victimization risk. Further, there were few gender differences in the *types* of precautionary and avoidance strategies that students used on the suburban and urban campuses. Specifically, women and men at both institutions described taking extra precautions on and around campus by being alert and
aware of their surroundings, walking with others rather than traveling alone, and engaging in various defensive behaviors (e.g., carrying a knife or pepper spray, holding their keys defensively, being prepared to fight).

While both women and men at Suburban U reported using these precautionary measures, women did so more frequently than men. Alternatively, at Urban U, women and men were equally likely to utilize these measures to minimize any risks they perceived in that context. The gender differences found in students’ use of precautionary strategies on the suburban campus and the gender similarities found in their behaviors on the urban campus is both consistent with and contradictory to previous research, respectively. Such work has concluded that women are more likely to adopt precautionary behaviors as a result of having higher levels of fear and perceived risk than men, especially of sexual victimization (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Wilcox et al. 2007; Woolnough, 2009). This was the case only among women at Suburban U.

Suburban U students’ use of protective strategies is even more intriguing, given their uniformly low perceptions of risk both on and around campus. It may be that women’s use of precautionary behaviors at Suburban U is tied to their overarching concern about sexual assault at the hands of strangers (see Ferraro, 1995), which all students in the suburban sample believed was the most prominent threat. However, the same argument cannot be made to account for why some men at Suburban U engaged in similar behaviors as women. This discrepancy warrants further investigation in future research. Additionally, the majority of women and men at Suburban U believed that women have to restrict their behaviors more often to prevent any possible victimization – and particularly sexual assault – despite their overwhelming perception that the setting
was safe. Interestingly, such statements were not made by Urban U participants. Such behavioral limitations will be discussed below with regard to the implications that they have for policy, and specifically ensuring that women have the same access as men to opportunities offered at institutions of higher education.

Unique to the urban context and in addition to the strategies noted above, both women and men emphasized the importance of concealing their valuables to lessen their chances of being mugged and avoiding African American city residents. Some Urban U students disclosed that they avoided city residents by not making eye contact or crossing to the opposite side of the street to keep a safe distance. It is likely that students engaged in these behaviors because they perceived that city residents were the people who were most likely to harm them in the urban setting as a result of their personal and vicarious victimization experiences, as well as the campus crime alerts they had received.

Overall, this study found that context and location do indeed matter when attempting to understand students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime on college and university campuses, just as they do when attempting to understand residents’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime within neighborhood settings (Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; Lane et al., 2014; Skogan, 1990). Students’ concerns and fears were not uniform across the suburban and urban settings but were instead unique to the threats they believed they faced in those particular contexts. Further, it appears that campus context shapes the influence of gender on perceptions of risk and fear of crime. That is, at Urban U, women and men seemed to be equally concerned about becoming victims of robbery in that setting, and they adapted their behaviors in an attempt to avoid this fate. As noted previously, this was largely a result of students’ personal and vicarious victimization
experiences, the campus crime alerts they received from the campus police, and the fact that women and men at Urban U appeared to be at equal risk of robbery victimization. Alternatively, at Suburban U where students acknowledged that crime threats were not as prominent, women were most afraid of being sexually assaulted on campus and their male peers agreed that this should be a concern for women, although they did not believe they faced any major crime risks themselves. Such findings point to the critical need for scholars to more intentionally investigate the role of campus context – and context more generally – in their research on fear of crime; an idea that will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

8.3. Methodological and Theoretical Contributions to the Literature

Our theories and explanations of social phenomena are heavily influenced by the methods we use to study them. The primary impetus behind this study and the qualitative methods it utilized was that the vast majority of studies attempting to account for the ways gender shapes students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime on college and university campuses have used quantitative methods (e.g., Dobbs et al., 2009; Fisher & May, 2009; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Hilinski, 2009; Lane et al., 2009; Rader et al., 2009; Tomsich et al., 2011). As illustrated previously in Table 1, which was presented in Chapter 2, these studies have mainly relied on survey and questionnaire data, with only two limited exceptions. One of these studies drew on open-ended survey responses that did not allow the researchers to probe their participants for further detail (see Hilinski et al., 2011), and the other used participant photography, interviews, and questionnaire data,
but was conducted nearly two decades ago (see Day, 1999). As Lane and colleagues (2014) highlighted:

Qualitative studies have the potential to build and expand theory beyond current ideas…[Participants] may describe their feelings in ways that indicate fear without using the terms researchers choose in their typical survey measures or they may indicate how they manage their greater perceived risk to lessen their fear. (p. 232; also see Lane, 2013)

In other words, qualitative examinations of students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime on campus, including the present study, may more effectively capture the nuances in students’ concerns, as well as when and how those concerns may be shaped by gender and context. It may be that our understandings of students’ fear on campus to date are limited due to scholars’ tendency to use quantitative methods while investigating this subject, rather than including a broader array of methodological tools at our disposal as social scientists (see Wright, Jacques, & Stein, 2015, for an argument about how the quantification of science has limited our knowledge in mainstream American criminology more broadly). Thus, studies using qualitative techniques to both investigate students’ concerns and examine the shadow of sexual assault on campus are much needed, and the present research aimed to revitalize this important methodological discussion.

In addition to relying on quantitative methods and as indicated in Table 1, previous work examining the shadow hypothesis on college and university campuses has rarely been comparative in nature, thus hindering further investigation of the role that campus context might have in shaping students’ gendered perceptions of risk and fear of victimization. The oversight of context is particularly notable, given that research examining fear of crime within neighborhood settings has concluded that environmental context plays an influential role in residents’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime (Lane et al., 2014). Specifically, this work has found that those living in more densely
populated (i.e., urban) areas tend to report higher levels of fear than those living in areas where residents are more geographically dispersed (Baumer, 1978; Clemente & Kleiman, 1977; Haynie, 1998). The main explanations for this finding have been that objective violent and property crime rates tend to be much higher in urban areas, individuals are more likely to have experienced either personal or vicarious victimization, and physical and social disorder are often much more prevalent within these communities (Baumer, 1978; Duhart, 2000; Ferraro, 1995; Haynie, 1998; Lane et al., 2014).

Despite these findings about varying levels of fear in different types of community settings, quantitative examinations of fear on college campuses have often treated students’ fear as being relatively uniform across context (e.g., Day, 1999; Dobbs et al., 2009; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Hilinski, 2009; Lane et al., 2009; Lee & Hilinski-Rosick, 2012; Wilcox et al., 2006; Woolnough, 2009). Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that as a result of the over-reliance on quantitative techniques and limited focus on the influence of contextual factors on college campuses, research has typically provided overwhelming support for the shadow hypothesis in university settings. In other words, studies have largely concluded that women’s fear of sexual assault on campus can account for their higher fear of other crimes relative to their male peers. Thus, my ultimate aim was to expand upon the contributions of previous research by using qualitative in-depth interviews, and to do so with students attending universities in two starkly different contexts. This approach allowed me to examine the ways in which gender shapes students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime, as well as whether any similarities or differences in their concerns can be traced to the contextual settings of the schools. To facilitate this contextual comparison, I conducted the study at one university
located in a disadvantaged, urban area with relatively high rates of crime, and another university set in an affluent, suburban area with comparatively lower rates of crime.

Perhaps the most compelling theoretical contribution of this study stems from my findings related to the shadow hypothesis and the role that context was found to play in students’ gendered fear of sexual assault victimization on campus. As noted above, at Suburban U, all students unanimously felt that the campus and the community around it were safe, and both women and men perceived that the most common threat on campus was the rape of their female peers. Alternatively, at Urban U, students generally reported feeling safe on the actual campus, but unsafe in the community around it. Students’ discomfort in the urban community was largely a result of the presence of social and physical disorder, as well as their increased likelihood of having unwanted encounters with residents of the city who were poor and African American. Further, Urban U students believed, with very few exceptions, that the most common threat against all students – both women and men – was robbery.

The shadow of sexual assault hypothesis, which has previously received support in quantitative studies conducted across a range of campus contexts, did not garner the same level of support in this comparative qualitative examination of students’ gendered fear. While the shadow was present in both women’s and men’s remarks at Suburban U, such that nearly all participants explicitly attributed the limited concerns they had on campus to the possibility of women being sexually assaulted there, this was largely absent from Urban U students’ comments, and most notably from women’s comments in

\[27\] Importantly, the two qualitative studies noted previously (e.g., Day, 1999; Hilinski et al., 2011) also found support for the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. However, neither study specifically examined the role of context nor attempted to compare institutions in different types of settings (e.g., urban, suburban, rural).
particular. This is likely because Urban U students perceived that there were more immediate threats to their safety like robbery, which students received frequent email alerts about from the campus police. Further, the fact that about 30% of Urban U participants reported a personal victimization experience, about 41% reported vicarious victimization, and nearly 24% reported witnessing a crime is likely to have also played a role in their overarching fear of robbery, as this crime comprised the vast majority of the incidents that were reported.

Importantly, I am not arguing against the validity of the shadow hypothesis as a possible explanation of the gender-fear paradox on college and university campuses. Rather, given the findings of this study, it is critical that researchers continue to examine the existence of the shadow across suburban, urban, and rural campus settings and with different methodological techniques to see if the findings presented here hold true on other types of campuses – including those that are urban and those that are suburban. It is entirely possible that students pursuing higher education on other urban campuses located in different parts of the country may have different concerns about threats to their safety and well-being, and the same follows for those on other suburban campuses. It is also important to investigate not just whether, but why, the shadow of sexual assault may be more influential in some settings than others.

8.4. Directions for Future Research

Because this is a study that took place at two universities on the east coast of the United States, it is difficult to know if the same findings would be uncovered at other institutions of the same size and type or if the findings discussed in this dissertation are
truly contextually-bound to the particular locations of Suburban and Urban U. In order to understand the answer to this question and enhance the potential for the generalizability of the findings across various settings (including those that are suburban, urban, and rural), future research should continue to examine the role of campus context in students’ perceptions of risk and fear of victimization on a larger scale.

Due to the contradictions that have been uncovered in comparing my qualitative findings with quantitative examinations of this subject, future studies should utilize mixed methods, as the two approaches are “interdependent players in the advancement of science” (Wright et al., 2015, p. 346) and can be used to clarify different aspects of the same general social phenomenon. There are a variety of ways in which such a study might unfold. One possibility is that students attending colleges and universities in different contexts across the U.S. could first be surveyed about their perceptions of safety and risk on their campuses, the types of precautionary strategies they use to lessen such risks, and their experiences with the campus police and other forms of security. Next, a subset of these student survey participants – chosen either randomly or with purposive sampling techniques – could be asked for follow-up interviews that would be designed to capture their detailed narratives about their perceptions of risk and fear of crime and victimization on campus.

While the first phase of this project would help make its findings more generalizable to institutions in various settings and of various sizes, the second phase would assist scholars in understanding the words that students use to describe their safety concerns (as well as how and when those concerns arise) – something that survey data is not able to do. Most importantly, a study of this nature would have the potential to offer
valuable insights into students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime at institutions of higher education. Such work might be able to shed light on the questions that have yet to be answered in this realm of research, particularly with regard to the roles that context and gender (along with race, sexuality, age, etc.) may play in shaping students’ perceptions of risk and fear of crime on campus.

8.5. Policy Implications

At a time when there are mounting concerns about safety on college and university campuses across the nation, it is critical to understand the threats that exist on campus, the sources of students’ fear, and how their fear influences their daily routines. As noted at the outset of this dissertation, the main goal of my research is to inform policy discussions at institutions of higher education, particularly as administrators and campus police departments attempt to make students feel safer and more free to engage in the educational opportunities that will make their futures successful.

In this vein, the present research has four key policy implications regarding changes that administrators at colleges and universities can implement on their campuses to make students feel safer as they pursue higher education. First, one of the main points that was raised throughout my interviews with students on both the urban and suburban campuses was the relatively easy changes that could be made to the physical environment to make students feel safer. This includes the installation of more lighting in areas that are darker at night and placing emergency call boxes on campuses that do not have them, such as the suburban campus that was examined in this study. Perhaps it would be useful as well for campus planners to have student input – particularly from women – on these
changes to ensure that they are being made in the right places on campus to most effectively alleviate women’s perceptions of risk and fear of crime (see, for example, Lane et al., 2014, for a suggestion about how such discussions could take place among architectural design companies, scholars, and women in urban areas). Further, due to Urban U students’ concerns about African American city residents entering various buildings on campus, another potential way to reduce their concerns would be to provide students, faculty, and staff with swipe card access to all academic buildings in order to restrict entry to those with legitimate business on campus.

Second, and given that Urban U students perceived that the greatest threat against them was posed by residents of the city who were poor and African American, it may be fruitful to hold community-building activities with urban community residents to increase students’ engagement with community members and lessen their fears. Likewise, it is important to establish community-building activities that foster mutual trust between students and campus police officers. In their interviews, some students – while appreciative of the visibility of the campus police – noted that they did not find the officers on their campus to be friendly or approachable, which could negatively impact students’ likelihood of seeking their help in times of need. Community-building activities that aim to introduce students to campus police officers (and vice versa) may help to reduce perceived barriers between the two. One possible activity that was proposed by a student I interviewed during my master’s thesis research28 is that campus police officers could host a barbeque cookout event as a way of getting out into the community early in the fall semester and introducing themselves to students in an

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28 My master’s thesis research examined students’ perceptions of safety on the same suburban campus as the present study (see Jacobsen, 2012).
informal and non-threatening way. Perhaps there are other social activities like this that might strengthen the connection and levels of trust between students and officers.

Additionally, it is critical for institutions of higher education to teach their students about the duties and powers of the campus police. Both campuses in this study informed students about the duties of the police during required orientation sessions to ensure that all students would receive the information, and it seemed to be an effective strategy. Thus, it is recommended that colleges and universities that are not providing this type of information to their students do so in a required setting that would touch the largest number of students, such as an annual new student orientation.

Third, given the concerns that were raised by both Suburban and Urban U students, it is critical to regularly educate students about the risks that exist on their campuses with regard to specific crime types, as well as who is most likely to commit those crimes against them. For instance, on the suburban campus where this study took place, the greatest threat students faced (according to the types of crimes reported to the campus police) was theft by other students\(^{29}\), but they voiced being most concerned about non-students coming on campus and sexually assaulting them, particularly in the case of women. During these discussions about risks, colleges and universities should also inform students about the strategies they can use to minimize their risk of falling victim to these crimes.

Fourth, I return to the question I have posed throughout this dissertation regarding whether women and men truly have equal access to higher education and the wealth of opportunities it aims to provide to students. That is, because women are more fearful

\(^{29}\) Specifically, of the 188 property crimes reported to the campus police, 179 (or over 95 percent) were for larceny-theft (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014c).
than men of being victimized, at least on campuses like Suburban U, they may be more afraid of attending certain activities or courses at night by themselves, and their male peers may not have the same concerns. This point that women may constrain their behaviors to prevent their own victimization has been suggested in previous research (e.g., Cass, 2007; May et al., 2010; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995; Stanko, 1995), with some scholars even arguing that women’s fear, more generally, functions as a form of social control to preserve patriarchal power structures that maintain women’s subordination to men (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975/1993; Day, 1994; Madriz, 1997a, 1997b; Pain, 1991; Riger & Gordon, 1981; Stanko, 1992, 1995). As a result of these patriarchal power structures, Lane and colleagues (2014) note that:

Women learn to fear crime under circumstances in which they are unlikely to get hurt. For example, women are taught to fear stranger attacks in public places, even though these are rare. These lessons may teach girls that the only way to stay safe is to restrict mobility or depend on others, especially men, even though men are typically their victimizers. (p. 100; also see Day, 2001; Hollander, 2001; Keane, 1998)

As highlighted in Chapter 6, some women at Suburban U mentioned being most fearful of being sexually assaulted at night while walking back to their dorms and cars. This was illustrated by both women’s and men’s comments about the “rape trail” or “rape bridge” leading from the main areas on campus to the dorms. Further, Nida, the only Suburban U student who did not explicitly name sexual assault in her remarks, still noted her concern about walking to her car after class at night and shared her precautionary strategy of carrying her pepper spray in her hand. Thus, this is an issue that may be impacted by context, as it was not raised by Urban U participants, who felt that the threats against them existed regardless of time of day. This is largely a result of the fact that the campus crime alerts they received about students being robbed on and near
campus often cited such incidents as occurring both during the daylight hours and after dark. Despite this and consistent with Lane and colleagues’ (2014) remarks above, some women at Urban U still expressed their preference of traveling with men, rather than their female peers, both on and near campus.

Because female students in certain contexts (including the suburban campus that was part of this study) may feel that they have to restrict their behaviors at night in order to ensure their safety, it is important to consider whether women’s engagement in these activities and courses would make them more competitive in their future careers and whether institutions of higher education may unintentionally be perpetuating gender inequality through the fears that their students have. If the answer to either of these questions is yes, it is imperative that these institutions do everything they can to give women more equal opportunities to succeed, and I believe that their implementation of the policy suggestions outlined above will help to facilitate this effort.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL FOR URBAN UNIVERSITY

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ASB III, 3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

October 2, 2013

Jody Miller
School of Criminal Justice
123 Washington St
Center for Law & Justice
Newark Campus

Dear Jody Miller:

( Initial / Amendment / Continuation / Continuation w/ Amendment )

Protocol Title: “Perceived Safety, Risk and Risk Avoidance Strategies among:

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

Approval Date: 7/18/2013 Expiration Date: 7/17/2014
Expedited Category(s): 6, 7 Approved # of Subject(s): 45

This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- This Approval-The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above;
- Reporting-ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- Modifications-Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- Consent Form(s)-Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- Continuing Review-You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project’s approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

Additional Notes: Expedited Approval per 45 CFR 46.110

Additional Conditions: Completion of HSPC Required for: All Participating Personnel;

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.
Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,

Acting For--
Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX B: SCREENING SURVEY FOR URBAN UNIVERSITY

Perceived Safety, Risk and Risk Avoidance Strategies among [Redacted] Students

Professor Jody Miller and graduate students in her research methods class in the School of Criminal Justice are studying undergraduate [Redacted] students’ perceptions of safety and risk on campus. We seek volunteers interested in being considered for participation in the research, which will involve confidential in-depth interviews with 45 students. Research participants will receive a $10 gift card from Starbucks in appreciation for their participation.

If you are selected and agree to participate, you can expect to sit down with a graduate student researcher for an open-ended conversational interview, in which you will be asked about your perceptions of safety and risk on campus, your perceptions and/or experiences with the [Redacted] police, and the strategies you employ to protect yourself from risk of crime. The results of the study will inform public safety efforts on the [Redacted] campus.

To ensure that we interview a diverse range of [Redacted] students, we are asking interested students to fill out this brief questionnaire. We may contact you during the semester to provide you with more information about the study and to see if you are still willing to consider participating.

Thank you for your consideration!

Name ____________________________

Email address ______________________

1. What is your gender? ____________________________

2. What is your race/ethnicity? ______________________

3. What is your age? ____________________________

4. In what country were you born? __________________

5. Which of the following best characterizes the community where you grew up?

   1. Urban community
   2. Suburban community
   3. Rural community

6. How long have you been a student at [Redacted]? ____________________________

7. Do you live on or within walking distance to campus? YES NO

8. Have you ever sought assistance from the [Redacted] Police Department by approaching an officer on campus, by telephone, or by visiting the campus police station? YES NO
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR URBAN UNIVERSITY

RUTGERS
School of Criminal Justice

Dr. Jody Miller  jody.miller@rutgers.edu
Professor
Center for Law and Justice
123 Washington Street, Suite 555
Newark, New Jersey 07102

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Perceived Safety, Risk and Risk Avoidance Strategies among [Redacted] Students

IRB Approval Number: 13-834M
Principal Investigator/Professor: Jody Miller

Why am I being asked to participate?

You are invited to participate in a research study about safety and risks for crime on the [Redacted] campus. The study is being conducted by Professor Jody Miller and graduate students in her research methods class in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. We are interviewing 45 undergraduate students on the [Redacted] campus. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision of whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with [Redacted] or [Redacted] If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to examine undergraduate students’ perceptions of safety and risk at [Redacted], and the strategies you may use to protect yourself from risks for personal or property crimes on campus. An additional purpose is to train university graduate students in how to conduct research. We hope the results of the study will help improve programmatic efforts on campus to assist with addressing public safety on the [Redacted] campus.

What procedures are involved?

If you agree to participate in this research, you can expect to sit down with a graduate student researcher for an open-ended interview. You will be asked questions about your perceptions of where and when you might feel more or less safe at [Redacted], your perceptions and/or experiences with campus police, and what strategies you might use to protect yourself from risks on campus. We will also ask about other services or organizations you are involved with on campus, and your thoughts on their effectiveness, especially with regard to addressing campus crime. You will also be asked basic demographic questions.

If you give us permission, we would like to audiotape the interview. This will help us accurately record what you tell us in the interview. The tape recording will be transcribed by the graduate student who interviews you, and then be returned to the class professor, who will review the transcription for accuracy and then erase the recording. Although we ask that you sign your name on the consent form, we will not include your name on the tape recording or on your interview transcript, so there will be no information that can directly identify you. The interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours, and approximately 45 undergraduate students on campus will be interviewed for this research.

Initial __________

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Version 6.08

APPROVED  JUL 18 2013
Approved by the Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES  JUL 17 2014
Approved by the Rutgers IRB
What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There are certain risks and discomforts that may be associated with this research.

- It is possible that you may find some of the questions asked uncomfortable or upsetting. You are not required to answer any question that you do not wish to answer and you may ask to end the interview at any time.

- I have a duty to report you if you disclose that you plan to harm yourself or others in the future. To minimize this risk, we will not ask questions that generate this kind of information, and we recommend that you avoid making any statements of this kind.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

We will also provide you with a list of contact information for campus services related to dealing with crime. In addition, the information from this project will be important for better understanding public safety on the ___ campus. We plan to submit a report to the university’s ______, so that they have additional evidence concerning undergraduate students’ perceptions of their safety on campus. We also hope that you will find participation in the research to be personally rewarding. We recognize that you are the expert on your experiences and our goal is to take your perspective seriously. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report, you can contact the professor supervising the project and she will provide you with a copy.

What other options are there?

Participation in the research study is voluntary. You will not receive any negative consequences from the ______ if you refuse to participate in the study.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

To protect your confidentiality, all of the interviewers have signed a Confidentiality Agreement. They have agreed not to share the data for this research with anyone outside of class, and to destroy all copies of the interview data once they have completed their research. The consent form will be stored in a locked file box by the professor, and it will not be linked to the interview. Interviewers will not keep a record of the names of research participants, so that what you tell us cannot be attributed to you. The only exception would be if you make statements about your future intent to harm yourself or others, which we are required to report. When the results of the research are submitted to the ______ and published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. We will not use your name in any of our reports, and will not include other specific identifying information.

In addition, during the interview you have the right to review and edit the audiotape. I will erase any sections of the tape in which you accidentally use your own or someone else’s name or otherwise disclose something you wish to remove from the interview. Each audiotape will be stored on a password protected computer until it is transcribed, and will be destroyed once the transcription is completed.

Will I be paid for my participation in this research?

You will receive a $10 gift card for Starbucks to thank you for your participation. If you begin the interview and choose not to complete it, you will receive a $5 Starbucks gift card.
Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

You can choose whether to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in the study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You also may refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If you decide to end your participation in the study, please contact the professor and she will send you a copy of the withdrawal letter.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The professor supervising this study is Jody Miller. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the professor at 973-353-1303 or jody.miller@rutgers.edu.

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 848-932-0150
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Remember: Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the [redacted]. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

I have read the above statement, understand the procedures described, and have had all of my questions answered. I have been given a copy of this form to keep for my records. I give my permission to participate in the research described above.

Signature dates must match.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participant’s Printed Name</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Signature</th>
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Initial ___

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Version 6.08

APPROVED

JUL 18 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUL 17 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB
AUDIOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: “Perceived Safety, Risk, and Risk-Avoidance Strategies among [redacted],” conducted by Professor Jody Miller (Principal Investigator) and graduate students in her research methods course. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape your interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the study.

The audio-recording will be used to ensure that we record what you have to say as accurately as possible. It will not include your name or other identifiers. Upon completion of your interview, the audio-recording will be transcribed into written form. It will be stored on a password protected computer while it is being transcribed. The written transcript will be checked for accuracy against the audio-recording, and then the audio file will be deleted. Our data for the project will include the written transcript of your audio-recording, but not the recording itself.

Your signature on this form grants the investigators named above permission to audio-record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording for any other reason than those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Participant’s Printed Name ____________________________

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________

Researcher’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________

APPROVED
JUL 18 2013
Approved by the Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES
JUL 17 2014
Approved by the Rutgers IRB
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR URBAN UNIVERSITY

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me. I want to start with a few basic demographic questions.

1. What is your gender? ___________________________
2. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? ___________________________
3. How would you describe your sexual orientation? (e.g., straight, gay, bisexual) ___________________________
4. How old are you? ___________________________
5. Where were you born? ___________________________
6. And where did you grow up? ___________________________

Thanks for sharing that information. Now I want to have more of a conversation about your experiences at [the urban university].

1. First, can you tell me how you decided to come to [the urban university]? Thinking back, what were the things that most appealed to you about the place?
   Were you considering other schools in addition to [the urban university] at the time? If so: What were the reasons you chose to come here?
   Was there anything that concerned you about coming here? (Anything else?)

2. What did your family think about you coming to [the urban university]? Did they share any opinions with you about coming here? (What did they say?) Have their opinions changed since you’ve been here? (In what ways/why not?)

3. How long have you been [an urban university] student?
   IF RECENT: What do you think of it so far? Have you decided on a major yet?
   IF LONGER: What are your general impressions of the place? What are you studying/majoring in? How do you like that program?

4. Aside from classes, are you involved in any activities on campus? IF YES: Tell me a bit more about the things you’re involved in. IF NO: What are the reasons you’re not?
5. Where are you currently living? (With whom/what’s it like?)

How close is it to campus?

IF ON/NEAR CAMPUS: How long have you lived there?
Why did you decide to live close to campus?

How do you find living around here? (What’s good/bad about it?)
Do you ever think about moving off/away from campus? (Why/why not?)

IF NOT: How long have you lived there?
How do you find living there? (What’s good/bad about it?)

Why did you decide not to live close to campus?
Have you ever thought about living on campus or close to campus? (Why/why not?; If they’ve lived on campus before, ask: Why did you decide to move?)

How do you generally travel to and from campus?

6. Can you tell me a bit more about where you grew up/where you’ve lived most of your life?

IF NOT FROM [THE URBAN CITY]: How does it compare to [the urban city]?
What things are similar or different?

(If they’ve moved around a lot – reference the place they most consider ‘home’; if they don’t have a place they most consider home, discuss the most recent place they lived prior to coming to [the urban university])

Did that have an impact on your decision to come here? (How so?)

Now I want to ask a few questions about how you spend your time.

7. What’s a typical day like when you have classes?

How about days when you don’t have classes?
And on the weekends?

Do you spend much of your time with other people at school? (Who, when, where)
How do you generally spend your free time (on campus)?

What do you usually do to have fun? (with whom, where?)

I have a map of the [urban university] campus. I’d like you to use this GREEN marker to indicate where you typically spend time or walk around on and near campus. You can draw squares around buildings or open spaces where you spend time, and draw lines along the routes you normally walk.

Now use the PURPLE marker to mark the places on or near campus where you feel most comfortable spending time. For places that overlap with what you marked in green, you can mark an X within the square, or draw a purple line next to the green one.

8. Ok, let’s start by talking about the places you marked in green. Can you tell me when you usually go there? What are you typically doing? With whom? (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

9. How about the places you indicated in purple? Tell me a bit about them. What makes you especially comfortable in those spaces? (Anything else?) (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

   When are you usually there? What are you typically doing? With whom?
   Are there certain times of day you’re more comfortable there than others?

   IF NO PLACES ARE MARKED IN PURPLE: I notice you didn’t mark any places in purple. Can you tell me a bit about why that’s the case?

Now I’d like you to use the RED marker to indicate any places on/near campus you avoid or try to avoid going. Again, use squares to indicate buildings or open spaces you try to avoid, and lines to indicate any walking routes you try to avoid. For places that overlap with what you’ve already marked, you can mark an X within the square, or draw a red line next to the other line.

10. Looking at the places you marked in red, can you tell me a bit about why you avoid or try to avoid them? (Any other reasons?) (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

   Are there certain times you try to avoid them more than others? (For what reasons?)

   IF THERE ARE OVERLAPS BETWEEN RED AND GREEN/PURPLE: I notice there is some overlap between the places you try to avoid and the places you sometimes go on campus. Can you tell me a bit about that?
IF NO PLACES ARE MARKED IN RED: I notice you didn’t mark any places in red. Can you tell me a bit about why that’s the case?

IF A RESPONDENT MENTIONS DIRECT/INDIRECT VICTIMIZATION AS A REASON FOR AVOIDING A CERTAIN PLACE: Are you comfortable telling me what happened?

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

Now I have a few questions about your perceptions of safety and risk on and around campus.

11. How safe do you think the [urban university] campus is? Can you tell me a bit more about the reasons you feel this way?

12. Do you usually feel safe on campus? (Why or why not? Anything else?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that make you feel more safe at some times than others? (Like what?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that make you feel less safe at times? (Like what?)

How about times of day, evening, or night?

FOR STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ:

12A. How open do you feel you can be about your sexual orientation/gender identity on campus?

Do you feel that you have to modify your typical behavior while on campus? (For example, walking or talking a certain way; showing affection to your partner?)

Anything else?

How about in the community around campus?

12B. Based on your experiences as an LGBTQ student here at [the urban university], can you describe how welcoming and/or accepting other [urban university] students have been towards you?

How about faculty and staff?
13. How about the community around [the urban university], how safe do you think it is? Can you tell me a bit more about the reasons you feel this way?

How much time do you spend off campus in [the urban city]?
Do you generally feel safe there? (Why/why not?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that heighten your concern at times? (Like what?)

14. What about your friends and other students at school – do they ever talk about their perceptions of the [urban university] campus, or the surrounding community, as safe or dangerous?

IF YES: What kinds of things have you heard or talked about? (Anything else?)

Do they say different things about the campus versus the community? Like what?

Is this something you talk about often? How do these conversations affect you?

15. Has there ever been a time when you were concerned for your safety on campus?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Tell me about the most recent time you were concerned for your safety on campus.

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

IF NO: Why do you think that is?

16. More than feeling concerned for your safety, have you ever been truly afraid that you were in immediate danger on campus?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Can you tell me about the most recent time that happened?
(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)
17. Has there ever been a time when you were concerned for your safety in the community around the [urban university] campus?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Tell me about the most recent time you were concerned for your safety in the community around campus.

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

IF NO: Why do you think that is?

18. More than feeling concerned for your safety, have you ever been truly afraid that you were in immediate danger when you were in the community around [the urban university]?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Can you tell me about the most recent time it happened?

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

19. Are you ever concerned for the safety for your friends, girlfriend/boyfriend, or roommates?

IF YES: When is that likely to happen? Is there anything you do about it? (Such as?)

20. What kinds of things do you do, on campus or in the nearby community, to protect yourself from risks? (Anything else?)

Does this vary by time of day? (How so?)
Do you take different precautions at night than during the day? (How so?)

Does it vary depending on who you’re with? (How so?)
Do you take different precautions when you’re alone or with other people? (How so?)

What about when you’re on campus versus elsewhere in the community near campus, do you take different kinds of precautions? (Like what?)
Do you ever carry any form of protection to ensure your safety on or around campus? (For instance, a knife, mace)

IF YES: How often/when do you carry it?
Does it make you more comfortable? How so?

21. Have you ever not done something on campus you wanted to do because you were concerned for your safety?

IF YES: How many times has this happened?
Can you tell me about the most recent time?

22. Do you think the risks for being a crime victim on or near campus are different for guys versus girls? (How so/why not?)

What about for students of different races? (How so/why not?)
What about for LGBT (e.g., lesbian, gay, transgender) students versus straight students? (How so/why not?)

23. In your experience, are some students at [the urban university] more concerned for their safety than others are?

What kinds of things do you think affect how much different students worry about their safety? (How so?)

Now I have a few questions about crime on and around the [urban university] campus. NOTE: If research participant has already disclosed their own or others’ victimization, acknowledge this before asking for additional information; confirm they’re willing to talk further about it, and ask only for additional information (i.e., don’t signal that you were inattentive during their initial disclosure).

24. Have any of your friends, classmates, or other students you know been the victim of a crime on or near campus?

IF YES: Tell me about what happened. How did you learn about it?
Where did it happen? *(as appropriate; probe for details)*

Do you know if they reported it to the campus police? (If so, what happened; if not, do you know why they didn’t?)
25. Have you ever witnessed a crime on or near campus?

IF YES: Tell me about what happened.

(As appropriate, ask for details: When it happened, who was involved and/or present, how they reacted, what happened next, did they or the victim report the crime to the police? Where did it happen? On/off campus?)

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 24 AND/OR 25, ASK:

Did that/those experiences (witnessing a crime, having someone you know victimized) affect you in any way? How so?

Did it change what you think about [the urban university]? How so/why not?

26. And what about you—have you ever been the victim of a crime on or near campus?

OR: I know you mentioned earlier that you were a victim of crime on/near campus. If it’s ok with you, I’d like to ask you a few more questions about it. (Ask follow-up questions mindful not to repeat questions you’ve already asked.)

IF YES: Do you mind telling me about what happened?

(As appropriate, ask for details: When it happened, who was involved and/or present, how they reacted, what happened next; Where did it happen? On/off campus)

What was that experience like for you?
Did it lead you to change your behaviors in any way? (How so?)
Did it change what you think about [the urban university]? (About being a student here?)
Did you report the incident to the [urban university] police?

IF YES: How was that experience? What happened?
How did the officer/s treat you?
Was the case resolved to your satisfaction? Why/why not?

IF NO: What were the reasons you didn’t report it?

27. Do you feel as though you’re generally informed about the risks for crime on campus? (How so/why not?)

Where do you get most of your information about campus crime?
Do you ever learn about campus crime from your friends or fellow students? (How so?)

What about crimes committed by [urban university] students? Have you heard much about that happening?

IF YES: What have you heard? (Anything else?) Can you tell me about the most recent incident?

28. What kind of advice have you gotten about crime here and how to avoid it? From whom?

29. What do you think about the Crime Alerts that are sent by the [urban university] police?

Have you ever changed your behaviors in any way as a result? (How so?)

Do you think the Crime Alerts are an effective strategy for making the campus community aware of crime incidents? (Why/why not?)

Do you think there are any problems with the Crime Alerts? (Like what?)

Have the Crime Alerts changed what you think about the [urban university] campus? (How so/why not?)

30. How familiar are you with the public safety services offered by the [urban university] Police Department?

What services are you aware of? Do you remember how you learned about them?

31. I want to run through some of the public safety services offered by the [urban university] police, to get a sense of which of these you’re aware of and which you may or may not have used. (You can skip services previously discussed in question 30 to avoid repetition.)

A. Have you noticed the emergency call boxes around campus?

IF YES: Have you ever used them? If so, tell me about what happened.

B. Do you ever use the campus escort service?

IF YES: How often do you use it? When are you most likely to? Why?
How useful do you find it? Any problems or concerns?

IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

C. Do you ever use the campus shuttle service?

IF YES: How often do you use it? When are you most likely to? Why?
         How useful do you find it? Any problems or concerns?

IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

D. Have you ever attended any [of the urban university Police Department’s] instructional seminars or trainings?

IF YES: How many have you taken part in?
         Can you tell me what it/they entailed?
         Did you find it/them useful? (In what ways?/Why not?)

E. Were you aware that the [urban university] Police Department has both a Facebook page and twitter account?

IF YES: Do you follow either one of them? (Tell me more about that/Why not?)

For Women Respondents:

F. Did you know that the [urban university] Police Department offers a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Training for women on campus?

IF YES: Have you ever taken the training?
         IF YES: How useful did you find it? Any problems or concerns?
         IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

32. How effective do you think the [urban university] Police Department is in making its programs and services known to students?

Do you have any suggestions for how they might do a better job? (Anything else?)

My final questions are about your thoughts and experiences with the [urban university] Police Department.

33. From your perspective, what kinds of things should the [urban university] police department do?
How would you compare the [urban university] police to other kinds of police departments?

34. How often do you see the [urban university] Police around campus?

When you see them, what kinds of activities are they engaged in?

Are there particular times of day/night that you’ve seen them more often?

Where do you usually see them? (followup: what mode of transport, i.e., vehicle, walking around, scooter, etc.)

35. When you’ve seen officers on campus, have any of them ever made a point of talking to you?

IF YES: What did they say/what did you talk about?

How would you describe the way they interacted with you?
Did they seem friendly/approachable or not? Were they respectful? How so/why not?

36. Have you ever felt like you were being watched or scrutinized by the [urban university] Police?

IF YES: How often has this happened?
Can you tell me a bit about the most recent time it happened? (Why do you think they were paying attention to you?)
How did it make you feel?

37. What about the [student officers] that work with the [urban university Police Department] – have you had any interactions with them? (They’re the unarmed uniformed student officers who patrol campus and provide escort and other services; they have the red stripe down their uniform.)

IF YES: What were those interactions like?

38. Have you had any interactions with the Security Personnel at [the urban university]? (They’re the unarmed uniformed officers who patrol, handle building lockouts, and are stationed at security posts like building entrances around campus; they have a blue stripe down their uniform.)
IF YES: What were those interactions like?

39. Have you ever sought assistance of any kind from the [urban university] police?

IF YES: How many times?
What kinds of things have you sought assistance for?
Can you tell me about the most recent time you went to the [urban university Police Department] for assistance? What was the reason you sought their assistance?
How would you describe the way they interacted with you? (Friendly? Respectful? Not?)
Were you satisfied with the assistance they provided? (Why/Why not?)

40. Have the [urban university] police ever questioned you about an incident that occurred on campus?

IF YES: How many times?
Can you tell me about the most recent time this happened? (Were you a participant or witness to the incident?)
How would you describe the way they interacted with you? (Friendly? Respectful? Not?)
Do you think they had reasonable grounds for questioning you? (Why/why not?)

41. Have you had any (other) experiences—good or bad—with the [urban university] Police?

IF YES: Can you tell me a bit about those?

42. What about your friends at school, have they ever told you about any experiences they’ve had with [urban university] police officers, good or bad?

IF YES: What experiences have they had?

43. If you were the victim of a crime on campus, how comfortable would you be reporting it to the campus police? (What makes you feel that way?)
Would your decision to report depend on what kind of crime it was? How so/why not?
FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES AND/OR LGBTQ:

43A. If you were harassed or otherwise the victim of a bias crime on campus based on (your race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation/gender identity), who would you talk to about it?

How comfortable would you be going to the [urban university] police? For what reasons/why not?

44. From what you’ve seen and heard, do you think the [urban university] police treat everyone in the same ways? How so/why not?

45. From what you’ve seen and heard, do you feel like the [urban university] police do a good job in making the campus safe? How so/why not?

Are there things you think they could do to make the campus safer? (Like what?)

46. Finally, have you had any experiences, good or bad, with the [urban city] police?

IF YES: Can you tell me about those experiences?

How have your interactions with [urban city] police compared with your interactions with the [urban university Police Department]? Why do you think that’s the case?

That’s the end of my questions. Is there anything else I haven’t asked about that you think is important for me to know? Do you have any questions for me?

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX E: IRB APPROVAL FOR SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ASB III, 3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

July 18, 2014

Shannon Jacobsen
Newark NJ 07104

Dear Shannon Jacobsen:

(Initial / Amendment / Continuation / Continuation w/ Amendment )

Protocol Title: “Perceived Safety, Risk, and Risk Avoidance Strategies Among [Redacted] Students”

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

Approval Date: 7/18/2014 Expiration Date: 7/17/2015
Expedited Category(s): 6,7 Approved # of Subject(s): 45

This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- **This Approval**—The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. **This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above**;
- **Reporting**—ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications**—Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form(s)**—Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- **Continuing Review**—You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project’s approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

Additional Notes: Expedited Approval per 45 CFR 46.110

**Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.**

Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

Acting for ---
Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board/mw

cc: Jody A. Miller
APPENDIX F: SCREENING SURVEY FOR SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY

Rutgers
School of Criminal Justice

Perceived Safety, Risk, and Risk Avoidance Strategies among Suburban University Students

Shannon Jacobsen, a doctoral student in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, is studying undergraduate students’ perceptions of safety and risk on campus. She seeks volunteers interested in being considered for participation in the research, which will involve confidential in-depth interviews with approximately 45 students. Research participants will receive a $10 gift card from Starbucks in appreciation of their participation.

If you are selected and agree to participate, you can expect to sit down for an open-ended conversational interview, in which you will be asked about your perceptions of safety and risk on campus, your perceptions and/or experiences with the University Police, and the strategies you employ to protect yourself from risk of crime. It is anticipated that the results of the study will inform public safety efforts on the campus.

To ensure that a diverse range of students are interviewed, I am asking interested students to complete this brief questionnaire. I may contact you during the semester to provide you with more information about the study and to see if you are still willing to participate.

Thank you for your consideration!

Name

Email address

1. What is your gender?

2. What is your race/ethnicity?

3. What is your age?

4. In what country were you born?

5. Which of the following best characterizes the community where you grew up?
   1. Urban community
   2. Suburban community
   3. Rural community

6. How long have you been a student at? ________________________________

7. What is your major? ________________________________

8. Do you live on or within walking distance to campus? YES NO

9. Have you ever sought assistance from the University Police by approaching an officer on campus, by telephone, or by visiting the campus police station? YES NO
APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Perceived Safety, Risk and Risk Avoidance Strategies among [REDACTED] Students

IRB Approval Number
Researcher: Shannon Jacobsen

Why am I being asked to participate?
You are invited to participate in a research study about safety and risks for crime on the [REDACTED] campus. The study is being conducted by Shannon Jacobsen, a doctoral student in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision of whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

What is the purpose of this research?
The purpose of this research is to examine undergraduate students’ perceptions of safety and risk at [REDACTED], and the strategies you may use to protect yourself from risks for personal or property crimes on campus. I hope the results of the study will help improve programmatic efforts on campus to assist with addressing public safety on the [REDACTED] campus.

What procedures are involved?
If you agree to participate in this research, you can expect to take part in an open-ended interview. You will be asked questions about your perceptions of where and when you might feel more or less safe at [REDACTED] your perceptions and/or experiences with the campus police, and what strategies you might use to protect yourself from risks on campus. You will be asked about other services or organizations you are involved with on campus, and your thoughts on their effectiveness, especially with regard to addressing campus crime. You will also be asked basic demographic questions.

If you provide permission, I would like to audiotape the interview. This will help me accurately record the information you share during the interview, as the tape recording will be transcribed. Although I ask that you sign your name on the consent form, your name will not be included on the tape recording or on your interview transcript, so there will be no information that can directly identify you. The interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours, and approximately 45 undergraduate students on campus will be interviewed for this research.

Initial ___

Copyright 2008, Rutgers University. All rights reserved. Page 1 of 4 Print Date: 6/20/2014 Version 6.08
What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There are certain risks and discomforts that may be associated with this research.

- It is possible that you may find some of the questions asked uncomfortable or upsetting. You are not required to answer any question that you do not wish to answer and you may ask to end the interview at any time.
- I have a duty to report you if you disclose that you plan to harm yourself or others in the future. To minimize this risk, we will not ask questions that generate this kind of information, and we recommend that you avoid making any statements of this kind.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

I will also provide you with a list of contact information for campus services related to dealing with crime. In addition, the information from this project will be important for better understanding safety on the [redacted] campus. I also hope that you will find participation in the research to be personally rewarding. I recognize that you are the expert on your experiences and my goal is to take your perspective seriously.

What other options are there?

Participation in the research study is voluntary. You will not receive any negative consequences from [redacted] or [redacted] if you refuse to participate in the study.

What about privacy?

Only I will have access to the data for this research, and all copies of the interview data will be destroyed once the research has been completed. The consent form will be stored in a locked file box and will not be linked to your interview. Upon transcription of your interview, I will replace your name with a unique pseudonym so that what you tell me cannot be directly attributed to you. The only exception would be if you make statements about your future intent to harm yourself or others, which I am required to report. When the results of the research are reported in my future dissertation work and/or academic publications, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. I will not use your name in any of my reports, and will not include other specific identifying information.

In addition, during the interview you have the right to review and edit the audiotape. I will erase any sections of the tape in which you accidentally use your own or someone else’s name or otherwise disclose something you wish to remove from the interview. Each audiotape will be stored on a password-protected computer until it is transcribed, and will be destroyed once the transcription is completed.

What about confidentiality?

This research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you, and this information will be stored in such a manner that there is some linkage between your identity and your response in the research. Some of the information collected about you includes your gender, race, and age. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individuals’ access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location.

The research team and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for three years following the completion of the project.

Initial _____

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Version 6.08
AUDIOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: “Perceived Safety, Risk, and Risk Avoidance Strategies among Students,” conducted by Shannon Jacobsen, a doctoral student in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. I am asking for your permission to allow me to audiotape your interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the study.

The audio-recording will be used to ensure that I record what you have to say as accurately as possible. It will not include your name or other identifiers. Upon completion of your interview, the audio-recording will be transcribed into written form. It will be stored on a password protected computer while it is being transcribed. The written transcript will be checked for accuracy against the audio-recording, and then the audio file will be deleted. The data for the project will include the written transcript of your audio-recording, but not the recording itself.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator the permission to audio-record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording for any other reason than those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Participant’s Printed Name __________________________________________

Participant’s Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

Researcher’s Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

APPROVED
JUL 18 2014
Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES
JUL 17 2015
Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

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Page 4 of 4
Print Date: 6/20/2014
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me. I want to start with a few basic demographic questions.

1. What is your gender? __________________________________________________________________________
2. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? __________________________________________________________________________
3. How would you describe your sexual orientation? (e.g., straight, gay, bisexual) __________________________________________________________________________
4. How old are you? __________________________________________________________________________
5. Where were you born? __________________________________________________________________________
6. And where did you grow up? __________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for sharing that information. Now I want to have more of a conversation about your experiences at [the suburban university].

1. First, can you tell me how you decided to come to [the suburban university]?

   Thinking back, what were the things that most appealed to you about the place?

   Were you considering other schools in addition to [the suburban university] at the time? If so: What were the reasons you chose to come here?

   Was there anything that concerned you about coming here? (Anything else?)

2. What did your family think about you coming to [the suburban university]?

   Did they share any opinions with you about coming here? (What did they say?)
   Have their opinions changed since you’ve been here? (In what ways/why not?)

3. How long have you been a [suburban university] student?

   IF RECENT: What do you think of it so far?
   Have you decided on a major yet?

   IF LONGER: What are your general impressions of the place?
   What are you studying/majoring in? How do you like that program?

4. Aside from classes, are you involved in any activities on campus?

   IF YES: Tell me a bit more about the things you’re involved in.
IF NO: What are the reasons you’re not?

5. Where are you currently living? (With whom/what’s it like?)

How close is it to campus?

IF ON/NEAR CAMPUS: How long have you lived there?
Why did you decide to live close to campus?

How do you find living around here? (What’s good/bad about it?)
Do you ever think about moving off/away from campus? (Why/why not?)

IF NOT: How long have you lived there?
How do you find living there? (What’s good/bad about it?)

Why did you decide not to live close to campus?
Have you ever thought about living on campus or close to campus? (Why/why not; If they’ve lived on campus before, ask: Why did you decide to move?)

How do you generally travel to and from campus?

6. Can you tell me a bit more about where you grew up/where you’ve lived most of your life?

IF NOT FROM [THE SUBURBAN CITY]: How does it compare to [the suburban city]?
What things are similar or different?

(If they’ve moved around a lot – reference the place they most consider ‘home’; if they don’t have a place they most consider home, discuss the most recent place they lived prior to coming to [the suburban university])

Did that have an impact on your decision to come here? (How so?)

Now I want to ask a few questions about how you spend your time.

7. What’s a typical day like when you have classes?

How about days when you don’t have classes?
And on the weekends?
Do you spend much of your time with other people at school? (Who, when, where)

How do you generally spend your free time (on campus)?

What do you usually do to have fun? (with whom, where?)

I have a map of the [suburban university] campus. I’d like you to use this GREEN marker to indicate where you typically spend time or walk around on and near campus. You can draw squares around buildings or open spaces where you spend time, and draw lines along the routes you normally walk.

Now use the PURPLE marker to mark the places on or near campus where you feel most comfortable spending time. For places that overlap with what you marked in green, you can mark an X within the square, or draw a purple line next to the green one.

8. Ok, let’s start by talking about the places you marked in green. Can you tell me when you usually go there? What are you typically doing? With whom? (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

9. How about the places you indicated in purple? Tell me a bit about them. What makes you especially comfortable in those spaces? (Anything else?) (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

   When are you usually there? What are you typically doing? With whom?
   Are there certain times of day you’re more comfortable there than others?

   IF NO PLACES ARE MARKED IN PURPLE: I notice you didn’t mark any places in purple. Can you tell me a bit about why that’s the case?

Now I’d like you to use the RED marker to indicate any places on/near campus you avoid or try to avoid going. Again, use squares to indicate buildings or open spaces you try to avoid, and lines to indicate any walking routes you try to avoid. For places that overlap with what you’ve already marked, you can mark an X within the square, or draw a red line next to the other line.

10. Looking at the places you marked in red, can you tell me a bit about why you avoid or try to avoid them? (Any other reasons?) (If multiple places are indicated, be sure to discuss each one)

   Are there certain times you try to avoid them more than others? (For what reasons?)
IF THERE ARE OVERLAPS BETWEEN RED AND GREEN/PURPLE: I notice there is some overlap between the places you try to avoid and the places you sometimes go on campus. Can you tell me a bit about that?

IF NO PLACES ARE MARKED IN RED: I notice you didn’t mark any places in red. Can you tell me a bit about why that’s the case?

IF A RESPONDENT MENTIONS DIRECT/INDIRECT VICTIMIZATION AS A REASON FOR AVOIDING A CERTAIN PLACE: Are you comfortable telling me what happened?

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

Now I have a few questions about your perceptions of safety and risk on and around campus.

11. How safe do you think the [suburban university] campus is? Can you tell me a bit more about the reasons you feel this way?

12. Do you usually feel safe on campus? (Why or why not? Anything else?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that make you feel more safe at some times than others? (Like what?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that make you feel less safe at times? (Like what?)

How about times of day, evening, or night?

FOR STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ:

12A. How open do you feel you can be about your sexual orientation/gender identity on campus?

Do you feel that you have to modify your typical behavior while on campus? (For example, walking or talking a certain way; showing affection to your partner?)

Anything else?

How about in the community around campus?
12B. Based on your experiences as an LGBTQ student here at [the suburban university], can you describe how welcoming and/or accepting other [suburban university] students have been towards you?

How about faculty and staff?

13. How about the community around [the suburban university], how safe do you think it is? Can you tell me a bit more about the reasons you feel this way?

How much time do you spend off campus in [the suburban city]?
Do you generally feel safe there? (Why/why not?)

Are there particular people, places or things in the environment that heighten your concern at times? (Like what?)

14. What about your friends and other students at school – do they ever talk about their perceptions of the [suburban university] campus, or the surrounding community, as safe or dangerous?

IF YES: What kinds of things have you heard or talked about? (Anything else?)

Do they say different things about the campus versus the community?
Like what?

Is this something you talk about often? How do these conversations affect you?

15. Has there ever been a time when you were concerned for your safety on campus?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Tell me about the most recent time you were concerned for your safety on campus.

(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)

IF NO: Why do you think that is?

16. More than feeling concerned for your safety, have you ever been truly afraid that you were in immediate danger on campus?
IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Can you tell me about the most recent time that happened?

*(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)*

17. Has there ever been a time when you were concerned for your safety in the community around the [suburban university] campus?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Tell me about the most recent time you were concerned for your safety in the community around campus.

*(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)*

IF NO: Why do you think that is?

18. More than feeling concerned for your safety, have you ever been truly afraid that you were in immediate danger when you were in the community around [the suburban university]?

IF YES: How many times has that happened?

Can you tell me about the most recent time it happened?

*(As appropriate, ask for details: Where were they? What time of day/night? Were they alone or with others? Who else was around? What made them feel unsafe?)*

19. Are you ever concerned for the safety for your friends, girlfriend/boyfriend, or roommates?

IF YES: When is that likely to happen? Is there anything you do about it? *(Such as?)*
20. What kinds of things do you do, on campus or in the nearby community, to protect yourself from risks? (Anything else?)

Does this vary by time of day? (How so?)
Do you take different precautions at night than during the day? (How so?)

Does it vary depending on who you’re with? (How so?)
Do you take different precautions when you’re alone or with other people? (How so?)

What about when you’re on campus versus elsewhere in the community near campus, do you take different kinds of precautions? (Like what?)

Do you ever carry any form of protection to ensure your safety on or around campus? (For instance, a knife, mace)

IF YES: How often/when do you carry it?
Does it make you more comfortable? How so?

21. Have you ever not done something on campus you wanted to do because you were concerned for your safety?

IF YES: How many times has this happened?
Can you tell me about the most recent time?

22. Do you think the risks for being a crime victim on or near campus are different for guys versus girls? (How so/why not?)

What about for students of different races? (How so/why not?)
What about for LGBT (e.g., lesbian, gay, transgender) students versus straight students? (How so/why not?)

23. In your experience, are some students at [the suburban university] more concerned for their safety than others are?

What kinds of things do you think affect how much different students worry about their safety? (How so?)

Now I have a few questions about crime on and around the [suburban university] campus.
NOTE: If research participant has already disclosed their own or others’ victimization, acknowledge this before asking for additional information; confirm they’re willing to talk
further about it, and ask only for additional information (i.e., don’t signal that you were inattentive during their initial disclosure).

24. Have any of your friends, classmates, or other students you know been the victim of a crime on or near campus?

   IF YES: Tell me about what happened. How did you learn about it?
   Where did it happen? (as appropriate; probe for details)

   Do you know if they reported it to the campus police? (If so, what happened; if not, do you know why they didn’t?)

25. Have you ever witnessed a crime on or near campus?

   IF YES: Tell me about what happened.

   (As appropriate, ask for details: When it happened, who was involved and/or present, how they reacted, what happened next, did they or the victim report the crime to the police? Where did it happen? On/off campus?)

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 24 AND/OR 25, ASK:

Did that/those experiences (witnessing a crime, having someone you know victimized) affect you in any way? How so?

Did it change what you think about [the suburban university]? How so/why not?

26. And what about you—have you ever been the victim of a crime on or near campus?

OR: I know you mentioned earlier that you were a victim of crime on/near campus. If it’s ok with you, I’d like to ask you a few more questions about it. (Ask follow-up questions mindful not to repeat questions you’ve already asked.)

   IF YES: Do you mind telling me about what happened?

   (As appropriate, ask for details: When it happened, who was involved and/or present, how they reacted, what happened next; Where did it happen? On/off campus)

   What was that experience like for you?
   Did it lead you to change your behaviors in any way? (How so?)
   Did it change what you think about [the suburban university]? (About being a student here?)
Did you report the incident to the University Police?

IF YES: How was that experience? What happened? How did the officer/s treat you? Was the case resolved to your satisfaction? Why/why not?

IF NO: What were the reasons you didn’t report it?

27. Do you feel as though you’re generally informed about the risks for crime on campus? (How so/why not?)

Where do you get most of your information about campus crime?

Do you ever learn about campus crime from your friends or fellow students? (How so?)

What about crimes committed by [suburban university] students? Have you heard much about that happening?

IF YES: What have you heard? (Anything else?) Can you tell me about the most recent incident?

28. What kind of advice have you gotten about crime here and how to avoid it? From whom?

29. What do you think about the [University] Alerts that are sent by the University Police?

Have you ever changed your behaviors in any way as a result? (How so?)

Do you think the [University] Alerts are an effective strategy for making the campus community aware of crime incidents? (Why/why not?)

Do you think there are any problems with the [University] Alerts? (Like what?)

Have the [University] Alerts changed what you think about the campus? (How so/why not?)

30. How familiar are you with the programs and services offered by the [suburban university] Police Department?
What services are you aware of? Do you remember how you learned about them?

31. I want to run through some of the programs and services offered by the University Police, to get a sense of which of these you’re aware of and which you may or may not have used. (*You can skip services previously discussed in question 30 to avoid repetition.*)

A. Have you noticed the emergency call boxes around campus?
   
   IF YES: Have you ever used them? If so, tell me about what happened.

B. Do you ever use the campus escort service?
   
   IF YES: How often do you use it? When are you most likely to? Why?
   How useful do you find it? Any problems or concerns?
   
   IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

C. Do you ever use the campus shuttle service?
   
   IF YES: How often do you use it? When are you most likely to? Why?
   How useful do you find it? Any problems or concerns?
   
   IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

D. Have you ever attended any of the instructional seminars or trainings that are offered by the University Police?
   
   IF YES: How many have you taken part in?
   Can you tell me what it/they entailed?
   Did you find it/them useful? (In what ways?/Why not?)

E. Were you aware that the [suburban university] Police Department has both a Facebook page and Twitter account?
   
   IF YES: Do you follow either one of them? (Tell me more about that/Why not?)

For Women Respondents:

F. Did you know that the [suburban university] Police Department offers a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Training for women on campus?
   
   IF YES: Have you ever taken the training?
IF YES: How useful did you find it? Any problems or concerns?

IF NO: What are the reasons you haven’t?

32. How effective do you think the [suburban university] Police Department is in making its programs and services known to students?

Do you have any suggestions for how they might do a better job? (Anything else?)

My final questions are about your thoughts and experiences with the [suburban university] Police Department.

33. From your perspective, what kinds of things should the University Police do?

How would you compare the University Police to other kinds of police departments?

34. How often do you see the University Police around campus?

When you see them, what kinds of activities are they engaged in?

Are there particular times of day/night that you’ve seen them more often?

Where do you usually see them? (followup: what mode of transport, i.e., vehicle, walking around, scooter, Segway, etc.)

35. When you’ve seen officers on campus, have any of them ever made a point of talking to you?

IF YES: What did they say/what did you talk about?

How would you describe the way they interacted with you? Did they seem friendly/approachable or not? Were they respectful? How so/why not?

36. Have you ever felt like you were being watched or scrutinized by the University Police?

IF YES: How often has this happened?
Can you tell me a bit about the most recent time it happened? (Why do you think they were paying attention to you?)
How did it make you feel?

37. What about the student [officers] that work with the University Police – have you had any interactions with them? (They’re the unarmed uniformed student officers who patrol campus and provide escort and other services.)

IF YES: What were those interactions like?

38. Have you had any interactions with the security officers at [the suburban university]? (They’re non-sworn employees who patrol the campus on foot, provide security in the buildings 24 hours a day, and serve as additional security in the residence halls at night.)

IF YES: What were those interactions like?

39. Have you ever sought assistance of any kind from the University Police?

IF YES: How many times?
What kinds of things have you sought assistance for?
Can you tell me about the most recent time you went to the University Police for assistance?
What was the reason you sought their assistance?
How would you describe the way they interacted with you? (Friendly? Respectful? Not?)
Were you satisfied with the assistance they provided? (Why/Why not?)

40. Have the University Police ever questioned you about an incident that occurred on campus?

IF YES: How many times?
Can you tell me about the most recent time this happened? (Were you a participant or witness to the incident?)
How would you describe the way they interacted with you? (Friendly? Respectful? Not?)
Do you think they had reasonable grounds for questioning you? (Why/why not?)
41. Have you had any (other) experiences—good or bad—with the University Police?

IF YES: Can you tell me a bit about those?

42. What about your friends at school, have they ever told you about any experiences they’ve had with University Police officers, good or bad?

IF YES: What experiences have they had?

43. If you were the victim of a crime on campus, how comfortable would you be reporting it to the campus police? (What makes you feel that way?)

Would your decision to report depend on what kind of crime it was? How so/why not?

FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES AND/OR LGBTQ:

43A. If you were harassed or otherwise the victim of a bias crime on campus based on (your race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation/gender identity), who would you talk to about it?

How comfortable would you be going to the University Police? For what reasons/why not?

44. From what you’ve seen and heard, do you think the University Police treat everyone in the same ways? How so/why not?

45. From what you’ve seen and heard, do you feel like the University Police do a good job in making the campus safe? How so/why not?

Are there things you think they could do to make the campus safer? (Like what?)

46. Finally, have you had any experiences, good or bad, with the [Suburban] City or County Police Departments?

IF YES: Can you tell me about those experiences?
How have your interactions with [the Suburban] City or County Police compared with your interactions with the University Police? Why do you think that’s the case?

That’s the end of my questions. Is there anything else I haven’t asked about that you think is important for me to know? Do you have any questions for me?

THANK YOU!
### APPENDIX I: SUMMARY SHEET TEMPLATE FOR SUBURBAN U PARTICIPANTS

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<td>Characterizations of other students</td>
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<td>Areas interviewee AVOIDS</td>
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<td>Role of the police in interviewee’s perceptions of risk/fear</td>
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<td>Characterizations of likely victims/targets</td>
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<td>Characterizations of those more likely to be fearful</td>
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<td>References to interviewee’s emotional state re: perceptions of safety or risk</td>
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<td>Specific things that make interviewee feel vulnerable or uncomfortable <em>(note which)</em></td>
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<td>Crimes mentioned <em>(note if mentioned as a concern or generically)</em></td>
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<td>Descriptions of actual personal victimization incident(s)</td>
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<td>Specific safety strategies adopted by interviewee</td>
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<td>Potential/projected strategies if faced with crime</td>
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<td>Advice interviewee has been given to stay safe/avoid risk (note by whom)</td>
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<td>Specific things that make interviewee feel safe</td>
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