
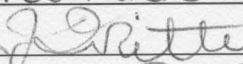
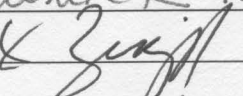


GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND DANGER ON THE COLLEGE
CAMPUS: THE FUNCTIONS OF FEAR

by

Shannon K. Jacobsen
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DEDICATION

For Brian A. Picone – an incredible friend with whom I had many discussions and invaluable brainstorming sessions during the early formations of this project. His insights into the meaning of equality and the social construction of gender have been – and will always be – a guiding inspiration in my work to which I owe the utmost of gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND DANGER ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS: THE FUNCTIONS OF FEAR

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Utilizing a mixed methods design, this research examines the ways in which students' perceptions of safety and danger on the college campus vary and do not vary according to gender through the inclusion of three key components. The first focuses on individual perceptions of safety on campus, along with the ways in which students and other members of the campus community police their behaviors within the university setting to ensure that their personal space is not violated as they navigate to and from classes and campus events. This section relies on data from interviews and focus groups with 24 Mason students and staff, along with data from the observations of two open meetings of the Presidential Task Force during April 2011 which centered on issues regarding campus safety. The second component of this study examines the institutional presentation of safety issues and risks to the university community. This section includes a content analysis of five crime and safety documents released during the 2011-2012 academic year to the campus community from the University Police and administration.

The final component consists of a nation-wide assessment of safety on college campuses, relying on the crime and security data from two nationally representative datasets including the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2004-2005 Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies and the U.S. Department of Education's 2006-2007 Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool. This study builds on previous research on this topic by investigating the gendered (and not gendered) dimensions of fear, in addition to how such fears may operate to restrict women's participation on the university campus and beyond. Further, this research seeks to inform discussions at colleges and universities about how to make students feel safer as they pursue higher education.

I. THE PROBLEM

This research examines whether or not students' perceptions of safety on a college campus are gendered, along with the ways in which they police their behaviors within the university setting to ensure that their personal space is not violated as they navigate to and from classes and campus events. Do female and male students perceive campus dangers differently? What factors (e.g., police reports, newspaper articles, campus safety measures, discussions with other students) promote and lessen students' perceptions of safety and danger on campus? What kinds of precautionary and avoidance strategies do students utilize to manage and alleviate their fears on campus and do these vary by sex? And, perhaps most importantly, why do students exclude University Police officers and the student police cadets, who provide the escort service, from their safety strategies? This research seeks to determine the answers to these questions and proposes several recommendations that can be used by colleges and universities to make students feel safer as they pursue higher education.

Fear of crime and concerns about one's personal safety are clearly gendered phenomena that affect the daily lives of women and men in different ways across a variety of social settings (Day 1994; de Becker 1997; del Carmen et al. 2000; Day 1999; Dobbs, Waid, and Shelley 2009; Fisher and May 2009; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Fox, Nobles, and Piquero 2009; Franklin and Franklin 2009; Haskell and Randall 1998;

Hilinski 2010; Hollander 2000; Jennings, Gover, and Pudrzynska 2007; Little, Panelli, and Kraack 2005; Kaminski, Koons-Witt, Thompson, and Weiss 2010; McConnell 1997; Rader 2004; Reed and Ainsworth 2007; Reid and Konrad 2004; Stanko 1995; Starkweather 2007; Warr 1984, 1985, 1990; Wilcox, Jordan, and Pritchard 2007; Woolnough 2009). These fears, for example, can lead women to adopt self-protective behaviors, ultimately preventing them from partaking in activities that they would otherwise engage in situations deemed safe. Alternatively, scholars have suggested that men may provide socially desirable responses in research studies examining the fear of crime, such that they are more likely to describe “act[ing] in accord with the prescriptions of hegemonic masculinity and report lower levels of fear when in fact they may be quite fearful of crime” (Dobbs et al. 2009:106; but see Sutton and Farrall 2005). With these potential and differential impacts of fear in mind, what role do college students’ concerns about their personal safety play in their experiences on campus? Do students’ fears serve to constrain their access to higher education and participation in learning opportunities? What function, if any, do these fears serve in maintaining gender inequalities? Campus safety and student comfort ought to be a top priority at institutions of higher education to ensure that students can focus on learning rather than on their personal safety and security.

It is entirely possible that these fears, which are continuously perpetuated by film and the news media, operate as a form of social control to prevent students, and especially women, from taking advantage of educational opportunities that could serve to benefit their professional growth and careers, ultimately allowing them to advance in

society. Because these opportunities are more accessible to men, who do not report being as fearful as women, particularly at night, colleges and universities may serve to reinforce gender inequality by preserving the more privileged social status of men.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a review of the literature on this topic, three key themes have emerged which illustrate: (1) how fear functions as a form of social control to limit female students' movement and behavior on the college campus; (2) the difference between actual and anticipated fear and the role that each play in our daily lives; and (3) the various precautions students take to ensure that their personal space is not violated on college campuses.

Fear as a Form of Social Control

Previous research on this topic has concluded that women's fear of crime (namely sexual assault and rape) – both on the college campus and in the broader society – operate as a form of social control to limit their freedom of movement in various spaces (e.g., Day 1994, 1999; Franklin and Franklin 2009; Haskell and Randall 1998; Hollander 2000; Madriz 1997; Rader, Cossman, and Allison 2009; Starkweather 2007). The impact of such limitations on women's movement in different social spaces can be viewed as a way of maintaining men's dominance and power, as women are less free to engage in activities that provide men with a competitive advantage in society. Such control over the movement and actions of women must remain invisible in order to be successful, as “power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms” (Foucault 1978:86). As a result

of their fear of crime, women come to police their own daily behaviors, adopting precautionary and avoidance strategies to protect themselves from potential violence. Because of this, fear must be viewed as a mechanism existing within gendered power relations to maintain men's domination and women's vulnerability (Acker 2006; Connell 2009; Little et al. 2005). Building on Connell's ([2002] 2009) concept of the gender regime, Acker (2006) develops the notion of "inequality regimes" to refer to the ongoing set of organizational processes and meanings that create and maintain unequal and gendered relations in this manner.

In her discussion of women's recent advances in paid employment, Tichenor (2005) asserts that the move of women into higher education has "at least in part, [enabled] them to stand on more equal footing with men" (p. 188). Recent research on the topic of women's fear of sexual assault on college campuses, however, provides a qualification to this argument. Day (1994), for example, contends that women are constantly bound by their fear of sexual violence and that it increases their "level of worry, often forcing them to adopt numerous precautionary measures and to curtail their activities and behaviors" (p. 743). One such precautionary measure that women might adopt is to practice safety in numbers by traveling with a buddy at night rather than going out alone or to alter their social lives so that they are not exposed to as great a risk of sexual victimization (Day 1994; Dobbs et al. 2009; Stanko 1995; Warr 1985). Stanko (1995) elaborates on Day's concept when she asserts that, "as a consequence of fear, women police themselves by restricting their activities in public because of the anxiety of potential violence and by using, in public and in private, more safety precautions than do

men” (p. 51). It seems possible that many women, particularly college students, may avoid engaging in certain events, activities, or even taking a night class for fear of (sexual) violence. Brantingham and Brantingham (1994) found, for instance, that gender is a predictor of higher levels of fear on campus after dark, concluding that men are about twice as likely to perceive their campuses as safe at night. This finding was later confirmed by Fisher and Sloan (2003), who argued that women are more than twice as concerned about the prospect of victimization on campus at night. In this manner, fear may operate as a way of controlling and restricting what women believe they can and cannot do in different social spaces, ultimately preventing them from taking advantage of opportunities that are available to their male peers.

Bourdieu (1992) discusses how such forms of exclusion can emerge as a form of symbolic violence, as these gendered structural arrangements become taken for granted and appear as natural. He suggests that

the best illustration of the political import of doxa is arguably the symbolic violence exercised upon women. I think in particular of the sort of socially constructed agoraphobia that leads women to exclude themselves from a whole range of public activities and ceremonies from which they are structurally excluded (in accordance with the dichotomies of public/male versus private/female). (Bourdieu 1992:74)

By excluding themselves from educational activities based on their fear of potential danger, this cycle of women’s structural exclusion from greater participation in a range of social venues continues to perpetuate itself, further embedding gender inequalities and male dominance. As social structures influence and shape individuals’ subsequent behavior, it is important to remember that these structures are also socially constructed and reinforced by individuals themselves (Martin 2004; Risman 2004).

With Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence and exclusion in mind, it is interesting to consider whether female and male students have equal access to learning while enrolled as students at institutions of higher education. According to the "chilly campus climate" hypothesis, the atmosphere of the institution, including students' perceptions of the safety it offers, "plays a crucial role in fostering or impeding women students' full personal, academic, and professional development" (Hall and Sandler 1984:2). Feminist poet Adrienne Rich (2003) discusses the more specific implications that the fear of danger can have for female students when she asks,

If it is dangerous for me to walk home late of an evening from the library, because I am a woman and can be raped, how self-possessed, how exuberant can I feel as I sit working in that library? How much of my working energy is drained by the subliminal knowledge that, as a woman, I test my physical right to exist each time I go out alone? (P. 401)

Students who choose not to venture out to the library, take classes, or attend educational and networking events at night could be missing out on learning because of their fears about potential violence that could occur as they are walking alone to their cars or dorms in the darkness (Franklin and Franklin 2009; Hilinski 2010; Hollander 2000). Darkness serves as a special form of social control, particularly because of the social meanings that it carries. It provides "opportunities for transgressions—opportunities not typically available during the daylight hours" because of the sense of anonymity it affords (Williams 2008:518), which further contribute to women's fear of darkness and their adoption of self-policing behaviors.

In their study examining the gender gap in fear, Reid and Konrad (2004), take the idea of social control even further to explain how it perpetuates and emphasizes the social construction of what it means to be male or female. They explain,

Fear of crime reinforces a socially constructed sense of feminine weakness, vulnerability, and passivity. This controls women's lives by teaching women (and men) a code of conduct that legitimizes gender differences in appropriate and "safe" behavior under the guise of protecting women from criminal victimization. (Reid and Konrad 2004:403)

Women and men are expected to exhibit different behaviors in the darkness. From the time they are children, women are socialized and instructed to behave in ways that are different from men because the two are believed to be inherently different (Butler 1999; Connell 2010; Connell 2009; Franklin and Franklin 2009; Lorber 1994, 2005; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987, 2009). Moreover, through the performance of gendered behaviors, "the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure" (Goffman 1959:30). From birth, bodies are placed into categories that become woven into social discipline (Foucault 1977) and subsequently lead to the enforcement and policing of normatively gendered behaviors (Butler 1999; Connell 2009). For women, such gender socialization and discipline includes learning to fear strangers and unknown settings, in addition to understanding the potential dangers of venturing out alone at night, all of which are assumed to place women at greater risk of victimization (Franklin and Franklin 2009; Reid and Konrad 2004; Stanko 1995). This often means that men take on a protective role by walking women to their cars at night,

further serving to reinforce women's vulnerability and ongoing need of male assistance (Franklin and Franklin 2009; Hollander 2000).

Individuals also protect themselves from potential harm by engaging in precautionary and avoidance strategies. Precautionary or protective strategies are those that an individual might use to compensate for a perceived lack of safety, such as walking with others at night, carrying one's keys in a defensive manner, or utilizing the campus escort service (Dobbs et al. 2009; Hilinski 2010; Starkweather 2007). Avoidance strategies, on the other hand, are used when an individual isolates oneself from situations that she or he perceives to be unsafe (Dobbs et al. 2009; Haskell and Randall 1998; Hilinski 2010; National Crime Prevention Council 2008; Starkweather 2007), such as taking night classes (Jennings et al. 2007; Kaminski et al. 2010). Because women are more likely to report higher levels of fear and greater adoption of these constraining self-protective behaviors (Fox et al. 2009; Hilinski 2010; Kaminski et al. 2010; Woolnough 2009), it seems possible that many women may limit their behavior because of their own fears about venturing out alone.

The concept of fear as a form of social control brings to question whether women's fears of violence are warranted, in terms of actual versus perceived threats of danger. As a result of their fears, women develop precautionary and avoidance strategies to ensure their safety on the college campus. While the impact of these fears has real and true consequences on women's behaviors and levels of participation as students at institutions of higher education, it is critical to consider whether such fears are realistic,

based on actual threats of violence, or are simply characteristic of women's perceptions of their own vulnerability, as dictated by the social construction of gender.

Actual versus Anticipated Fear and the Use of Precautionary Strategies

The distinction between actual and anticipated fear was initially made by James Garofalo (1981) who claimed that actual fear is triggered by some cue in the surrounding environment including other people, physical structures, lighting, or the presence of police. Alternatively, anticipated fear may or may not be based on having experienced actual fear in the past (Garofalo 1981). Many later studies were based on Garofalo's idea and sought to examine whether individuals' experiences with various forms of victimization influenced their subsequent behaviors. Most of the research on previous victimization is limited in that it only examines women's experiences with various forms of sexual violence (e.g., Dobbs et al. 2009; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000; Fox et al. 2009; Hilinski 2010; MacMillan, Nierobisz, and Welsh 2000).

One such study conducted by MacMillan and colleagues (2000) analyzed survey responses on Canada's 1993 Violence Against Women Survey to determine if there was a relationship between stranger or non-stranger sexual harassment and women's subsequent perceptions of safety. They found that stranger sexual harassment is a key determinant of perceived safety among women in that it reduces feelings of safety while they are alone in various social spaces (MacMillan et al. 2000). In fact, the majority of the research examining exactly what college women are most afraid of has found that they perceive themselves at greater risk of crimes committed by strangers (Day 1994; Hilinski 2010). It is important to remember, however, that men are more likely to be

victimized by crime than women (Britton 2011; del Carmen et al. 2000; Dobbs et al. 2009; Fox et al. 2009) and that most of the violence committed against women is perpetrated by acquaintances, not by strangers (Fisher and Cullen 2000; Fisher et al. 2000; Hollander 2000). This is a key point to consider, particularly in relation to research on how women's fear functions as a form of social control, as it is unclear whether women's fear of crime is actually warranted.

Another study conducted by Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003) examined the accuracy of routine activity theory, which suggests that victimization is associated with an individual's lifestyle, daily routine, and demographic characteristics (also see Cohen and Felson 1979). They discovered that students who engage in a greater number of activities that take them out of their homes and closer to potential offenders are more likely to use self-protective measures, such as traveling with others, to protect themselves from danger (Tewksbury and Mustaine 2003). While this study does not focus exclusively on whether participants had been previously victimized as MacMillan and his colleagues' study did, it does look at the relationship between the anticipation of crime and danger and the strategies that students adopt to stay safe from harm. Later studies have also found that individuals who limit their behavior and avoid certain spaces because of their fear of crime should, as a result, decrease their prospective chances of victimization (Miethe, Stafford, and Sloane 1990). These limitations and constraints on one's behaviors, however, have also been found to increase women's fear of crime, particularly that of rape (Ferraro 1996; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Hilinski 2010; Rader 2004).

A third study came to a very different conclusion about the impact that previous victimization experiences can have on students' precautionary behaviors on the college campus. In a survey of female students, Wilcox and colleagues (2007) found that women's experiences with victimization, generally speaking, had little relation to their precautionary behavior, although "previous sexual victimization by a stranger more than doubled the odds of carrying or owning something for protection in comparison to sexual assault nonvictimization" (p. 242). Related to this finding is the notion that one's prior experience of serious offenses, including sexual assault by a stranger, can provoke greater fear and perceived risk, leading individuals to engage in specific kinds of precautionary behaviors more than they would after experiencing other forms of victimization (Dobbs et al. 2009; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Warr 1984).

To summarize, actual fears are those arising as a consequence of environmental cues in a given social setting, along with one's prior experience of victimization, while anticipated fears are those threats that an individual perceives in a particular setting and that may or may not be grounded in any immediate threats of danger. Most critical to this discussion is that the aforementioned studies have revealed women's fear of strangers, a fear that is not actually warranted when considering data on reported crime. As discussed, both actual and anticipated fears clearly have an impact on individuals' use of precautionary strategies as they navigate through various social spaces. It is unclear, however, whether individuals who limit and constrain their behaviors and levels of participation on the college campus by adopting these techniques actually feel safer and more secure as a result (see Ferraro 1996; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Hilinski 2010; Rader

2004). Although men and women admit to adopting these strategies for different reasons, the underlying theme is that they do so for the purposes of self-protection. Individuals, and particularly women, on college campuses and in other social spaces seem to use precautionary strategies as a result of their anticipated and actual fear of potential danger and harm.

Safety in Numbers as a Precautionary Strategy

One of the most common precautionary and defensive strategies that individuals use to stay safe in various social spaces at night is the practice of safety in numbers (Bennett and Flavin 1994; Day 1999; Day, Stump, and Carreon 2003; Dobbs et al. 2009; Fisher and May 2009; Garofalo 1981; Hilinski 2010; Jennings et al. 2007; Starkweather 2007; Warr 1990; Williams, Singh, and Singh 1994). It is the idea that we are safer traveling with others than we would be alone, with the implicit assumption that someone would come to our rescue should we encounter danger on the way to our destination (Warr 1990). The concept of safety in numbers is similar to the buddy system or to other groups that may be pre-planned by students in an effort to stay safe and avoid harm, particularly at night. Bennett and Flavin (1994) explain that

High group strength is indicated by clearly defined boundaries of the group, selective group admission, strong identification among members, and a willingness to act on the behalf of members...fear of crime should be lowest under conditions of high group strength because of the protection and support that a group affords its members. (P. 364)

When thinking about the strategy of safety in numbers, formal groups, such as those described by Bennett and Flavin, are generally pre-planned with the purpose of providing protection to the members within them. Pre-planned or existing groups are very different

from those that are more informal in nature, which are generally not really groups at all. The individuals within them might happen to be traveling to the same destination or are walking in the same general direction. These groups tend to have more fluid boundaries because those within them are not actually together as a cohesive unit.

In several different studies about campus safety, students mentioned feeling safe while they were traveling alone on campus at night as long as other students or campus-related people happened to be around them, even if those individuals were strangers (Day 1994; Fisher and May 2009; Warr 1990). In his study on the cues that can lead individuals to believe they are in danger, for example, Mark Warr (1990) found that “if the presence of others reduces fear through a presumption that offenders prefer isolated targets, then the presence of strangers (assuming they are nonthreatening) may be as reassuring as that of, say, friends” (p. 905). This finding illustrates the concept of informal groups. Individuals often feel just as safe around others who they are not in a formal or pre-planned group with, so long as those others are deemed to not be a threat. Ironically, aside from theft, the majority of crimes that occur on campus are perpetrated by other students (McConnell 1997). Warr’s (1990) finding seems to be in stark contrast to those emerging from the literature on fear as a form of social control, as students tend to express being most fearful of the unknown, including strangers in the darkness (Day 1994, 1999; Fisher and May 2009; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Fox et al. 2009; Franklin and Franklin 2009; Goffman 1971; Haskell and Randall 1998; Hilinski 2010; Little et al. 2005; MacMillan et al. 2000; McConnell 1997; Stanko 1995; Starkweather 2007; Wilcox et al. 2007; Williams 2008). What does not seem to be explained within the literature are

the processes through which students evaluate whether strangers (or other students) are safe or pose a threat to their personal safety as they are traveling to their destinations, nor how such evaluations restrict and inhibit their future movement and participation on the college campus.

The concept of groups loitering or hanging out on campus is also a compelling one because the presence of groups that individuals are not a part of can carry different meanings, depending on the size and overall age and gender composition of the group in question. For both male and female students, groups of loitering youth cause greater levels of concern, particularly if the members of those groups are males. Male students have reported that they are more fearful of these kinds of situations because they are outnumbered and perceive that they have little to no control over what could potentially happen (Day et al. 2003; Fisher and May 2009). This fear in men could be linked to the fact that the crimes they fear most are aggravated assault (Day et al. 2003; Fisher and May 2009) and robbery (Dobbs et al. 2009; Reid and Konrad 2004). Contrasting this idea with the strategy of safety in numbers reaffirms that groups have different meanings for individuals depending on whether or not they are a member of that particular group. Groups can incite fear in those who do not belong to them, but they can also provide a feeling of safety from harm and danger to those who do belong to them.

Staying with the group and avoiding separation is a strategy that is used mainly by women to counteract the fear that they tend to have as they are moving through different social spaces alone at night (Haskell and Randall 1998). Women use this safety strategy mainly to avoid potential sexual violence that they believe will happen at the hands of

strangers lurking on campus. Men also use this strategy to avoid potential danger, though they are hesitant to describe their use of safety in numbers in this manner.

In one of the few studies of men's fear in public space, Day and colleagues (2003) interviewed a large sample of male undergraduates at the University of California - Irvine. They found that group association for men is strongly linked to the construction of masculinity, in that being with a group discourages potential attackers and confrontation by magnifying one's presence in the space (Day et al. 2003; Fisher and May 2009). It seems clear that for the men interviewed in this study, there was some reluctance to admit that groups made them feel safer than they would be if they were traveling alone. For them, the role of the group was about proving to potential attackers that they had control over the space they inhabited.

The concept of men's fear in public space and the role that safety in numbers can have on their perceptions of security deserves more attention. For example, previous research has not explored the ways in which the construction of masculinity and of femininity prevent men from being able to admit fear in certain spaces and conditions, along with the strategies they might use to cope with those feelings.

III. METHODS

The Present Study

As a result of this review of the literature, the present study seeks to determine how students' perceptions of safety are gendered, specifically examining how women's fear of their personal safety serves to prevent their participation on the college campus and ultimately in the broader social world. Previous studies have investigated how fear operates as a form of social control on the college campus, but they have not explored how this reinforces gender inequalities, maintaining women's subordination to men in the university setting and beyond. Previous studies have also failed to acknowledge the factors, including existing campus security measures and local crime reports, that promote and lessen students' perceptions of safety and danger on campus. For example, there have not been any studies to date comparing the security measures that are in place at institutions of higher education to make students feel safer, along with the positive or negative effects of such measures on campus crime. Additionally, recent research on students' perceptions of safety on campus employs either qualitative techniques through interviews with the students themselves (e.g., Day et al. 2003; Haskell and Randall 1998; Hollander 2000) or quantitative techniques through the analysis of surveys and questionnaires (e.g., Blair, Seo, Torabi, and Kaldahl 2004; del Carmen et al. 2000; Dobbs et al. 2009; Fisher and May 2009; Fisher and Sloan 2003; Fisher et al. 2000; Fox et al. 2009; Hilinski 2010; Jennings, Gover, et al. 2007; Kaminski et al. 2010; McConnell

1997; Rader et al. 2009; Reed and Ainsworth 2007; Sulkowski 2011; Tewksbury and Mustaine 2003; Tomsich, Gover, and Jennings 2011; Wilcox et al. 2007; Woolnough 2009), while only two studies have utilized a mixed methods design that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods (Day 1999; Starkweather 2007).

This study intends to account for each of these gaps in previous research, while also proposing recommendations that colleges and universities can use to help make their students feel more comfortable as they further their educations to become contributing members of society. By examining the strategies that students adopt to stay safe on campus, colleges and universities will be better able to address the fears that students have as they navigate through spaces on campus to travel to class and other activities.

In the interviews that I conducted as part of this study, for example, Mason students repeatedly expressed a general distrust of and level of skepticism about the University Police. While students are more than willing to disclose their unease with various physical spaces on campus, they remain wary of any assistance that the University Police and associated security measures (e.g., the emergency blue lights or student police cadets) would ever be able to provide in the event of an emergency. Previous studies have also highlighted students' concerns about campus police forces (e.g., Sulkowski 2011). Such suspicion of the police causes concern, especially as students, and women in particular, admit to feeling unsafe and fearful in various spaces on campus. By developing a set of recommendations at the conclusion of this study that campuses, and particularly George Mason University, can adopt to help make their

students feel safer, concerns like this may be alleviated, potentially providing all students with more equal access to learning at institutions of higher education.

Qualitative Approach

This research was conducted using a mixed methods approach, combining field observations, in-depth individual and focus group interviews, and content analysis with statistical techniques. While qualitative and quantitative data can be quite revealing by themselves, I strongly believe that they can paint an even richer picture of the social world when combined as they are used to address different aspects of a research question like my own.

I initially began this research during the fall 2008 semester as an undergraduate working on the Diversity Research Group's Ethnography of Diversity project, while also taking the Feminist Approaches to Social Research (SOC 395) and Gender Research Project (SOC 395) year-long course sequence. I did not embark on this study with one clear research question in mind, but instead entered the field with a general interest in students' perceptions of safety on campus based on my own feelings about it as a student at Mason. Over the course of this project, I spoke with a total of 24 Mason students and staff (including 14 women and 10 men) through eight individual interviews and four focus groups during the fall 2008, spring 2009, and fall 2011 semesters (see Appendix I for "Chart of Qualitative Materials Collected and Individuals Interviewed"). Additionally, I conducted two participant observations of the Presidential Task Force during the spring 2011 semester.

Interview and focus group participants include current students and staff who represent the Community Adjudication Board (CAB), a student-led board that hears cases of alleged violations of the University's Code of Student Conduct; Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program, which consists of a network of trained student volunteers who provide information (at the Peer Educator level), support (at the Peer Companion level), and direct assistance (at the Peer Advocate level) to survivors of sexual assault; Student Government; the student police cadets; the University Police; and the general student population. In the early stages of this project, I decided that I did not want to interview friends or those with whom I had close preexisting relationships. One of my main reasons for doing this was that my friends tend to know what my interests are, and I did not want the direction or outcome of this research to be biased in any way. While this initially made my recruitment efforts rather difficult, it did allow me to speak with new people and to network with individuals who share similar interests in and concerns about safety on campus. To recruit participants for interviews, networking techniques became quite useful as those I knew in various organizations on campus were able to put me in touch with key individuals to interview. Snowball sampling was generally used thereafter with the use of a recruitment email that I would adapt based on the target audience of interest (see Appendix II for "Recruitment Email to Potential Participants").

My first interview participant, who was recommended to me by a professor, was a University Police officer. This contact proved to be quite beneficial as the officer learned about my interests in the student cadet program and ultimately introduced me to their

supervisor, who worked with me to coordinate a cadet focus group. After speaking with the cadets and hearing their views about safety on campus, I became curious about how students in other safety groups at Mason felt and whether they would have similar responses to my questions. Having previously volunteered and interned with Sexual Assault Services as an undergraduate at Mason, I knew about their Peer Support Program and emailed then-Director Connie Kirkland about my research. She agreed to forward a variation of my recruitment email to the Peers, and I was able to individually interview four students and one staff member who are affiliated with that program. I utilized a similar strategy for the CAB. As a graduate student representative on the CAB since the spring 2010 semester, I mentioned my project to several other student members during one of our monthly team meetings and later sent my recruitment email with more details to the full group. Those I interviewed in focus groups from the general student population were generally acquaintances who were recruited through other participants or through mutual friends. Only the final focus group was intended to be gender-specific because I was curious about the dynamics and conversation that would take place in an all-male group about safety on campus, based on the other data I had collected previously.

Before beginning the interviews and focus groups, I would provide each of my participants with an informed consent form, which had received approval from George Mason University's Human Subjects Review Board (see Appendices III, IV, and V for the three variations of the informed consent form that were used throughout this project). Participants were asked to sign the consent forms and to indicate if they were comfortable

with being audio-recorded, which they all were. Each of my individual and focus group interviews were semi-structured, in that I would have a few general prompts prepared to get my participants speaking and then the rest of the interview would unfold like a conversation (see Appendix VI for “Interview and Focus Group Guide for Student Participants” and Appendix VII for “Interview Guide for Faculty & Staff Participants”). Immediately following the interviews and focus groups, the audio-recordings were transcribed and coded by the author. All participants were provided with pseudonyms (which are listed in Appendix I) for the purposes of this analysis to protect the identities of those who were interviewed and who may have been critical of the services provided on campus.

Individual and focus group interviews are important to this research, as they reveal how various members of the Mason community construct, talk about, and make meaning out of their perceptions of safety and danger on campus (Connell 2010; Esterberg 2002). Speaking directly with members of the Mason community has allowed me to see how students view potential dangers on the college campus and how they deal with such threats in their daily lives, in addition to seeing any discrepancies between various participants’ perceptions of threats. I found it particularly important to speak with individuals from both the general student population and violence awareness groups, as mentioned earlier and as indicated in Appendix I, to determine if their perceptions of campus safety are different from one another.

Additionally, I conducted observations of two open meetings of the Presidential Task Force during the spring 2011 semester. This group was established in April 2011 in

response to the arrest and felony abduction charge of a Mason student in Fenwick Library during the previous month. The Task Force's main charge from President Merten was "to seek input from members of the George Mason community on their interactions and experiences with the University Police Department" (see Appendix VIII for "Charge of the 2011 Presidential Task Force"). This observation experience serves to enrich my other data as I heard a total of 10 students and 5 faculty and staff (including 4 women and 11 men) speak, publicly voicing their experiences and concerns about the University Police with the Task Force during the open meetings.

After sharing the findings of their review with University President Alan Merten during the summer of 2011, the Task Force made their findings public through a series of institutional reports that were released to the Mason community via email in October 2011. These documents, along with the annual report released by the University Police during the 2011-2012 academic year, will be analyzed for content and referenced in Chapter V, separate from individuals' accounts of safety and danger, which will be presented in Chapter IV. Such reports are used to assess the institutional context of these issues by examining how the university presents both safety and potential risks to the campus community. Additionally, these reports are used to understand how membership to the university community is framed through these public documents, along with the influence that such framing might have on the campus community's perceptions of who belongs (i.e., is safe) and does not belong (i.e., is not safe) on campus.

Quantitative Approach

As mentioned above, previous studies have neglected to make the connection between students' perceptions of safety on campus and those incidents of crime that are reported to campus law enforcement officials. For the quantitative portion of this research, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI, data from two separate datasets were utilized to help contextualize the findings that emerged from the qualitative data, while also determining the impact that the implementation of various security measures might have on the occurrence of on-campus crime. These datasets include the 2004-2005 Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the U.S. Department of Education's 2006-2007 Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool.

Multiple regression is used to examine the effects of security measures implemented and the female to male enrollment ratio on the incidence of both on-campus violent and property crime, while controlling for the type of institution, the geographic size of the institution, and total student enrollment. It is hypothesized that campuses with a greater number of security features in place will have fewer incidents of crime reported. It is anticipated, however, that there will be an interaction effect between gender (measured here by a female to male enrollment ratio) and the number of safety features that have been implemented on a given campus. Specifically, for institutions that have more females than males enrolled and score relatively high on the safety scale, one would expect that fewer numbers of crimes would be reported, due both to gender role expectations and studies indicating that men tend to be the perpetrators of crime (see Franklin and Franklin 2009; Reid and Konrad 2004; Stanko 1995). If fewer men are

enrolled at an institution and males are typically the ones committing crime, then presumably there would be less crime occurring on those particular campuses. Further, a greater number of security measures in place would seem to lessen the occurrence of crime even more.

IV. PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY: FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

In my interviews and focus groups with members of the university community and in my observations of the two open meetings held by the Presidential Task Force in April 2011, four key themes emerged in individuals' accounts of their experiences with safety on campus. These themes are that: (1) male and female students have different perspectives on fear and what it means to be afraid for one's personal safety; (2) male and female students identify similar types of spaces as producing general feelings of discomfort on campus; (3) male and female students share similar concerns about the overall effectiveness of campus security features, of the University Police, and of the student police cadets; and (4) male and female students differ in their development of precautionary strategies to compensate for their feelings of fear on campus.

Gendered Discussions of Fear

When asked to describe the feelings that define fear, both male and female students similarly spoke of situations in which they have no sense of control. Three of the participants in the all-male focus group, for example had the following exchange.

Bobby: I think fear I guess is more when you have a physiological response and anxiety is when you're kinda concerned about something, but there's no physical um, trigger.

Shannon: Okay.

Vince: Probably a loss of control in a situation or um, a fear of personal harm in any manifestation, such as monetary, bodily, mental, emotional...

Owen: And also it can be like stereotype from what you see in the movies and shows, so when you face a similar situation, then you automatically tend to think that something's going to go wrong, but it can...end up in a positive way.

Important in this discussion is the distinction between anxiety, or the feeling of being worried about the possibility of something happening, and fear, or the loss of control and the physiological response to a cue in the environment. Similarly, Maria described danger as “any situation in which you feel like you are over your head and unable to handle yourself.” That is, for both male and female students, fear and danger involve the feeling that an individual has no control over their surrounding environment or personal well-being. In an individual interview, William expanded on this concept, distinguishing between anxiety and fear. He explained that anxiety “is the worry of something that is going to—that may occur. Fear is the actuality of an event that will occur...That fear could be both immediate in the sense that, you know, all of a sudden the guy in front of you, like a guy just jumps out in front of you with a knife.” Although his definition is quite similar to the one identified in the focus group, also included within William’s definition of fear is an example of the scenario he finds most fearful, which happens to include an armed male who suddenly jumps out from behind something.

When discussing their perceptions of safety on campus, all students generally described hypothetical instances in which another individual or group imposed upon their sense of personal space by not maintaining the normal boundaries and divisions within a specific space. As male participants never actually disclosed any strategies that they use to ensure their safety on campus, these are the types of incidents that female students most often spoke of when sharing the strategies they use to avoid possible danger. Gina

revealed that she views everyone as a potential suspect when she is out at night. She explained,

...when I went out that late everybody is suspect in my eyes like that's just me...I wanna remember who I saw walking...I don't know I just, I feel like I'm creepy when I'm out that late 'cause it's like why are you out, so I was like "what are you doing?"

In a separate interview, Brenda seemed to expand on Gina's statement by stressing the importance of making eye contact with those you pass at night. Brenda asserted,

...the number one thing you can do is look at every single person that you come near and you know as soon as you make eye contact with them, if they're planning anything, they're going to be like "okay, they've seen my face, they've made eye contact with me."

Being aware of and making eye contact with those around you appears to be a strategy that (female) students use particularly when they walk around campus at night as a way of avoiding potential violations of their physical space. Making eye contact with the individuals they pass both lets possible violators know that they have been seen and can be identified and it might also serve to humanize a potential victim in the eyes of the would-be violator.

When talking about violations of physical space, most of the female students I spoke with discussed the importance of following your intuition when entering a particular situation or approaching a certain person, which is indicative of the ways in which women have been socialized to listen to their feelings. In general, when talking about their perceptions of safety on campus, male participants did not discuss the strategies they use to stay safe on campus nor did they divulge any of the specific feelings they get in dangerous situations. The following series of statements were each provided

during separate interviews with female students, but each highlights the idea that danger is something that is perceived by an individual and cannot be easily defined.

Becky: ...[when] women have an intuition about something, you need to follow it...if you're nervous about somebody there's a reason for it.

Natalie: ...if the back of your mind is saying don't go there, maybe there is something there. But it's not something that should be ignored and it kinda depends on different people.

Nicole: I think that if you get that gut feeling that something is not right then you should always stay on your guard with it.

These female students' statements are interesting because they show that danger is more of a feeling than a term with a specific definition. Other than listing characteristics such as dark or wooded spaces, these students often found it difficult to define "danger" because of the fact that the feeling is reliant upon the circumstances of a given situation.

Alternatively, two students from the all-male focus group responded with the following rather flippant exchange when I asked how they would define a dangerous situation.

Neil: Obviously if you're like kinda isolated...if you're on your own and you don't have like any support system or anything else to deal with...if you're being followed, that's kind of creepy always, but [laughs] yeah, I think that's, that probably I would feel threatened, but not like enough to start running, you know...

James: [laughing]

Neil: Yeah, if somebody like starts harassing you, then I'd kinda feel threatened.

Shannon: Okay.

Neil: Yeah.

Shannon: So there's a safety in numbers sort of thing?

Neil: Yeah.

James: I would say just being followed. Other than that, I don't have any sense of danger for some reason, yeah. Either I'm like surrounded by people trying to kill me, you know, or I'm fine. [group laughs]

For these male students, danger and fear are not defined by feelings or gut reactions like they are for the female students I spoke with. Instead, they refer to actual physical threats, including individuals who are either harassing them or attempting to cause bodily harm. The performance of masculinity in this all-male focus group was quite evident as Neil expressed feeling “kinda” threatened at the thought of someone harassing him, but not enough to run for help, and James shared his view that he doesn’t perceive any real source of danger. If these male students’ statements are indeed accurate portrayals of their perceptions of safety on campus, it is clear that fear is not altering their behaviors or preventing their engagement in campus activities like it may be for several of the female students I interviewed.

When I spoke with a University Police officer about the escort service, for example, he described the following scenario to demonstrate the sense of security that a cadet escort can provide to (female) students who experience that gut feeling that something is not right as they are walking alone on campus at night. He said,

...you’re in class, you worked until 10 o’clock, you stopped in to talk to the teacher for a few minutes ‘cause you want to get clarification on an assignment, and you spend 15 minutes and you walk out the door and you’re walking out and you’ve never been here past, you know, 8 o’clock before. And you walk outside and you go “Holy shit, it’s dark outside”...and it looks creepy. K? ...when you walk out of that classroom, what is it that instills the fear that when we walk outside, “Whoa, this is creepy, this is abandoned.” Well, our mind gets rolling. It’s “Oh my god, someone’s going to attack me”...

Those I interviewed tend to agree that we have a campus that is generally safe, yet many of them (generally female participants) admitted to getting a creepy feeling when walking into the darkness because their minds begin creating scenarios about all of the things that *could* happen. It is also worth noting that what both female and male students tend to

fear is an attack perpetrated by a man. No one ever mentioned being afraid of the prospect that a woman could be lurking in the dark waiting for them to walk by.

In female students' discussions of potential danger on campus, the scenarios they described tended to reveal that they have a fear of interlopers, or individuals who are not direct members of the Mason community, coming onto campus. Male students, however, were not as quick to share this concern during their interviews. Fiona, a student in the police cadet program, explained how it can be scary to work the early morning shifts. She said,

Between four and six a.m. it's kinda scary...all the cleaning people are either coming in or leaving for the day and you can like hear them and see them outside but you're not really sure who they are. That's happened to me a few times walking across campus and like through the trees like I'll see a silhouette of someone or I'll hear like leaves rustling or rattles dragging and...then I just see somebody like pushing a garbage can or like raking leaves or something like that and I'm like oh...

Here you can see the kind of emotional rollercoaster that Fiona is briefly taken on as she imagines who is behind the noises in the darkness. You can almost sense the amount of relief she feels when she realizes that it is just a member of the cleaning staff and not an interloper creeping around on campus.

Gina described a similar experience that she had when walking back to her dorm after setting up one of the "shacks" in the Free Speech Zone on campus for her sorority during Greek Week's annual Shackathon, which is a fundraising effort led by students in Mason's various Greek organizations. It was around five o'clock in the morning and she described a man that was seen slowly driving around Patriot Circle and who appeared to be following her and her friend. She said,

...me and my friend were actually like “what is he doing?” Like and he was older so I, I mean I don’t think there are employees on campus at five o’clock in the morning and it just, it just was weird, you know? ...The community comes on campus—it’s not just Mason. We’re not in a gated community.

The fear of interlopers on campus is a concept that can be tied back to Adrienne Rich’s discussion of the impact that the anticipation of potential danger can have on female students’ access to learning. Women on campus take this possibility seriously and take a variety of precautions to ensure that their space is not violated by walking with friends, avoiding certain spaces, or questioning whether they should engage in certain activities at all.

It is important to remember, however, that in terms of sexual assault (this is the violation that was implicit in female students’ discussions of danger on campus), the perpetrator is generally not a stranger waiting in the darkness, but is instead someone the victim knows. Because of this, women’s fear of the interloper on campus serves as a distraction away from those who actually pose the greatest threat – male friends and acquaintances. The students I spoke with who had been educated about the issues around safety and violence tended to raise the concept of acquaintance rape in their discussions about campus safety and danger. Nicole asked,

Personally do I feel safe walking to my car at night? Yes. Do I think that’s because I know the facts about who the perpetrator typically is?...we don’t ever like to try and scare people, but...just kind of being educated um, you know, knowing that it’s typically acquaintances. It’s around like ninety percent of the time it’s someone that you know.

Here Nicole describes why she is not afraid of walking to her car at night, attributing it to the fact that she has been educated about safety issues as a Peer Companion in Sexual Assault Services’ Peer Support Program. She understands that the typical perpetrator is

not someone lurking behind a tree on the path by Mason Pond (though this could be entirely possible), but is generally an acquaintance of the victim. This is an interesting point to consider when thinking about students' fears of interlopers on campus and how they could be better educated to understand the facts about who the typical perpetrator could actually be.

Similar to Nicole, William is a member of the Community Adjudication Board (CAB), another violence awareness student group on campus. While he disclosed that he generally views campus as safe, he did share the impact that joining the CAB had on his perceptions and overall understanding of safety on campus. He explained,

It was very interesting to me that I had very little idea of these kinds of occurrences that happen on campus. And you're kind of led to believe that those kinds of incidents don't happen on campus almost. I mean...it's very much, you know, it's what an institution does. An institution protects itself.

William emphasized the fact that he had never experienced anything that compromised the integrity of student safety on campus, a point which – when taken with Nicole's earlier statement – illustrates how male and female students are quite similar in their simultaneous and very conflicted perceptions of campus as being both safe and dangerous. Further, William also raised an important point about the ways in which the institution builds its image as a safe space both within the university community and beyond. He later suggested that "...to maintain their integrity and their public perception, there is definitely a sort of silencing effect that happens between, you know, cops from the institution and then the student body at large." Why and how the institution does this, along with the potential impacts that such presentations can have on students' perceptions of safety are the subject of Chapter V.

Spaces of Discomfort on Campus

When speaking with students about their perceptions of safety on campus, it became clear that there is a general consensus among male and female students that our campus is safe, meaning that most of the time, students feel comfortable that they are not walking into harm's way. Poorly lit and wooded spaces, however, were consistently raised by all students as characteristics of unsafe and potentially dangerous areas on campus. Students' hesitance and discomfort with walking through these types of spaces can be more clearly illustrated in the following excerpt from my interview with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: There's a lot of times that I wouldn't go through, you know, the woods where they have a lot of those walkways. Now some of them are really well lit and you can see straight through and straight through to the other side...but if they're not, to me that's really uncomfortable and I don't think it wise to go through there.

Shannon: Are there any specific places you have in mind when you say that?

Elizabeth: Well I don't know for sure, but I wonder about the whole trail um, that's down by the pond...it didn't strike me as someplace I'd be comfortable with at night.

In her description of this "creepy space" on campus, Elizabeth highlights the importance of being able to see what's around you. Darkness seems to increase the perception that an area is not safe, which could be attributed to the fact that you can't see your surroundings and that you do not necessarily know if anything threatening is there.

William echoed this concern about the lack of light along that same path. He explained,

...one of the things that I tend to find a little disconcerting about the physical health of students is how little light there is. Um, you know when you pass Mason Pond and you're like at, by Lot K and Lot J? Like that street there, there's very little light.

Students' apprehension about dark spaces is related to the concept of the fear of the unknown. This finding is consistent with that mentioned by Jennings and colleagues (2007) in their article about safety on college campuses. They explain that

...personal and contextual factors ranging from vulnerability to the adequacy of lighting on campus have been found to influence fear of crime in college samples...Students on campus will be more fearful of crime when there is low prospect (such as lack of a clear open view of the area), lack of escape from a potential offender, and a high possibility of refuge for the offender to hide. (P. 194)

The discomfort with these types of spaces is reflected in Elizabeth's statement, especially in her descriptions of the wooded walkways and the path by the Mason Pond. Both of which allow little room for escape and no clear line of sight, thus increasing her level of fear and discomfort in those particular spaces. The concern with darkness on campus and with the wooded pathways was also highlighted in my conversation with Natalie.

Shannon: Are there any spaces you avoid when it's late like that?

Natalie: Anything that's dark.

Shannon: Where?

Natalie: Over near the pond. If there's not a bunch of people walking down it, then usually I'll walk all the way around Patriot Circle...It's one of the easiest things to do.

It is compelling how each of these participants refer to the wooded pathway by Mason Pond as they are describing characteristics of creepy spaces that produce feelings of fear on campus. Students who commute to campus and park in Lots J or K must use the path by Mason Pond, as it is the most direct route to the main areas on campus. This path is just one example of a space that makes students the most nervous on campus, particularly at night. Some students, including Natalie, mentioned how they would purposely avoid the pathway at night, even if this involved walking around the pond along Patriot Circle.

While it is understandable that students would choose to do this, it could prove to be dangerous if students are venturing into areas with which they are less familiar at night. Natalie's statements also illustrate how women's fear on campus can serve to alter their behaviors.

Concerns about the Effectiveness of Campus Security Features, the University Police, and the Student Police Cadets

Some of the students who continue to walk on the path by Mason Pond at night are able to find comfort in the fact that there is an emergency call box conveniently located about midway along the path, while others are skeptical as to whether or not the call boxes even work. Becky revealed that she is asked to use the call boxes on campus as a selling point for the university and to tell prospective students that if they need help they can press the button on the call box for assistance from the University Police. She explained,

That's not true because the company, the vendor that made the call boxes, went out of business and so when a call box breaks down, you can't fix 'em...So they don't ever know how many call boxes they actually have and they don't even know if they actually work.

This is a troubling issue that Becky raises as many students likely rely on the idea that the call boxes are there to assist them, should they ever need to use one. The *2011 Annual Security Report* that is prepared each year by the University Police even highlights that "parking lots, sidewalks, and all major walkways are lit at night. Call boxes throughout these areas, which are easily located in daylight by their orange color and at night by their blue lights, provide instant communication with the University Police or the Escort Service" (p. 8). Becky also shared that

When you walk around [laughing], you'll see a call box that doesn't even have wires connected to it...Like I know last year in Potomac, the call box [laughing] – it didn't even have wires. It was just a box that says "Emergency Call Box." Same with the one in the Sandy Creek Parking Deck [now the Shenandoah Parking Deck]. That one hasn't had – I don't know if it has wires yet, but – and these haven't had wires for years!

If Becky's statements are accurate, it is compelling to consider why the university would decide not to remove call boxes that have been disconnected or are broken. As Becky puts it, the call boxes are "security placebo." They may serve a symbolic function in that many members of the Mason community trust that they can simply push a button and be helped by the police, however, this is quite problematic if the equipment is indeed not functional. Later in her interview, Becky warned, "...if you're thinking 'oh yeah, I can just sprint to that call box right there. Oh, I'm next to the call box, I'm kinda safe right now.' You don't know if that thing works...most likely it doesn't." Melissa echoed a similar sentiment when asked about safety on campus. She said,

Do I feel like campus itself is safe? Not particularly with all the wooded areas, the lack of lighting...I mean there's always the blue call boxes, but most people say that they don't even work. So if you're not gonna have that work for you then it's not particularly safe.

Although the presence of the call boxes may serve a symbolic safety function for members of the Mason community, several of my participants mentioned the concern that taking the time to push the button on the potentially dysfunctional call box could consume valuable seconds in which a possible victim could be calling the police on a cell phone or attempting to ward off an attacker. Quite reasonably, some expressed the view that it would be better if the call boxes were removed so that students would not rely on a piece of equipment that doesn't work for help. It could be that the call boxes are not

removed because they operate as a deterrent and as a way of preventing possible crime. It is important to note, however, that none of the students who raised concerns about the emergency call boxes had ever actually tried to use them or knew of anyone who had. At the same time, the fact that (female) students share this general perception that faulty security equipment exists on campus is quite disconcerting and could serve to elevate their fears of potential safety risks.

William was the only male to express concern about the emergency call boxes, particularly in terms of how unnoticeable they are. In my discussion with him, he happened to refer to another Virginia public university's emergency call boxes as a useful security feature. When I informed William that Mason also has call boxes on campus, he responded, "I don't think I've noticed them quite as well." He later explained that the specific function of such measures, aside from providing direct and immediate contact with the police, is deterrence. He further suggested that "people knowing that they are there may deter activity just based on the fact that a person could get access to one." William's statement raises questions about the extent to which the implementation of security features on campus impacts the incidence of on-campus crime, a topic that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter VI.

Perhaps the most discouraging finding that has emerged from both my interviews and focus groups and my observations of the open meetings held by the Presidential Task Force involved Mason community members' general distrust of the University Police and unwillingness to use the escort service provided by the student cadets. During my interview with Denise and Lindsay, for example, they mentioned that the University

Police “call for back-up for anything,” explaining that there often seems to be an excessive police presence on campus. Their attitudes toward the police, which are quite illustrative of conversations in other interviews, can be seen in the following excerpt.

Lindsay: I think ‘cause they are bored and there’s so many like you could go to the parking lot and there’s like so many, you know, it’s like “why?” Not – I mean a lot of people live on campus, but not like...you don’t need that many to deal with the situations that do happen on campus.

Shannon: Do you think students trust the Mason police or do you think –

Lindsay: Hell no.

Denise: I think they find ‘em more annoying than trusting, you know?

These students express their aggravation with the University Police due to their perception that there are too many of them on campus. Because the police are visible on campus, Mason students take this to mean that the officers have little to do and, as such, are out looking for individuals to apprehend. Rather than finding the police presence beneficial to ensuring the overall safety of the Mason community, students’ annoyance instead leads to intense feelings of distrust. This view was also shared by Becky, who believes that the police are indeed looking for students who might be headed to underage parties. She explained,

Sometimes I think that they think they know more than what they actually do and they assume too much...and they don’t do things either to help build that trust either, you know? Like two years ago it was a witch hunt. If you looked like you were going to a party, you know, you got pulled over...You want people to feel like they can call you.

Becky is concerned that the way the police approach the issue of underage parties is eroding the university community’s trust in their efforts. Because of this, she believes that students will be less likely to call the police for help in situations when they actually need it.

Similar views about Mason community members' feelings of distrust toward the police were expressed during the two open meetings held by the Presidential Task Force, where attendees were asked only to speak if they had previously had a personal experience with the University Police (see Appendix IX for "Letter Distributed to Presidential Task Force Open Meeting Attendees in April 2011"). One female faculty member who spoke at an open meeting expressed that the Task Force was a "long time coming," due to a "pattern of abuses with no resolution." She also shared her concern about attending the open meeting and voicing her opinion for fear of retaliation when she said, "I don't want the police tailing me." This was an interesting statement, particularly when it came time for a break a few moments later and a visiting scholar asked if he could take a photo of the proceedings. One of the women who was in charge of organizing the open meetings and ensuring that speakers had signed in when they entered the room announced that if we didn't want to appear in the photo as a meeting participant or attendee, we should quickly move to the back of the room. Sitting in the room as an observer, I found this to be an odd message to those in the room, particularly given that her comment was shaped by the immediate context of the open meeting. My understanding of the space was that it was intended to make Mason community members feel comfortable with sharing their concerns about the University Police, in light of the incident in the library (which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V), but this announcement seemed to convey an entirely different tone. It was as though she was conceding the point that we were placing ourselves in some kind of jeopardy if we were documented as having been in the room. Needless to say, it was a compelling exchange

after the faculty member expressed her fear of retaliation for voicing her opinion and concerns at the meeting.

Others shared related concerns about the University Police, especially in terms of their perception that the police are looking for problems on campus, which is consistent with Lindsay and Denise's earlier assertions that there are too many officers on campus. A second-year male student made the comment that the creation of the Task Force was too late; that the concerns about the University Police were nothing new and had been known to the university community all along. A male faculty member expressed his belief that we "need an organization to police the police." A fourth-year male student explained that the "police at Mason are just trying to get you in trouble [and] seem to make the situation worse." Another fourth-year male student expressed that there are unnecessary tensions between students and the police, along with the general "feeling that Mason Police are here to prosecute rather than protect." This student suggested that there needs to be a permanent place for university community members to voice their concerns about the police beyond the Task Force and that officers should actually patrol the campus on foot (rather than having this be a duty of the cadets) to change the way that they interact with the community.

Of the 15 individuals who spoke at the open meetings, only two came to share positive comments about the University Police. A male staff member who has worked at Mason for over 25 years stated, "from what I see, police work is not easy and I would not trade places." He further explained that he has witnessed the police minimize escalating situations at events where students have been heavily intoxicated. A third-year female

student shared her perception that being a Mason police officer is a difficult job and that it is “hard to understand what they do since it is regulation.” She further explained that “they’re here to protect us” and that she “doesn’t believe they’re out to get us or be horrible.”

As shown, the vast majority of those who participated in the open meetings questioned the adequacy of the University Police. Similarly, many of my own interview participants also expressed that they would be reluctant to call the police for help, and there is general agreement that Mason community members think the police are “out to get” them. It is important to note that, like students’ skepticism of the functionality of the call boxes, community members don’t necessarily need to have had their own personal encounters with the police to jump to these conclusions, but are comfortable forming them based on what they have heard from others. Even with this concept in mind, it is critical to consider the impact that such views of the University Police have on students’ perceptions of fear on campus, particularly when they have such an intense distrust of those who are available to provide assistance. This distrust could lead to heightened feelings of fear, potentially preventing students from participating in activities which they would otherwise engage, due to the fact that they view those who can enforce safety on campus as generally not very useful.

Students also raised concerns about the training of the student cadets. When discussing the use of surveillance on campus, for instance, Vince explained, “I think they’ve um, expanded upon that effort by deploying cadets around campus so you always see them everywhere. Not the most useful people, but...” Similarly, students have

questioned the effectiveness of the escort service, as they wonder whether a cadet would truly be able to protect them in an emergency situation. Several have mentioned feeling more comfortable with the idea of walking through the dark by themselves than with calling for an escort. When discussing the strategies she uses to stay safe, for example, Becky suggests that students should

Follow your intuition, don't knock it off...Call a friend if you, if you feel like a pansy asking for an escort 'cause that's the main reason like I mean...we're girls. We have egos, too. You know? [laughs] I don't want – I don't want people knowing that I had to call a cadet to walk me home. That's embarrassing, you know? I don't want people to think that I'm a sucker...so you'll call a friend. Be like, "Hey, I'm walking home – I'm about to walk home. Um, this is the time I'm leaving, if I'm not home in twenty minutes it means something happened."

In her discussion of the potential strategies that students can use to stay safe are assumptions about gender, fear, and who to ask for help. Becky expresses concern about what others would think of her if she were to call for an escort and seems to prefer walking home by herself, even if it is potentially unsafe, as opposed to risking her reputation and looking like a girl (or a "pansy" or a "sucker"). Her fear appears to prevent her from calling for help, perhaps so as not to reinforce gendered stereotypes about women's dependence on (male) authority figures. Becky also raises questions about how gender affects the very use of the escort service. Implicit in her discussion and particularly in her statement, "we're girls. We have egos, too," is also the assumption that male students will not call for an escort because they have a certain public persona to uphold. It is as though calling for outside help, due to a threat in the surrounding environment, would discredit one's masculinity and independence as a man. This belief was expressed in the following exchange during the all-male focus group.

Neil: As a guy, you're supposed to be more independent than anything else. I mean, I don't know, I'm not really a girl so I don't know that perspective.

James: [suppressing laughter]

Neil: ...but just, just for myself, you're always expected to be more on your own than relying on, you know, like I think I'd be very hesitant to call uh like an es – for escorts and that 'cause it's kind of like why? I can walk across, you know [laughing], it's not that big of a deal. And I work at like a security uh, um like at a hospital. And I know...like every time like a nurse calls, they're fine with it. Every time a guy calls, they're always, always already like "what...you're a man, come on, walk across the damn street"...So that's, it's always I guess in the back of your head, you're supposed to be like that, but I'm already like that. I guess I don't really mind, but and that expectation is always kinda there.

Here, Neil emphasizes how there are different gendered expectations for males and females when it comes to safety and who is free to ask for help. He explains that men are expected to be independent and not ask for help, while women are expected to be more dependent, thus making it more acceptable for women to ask for outside assistance.

As will be shown in the next section, these gendered behavior expectations can lead female and male students to take different kinds of precautions in an attempt to quell their fears about their own personal safety while on campus.

Students' Use of Precautionary Strategies on Campus

To protect themselves against possible danger, female students revealed that they tend to change their behaviors at night. They don't listen to their iPods and they try to stay on lit paths and avoid those that are surrounded by trees or isolated from the rest of campus. Female students also discussed the importance of practicing safety in numbers, although their ideas vary as to exactly what qualifies as "safety in numbers." One definition of this concept was provided during my interview with Melissa after I asked

her if she would feel safe walking alone to her car at night if she were surrounded by other students she did not necessarily know. She explained,

I guess if there were people in front of me and behind me um, I would feel a little more secure because I would feel like nobody would probably attack me 'cause I'm not technically alone...I don't feel like I would need a friend in that instance.

Here, Melissa describes how she would feel safe as long as other people were around her and she was not completely alone. Natalie provided a similar definition of the concept when discussing the buddy system and how individuals should not travel by themselves. She suggested,

Natalie: ...it's the whole safety in numbers thing. It works if you're going into dark places and if you really are all going to your cars, whatever. Yeah. So like at ten o'clock at night, you can't...you've got your numbers there. You don't necessarily need a plan to meet.

Shannon: Right, so you can be surrounded by people you don't...

Natalie: You don't know. Yeah. Or walk behind them, walk in front of them, whatever. You've got people. The numbers are there.

It is interesting, too, to consider that Melissa and Natalie are both involved with Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program and have been extensively educated about strategies for staying safe. They may have provided me with these answers because they are aware of the fact that the majority of sexual violence occurs between acquaintances and not between strangers. My conversation with Becky, however, was quite different. While she is not a Peer, she has taken and taught a number of women's self-defense courses. When asked if she would feel safe walking alone to her car at night if other students were around, she responded with the following.

People you are around should make you nervous because it's people that are going to hurt you. So it's hard to alter your thinking in that way...you shouldn't be afraid to be alone. You should be afraid of somebody getting in your space...I

mean it's good to be with people if you know them. If you don't know them, that's—I'd rather be alone than be with a bunch of strangers.

Although these three female students each provide different ways of defining “safety in numbers,” they each do seem to agree that you are safer being with others (though they disagree about who the others should be) than you would be if you were walking alone.

Another strategy that female students use to avoid any possible violations of their space involves the cell phone. The students I spoke with who had been educated about violence awareness and prevention articulated the importance of not being on your cell phone when you are walking alone at night. Nicole, a student in the Peer Support Program, explained the following.

I don't think that people should be on their cell phones when they're walking at night...I think that if you're going to your car, you should have your keys out, you should be off your cell phone,...and you should be aware of your surroundings...If people see that you're a confident individual, that you know what's going on, that they can't trick you, they're less likely to do anything to you.

The students I interviewed who were most aware of the safety issues affecting female students in particular each mentioned how being on the cell phone can serve as a barrier, blocking an individual's peripheral vision and distracting them from their surroundings. This concept is another one that is interesting to compare to the ideas of students who have not been as educated about safety issues. Women from the general student body mentioned using their cell phones as a way to stay safe while walking alone. This perspective can be illustrated by the responses of Denise and Lindsay after I asked them about the strategies they use to stay safe on campus.

Denise: ...usually when I walk, I usually walk with somebody.

Lindsay: Or be on the phone...I'm usually on the phone.

Denise: Be on the phone, yeah.

Shannon: Do you think that that makes you safer that you know, if something happens, someone's there to hear you?

Denise: Umhmm.

Lindsay: Yeah and you describe what you're wearing—my parents make me do that...where you are, what you were doing, where you're coming from, who you were with...

Denise and Lindsay are discussing how they use their cell phones to comfort themselves as they are walking alone at night and also as a way to let the person on the other end know where they are. It is compelling to compare the situation they described, however, to the idea mentioned by others that the cell phone can serve to distract you from your surroundings. If you are walking along on your phone focusing your attention on explaining what you're wearing, where you're coming from, and where you're going, it does seem as though you will not be as attuned to what is going on around you.

Although Denise and Lindsay described how they use their cell phones as a tool to ensure their safety as they are walking alone at night, Lindsay was also quick to state her sense of her own invincibility on campus. She explained,

Lindsay: I think with safety, I guess I kinda feel like bad things won't happen to me so I don't really...

Denise: Yeah, she has that philosophy.

Lindsay: Yeah, I really think that bad things won't happen to me....so I don't really like...care. I mean I care, but I don't like make too much of it that way.

Because of this perception that she is virtually untouchable by danger, Lindsay finds that she doesn't take extra precautions to ensure her own personal safety. Such perceptions may be influenced by one's sense of familiarity with a given space, perhaps to the point where they become complacent about the level of security in an area and begin to let their

guard down. While male students avoided any discussion of the strategies they use to stay safe on campus, Bobby, a participant in the all-male focus group, described a similar shift toward complacency in response to my question about the factors that contribute to feelings of danger. He explained,

I mean, I guess if it's an area you're not familiar with. I know freshman year, just walking around campus at night was a little, little concerned because I didn't really know the area, but right now I'm pretty comfortable walking around anywhere on campus at night.

Bobby touches on the impact that familiarity with a given area can have on one's perceptions of safety and fear in a particular space. Later, some of his fellow focus group participants chimed in with the following.

Owen: So naturally when you get used to the situation it's like, "okay, this is a safe place, I can go anywhere I want," so...

Neil: Yeah, it's kinda true.

Shannon: Do you think that can be dangerous that you have that feeling that you can go anywhere you want anytime?

[group laughs]

Vince: Wait...what?

Owen: So far, so good. [group laughs]

Again, these students touch on the idea that individuals become complacent about safety and stop taking necessary precautions once they become familiar with a given social space. Bobby mentioned being more diligent as a freshman at Mason (although he never explained what such diligence entailed in terms of specific safety strategies), but now feels more comfortable about traveling around on campus at night. Owen and Neil expressed a similar sentiment that they can go where ever they want whenever they want because of their general familiarity with the area. This level of complacency is

disconcerting as students are less likely to take safety precautions and thus may be making themselves more vulnerable to potential risks.

Summary

As has been discussed, individuals' perceptions of safety on campus have many implications for how university community members, and particularly Mason students, go about their daily lives within the university setting. Four overarching ideas stemmed from my discussions with students and my observations of those who spoke during the open meetings of the Presidential Task Force. First, perceptions of fear on campus are clearly gendered, as female students are more likely than males to attribute their fears about certain spaces and individuals to feelings and intuition. Second, male and female students are quite similar in terms of their discomfort in poorly lit and wooded areas on campus. This is most likely due to the fact that students are unable to see or feel that they have control over their surroundings in such spaces. Third, male and female students also voiced similar concerns about the effectiveness of various security features, including the University Police and the student police cadets. Finally, there were gender differences in terms of the strategies that students use (or do not use) to alleviate their fears and ensure their safety on campus. Female students were more willing than males to specifically discuss such strategies, along with their rationale for using them.

Based on my interview and focus group data, I have compiled and attached a list of recommendations to this paper (see Appendix X for "Recommendations for Enhancing Perceptions of Safety on Campus"), which include suggestions students shared about improvements that could be made by university administration to help them feel more

comfortable and safe on campus. Each of the recommendations included on this list were made by interview and focus group participants themselves. Such recommendations include enhancements to existing security features and ideas about how the Mason community can be made more aware of safety issues on campus, along with community-building activities for students and the University Police to foster feelings of mutual trust.

V. THE PRESENTATION OF SAFETY AND DANGER TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: FINDINGS FROM INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

To better understand the ways in which the institution presents issues about safety and danger to the broader university community, five documents released during the 2011-2012 academic year by the University Police, the Presidential Task Force, and the *Broadside* student newspaper were examined. As mentioned previously in Chapter III, the Presidential Task Force was assembled in April 2011 after an incident occurred in one of the coveted Fenwick Library study rooms between two Mason undergraduate students. One of the students, Abdirashid Dahir, had left his belongings in the study room for approximately 7 to 10 minutes to retrieve an item from his dorm and returned to find that another student, a female whose name has been withheld from public documents for safety purposes, had removed his belongings and taken over the study room. This led to a heated confrontation, at which point the University Police were called by the female student. Dahir was eventually arrested and charged with felony abduction, based on the female student's allegation that he had locked her inside of the room and blocked her from being able to exit. Dahir's account of how the incident unfolded raised questions about the police officers' use and potential abuse of power in the situation, which is ultimately what led to the establishment of the Presidential Task Force.

The documents that were reviewed for this chapter include: (1) the *2011 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, a document released by the University Police each year

that addresses issues involving institutional safety and provides statistics about on-campus crime as required by the U.S. Department of Education; (2) the Presidential Task Force's final report from July 2011 entitled *Presidential Task Force on University Police and University Community Relations*; (3) the *Due Diligence Review of the March 8, 2011 Fenwick Library Incident*, which was prepared by independent consultant John E. Tomlinson and submitted to university administration for consideration; and (4) the *Action Plan for Police and Community Relations*, a list of recommendations that were developed based on the findings of the Presidential Task Force and Tomlinson. Additionally, (5) an article about on-campus safety that appeared in the *2011 Broadside Freshmen Orientation Guide*, which is geared toward incoming students and their parents, was also analyzed for themes and assumptions about safety and danger. This document serves as a representation of the ways in which potential dangers are presented to the university community, along with students' responsibilities for keeping themselves safe while enrolled at Mason. It is important to note that documents 1 and 5 are routine bureaucratic productions, while the other three are special reports that were released following the university's investigation into the incident in Fenwick Library.

In my examination of these documents for the institution's overall presentation of security measures and safety risks to the university community, two key areas of overlap emerged. The first area of overlap regards the ways in which campus safety is framed in the five institutional documents mentioned previously. It also explores whether or not the institution has a commitment to ensure that its constituents are safe from harm. The second area examines exactly who these constituents are, incorporating definitions of

who belongs and does not belong on campus, as presented through institutional policies about who is protected under certain security measures. This section engages literature on the meaning of citizenship as a set of rights afforded to those in a given community. Additionally, it interrogates the ways in which citizenship operates within the university setting and how this clashes with the present “crime fighter stance” of the University Police.

The Framing of Campus Safety in Institutional Documents

A student-authored article that appeared in the *2011 Broadside Freshmen*

Orientation Guide, a publication that was located on newsstands around the entrances of all major buildings on campus during the summer of 2011 (after the incident in the library), framed Mason as being relatively safe when compared with other colleges and universities. The article, which had a targeted audience of parents and incoming freshmen, begins with the following:

The GMU campuses are very safe compared to other colleges. There is little fear about walking alone at night around campus, as crimes against persons are uncommon. Theft of property from locker rooms and unlocked cars is more common on campus, and these types of crimes rarely endanger anyone. (Rogge 2011:14)

First, this article jumps to the conclusion that students are not afraid of walking alone at night because crime is so rare; a claim that conflicts with the apparent ambivalence of the female interview participants, who described their simultaneous perceptions of safety and danger on campus. However, no first-hand accounts from students or statistics about on-campus crime are ever presented in the article. Further, this excerpt contains the false presumption that theft (classified legally as a property crime, as discussed in Chapter VI)

does not endanger the community when, in fact, it does. The occurrence of theft on campus indicates that some individuals believe that it is okay to disregard socially accepted rules and institutional policies, something that could ultimately escalate to additional violations or crimes in the future. Not surprisingly, the article also depicts a safe campus, on which students have no need to feel afraid, because of the fact that crime is so “uncommon.” The article ends, however, with just the opposite tone, as it reminds students that they must take extra precautions to deter an attack, even though the prospect of one is not likely. It concludes,

Although the likelihood of being assaulted while walking the campus at night is small, the possibility does exist. There are several ways to deter such an unlikely attack. Stay on the illuminated pathways instead of taking shortcuts through the woods. Do not make yourself a target for robbery by lavishly displaying accessories such as jewelry and expensive electronic devices. Pay attention to your surroundings at all times. Do not become distracted by using earphones or talking on your cell phone, especially when crossing streets. If you are going to your parked car in the lot, check in and around the car as you approach and before you get in. This should already be done automatically for vehicle safety. And if you do see something suspicious on campus, report it to the campus police by calling 703-993-2810. (Rogge 2011:14)

This concluding paragraph, which advises incoming freshmen about the strategies they can use to ensure their safety as students at Mason, places the onus of safety purely on the students themselves. Rather than discussing the myriad security features that the institution has in place to lessen the likelihood of students encountering danger on campus, this article ends by listing safety strategy after safety strategy, which could serve to instill fear in students who may be venturing away from home for the first time in their lives. It may also lead new students to question whether campus is indeed as safe as the article initially suggests.

Similarly, in the *2011 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, Mason community members are reminded that they have the ultimate responsibility of keeping themselves safe and that they should utilize the student police cadet's escort service as a last resort.

It explains that

a safe environment also depends on the awareness and cooperation of individual community members...Avoid working or studying alone in a building at night. When traversing campus at night, stay within well-lit walkways. Do not take shortcuts through wooded areas. If you cannot avoid walking alone at night, call the Escort Service. (George Mason University Police 2011:16)

The report closes on this note about strategies the university community can use to ensure their safety, reinforcing notions that darkness and wooded areas are to be feared and entirely avoided. From the institution's perspective, it is understandable that Mason be depicted as generally safe in these documents – both to entice students (and their parents) to enroll and to attract visitors to on-campus events. Legally, however, the university must also make students aware that they will not constantly be protected from harm, as indicated in the previous two excerpts, and that they must exercise the same level of caution as they would in any other space.

This relates to discussions of citizenship, which will be examined in greater detail in the next section of this chapter, as the university cannot control who comes onto its premises at all times. Sociologist David Garland (2001) refers to this notion as “the myth that the sovereign state is capable of delivering ‘law and order’ and controlling crime within its territorial boundaries” (p. 109). This myth can be applied to the university setting, in which constituents assume certain institutional protections while on the physical campus. Gina spoke to this assumption in Chapter IV when she asserted that

“the community comes on campus—it’s not just Mason. We’re not in a gated community.” Such assumptions are not always realistic, as Garland and Gina clearly suggest.

As illustrated earlier in the accounts of individual students, these official statements about darkness resonate in similar ways with both male and female students; however, the particular strategies for avoiding it are taken most seriously by women. This point was highlighted in the report released by the Presidential Task Force when it proposed how the adoption of community policing techniques could benefit the university community’s perceptions of the police. The report suggested that increased foot patrols could ease students’ minds, “particularly late at night when several female students commented that they felt unsafe walking on campus” (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:5). It is unclear how effective strategies for increasing foot patrols would be when considering that some students already perceive that there are too many police officers on campus and are simply distrustful of the University Police, as mentioned in Chapter IV. Depending on the context, the presence of police likely carries different meanings for students. That is, increased foot patrols at night may bring welcome comfort to fearful female students, while increased police cruisers patrolling Patriot Circle in a “witch hunt” for potential party-goers, as Becky suggested in Chapter IV, would not. One could also presume, however, that an increased police presence on campus would only amplify students’ existing concerns that the “police at Mason are just trying to get you in trouble,” as one student stated during an open meeting of the Presidential Task Force.

In a different approach, the *Due Diligence Review* developed by Tomlinson (2011) proposed the implementation of new security features within the buildings themselves to ensure students' safety. Focusing mainly on items that could be used to enhance the security of Fenwick Library because of the incident that occurred in one of the study rooms there, Tomlinson suggested that panic alarms be installed in multiple places on the second through fifth floors. Because there are not any staff members who are specifically assigned to those floors except when re-shelving books, Tomlinson (2011) felt that "the application [of panic alarms] serves as a deterrent and also a response tool for health and threat scenarios" (p. 12). Such alarms sound similar to the emergency call boxes that are located in outdoor spaces and, if functional, could save Mason community members valuable time in an emergency situation rather than requiring them to reach the first floor Circulation Desk or call the police for help. This security feature would also assist the university in further depicting itself as safe and as prioritizing the well-being of its constituents.

While these institutional documents depict the campus environment as generally safe, they also highlight the various precautions that university community members can take to ensure that they stay out of harm's way. This is a critical assertion on the part of the institution, as it must carefully balance its broader need to portray itself as safe with its more specific responsibility to protect its constituents. It also raises questions as to who is considered a member of the university community, as illustrated by the institutional documents, in addition to who is "protected" under the various security measures at hand.

Notions of Citizenship within the University Setting

In *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*,

Margot Canaday (2009) examines the distinction between the concept of citizenship as a set of rights versus an obligation that individuals have to a particular community or nation. She reviews how the term has been defined in previous literature, suggesting that

Some accounts describe citizenship as practice, with the emphasis on the activity of being a citizen. Other accounts treat citizenship as status, whether defined legally or culturally...In the American tradition, the legal status of citizenship is simple...one either is or is not a citizen. (Canaday 2009:8)

Although Canaday's (2009) argument centers on the ways in which homosexuality has been defined as a status existing outside of citizenship at various points throughout U.S. history, her description of citizenship is also applicable to the present discussion. This section seeks to examine who is and is not considered a "citizen" of the Mason community, in addition to how institutional documents reinforce these notions and delineate who should and should not be feared on campus.

In Chapter IV, for example, we saw how students have come to fear those they perceive as outsiders to the university community as Fiona recounted her experience with a member of the cleaning staff. She was clearly relieved to learn that the rustling noises she heard in the darkness were only coming from a trusted member of the cleaning staff and not from someone creeping around on campus. This identification of who does and does not belong on campus is an important process, particularly when making determinations about who is and is not deemed to be safe. Interestingly enough, in the *2011 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, members of the Mason community are defined as students, faculty, staff, alumni, contract employees, and visitors (see pp. 4-5),

a distinction that Fiona and other interview participants would likely be apprehensive of, particularly when considering the inclusion of the category of visitors. As “citizens” of the university, all of these individuals have certain responsibilities, protections, and privileges as outlined in the annual report from the University Police.

The function of citizenship in any public university community, however, is quite different than citizenship in a national setting in two critical ways. First, students cannot legally be excluded from the university unless they have been expelled as a result of violating a policy such as those included in the University’s Code of Student Conduct (see George Mason University Office of Student Conduct 2011). This generally only occurs when students have been deemed to compromise the safety of themselves or other members of the university community. Similarly, faculty and staff must abide by the policies listed in their respective handbooks as set forth by Human Resources and Payroll (see George Mason University Human Resources and Payroll 2012). The same follows for visitors who also must obey university regulations while on campus. Such policies illustrate the fact that membership to the university is a privilege (like citizenship), which can be revoked at any time.

The second key difference between national citizenship and membership in the university community is that in the university setting, no groups are explicitly barred from coming onto campus based on visible characteristics or physical features. In his examination of the construction of the “Oriental” and other racial categories in the U.S., for instance, Henry Yu (2002) reviews how categories of race emerged based on physical differences among bodies in terms of their skin color. Such categorization initially led to

the exclusion of certain groups from U.S. citizenship, in addition to unequal privileges and distributions of resources among various types of people. Within the university setting, there are no explicitly excluded or disadvantaged groups, unless a policy violation has occurred. Even once individuals have been permanently excluded from the institution for violating a policy though, there is still nothing to visibly distinguish them from those who “belong” on campus. Such individuals remain invisible as there is nothing to differentiate them from actual members of the university community.

In *Impossible Subjects*, Mae Ngai (2004) asserts that citizenship corresponds with an individual’s access to rights. Therefore, if an individual is not a citizen, she or he has no rights. Ngai (2004) further suggests that if citizens don’t follow socially accepted rules, perhaps by committing criminal acts, they are subsequently excluded from a given community, an act which illustrates social desirability and reiterates the norms that govern bodies and behavior within a particular space. When discussing the drug and alcohol policies in the *2011 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, for instance, it is stated that “the abuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the campus community is not compatible with the goals of the university...The university imposes a variety of sanctions, which include housing eviction or permanent separation from the university” (George Mason University Police 2011:4). Such language obviously targets underage students living in on-campus residences, but also makes it clear that if a student is to break the rules of the institution, her or his rights as a “citizen” of the university community will be revoked, as mentioned earlier. Ngai (2004) explains that the purpose of such exclusion is to protect a community (or, in her case, a nation) from “the

contaminants of social degeneracy” (p. 59). She asserts that deportation – or removal from the university community – is used as a key mechanism of excluding unwanted or troublesome persons from a particular social space. This is because it is believed that such individuals will compromise the integrity and safety of those who are seen as abiding by the rules and as being full members of a space. Because seemingly dangerous individuals are the only people who are legally excluded from membership in the university community, such policies also depict university constituents as safe and harmless.

University policy explains that “Mason is committed to providing an institutional environment where all persons may pursue their studies, careers, duties, and activities in an atmosphere free of threat” (George Mason University Police 2011:5). Individuals whose actions do not demonstrate a commitment to this core value by violating rules and regulations are removed from the institution. To this point, sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1991) explains that “social identity is always exclusionary, since any inclusion necessarily entails some element of exclusion as well...If membership...is to be meaningful, there must be at least some individuals who are explicitly excluded from such collectivities” (p. 41). All members of the Mason community, including students, faculty, staff, contract employees, and visitors, are expected to comply with institutional policies at all times, whether on or off campus. If these individuals are deemed to pose a threat to themselves or others, they are explicitly excluded, further depicting the university community and physical campus as safe because it consists of only non-threatening individuals.

The report developed by Tomlinson (2011), the independent consultant hired to investigate the role of the University Police in the Fenwick Library study room incident, discussed how both of the students involved had a responsibility as members of the Mason community to follow posted policies about study room usage, but neither did. The report explains that “Mr. Dahir should have followed the posted rules and removed his property when he left the room. Being a Senior, he was or should have been familiar with those rules” (Tomlinson 2011:6). Similarly, the student who removed Dahir’s belongings from the room “ignored the rule that required her to take such “abandoned” property to the Circulation Desk for safekeeping” (Tomlinson 2011:6-7). Such statements imply that only bodies can be used to reserve space, although it is widely accepted that placing one’s belongings on a table or chair labels that space as claimed. Because of both students’ disregard for policy and regulations, Tomlinson concluded that each party shared a responsibility for how the incident unfolded as neither followed their obligations as members (or citizens) of the university community. That is, as Mason students, both parties should have been aware of and acting in accordance with posted university policy. This raises questions as to how many students actually read or are aware of these posted policies. It is entirely possible that the rules could be made available in this manner so that they can be used against community members, should any conflicts (like the one in the library) arise. Such policies cover the institution and give it something to revert to in these kinds of situations.

Just as the nation’s borders symbolize the point of exclusion by separating the interior from the exterior space, the campus’s borders symbolize who is and is not a

member of the Mason community. Those who have been removed from the university community, perhaps by violating one of the institution's policies, are no longer welcome to cross the border into the interior space, although this is generally unenforceable in the university setting. Zerubavel (1991) asserts that, "when a society fails to punish deviants who venture beyond the limit of what it defines as acceptable, members will wonder whether such a line really exists" (p. 20). In the case of the incident in Fenwick Library, Dahir was punished and held accountable (even if only temporarily) for actions that he was alleged to have committed against his female peer. The failure to hold individuals accountable for their behavior can lead others to test the limits of the rules and regulations that are in place, subsequently compromising the integrity of the safety of others at the institution.

Notions of Citizenship under the "Crime Fighter Stance" of the University Police

Consistent with Mason community members' individual perceptions that the University Police are "out to get" them, the Presidential Task Force heard similar concerns during their open meetings and discussions with Resident Advisors and Directors, as well as in the comments that were submitted electronically. They mention how this adversarial posture of the police does not align with actual threats of crime and danger on campus when they explain,

Official crime data on Campus Safety and Security (2007-09) indicate very few occurrences of serious crime on campus. This high level of public safety on campus suggests that there is little reason for the University Police to assume a crime fighter stance that distances officers from the public they serve, favors strict adherence to the law, and embraces the traditional police power to issue citations and make arrests. (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:3)

Here, this public document acknowledges that very little crime is reported on campus and that it is a relatively safe environment. The treatment of the university community by the police, however, often suggests otherwise and could lead to heightened feelings of distrust, bitterness, and fear. Such feelings could ultimately compromise the safety of the university community as individuals may become less likely to seek the help and assistance of the University Police. As such, the Presidential Task Force's report continues, "some members of the campus community were sufficiently distrustful of the University Police that they were reluctant to share their experiences publicly" (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:3). Due to feelings of distrust, community members did not feel comfortable enough to attend the open meetings and voice their concerns about the police for fear of retaliation, a theme that was also discussed in Chapter IV.

One of the Presidential Task Force's recommendations to the University Police was that all visitors and members of the Mason community should be treated fairly and with respect. Their report asserts that many of the comments contained

perceptions of the University Police as dismissive, uncaring, biased or inconsistent, untrustworthy, unsupportive, and unresponsive to community members' concerns...The Task Force was struck by how many respondents, especially those respondents providing general impressions of the University Police and those describing actual encounters, expressed dissatisfaction with how they were treated. The Task Force's impression was that this issue was particularly of concern to people of color and people of diverse sexual orientations. (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:5)

That those of various racial backgrounds and sexual orientations feel discriminated against by the University Police raises questions as to who the officers deem full members of the university community (i.e., who is believed to be safe) versus who might

be dangerous and potentially excludable to the extent that they are treating particular individuals differently than others. The perceived differential treatment that was raised in the feedback provided to the Task Force suggests that certain individuals are being targeted over others due to their appearances and personal characteristics.

A student who self-identifies as Filipino, for example, shared the following statement with the Task Force: “It makes me uneasy being ‘protected’ by people who have been reported to use unfair treatment to people of an ethnicity other than Caucasian” (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:6). It is clear from this student’s statement that she or he does not feel that she or he is afforded the same level of protection by the University Police as White students. It also reveals how students make sense of and interpret the behaviors and actions of the police. These comments again raise questions about the stance of the police officers, in terms of whether they assume certain individuals will be the victims, and others the perpetrators, of crime.

One of the items included in the *Action Plan for Police and Community Relations* was a commitment to community policing on the part of the University Police. The plan explains that “without diluting public safety principles, the philosophy of community policing places the highest value on respect, diversity, individuality and the capacity to effectively address university-related community incidents in a manner consistent with professional campus law enforcement” (George Mason University 2011:1). In this manner, all students who engage in misconduct would have an equal probability of encountering the police, as diversity and respect are core values under the model of

community policing. This model would better align the University Police's treatment of citizenship in the university setting with that of the broader institution.

Rather than assuming a crime fighter stance and treating particular individuals on campus as perpetrators, the Presidential Task Force also recommended that the University Police adopt community policing strategies by “work[ing] in close partnership with community members to reduce problems and concerns that the community (not just the University Police) identifies as important” (George Mason University Presidential Task Force 2011:4). Such a strategy would build a sense of community and subsequently stronger feelings of mutual trust between the University Police and the Mason community. Similarly, Tomlinson (2011) proposed that “both students and the officers sworn to protect them, must align generally on expectations...That does not happen by coincidence...A better understanding of each others' expectations and role within the University environment might have added value” (p. 16). This proposition is reiterated in the suggestions made by my interview participants about the need for community-building activities between the University Police and, in particular, Mason students (see Appendix X for “Recommendations for Enhancing Perceptions of Safety on Campus”). As it currently stands, students and the police seem to have an adversarial relationship which runs counter to the overarching core values regarding safety that are held by the university in general. Safety cannot be ensured if constituents are fearful of those who are there to protect them, a point that was well-articulated by the Filipino student. This turn to a more community-oriented policing posture would reflect the university's general

view of citizenship on campus, as all community members have certain rights and privileges until they are legally excluded for a policy violation.

Summary

In examining these five documents for the institution's overall presentation of safety and danger to the university community, two common themes were discovered. The documents carry messages about the ways in which the Mason community should view safety and danger on campus, along with the strategies that ought to be used to minimize any potential risk that might be encountered. The documents also make claims about membership in the university community, identifying who belongs and does not belong on campus, who is protected under certain security measures, and who is expected to be aware of and abide by university policies. Further, it is clear from these institutional documents that the broader university and the University Police have different ideas about what such membership entails.

Because these themes are so embedded throughout these institutional reports, they inevitably influence how members of the Mason community come to view issues of safety on campus, along with their likelihood of encountering danger. For Mason students in particular, the ways in which safety risks are presented by the institution itself may serve to instill feelings of fear, potentially affecting the activities that they engage in or avoid while enrolled at the university.

VI. SECURITY AND CRIME AT INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES: FINDINGS FROM A NATION-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF DATA

Data

As mentioned in Chapter III, two datasets were combined for this analysis. The first was the 2004-2005 Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies, an instrument administered through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics. This instrument collected data from a total of 749 campus law enforcement agencies across the United States during the 2004-2005 academic year about institutions' physical characteristics and layout, number of students, and location. Perhaps most important to this study is the fact that this survey also requests information about the services and programs that campus law enforcement agencies provide including the use of emergency blue light systems, student escorts, community policing strategies, and regular interactions with faculty and student organizations. These items will be included in a safety scale as the impact of such measures on actual reported campus crime is considered.

The second dataset of interest was obtained from the on-campus crime portion of the U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool, which was drawn from online data submitted by close to 9,000 institutions of all types during the 2006-2007 academic year, as required by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Fisher et al. 2000; Jennings et al. 2007; U.S. Department of Education

2012). The Clery Act was enacted in 1990 after the rape and murder of a freshman student in her dormitory at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania (Katel 2011). It mandated all degree- and non-degree-granting colleges and universities whose students may apply for federal aid to both report annual crime data and immediately inform the university community of violent incidents on campus (Katel 2011). As such, this dataset contains information about alleged criminal offenses that were committed and reported to officials at a wide range of institutions across the United States. The data provided reflect those presented in the *Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, a document produced by the University Police each year which was discussed previously in Chapter V.

The two datasets were merged by matching institution names and locations (by city and state), and eliminating those who did not participate in both surveys or who had missing data on any of the variables of interest. This ultimately resulted in a sample of 399 four-year public and private degree-granting institutions.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in these analyses consist of the various types of crimes that my interview and focus group participants mentioned feeling most fearful of in their daily activities on campus. I have summed and categorized these items as either violent crimes or property crimes (based on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's categories on the annual Uniform Crime Report; see Federal Bureau of Investigation 2011), all of which were measured by the U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool.

The items categorized as violent crimes include murder, negligent manslaughter, forcible sex offenses, robbery, and aggravated assault. The items categorized as property crimes include burglary, car theft, and arson. For each of these items, agencies were asked to report the number of incidents that had been reported during the academic year of interest. The descriptive statistics for each category of crime, along with those for each of the other variables that are used in this analysis, are included in Table 1. Campuses reported an average of 6 violent incidents and about 30 property crimes during the 2006-2007 academic year.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in these analyses include a safety scale and a female to male enrollment ratio, both of which will also be used in a product-term interaction to better understand the impact that increased safety measures and gender have on campus crime.

Safety scale. The primary independent variable in these analyses consists of a safety scale, which was constructed based on those security features that were mentioned in the interviews and focus groups I conducted as features that participants either appreciated having on campus or believed would be useful to have on campus. As mentioned previously, there were a number of items on the Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies that assessed the services and programs offered by various institutions. The safety scale is comprised of 16 summed items. Higher numbers on the scale indicate that a greater number of security features have been implemented on a particular campus. These items include campus law enforcement agencies' use of:

emergency blue lights; a basic 911 system; an on-campus 3- or 4-digit emergency phone number; meetings with faculty, staff, and student organizations to discuss crime-related problems; an anti-fear campaign; informational materials to increase campus preparedness; special units for bias and hate crime, date rape and general rape prevention, stalking, and victim assistance; community policing and crime prevention efforts; opportunities for training in self-defense techniques; and student security patrols (similar to Mason's student police cadet program). Each item was recoded into a dichotomous variable to indicate if a campus had a particular security feature (coded as 1) or not (coded as 0) prior to generating the additive scale. Complete details about the coding of these items can be found in Appendix XI. As shown in Table 1 below, the institutions included in this sample had an average of about 12 of the 16 safety features implemented on their campuses.

Female to male enrollment ratio. The U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool asked institutions to specify the number of female and male students enrolled. In order to include a measure of gender in the models, an enrollment ratio of female to male students was generated. A ratio of 1 means that equal numbers of female and male students were enrolled at an institution; a ratio greater than 1 means that more females than males were enrolled; and a ratio less than 1 means that more males than females were enrolled. As indicated in Table 1, the institutions included in this sample tended to have a greater number of females enrolled than males.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Analysis^a

Variable	Mean or Percent (SD)	Range
Violent Crime	6.064 (7.107)	0 - 60
Property Crime	29.592 (33.668)	0 - 306
Safety Scale	11.877 (.538)	0 - 16
Female to Male Enrollment Ratio	1.479 (1.109)	.232 - 17.842
Type of Institution		
4-year Private	.341 (.475)	0 - 1
4-year Public	.659 (.475)	0 - 1
Geographic Size of Campus (in acres)	2.456 (1.721)	1 - 6
Total Student Enrollment	2.907 (2.028)	1 - 11

^a $n = 399$ for all variables in the analysis.

Control Variables

The control variables in these analyses include the type of institution, the geographic size of the campus, and total student enrollment.

Type of institution. Both survey instruments collected information about whether institutions were classified as public or private. This item is included in the models as a dichotomous variable, using private institutions as the reference category.

Geographic size of campus. The Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies collected information about the geographic size of campuses, as measured by the number of acres it has. Agencies were free to state any number ranging from 0 to over 1,000 acres, however, these responses were recoded into categories that increased by

increments of 199 acres and ranged from “1 to 200 acres” (1) to “More than 1,000 acres” (6) to simplify the analysis.

Total student enrollment. Both survey instruments asked institutions to report their total student enrollment for a given year. Responses were recoded into categories that increased by increments of 4,999 students and ranged from “4,999 or less” (1) to “55,000 or more” (12).

Method of Analysis

Multiple regression was used to regress the incidence of campus crime on the number of security features implemented (as measured by the safety scale) and the female to male enrollment ratio, while controlling for type of institution, the geographic size of the campus, and total student enrollment. A total of four models, with two models for each category of crime, were conducted. For each dependent variable, Model 1 was a baseline model, while Model 2 included a product-term interaction to capture the moderating influence of the female to male enrollment ratio on the number of security features implemented.

Findings

On-campus violent crime. The first two models focus on the role that the implementation of various safety features and the female to male enrollment ratio have in the occurrence of on-campus violent crime, including murder, negligent manslaughter, forcible sex offenses, robbery, and aggravated assault.

As shown in Table 2, both models are statistically significant and can explain between 36.0-36.6 percent of the variance in the occurrence of on-campus violent crime.

The safety scale, the female to male enrollment ratio, and the type of institution are not statistically significant in Model 1. This model does illustrate, however, that larger campuses, in terms of both geographic size and the total number of students enrolled, are associated with higher numbers of violent crime.

Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients Predicting Violent Crime on College Campuses

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Safety Scale	.206	.406**
Female to Male Enrollment Ratio	-.378	.953
Type of Institution		
4-year Private	<i>reference</i>	<i>reference</i>
4-year Public	-.973	-.925
Geographic Size of Campus (in acres)	.564**	.517*
Total Student Enrollment	1.747***	1.714***
Female to Male Enrollment Ratio * Safety Scale	---	-.163*
Model statistics		
Intercept	-1.716	-3.136
R ²	.360	.366
F	43.128***	36.917***
N	399	399

NOTE: standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; two tailed tests.

Model 2 expands on Model 1 by including an interaction term between the female to male enrollment ratio and the safety scale. The interaction term is statistically significant and indicates the impact that enhanced safety features can have on campuses with larger numbers of women when considering the occurrence of violent on-campus

crime. Specifically, institutions with more females than males enrolled and increased numbers of security features implemented are associated with fewer reports of on-campus violent incidents as shown in Figure 1.

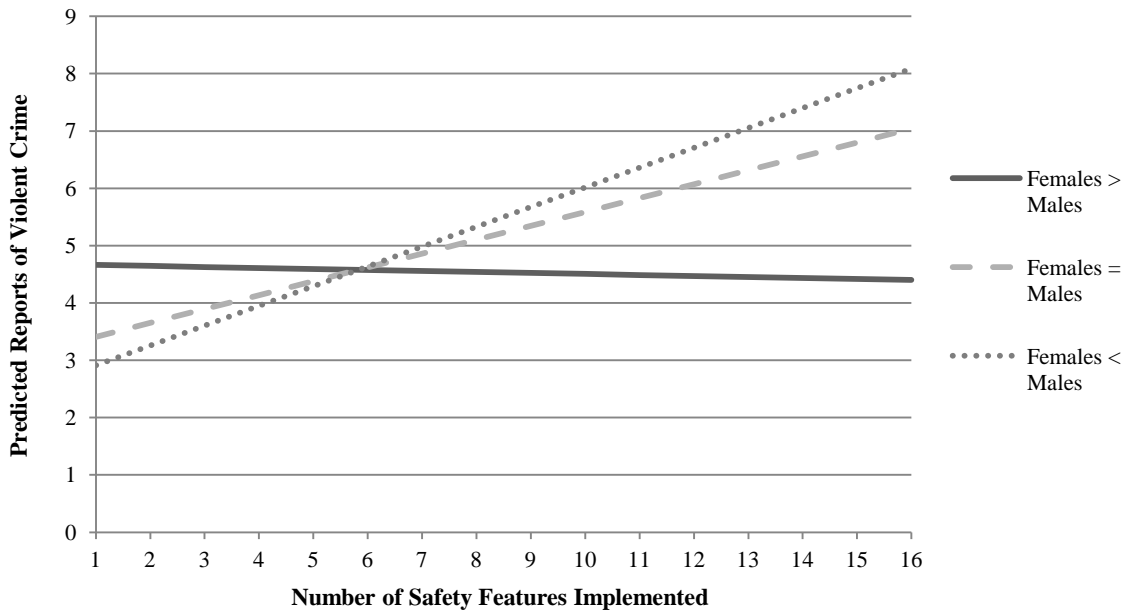


Figure 1. Number of Safety Features Implemented and Predicted Reports of On-Campus Violent Crime, by Female to Male Enrollment Ratio

NOTE: Predicted probabilities calculated from unstandardized regression coefficients for four-year public institutions, where geographic size of the campus and total student enrollment are at their sample means. Enrollment ratios for “females > males” and for “females < males” were selected by calculating ratios one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

On-campus property crime. The two models presented in Table 3 focus on the impact that the implementation of various safety features and the female to male enrollment ratio have on the occurrence of on-campus property crime, including burglary, car theft, and arson.

As shown in Table 3, both models are statistically significant and can explain between 36.2-36.3 percent of the variance in the occurrence of on-campus property crime. Similar to the first model for on-campus violent crime, the safety scale and the female to male enrollment ratio are not statistically significant. Public institutions have fewer numbers of property crimes reported on campus when compared with private institutions. Although the geographic size of the campus is not significant in this model, institutions with greater total student enrollment are associated with higher numbers of property crimes.

Table 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients Predicting Property Crime on College Campuses

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Safety Scale	.672	1.088
Female to Male Enrollment Ratio	-2.309	.469
Type of Institution		
4-year Private	<i>reference</i>	<i>reference</i>
4-year Public	-8.584**	-8.485**
Geographic Size of Campus (in acres)	1.317	1.220
Total Student Enrollment	9.320***	9.251***
Female to Male Enrollment Ratio * Scale	---	-.341
Model statistics		
Intercept	.059	-2.905
R ²	.362	.363
F	43.591***	36.430***
N	399	399

NOTE: standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; two tailed tests.

Model 2 expands on Model 1 again by including an interaction term between the female to male enrollment ratio and the safety scale. The interaction term is not statistically significant in this model.

Interpretation of Findings

A key finding from this component of the study is that institutions with higher numbers of on-campus property and violent crime tend to be larger, in terms of the number of students enrolled. Institutions that are geographically larger are also associated with increased numbers of violent crimes, and public institutions have fewer reports of property crimes than private institutions. Further, when focusing on the reports of violent on-campus incidents, there is an interaction effect between the number of security features implemented and the female to male enrollment ratio, such that there are fewer reports of violent incidents at institutions with higher numbers of security features in place and a larger proportion of women enrolled relative to men. This second finding is illustrated by Figure 1. The figure also shows that for institutions with equal numbers of females and males enrolled reports of violent crime increase as more security features are implemented on campus. The same is true for institutions with more males enrolled than females.

That more security measures are associated with higher numbers of crime for some campuses is interesting and opposite of what might initially be expected. It is important to highlight the role of gender in this finding, which indicates that as more males are present on campus, the number of violent crimes reported increases. This finding makes sense when considering that men are arrested at higher rates for

committing these types of crimes than women (see Britton 2011), but why does the incidence of such acts increase as more security features are implemented on campus? This leads to questions about causality, in terms of whether security measures were put in place on campuses that already had higher numbers of crime, whether crime started to rise after security measures were put in place, *or* whether reporting started to rise after increased security measures were implemented.

This finding also raises questions about complacency. Students may develop a false sense of security knowing that these additional measures are in place, subsequently not paying as much attention to their surroundings as they did before, perhaps by listening to iPods, walking alone at night, leaving their dorms unlocked, or not practicing other safe habits on campus. This argument is most applicable to the findings that arose from my interviews and focus groups with students, as several (including Lindsay, Bobby, Owen, and Neil) mentioned not using precautionary strategies because of their perception that campus was generally safe. For these students, this complacency with safety on campus developed as they became more familiar and comfortable with the social space.

A Closing Note about Problems with Using Data on Reported Crime

While the Jeanne Clery Act has effectively changed attitudes about the importance of campus safety, along with making crime data publicly available, the ways in which the data are reported (and not reported) by institutions of higher education is its one critical flaw. Perhaps most importantly, not all crimes that are committed are reported to the police. In Fisher and colleagues' (2000) analysis of data provided by

college women on the National Crime Victimization Survey, it was concluded that “few incidents of sexual victimization were reported to law enforcement officials. Thus, fewer than 5 percent of completed and attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement officials” (p. 23). In my interviews and focus groups with students, these were the crimes that women felt most fearful of on campus. College women indicated that they were hesitant about reporting such crimes for “fear of being treated with hostility by the police, and anticipation that the police would not believe the incident was serious enough and/or would not want to be bothered with the incident” (Fisher et al. 2000:23). This concern and distrust of the police is again reminiscent of the concerns that were raised in both my own interviews with students and my observations of the open meetings held by the Presidential Task Force. That campus crime data does not accurately depict the dangers that do exist on campus because of the number of incidents that go unreported is quite problematic, as such data likely influence Mason community members’ daily behaviors on campus and their use of safety strategies.

Additionally, the annual crime data that is provided by colleges and universities gives the false impression that students are at lower risk for violent victimization than their nonstudent counterparts (Katel 2011). Scholars, however, claim that the data does not provide an accurate depiction of the crime that actually occurs on and near campus, as it can only illustrate the crimes that have been reported to campus law enforcement officials (Fisher et al. 2000; Jennings et al. 2007; Katel 2011; Sloan, Fisher, and Cullen 1997). For example, crimes that occur on campus and that are reported to local off-campus police agencies, as opposed to on-campus agencies, are not necessarily included

in institutional crime counts or in the Department of Education's dataset which was used here. Further, professional and religious counselors are exempt from reporting any information about crimes that student victims share with them (generally rape and sexual assault), including aggregate numbers that would not violate agreements of confidentiality (Katel 2011). Additionally, because institutions of higher education have reputations to uphold, colleges and universities may opt to deal with incidents informally to avoid any potentially negative media attention (Tibbetts 2012).

Such criticism should not be used to discount those incidents that are reported, but should instead be acknowledged by those reviewing the data so that consideration is given to what is not necessarily depicted by the numbers.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This study has sought to examine how students' perceptions of safety are and are not gendered, focusing in particular on how women's fear of their personal safety can serve to impede their participation on the college campus and thus in the broader social context. Although my female and male interview participants expressed their general discomfort with similar spaces on campus and shared related concerns about various security features including the services offered by the University Police, it is clear that students' perceptions of fear on campus are gendered.

Specifically, female students were more likely than males to attribute their fears about certain spaces and individuals to their "gut" feelings and intuition. The ways in which female students like Fiona and Gina spoke about their frightening late-night encounters with individuals they felt did not belong on campus, for example, can be informed by the discussion presented in Chapter V. As was illustrated, institutional documents have clear definitions as to who is a "citizen" of the university community and who is not. Only those individuals who are deemed to be dangerous by violating a university policy are legally excluded from membership in the Mason community, leaving institutional documents to depict university constituents as safe and harmless. This has the effect of making female students most fearful of interlopers or those they

perceive as not truly belonging to the Mason community, which was shown in those examples provided by Fiona and Gina.

The institution's presentation of safety risks through documents and policies in terms of what is and is not safe to do, along with how danger can be avoided, is also likely to influence how Mason students – and particularly females – come to view such issues on campus. The findings from these documents and the ways in which they paralleled the comments I heard in my interviews and focus groups illustrate the disparate gendered expectations that women and men face; expectations which could affect their participation in the educational setting and the broader society. The women I interviewed, for instance, were more open about the strategies they use to alleviate their fears and avoid danger while on campus than were men, who never discussed such strategies at all, even when directly prompted. Further, male students – and particularly those members of the all-male focus group I conducted – tended to emphasize their lack of fear on campus, often making jokes and laughing about safety issues, which can likely be attributed to the ways in which they have been socialized as men to be independent and brave without showing signs of weakness or vulnerability (i.e., confessing their fear of certain spaces). Instead, men generally shared their level of comfort with various spaces on campus and attributed those feelings to their familiarity with the geographic area. Lindsay was the only female student to candidly express that she didn't think bad things would happen to her on campus.

This complacency with the safety of the campus environment was highlighted again in Chapter VI where it was found that institutions with equal numbers of male and

female students or with a greater proportion of male students are associated with higher reports of violent crime as more security measures are put in place. Alternatively, institutions with a greater proportion of female students and more security measures on campus are associated with lower reports of violent crime. This piece of the study serves to place Mason students' fears – or beliefs that there is nothing to be afraid of – in context by examining the relationships between crime and campus security measures at institutions across the nation. It is particularly informative when considering those comments made by Lindsay and the members of the all-male focus group, who each expressed their general level of complacency with safety on campus because of their familiarity with the geographic space. One of the reasons that crime may be higher on campuses with more security measures in place is that the students at those institutions feel that they are safe and are therefore free to exercise fewer precautions.

This study has attempted to explore how women's fear can function to reinforce gender inequalities, maintaining women's subordination to men in the university setting and beyond. At the individual level, it clarifies the gendered dimensions of fear on college campuses by illustrating how women's fears affect their daily behaviors, leading them to adopt precautionary strategies that men never speak of, which can likely be attributed to normative gender expectations and the construction of masculinity. At the institutional level, this study examines how university policies and documents may perpetuate (female) students' fears on campus, in addition to the strategies they feel they need to practice to ensure their personal safety. Further, it explores how institutional policies depict what it means to be a member of the university community, along with

who can be considered safe. Finally, at the national level, it analyzes the relationships between the number of security features implemented on campus, the female to male enrollment ratio, and the number of crimes reported in an attempt to clarify the concerns raised in my individual and focus group interviews.

It is my hope that colleges and universities will use the findings presented here to make every effort they can to ensure that students (and women in particular) feel free to engage in any and every activity that they would like to while enrolled at institutions of higher education. While the data presented in Chapters IV and V are specific to George Mason University, they present similar concerns as those raised in previous research on this topic. The recommendations provided in Appendix X are items that institutions can adopt in an effort to provide all students with more equal access to learning by potentially lessening their fears for their personal safety on campus.

APPENDIX I. CHART OF QUALITATIVE MATERIALS COLLECTED AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

Date Collected	Type of Data Collected	Pseudonyms of Participants	Affiliation of Participants
October 24, 2008	Interview #1	Louis	University Police officer
November 10, 2008	Focus Group #1	Beth, Brenda, and Harvey	Mason alumni and current staff
February 27, 2009	Focus Group #2	Brooke, Debbie, Evan, Fiona, Frank, and Stephanie	Student police cadets
March 16, 2009	Interview #2	Natalie	Peer Educator in Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program
March 23, 2009	Interview #3	Elizabeth	Sexual Assault Services staff and supervisor of the Peer Support Program
March 23, 2009	Interview #4	Becky	Student Government representative
March 23, 2009	Interview #5	Gina	Peer Educator in Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program
March 26, 2009	Interview #6	Maria	Peer Educator in Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program
March 31, 2009	Focus Group #3	Denise and Lindsay	Mason students
March 31, 2009	Interview #7	Nicole	Peer Companion in Sexual Assault Services' Peer Support Program
April 12, 2011	Observation #1: Presidential Task Force Open Meeting 1	n/a	Mason students, faculty, and staff
April 20, 2011	Observation #2: Presidential Task Force Open Meeting 2	n/a	Mason students, faculty, and staff

Date Collected	Type of Data Collected	Pseudonyms of Participants	Affiliation of Participants
November 16, 2011	Interview #8	William	Community Adjudication Board member
December 6, 2011	Focus Group #4	Bobby, James, Neil, Owen, and Vince	Mason students

APPENDIX II. RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear [name of potential participant],

Thank you for your interest in this study. I am a graduate student at George Mason University and am currently interviewing traditional Mason students (ages 18-24) to hear their opinions about safety on campus. You can expect the interview to last between 30 minutes and an hour, during which time I will be asking you about your experiences at Mason, the kinds of activities you either engage in or avoid while on campus, and any strategies that you might use to ensure your own personal safety. Though I am most interested in the topics you think are important, I would also like to discuss whether you have ever been a part of or a witness to a conflict on campus, such as a protest, a verbal argument, or a physical altercation, and how this incident made you and those around you feel in that moment.

If you are willing to be interviewed for this research project, please email me at sjacobse@gmu.edu and we can schedule a time and place to meet at your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Shannon Jacobsen
sjacobse@gmu.edu

APPENDIX III. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study is being conducted to explore students' perceptions of safety in various spaces on campus. This research will also examine the ways in which students construct and think about violence and how their definitions have implications for their daily behavior and participation in campus activities. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will run approximately 30 minutes to an hour.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research involving students' perceptions of safety on campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Names and other identifiers will not be used in the written analyses of this research. If you agree to be audio-taped, recording will begin at the start of the interview in order to accurately capture your words and the nature of the situations that you are describing. The recording will remain confidential and will never leave my possession. After this interview, the digital recording will be stored on a password-protected computer until its deletion at the conclusion of this study. Neither your name nor any other personal identifiers will be included on the data that is collected; only the researcher will have access to this information. Only I will have access to the identification key that links your interview to your name.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Shannon Jacobsen with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at George Mason University. She may be reached at [*phone number removed by the author*] for questions or to report a research-related problem. In addition, Shannon's faculty adviser, Karen Rosenblum, may be reached at 703-993-1450. You may contact George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

_____ I agree to audio-taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio-taping.

Printed Name

Signature

Date of Signature

APPENDIX IV. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study is being conducted to explore students' perceptions of safety in various spaces on campus. This research will also examine the ways in which students construct and think about violence and how their definitions have implications for their daily behavior and participation in campus activities. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in focus group composed of 3-6 participants that will last approximately one hour.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research involving students' perceptions of safety on campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Names and other identifiers will not be used in the written analyses of this research. If you agree to be audio-taped, recording will begin at the start of the focus group interview in order to accurately capture your words and the nature of the situations that you are describing. The recording will remain confidential and will never leave my possession. After this focus group interview, the digital recording will be stored on a password-protected computer until its deletion at the conclusion of this study. Neither your name nor any other personal identifiers will be included on the data that is collected; only the researcher will have access to this information. Only I will have access to the identification key that links your interview to your name.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Shannon Jacobsen with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at George Mason University. She may be reached at [*phone number removed by the author*] for questions or to report a research-related problem. In addition, Shannon's faculty adviser, Karen Rosenblum, may be reached at 703-993-1450. You may contact George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

_____ I agree to audio-taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio-taping.

Printed Name

Signature

Date of Signature

APPENDIX V. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS WITH FACULTY & STAFF PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study is being conducted to explore students' perceptions of safety in various spaces on campus. This research will also examine the ways in which students construct and think about violence and how their definitions have implications for their daily behavior and participation in campus activities. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will run approximately 30 minutes to an hour. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your experiences as a faculty/staff member at Mason, whether you have ever witnessed a conflict on campus, and your observations of students' responses to that particular incident.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research involving students' perceptions of safety on campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Names and other identifiers will not be used in the written analyses of this research. If you agree to be audio-taped, recording will begin at the start of the interview in order to accurately capture your words and the nature of the situations that you are describing. The recording will remain confidential and will never leave my possession. After this interview, the digital recording will be stored on a password-protected computer until its deletion at the conclusion of this study. Neither your name nor any other personal identifiers will be included on the data that is collected; only the researcher will have access to this information. Only I will have access to the identification key that links your interview to your name.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Shannon Jacobsen with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at George Mason University. She may be reached at [*phone number removed by the author*] for questions or to report a research-related problem. In addition, Shannon's faculty adviser, Karen Rosenblum, may be reached at 703-993-1450. You may contact George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

_____ I agree to audio-taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio-taping.

Printed Name

Signature

Date of Signature

APPENDIX VI. INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Introductions

1. How long have you been a student at Mason?
 - a. Do you live on campus or commute?
2. Take me through your typical day on campus.
3. Take me through the last time you witnessed a conflict on campus (i.e. a protest, a physical fight, a verbal argument...).
 - a. How did you feel during the incident?
 - b. Describe your feelings.
 - c. How did you know there was trouble?
4. How do you feel about safety on campus?
 - a. Have you ever not done something on campus that you wanted to do because of concerns for safety?
 - i. Examples: taking a night class, attending an event, or participating in a student organization
 - b. Are there any spaces that you avoid on campus?
5. How would you define a “dangerous” situation?
 - a. What is danger?
 - b. What feelings define it for you (physiological, physical, psychological responses...)?
 - c. When you’re walking alone on campus, what will make you start walking faster?
6. Are there any strategies that you use to feel safe on campus?
 - a. Examples: changing one’s daily routine, avoiding certain spaces, taking self-defense classes, using the escort service, etc.

APPENDIX VII. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FACULTY & STAFF PARTICIPANTS

Introductions

1. How long have you worked at Mason?
 - a. What is your role on campus?
 - b. How frequently do you interact with students?
2. Take me through your typical day on campus.
3. Take me through the last time you witnessed a conflict on campus (i.e. a protest, a physical fight, a verbal argument...)
 - a. How did you feel during the incident?
 - b. How did you know there was trouble?
 - c. How did you observe students reacting to this incident?
4. How do you feel about safety on campus?
 - a. Are there any spaces that you avoid on campus?
5. How would you define a “dangerous” situation?
 - a. What is danger?
 - b. What feelings define it for you (physiological, physical, psychological responses...)?

APPENDIX VIII. CHARGE OF THE 2011 PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE

The following is the official announcement of the creation of the Task Force as written and disseminated by President Alan Merten's office in March 2011.

In order to uphold our commitment to fostering a community where respect for all is the hallmark, President Alan Merten has formed a Presidential Task Force to seek input from members of the Mason community on their interactions and experiences with the University Police Department.

The task force will hold two open meetings on April 12 and April 20 during which any current Mason student, faculty, or staff will have an opportunity to schedule a time to make a brief statement. Written statements may also be submitted to the Task Force at the following e-mail address: taskforc@gmu.edu.

Following the completion of the community meetings, the Task Force will submit an interim status report to President Merten, and will determine if further community meetings are necessary. It is our goal that a final report with outcomes and recommendations will be submitted to the president by mid-June.

The Task Force will be cochaired by Peter Pober, chair of the Faculty Senate, and Rose Pascarell, associate vice president for University Life, and will be comprised of faculty, staff, and students from across the university.

In addition, the university has hired Tomlinson Strategies LLC, an external consulting firm specializing in institutional safety, security assessments and law enforcement issues, to review the police policies and procedures that led to the arrest on a felony charge of Mason student Abdirashid Dahir in March 2011. All charges against Dahir were dropped. At the appropriate time the findings of this review will be made public.

**APPENDIX IX. LETTER DISTRIBUTED TO PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE
OPEN MEETING ATTENDEES IN APRIL 2011**

Hello,

Thank you for signing up to speak with the Presidential Task Force. The Task Force looks forward to listening to **your specific interactions and experiences** with the University Police. Your input is most helpful in promoting an open, respectful, and positive campus environment among all members of the Mason community: students, staff, faculty and university police.

Please note that the Task Force will not be responding to each speaker; our priority is to listen and gather information which will then inform the subsequent recommendations and report submitted to President Merten. We do expect that the report will be made public. Please check in ten minutes prior to your scheduled speaking time and remember that in order for everyone to be heard you will have a maximum of five minutes to speak. A written record of the meeting and your comments will be kept as a resource for the Task Force. As a reminder, the charge given by President Merten to the members of the Task Force is listed below:

“To seek input from members of the Mason community on their interactions and experiences with the University Police Department. The Task Force will hold two open meetings during April in which any member of the Mason community will have an opportunity to schedule a time to make a brief statement. Community members may also submit written statements to the Task Force. Following completion of the community meetings, the Task Force will submit an interim status report to the President. The Task Force will also determine at that point if it is necessary to seek additional input from the community. It is anticipated that a final report with recommendations will be submitted to the President in early to mid-June.”

We look forward to hearing from you.

Peter Pober and Rose Pascarell, Task Force Co-Chairs

Task Force members are:

Rose Pascarell, Task Force Co-Chair; Associate Vice President, University Life
Peter Pober, Task Force Co-Chair; Chair, Faculty Senate; Professor, Communication
D’leon Barnett, Student Body President

John Blacksten, Associate Vice President, University Relations
Joey Carls, Chair, Staff Senate
Pat Donini, Deputy Director, Human Resources
Mark Hopson, Co-Chair, Campus Climate Committee; Assistant Professor,
Communication
Corey Jackson, Assistant to the President; Director, Equity and Diversity Services
Michael Lynch, Chief of Police, University Police
Linda Schwartzstein, Vice Provost
James Willis, Assistant Professor, Criminology, Law and Society

In addition, the university has hired Tomlinson Strategies, LLC, an external consulting firm specializing in institutional safety, security assessments and law enforcement issues, to review the police policies and procedures that led to the arrest on a felony charge of Mason student Abdirashid Dahir earlier this month. All charges against Dahir were dropped. At the appropriate time, the findings of this review will be made public.

APPENDIX X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY ON CAMPUS

The following recommendations were made directly by my interview and focus group participants as ways of making members of the Mason community feel more comfortable and safe on campus.

- Remove or replace any malfunctioning call boxes.
- Revamp the Mason Alert system so that everyone in the Mason community who subscribes to the service receives all of the emergency text messages and not just some.
- Install brighter and more lighting along the wooded pathway by Mason Pond.
- Install surveillance cameras in the parking lots.
- Inform the Mason community more widely about the safety resources that are available to them, such as Sexual Assault Services (SAS), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the University Police, and the escort service. A greater awareness of these resources could be fostered during the new student orientations that every student is required to attend upon enrolling at Mason.
- Hold a large campus event (similar to those held during Welcome Week) with free food and giveaways that would highlight strategies that students can use to stay safe on campus.
- Have community-building activities for the University Police and Mason students in order to foster a greater level of trust. This might include:
 - Having an intramural basketball game between the police and students;
 - Having more officers on foot patrol so that they are more accessible to students; and
 - Having a cookout where the officers could grill food for the students or vice versa.
- Establish a satellite office for the University Police in the Johnson Center to give the Mason community greater access to officers.
- Develop a student-run safety committee to help heighten students' awareness about safety issues and resources on campus.
- Teach students about strategies for staying safe on campus such as:
 - Walking with a group rather than by yourself;
 - Staying off of your cell phone while you are walking alone at night;

- Paying attention to your surroundings and noticing if something is different than usual;
 - Always letting someone know where you are going and when they can expect you to return;
 - Taking self-defense classes (Rape Aggression Defense – RAD);
 - Following your intuition; and
 - Avoiding poorly lit areas.
- Explore the possibility of creating a student-run group (separate from the University Police) that would escort other students.

**APPENDIX XI. DESIGN AND CODING OF MEASURES INCLUDED IN THE
SCALE OF SAFETY MEASURES IMPLEMENTED ON CAMPUS**

Measure	Coding of Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus has emergency blue lights 	<p>Agencies were asked to specify the number of blue lights on their campus. Item was recoded so campuses with no blue lights were assigned a 0 and campuses with one or more were assigned a 1.</p>
<p><i>Campus agency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a basic 911 system • Has its own on-campus 3 or 4-digit emergency phone number • Meets regularly with faculty and staff organizations to discuss crime-related problems • Meets regularly with student organizations to discuss crime-related problems • Engages in an anti-fear campaign • Disseminates information to increase citizen preparedness 	<p>Agencies were asked to respond with yes (1) or no (2) to each of these measures. Items were recoded so that responses of no were assigned a 0 and responses of yes were assigned a 1.</p>
<p><i>Campus agency has a special unit with personnel OR policies and procedures that address:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias and hate crime • Community policing efforts • Crime prevention efforts • Date rape prevention • General rape prevention • Self-defense training • Stalking • The oversight of a student security patrol • Victim assistance 	<p>Agencies were asked to indicate whether their agency has full-time personnel (1), uses designated personnel on an as-needed basis (2), has policies and procedures only (3), or does not officially address the issue (4) for each of these measures. Items were recoded so that responses of not officially addressing the issue were assigned a 0 and all others were assigned a 1.</p>

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