

EMPIRICALLY ASSESSING THE THREAT OF VICTIMIZATION:
HOW VICTIMIZATION AND GENDER MEDIATE
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED RISK,
FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION AND CONSTRAINED BEHAVIOUR

By

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ABSTRACT

There are a number of issues within the fear of crime literature, such as problems defining and measuring fear of crime, which continue to exist. Thus, the first aim of this thesis was to empirically test a new fear of crime model that consists of three components: fear of victimization (emotive), perceived risk (cognitive) and constrained behaviour (behavioural). The multiple component theory posits that a reciprocal relationship exists between the components that contribute to people feeling threatened by criminal victimization (also referred to as the threat of victimization). Past research has also indicated that gender is always a significant predictor of fear of crime, and therefore was included in the test to assess if women continue to feel threatened by victimization more than men in the new model. Finally two common theories used to explain why women fear crime more than men; specifically gender construction that equates femininity with vulnerability and masculinity with invulnerability and prior experience with intimate partner violence and stalking, were explored.

The data came from the Statistics Canada General Social Survey 2004: Cycle 18, which is a Canadian telephone survey that measures fear of crime as well as various types of criminal victimization. A quantitative analysis was done using multiple logistic regressions to assess all three objectives.

Results for this thesis indicate that a reciprocal relationship exists between all three components of the threat of victimization and must continue to be measured as separate constructs. Perceived risk and constrained behaviour are particularly influenced by gender construction and intimate partner violence and stalking victimization.

It is concluded that accurate and consistent measures need to be created for each of the components of the threat of victimization to facilitate validity, replication and comparison. As well, (in)vulnerability linked to masculinity and femininity, appear to have negative implications for both women and men in relation to the threat of victimization, which need to be addressed through education and active resistance.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

In the last few decades fear of crime research has generated a great deal of academic discussion. Scholars have targeted the concepts, theories and methodologies (Jackson, 2004; Rader, 2004; Mesh, 2000; Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist, 1997) explaining fear of crime as well as the operationalization of fear measures. The interest in this area of research is not surprising given that such research directly affects government policy and programming. It is also more effective to initiate and maintain policies and programs that are tailored to address specific social issues, therefore research facilitates understanding about the ways in which fear of crime affects people.

Research continually suggests that fear of crime has potential impacts on mental and physical well-being (Fitzgerald, 2008; Stafford, Chandola & Marmot, 2007). According to Stafford et al. (2007), behavioural responses to fear of crime, such as avoidance, restrict movement and participation in social activities. People who are more inclined to stay home are inhibited in their ability to build social support networks and engage in physical activity, which have been found to have positive effects on health (Cohen, 2004): “those who fear may therefore be less physically active, a lifestyle that increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, poor mental health, and poorer physical and cognitive functioning” (Stafford et al., 2007, p. 2076). Fearing crime can be a stressful experience and stress has been associated with weakened immune systems (Stafford et al., 2007). When topics such as fear of crime are investigated, quality of life issues are highlighted. It is, therefore, not surprising that a large amount of time and money is spent on crime prevention programs (i.e. neighbourhood watch programs) and education to help people feel safe¹. In response to this important issue, the body of research continues to grow as theories of fear of crime become

¹ The Government of Canada’s Public Safety National Crime Prevention Centre has implemented the National Crime Prevention Strategy that not only addresses crime prevention but recognizes the need for citizens to feel safe.

more comprehensive, requiring continued empirical validation. The research undertaken in this thesis continues in this tradition by further exploring and verifying the complexity of fear of crime theories.

As fear of crime research becomes more comprehensive, it is also beginning to take into consideration a broad range of influences such as demographics, media representation, physical environment, culture, personality types, and socially constructed gender roles. As theoretical fear of crime research has evolved, it has increasingly addressed the central constructs and conceptualizations used to measure fear of crime. Theories continue to posit that perceptions of victimization risk and fear of crime are completely different constructs and must be measured separately (LaGrange, Ferraro & Supanic, 1992; Wilcox-Roundtree & Land, 1996; Mesh, 2000;), which was not done in past research. Research has also begun to provide insight into interlocking or reciprocal relationships between new constructs of fear of crime (Rader, 2004). Jackson (2004) calls for even more complex conceptualizations that address the subjective nature of perceptions, such as perceived vulnerability. In addition to these cognitive variables, behavioural constraints, such as avoiding certain areas or locking doors, have been studied in relation to fear of crime (Rader, 2004; Warr, 1985). Clearly there are a number of components that should be taken into consideration when looking at fear of crime.

Nicole Rader (2004) has contributed to the fear of crime research with her theory of the ‘threat of victimization’ as an overarching term consisting of three reciprocal constructs: perceived risk (cognitive), fear or worry of victimization (emotive), and constrained behaviour (behavioural). Due to the ensemble of constructs, more comprehensive ways to capture these concepts are required. For example, victimization surveys require questions that reflect all fear of crime components.

Fear of crime studies have historically relied on questionnaires or surveys that ask respondents 'how safe they feel walking alone in their neighbourhood at night' to operationalize fear of crime (Rader, 2004). Scholars continue to critique this construct, which is now used to measure perceptions of risk, because the question is actually asking respondents how likely it is that they believe they will be victimized by crime while walking alone in their neighbourhoods at night. This is a cognitive assessment about risk rather than a measure that asks respondents to recall an emotion (fear). Risk perception has become a topic on its own, with a large body of research emerging (Chadee, Austen & Ditton, 2007; Warr & Stafford, 1983; Wilcox-Roundtree & Land, 1996; Wyant, 2008). Researchers continue to support the theory that fear of crime has emotional and cognitive components that must be recognized as distinct and separate entities (Jackson, 2004; Keane 1992; LaGrange, Ferraro & Supanic, 1992; Mesh, 2000; Rader, 2004; Wilcox-Roundtree & Land, 1996). As well, within the cognitive risk perception research, cues that people use to assess risk have begun to emerge (Hale, 1996; LaGrange, Ferraro & Supanic, 1992; Wyant, 2008).

Environmental cues such as location, time of day, lighting, and level of isolation are only a few examples of indicators that people use to determine levels of risk. Demographic cues such as gender, age, race and social class are also used to assess potential risk - not only for the victim but of potential perpetrators. For example, a white male may only perceive himself as being at risk of an assault while in a neighbourhood that is comprised of primarily non-white residents (Hollander, 2001). Usually, perception-of-risk research focuses on violent victimization; however, in past fear of crime research, victimization was not specifically defined. Respondents were not required to specify which crime they feared becoming a victim of, such as burglary or robbery. There are potentially hundreds of different crimes a person could become a victim of and it would seem intuitive that not all crimes invoke the same levels of perceived risk or fear. In

response to this lack of clarity, researchers have narrowed their focus of fear of crime to include particular kinds of criminal victimization, from graffiti to violent assaults and murder (Evans & Fletcher, 2000; Warr & Stafford, 1983). Scholars have found differences between perceptions of risk and perceptions of seriousness (Warr, 2000). The crime of graffiti, for example, may be more likely to occur than a murder; however, murder may invoke higher levels of perceived risk due to its comparative seriousness. As researchers continue to deconstruct fear of crime, the complexity of its nature is becoming evident. Current theories include not only its cognitive and emotional dimensions, but behavioural ones, as well.

Rader (2004) refers to the behavioural measure of fear of crime as “constrained behaviour”. People mediate their fear by not fully participating in society through avoidance or defensive behaviour. Rader’s (2004) perspective takes all of the elements used to measure fear of crime, including behaviour, into consideration and posits a potential reciprocal relationship. It is interesting to note that, despite its limitations, the term ‘fear of crime’ is not obsolete and is still widely used as a broad term reflecting the diverse research on the topic². As new theories, such as Rader’s (2004) emerge, it has been integral that they be tested empirically to assess their validity. In this way, we have been able to move forward with our understanding about how fear of crime affects people and its broader implications for social policy.

In 2007, the first test of Rader’s (2004) threat of victimization model was conducted using U.S. data. Rader and her colleagues used an OLS regression model to assess the relationships between fear of victimization, perceptions of risk and constrained behaviour (Rader, May & Goodrum, 2007). Although their findings partially support Rader’s (2004) theoretical model, more empirical testing needs to be done in order to further verify or falsify the

² Fear of crime will also be used throughout this thesis as an overall generalized term reflecting the broad definition and literature. Rader’s (2004) term *threat of victimization* and its constructs, *perceived risk*, *fear* or *worry of victimization*, and *constrained behaviour*, will be used specifically to reflect her work as well as the results of this thesis.

theoretical model. In Rader's (2007) empirical test of her theory, gender was found to be a strong predictor of fear of victimization. An important finding was that prior sexual victimization was a strong predictor of both fear of victimization and perceived risk, and prior violent victimization was a strong predictor of perceived risk and avoidance behaviour (Rader, May & Goodrum, 2007, p. 20). Regardless of the fear of crime measures used, research findings suggest that women tend to fear crime more than their male counterparts; this in turn, has spurred feminist research in this field of study (Schafer, Huebner & Bynum, 2006).

Gender consistently predicts fear of crime. Two factors that have been put forward to explain women's heightened fears are prior 'female targeted' victimization (i.e., intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual assault), and gender role socialization (i.e., social constructions of gender) which includes the normalization of 'vulnerability' and 'danger' within masculine and feminine constructs. Given Rader's (2004) finding that female targeted victimization is related to the components of the threat of victimization, previous experience with intimate partner violence and stalking are included in this thesis. As well, this thesis also provides the first test of Rader's theory using Canadian data – the General Social Survey; Cycle 18 2004. The relationships among the three components of Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model – perceived risk (cognitive), fear of victimization (emotive) and constrained behaviour (behavioural) – were empirically tested using logistic regression. Constrained behaviour was divided into two categories: defensive and avoidance behaviours. Because this is a new theoretical model, a second test was conducted that included gender as a predictor variable to see if women are more likely to feel threatened. Victimization variables of intimate partner violence and stalking were also included in a female only model to assess if these 'female targeted' crimes influence the threat of victimization. Specifically, the purposes of this thesis were to: 1.) evaluate whether or not fear of victimization, perceived risk and constrained behaviour are reciprocal; 2.) explore

gender differences in fear of victimization, perceived risk and engagement in constrained behaviour; and 3.) examine the significance of intimate partner violence and stalking for women in relation to the threat of victimization.

Chapter 1 of this thesis consists of an introduction of previous research regarding fear of crime and why the research is important. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the fear of crime literature and is divided into two parts. Part one reviews fear of crime theories and reintroduces Rader's (2004) threat of victimization theory in more detail. Part two presents the literature surrounding the theories about gender in relation to fear of crime and why women continue to fear crime more than their male counterparts. Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in this study, the variables used and their construction as well as an overview of the data provided by the Canadian General Social Survey; Cycle 18 2004. The results of the thesis are presented in Chapter 4. In this chapter all three models are discussed, including the test of Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model (Model 1), Model 2 which includes all of the components of the threat of victimization and gender, and, Model 3, a female specific model where all of the threat of victimization components as well as the victimization variables are included. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion about the results and their support of particular theories presented in the literature review. The discussion is followed by a brief conclusion of the entire thesis.

CHAPTER 2

Part I

2.0 Background

Fear of crime is a social issue that continues to garner the interest of scholars. What began as a simple question about ‘how threatened’ people felt about the potential of criminal victimization has evolved into a complex debate about the meaning and definition of fear of crime. Scholars have yet to come to agreement on the best way to define fear of crime. The volume of literature suggests that fear of crime is a generalized term that can reflect actual emotional, cognitive, or behavioural responses. There are several identifiable ‘streams’ in the fear of crime literature that highlight perceptions of risk, fear of crime, and the actions or behaviours people engage in to avoid and minimize victimization. Included in the research are broad partial theories that introduce factors people use to evaluate risk, such as prior victimization experience and gender.

In the past, it was common for researchers to measure fear of crime by asking respondents how safe they felt walking alone in their neighborhoods at night (Stanko, 1995; Wilcox & Land, 1996). After much academic debate, this question has come to be understood as a measure of concern about safety. It has been argued that concern about safety, or perceived risk, reflects the respondents’ attempt to cognitively assess their safety (Rader, 2004). Fear, however, has been linked to anxiety and worry, which reflect a broader emotional construct of fear of crime. Since the ‘original’ question used to measure fear of crime has now been associated with risk perception, new questions have been developed to assess fear of crime in a more valid and complex way.

2.1. Fear

‘Fear of crime’ is a difficult term to operationalize. Researchers have attempted to measure it by measuring how much respondents fear being victimized by certain types of crime, using questions such as, ‘Are you afraid of being a victim of burglary?’ ‘Are you afraid of being a victim of assault?’ (Mesch, 2000, p. 53), ‘I am afraid of being attacked by someone with a weapon’, and ‘I am afraid of having my money/possessions taken from me’ (Rader, 2007, Appendix), and ‘How much do you worry about burglary?’ (Gray, Jackson, Farrall; 2008) Although these questions use words that reflect emotions that people experience during a fearful event, they too have been criticized. For example, Gray et al. (2008) have criticized the use of rating scales (e.g., ‘very’, ‘fairly’, ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ afraid or worried) to assess respondents’ fear. They compared the responses of people who were asked ‘how worried are you...’ about being victimized (by robbery, burglary, and car theft) with the results of a new set of questions that ask respondents, ‘In the past year, have you ever felt worried about...’ (specifically about robbery, burglary, and car theft)? Respondents who answered, “Yes”, were then asked, ‘How frequently have you felt like this in the last year?’ and ‘On the last occasion how fearful did you feel?’ (p.368). These questions provide a time frame to enable better memory recall and they measure the intensity of the fear experienced. The researchers intentionally made reference to the *last* episode experienced, expecting that it was more likely that respondents would remember the *most* intense episode, thus allowing them to assess the magnitude of the most intense fear experienced (Gray et al.; 2008).

Gray et al.’s (2008) findings suggest that people inflate their measure of fear when they are only asked ‘how afraid are you...’. For example, 35 percent of respondents answered that they were either ‘very worried’ or ‘fairly worried’ to the original question, ‘how worried are you

about being robbed' (Gray et al.; 2008, p.370). In contrast, 16 percent of respondents said they were 'worried in the past year about being robbed'; overall, 85 percent of respondents were 'not worried at all about being robbed'; 9 percent said they worried anywhere from 1 to 11 times in the last year (which is less than once a month) and 8 percent were either 'very worried' or 'quite worried'. Therefore, the fear that individuals express appears to depend on how they are asked about their fear. Gray et al. (2008) suggest this is because the original question actually "access[es] individuals' mental image of the risk of victimization...[an] emotionally tinged image of risk..." (p. 364). Essentially, people still respond to the question, 'how worried/afraid are you...' in a manner that represents how they *feel* about the *possibility* of being victimized, which is still 'future-oriented' rather than recalling an actual past emotionally fearful event (p. 364). Gray et al. (2008) suggest that the original question may be measuring a broad awareness or anxiety about crime rather than actual physiological fear. The results of their study suggest that although fear and perceived risk are separate constructs, there is a connection between fearing crime and the perceived risk of becoming a victim of crime.

2.2 Perceived Risk

'Perceived risk' refers to one's cognitive assessments of the likelihood that one may be victimized by crime. Warr and Stafford (1983) constructed a model of fear of crime³ that includes "perceived seriousness and perceived risk associated with that offense" (p.1034). They argue that both components must be considered in order to ascertain the way in which fear of a particular crime is influenced; if a particular offense measures high on perceived seriousness and on the perceived risk of the offense actually occurring, a person's fear of that crime will increase accordingly. In contrast, if an offense is perceived as being serious but also perceived as being of

³ Fear of crime here refers to the overall term used in the literature. Although the Warr and Stafford (1983) study reflects perceived risk, their argument is that fear of crime should be measured using both, perceived risk measures as well as perceived serious measures to evaluate fear of crime.

low risk to occur, such as an armed robbery, it will elicit lower measures of overall fear of crime.

Warr and Stafford (1983) contend:

The degree of fear evoked by an offense is not simply a function of its perceived seriousness... violent crimes are uniquely capable of producing the greatest fear due to their higher perceived seriousness, but that potential is offset by the fact that the perceived risk of these offenses is typically low (p.1040)

For example, Warr and Stafford (1983) found that although murder ranked the highest of all crimes in perceived seriousness, it only ranked 10th out of 16 different crimes as being a crime that is feared, because it ranked lower on the perceived risk scale. In fact, the crime that respondents ranked as the one they feared most was having their homes burglarized (while they were away), because it was considered both serious and likely to occur.

Jackson (2006) calls for an interdisciplinary approach as he suggests that both sociological⁴ and psychological⁵ aspects should be addressed in what he terms “risk perception research” (p. 254) and he posits that they are reciprocal in nature - not only do perceptions of risk influence fear, but fear of being victimized influences perceived risk. This hypothesis is in line with other researchers’ (Rader’s, 2004; Smith & Torstensson, 1997) theories that point to a reciprocal relationship between perceived risk and fear of victimization. Jackson (2006) notes that people who are “emotionally animated about crime are more likely to see disorder in their environment, and more likely to link that to the threat of crime” (p.257). Essentially, people who are more sensitive to being victimized will more often perceive themselves at risk and perceive more situations as risky.

In some cases, individuals might perceive themselves as being at risk yet their perception does not generate anxiety or worry. Keane (1998) has argued that, “it is possible that some

⁴ For example, perceived risk-a cognitive assessment of the social factors that contribute to risk of victimization such as neighborhood and gender.

⁵ For example, fear-an emotive response to a potential situation without forethought or rational consideration.

individuals anticipate that they will be victims, yet experience little fear. For example, people who frequently leave their car parked with the doors unlocked may anticipate that theft is likely yet not feel fearful about this possibility” (p. 61). An interesting note about this example, however, is the perceived seriousness of the crime. An anonymous, non-confrontational car theft is unlikely to evoke as much physiological/ emotional fear as a face-to-face physical assault, which may account for a difference in fear measures. As Wilcox-Roundtree and Land (1996) state, “risk perception...is not perfectly correlated with fear, since fear also depends upon individual-level perceived seriousness of the offense in question...” (p. 1355).

The perception of risk, therefore, is a key component of fear of crime. But there is yet another element that must be considered – the behavioural dimension of fear (Rader, 2004). Fear of crime becomes observable in the constraints that individuals’ place on their behaviour in an attempt to avoid or mediate potential victimization.

2.3 Constrained Behaviour

Terance Miethe (1995) uses behavioural responses as a measure of fear of crime. Fearing crime, or perceiving oneself as being at-risk, prompts people to change their behaviour in terms of engaging in ‘self-imposed’ victimization prevention strategies. Miethe (1995) has examined behaviours that indicate avoidance, protective actions, and adjustments in routine activities - or ‘constrained behaviours’ (Rader, 2004) intended to reduce one’s risk of victimization.

Constrained behaviour can be assessed as an overt response to fear of crime. DuBow, McCabe and Kaplan (1979) identified five behavioural responses to fear of victimization - avoidance, protective, insurance, communicative and participation. Garofalo adopted these categories to study behavioural responses to being victimized, arguing that they “are flexible enough to be easily modified and used in a more focused discussion of either fear of physical injury or worry

about property loss” (p.848). The following paragraphs will briefly describe each of these constrained behavioural responses.

Avoidance behaviours are intended to avoid potential victimization. For instance, people may avoid walking through empty parking lots late at night, down dark alleys, or going out in the evening. People may also avoid certain ‘types’ of people (such as juveniles) who travel in groups or are out late at night. Essentially, these avoidance behaviours serve as a prevention of victimization (Garofalo, 1981).

Protective behaviours are specific actions that discourage certain crimes from occurring (Miethe, 1995). Another term often used to describe this type of behaviour is ‘target hardening’, where different methods are employed to make the attempted crime more difficult to complete. Examples of target hardening include: locking doors, purchasing or carrying a weapon, taking self-defense courses, or traveling in groups. The odds of victimization are reduced as a potential perpetrator would have to take additional measures to successfully complete the criminal act, thereby increasing the risk of detection.

Insurance behaviours are actions that involve reducing the effects of victimization. “Perhaps the most important insurance behaviour resulting from fear is passively handing over one’s money when faced with a threat during a robbery” (Miethe, 1995, p. 848). The behaviour optimizes one’s recovery from victimization or minimizes the degree of victimization. Therefore, although victimization is occurring in the form of robbery, physical victimization is prevented by giving the wallet to the offender as opposed to resisting.

Communicative behaviour involves supplying information to others about a particular crime that has occurred, such as Neighbourhood Watch programs. *Participation behaviour* is active participation with others in response to a particular crime, such as the initiation of a support group for individuals experiencing the same type of crime. These categories were used

to describe responses to crime rather than a response to fear of crime. As such, questions assessing communicative and participation behaviour are not generally included in fear of crime surveys. By contrast, avoidance and protective behaviours are the constrained behaviour questions that are most frequently included in fear of crime surveys.

Although the term “routine activities” is used within the constrained behaviour literature, the term is usually used in reference to a criminological theory that introduces the idea that engagement in routine activity increases vulnerability to crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). This theory is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, the theory lends itself well to understanding why it is used in reference to constrained behaviour. The theory suggests that when there is a motivated offender, a suitable target, and there is no guardianship of the target, it provides the perfect environment for a crime to occur (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

For example, if there is a motivated offender (such as a burglar), a suitable target (a home), and the home is not guarded by its resident, then the chance that the home will be burglarized increases. As well, if the home is regularly unguarded by its owner every day at the same time (resident works outside of the home from 9 to 5, for example), it provides the opportunity for the burglar to commit a crime undetected at the time the home is unguarded. It would, however, be more difficult for the perpetrator to commit a burglary if the resident worked inconsistent hours, as the burglar would not know exactly when or for how long the home would be unguarded, thus decreasing the likelihood the burglary would be successful. More specifically, as the level of social interaction that the homeowner engages in increases, the likelihood of criminal activity occurring is expected to rise due to an increase in unguarded targets (Messner & Blau, 1987). Again, this theory is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it provides background as to why the term ‘routine activities’ is used in reference to constrained behaviour.

Within the fear of crime literature, routine activities are often included as a behavioural constraint component because some scholars contend that people often refrain from engaging in routine activities (activities that occur while living a 'normal' life) to mediate crime. In reference to the prior example, the home owner 'routinely' left her/his home unguarded to go to work; in other words, *routine* is synonymous with *consistent behaviour* engaged in during the course of living ones' life.

Kennedy and Forde (1990) found that engaging in routine activities increased an individual's likelihood of victimization for both property and personal crime, including violent victimization. Miethe (1995) refers to general lifestyle changes as well as routine activity changes as involving "basic alterations in the who, what, when, and where of everyday life" (p. 25). In this way, 'movement' is restricted to prevent, deter and minimize the chances of victimization. Miethe's (1995) definition is actually more reflective of avoidance behaviours where one physically avoids risky situations.

Riger, Gordon and LeBailly (1982) use the term 'precautionary behaviour' in reference to the manner in which people (specifically women) mediate victimization (p. 370). Precautionary behaviours are broken down into two categories: avoidance and risk management (Skogan, 1978; cited in Riger). In this regard, the reduction of exposure reduces the risk of victimization.

Finally, risk management includes behaviours that reduce victimization when avoidance is not an option. For example, people who work night shifts must travel to and from work during the evening, thus exposing themselves to an increase of potential victimization. This may prompt people to engage in particular behaviours to manage the risk, such as carpooling for safety purposes or carrying a weapon. Riger et. al.'s (1982) use of risk management closely parallels the protective behaviours discussed by Miethe (1995), and Rader (2004) describes this

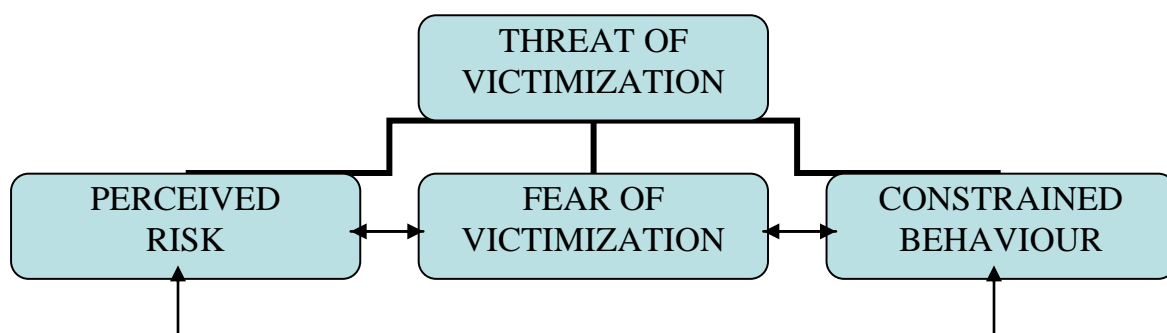
as defensive behaviour. Fundamentally, the behaviours are the same, regardless of the name given to them.

Researchers have also argued that “by avoiding physical contact with risky situations and dangerous people, individuals decrease their risks of criminal victimization, but these behavioural changes may further increase their fear of crime” (Miethe, 1995, p. 22). Just as perceived risk and fear of crime share a reciprocal relationship, researchers suggest that a similar relationship exists between constrained behaviours and fear (Liska, Sanchirico, & Reed, 1998; Miethe, 1995; Rader, 2004). It is clear that fear of crime is more complex than how it was seen when researchers initially began exploring the topic. The continued fear of crime debate and discussion about reciprocal relationships facilitates the creation of new theories, as well as the need to empirically test them.

2.4 Threat of Victimization Model

In response to the criticisms made by the fear of crime studies, Rader (2004) has explored a multi-component approach to fear of crime that posits several reciprocal relationships. As shown in Figure 1, Rader's theory begins with an all encompassing term, the 'threat of victimization,' which she breaks down into three parts: fear of victimization as the emotive response, perceived risk as the cognitive response, and constrained behaviours as the behavioural response to the threat of victimization (Rader, 2004, p. 689).

Figure 1: Rader's Threat of Victimization Theoretical Model



According to Rader (2004) these three constructs are reciprocal in nature, so fear should not just be used as a dependent variable:

Making fear of crime the dependent variable is questionable because of the interrelated relationships found between fear of crime, perceived risk and constrained behaviours. Studies show that fear of crime and perceived risk and fear of crime and constrained behaviours are closely tied and, in fact, may be reciprocal. (Rader, 2004, p.691)

In empirical tests of this model, Rader et al. (2007) have found that perceived risk, avoidance behaviour and defensive behaviour⁶ predicted fear of victimization. As well, fear of victimization predicted perceived risk, avoidance behaviour and defensive behaviour. Among the predictive capabilities of the components of the threat of victimization, Rader et al. (2007) also found that gender, prior victimization and perceived neighbourhood incivilities were significant predictors of the various components of the threat of victimization. These factors have been discussed within the fear of crime literature as scholars attempt to formulate theories about how people assess potential risk of victimization and fear.

2.5 Broad Partial Theories

Although there are no all-encompassing fear of crime theories, there are streams of thought or broad partial theories (Jackson, 2006; Rader, 2004; Taylor & Hale, 1986). This may be due, in part, to the complexity of fear of crime. Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model represents an attempt to construct a broad theoretical model that takes into consideration all prior research, including factors related to risk perception, such as neighbourhood incivilities, criminal opportunity, media representation, and prior victimization (Ferraro, 1996).

One of the broad partial theories within the literature is referred to as the 'risk interpretation model' (Ferraro, 1995). This model highlights factors that are used to calculate the risk of being victimized by crime. Although the risk interpretation model is beyond the scope of this thesis; the following paragraphs provide valuable insight into the complexity of fear of crime research that should be taken into consideration.

⁶ Rader and her colleagues looked at two separate constrained behaviours, avoidance (includes physically avoiding potential victimization) and defensive (includes behaviours that reduce victimization when avoidance is not an option).

2.5.1 Risk Perception

Kenneth Ferraro (1995) discusses risk interpretation or perception, which revolves around what factors people perceive as increasing their risk of victimization within the context of knowledge about the level of criminal activity or opportunity at that moment. Ferraro states, “this is an empirical study of how people interpret criminal realities and victimization potential around them” (p. 2). People make judgments about risk based on current information regarding actual reported or experienced victimization. Two specific examples of contextual information that people use to assess risk are: prior victimization experience (Ferraro, 1996), and perceived vulnerability (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981).

2.5.1a Victimization

Ferraro (1996) found in his study that ‘indirect victimization’ such as having knowledge that a person close to a respondent was victimized (by violent crime), ultimately increased fear of crime (p. 684-685). Knowing that someone close to you has been victimized by crime or that someone in close proximity, such as a neighbor, has been victimized is enough to affect how ‘at risk’ a person feels. Interestingly, Ferraro (1996) found that indirect victimization was more influential in increasing fear of crime than actually being victimized. Direct victimization, however, has also been correlated with increases in fear of crime (Gray, Jackson & Farrall, 2008; Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008). In general, people tend to specifically fear the crime they were previously victimized by, rather than generalizing their fear to all crime. Victimization serves to heighten perceptions of being vulnerable - another key component in perceived-risk research.

2.5.1b Vulnerability

McCrea, Shyy, Western & Stimson (2005) define vulnerability in relation to fear of crime as “individual characteristics that relate to perceived risk, seriousness of consequences and lack of control” (p. 9). Vulnerability, therefore, includes perceived outcomes of being victimized as well as the inability to avoid such victimization. For example, women feel more vulnerable than men to rape because the physical and emotional consequences of rape, are generally very serious, even devastating and because women are more likely to be targeted as victims of rape compared to men, (McCrea et al. 2005). Also, women are generally perceived as physically weaker than men, and therefore are more likely to conclude that they will be unable to avoid or defend themselves from rape if someone chooses to victimize them. Indeed, women consistently fear crime more than men, regardless of the study (McCrea, Shyy, Western & Stimson, 2005; Hale, 1996; Smith, 1988). In addition Skogan & Maxfield (1981) point out that ethnicity, age and social class also can affect fear of crime due to perceived vulnerability (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). Vulnerability, therefore, is an important factor to consider in research on fear of crime and risk perception.

Ultimately, risk perception research represents a more in-depth look at what factors people use to assess their likelihood of being victimized by crime. Prior victimization experience and perceived vulnerability both contribute to perceptions of risk, and perceived risk is just one component of assessing the threat of victimization. Although this thesis does not test the risk perception model, it is an important construct to understand, as it reveals the complexity of fear of crime research. It also helps to understand gender differences in terms of fear and why women fear, perceive themselves at risk and constrain their behaviour more than their male counterparts. Because gender is another important aspect that this thesis sets out to explore, it is important to discuss the theories that have been brought forth to explain why women fear more than men.

Part II

2.6 The Importance of Gender, and Why Women Fear Crime More than Men

Two common explanations for women's higher fear of crime levels are the social constructions of gender and women's experience with violence, specifically intimate partner violence, rape and stalking. Socialization theories have suggested that because women are socially constructed as vulnerable and men as invulnerable, it is more socially acceptable for women to admit to being afraid (Hollander, 2001; Smith, 1988). This is important to consider since fear of crime studies, in general, are self-reported. Women, therefore, may not only perceive themselves as more vulnerable, which affects differential gender fear of crime levels, but women would be more likely than men to admit to fearing crime on a survey (Stanko and Hobdell, 1993). Men's fear of victimization may therefore be underreported (Smith, 1988).

The literature also indicates that women do not generally fear all types of crime; they tend to fear being harmed, physically, by men. It is important, therefore, to not only take into consideration the social construction of gender, but also the types of crime that women typically experience: intimate partner violence, rape and stalking (Hollander, 2001; Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999). These crimes are usually perpetrated by men, and thus reinforce constructions of female vulnerability and male invulnerability. It is not surprising, therefore, that social constructions of gender and violent crime experiences are theories to explain why women *fear crime* more than men.

2.7 Social Constructions of Gender

Hollander (2001) posits that vulnerability and dangerousness are key components in gender construction; assumptions about the human body make perceptions of vulnerability and dangerousness appear biological and therefore natural. Femininity is linked to vulnerability and masculinity is linked to dangerousness. As (2001) Hollander states,

Female bodies are believed to be inherently vulnerable and not dangerous to others because of their smaller average size, perceived lack of strength, and physical vulnerability to rape. Male bodies, in contrast, are seen as potentially dangerous to others because of their larger size, greater strength, and potential use as a tool of sexual violence (p. 84).

These physiological factors make vulnerability and dangerousness seem natural and logical. This essentialist belief about masculinity and femininity masks the reality that men are more often the victims of violent attack than women, and in fact are also victims of rape at the hands of other men (Hollander, 2001). Yet women fear violent victimization more than their male counterparts. Interestingly, although women tend to fear violent victimization by strangers out in public, the reality is that they are more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner at home (Hollander, 2001; Valentine, 1999). Hollander (2001) argues that ‘violence and perceived threat of violence’ (p. 86) are key components in understanding the existence of a gendered reality. Put another way, violence is a key component in the social construction of gender that scholars often fail to consider. Hollander (2001) suggests that there is an overall belief system or ‘shared cultural conception’ about masculinity and femininity and how dangerousness and vulnerability permeate those constructs.

Hollander (2001) uses discourse to reveal how women are constructed as vulnerable and men as dangerous. Through focus groups, she reveals how men and women discuss gender in the context of vulnerability and danger, without being prompted, but by simply being asked how

violence affects them personally. With 76 adult participants and a total of 13 focus groups, it became clear through discussion that women were *always* considered vulnerable and men were considered invulnerable, dangerous and responsible for protecting others (specifically women).

Hollander (2001) found that women's level of vulnerability fluctuates between 'more or less' in certain contexts. For example, female children and elderly women are considered the most vulnerable, and some discussion suggested that young women (late teens into the twenties) were more vulnerable than women in their 30s and 40s. Therefore, the period when males are considered to be the most invulnerable due to physical growth and increase in strength, is the same age at which females are considered to be extremely vulnerable. Although females also grow larger, become physically stronger and more capable than they were when younger, they are still seen as being relatively weak, regardless of their abilities (Hollander, 2001). Females in this age frame are also considered to be more vulnerable due to their sexual desirability. Women in their 30s and 40s felt less vulnerable as they felt their sexual desirability had diminished due to their age. Hollander (2001) suggests this perspective indicates that the (mistaken) belief that men sexually assault women based on attractiveness continues to exist. This perspective also indicates how age and gender intersect with the construction of vulnerability.

According to Hollander (2001), age and gender also intersect in regards to masculinity. Children and the elderly are considered to be the age at which males and females are the most vulnerable. However, whereas male and female children are considered equally vulnerable, elderly women are perceived to be more vulnerable than elderly men. This means that once adulthood is reached, females are always perceived as more vulnerable than males. This perception of adult masculinity may actually serve to protect men because those who would prey on their vulnerability would be less likely to see a man as a vulnerable target. It could also facilitate the notion of men as the protectors of vulnerable women and children.

Hollander (2001) suggests that the perceived ability to protect others is another illustration of cultural perceptions of vulnerability. In her focus group study, 41 of 98 participant statements regarding protection identified men as protectors and 63 statements identified women in need of protection. Even more revealing was that “women were never discussed as protectors of men” (p. 92). Within the focus groups it was widely accepted that women were protectors of children and of other women - and women tended to doubt their abilities to defend themselves against men, even if they were in a group. As Hollander (2001) states, “even 10 women together are not perceived to be capable of defending themselves or each other from men’s violence... comments about protection, like more general comments about vulnerability... tend to identify women as vulnerable and men as the sources of both danger and protection” (p. 94). Masculinity not only insulates men from perceived vulnerability, which enables them to provide protection to others, but it also facilitates the perception of men as dangerous.

Hollander’s (2001) study reveals that men were consistently considered to be potentially dangerous by both men and women. Of the 121 comments that identified a particular gender as dangerous, only 6 referred to women. Two comments regarding females as dangerous were stated as jokes, (which Hollander suggests provides support about the absurdity of female dangerousness), two comments referred to women as dangerous in relation to falsely accusing men of rape (which is clearly not in relation to physical violence) and the final two statements were in relation to race (groups of Black women were considered dangerous). Hollander (2001) concludes that these findings reflect the idea that men are considered potentially dangerous at all times, however women are only considered dangerous in ‘extraordinary circumstances’ (p. 100). Because it is difficult to anticipate which man may, and at what point, become violent, all men are considered capable of violence, and all are

therefore perceived as potentially dangerous. Because these perceptions of female vulnerability and male dangerousness are so prevalent in society, social constructions of masculinity and femininity may be more influential in how much someone fears crime than an actual victim's experience, which many may have not experienced.

Smith (1988) also discusses gender socialization as a potential explanation of women's elevated fear of crime and perceived risk. She points out "stereotypic female personality traits, such as timidity, passivity, and dependency, resulting from female socialization, predispose women to be fearful" (Smith, 1988, p.31). Women feel they are not physically capable of defending against an attack from a stronger male, that they "have limited means of coping" (p.31) which includes unsupportive agency response, and that many violent crimes against women are predatory (Smith, 1988). Women thus perceive themselves as being at higher risk of victimization than men do (Smith, 1988; Carcach and Mukherjee, 1999).

Valentine (1989) has suggested that the construct of women's roles in the private domain includes their need to be protected from the public domain and thus reinforces women's fear of violent victimization in the public sphere. In a discussion of this idea, Pain (1997) has stated, "the attachment of fear to public places, and the precautions that women take as a result, constitute a 'spatial expression of patriarchy', reproducing traditional notions about women's roles and the places which are considered appropriate for them to use" (p.231). Because women are vulnerable, they are relegated to the *safety* of the private sphere and engage in domestic activities within that sphere. Men, in contrast, are not only invulnerable but also dangerous and are therefore expected to occupy the public sphere. According to this view, men are both perpetrators and protectors of women who dare to negotiate the dangers of the public sphere. Ultimately, the social construction of gender is a convincing explanation as to why gender is a

consistent predictor of fear of crime (Hale, 1996). It also clarifies why women not only fear crime, but also perceive themselves at risk and engage in constrained behaviour more than men.

2.7.1 Vulnerability and Dangerousness: Fear, Perceived Risk and Constrained Behaviour

Beyond the suggestion that women are more likely than men to answer on self-reported fear of crime surveys that they are fearful of crime, social constructions of gender reveal how and why women fear crime - and provide partial support for Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model. Since women are socially constructed to *be* perceived, and perceive *themselves*, as vulnerable, and they consistently fear crime and constrain their behaviour more than men, then there may be a relationship between perceived vulnerability and fearing victimization. Warr (1985) uses a multiplicative model (perceived seriousness interacting with perceived risk) to help explain women's increased fear of crime. His theory is based on the fact that women are more likely than men to be victims of rape. Rape is considered a serious offence; therefore, any crime with the potential to become a sexual assault increases women's fear. For example, women may not necessarily fear burglary as a crime of stolen property, but as a situation that could make rape more likely. The potential risk of a face-to-face confrontation with the burglar exists, thus increasing the likelihood that a rape could occur. Warr (1985) found the correlation between fear of burglary and the perceived risk of burglary was not as strong as when perceived risk of rape was included in the model: "for women, rape is a logical if not a necessary outcome of burglary" (p. 248). Women, therefore, may fear less serious crimes more if they perceive themselves at risk of being victimized in a more serious way. Women may also perceive themselves as particularly vulnerable to crimes perpetrated by men, due to the potential for a sexual assault to occur. If so, this would support the theory that gender is socially constructed in a way that includes women's vulnerability and men's

dangerousness. It would not be surprising, then, to find that women engage in behaviour that reduces their perceived vulnerability. Indeed, scholars consistently find that women engage in constrained behaviour more than men (Reid & Konrad, 2004; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007).

Not only are vulnerability and dangerousness components of gender construction, they are also linked to space or social geography (Pain, 1997). If women perceive themselves to be vulnerable, especially in the public sphere, they might choose to avoid public spaces and/or employ certain tactics to reduce their risk of victimization while in the public domain. This may be done through defensive measures, such as locking doors, carrying weapons or choosing particular routes for travel. Men, in contrast do not need to negotiate danger as they are seen as invulnerable and potentially dangerous. Green and Singleton (2006) contend, however, that it is not geographic location (public/private) alone that signifies gendered differences in risk, but that geographical risk is part of gender construction, and thus relational in nature. A location that is considered a 'safe space' by a particular group may be considered 'unsafe' by another. Research reveals that gender, race, class and sexuality all intersect when measuring risk (Hollander, 2001; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007). For example, Hollander (2001) found that lesbian couples tried to pass as 'straight' while out in a public location 'normally' occupied by heterosexual couples, revealing that not all women feel equally at risk in a particular space. Therefore, it is a relational construction that defines geographical space as safe or unsafe. Gender construction, including spatial elements, are important to consider in understanding why women engage in higher levels of constrained behaviour than men. As Green and Singleton (2006) state,

Space, it is argued...is gendered, sexualized, classed and racialized; and ease of access and movement through space for different groups is subject to constant negotiation and contestation, and is embedded in relations of power. Public space in Western society has long been claimed by white, heterosexual men

who have dominated, controlled and excluded other groups through the exertion of an aggressive 'gaze' or the use of violence (p. 859).

Essentially, women engage in constrained behaviour based on their social location, which is played out in physical locations. But it is important to consider the type of crime that women are most likely to fear. It is male violence of which women perceive themselves as being most at-risk, of which they most fear becoming a victim, and which they are most likely to avoid by constraining their behaviour. Therefore, the experience of male violent crime may be an important factor to consider in studies of gender differences in fear of crime. Feminist scholars have continued to point out that women are more likely than men to experience intimate partner crimes such as violent assault, rape and stalking, which are grossly under-reported (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999; Hollander, 2001; Pain, 1997; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007) and should be taken into consideration when assessing gender differences in perceptions of risk, fear of victimization and engagement in constrained behaviour.

2.8 Types of Victimization Women Experience: how they relate to fear of crime, perceived risk and constrained behaviour

Early research findings suggested that women's fear, in a sense, is 'irrational' since it is men who are the more likely victims of crime (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999). But more recently, researchers (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999; Hollander, 2001; Pain, 1997; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007) have pointed out that women are more often victims of intimate partner violence, rape and stalking.

Women's experiences with violence are different from those of men. Women are more likely than men to be physically victimized by a current/ex-partner or an acquaintance, whereas men tend to be physically victimized by acquaintances or strangers (Pain, 1997). Intimate partner violence is vastly underreported, skewing police reports, and suggesting that men are

more often victims of violent victimization than women. According to a U.S. Department of Justice (1996) victimization survey,

Twenty years ago the likelihood of women's victimization was less than half that of men. The overall trend indicates that the rates of victimization for men and women converge – the rate for men decreasing and the rate for women remaining relatively stable or increasing (Craven, p. 1).

According to Canadian police report data (Statistics Canada, 2003), men are more likely than women to be victims of homicide, attempted homicide and robbery, but women are more likely than men to be victims of assault. Violent assaults are most often committed by either an acquaintance or a stranger when males are the victims, however, family members (including ex-intimates) and acquaintances are the more likely perpetrators of violence towards female victims (Statistics Canada, 2003).

It is interesting, however, that women continue to fear the violence of strangers more than that of intimates, who are actually the more likely perpetrators of violence against them. Smith (1988) has suggested that intimate partner violence “creates a generalized fear of male violence, which has manifested itself in the national victimization surveys as fear of violent crime” (p.30). In a study of how women's fear of crime is allocated, Pain (1997) asked women who would be more likely to commit a rape - a friend, a relative, or a stranger. Almost 50% of the women in the study answered that a non-stranger would be the most likely to commit rape. But when they were asked who would be most likely to commit a rape if they [the women in the study] were the victim, 70% of the women answered that the most likely person would be a stranger (Pain, 1997). Pain (1997) explains her findings in terms of “fear management”: “it became apparent from interviewing women in more depth that this ostensibly contradictory state of holding different beliefs about personal and aggregate risk is achieved by distancing violence from the self, both geographically and socially” (p. 236).

Carcach and Mukherjee (1999) have found that the actual experience of intimate partner violence is related to an increase in fear of victimization overall:

The analysis revealed that women who are victims of physical violence by a male partner (current or former), or by another male tend to admit to more fear of crime than other women do. Being a victim of violence by a partner (current or former) or another male contributes to worsen women's perceptions of safety in the community; however, the really strong effect appears from experiencing violence both in and outside the home (p. 4).

Therefore, when women experience violence in both the private and public spheres, they may come to believe that *all space* is potentially 'unsafe'.

Wilcox, Jordan and Pritchard (2007) assessed fear of crime among college women and their experiences of various types of victimization on campus, namely stalking and physical and/or sexual victimization perpetrated by strangers or acquaintances. They found that women who experienced stalking by strangers, or violence by an acquaintance, were more likely than women with any other victimization experience to perceive the campus as unsafe. Victimization worries tended to be specific to victimization experience. For example, 'stranger stalking' experiences were specifically related to stranger-stalking worry, and 'acquaintance stalking' experiences were specifically related to acquaintance-stalking worry. However, women who had been stalked by a stranger were also more likely to worry about stranger-perpetrated physical assault which, in turn, was linked to constrained behaviours, specifically defensive behaviours. Perceived campus risk also was related to avoidance behaviour. Like Pain (1997), Wilcox et al. (2007) found that women displayed more worry about stranger-perpetrated victimization than acquaintance-perpetrated victimization, even though the latter had a higher rate of occurrence. But having been stalked was a more predictive experience for increasing fear of crime (specifically perceived risk) than physical victimization by an acquaintance. Therefore, stalking may be an important experience to include in studies of fear of crime among women.

Stalking has come to public awareness over the past two decades as laws prohibiting it have been enacted. In 1993, criminal harassment was included in the Canadian *Criminal Code* (Department of Justice, 2003, p.3). In Canada 80% of victims are women, 90% of stalkers are men, and 12% of stalking cases occur between strangers (Department of Justice, 2003, p.3). The majority of stalking cases in which the victim and perpetrators know each other are extensions of intimate partner violence (Coleman 1997; Department of Justice, 2003; Melton 2007). Thus, stalking should be considered within the context of intimate partner violence as a continuation of abuse in the public realm. Stalking often begins when an intimate relationship ends and the rejected partner tries to maintain control and re-establish the relationship (Roberts & Dziegielewski, 1996).

In a qualitative study of women who were victims of intimate partner stalking in the United States, Melton (2007) found that in 81% of cases, the stalking began during the relationship. At the time, the women did not interpret the behaviour as stalking, but as care and concern. For example, one woman stated that she had thought, “Oh that’s really sweet that he’s coming to visit me so much...but I think it was more like him coming to check up on me, because it was never announced” (Melton 2007; p. 355). Stalking can be difficult to detect because the line between care or concern and control is not always clear. Stalking in the context of intimate partner violence is related to greater fear, as well as depression, anger and distress (Davis, Ace & Andraa, 2000, cited in Melton, 2007), possibly because it is conducted in both the public and private spheres, leaving no safe space for the victim. Intimate partner violence, rape and stalking serve to reinforce the social constructions of gender, which include female vulnerability and male dangerousness. For a woman to experience violence at the hands of both male intimate partners and male strangers reinforces the belief that 'any man at any time' poses a potential threat.

It is not surprising, then, that both the social construction of gender and 'female targeted' victimization experiences are used to explain women's higher fear of crime levels relative to those of men. Ultimately, fear of crime for women is interpreted as fear of male violence. As Hollander (2001) suggests, violence or even the threat of violence is a key component of gendered experiences and realities.

2.9 Purpose and Hypothesis

The overall purpose of this thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model, which includes three components: fear of victimization, perceived risk and constrained behaviour (avoidance and defensive). While some empirical support has been found for this model, its applicability for a Canadian population is unknown. Further, although the theoretical literature posits that a reciprocal relationship exists among fear of victimization, perceived risk and constrained behaviour, further empirical testing is needed to confirm the reciprocity of these relationships within the Canadian population. Therefore, the first purpose of this thesis is to provide an empirical test of the threat of victimization model within a representative Canadian sample. On the basis of findings from US studies (Jackson, 2006; Rader, 2007), it is anticipated that the model will be supported and that the relationships among the *threat of victimization* components will be found to be reciprocal.

Another important component to this study is to understand how the influence of gender may affect the proposed threat of victimization model. Past research has demonstrated that vulnerability is related to the social construction of femininity (Hollander, 2001). By testing Radar's threat of victimization model for women only and their experiences of female targeted crimes, this research can validate that:

- 1) Women do in fact fear crime more than men and that past research has not concluded this because of the generalized structure of the fear of crime measures.

- 2) Verify that the hypothesized reciprocal relationship between the three components of threat of victimization are not the result of a spurious relationship between fear and socially constructed gender vulnerability.

To shed further light on the role of gender in the threat of victimization model, it is important to examine gender-related crime. The role of gender-related victimization experiences in the threat of victimization felt by women has not been examined extensively in previous research. Therefore, the third purpose of this study is to explore this relationship. It is expected that women who have experienced gendered victimization such as stalking or domestic violence will be significantly more likely to fear victimization compared to women without these experiences.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Research Method and Measurements

3.1 Data Set

The sample for this study was extracted from the Statistics Canada General Social Survey (GSS) 2004 Cycle 18, a self-reported survey designed to assess social trends. Although the GSS is conducted annually, each cycle consists of questions that focus on a particular subject. Cycle 18 focuses on different types of criminal victimization, including property crime, violent crime, current and former intimate partner abuse, stalking and fear of crime. Cycle 18 was carried out on a stratified sample of 23,766 Canadians that were surveyed by telephone using random digit dialing (RDD) and a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system⁷ (Gannon, 2005). The survey respondents resided in the ten Canadian provinces (although pilot pre-tests were conducted on the three territories, they were excluded from the study sample). According to Statistics Canada, each contacted household was enumerated and demographic characteristics of each member of the household were recorded in a computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) program. The CATI program then randomly selected one household member who was at least 15 years of age to answer the survey questions (Statistics Canada, 2007). The response rate for cycle 18 was 75% (Gannon, 2005).

Data collection began in January 2004 and was conducted over a 12-month period in 7 waves to offset possible variations due to time of year or season. The sample was divided into 27 geographical areas/strata. Seventeen areas consisted of Census Metropolitan Areas (St. John's, Halifax, Saint John, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria). Two additional strata were comprised of regions from Ontario and Quebec. The areas not included in the above mentioned CMA

⁷ The data were weighted for households that do not have telephones (<2%) and for those with cell phone (<3%).

designations were grouped according to province, resulting in ten more strata. The data set was weighted to reflect all non-institutionalized Canadians who are at least 15 years of age or older. The weights were based on Canadian census results to ensure the sample was representative of the Canadian population. Because it is not a census, people in the sample represent a number of Canadians that have similar characteristics in the population. The weight varies depending on how many people in the Canadian population are represented by each person in the sample.

All data analysis took place at the University of Manitoba Research Data Centre (RDC), the designated data repository for the province of Manitoba. Although public use data sets are available, one of the key variables, intimate partner violence is suppressed from the GSS 2004 Cycle 18 public access database because of the sensitive nature of that variable. It is routine for Statistics Canada to suppress not only data that may reveal the identity of participants in the survey, but also any statistical output that would enable someone to identify a participant.

A sample of 15,707 Canadians was selected from the database on the basis of their marital status; all participants selected either had a current intimate partner (married or in a common-law relationship) or an ex-intimate partner (separated or divorced). This group of people was chosen because the General Social Survey did not ask intimate partner violence questions of persons who did not identify themselves as married, common-law, separated or divorced. The final study sample comprised 66% of the total GSS 2004 sample. The study sample was equally divided by gender (50.3% female).

A secondary data analysis was chosen for this thesis due to its availability, cost effectiveness, and facilitation for replication. Specifically, the GSS 2004 Cycle 18 was chosen because the survey includes questions that can operationalize the components of Rader's threat of victimization model.

3.2 Variables

The four variables measured were: 1) perceived risk (cognitive component); 2) fear of victimization (emotive component); 3) constrained behaviour – avoidance (behavioural component); and 4) constrained behaviour – defensive (behavioural component). Each served as both an outcome and a predictor variable in order to assess the degree of reciprocity among them. Because the avoidance behaviour variable is dichotomous, all of the outcome variables were also dichotomized in order to facilitate the logistic regression used to test the statistical model.

Perceived risk. In the GSS 2004, participants rated their perceived personal safety in response to two questions:

- 1) “How safe do you feel from crime walking ALONE in your area after dark?”
(1 = very unsafe, 2 = somewhat unsafe, 3 = reasonably safe, 4 = very safe);
- 2) “In general, how satisfied are you with your personal safety from crime?”
(1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = very satisfied).

In the present study, participants' ratings were re-coded into a single perceived risk variable. If the respondent said that s/he felt “very unsafe or unsafe” walking alone after dark, *and/or* “very dissatisfied or dissatisfied” with his/her personal safety from crime, s/he was assigned a code of 1. If the respondent felt “reasonably safe or very safe” walking in his/her area after dark, *and* felt “somewhat satisfied or very satisfied” with his/her personal safety from crime, s/he assigned a value of 0.

Fear of victimization. In the GSS 2004, respondents were asked, “When alone in your home in the evening or at night, do you feel..... about your safety from crime” (1 = not worried at all, 2 = somewhat worried, 3 = very worried). In the present study, a dichotomous fear variable was created by collapsing somewhat worried and very worried into one category.

Respondents who were not worried at all were assigned a score of 0; those who were very worried or somewhat worried were assigned a score of 1.

Constrained behaviour. In the GSS-2004, respondents were asked to indicate whether they do any of the following things to make themselves safer from crime: 1) carry something to defend themselves or to alert other people; 2) lock the car doors for their personal safety when alone in the car; 3) check the back seat for intruders before getting into the car when alone and returning to a parked car; 4) plan their route with safety in mind; and 5) stay at home at night because they are afraid to go out alone. I speculated that the first four of these items constituted defensive behaviours, while the fifth constituted avoidance behaviour. Before collapsing the first four items into a single defensive behaviour measure, I tested my assumption using factor analysis to ensure that those four items were indeed correlated with a single factor – and that the fifth item was statistically unrelated to that factor. An oblique rotation was applied because in this study it was assumed that the components of the threat of victimization are correlated. The results of the factor analysis did yield two factors (defensive and avoidance behaviours), but the item “Do you routinely carry something to defend yourself?” had the weakest loading⁸ of the five items and loaded in a way that made the results rather obscure. Further examination of responses to this item revealed that it had extremely low variability: therefore, this item was excluded from further analysis. A second factor analysis yielded two distinct factors - avoidance behaviour and defensive behaviour⁹ (see Table 1).

⁸ ‘Load’ or ‘Loadings’ is a term used to indicate how strongly variables correlate to a particular factor (qualitative concept).

⁹ According to Floyd and Widaman (1995) the debate is still ongoing as to the use of dummy variables in factor analysis. Some findings produce different results in comparison to using interval data (Floyd & Widaman 1995; Rummel, 1970). Floyd & Widaman (1995) and Rummel (1970); however, contend that dummy variables may be used in factor analysis but interpreted with caution. Rummel (1971) also references Cattell ‘s (1952) 4 to 1 guideline in determining adequacy of the sample size for factor analysis. For example, 40 cases for 10 variables (pg 220). This factor analysis was not the main focus of this thesis and the sample size was quite large; its purpose was to justify the creation of the avoidance and defensive behaviour variables.

Table 1: Summary of Factor Loadings for Two Factor Solution for Constrained Behaviour: Avoidance and Defensive				
			Loadings	
Variables:	Mean	SD	Factor 1	Factor 2
Lock the car doors	1.60	0.489	0.773	-0.044
Check the back seat	1.46	0.498	0.824	-0.084
Plan your route	1.43	0.496	0.692	0.173
Stay at home	1.09	0.289	0.003	0.987
Component correlation:				
Factor 1 (Defense)			1.00	2.19
Factor 2 (Avoid)			2.19	1.00
Oblique rotation; Kaiser-Meyer .680				

Therefore, the defensive behaviour variable consisted of respondents' answers to whether they routinely lock car doors, check the back seat of the car before getting in, and plan their routes with safety in mind. It was coded as 0 (No, they do not do any of these things) or 1 (Yes, they do at least one of these things). The avoidance behaviour variable consisted of respondents' answers to whether they routinely stay home at night because they are afraid to go out alone, which was coded as 0 (No) or 1 (Yes). It should be noted that only 9% of respondents answered 'yes' to the avoidance behaviour question. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) recommend the sample size be five times the number of variables used in the multivariate analysis to maximize the accuracy of the findings. Because the sample size in this study was large ($n=15,707$) and avoidance behaviour was a key variable, this variable was maintained.

Gender. Respondents' genders were coded as 0 (male) or 1 (female).

Intimate partner violence (IPV). In the GSS 2004, respondents were asked whether or not, in the previous five years, a current or previous intimate partner had: 1) threatened to hit them with a fist or anything else that could have hurt them; 2) thrown anything at them that

could have hurt them; 3) pushed, grabbed or shoved them in a way that could have hurt them; 4) slapped them; 5) kicked, bit or hit them with a fist; 6) hit them with something that could have hurt them, other than a fist; 7) beaten them; 8) choked them; 9) used or threatened to use a gun or knife on them; 10) forced them into any unwanted sexual activity, by threatening them, holding them down, or hurting them in some way. IPV is known to be under-reported (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999; Hollander, 2001; Pain, 1997; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007) and variability in responses to these items was low (7%) in the present sample. Therefore, in the present study, these items were collapsed to create a dichotomous variable coded as 0 (No to all IPV items) or 1 (Yes to at least one IPV item).

Stalking. In the GSS 2004, respondents were asked whether or not, in the previous five years, they had been subjected to any of the following behaviours, repeated or unwanted, from people they did or did not know and that caused them to fear for their safety or the safety of someone known to them: 1) repeated, silent or obscene phone calls; 2) being followed or spied upon; 3) being waited for outside their homes; 4) being waited for outside their place of work or school or other places by someone who had no business being there; 5) being sent unwanted e-mail messages; 6) being sent unwanted gifts, letter, or cards; 7) being persistently asked for a date by someone who refused to take no for an answer; 8) having someone try to communicate with them against their will in any other way; 9) having someone attempt to intimidate or threaten them by threatening or intimidating someone else; 10) having someone attempt to intimidate or threaten them by hurting their pet(s) or damaging their property.

Variability in responses to these items was low (11%), therefore, in the present study; these items were collapsed to create a dichotomous variable coded as 0 (No to all stalking items) or 1 (Yes to at least one stalking item).

3.3 Analytic Strategy

A logistic regression approach was chosen as the best fit for the data because it allows the researcher to examine the power of the predictor variables, to predict the likelihood of a dichotomous outcome variable. Because the lowest level of data in the present study was dichotomous, the logistic regression approach was most suitable in this case (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2001). It is acknowledged that the dichotomizing of some variables in the present study reduced the variation in the data. The present study can be considered preliminary, as it was only the second empirical test of Rader's model and the first utilizing Canadian data.

The analysis was carried out in three steps, each of which tested one of the study's hypotheses.

Step 1 hypothesis: The relationships among the components of Rader's threat of victimization model will be reciprocal. Step 1 of the analyses addressed the first purpose of the study, which was to examine the reciprocity of the components of Rader's threat of victimization model - perceived risk, fear of victimization, avoidance behaviour, and defensive behaviour. In this step, a sequence of four logistic regression equations was generated. In each equation, one of the threat of victimization components served as an outcome variable, and the other three served as predictors. This approach allowed me to examine the degree of reciprocity in the relationships among these variables. My criteria for determining whether Hypothesis 1 was supported was if each logistic regression illustrated that there was a significant relationship among the components of the threat of victimization model.

Step 2 hypothesis: Women will fear victimization, perceive themselves as being at-risk and constrain their behaviour more than men. Step 2 of the analyses addressed the second purpose of the study, which was to determine if women will fear victimization, perceive themselves as being at-risk and constrain their behaviour more than men. Therefore, in Step 2,

gender was added to the model as a predictor variable. As in Step 1, a sequence of four logistic regression equations was generated such that each threat of victimization component served as an outcome variable while the other three components and gender served as predictors. If the components of threat of victimization are still reciprocal, even though they are in the presence of an influence as strong as respondent gender, it would illustrate that the model is still robust even when controlling for gender, and confirm that gender still plays a crucial role in determining fear of crime, even when using a model as carefully designed as Radar's fear of victimization. My criteria for determining whether Hypothesis 2 was supported were if all four logistic regression models demonstrated that the components of the model were still reciprocal, but also illustrates that gender is a significant predictor of each component.

Step 3 hypothesis: Intimate partner violence and stalking will be significant predictors of whether or not women perceive themselves as vulnerable to victimization. Step 3 of the analyses addressed the third purpose of the study, which was to determine if experiencing gendered forms of victimization significantly contributed to predicting whether or not women fear victimization. In this third model, the experiences of having been stalked or having been the victim of IPV were added as predictors. Again, a sequence of four logistic regression equations was generated, each with a different threat of victimization component as the outcome variable and the remaining components, IPV and stalking as predictors. This set of equations was based only on female respondents' data because gender (being female) is expected to be a significant predictor of fear of victimization, and because the frequencies for avoidance and stalking were lower among male respondents.

Controlling for Sample Selection Bias

The GSS 2004 sample was not derived from simple random sampling. Therefore, sample selection bias must be addressed. The Research Data Centre provides statistical software (SUDAAN) that utilizes Balanced Repeated Replication (BRR), a variance estimation technique that randomly and repeatedly selects sub-samples from the entire sample. It then calculates each test statistic for every sub-sample and ultimately estimates the variance of the entire sample statistic (Zhang, Weng, Salvucci & Hu, 2001). All of the logistic regressions conducted in the present study were calculated using BRR, and all frequencies and crosstabulations were weighted (by person)¹⁰.

¹⁰ The data were weighted to reflect all non-institutionalized Canadians who are at least 15 years of age or older. The weights are based on Canadian census results to ensure that the data are representative of the Canadian population. Because it is not a census, people in the sample represent a number of Canadians that have similar characteristics in the population. The weight varies depending on how many people in the Canadian population are represented by each person in the sample.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides frequencies for all of the study variables. More than three-quarters of the sample were not worried about their safety; more than 80% did not perceive themselves to be at-risk; and more than 90% did not engage in avoidance behaviour, although half of the sample engaged in defensive behaviour.

Table 2: Sample Variable Description	
	% of sample
n=15,707*	
Variables:	
Gender	
Male	49.7
Female	50.3
Fear of victimization	
Worry about safety	20.6
Do not worry about safety	79.4
Perceived risk	
Perceive risk	14.8
Do not perceive risk	85.2
Defensive behaviour	
Engage in...	50.3
Do not engage in...	49.7
Avoidance behaviour	
Avoid going out at night	9.2
Do not avoid going out at night	90.8
(Current/ex) Intimate Partner Violence	
Yes, have experienced IPV	6.8
No, have not experienced IPV	93.2
Stalking	
Yes, have experienced stalking	11.1
No, have not experienced stalking	88.9

(* 'n' frequencies are not included in this table as the results were weighted n=17,709,674)

More than 90% of respondents had not experienced IPV or stalking. This could reflect reality or it could reflect the documented tendency of victims to underreport these crimes (McKenzie, Pinger, & Kotecki, 2007; Smith, 1988). Despite their low variability, these variables were retained because the frequency was large enough to support the number of variables in the model.

4.1 Step 1: Testing the Threat of Victimization Model

In Step 1 of the analyses, I aimed to determine whether the threat of victimization model is supported within a Canadian population, and whether there is evidence of reciprocity among its components. Four logistic regression models were therefore generated.

Model 1: Predicting perceived risk. The first statistical model tested the ability of fear of victimization, avoidance behavior and defensive behavior to predict perceived risk. As Table 3 shows, each of the three predictors were statistically significant ($p < .01$ in all cases)¹¹. The strongest predictor of perceived risk was avoidance behaviour. Respondents who say they avoid going out at night were 7.28 times more likely to say that they perceive themselves as being at-risk than those who do not avoid going out at night. The second strongest predictor was fear of victimization. Respondents who worry about their safety were 4.08 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than those who said they do not worry. The third best predictor of perceived risk was defensive behaviour. Respondents who said they engage in defensive behaviour were 2.07 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than respondents who did not engage in defensive behaviour. Therefore, perceived risk was predicted by all of the remaining components of Rader's *threat of victimization* model.

¹¹ SUDAAN, the statistical software, which uses Balanced Repeated Replication, provides a 95% confidence interval (CI) for each statistic - 95% of the time the result will fall between the upper and lower limit. For odds ratios the null relationship equals 1, so as long as 1 does not fall between the upper and lower CI limits, the statistic is significant.

Table 3: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Risk in Step 1 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	4.08**	3.98	4.19
Avoidance behaviour	7.28**	7.01	7.55
Defensive behaviour	2.07**	2.01	2.12
**p<.01.			

The second statistical model tested the power of perceived risk, avoidance behavior and defensive behavior to predict fear of victimization. As Table 4 shows, all three predictors were significant ($p < .01$ in all cases). The strongest predictor of fear of victimization was perceived risk – and the odds ratio was equivalent to that found in the previous model when perceived risk was used to predict fear of victimization. Respondents who perceived themselves as being at-risk were 4.08 times more likely to worry about their safety than those who did not perceive themselves as being at risk. The second strongest predictor of fear of victimization was avoidance behaviour. Respondents who avoid going out at night were 2.81 times more likely to say they worry about their safety than respondents who do not engage in avoidance behaviour. The difference in the ability of the two constrained behaviour variables to predict fear of victimization was slight. Respondents who engaged in defensive behaviour were 2.49 times more likely to say they worry about their safety than respondents who do not engage in defensive behaviour.

Table 4: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Fear of Victimization in Step 1 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Perceived Risk	4.08**	3.98	4.18
Avoidance behaviour	2.81**	2.71	2.92
Defensive behaviour	2.49**	2.43	2.54
**p<.01.			

Avoidance behaviour served as the outcome variable in the third regression model, with perceived risk, fear of victimization and defensive behavior as the predictors. All three variables were significant predictors of avoidance behavior ($p < .01$ in all cases). The strongest predictor was perceived risk. As shown in Table 5, respondents who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 7.31 times more likely to engage in avoidance behaviour than those who do not perceive themselves as being at-risk. This odds ratio was almost identical to that found in model 1 when avoidance behavior was used to predict perceived risk, therefore, it can be concluded that perceived risk and avoidance behaviour have a strong reciprocal relationship. Fear of victimization and defensive behaviour were equal in their power to predict avoidance behaviour. Respondents who worry about their safety were 2.85 times more likely to say they avoid going out at night than respondents who do not worry about their safety. Respondents who engage in defensive behaviour were also 2.85 times more likely to say they avoid going out at night than those who do not engage in defensive behaviour.

Table 5: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Avoidance Behaviour in Step 1 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	2.85**	2.74	2.96
Perceived Risk	7.31**	7.05	7.58
Defensive behaviour	2.85**	2.75	2.96
** $p < .01$.			

The fourth model tested the power of perceived risk, fear of victimization and avoidance behavior to predict defensive behaviour. As shown in Table 6, all three variables were significant predictors ($p < .01$ in all cases). The strongest predictor was avoidance behavior. Respondents who avoid going out at night were 4.21 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than those who do not avoid going out at night. The second strongest predictor was fear of victimization. Respondents who worry about their safety were 3.01 times more likely to engage

in defensive behaviour than respondents who do not worry about their safety. The final predictor of defensive behaviour is perceived risk. Respondents who perceive themselves as being at-risk are 2.54 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than those who do not perceive themselves as being at-risk.

Table 6: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Defensive Behaviour in Step 1 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	3.01**	2.92	3.11
Perceived Risk	2.54**	2.45	2,64
Avoidance behaviour	4.21**	3.93	4.51
**p<.01.			

In summary, the first step of the analysis indicated that perceived risk is the best predictor of fear of victimization and avoidance behavior, and that avoidance behaviour is the best predictor of perceived risk and defensive behaviour. Rader's threat of victimization theory is also supported as the components are reciprocal. A summary of the results is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Step 1 Results	
Predictive relationship	Step 1 Odds Ratio
Perceived risk predicting avoidance behaviour	7.31**
Avoidance behavior predicting perceived risk	7.28**
Perceived risk predicting fear	4.08**
Fear predicting perceived risk	4.08**
Fear predicting avoidance behaviour	2.85**
Avoidance behavior predicting fear	2.81**
Fear predicting defensive behavior	3.01**
Defensive behavior predicting fear	2.49**
Perceived risk predicting defensive behavior	2.54**
Defensive behavior predicting perceived risk	2.07**
Avoidance behavior predicting defensive behaviour	4.21**
Defensive behavior predicting avoidance behavior	2.85**
**p<.01.	

As Table 7 shows, the strongest relationship was found between perceived risk and avoidance behavior, and this relationship was reciprocal; the odds ratio was approximately 7.3 regardless of which variable served as the predictor. The second strongest relationship was found between perceived risk and fear of victimization. This relationship also was reciprocal; the odds ratio was 4.08 regardless of which variable served as the predictor. The third strongest relationship was found between fear of victimization and avoidance behavior, also a reciprocal relationship; the odds ratio was approximately 2.8 regardless of which variable served as the predictor. While significant, the relationships between perceived risk and defensive behaviour, and between fear of victimization and defensive behavior showed slightly weaker reciprocity. The least reciprocity was found between avoidance behaviour and defensive behaviour.

4.2 Step 2: Testing the Threat of Victimization Model Including Gender

In Step 2 of the analyses, I aimed to assess the role of gender in the threat of victimization. The Step 1 regression models were re-generated but included gender as an additional predictor to assess whether the relationships among the components of the threat of victimization model change when gender is considered.

In the first model, perceived risk served as the outcome variable. All of the predictors remain significant with gender included in the model ($p < .01$ in all cases). As in Step 1, the strongest predictor of perceived risk was avoidance behaviour, although the odds ratio was slightly lower than it was in Step 1. Respondents who avoid going out at night were 6.42 times more likely to say they perceive themselves as being at-risk than respondents who do not avoid going out at night (OR = 7.28 in Step 1).

Table 8: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Risk in Step 2 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	3.91**	3.81	4.01
Avoidance behaviour	6.42**	6.18	6.66
Defensive behaviour	1.76**	1.71	1.81
Gender	1.87**	1.81	1.92
** $p < .01$.			

As in Step 1, the second strongest predictor of perceived risk was fear of victimization and the odds ratio was only slightly lower than it was in Step 1. Respondents who worry about their safety were 3.91 times more likely to say they perceive themselves as being at-risk than those who do not worry about their safety (OR = 4.08 in Step 1). The next strongest predictor of perceived risk was gender; women were 1.87 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than men. As in Step 1, the weakest predictor of perceived risk was defensive behaviour and the odds ratio was slightly lower than that found in Step 1. Respondents who engage in

defensive behaviour were 1.76 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than respondents who do not engage in defensive behaviour (OR = 2.07 in Step 1). Therefore, the inclusion of gender in the regression models did not alter the patterns found in the strength of relationships among perceived risk and the other components of the fear of victimization model, although the odds ratios were slightly weakened.

In model 2, fear of victimization served as the outcome variables. As shown in Table 9, the results of this model were very similar to those obtained in Step 1. All predictors remained significant with gender included in the model ($p < .01$ in all cases) and retained their order of strength. However, as in model 1, the odds ratios were slightly lower than those obtained in Step 1. The strongest predictor of fear of victimization was perceived risk. Respondents who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 3.90 times more likely to worry about their safety than respondents who did not perceive themselves as being at-risk (OR = 4.08 in Step 1). The second strongest predictor of fear of victimization was avoidance behaviour. Those who avoid going out at night were 2.62 times more likely to worry about their safety than those who do not avoid going out at night (OR = 2.81 in Step 1). Defensive behaviour is the third strongest predictor of fear of victimization. Respondents who engage in defensive behaviour are 2.24 times more likely to fear victimization than those who do not engage in defensive behaviour (OR = 2.49 in Step 1). While still significant, gender was the weakest predictor of fear of victimization; women were 1.45 times more likely to fear victimization than men.

Table 9: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Fear of Victimization In Step 2 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Perceived Risk	3.90**	3.8	3.99
Avoidance behaviour	2.62**	2.52	2.72
Defensive behaviour	2.24**	2.19	2.29
Gender	1.45**	1.41	1.48
** $p < .01$.			

In model 3, avoidance behaviour served as the outcome variable. All predictors remained significant with gender included in the model ($p < .01$ in all cases), but the odds ratios were lower than those obtained in Step 1 (see Table 10). As in Step 1, perceived risk was the best predictor of avoidance behaviour. Respondents who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 6.54 times more likely to engage in avoidance behaviour than those who do not perceive themselves at risk (OR = 7.31 in Step 1). The second strongest predictor of avoidance behaviour was gender. Women were 3.24 times more likely to engage in avoidance behaviour than men. Fear of victimization was the third strongest predictor of avoidance behaviour. Respondents who worry about their safety were 2.75 times more likely to engage in avoidance behaviour than those who do not worry about their safety (OR = 2.85 in Step 1). The weakest predictor of avoidance behaviour was defensive behaviour. Respondents who engage in defensive behaviour were 2.19 times more likely to say they engage in avoidance behaviour than respondents who do not engage in defensive behaviour (OR = 2.85 in Step 1).

Table 10: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Avoidance Behaviour in Step 2 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	2.75**	2.65	2.86
Perceived Risk	6.54**	6.30	6.78
Defensive behaviour	2.19**	2.11	2.28
Gender	3.24**	3.10	3.38
** $p < .01$.			

In model 4, defensive behaviour served as the outcome variable. All components of threat of victimization remained significant with gender included in the model ($p < .01$ in all cases) and they retained their order of strength, although the odds ratios were all lower (see Table 11). In this model, however, gender became the strongest predictor. Women were 3.24 times as likely as men to engage in defensive behaviour. The second best predictor of defensive

behaviour was avoidance behaviour; respondents who avoid going out at night were 3.02 times as likely to engage in defensive behaviour as those who do not avoid going out at night (OR = 4.21 in Step 1). Fear of victimization was the third best predictor of defensive behaviour. Respondents who worry about their safety were 2.66 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than respondents who do not worry about their safety (OR = 3.01 in Step 1). The weakest predictor of defensive behaviour was perceived risk. Respondents who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 2.07 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than those who do not perceive themselves at risk (OR = 2.54 in Step 1).

Table 11: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Defensive Behaviour in Step 2			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	2.66**	2.57	2.75
Perceived Risk	2.07**	1.99	2.15
Avoidance behaviour	3.02**	2.18	3.31
Gender	3.24**	3.18	3.31
**p<.01.			

In summary, the Step 2 analyses revealed the role of gender in the threat of victimization. While gender did not affect the reciprocity of the relationships among the components of threat of victimization, it did affect the strength of those relationships, making it clear that gender is an important influence in how much an individual feels threatened by victimization. When gender was included in the model, the strength of the log odds between the components was still significant, but not as strong. Moreover, it emerged as an important factor in constrained behaviour; it was the strongest predictor of defensive behaviour and the second strongest predictor of avoidance behaviour.

Table 12: Theoretical Model 2 Summary		
Predictive relationship	Step 1 Odds Ratio	Step 2 Odds ratio
Perceived risk predicting avoidance behaviour	7.31**	6.54**
Avoidance behavior predicting perceived risk	7.28**	6.42**
Perceived risk predicting fear	4.08**	3.90**
Fear predicting perceived risk	4.08**	3.91**
Fear predicting avoidance behaviour	2.85**	2.75**
Avoidance behavior predicting fear	2.81**	2.62**
Fear predicting defensive behavior	3.01**	2.66**
Defensive behavior predicting fear	2.49**	2.24**
Perceived risk predicting defensive behavior	2.54**	2.07**
Defensive behavior predicting perceived risk	2.07**	1.76**
Avoidance behavior predicting defensive behaviour	4.21**	3.02**
Defensive behavior predicting avoidance behavior	2.85**	2.19**
Gender predicting perceived risk		1.87**
Gender predicting fear		1.45**
Gender predicting avoidance behaviour		3.24**
Gender predicting defensive behaviour		3.24**
**p<.01.		

In Step 2, the strongest relationship remained that between perceived risk and fear of victimization and this relationship remained reciprocal. The second strongest relationship remained between perceived risk and fear of victimization, and this relationship also remained reciprocal. In fact, the relationships among the threat of victimization components retained their order of strength and degree of reciprocity, although the odds ratios were lower in all cases. The greatest impact of gender was seen in its relationship with constrained behaviour. It emerged as the best predictor of defensive behaviours and the odds ratios for both of defensive and avoidance outcomes were identical. However, gender was the weakest predictor of fear of victimization and perceived risk of victimization, although women did indicate greater fear and higher perceived risk than men.

4.3 Step 3: Testing the Threat of Victimization Model among Women, including Experiences of Stalking and Intimate Partner Violence

In Step 3 of the analysis, I examined the role of having experienced IPV and/or stalking in the threat of victimization. The Step 1 regression models were re-generated but included two additional predictor variables – IPV and stalking – to assess the impact of having been victimized on the relationships among the threat of victimization components. In the present sample, only female respondents were included in this step of the analysis. As previously discussed, only respondents that were asked the IPV questions were included in the sample, which eliminated low variability due missing data (less than 1%), so all of the women in this model were asked the IPV questions.

Table 13 shows the results for the first model, in which perceived risk served as the outcome variable. As in Steps 1 and 2, each of the other components of fear of victimization remained a significant predictor with IPV and stalking included in the model ($p < .01$ in all cases). The best predictor was avoidance behaviour. Women who avoid going out at night were 5.83 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at risk of victimization than women who do not avoid going out at night. As in Steps 1 and 2, the second best predictor of perceived risk was fear of victimization. Women who worry about their safety were 3.20 times more likely to say they perceive themselves at risk than women who do not worry about their safety. The third best predictor of perceived risk was having been a victim of stalking. Women who had experienced being stalked were 1.64 times more likely to say they perceive themselves at risk than women who have had no experience as a victim of stalking ($p < 0.01$). The next strongest predictor was defensive behaviour; women who engage in defensive behaviour were 1.56 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than women who do not engage in defensive behaviour. The weakest predictor of perceived risk was having experienced IPV; these women

were 1.06 times more likely to perceive themselves as being at-risk than women who had not experienced IPV ($p < .05$).

Table 13: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Risk in Step 3 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	3.20**	3.11	3.29
Avoidance behaviour	5.83**	5.59	6.08
Defensive behaviour	1.56**	1.51	1.61
Stalking	1.64**	1.59	1.70
Intimate Partner Violence	1.06*	1.00	1.12
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.			

In model 2, fear of victimization served as the outcome variable. As in Steps 1 and 2, each of the fear of victimization components was a significant predictor ($p < .01$ in all cases), and the strongest was perceived risk (see Table 14). Women who perceive themselves as being at-risk are 3.20 times more likely to worry about their safety than women who do not perceive themselves as being at-risk. As in Steps 1 and 2, the second strongest predictor of fear of victimization was avoidance behaviour; women who avoid going out at night were 2.69 times more likely to fear being victimized than women who not avoid going out at night. The next strongest predictor, as in Steps 1 and 2, was defensive behaviour; women who engage in defensive behaviour were 1.82 times more likely to fear victimization than women who do engage in defensive behaviour. The weakest predictors of fear of victimization were stalking and IPV, which were similar in their predictive power. Women who had at least one stalking experience were 1.19 times more likely to fear victimization than women who had never been a victim of stalking ($p < .01$) and women who had experienced IPV were 1.13 times more likely to fear victimization than women who had never experienced IPV ($p < .01$).

Table 14: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Fear of Victimization in Step 3 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Perceived Risk	3.20**	3.11	3.29
Avoidance behaviour	2.69**	2.58	2.80
Defensive behaviour	1.82**	1.76	1.87
Stalking	1.19**	1.15	1.23
Intimate Partner Violence	1.13**	1.08	1.18
** $p < .01$.			

In model 3, avoidance behaviour served as the outcome variable. As in Steps 1 and 2, the other threat of victimization components were all significant predictors ($p < .01$ in all cases) and the strongest predictor was perceived risk (see Table 15). Women who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 5.85 times more likely to avoid going out at night than women who do not perceive themselves as being at-risk. As in Steps 1 and 2, the second strongest predictor of avoidance behaviour was fear of victimization. Women who worry about their safety were 2.69 times more likely to avoid going out at night than women who do not worry about their safety. As in Steps 1 and 2, the next strongest predictor was defensive behaviour. Women who engage in defensive behaviour were 1.75 times more likely to avoid going out at night than women who do not engage in defensive behaviour. As in model 2, the weakest predictors of avoidance behaviour were IPV and stalking, and their odds ratios were similar. Women who had experienced IPV were 1.35 times more likely to avoid going out at night than women who had not experienced IPV ($p < .01$) and women who had been stalked were 1.23 times more likely to avoid going out at night than women who had not been stalked ($p < .01$).

Table 15: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Avoidance Behaviour in Step 3 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	2.69**	2.59	2.81
Perceived Risk	5.85**	5.61	6.10
Defensive behaviour	1.75**	1.67	1.82
Stalking	1.23**	1.17	1.29
Intimate Partner Violence	1.35**	1.27	1.43
**p<.01.			

In model 4, defensive behaviour served as the outcome variable. As in Steps 1 and 2, the other threat of victimization components were all significant predictors ($p < .01$ in all cases) and the strongest was avoidance behaviour (see Table 16). Women who avoid going out at night were 2.48 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than women who do not avoid going out at night. The second strongest predictor was fear of victimization. Women who worry about their safety were 2.22 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than women who do not worry about their safety ($p < .01$). As in Steps 1 and 2, the next strongest predictor was perceived risk. Women who perceive themselves as being at-risk were 1.94 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than women who do not perceive themselves as being at-risk. The weakest predictor was stalking; women who had been stalked were 1.28 times more likely to engage in defensive behaviour than women who had not been stalked ($p < .01$). Having experienced IPV did not predict defensive behaviour.

Table 16: Summary of Logistic Regression Predicting Defensive Behaviour in Step 3 of the Analysis			
Variable	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95%CI	Upper Limit 95%CI
Fear of victimization	2.22**	2.12	2.33
Perceived Risk	1.94**	1.84	2.05
Avoidance behaviour	2.48**	2.31	2,67
Stalking	1.28**	1.21	1.35
Intimate Partner Violence	1.03	0.97	1.10
**p<.01.			

Step 3 of the analysis was conducted on female respondents only and included the experiences of having been stalked and/or having been a victim of IPV. The results of this step were very similar to those of the previous two steps in terms of the order of strength of the predictors. As in the previous steps of the analysis, the strongest relationship was found between perceived risk and avoidance behaviour, and this relationship remained reciprocal. Also consistent with the findings of the first steps of the analysis, the second strongest relationship was found between perceived risk and fear of victimization. However, the reciprocity between these variables was weaker in this step of the analysis. The third strongest relationship, as in the first two steps of the analysis, was that between fear of victimization and avoidance behaviour, and this relationship remained reciprocal. The weakest predictors of each threat of victimization component were stalking and IPV; although almost all odds ratios were significant, most of their values were close to 1. The weakest relationship was found between IPV and defensive behaviour; this was the only non-significant relationship found in all of the analyses conducted in this study.

Table 17: Theoretical Model 3 Summary			
Predictive relationship	Step 1 Odds Ratio	Step 2 Odds ratio	Step 3 Odds Ratio
Perceived risk predicting avoidance behaviour	7.31**	6.54**	5.85**
Avoidance behavior predicting perceived risk	7.28**	6.42**	5.83**
Perceived risk predicting fear	4.08**	3.90**	3.20**
Fear predicting perceived risk	4.08**	3.91**	4.08**
Fear predicting avoidance behaviour	2.85**	2.75**	2.69**
Avoidance behavior predicting fear	2.81**	2.62**	2.69**
Fear predicting defensive behavior	3.01**	2.66**	2.22**
Defensive behavior predicting fear	2.49**	2.24**	1.82**
Perceived risk predicting defensive behavior	2.54**	2.07**	1.94**
Defensive behavior predicting perceived risk	2.07**	1.76**	1.56**
Avoidance behavior predicting defensive behaviour	4.21**	3.02**	2.48**
Defensive behavior predicting avoidance behavior	2.85**	2.19**	1.75**
Gender predicting perceived risk		1.87**	
Gender predicting fear		1.45**	
Gender predicting avoidance behaviour		3.24**	
Gender predicting defensive behaviour		3.24**	
Stalking predicting perceived risk			1.64**
Stalking predicting fear			1.19**
Stalking predicting avoidance behaviour			1.23**
Stalking predicting defensive behaviour			1.28**
IPV predicting perceived risk			1.06*
IPV predicting fear			1.13**
IPV predicting avoidance behaviour			1.35**
IPV predicting defensive behaviour			1.03
*p<.05 **p<.01.			

Results in Table 17 clearly indicate that stalking and intimate partner violence experiences are statistically significant experiences capable of influencing women's perceived threat of victimization.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.0 Discussion of Findings

This study was designed to empirically test Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model. The three components of her model - fear of victimization, perceived risk, and constrained behaviour - were included in systematic iterations of regression equations to determine whether the model is supported empirically and whether the relationships among its components are reciprocal within a Canadian sample. In addition, the role of gender in threat of victimization was examined. Finally, the role of having experienced crimes that are strongly gender-related (intimate partner crime and stalking) was explored to assess how important these experiences are for women in relation to fear of victimization, perceived risk and constrained behaviour and whether this gendered form of crime can influence how strongly a woman perceives the threat of victimization. In this chapter the study's findings are summarized, the hypotheses are evaluated, the limitations of the study are identified, and recommendations for future research are put forth.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Step 1: Discussing the Threat of Victimization Model Results

Step 1 of the analyses addressed the first purpose of the study, which was to examine the reciprocity of the components of Rader's threat of victimization model - perceived risk, fear of victimization, avoidance behaviour, and defensive behaviour. In this step, a sequence of four logistic regression equations was generated. In each equation, one of the threat of victimization components served as an outcome variable, and the other three served as predictors. Hypothesis 1 was supported because the results of the logistic regressions illustrated that there were significant relationships among the components of the threat of victimization model, regardless

of which component served as the outcome variable. Some components, however, were better predictors than others.

Overall, the best predictor of fear of victimization and avoidance behaviour, was perceived risk. Not surprisingly, people who perceive themselves at risk of being victimized are more likely to worry about being victimized and engage in avoidance behaviour, possibly to decrease the likelihood of being victimized. Engagement in avoidance behaviour turned out to be the best predictor of perceived risk. One explanation may be that people who engage in avoidance behaviour to reduce their risk of being victimized are more aware of risky situations or consider more types of situations as risky. As well, if people perceive themselves at risk and then engage in avoidance behaviour, it may serve to reinforce the entire process, especially if victimization does not occur. Essentially, people attribute the fact that they were not victimized to their decision to avoid a risky situation, which in turn, continues to affirm the types of situations that they interpret to be risky. This supports Meithe's (1995) finding that behavioural changes increase fear of crime due to consciously avoiding 'physical contact with risky situations' (p. 22).

One of the interesting findings is the equal prediction strength between fear of victimization and perceived risk; fear of victimization and avoidance; and perceived risk and avoidance. Fear of victimization shares almost equal reciprocal relationships with perceived risk and avoidance behaviour. Basically the three components of the threat of victimization (using avoidance as the constrained behaviour) share almost an equal reciprocal relationship with one another. The odds ratios between fear and perceived risk are identical regardless of which component is the predictor. The odds ratios for perceived risk and avoidance are almost equal, as are the odds ratios between fear of victimization and avoidance. The results point to a possible process that people engage in to assess, mediate, and/or reduce the risk of being victimized by

crime, which includes all three of the components of the threat of victimization. Avoidance behaviour may also be the more likely behaviour chosen to minimize the odds of victimization as it is the best predictor of the other constrained behaviour (defensive behaviour), and engagement in defensive behaviour is not as strong a predictor of avoidance behaviour. Constrained behaviour includes a variety of actions that people can choose to engage in and they may employ a combination of methods depending on the situation (Garofalo, 1981). It may be that people who avoid going out at night to decrease the likelihood that they will be victimized by crime are more likely to engage in defensive behaviours when avoidance is not an option.

The nearly equal predictive power between the fear of victimization and perceived risk may also support Gray, Jackson and Farrall's (2008) study that suggest fear of crime questions that ask respondents if they worry about crime, are actually measuring a broad awareness or anxiety about crime rather than actual physiological fear. Gray et al's. (2008) theory posits that people still respond to questions about how worried or afraid they are in a manner that represents how they *feel* about the *possibility* of being victimized, which is still 'future-oriented' rather than recalling an actual past emotionally fearful event. As a result, the question that is used to measure fear of victimization in this thesis, ("When alone in your home in the evening or at night, do you feel.....worried about your safety from crime") may actually be prompting respondents to assess how likely they think victimization will occur while home alone at night. Thus measuring a concept that is more representative of perceived risk, which may explain why the odds ratios are equal between the two components

Ultimately, the first hypothesis of this study is supported by the results. People who say they perceive themselves at risk, fear being victimized by crime, and constrain their behaviour are more likely to say they experience and engage in the other components of the threat of victimization than those who do not feel threatened by victimization. And, although the results from step 1 indicate reciprocal relationships between all of the components, certain components are better predictors than others.

5.2.2 Step 2: Discussing the Threat of Victimization Model Including Gender

In Step 2, gender was added to the model as a predictor variable in order to determine if women would fear victimization, perceive themselves as being at-risk of victimization and constraining their behaviour more than men, while the components of the threat of victimization continue to indicate reciprocation. Although the components of threat of victimization were in the presence of an influence as strong as gender, the reciprocal relationship between the threat of victimization components remained, supporting the second hypothesis.

The results in Step 2 indicate that women not only cognitively perceive themselves more at risk of being victimized than men, but they worry more about being victimized, and engage in constrained behaviours more than men. The results in Step 2, which include gender, give similar results to those in Step 1, as all of the components of the threat of victimization are significant predictors of the other components. Essentially, these reciprocal relationships exist, regardless of the addition of gender as a variable. There were, however, two changes that occurred within this step, both which can be linked to gender. The first change was that the strength of the odds ratios decreased slightly. Since gender is a significant predictor it is more than likely interacting with the other components to produce smaller odds ratios. The second change was that engaging in avoidance behaviour was no longer the best predictor of defensive behaviour. The best predictor

of defensive behaviour is gender, which can be attributed to the inclusion of gender. Isolating gender provides a better picture of the model since all of the odds ratios decreased, indicating that gender is quite influential as a predictor of each of the components. It also provides support that Rader's (2004) model is robust as the reciprocal relationships remain even while holding gender constant.

Similar to the results in Step 1, the best predictor of fear of victimization and avoidance behaviour is perceived risk. As well, fear of victimization and perceived risk are nearly identical in their predictive strength of each other. In terms of constrained behaviour, gender is equal in its predictive power for engagement in both avoidance and defensive behaviours. This supports the literature's conclusion that women consistently fear crime more than men, (Hale, 1996; McCrea, Shyy, Western & Stimson, 2005; Smith, 1988) including engagement in constrained behaviour (Reid & Konrad, 2004; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007).

One explanation may be that women consider themselves to be more at risk of victimization than men, as they are seen as physically weaker and more vulnerable (McCrea et al. 2005). This supports Hollander's (2001) study where she posits that there is an overall belief about femininity and masculinity, and how this belief affects women's risk perception. The social construction of masculinity and femininity, which includes different levels of vulnerability, would explain why women, in this study, are more likely to say they feel threatened by victimization. As mentioned earlier, the second theoretical model shows that gender is the best predictor of defensive behaviour. This supports prior research, particularly that of Green and Singleton (2006), which indicates that space is gendered, and geographic risk is part of gender construction. Vulnerability, for women, is linked to the public sphere and that is why they occupy the private sphere. Generally, the private realm is represented by 'the home' where domestic activities are the *appropriate* activities women engage in. Women are seen as vulnerable when occupying space

within the public sphere and would, therefore, be more likely to engage in defensive behaviours that mediate their vulnerability to victimization. As well, the results indicate gender has equal predictive power of both constrained behaviours which also supports Green and Singleton's (2006) discussion of gendered geography. It makes sense that women would be more likely than men to say that they routinely stay at home at night because they are afraid to go out alone. Essentially, the home is perceived as 'safe' for women to be and if they must go out, then engagement in defensive behaviours is an important option.

Another explanation of women's higher levels of fear, perceived risk and engagement in constrained behaviour is also in relation to the socialization theory as the GSS 2004: Cycle 18 is self-reported. Because more women than men perceive themselves as vulnerable, women would therefore be more likely to admit on the General Social Survey that they do, in fact, fear crime. In contrast, men may be more reluctant to admit to being afraid of crime or even perceive themselves at risk (Stanko and Hobdell, 1993). Thus gender is a significant predictor of the threat of victimization. Socialization theory that includes the social construction of gender that incorporates vulnerability and dangerousness, is supported by the results in Step 2.

5.2.3 Step 3: Testing the Threat of Victimization Model among Women, including Experiences of Stalking and Intimate Partner Violence

Step 3 of the analyses attempted to address whether experiences of having been stalked or having been the victim of IPV were significant predictors for women in relation to the components of the threat of victimization. Specific forms of prior victimization, such as stalking and intimate partner violence, are often presented to explain women's higher fear of crime levels. Early research presented women's fear as 'irrational', since police reports indicate that men are the more likely victims of crime (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999). Therefore, researchers (Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999; Hollander, 2001; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007; Pain,

1997), in their attempt to explain this apparent paradox, have pointed to the fact that women are also victims of crime.

The third model indicates that the components of the threat of victimization continue to be reciprocal as each one predicts the others. In this woman inclusive model the same relationships remain that exist in the first model (step 1), which continues to support Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model. The strongest predictor of fear of victimization and avoidance behaviour continues to be perceived risk and the strongest predictor of perceived risk and defensive behaviour is avoidance behaviour. Nearly equal odds ratios exist between perceived risk and avoidance behaviour, and equal odds ratios exist between fear of victimization and avoidance behaviour. The odds ratios between fear of victimization and perceived risk however are no longer equal, which may be a result of including intimate partner violence and stalking experiences in the model. It seems that when intimate partner violence and stalking experiences are included, the strength of perceived risk predicting fear of victimization decreases. One explanation may be that, not surprisingly, experiencing 'female targeted' crimes such as stalking and intimate partner violence affects perceptions of risk and fear.

Of the 'female targeted' crimes included in the statistical models, stalking was a consistent predictor for all of the components including both constrained behaviours. Prior stalking victimization, however, was a stronger predictor of perceived risk than it was of predicting the other threat of victimization components. Wilcox, Jordan and Pritchard (2007) also found in their study that stalking was a more predictive experience for increasing fear of crime (specifically perceived risk). As mentioned in Chapter 2, stalking has gained public awareness in the last decade. The fact that stalking is recognized as a crime is important as past research, as well as the results of this thesis, indicate stalking can and does affect women's perception of risk.

It is also not surprising that women who experience stalking also engage in both defensive and avoidance behaviours. Because the crime of stalking crosses into both public and private spheres, women must mediate the risk in the public realm by employing both avoidance and defensive measures. These results are also in line with Melton's (2007) study that concluded women make behavioural changes due to their perceived risk of victimization resulting from stalking experiences. Although Carcach and Mukherjee's (1999) study looked at women who experienced intimate partner violence in relation to fear of crime, what they found was that the strongest effect on fear of crime occurred when women experienced violence in both the private and public sphere; an outcome that may be useful when looking at stalking experiences. Stalking can occur in both spheres and may explain why it is a significant experience for all of the components of the threat of victimization.

Intimate partner violence is another 'female targeted' crime that was significant for all of the components of the threat of victimization except for engagement in defensive behaviour. The fact that IPV is a significant predictor for fear of victimization, perceived risk and avoidance behaviour is in line with prior research (Hollander, 2001; Runyan, Casteel, Moracco & Coyne-Beasley, 2007; Pain, 1997). The results also support findings that although women are more likely to be victimized by someone they know, such as an intimate partner, they continue to fear crime perpetrated by strangers (Pain, 1997; Smith, 1988). Essentially, women are experiencing violent crime at the hands of men they know, and yet the experience affects their overall fear of crime, which seems to be the case in this study.

IPV is also a strong predictor of avoidance behaviour, in comparison to the other significant components. Women who experience IPV feel vulnerable and may conclude that if they are victimized within the private sphere, then the public sphere would be seen as considerably more dangerous. This explanation is in line with Pain's (1997) discussion about

male violence reinforcing spatial patriarchy, which reinforces women's vulnerability. Women may also feel exceptionally vulnerable if they are injured and thus feel less capable of defending themselves in the public sphere.

The fact that IPV is not a significant predictor for engagement in defensive behaviour, however, is counter to the literature that suggests women generalize their fear to fear of stranger victimization even though it is an intimate partner that is committing the violence (Smith, 1988). One explanation may be that because IPV occurs within the home (private sphere), there is no need to engage in defensive measures that are used to mediate risk while in the public domain. Perhaps women who experience IPV feel they are incapable of physically defending themselves in the public sphere because they have not been able to in the private sphere, and thus do not choose this form of mediation strategy.

The third theoretical model indicates that 'female targeted' crimes such as stalking and IPV are important factors to include when assessing women's threat of victimization levels. As well, gender construction that includes vulnerability, dangerousness, and incorporates geography, provides a valid argument when explaining women's fear of victimization, perceived risk and engagement in constrained behaviour.

5.3 Limitations

This thesis utilized a logistic regression method to test Rader's threat of victimization model. Because the model requires measurement of the relationships between the components (fear, perceived risk, and constrained behaviour), logistic regression was chosen as the most appropriate method. As well, because one of the main outcome variables (avoidance) was dichotomous it meant that the only suitable method available was logistic regression. Thus, all of the variables used to measure the components of the threat of victimization needed to be manipulated into dichotomous or dummy variables. Because the variables are dichotomous, there

is no way to know how prevalence or experiencing different levels of intimate partner violence or stalking, affect levels of fear (of victimization), perceptions of risk or the engagement in different levels of constrained behaviours. For example, does *severity* of intimate partner violence or stalking influence how women engage in more or less defensive behaviour? This question cannot be answered due to the dichotomous structure of the variables.

As well, although the questions in the GSS 2004; Cycle 18 were designed to measure fear of crime, it cannot be guaranteed that the data is accurately measuring fear of crime as it has been defined in this study. As discussed earlier, the fear of victimization variable may have been measuring perceived risk (Gray, Jackson and Farrall, 2008). In addition, the GSS is a self-reported survey and respondents may remember a particular highly fearful event and interpret this to happen more often than in reality (Gray, Jackson and Farrall, 2008). Respondents may also answer questions in a way they feel is socially acceptable rather than providing factual information; this is particularly important when determining gender differences.

Because intimate partner violence had such low variability, it was necessary to exclude respondents who were not asked the IPV question. This study, therefore excludes boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, which is a drawback, (especially since IPV also occurs within these relationships), and although age is not a variable included in the study it can be assumed that because the GSS 2004 only asks those in married/divorced, (ex)common-law relationships about IPV, the sample is not a true representation of age groups in Canada, since it is likely that age is correlated to marital status.

5.4 Future Research

Future fear of crime research should continue to recognize the different components that Rader (2004) has identified. Most helpful, would be the addition of standard questions that are valid measures of each construct, as Gray, Jackson and Farrall (2008) have done with their panel of questions that assess fear of victimization (emotive response). In this way, a standardized scale can be created that will accurately measure each construct and thus be replicated. At this point, with the exception of the perceived risk question ('how safe [the respondent] feel[s] walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night' (Stanko, 1995; Wilcox & Land, 1996) fear of crime surveys, in general, do not ask questions in the same way. It is, therefore, difficult to compare studies, as the operationalization of concepts are not the same. It may also be beneficial to employ a method that requires respondents to keep a diary of every-day behaviours they engage in, their perceptions of risk at the moment, as well as the emotion that is evoked when threatened by victimization. Statistics Canada often uses this technique while researching a variety of topics, from sleep patterns (Hurst, 2008) to commuting (Turcotte, 2005). This may shed light on how much effort and time is spent on worrying about and mediating the threat of victimization, which may also aid in understanding to what extent engagement in constrained behaviour is problematic.

Research in the area of constrained behaviour would also be most beneficial. As the factor analysis in chapter 3 indicated, there were two distinct latent constructs of constrained behaviour – avoidance and defensive. More research should be done to verify these latent constructs. For example, although all of the questions that loaded on factor 1 were interpreted to be defensive in nature; it could be argued that the question, "Do you routinely plan your route with safety in mind" could, in theory, be an example of avoidance. If a respondent plans her/his route with safety in mind, the assumption is that she/he is *avoiding* a potentially dangerous area

and taking a safer route instead. By definition then, the question is actually a reflection of avoidance behaviour. There may be alternative explanations for this result, which future research could validate.

Perhaps results to the above question actually show the number of respondents who are affected by perceptions of risk and fear victimization in such a way that they take the time to plan their route, so as to reduce the possibility of being victimized. The first action taken, therefore, is *planning* the route. The second action would be whatever the respondent decided to do within the plan. Because there is no way to know what action the respondent decided to take, it is impossible to know if the plan is truly an avoidance measure or a defensive measure. For example, respondents may choose to take the most dangerous route but mediate the risk by locking their car doors or carrying a weapon. This would be considered a defensive measure. Because the question loaded quite well on factor 1 (defensive) and not very well on factor 2 (avoidance), it may be that what is reflected in the question results is the action of *planning* the route, which is a defensive measure that mediates victimization.

Another explanation that needs further research is the fact that all of the defensive questions are assumed to occur in the public sphere. Actions such as locking car doors while alone in the car, checking the back seat of the vehicle before getting in, and planning a route with safety in mind all occur in the public sphere. The avoidance measure asks respondents if they stay home at night because they are afraid to go out alone. More research needs to explore the link between private and public geography, and constrained behaviours. Perhaps avoidance behaviour really reflects avoiding the occupation of public space, while defensive behaviour encompasses all behaviour that mediates the threat of victimization in the public sphere, even if that behaviour includes avoiding certain public areas. Ultimately, constrained behaviour questions need to be created that accurately captures what is being measured.

There are several issues in regard to femininity and masculinity construction that are in need of attention. Although the threat of victimization is a social issue, more research needs to be done in terms of levels of fear. At what point is perceived risk, fear of victimization, and engagement in constrained behaviour negative? Crime does exist and the fact that people are aware of crime, and find ways to mediate the risk of being victimized so that they can live their lives is, on some level, not necessarily a negative thing. For example, a child is taught to cross a busy street at a crosswalk. The child has been taught that once the crosswalk button is pushed, the lights begin to flash to signal drivers to stop, as the pedestrian has the right of way. The child has also been cautioned to not step off the curb until all the cars, in all of the lanes, have stopped just in case one of the cars does not see the flashing lights or just simply refuses to stop.

Although the pedestrian has the right of way and *should* be able to cross unrestricted once the lights are flashing, this *right* is of no consolation if the consequences of not waiting are that the vehicle hits the pedestrian, since it will be the pedestrian, not the vehicle, that will pay the physical price. Essentially, this scenario provides an example of how the risk of being hit by a vehicle is mediated by engaging in constrained behaviour – waiting until all the vehicles have stopped before crossing the street. Even if the potential risk of occurrence (being hit by a vehicle) is low, the ‘rule’ or technique is not necessarily unreasonable as it ensures safe passage across the street. This mediation measure may increase the child’s anxiety about crossing busy streets; however, the precautionary action enables the child to consistently cross the street without avoiding the action (street crossing) all together. In this way, it is acknowledged that accidents sometimes happen or that pedestrians are sometimes killed or injured by vehicles at crosswalks, and that actively mediating the risk is effective in preventing such outcomes; however, at what point does the engagement in the behaviour become problematic? Further research would help identify the level of engagement that poses potential health risk for people

who understand that crime or victimization will always be a part of human existence and risk management of victimization, a necessity. The above example can also be used to illustrate how the social construction of femininity, for women, facilitates the belief that they are vulnerable to male violence, and it is better to engage in behaviours that mediate the threat rather than pay the potential physical price and how it sets the stage for men to inadvertently put themselves at risk.

For example, imagine if male children were taught that they can cross the street at the busy crosswalk without having to make sure all of the cars had stopped (due to inherent invulnerability), but because female children are considered to be vulnerable they are taught to wait. Then when pedestrian fatality or injury statistics are reported, there is a clear indication that male children are more at risk of being hit by vehicles at crosswalks, yet female children worry more about being hit. If part of being masculine includes invulnerable self-perception, and behaving in ways that express invulnerability, even though there are clear indications of victimization risk, then masculinity construction increases men's risk of victimization, which seems rather unwise. Perhaps women are not victimized as much within the public sphere *because* they perceive themselves more at risk and thus utilize mediation techniques (police reports indicate men are the more likely victims of crime; Carcach & Mukherjee, 1999). It is acknowledged that this example is rather simplistic in nature; however it provides a helpful picture of the potential negative consequences that masculine and feminine gender construction can have on the lives of both men and women.

It would be fruitful to identify perceptions of invulnerability and make men aware of the types of victimization they are more at risk of experiencing; just as women are continually made aware of their vulnerability, as well as, how to mediate victimization risk. If men begin to denounce the invulnerability and dangerousness construction of masculinity, it could potentially benefit the overall perceptions of the risk of victimization for both men and women. Essentially,

dangerousness (male violence) and invulnerability would begin to be seen as less essentialistic, which provides the opportunity for men to express and engage in appropriate amounts of risk management. Ultimately further research regarding male vulnerability needs to be done.

Much of the gender research has focused on women, for obvious reasons, but it would be fruitful to take a look at a male only model to test Rader's (2004) threat of victimization theory. Will reciprocation between the components continue? Do men actually perceive themselves to be less vulnerable to victimization, or are they simply answering fear of crime surveys in a way that reflects socially constructed masculinity (Sutton and Farrall, 2005)? And what behaviours *do* they engage in (or can they *get away with* engaging in) that help mediate their perceptions of victimization risk while still maintaining appropriate masculine behaviour? Ultimately, it would be most beneficial to thoroughly understand the ways in which consequences of socially constructed masculinity and femininity are linked to the threat of victimization. With this suggestion, however, it is recognized that fear of crime surveys will need to take into consideration gendered questions.

For example, some of the GSS questions used to represent the different threat of victimization components are constructed with women in mind (i.e. do you routinely check the back seat before getting into the car, do you stay home at night because you're afraid to go out alone?). Because women are continually made aware of their vulnerability, they see potential risks of victimization where men would not. More research needs to address the fact that men and women do not perceive the same situations as risky and therefore do not engage in the same types of behaviours, which has definite implications in terms of the types of questions we ask on fear of crime surveys. Questions should be designed in a way that takes into consideration the social constructions of masculinity and femininity (perceptions of in/vulnerability and

dangerousness). In the end, it would be most beneficial to thoroughly understand the ways in which socially constructed masculinity and femininity are linked to the threat of victimization.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to empirically test Rader's (2004) threat of victimization model, which provides a significant contribution to the fear of crime research, as it is the first test utilizing Canadian data. There is no doubt that fear, perceptions and behaviours are all important components to include when conducting research on the threat of victimization, and should continue to be explored as separate constructs. Because gender construction (vulnerability and dangerousness), as well as 'female targeted' victimization so adeptly provide theoretical support for women's increased levels of fear of victimization, perceived risk and constrained behaviour, it is imperative that the link between masculinity and male violence be addressed in ways that communicate to both men and women that it is neither inherent nor acceptable. Ultimately, women need to be able to find safe space within both public and private spheres, and men should be made aware of the ways they can mediate risk.

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