

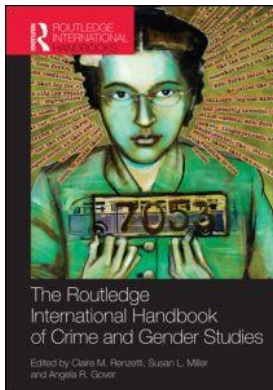
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Theoretical explanations for gender differences in fear of crime

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Section II

Gender and victimization

Introduction

One of the most significant contributions of feminist criminologists to the discipline has been their unrelenting effort to document the gendered nature of criminal victimization. Indeed, feminist criminologists pioneered the study of gender and criminal victimization, demonstrating empirically, for example, the greater likelihood of women, compared with men, being the victim of a violent crime at the hands of someone they know – especially a man they know – than by a stranger. Moreover, feminist criminologists have systematically documented the failure of the criminal justice system to protect women from men’s violence. The chapters in this section review the extant research, including feminist research, on gendered victimization, exploring not only gender differences in victimization risk, but also how gender intersects with race, class, sexual orientation, and other social locating variables to affect victimization experiences. As many of the authors show, these experiences also vary cross-culturally.

Jodi Lane initiates the discussion by examining the gendered nature of fear of crime. As she points out, gender is the most consistent predictor of fear of crime; regardless of time, place, social class, race or ethnicity, women are more afraid of becoming a crime victim than men are, and they are more fearful *for* others as well. Lane evaluates the major theoretical perspectives that have been developed to explain gender differences in fear of crime, raises issues for further study, and explores the policy implications of the current research.

Nikki Jones and Jerry Flores review some of the earliest feminist criminological literature on gender, crime, and victimization as well as more recent theoretical developments, including Black feminist criminology, which has emphasized the need to analyze victimization and offending using an intersectional framework. As Jones and Flores point out, intersectional analysis not only helps us understand victimization differences within groups and across groups, but also how various intersecting factors influence criminal justice responses to victimization.

Holly Johnson focuses specifically on the gendered nature of sexual violence and intimate partner violence (IPV). Johnson notes that in the relatively short time span of about 40 years, research on these crimes has mushroomed, and data are now available from many countries throughout the world. She attributes this phenomenal growth in large part to

improvements in research methodologies and instruments developed specifically to measure the prevalence of sexual and IPV victimization. Johnson discusses how several international agencies have contributed to these developments through the promotion of research standards. But despite the fact that these efforts have produced a large body of literature on sexual and IPV victimization, Johnson also highlights areas that would benefit from additional research.

In the final chapter in this section, Dana DeHart and Shannon Lynch explore in greater detail an issue raised previously by Jones and Flores: the relationship between victimization and offending. DeHart and Lynch report that this relationship is gendered: males and females typically follow different “pathways” to offending. Victimization during childhood and adulthood plays a differential role for males and females in this journey to offending. The concept of cumulative trauma is central to understanding this relationship, and DeHart and Lynch identify other significant intervening variables as well. Their analysis provides a critical link to the research discussed in Section III.

Theoretical explanations for gender differences in fear of crime

Research and prospects

Jodi Lane

Gender is the most consistent predictor of personal fear of crime and has remained so over decades of research. Specifically, women are almost always more afraid of crime, no matter how, when or where it is measured. Studies in the United States, England, Ghana, Greece and other areas have found women to be more afraid of crime (e.g., Adu-Mireku, 2002; Goodey, 1997; Softas-Nall, Bardos and Fakinou, 1995; see also Warr, 1994, for a review). This is true across racial and ethnic groups as well as social classes. Early research on fear found that despite the fact that women were least likely to be victimized by street crime, they, and the elderly, were the most afraid, and this came to be known as the paradox of fear (Warr, 1994). After these early findings, researchers in both the United States and internationally focused on explaining why women and the elderly might be more afraid. Much of the criticism of this early work focused on the poor measures of fear used in most studies, including their inability to distinguish the emotional feeling of fear from the cognitive component of perceived risk and the fact that measures did not distinguish among fears of different offenses (for examples of these criticisms, see work by Kenneth Ferraro and Randy LaGrange and Mark Warr). Although findings on age differences in fear became inconsistent as measures improved, gender differences in fear consistently remain.

Some scholars have argued that measuring victimization by street crime missed much of the real victimization risk and experiences that women face from intimates (e.g., marital and acquaintance rape, sexual abuse as children or battering), which could easily and rationally explain their greater fear of crime. That is, women's fear was rational based on their experiences of victimization with people close to them and therefore not a paradox at all (e.g., Stanko, 1985; Young, 1992). Still, most of the theoretical work on gender has focused on explaining why women are more afraid of street crime despite their lower risk of this type of victimization.

There have been at least four prominent theoretical ideas developed to understand greater personal fear of crime among women specifically – physical vulnerability, differential socialization, the unique influence of the perceived threat of rape, and patriarchy. Although these ideas are theoretically different, there is often overlap in their arguments. This chapter will discuss the theoretical ideas in each of these areas. In addition, it will discuss what is known

about fear of crime among men and will briefly describe how gender is related to altruistic fear, or fear for others. Finally, it will discuss policy implications and speculate on future developments in research on fear of crime among both women and men.

Physical vulnerability

One of the most basic and straightforward arguments for greater fear among women is that they are physically more vulnerable to being victimized and consequently hurt if they do experience victimization, due to their generally smaller and weaker statures compared to their male counterparts. Skogan and Maxfield (1981), for example, argued over 30 years ago that women were in part more afraid because, compared to men, they faced more “openness to attack, powerlessness to resist attack, and exposure to physical (and probably emotional) consequences if attacked” (p. 69). In essence, the argument was that women did not feel strong enough to fend off people who might victimize them and worried that they would face physical and emotional injury if they experienced crime. This is a simple but key argument underlying some of the other ideas about women’s greater fear, especially the next two arguments that focus on differential socialization by gender and the threat of rape.

Differential socialization

One of the theories about why women do not feel strong enough to protect themselves from crime (while men do) is that women are socialized to be weak and submissive while men are socialized to be strong and powerful. Early researchers on fear of crime noted this point but more recent researchers have focused more on this specific argument. For example, Hollander (2001) found that vulnerability, especially to violence, was considered a key component of being feminine while being dangerous was a key characteristic of masculinity. She argued that these ideas are socially constructed and consistently passed to others through conversation. For example, she found that her subjects took for granted the idea that women were physically weaker and men were physically stronger, even though this is not always true. Moreover, Hollander (2001) asserted that women might be more likely to express more fear than they felt and men to express less fear than they felt, specifically as a way of meeting society’s expectations of how they should be (see also Sutton and Farrall, 2005, who, based on work in Scotland, argue that this is more true for men). In support of the socialization argument, a recent study conducted in Belgium (Cops and Pleysier, 2011) found that it was not the sex of the respondent but their gender identity that mattered most. That is, both males and females who had more masculine attitudes and behaviors were less afraid.

Perceived threat of rape – shadow hypothesis

One of the most researched ideas regarding women’s fear of crime focuses on the impact of the possibility of rape. The key argument of the “shadow hypothesis,” originally put forth by Kenneth Ferraro (1995, 1996), is that women are more afraid of crime generally, because they are specifically afraid of rape and the physical and emotional harm that would result if it happened. This fear may be in part because they are socialized to believe that they must fear rape. Some have argued that fear of rape is an additional burden of being a woman (Gordon and Riger, 1989), or that thinking about the possibility of rape is ever-present for women but is not an issue for men. Warr (1984) similarly argued that women are more afraid of crime generally because they are afraid that rape may happen during the commission of

other crimes, or what he called “perceptually contemporaneous offenses.” For example, women might fear their home being burglarized because they may fear that the burglar might come upon them while ransacking their home for items of interest and also rape them. The research examining this specific argument has consistently shown that fear of rape is a predictor of other types of fear for women, and sometimes also for men who are much less likely to be victimized by rape but not immune from it (Fisher and Sloan, 2003; Hilinski, 2009; Lane, Gover and Dahod, 2009; Lane and Meeker, 2003; May, 2001; Wilcox, Jordan and Pritchard, 2006).

Patriarchy

One of the most critical arguments used to explain greater fear of crime among women focuses on gender inequality and greater social and physical power among men. In the 1970s, feminists, such as Brownmiller (1975), argued that men gain power and knowingly control women through the constant threat of rape. One of the strongest proponents of this argument over time has been Betsy Stanko, who currently leads the research unit for the London Metropolitan Police, and who conducted qualitative studies interviewing both women and men about their experiences and feelings about crime (Stanko, 1985, 1990). Stanko (1985, p. 2) has argued that women’s heightened fear is to be expected in a male-dominated society, where their “ordinary experiences” indicate every day that they *should* be worried about their safety. She has said that a fundamental part of being a woman “is to experience physical and/or sexual terrorism at the hands of men” (1985, p. 9), and so women’s heightened fear is rational. She maintains that women are often threatened and victimized by family members or acquaintances, by crimes which rarely get reported to the police or therefore get counted in official victimization statistics. Consequently, their fear might seem irrational based on official statistics but is actually rational based on women’s lived experience (see also Young, 1992). Stanko additionally claims that because academics and practitioners focus on why women were victimized and how women can protect themselves, rather than on why men choose to hurt women, the responsibility is placed on women to be aware and cautious rather than on men to be less violent. Because of this burden of responsibility, women feel they must constantly be more attuned to their surroundings and protect themselves from potential attackers, which could be any man they come across.

Madriz (1997) echoed this argument in discussing her qualitative work, arguing that “The responsibility for preventing and controlling crime against women is placed squarely on the shoulders of women” (p. 152). Madriz argued that the societal expectation is that women can protect themselves by limiting their behaviors (e.g., where they go and when and how they dress) – that if they are “good,” they can avoid being hurt or killed (p. 152). In contrast, those women who do not behave appropriately based on cultural expectations are to blame if they get hurt. Moreover, similar to Stanko (1985), Madriz (1997) asserted that women make choices to fit within societal expectations of behavior and dress within the context of a patriarchal society where they do not have equal power and their choices are, therefore, not freely made. These constrained choices to avoid risk then perpetuate the societal notion that women are weaker and men are stronger.

Results of women’s fear of crime: precautionary behaviors

As a result of their fears about crime, empirical research shows women often take more precautions than men do to protect themselves. Specifically, research shows that women are more likely than men to engage in avoidance behaviors to prevent victimization. These can

include behaviors such as avoiding going out at night, going out with someone else – especially a man – rather than going alone, and avoiding certain areas of the community or dark areas like parking lots and places with a lot of foliage which would allow a potential attacker to hide from view (see e.g., Hollander, 2001; Meyer and Post, 2006; Rader, 2008; Rader, Cossman and Allison, 2009). Madriz (1997), for example, noted that fear of crime also limited women's employment and education by preventing them from taking certain jobs, avoiding night classes, taking trains, etc.

Men's fear of crime (or lack of it)

In contrast to women, men often express little fear of crime. Most explanations for the lack of expressed fear of crime in men also point to the importance of societal expectations of how men and women should act. Specifically, as Goodey (1997) who conducts research in England has argued, the existence of "hegemonic masculinity," in which young, strong, heterosexual, white men are valued more and males who are older, weaker, homosexual, and/or minority are valued less, is a primary factor in the lack of expressed fear among adult men. Specifically, the argument is that men do not feel "safe" admitting that they feel unsafe, even if they do fear crime, because they worry that they will be likened to a girl rather than considered a valued man. In other words, for men, expressing fear of crime is a sign of weakness, and being considered "weak" is bad for those who want to be considered masculine (see also Stanko, 1990). Consequently, some argue that many men really are afraid of crime, but studies are unable to adequately measure their personal fear because even fearful men may not admit it to a researcher. Yet, younger boys, before they reach their teens, may feel comfortable expressing fear due to their obvious physical weakness due to age (Goodey, 1997). May (2001, p. 167) has called this fear related to physical weakness and feelings of inadequate personal power among some men "the shadow of powerlessness."

Still, some studies find that males admit to being afraid of serious violence, such as being shot or murdered (see Lane, 2006). Some also find that men report some fear of rape and that it impacts their fears of other crimes, although much less so than it does for women (see Lane et al., 2009; Lane and Meeker, 2003; May, 2001). Others argue that men are not actually very afraid of crime as long as they feel in control of the situation (e.g., if they know well the areas they are in and if they can avoid altercations with others, by hanging in groups and being prepared to react aggressively if negative interactions arise) (see Brownlow, 2005; Day, Stump and Carreon, 2003; Rader, 2010). This idea of men feeling safer while hanging in groups is an interesting twist on the idea of not going out alone, which is considered more common among women. It points to the strong possibility that researchers need to consider new ways of talking to men about fear and their behavioral responses to it. Specifically, researchers may need to find ways to ask questions that allow men to maintain their masculinity while also expressing their fear of crime. For example, it might be easier for a man to say that he hangs out with his buddies because as a group they are stronger and more prepared for confrontation than to say that he is afraid to go out by himself at night (as the typical question about precautionary behaviors asks), although both of these comments may be conveying a similar underlying concern about one's own safety.

Altruistic fear, or fear for others

One element of crime-related fear that has received much less attention in the literature is altruistic fear, or fear for others such as spouses or children. Research has found that there are

gender differences here, too. Some research shows that males are more likely than females to fear for others in their homes (Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992), but women are more likely to fear for others outside the home, such as children, older parents and siblings (Snedker, 2006). One study found that within households, husbands were more likely to worry about their wives than vice versa, that moms were slightly more likely to worry about their children than dads were, and that both moms and dads were more likely to fear for their daughters than their sons (Warr and Ellison, 2000). Researchers have argued that gender roles also explain differences between women and men in altruistic fear. Specifically, researchers believe that the societal view of female as caretaker and male as protector accounts for gender differences in fear for others. For example, men are more likely to feel they are expected to protect their wives, and wives often express that they feel safer with a husband around (see Rader, 2008; 2010). In line with the differential socialization arguments, both are more likely to believe that their daughters are less able to protect themselves than their sons are (De Vaus and Wise, 1996).

Policy implications

Depending on one's theoretical point of view, different policy implications arise regarding how to address fear of crime. Warr (2000) has argued that fear of crime is functional if it is in line with objective risk, and that in that case policies to reduce it would be counterproductive. However, in cases where fear of crime is greater than necessary and results in undue stress for the individual, there may be a need for programs and policies that help decrease the impact of fear on people's lives. Yet, the theoretical perspectives discussed here would call for different, sometimes competing policy approaches.

The vulnerability hypothesis, which focuses on the physically smaller stature of women and their self-perceived lack of strength to fight off attackers, might argue for approaches such as self-defense classes to teach women how to protect themselves despite these physical limitations. In addition, people believing in this perspective might teach women how to target harden by going out in groups, by carrying pepper spray, and avoiding seemingly unsafe places so they can feel safer as they navigate through their daily lives. The patriarchy argument, such as the one made by Stanko (1998), in contrast, argues that teaching women how to protect themselves in this way actually inappropriately puts the responsibility for preventing men's crimes on women rather than focusing on the real problem of preventing the violence and harassment that men perpetrate in the first place. Stanko (1998) argues that such efforts to teach women how to protect themselves actually increase female fear because they teach women to always be aware of and vigilant about their risk of victimization and try to reduce it. This in turn leads women to constantly worry that every man they meet might be a potential victimizer. Yet, research by Hollander (2004) shows that women who take self-defense classes feel more confident and assertive in situations in which they might normally feel vulnerable (e.g., walking by a man or being confronted by one on the street), feel better about their bodies, and feel stronger when comparing themselves to men.

Unfortunately, the patriarchy perspective, which takes a critical view of traditional approaches to making women feel safer, has resulted in few realistic policy implications put forth by the theorists. However, there are programs that are attempting to change men's point of view about how to treat women (rather than trying to teach women to protect themselves from men). For example, studies by Foubert and his colleagues show that rape prevention programs aimed at men can have lasting attitude and behavioral changes. Specifically, men learn to think differently about women and the consequences of rape and to behave differently by avoiding

rape jokes, intervening to prevent rape by others, and being careful in sexual encounters when someone is drinking (e.g., Foubert and Cowell, 2004; Foubert, Godin and Tatum, 2010; Foubert and Perry, 2007).

The socialization argument is similarly difficult to translate into practical solutions given the extensiveness of gender “training” that occurs in modern society. The socialization argument focuses on the messages that women and men receive throughout their lives regarding how they are expected to act (e.g., men are supposed to be tough and aggressive and women are supposed to be weaker and submissive). It would be a monumental task to fundamentally change how men and women relate to each other throughout all cultural, racial and ethnic, and other groups in society and to systematically change the messages that women and men receive about their strength and vulnerability. There are some programs in schools that are designed to increase knowledge of issues such as sexual harassment and improve related behavior (e.g., see Meraviglia, Becker and Rosenbluth, 2003), but youths are bombarded with cultural messages on gender in multiple contexts that would need to be addressed. Even if true equality in power should ever be reached (in relationships, finances, employment, decision-making, and so forth), it may be difficult to change fundamental attitudes and beliefs about who does or who should have more power in society. Consequently, although these two perspectives can point to the problems with gender relations in society, it is very difficult for researchers to point to solutions that can easily be implemented by policymakers and practitioners – who often want concrete answers from scholars about how they should respond to problems.

Stanko (1989) has noted that one way to protect women from men would be to have female-only areas, such as restaurants, stores, bars, and parking garages but acknowledges that these options are not practical or easily defended in the broader context. She notes that police have responded in some ways to feminists’ arguments for better protection of women (e.g., through presumptive arrest policies for battering), although research is equivocal on whether this increases or decreases subsequent victimization (Berk, Campbell, Klap and Western, 1992; Felson, Ackerman and Gallagher, 2005). Stanko (1998) also has argued that one doable way to reduce women’s fear is to allow women to design public environments because they typically result in areas where people are more able to look out for each other.

Researchers who have studied the shadow thesis, or the idea that fear of rape is the key cause of heightened fear of crime in women, have not regularly addressed policy implications of this finding. What they have noted is that fear is in part about perceived risk, but not completely (see Lane et al., 2009). Consequently, efforts to provide information to people regarding their actual risk of victimization may (see Warr, 2000) or may not (see Lane and Meeker, 2003) make a difference in their fear levels. Given the lack of correspondence between actual crime victimization statistics and people’s perceived risk and fear of crime, it is almost certain that crime reduction policies alone will not directly translate into lower fear levels.

Similar to those discussing the vulnerability argument, some have argued that teaching women to feel more powerful by taking behavioral precautions to protect themselves may reduce fear of crime, and specifically fear of rape. Hollander (2009), though, found that there is some resistance to this notion because people do not believe women can protect themselves, do not want to blame the victim, or worry that such training may embolden women to take more unnecessary risks. Still, if Stanko (1998) is correct, these approaches to teaching women to protect themselves might eventually backfire if women feel more responsible for their safety and therefore more afraid rather than less so. The bottom line is that researchers have spent much time thinking through the reasons for more fear of crime among women but have almost ignored the real policy implications of their arguments. Although some programs have begun

to focus on changing men's attitudes toward women and seem to have some success (e.g., Foubert and Cowell, 2004; Foubert et al., 2010; Foubert and Perry, 2007; Schmidt, Kolodinsky, Carsten, Schmidt, Larson and MacLachlan, 2007) there is much yet to be learned in this regard.

Where the research might go

Because gender is the most consistent predictor of personal fear of crime, there has been much discussion in the literature on why gender matters so much. This chapter has focused on the four primary theoretical arguments that have received the most attention in the literature to date with regard to gender differences specifically. In addition, it discussed differences in altruistic fear, or fear for others. There has also been a lot of research conducted to examine environmental (diversity, disorder, and community concern/decline) and media factors (e.g., resonance of the media portrayal with one's own life, belief in the veracity of presented material, and personal attention to the presented material) that may generally explain why some people (both women and men) are afraid when they are not at high risk of victimization. However, this research has yet to specifically focus on gender differences. It may be that community factors or media factors affect men and women differently. It is likely that research on these topics will continue and may result in more specific information about the differential causes of fear for men and women as studies continue to be refined and samples are disaggregated.

With regard to the particular theoretical arguments discussed here regarding gender differences in personal fear, there are some specific ways in which research could improve upon our understanding of these issues. There are at least seven general areas where more research could add to our knowledge. First, more large empirical studies that disaggregate the samples, comparing women and men as independent groups, may be able to better determine whether the specific predictors or strength of predictors of fear vary by gender. For example, theoretical arguments indicate that fear of rape is important for women but not men; yet, some studies have found that fear of rape predicts fear for men, too, but to a lesser extent (see Lane et al., 2009; Lane and Meeker, 2003; May, 2001). Future studies in this vein could also ask similar questions designed to measure other theoretical arguments, too. For example, studies might ask both men and women about and compare whether they feel they have the physical power to fend off a potential attacker, whether their parents and others in their lives taught them to believe they should be strong or submissive or told them that they were at heightened risk of victimization due to their gender, size, sexual orientation, etc. Researchers might consider asking some of these questions in new ways that allow men to maintain their self-presentation as masculine while also expressing concern for their own safety (e.g., by asking questions that focus on how they portray strength, why they do so, and how often they feel it is necessary to do so rather than questions that ask them to admit weakness). Studies could also ask people about their feelings of power generally within their social context and their own perceptions of the level of patriarchy in society to see if these are related to their fears about different crimes. Most studies on the patriarchy argument, in particular, have been smaller qualitative studies and have focused specifically on women's fear of crime (e.g., Madriz, 1997; Stanko, 1985, 1990). It would be interesting to see how these theoretical ideas pan out in larger empirical studies specifically designed to measure them.

Second, further disaggregating the samples to compare women of color and white women and men may yield even more information about the intricacies in the effects of factors that predict fear of crime. Madriz (1997) argued that crime, fear and powerlessness are even

bigger problems for women of color than they are for white women. Moreover, it may be that minorities are socialized differently in terms of their risk of crime than whites are. Results showing that minorities are more afraid may not only be a result of their heightened objective and subjective risk within problematic neighborhoods where they are more likely than whites to reside, but also due to their receiving different direct and indirect messages throughout their lives about their likelihood of experiencing crime (especially violent crime) and the possible consequences of victimization. These may vary within races and ethnicities based on gender (for example, minority women may feel especially vulnerable based on the messages they have received about their vulnerability as both women and minorities) (see Madriz, 1997). So far, studies have not directly measured these possibilities. Therefore, future research should examine how other social locating variables (race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, and ability status) intersect with gender to produce differential outcomes regarding fear of crime. For example, the author knows of no studies that examine lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) men and women, although it would be useful to know whether or not they fear victimization by others, including “straight” people, and what they fear (e.g., gay-bashing, intimate partner violence). It would be useful to know how sexual orientation and gender converge or diverge in prompting fear of crime.

Third, more qualitative research that specifically compares the thinking processes of women and men and the differential causes and effects of fear of crime has the possibility of expanding our theoretical ideas. Such studies may find important predictive factors that researchers have yet to consider and may show connections among the current theoretical approaches that have not yet been explored. For example, it is possible that women and men may openly discuss (without specific prompting) their own understandings of gender inequality (patriarchy) and how that has been translated to them through messages from their parents, teachers, etc. (socialization) to make them feel physically weak or strong (vulnerability). Of course, this is just one possibility of how the theories may be refined through qualitative exploration. Different results may be just as likely, but it may be that there are ways to integrate the theoretical approaches and come up with policy solutions to reducing fear of crime by listening to women and men speak for themselves.

Fourth, it would be useful to have more studies specifically focusing on the socialization of *children*, both boys and girls, regarding the risk of crime victimization, one’s need to have heightened awareness or anxiety about crime and others (such as the opposite gender or different races and ethnicities or older youths), the importance of thinking about crime compared to other daily experiences, etc. There are only a few studies of adolescents’ fear generally and most do not directly study these particular issues. It would be especially interesting to see how socialization messages vary by both gender and context (e.g., by neighborhood levels of social disorganization and crime) as children progress through their teenage years. Surveying or interviewing both children (e.g., teens) and their parents would provide interesting insight into how messages are transmitted during the period in life when people are most likely to be socialized.

Fifth, more studies that compare fear of crime for men and women in different countries would be useful. Studies could determine whether or not countries that have different levels of patriarchy have differing fear levels for women and men. For example, if a society is less patriarchal, are women less focused on protecting themselves from men? In addition, comparative studies could examine whether or not societies with lower overall crime rates, and especially official estimates of rape, also have lower fear of crime among women, men or both. Another angle would be to examine fear of rape and other violence against women in war-torn areas, where rape may be used as a form of social control in an even more blatant form than it

is arguably used in the United States and similar countries (e.g., Bijleveld, Morssinkhof and Smeulers, 2009).

Sixth, researchers focused on understanding gender differences in fear may want to spend more time thinking through the specific policy implications of their ideas and findings. If fear of crime among women especially is as big a social problem as research implies, then researchers who hope to make a difference have an obligation to translate their findings into meaningful recommendations that actually could be used by policymakers and practitioners. Stanko has chosen to work within a practitioner agency to promote such translation, but most of the theoretical work on gender differences in fear has failed to directly address these issues. It is unlikely that policymakers and practitioners will have the knowledge and priority to focus specifically on reducing fear of crime (versus crime) without the help and nudging of scholars.

Finally, more research needs to be conducted on the causes and consequences of altruistic fear. Research in this area is in its infancy, and more research needs to be conducted on different groups within the population (older and younger people, minorities and whites, richer and poorer, etc.) as well as by gender. In addition, there is very little information on the results of altruistic fear, for either the person who has it (e.g., a parent or spouse) or the person who is the target of it (e.g., how parental fear translates into daily consequences for children) or whether these effects vary by gender of the person who is afraid or the gender of the person who is the object of altruistic fear.

Discussion and conclusions

This chapter has focused on the key and most consistent predictor of fear of crime over at least four decades of research – that is, being female. Scholars have put forth four theoretical perspectives specifically designed to explain why women are consistently more afraid than men are across time and societal contexts. Although each perspective focuses on a different key argument for why women are more afraid (i.e., whether they feel too small physically, are socialized to feel weaker than men, worry about the physical and emotional intrusion of rape, or fear all men may be attackers because men use their power to control them in this way), all of these point to women feeling too weak to protect themselves from crime. Researchers discussing these theoretical perspectives have suggested few policy implications to reduce fear among women that are practical and doable in today's societal context, other than teaching women strategies to make them feel safer (e.g., self-defense and target hardening approaches). There is even more to learn about men's fear of crime, because studies to date have struggled to find ways to tap men's fear while still allowing men to maintain their masculinity and not appear weak (which admitting fear may imply). Even after decades of research on fear of crime, there is much to be learned both about the causes and consequences of fear by gender and about the ways that policymakers and practitioners can help women in particular feel safer as they navigate their daily lives. This chapter has suggested some ways that research might work toward that goal.

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Topical box 3.1

Campus crime

George W. Dowdall

The worldwide growth of higher education poses a unique challenge to those concerned about gender and crime. Studying at a university is often accompanied by major changes in the routine activities of students and other members of university communities, and those changes intersect with gender to shape student crime victimization and perpetration.

The dominant image of university life once was a virtually crime-free “ivory tower.” In the US, this image began to change after the 1986 brutal rape and murder of first-year student Jeanne Ann Clery at Lehigh University. Her family led a successful campaign to pass what is now called the Clery Act. The Act requires institutions of higher education to collect and publish crime statistics, disclose timely information about crimes and threats, and guarantee the rights of sexual assault victims. The Clerys also founded an organization, Security on Campus, Inc., that has played a leading role in calling attention to campus crime (see <http://www.securityoncampus.org/>). Other movements were directed at sexual violence and victimization and at binge drinking, whose behavioral consequences like violence and crime often affected female students. The movements argued that higher education institutions were liable for these problems and were in urgent need of reform (Sloan and Fisher, 2011).

The Clery Act has helped shed light on patterns of campus crime but is limited to crimes or disciplinary actions known to campus officials (Dowdall, 2012). As in the broader society, a “dark figure of crime” separates the number of victims of reported crimes from the much larger number of victims who have not reported their experiences to authorities. Student victimization data show that the gap between reported and unreported crime is substantial: about half of the robberies and aggravated assaults, three-quarters of the burglaries, and the vast majority of rapes and sexual assaults are not reported.

Rates of victimization for rape/sexual assault are of particular concern: a campus with 10,000 women might have 350 rapes per year according to a national survey (Fisher, Cullen and Turner, 2000). In 2009, more than 3,300 forcible sex offenses were reported

by colleges as required by the Clery Act (Ali, 2011). The role of alcohol in these patterns has received considerable recent attention (Dowdall, 2012). Alcohol use appears higher among students than the general population, and so its role in college crime has been examined in depth (Abbey, 2011). Alcohol use and abuse are deeply gendered activities, and the gap between the genders has narrowed but remains significant. On American campuses, alcohol abuse is correlated with immersion in Greek life and in athletics, and those are elements of male peer support that play a role in sexual assault perpetration (Schwartz and DeKeseredy, 1997).

Alcohol also plays a role in victimization (for detailed discussion, see Dowdall, 2012, parts of which are used here with permission). One study (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss and Wechsler, 2004) used data from three large national surveys of students of traditional college age in a representative sample of 119 four-year colleges and universities. Women were asked to say whether they had experienced sexual intercourse against their wishes since the beginning of the school year. One out of 20 women reported non-consensual sex, with 72 percent answering that they had sex without their consent because of intoxication. Women attending institutions with elevated drinking rates had a 1.5-fold increased chance of intoxicated rape than those at institutions with lower drinking rates. These findings are consistent with other studies of sexual assault (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher and Martin, 2007).

The reporting of campus crime remains a major challenge, even after the many years since passage of the Clery Act in 1990 (Fisher and Sloan, 2007). This is particularly problematic in the case of rape and sexual assault. A telephone survey of 2,000 women at four-year colleges found that 230 had experienced rape (Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Armstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero and Kilpatrick, 2011). But only 16 percent of forcible rape victims had filed a formal report with law enforcement. Less than 3 percent of women who had experienced incapacitated rape or drug- or alcohol-facilitated rape had made formal reports. So the most common form of nonconsensual sex among college women is also virtually never reported to the authorities, and college women are less likely to report rape than non-college women.

Campus security has changed considerably in the past few decades (Fisher and Sloan, 2007). In addition to compliance with the Clery Act, many universities in the United States have increased their criminal justice forces and services, and have professionalized their crime security and safety efforts. Students and university staff have organized on many campuses to provide services to victims and to lower the risk of victimization. But experts on campus safety still debate whether universities have done enough to improve student safety (Katel, 2011). Security efforts have increased, but there has been little change in heavy drinking and its consequences (including getting into trouble with the police or women reporting being a victim of sexual assault or rape) in the period from 1993–2005 at heavy drinking colleges (Nelson, Xuan, Lee, Weitzman and Wechsler, 2009).

The recent “Dear Colleague” letter from the Department of Education to all higher education institutions underscores how much work needs to be done to guarantee student safety and security (Ali, 2011). The letter notes that Title IX of the Education Acts of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs receiving federal funds, and then argues that sexual harassment and sexual violence (including sex against a person’s will or when incapacitated by drugs or alcohol) falls under this prohibition. The letter suggests that each institution’s Title IX coordinator be trained on the “link between alcohol and drug abuse and sexual harassment and violence and best practices to address that link.” As they work to implement this new mandate, colleges

can draw on a growing body of evidence about how to prevent campus crime and lower substance abuse (Dowdall, 2012; Fisher and Sloan, 2007).

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Biographical box 3.1

Betsy Stanko, University of London

I studied sociology and criminology in New York in the early 1970s, working full-time as I was studying for my Ph.D. as a researcher on the New York Bar Association's evaluation of the New York Drug Law. From this prestigious base, I gained access to the inside workings of the criminal justice process, conducting ethnographies of the New York District Attorney's Office and the NYPD. My approach to the study of violence against women was sparked at this time, as my doctorate explored how prosecutors in Manhattan's Criminal Court assessed serious violence. I rode in the back of NYPD's 9th Precinct squad cars for a few months as well, looking at how the decisions of the police set the stage for the prosecutor's work. This field work was formative for my insistence about the primacy of grounded experience and data above theory, and my job for the past ten years in the London Metropolitan Police could be linked to this early experience in exploring criminal justice in New York.

Moving from full-time research to full-time academia, I arrived at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in the mid-1970s. Much feminist activism during the 1970s/1980s was aimed to expose the failure of officialdom to recognize the commonness – and the damage – of sexual violence and domestic violence. As a class project, I helped found a refuge for battered women in Worcester. Daybreak, nearly three decades old, is still the largest provider of help for battered women in Central Massachusetts. My studying violence against women was grounded in activism. My own experience as a litigant in a ground breaking sexual harassment case brought the reality of violence against women close to home. My greatest legacy to criminology was *Intimate Intrusions: Women's Experiences of Male Violence*, published in 1985. This book challenged criminology as a discipline and as a practice, and set an approach to studying the impact of violence against women in the criminal justice system. My American Society of Criminology's Vollmer Award (1996) recognizes the impact of this book, and of my feminist activism, in demanding improvement in the criminal justice system's treatment of violence against women.

Changing continents in the early 1980s to work as an academic enabled me to participate in international dialogues about how governments around the world saw and responded to violence against women. I played a major part in the improvements to government approaches to violence against women in the UK. I was able to create new conversations about fear of crime, women's safety and the policing of domestic violence. I also sparked debates about masculinities and crime in the 1990s. Yet I was still drawn to my activist self, so after serving as the UK director of the Economic and Social Research Council's five-year Violence Research Programme to 2002, I entered the Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reform as a senior advisor to see if I could apply my academic knowledge to the overall improvement of criminal justice. But I found that working inside the criminal justice system was the better location for encouraging change. Since 2003, I have been a full-time employee of the London Metropolitan Police Service. My work on violence has been channeled to the improvement of the whole of policing. My current interest in how people see policing – my work on confidence in the police – widens the focus from my early work on gender to the improvement of a whole criminal justice organization.