Navigating the Femininity-Vulnerability Nexus:
A Reconsideration of the Protective Function of
Gendered "Safety Work"

by

Rebecca Lennox

B.A. (Hons.), University of Regina, 2017

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

© Rebecca Lennox 2019
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2019

Approval

Name:	**Rebecca Lennox**
Degree:	**Master of Arts (Sociology)**
Title:	**Navigating the Femininity-Vulnerability Nexus: A Reconsideration of the Protective Function of Gendered "Safety Work"**
Examining Committee:	**Chair: Amanda Watson** Lecturer

Wendy Chan
Senior Supervisor
Professor

Ann Travers
Supervisor
Associate Professor

Sheri Fabian
External Examiner
University Lecturer
School of Criminology
Simon Fraser University

Date Defended/Approved: August 6, 2019

Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

a.   human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

or

b.   advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

or has conducted the research

c.   as a co-investigator, collaborator, or research assistant in a research project approved in advance.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed with the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Update Spring 2016

Abstract

Based on Critical Discourse Analysis of 17 interviews with women aged 19-26, this thesis explores the ways women negotiate positionalities as subjects of a gendered fear discourse that, while exaggerating gendered risks in public spaces, paradoxically places the onus on women to ensure their own safety. Findings suggest that, while fear of violent crime (FoVC) contours nearly every aspect of women's lives and engenders taxing "safety work", gendered "risk-management" is naturalized by participants as a sensical response to "immutable" gendered vulnerability. Although ostensibly engaged to ensure physical security, safety work only exacerbates women's FoVC and unreliably mitigates their exposure to violence. I thus suggest that, in the present research, safety work is engaged because it affords women the ontological security associated with evading the subjectivity of the "Imprudent Woman": the failed female subject whose inadequate "risk-management" justifiably denies her care, trust, and even access to the resources required for living.

Keywords: gender; public space(s); risk; fear of violent crime; safety work; ontological security

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the 17 women who participated in this research. Your openness and candor in sharing your experiences navigating public spaces in Greater Vancouver made this work possible.

My gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Wendy Chan, for her unselfish mentorship and guidance. Thank you for your thoughtful comments and encouragement on this research. My research experiences with you have opened my eyes to a fuller vision of the nature of violence against women in contemporary Canada.

Thank you to Dr. Ann Travers. I am sincerely grateful to you for opening the door to a liberating and resistant vision of social theory, and for creating a secure learning environment in which to reconsider what "counts"—and on whose terms—as "classical" theory. Your incisive comments and suggestions have made this a stronger piece of research.

Many thanks to Dr. Sheri Fabian for her thoughtful commentary and feedback, and for encouraging me to challenge some of the "taken-for-granted" aspects of qualitative research.

Sincere thanks to Tara McFarlane for her generous assistance with participant recruitment. Thank you to Ki Wight for opening her classrooms to me, for her help with recruitment materials, and for her unflagging encouragement and support.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CU	Capilano University
DFSA	Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault
FoVC	Fear of Violent Crime
GVA	Greater Vancouver Area
SFU	Simon Fraser University
VPD	Vancouver Police Department

Glossary

Discourse	Used interchangeably with terms like "sense-making story", "interpretive repertoire", "myth", and "meaning system", "discourse" is a term denoting the ways in which individuals simplify, naturalize, and generally apprehend social reality.
Gender	The performative enactment of temporally, spatially, and socially variable discourses of masculinity and femininity.
Gendered Fear Discourse	The collective of beliefs, attitudes, and judgements that circulate both *tangibly* (e.g., through personal safety pamphlets produced by local police) and *intangibly* (e.g., via the normalized notion that women are responsible for preventing rape) in contemporary society, and that cumulatively socialize women—and men—about their respective entitlements, obligations, and "risks" in public spaces.
Masculine Hegemony	Unlike patriarchy, which denotes direct control and dominance, "masculine hegemony" refers to the diffuse, but nonetheless repressive, operation of male/masculine power in contemporary society. Within masculine hegemony, masculinity is an embedded norm, and androcentric ideals and values permeate society and are naturalized. Men hold the majority of economic, political, and ideological power.
Ontological Security	A general social-psychological sense of security and certainty experienced by individuals when they understand themselves as recognized by others in a given space as rightfully existing therein. Ontological security denotes a state of being characterized by *social/existential*, rather than *physical*, security.
Safety Work	As coined by Liz Kelly (1988), "safety work" refers to the embodied strategies that women engage in public spaces to prevent, avoid, and manage male violence. Such strategies include, for example, avoiding appearing in public alone; wearing plain or "unattractive" clothing; displaying an unfriendly facial expression; and wearing sunglasses.
The "Good Woman"	The hyper-vigilant, "risk-averse" female subject who "sensibly" recognizes—and thus constantly endeavours to mitigate—her "biologically inalterable" vulnerability to male violence in public spaces.
The "Imprudent Woman"	The failed female subject who, through carelessness or willful recklessness, fails to practise "risk-management" in public spaces, and is thus justifiably denied care, trust,

and even access to the symbolic and material resources required for living, should she encounter men's violence.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

> *Once upon a time there was a sweet little girl. Everyone who saw her liked her. One day her mother said to her, "Come Little Red Cap. Here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother. She is sick and weak, and they will do her well. Mind your manners and give her my greetings. Behave yourself on the way, and do not leave the path". Little Red Cap promised to obey her mother.*
>
> (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Little Red Cap,* 1857)

As geographers and urban studies scholars widely acknowledge, access to and usage of public space is a central index of citizenship. Relatedly, restricting access to public space has been, and remains, one of "the *constituent ways* to limit the economic and political rights of groups" (Domosh and Seager 2001:115, my emphasis). Dominantly figured as symbols of economic and social advancement *par excellence*, modern cities in Canada are shaped by state-sanctioned theft and violence. Indeed, the human and physical geographies of modern cities reflect these sites' origins as projects of *ex*clusion, rather than *in*clusion. Premised upon colonialist, ableist, sexist, racist, and classist criteria that have and continue to determine whose bodies are imagined as "fully human" and whose bodies thus "legitimately" belong in public spaces, racialized, classed, and gendered projects of exclusion nonetheless dominantly continue to operate as "common-sense". As Goh (2018: 464) notes, "the extent…[to which] the space of the city is sometimes safe for some people" is due, not to "natural evolution" or random chance, but to historically and geographically specific "actors, strategies, and processes".

As Eli Clare (2017:128) discusses in his work *Brilliant Imperfection*, it is a historically specific "logic of privilege" that has marked a very specific class of men—those who are white, English-speaking, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied, and gender-conforming—as "locationless", "universal" subjects who stand in for what it means to be human. As "universal subjects", this limited class of men has historically and largely continues to act as legitimate gatekeepers of public spaces, and indirectly, of the symbolic and material resources that accompany unfettered public space usage,

including, for example, full and unquestioned citizenship; access to healthcare, quality schools and job opportunities; protection from environmental hazards; and freedom from race-, class-, and gender-motivated symbolic and physical violence.

In this thesis, I seek to denaturalize (Razack 2002) white men's domination of public spaces and the corresponding exclusion of women by rendering visible the colonialist, ableist, sexist, and racist theft and violence on which modern cities are built, as this theft and violence is visible in discourse (e.g., crime-prevention advisories and media representations of violent crime). Specifically, I trace the operation of gendered fear discourse in contemporary Greater Vancouver as a means of understanding how ongoing gendered exclusions in public spaces (re)produce women as docile, non-threatening subjects of the contemporary gender order. In the concluding chapters of this thesis, I consider the ways in which women's legibility as "docile" subjects is informed by race and class, among other vectors of social location.

1.1. Living Gendered Fear Discourse

Shortly after moving to Vancouver in Autumn 2017, I found myself on Burnaby Mountain one chilly afternoon with neither raincoat nor umbrella. Eager to avoid a mist that was rapidly turning to drizzle, I purchased a black umbrella from Simon Fraser University's campus bookstore. In addition to being impressively weighty, my new umbrella featured a built-in flashlight in the handle.

About two weeks later, I met two women I had recently become acquainted with for lunch. It being another cold and drizzly afternoon, I arrived at lunch with my umbrella in hand. Both of my companions *oohed* and *aahed* at the weight of my umbrella and commended me on establishing myself as a "Vancouverite". To my surprise, the conversation then abruptly turned to the supposed "self-defence-enhancing" properties of what I had previously regarded as a rather commonplace item of rain protection. One woman, implicitly referencing the weightiness of my umbrella, suggested that I would no longer need to "worry" about walking on campus after night classes. Laughing in agreement, my other lunch companion pointed to the flashlight in the handle of my umbrella and remarked, "both light and a weapon! With this thing, you can knock 'em dead!". We all laughed, and the conversation quickly changed.

The fact that, as a body read as female/feminine, two virtual strangers had almost immediately presumed me vulnerable to (male) violence, and moreover, to require (pseudo) weaponry for self-defence, seemed—in the moment—utterly commonplace. Yet, the apparently "unexceptional", even "humorous" nature of an interaction that implicitly relied on an imagined male "stranger danger" and on my supposed ability to transcend twenty-six years of gender socialization and become "instantly 'male'" while I "aggressively confront[ed]" a would-be assailant (Tuerkheimer 1997:192), perturbed me.

As Jocelyn Hollander (2001) has observed, the "mundane" conversation of everyday life is one of central mechanisms through which the mythology of women as "immutably" frail and unalterably vulnerable to male violence is (re)produced. As a seemingly "unexceptional" encounter that entailed the gendered "weaponization" of a commonplace everyday item, my lunch conversation with two women is one example of what I term "gendered fear discourse". As I conceptualize it in this thesis, "gendered fear discourse" is the collection of beliefs, attitudes, and judgements that circulate both tangibly and intangibly in contemporary society, and that cumulatively socialize women—and men—about their respective entitlements, obligations, and "risks" in public spaces. This discourse is tangibly evident in, for example, newspapers and other texts that question the "legitimacy" of women's space usage when they encounter male violence in public spaces. Intangibly, gendered fear discourse is evident in the normalized notion that women should—and can—"prevent" male violence in public spaces through gendered "risk-management" strategies, such as curtailing their public space usage after dark or carrying pseudo-weapons when they use public spaces.

The blatant privileging of male[1] bodies, mobilities, and entitlements undergirding gendered fear discourse is occasionally rendered starkly visible. Normalized male spatial privilege was apparent in, for example, former Judge Robin Camp's widely condemned assertion that a 19-year old survivor of rape could have "kept…[her] knees together" as a means of preventing her own sexual assault (qtd. in Kassam 2017:n.p.). Equally, the privileging of male mobilities and entitlements in public spaces was visible in law

---

[1] When I discuss normalized male entitlements in public spaces in this thesis, I use the words "men"/"male" to refer to the bodies that fall within the euro-western "logic of privilege" (Clare 2017) I discussed at the outset of Chapter 1. Specifically, men in this category are dominantly white, cisgender, able-bodied, middle/upper class, and heterosexual.

enforcement's blasé dismissal of the intimidation, harassment, and assault of at least 24 women by a group of men at the 2000 Puerto Rican Day Parade as an "overdose of testosterone and stupidity" (qtd. in Laniya 2005:166). While there are many such examples of the normalized male entitlement undergirding gendered fear discourse being rendered starkly visible, men's entitlements much more dominantly, and from a poststructuralist perspective, *powerfully* operate as invisible, unquestioned, and "mundane" features of the everyday lifeworld.

The findings of this research emphasize the power of "mundane" features of the everyday lifeworld in reinforcing these gendered messages of power to women and men, illustrating that it is indeed through everyday interactions that women come to understand the core messages of gendered fear discourse: (1) that, as women, they are immutably vulnerable to violence; and (2) that, as women, they are solely responsible for ensuring their own safety in public spaces. The sexist and restrictive messaging of gendered fear discourse causes many women to internalize self-perceptions of innate vulnerability, or as Kate (21, Chinese, heterosexual) worded it, to adopt the idea that "being female means *being weaker*" (my emphasis). For Alexa (25, Greek-White, heterosexual), the message of her "innate" gendered vulnerability was understood in the discomfort of having pepper spray forced on her by her concerned mother every time she left the house for leisure or exercise as a young adult. For Analyn (24, Filipino, heterosexual), it was realized in the parental mandate that she cease to "take up so much space" in public, and that she routinely engage embodied labour to counteract her natural tendency to sit with her "legs out", so that she might appear appropriately "ladylike".

The notion that "femininity = vulnerability" is often realized by young women alongside a message that the condition of femininity *itself* is inherently "risky", and that simply using public spaces as a woman at any time of day, for any purpose, connotes a certain amount of "carelessly" assumed "risk". For Carmen (21, Indian-Italian, bisexual), the idea that there is something inherently "risky" about showing a "feminine side" in public spaces became clear after her parents misconstrued her logical choice to wear a sleeveless top on a hot summer day as "promiscuity" when she was still a young teenager. For Reena (22, Hindu, heterosexual) and Taylor (22, European, queer), the gendered obligation they felt to "manage risk" was highlighted affectively in the intense

shame (Reena) and even "self-disgust" (Taylor) they experienced when they were "unable" to "prevent" a man's sexual intrusiveness in public space.

As the accounts of women in this research underscore, while gendered fear discourse operates at a micro-level as a quotidian, naturalized feature of the everyday lifeworld that masquerades as "common-sense", parental concern, "good etiquette", and even humor, it nonetheless serves at a macro-level to privilege men's mobility and entitlement at the cost of perpetuating women's political, social, and economic marginalization. Not only does gendered fear discourse encourage women to internalize self-perceptions of "innate" gendered vulnerability, but it also causes the routine expenditure of valuable energy and resources as women attempt to "manage" their apparent vulnerability.

Employing a Critical Discourse Analytic methodology, and based on deconstructionist (Czarniawska 2004; Martin 1990) analysis of 17 in-depth interviews with young (ages 19-26) female-identified residents of the Greater Vancouver Area (GVA), this thesis centralizes the role of gendered fear discourse in informing women's fear of violent crime (FoVC) and in promoting gendered "safekeeping" strategies that powerfully contour and constrain the geographies of young women's everyday lives.

In what follows, I provide an outline of the major sections of this thesis.

1.2. Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into four central chapters. In Chapter 2, I contextualize the present research through a review of literature to date, and I highlight the role of contemporary, institutionally-sanctioned instantiations of gendered fear discourse in reifying the mythical figure of the male "stranger rapist" and encouraging women to assume cognitively, emotionally, and physically taxing "risk-management" strategies in public spaces. I conclude Chapter 2 by emphasizing the increased pressures women face to "manage risk" in the "postfeminist", neoliberal cultural landscape of contemporary Canada.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the central tenets of this study's overarching methodological framework, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and I offer a detailed account of the methods and analytical strategies employed in this research.

Chapters 4 and 5 present and discuss the major findings of the present research. In Chapter 4, I highlight women's overwhelming FoVC in public spaces, and I explore the cognitive and embodied "safekeeping" strategies that participants reported employing in public spaces to "mitigate" their personal risk of exposure to male stranger violence. Chapter 4 concludes by summarizing participants' experiences in public spaces as ones of *normalized liminality*, a concept I utilize to capture the fact that, although FoVC crime contours and constrains nearly every aspect of women's lives, most women do not explicitly recognize its central—and limiting—role in their day-to-day navigation of public spaces.

In Chapter 5, I centralize "textual disruptions"—that is, tensions, contradictions, and ambiguities—in women's accounts to critically consider the function of women's routinized safekeeping strategies. Emphasizing the limited capacity of these strategies to tangibly mitigate women's risk of encountering male violence, I engage the work of Giddens (1990) to consider women's safekeeping labour as a means of securing not *physical* security, but *ontological* security.

I conclude this thesis by exploring the ways in which women's normalized liminality in public space might be transformed, and I consider concrete strategies for transforming gendered fear discourse as a means of achieving one of the core ideals of CDA: that of emancipatory social change.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review and Context

> *As she was going through the wood, she met with a wolf, who had a very great mind to eat her up, but he dared not, because of some woodcutters working nearby in the forest. He asked her where she was going. The poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stay and talk to a wolf, said to him, "I am going to see my grandmother and carry her a cake and a little pot of butter from my mother".*

<div align="right">(Charles Perrault, Le Petit Chaperon Rouge, 1697)</div>

As I outlined in Chapter 1, I use the concept "gendered fear discourse" in this thesis to describe the collective of beliefs, attitudes, and judgements that circulate both tangibly and intangibly in contemporary society, and that cumulatively socialize women and men to differently understand their respective "vulnerabilities", obligations, and entitlements in public spaces. While phrases such as "crime prevention advice" (see, e.g., Stanko 1996) and "safety discourse" (see, e.g., Fanghanel and Lim 2017) are more commonly engaged in existing research exploring the strategies that women are socialized to adopt to "manage risk" in public spaces, such descriptors arguably lack explanatory power.

As I emphasize throughout this chapter, the "safety" advice that women receive in contemporary society has no genuine link either to "safety" or to "crime prevention". Rather, this advice—or "gendered fear discourse"—keeps women in a constant state of anxiety and fear; socializes a gendered defenselessness that paradoxically places the onus on innately "frail" women to ensure their own safety; and encourages gendered "safekeeping" strategies that indirectly perpetuate men's normalized spatial and embodied entitlements at the cost of reinforcing women's social, political, and economic marginalization.

In this chapter, I contextualize the present research through a review of literature from disciplinary traditions including feminist urban studies, criminology, feminist media studies, and geography to illustrate the ineffectiveness of gendered fear discourse in ensuring women's safety and preventing crime. To this end, Chapter 2 is divided into three major sections.

In the first section, I present police-reported crime data to highlight the rarity of stranger violence against women in public spaces, and to explore gender differences in FoVC nationally. Data demonstrate that although women are less likely than men to experience violent crime in public spaces, they consistently report higher levels of fear therein. The first section concludes by reviewing feminist criminological explanations for this apparent "gender-fear paradox".

In the second section, I consider two central arenas in which gendered fear discourse tangibly operates: (1) via crime-prevention advisories disseminated in popular discourse and by law enforcement agencies; and (2) via the sensationalist and distorted portrayal of violent crime and violent crime victims in news and entertainment media. The second section highlights the Vancouver Police Department's *Safety for Individuals* guide as a local example of institutionally sanctioned gendered fear discourse that insidiously perpetuates women's liminality in public spaces by encouraging gendered "crime-prevention" strategies that are costly to assume (i.e., require the expenditure of energy and resources) and that only target extremely rare stranger crimes, such as drug facilitated sexual assault (DFSA).

The final section of this chapter contextualizes gendered pressures to "manage risk" within the increasing neoliberalization of Canadian culture and governance. This final section illustrates how postfeminist imperatives of "empowerment", "control", and "choice"—while seemingly transforming much of the negative messaging of gendered fear discourse—in fact simply *increase* gendered pressures to "manage risk" by fitting neatly within a neoliberal paradigm that shifts "risk-management" away from the state onto purportedly "responsibilized" individuals who can "*choose*" to be safe through intensive self-surveillance.

2.1. Gender, Fear of Crime, and Public Spaces: Unpacking the "Gender-Fear Paradox"

For decades, women have reported higher levels of FoVC in public spaces than men, as well as an increased propensity to practice constrained behaviours therein (Ferraro 1995, 1996; May 2001; Maxwell, Sanders, Skues, and Wise 2019; Rader 2008; Roberts 2019). Researchers have noted that women's heightened levels of FoVC are largely attributable to their fear of sexual victimization, and that the cautionary

behaviours women practice in public spaces are mostly engaged because of their perceived ability to mitigate women's exposure to sexual violence (Day 1999; Mehta and Bondi 1999).

While there are many ways to assess fear of crime, individuals' self-assessed feelings of safety when walking alone in their own neighbourhoods after dark is one of the most frequently used measures to date (see, e.g., Senn and Dzinas 1996). In Canada, research has shown a persistent gender gap in perceptions of safety. In 2014, while 64% of men reported "feeling very safe" walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark, only 38% of women reported the same; among women aged 15-24, the proportion dropped to 28% (Statistics Canada 2014b). Findings of the 2009 *General Social Survey* report similar results and emphasize the restrictive impacts of FoVC by noting that 4 in 10 Canadian women report that they would walk alone after dark in public spaces more frequently if they felt safer (Statistics Canada 2009). In addition to reporting higher levels of fear of crime overall, women are more likely (96%) than men (91%) to practice cautionary or constrained behaviours in public spaces, and women employ a greater number of cautionary strategies than men. 2014 data show that while women on average reported engaging in 4 different forms of cautionary behaviour, men engaged in 3 (Statistics Canada 2014b). Women's cautionary behaviours include routinely using a car or taxi, instead of walking; altering their personal routines to avoid neighbourhoods or spaces perceived as dangerous; and staying out of public spaces altogether after dark (ibid).

Some criminologists have theorized that women's FoVC can be explained by their disproportionate vulnerability to sexual violence, given the stability of gender as a predictor of sexual victimization over time (see, e.g., Ferraro 1996 and Özascilar 2013). In Canada, rates of violence against women have existed at epidemic proportions for decades, with one out of every three Canadian women experiencing sexual violence in her lifetime (Government of Ontario 2011). While women are over-represented as sexual assault victims, men are over-represented as perpetrators: in 2014, 9 out of 10 sexual assault victims in Canada were women, while 9 out of 10 perpetrators were men (Statistics Canada 2014a).

Women's vulnerability to sexual violence varies considerably by age, ethnicity, (dis)ability, and sexual orientation. Specifically, young, Aboriginal, lesbian and bisexual

women, and women with disabilities are especially vulnerable to sexual violence. In terms of age, of the 9 women accounting for every 10 victims of sexual assault in 2014, 6 were under 25 years of age (Statistics Canada 2017a), making women aged 15-24 fully twelve times more likely than men in the same age cohort to experience sexual violence (Statistics Canada 2014a). Further, Aboriginal women are on average 3 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to experience sexual assault, a disproportionate vulnerability that makes young Aboriginal women the most vulnerable demographic to sexual violence nationally (Statistics Canada 2014a; Native Women's Association of Canada [NWAC] 2010). In terms of sexual orientation and (dis)ability, lesbian and bisexual women are 5 times more likely than heterosexual women to experience sexual assault, and women with disabilities are 2 times more likely than able-bodied women to experience sexual assault (Statistics Canada 2014a).

Although available data highlight the epidemic nature of sexual violence against women nationally, it is important to note that sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes nationally. Police-reported rates, such as those captured in the *General Social Survey* thus seriously underestimate the extent of sexual violence nationally. Emphasizing the gap between police-reported and self-report data, the 2014 iteration of the *General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety* documents that only 1 of every 20 (5%) sexual assaults in Canada was reported to the police, a proportion that has remained stable since 2004 (Statistics Canada 2014a).

While women are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence, there are notable discrepancies between the most common locations of sexual violence and the spaces in which women commonly locate their fears, a phenomenon Pain (1997) has referred to as the "spatial paradox". As feminist geographers have long documented, women's perceptions of various spaces' "safety" and "dangerousness" often do not align with the actual risks these spaces pose to women (Duncan 1996; Fanghanel 2014; Gardner 1990; Listerborn 2016). Specifically, although sexual assault occurs most frequently (43% of the time) in commercial establishments, such as malls, schools, and restaurants; second most frequently at private residences (22%); and most rarely (14%) in open public spaces such as streets and parking lots (Statistics Canada 2014a), most women continue to assess private residences as safer than public spaces, and "regulated" spaces like grocery stores and shopping malls as safer than other "open" public spaces, such as parks and parking lots (Domosh and Seager 2001).

Further, while many women's fears center on the mythical, foreboding figure of the lurking "stranger rapist" (Nicholls 2019; Roberts 2019), the vast majority (60%) of sexual assaults are perpetrated not by strangers, but by persons known to the victim, including friends, family members, and intimate partners (Statistics Canada 2014a). Self-report data on sexual assault in Canada reveal that in 2014, 6 out of every 10 female sexual assault survivors were assaulted by someone they knew, and 4 in 10 female survivors of physical violence were assaulted by a friend, acquaintance, or neighbour (Statistics Canada 2014a).

Women's seemingly "irrational" fear of stranger violence in public spaces, given their statistical improbability of encountering such violence, has led feminist geographers to acknowledge a general "mismatch between the geography of violence and the geography of fear" (Valentine 1992:22). Criminologists further note the persistence of the "gender-fear paradox", a phenomenon denoting the fact that women, who are in fact less likely than men[2] to be violently victimized in public spaces, consistently report higher levels of FoVC therein (Ferraro 1996; Gardner 1990; Harris and Miller 2000).

The "gender-fear paradox" has been the subject of a great deal of theorizing in criminology (see, e.g., Gardner 1989, Hollander 2001, and Madriz 1997). One prominent explanation for the so-called "paradox" is the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. Originating in the work of Ferraro (1995, 1996), this theory posits that women's seemingly disproportionate FoVC in public spaces can be explained by their fear of, and disproportionate vulnerability to, sexual victimization. Rape is hypothesized to operate as a "master offense", shadowing women's perceptions of "perceptually contemporaneous" (Warr 1984) offenses (e.g., being mugged) and causing them to be fearful in any situation where they perceive the possibility of rape (Ferraro 1996). Numerous empirical studies have tested this hypothesis and have found widespread support for the

---

[2] Physical assault comprises the majority (6 of every 10 violent crimes) of violent crime in Canada, and men are more likely than women to be physically assaulted (Statistics Canada 2017a). Men are also more likely than women to experience severe forms of physical assault, such as aggravated assault (72% male victims), and assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (61% male victims). Further, when men are physically assaulted, it is often (63% of the time) by a stranger (Statistics Canada 2016a). However, in contrast to many forms of violence against women (e.g., sexual harassment and assault, leering, and frottage) which centralize sex and gender as axes of vulnerability by explicitly focusing on women's bodies and sexuality, men's violent victimization is not related to gender *per se*, but rather is resultant of other predictors of vulnerability, such as gang involvement (Statistics Canada 2017b).

significance of fear of rape as a predictor of general FoVC (see, e.g., Fisher and Sloan 2003, Hirtenlehner and Farrall 2014, Özascilar 2013, and Wilcox, Jordan, and Pritchard 2006).

In addition to highlighting the centrality of sexual victimization to women's FoVC, scholars have countered the apparent "paradox" of women's fear in public spaces by noting that, while stranger rape in public spaces is indeed rare, women are nonetheless routinely subjected to a plethora of gender-based sexual intrusions, harassments, and microaggressions in public spaces, all of which are rarely experienced by men (Davis 1994; Stanko 1985). In fact, nationally-representative research documents that between 85% and 91% of Canadian women have experienced some form of street harassment (e.g., verbal insults, personal space invasion, and unwanted touching) in a public space in their lifetime, and that most women experience street harassment more than once (Lenton, Smith, Fox, and Morra 1999; Macmillan, Nierobisz, and Welsh 2000). Among university-aged women, the incidence of street harassment rises to 98% and 99% (Lord 2009; Sullivan 2011), and some research finds that university-aged women experience sexualized catcalls, whistles, and stares as frequently as every few days or more (Fairchild and Rudman 2008). Moreover, unlike many other forms of violence against women, street harassment is almost exclusively perpetrated by stranger men (Kearl 2014). Experienced within a broader cultural landscape in which violence against women is normalized and trivialized (Hindes and Fileborn 2019), even "benign" forms of sexual harassment may heighten women's fears of crime by causing them to distrust strangers; to feel generally unwelcome in public spaces; and to associate strangers and public places with sexual violation (Mellgren and Ivert 2019; Pain 1991).

In highlighting women's routine exposure to sexualized hostility in public spaces, feminist scholars have successfully challenged the androcentrism inherent in the very concept of "risk", drawing attention to the fact that harms that men do not (or cannot) suffer are under-addressed in traditional victimization surveys, and that the victimization rates such surveys generate are thus limited in their ability to accurately reflect gendered risks in public spaces (Madriz 1997; Mehta and Bondi 1999; Pain 1997). While explanations such as the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis (Ferarro 1995, 1996) and the emphasis on women's routine exposure to trivialized forms of sexual harassment in public spaces have undoubtedly enhanced our understanding of gendered experiences

of risk in public spaces, these explanations do not acknowledge the powerful role of talk, text, and imagery—that is, "discourse"—in informing women's FoVC.

In the next section, I centralize the role of gendered crime-prevention advisories and news and entertainment media in informing women's fears of stranger crime in public spaces.

2.2. Discursively Establishing the "Stranger Rapist": The Role of Gendered Crime-Prevention and Media

Despite decades of documentation that "stranger rape" is the exception rather than the rule in Canada, media and crime-prevention discourses continue to figure public spaces as more dangerous for women than private spaces, and to pose "stranger danger" as the greatest threat to women's safety (Gardner 1990; Koskela 1997; Listerborn 2016; Pain 1997). Indeed, the myth that public spaces teem with stranger rapists lurking in dark and isolated spaces, seeking vulnerable women to attack, powerfully informs the overarching ethos of contemporary crime-prevention (Fanghanel 2018). Discursively circulated through gendered crime-prevention advisories disseminated by culturally "legitimized" institutions such as law enforcement agencies and educational institutions, "safekeeping" strategies that target only very rare stranger crimes continue to operate largely as "common-sense", "necessary" protective measures against pervasive gendered risks in public spaces (Brooks 2011; Fileborn 2016; van Eijk 2017).

The notion of an amorphous, perpetually lurking stranger danger in public spaces has informed gendered crime-prevention and "safety" advice for decades. As Campbell (2005:122) notes, women have long been counselled to:

> [A]void dark streets, to not walk alone especially at night, to walk near the curb and to avoid passing close to bushes, to have a key ready in the hand, to equip the house or apartment with peepholes, to ask servicemen and deliverymen for identification, to keep outside bushes and shrubbery trimmed, and to have a male leave the outgoing message on the answer phone.

Gardner (1990) further highlights some of the most lurid historical examples of gendered crime-prevention advice, noting that, in the 1970s and 1980s, women were encouraged to "avoid" violent sexual victimization in public spaces by rendering themselves "too

13

repulsive a target for approach": some of the concrete strategies women were mandated to adopt as a means of rendering themselves suitably "repulsive" included "act[ing] insane", "eat[ing] grass", "jump[ing] around", "sing[ing] out loud", and generally making "fools" of themselves (321). In especially dire circumstances, women were advised to "tell rapists that they have venereal disease…even carrying an old penicillin bottle to bolster claims" (ibid).

In addition to relying on problematic stereotypes of mental illness, the gendered crime-prevention advice Gardner (1990) discusses rests on the faulty premises that: (1) the extent of danger faced by women in public spaces is sufficiently grave to necessitate such strategies in the first place; (2) women's actions have a tangibly mitigating (or conversely, reinforcing) effect on the actions of stranger men who commit extreme acts of violence; and (3) it is reasonable to assume that women can, under threat of sexual violence, calmly "get into character" and enact a bizarre routine of "repulsiveness". As Gardner (1990) notes:

> Such advice would indeed seem strange if offered to a man threatened with street violence. It is now…commonplace [knowledge] that an attractively dressed woman does not "cause" a man to rape her any more than a well-dressed man causes a man to rob him. It is not so commonly noted that we do not advise men to fake insanity or to sham morally impugning disease[s] with the alacrity that women are so advised (322).

While the gendered crime-prevention advice discussed by Gardner (1990) and Campbell (2005) purports to offer women concrete strategies for "staying safe" both at home (e.g., by keeping the shrubbery trimmed) and in public spaces (e.g., by avoiding dark and deserted areas), the only "danger" this advice implicitly addresses is that posed by violent strangers. In avoiding using public spaces alone, shamming disease, keeping outside shrubbery trimmed, and walking with a key "ready in hand", it is only the elusive man who lurks stealthily on dark street corners that women are ostensibly prepared to defend themselves against. Notwithstanding the extremely dubious capacity of such strategies to effectively deter male stranger violence (Stanko 1996), crime-prevention strategies that reify stranger danger problematically invisibilize intimate partner violence and date rape, which, as has been documented for decades, pose a far greater risk to women's safety than stranger violence (see, e.g., Gladu 2017, and Government of Ontario 2011).

While contemporary safety discourse lacks some of the luridness of historical gendered safety mandates, the overarching message of gendered crime-prevention has barely changed in decades. As it is beyond the scope of this thesis to comprehensively review multiple examples of crime-prevention discourse (for broad reviews, see, e.g., Meyers 1997, and Stanko 1996), in what follows, I explore two contemporary examples: (1) the Vancouver Police Department's (VPD) "Personal Safety" guide, and (2) the VPD's "Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault" (DFSA) information page. These crime-prevention advisories are highlighted as tangible examples of the substantial gap between empirical research on the nature of violence against women, and ongoing areas of focus in crime-prevention. Further, local crime-prevention advisories provide some insight into the discursive context backgrounding young GVA women's public space usage.

The VPD's *Crime Prevention and Safety for Individuals* guide, much like the advice Gardner (1990) discusses, reifies the notion of the dangerous, lurking stranger. Beginning with a short sentence acknowledging the rarity of stranger crime in public spaces in Vancouver, the rest of the 1200-word guide is devoted to outlining "basic steps" that purportedly provide Vancouverites with concrete, "simple" strategies to "prevent…assault" or otherwise "respond *correctly* if something does happen" ("Personal Safety", VPD, my emphasis). Violent crime is overwhelmingly portrayed as something that is random, episodic, and generally unpredictable; "trust[ing] your gut" and "be[ing] aware of your surroundings" (ibid) are thus some of the best safeguards against becoming a victim of crime. Despite being unpredictable, violent crime is imminently preventable: as is optimistically noted at the outset of the guide, "[t]hese [strategies] are basic…so they may seem extremely simple, but they *do work*" (ibid, my emphasis).

Framed in gender-neutral language and thus ostensibly applicable to all Vancouverites, the VPD's "Personal Safety" guide addresses various situations in which stranger crimes including sexual assault, DFSA, robbery, and stalking may occur. These situations include when Vancouver residents are "at a club or at a party", while they are "running, jogging, or rollerblading", and when they are "using an ATM machine" or "using transit". The "basic steps" the guide advocates as a means of responding "correctly" to stranger crime include "carry[ing] a whistle or personal safety alarm" and "hold[ing] [your keys] between your thumb and forefinger", since "if you are attacked…[keys] can be used as a defensive tool". Precisely which situations necessitate the usage of a whistle

15

or the wielding of keys as a "defensive tool" is left to the reader's imagination. Further safety strategies advocated by the VPD include "park[ing] in well-lit areas", "us[ing] well-lit streets, stay[ing] in the middle of the sidewalk and avoid[ing] alleyways", "choos[ing] busy and visible bus stops", "approaching shadowy doorways, shrubbery, or anything that someone could hide behind with extra caution", and "avoid[ing] wooded areas at night" (ibid).

While the "Personal Safety" guide does not solely (or even dominantly) focus on gendered crimes (e.g., sexual assault), the sole image it features depicts a blonde woman wearing headphones, her hair and winter jacket clearly outlined against a backdrop of city lights at nighttime. Given the placement of this image in a guide devoted to presenting "simple steps" for "preventing" violent crime, the image begs the question of whether this young woman's use of public space at nighttime while wearing headphones is in *itself* dangerous. Moreover, the guide's persistent focus on darkness and physical features of the urban landscape as potential sources of danger serves to reinforce the notion that public spaces teem with "dangerous strangers", a notion that, as news and entertainment media have been complicit in reinforcing, poses particular dangers to women (Dowler 2006; Greer 2007).

Like the "Personal Safety" section of the VPD's *Safety for Individuals* guide, the "DFSA" page begins with an acknowledgement of the rarity of the crime it addresses: in 2010, of 273 sexual assaults reported to Vancouver police, only 1-4% (or between 3 and 11 assaults) were drug-facilitated. Despite the extreme rarity of DFSA—which, according to the VPD's 2010 statistics, has historically impacted approximately 0.00001% of Vancouver's population—the "DFSA" page is one of only two[3] stand-alone pages linked to the general "Personal Safety" guide, and DFSA is thus one of only two forms of crime for which specific "avoidance" strategies and guidance are available.

As researchers have noted (see, e.g., Burgess, Donavan, and Moore 2009) DFSA is highly improbable as a widespread crime: not only does perpetrating DFSA involve access to, and knowledge of, incapacitating drugs and their effects, but it also requires the perpetrator to administer drugs to a stranger undetected, and to reliably predict and/or control the effect(s) of an incapacitating drug on a stranger (Burgess et al.

---

[3] The second stand-alone advice page addresses domestic violence and criminal harassment.

2009; Brooks 2011). Despite its improbability as a widespread crime and documented rarity to date (VPD, n.d.), DFSA has become the subject of a gendered crime-prevention frenzy in recent years (Nicholls 2019; Olszewski 2009), with the result that a variety of drug-detecting devices have become available to consumers. These devices, such as the "drink detective", which can be carried on a key chain or in one's personal luggage, allow concerned individuals to "inconspicuously" test for the presence of drugs in their beverages when they visit public drinking establishments (Wolfson 2018).

As I discuss in what follows, the VPD's DFSA "avoidance" advice is a trenchant example, not only of the persistent focus on extremely rare stranger crimes that dominates crime-prevention discourse, but also of the uneasy tension between advising avoidance and victim-blaming that generally characterizes gendered crime-prevention advisories (Stanko 1996; Walsh 2015). Noting that "you are never to blame for being assaulted", the DFSA information page then briskly proceeds to offer a plethora of strategies for avoiding DFSA: when visiting clubs and bars, it is best to "go out with friends and stay together", avoid "leav[ing] with a stranger, especially if you feel intoxicated or unwell", "never leave a drink unattended", avoid "tak[ing] drinks from someone you don't know", and never "let a friend out of eye shot with a new guy" ("Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault", VPD). This generally "stranger danger"-reifying advice is positioned rather awkwardly alongside the VPD's acknowledgement that 57% of sexual assaults in Vancouver in 2010 took place on a date; despite this, it is the "new guy" and the "stranger" that potential DFSA victims should guard against. In addition to proposing strategies for "crime-prevention" that are thus largely inapplicable to situations in which women are most likely to be harmed, the DFSA guide's persistent focus on "avoidance" strategies is decidedly in tension with the assertion that sexual assault victims are "never to blame" for their assaults. Ultimately, the DFSA page offers women a "confusing and illogical hodgepodge" of advice (Walsh 2015:133) that peculiarly and conflictingly tells prospective victims of sexual violence that "it's not your fault…but you *could have* done a, b, c, d, e, and f".

Indeed, the emphasis on "extremely simple" strategies for "preventing" crime that characterizes not only the VPD's DFSA page, but also the general "Personal Safety" guide reinforces these advisories' general complicity in establishing a very short and slippery slope between "avoidance"/"prevention" and victim-blame. In emphasizing the inherent "simplicity" of preventing assault (see also Madriz 1997, and Meyers 1997) the

VPD's advice, like decades of gendered "crime-prevention" advice that has come before it, implicitly suggests that if and when women fail to "prevent" their own assaults, they get whatever they deserve. As the Grimm brothers' (1857) classic tale warns—and as the VPD's crime-prevention advice helpfully reiterates for women who have forgotten the Grimms' moralizing message—"little girls" should not "go out into the dark scary world alone or a strange scary man *will* attack [them]" (Walsh 2015:128, my emphasis).

Positioned as an inevitable danger that is nonetheless imminently "preventable" (VPD, "Personal Safety"), gendered crime advisories discursively establish male violence as "part of the natural environment" (Griffin 1986:3); a danger that "women can only *protect themselves against* rather than challenge" (Pain 1991:423). In renderings of male violence as an immutable feature of the natural environment, or as something that *will* happen unless women protect themselves appropriately, the men who perpetrate violence against women are rendered discursively invisible, becoming "sub-human figure[s] without agency…[who are] merely part of the 'hazard/risk' that…[women] must deal with" in public spaces (Anderson and Doherty 2008:82).

Despite being advertised as "basic" (VPD, "Personal Safety"), "simple" (Stanko 1996), and "natural" (Campbell 2005), crime-prevention strategies such as holding one's keys as a defensive tool, being vigilant and aware of one's surroundings, carrying a whistle or an alarm in public, avoiding public spaces at nighttime, and never leaving a drink unattended at a club often necessitate intensive, deliberative labour that is anything but "routine", "simple", or "basic". The routine exercise of this labour, as scholars have long noted (see, e.g., Madriz 1997, Pain 1997, and Valentine 1989) has many negative short- and long-term effects in women's lives.

At a micro, everyday level, the routine strategies that women are encouraged to adopt to "manage risk" cause many women to feel anxious and nervous when they navigate public spaces (Maxwell, Sanders, Skues, and Wise 2019; Roberts 2019); to pay more for transportation to feel safe (Borker 2017; Madriz 1997); to curtail or forego desired activities and occupations that necessitate spending time in public spaces (Laniya 2005; Pain 1997); and to remain in dependent relationships with men because they do not feel safe using public spaces alone (Pain 1991). Moreover, in perpetually "practising safety" in public spaces, women's constrained behaviours, rather than preventing violence (given the rarity of stranger crime), serve only to reify or "make real"

the possibility of violence: stranger rape, as something that women continually "protect themselves" against, becomes a fixed reality in women's consciousness (Campbell 2005).

In addition to negatively impacting the quality of women's lives, the implicit messaging of gendered crime-prevention—that is, that women are perpetually vulnerable to sexual violence from men—reinforces the idea that, while men are innately "potent" and "dangerous", women are conversely innately "weak" and "vulnerable". As the disenfranchised bearers of "breakable, takeable bodies" (McCaughey 1997:37, qtd. in Hollander 2001) that are always-already vulnerable due to their diminutive physical size and "biologically inalterable" lack of physical strength, women come to understand vulnerability to violence as a "*central element* of femininity" (McCurn 2017:54, my emphasis). Understood in the language of "biology", women's "vulnerability" is immutable, and constrained behaviour in public spaces, rather than being recognized as a form of social control (Pain 1991; Roberts 2019), masquerades as nothing more than "common-sense".

It is important to note that women do not encounter crime-prevention advice in a "vacuum"; rather, gendered crime-prevention advice and the apparently pervasive "stranger danger" it addresses is often reinforced by representations of violent crime in news and entertainment media. As feminist media scholars have long noted (see, e.g., Carll 2003, Greer 2007, and Sutherland, Easteal, Holland, and Vaughan 2019), news and entertainment media dominantly distort the nature of violent crime by over-emphasizing statistically rare crimes (e.g., homicide and serial rape), and by over-representing women—particularly young white women—as victims of violent crime.

For example, while in Canada, as in other countries, homicide comprises only a minute percentage (0.2%) of all police-reported violent crime (Statistics Canada 2017b), it accounts for a substantial proportion of news media's overall coverage on crime (Hetsroni 2012; Sutherland et al. 2019) and is dramatically over-represented in entertainment media (Britto et al. 2007). In a systematic content analysis of prime-time television shows airing over one week in North Carolina, Diefenbach and West (2001) found that the murder rate in the shows they analyzed was approximately 100 times that of the local police-reported rate. Other research (see, e.g., Hetsroni 2012; Madriz 1997) documents the fact that, while most homicide victims are in fact men, women are over-

represented as victims of homicide on-screen, especially of strange or brutal murders that occur in public spaces. While seriously misrepresentative of the true nature of violent crime, entertainment and news media's "dead girl obsession" (Bolin 2018) nonetheless intersects with gendered crime-prevention advisories to discursively reinforce a gendered status quo in which women are "most comprehensible as victims" (Hunt 2019: n.p.).

When gendered crimes (e.g., sexual assault) are the subject of news reporting, statistically rare "stranger danger" cases are covered disproportionately, and young white women, particularly those whose bodies conform to hegemonic standards of femininity, are over-represented as victims (Britto et al. 2007; Madriz 1997). Since most Canadians do not have direct experience with violent crime, news media is an important source of information (Lee and Wong 2019), and as such, may mislead the public by inaccurately representing where and by whom rapes are perpetrated, in addition to distorting the reality of who is most vulnerable to stranger crime (Dowler 2006). Although women racialized as non-white are more vulnerable to sexual violence than white women, news and entertainment media's disproportionate focus on white women victims and simultaneous minimization of violence against Indigenous, Latina, and Black women gives the false impression that white women are most in danger (García-Del Moral 2011; Gilchrist 2010).

Noting the centrality of race to media coverage of violent crime, Kitzinger (2009:89) observes that "the history of media coverage of sexual violence is also a history of racism". In Canada, Indigenous women are more vulnerable to stranger violence in public spaces than white women (NWAC 2010), yet media outlets ignore, minimize, and misrepresent the nature and extent of this violence, particularly when it is perpetrated by white men (Gilchrist 2010). Produced in the neo-colonial context of contemporary Canada, representations of Indigenous women as victims of violent crime are marked by "strategic silences" (Jiwani and Young 2006:899), such that Indigenous women occupy a paradoxical position of both *invisibility* and *hyper*visibility. As victims of violence, Indigenous women are invisible; in death, they exist only in the margins. As deviant, suspicious, sexually promiscuous, and inclined to criminal activity, however, Indigenous women are hyper visible (Razack 2002). Time and again, media coverage of missing and murdered Indigenous women centralizes their alleged "high risk" lifestyles, sexual licentiousness, and "abuse of substances", while failing to situate their lived

realities within the neo-colonial social context in which they are shaped (García-Del Moral 2011; Ramirez 2004).

Indeed, being denied credibility as a victim of sexual violence is a distinctly racialized phenomenon. While disproportionately afforded to white, middle/upper class women who experience stranger violence, victim credibility and "worthiness" is broadly denied women racialized as non-white (Lykke 2016). In addition to being largely invisibilized as victims of sexual violence, women of color are portrayed in news and entertainment media through a "white gaze" (Kitzinger 2009) that is shaped by racist and colonialist understandings of white, able-bodied, middle/upper class, heterosexual womanhood as the epitome of sexual innocence and virtue, and non-white womanhood as symbolic of disease, licentiousness, and threat to the social order (Chmielewski et al. 2017; Skeggs 2002). Borne out discursively in stereotypes that extend to the origins of slavery, Black women are positioned as "un-rapeable Jezebels" due to their "insatiable" sexual desire (Britto et al. 2007; Godfrey 2003), a racialized hypersexualization that functions to render Black women "pre-emptively" guilty as victims of sexual violence. Discursively positioned as "unnaturally" sexual, these women "*cannot*" be raped (Collins 1991; Lykke 2016).

On the rare occasions when Black, Latina, and Indigenous women are portrayed as "worthy" victims when they encounter men's violence in public spaces, this "worthiness" rests precariously on an "honorary whiteness" extended to women of color who "approximate" the white ideal of hegemonic femininity by being "harder working, more attractive, better students, or better persons…[than] other members of their race" (Madriz 1997:76). Like racist and colonialist stereotypes that deny women of color agency and subjectivity, "honorary whiteness" re-inscribes the notion that only select white women whose bodies conform to limited standards of "appropriate femininity" are deserving of care, trust, and protection when they encounter violence from stranger men (Gilchrist 2010; Lykke 2016).

While bodies of color are largely invisible as (worthy) victims, they are hyper-visible as perpetrators of violent crime. The pervasive notion of stranger rapists as deviations from the "norm", or as men who are essentially a "separate species" (Kitzinger 2009:87) is a racialized one (Boris 1998; Godfrey 2003). While white men who perpetrate extreme acts of sexual violence against women are dominantly figured as

"weirdos", "nutters", and "lunatics" (Fanghanel and Lim 2017; Fanghanel 2018; Meyers 1997) who are distinctive precisely because they are unrepresentative of the "civilized" euro-western culture in which they are embedded, non-white men are conversely monolithically figured as violent precisely *because* of the "backward" and "barbaric" cultures in which they are embedded (Bernhardsson and Bogren 2012).

Originating in euro-western science and medicine positioning "whiteness" and "blackness" as opposite ends of the spectrum of "full humanity" (Clare 2017), stereotypes situating non-white men as inherently deviant, "animalistic" creatures predestined to violence due to their "beastly" natures or "backward" social and cultural traditions have been instrumental in reproducing white supremacist myths of European exceptionalism and in subsequently normalizing white men's legitimacy as users of public spaces, while foreclosing spatial possibilities for bodies racialized as non-white (Beauchamp 2019; Lipsitz 2007). The imagined dangers posed by sexually "insatiable" Black men (Godfrey 2003; Patil and Purkayastha 2015) and "patriarchal" and "backward" "foreigners" (Bernhardsson and Bogren 2012) has been utilized to uphold the gendered, racialized, and classed status quo. In marking non-white men as violent, backward, and threatening, white masculinity is positioned as symbolic of progress and civilization, becoming something inherently worth saving.

Despite the media's complicity in reinforcing notions of gendered "stranger danger" and the essentially "random" nature of violent crime (at least as perpetrated by white men), research belies masculinist characterizations of euro-western culture as civilized, democratic, and equitable: in fact, approximately one-third of college-aged men assert that they would sexually assault a woman if they could be certain that they would not encounter any consequences (Edwards, Bradshaw, and Hinsz 2014; Malamuth, Haber, and Feshbach 1980). Indeed, violence against women is a profoundly predictable outcome of a "rape culture" in which male violence is trivialized (Gekoski, Gray, Adler, and Horvath 2017; Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose 2018), and in which representations of heterosexual romance dominantly position men as active sexual "instigators", while featuring women largely as passive "recipients" of sexual advances and pathologizing women who are (or are imagined to be) sexually agentic and desiring (Chmielewsi et al. 2017; Hindes and Fileborn 2019).

In misrepresenting victims of violent crime and distorting the nature and extent of this crime, media representations of violence coalesce with crime-prevention discourses to warn women not only of the physical dangers of public space usage, but also of the social dangers inherent in "flouting" gendered "risk-management" therein: if women fail to practise "basic" steps for staying safe, not only will they suffer physical harm, but they will also suffer the shame, blame, and social judgement associated with being unable to "prevent" this violence (Madriz 1997; Stanko 1997).

In the next and final section of this chapter, I explore the ways in which postfeminist emphases on "choice" and "agency", while seemingly offering young women novel and empowered feminine subjectivities to embody, ironically only exacerbate gendered "risk-management" pressures by posing intensive self-surveillance as the primary means through which to exercise gendered "agency". The individualism that dominates postfeminist rhetoric, as I explore in the next section, fits neatly within the broader neoliberalization of Canadian culture.

2.3. Gendered Risk-Management in a "Postfeminist" Era: "Choosing" Safety over Danger

In economic terms, "neoliberalism" denotes the diminishing role of government in citizen's lives, in favour of the increased presence of private corporations (Shamir 2008; Tudor 2012). Neoliberal governmentality is broadly characterized by de-regulation, privatization, and the retrenchment of social provisioning (Bockman 2013; Byler 2016). When extended beyond the economy to society more broadly, neoliberalism can be understood as a cultural paradigm that encourages individualism and self-reliance through promoting a notion of the ideal citizen as a fully "responsibilized" subject whose success (or failure) in personal, social, and financial realms alike is entirely the product of personal decision-making (Shamir 2008; Tudor 2012).

Through citizen "responsibilization", neoliberal cultural-economic regimes shift welfare from a communal to an individual concern, providing only the minimal conditions for citizens to make "responsible" welfare choices (Peters 2016). Unsurprisingly, given neoliberalism's investment in the free market, these state-provided "minimal conditions" take the shape of "governance at a distance", and ensure only the existence of a free market peopled with "distant experts" who guide informed citizen-consumers in making

rational, "responsible", and self-interested decisions regarding personal health, education, and finance (Aykan and Güvenç-Salgırlı 2015; Bockman 2013).

Central to a neoliberal ethos is the invisibilization of social-structural factors (e.g., gender, racialization) constraining the "choices" available to individual social agents (Baker 2010). Like neoliberalist cultural ideals that emphasize personal choice to the extent of problematically occluding the role of social-structural factors in determining individuals' life outcomes, postfeminist emphases "agency" and "empowerment" ignore and invisibilize the structural constraints that inform individual women's capacities to control the circumstances of their lives (Gill 2007). As defined by Rutherford (2018:620) postfeminist discourse is characterized by the:

> claim that gender equality has been achieved, that second wave feminism—or at least some aspects of it—is now unnecessary, and that women are free (and indeed, have the *responsibility*) to lead autonomous, agentic lives and exercise unconstrained choice (my emphasis).

Like neoliberalist rhetoric, postfeminist discourse figures western democracies in the 21st century enticingly as "freshly modernized" and "progressive" new worlds (Baker 2008:53), ones in which young women, unlike their downtrodden historical counterparts, have the self-confidence and assertiveness to simply *take* what is theirs. Unlike previous generations of women held back by the "dreaded discourse" (Rutherford 2018:626) of victimhood, 21st century women are emboldened by a brave new world of equality and opportunity to make the "*choice*" to be empowered. As a generation for whom gender inequality is nothing more than a dusty historical artifact, modern young women are purportedly capable of "grasp[ing] rearticulated feminine identities…[to] embody independence, agency, and sexual empowerment" (Nicholls 2019:210).

Within this discourse of post- gender inequality, embodying the subjectivity of the victim signals personal failure, and is thus shameful (Baker 2010; Rutherford 2018). Ironically, intensive self-surveillance is posed as the central means through which to realize "empowerment" and thus evade a victim subjectivity: modern women, postfeminist discourse posits, can be more effective "risk managers" than their historical counterparts through engaging in more intensive self-policing and surveillance (Gill 2007). Despite its emphasis on female self-determination, postfeminist "girl power" (Gonick 2004) rhetoric is undermined by its neoliberalist occlusion of the role of social structures in shaping women's life outcomes, and by its focus on self-surveillance as a

path to empowerment. Moreover, in adding to the gendered stigma surrounding "victimhood" by implying that women who are victims of violence (or any other undesirable life circumstance) simply "failed" to make optimal life choices, postfeminist discourse exacerbates gendered risk-management pressures.

Given the fact that there are "considerable overlaps and continuities between…'old'…[and] 'new' femininities" (Nicholls 2019:257), young women today are responsible not only for embodying traditional gendered mandates of docility, self-effacement, and self-regulation, but also for if not *being* empowered, at least *looking* or *feeling* as though they are "empowered" (Becker 2005). Paradoxically, young women caught at the intersection of "old" and "new" femininities are mandated to exercise their newfound agency "within a [limited] prescription of freedom through the operation of compulsory sexual vigilance" (Fanghanel and Lim 2017:348). In the context of women's gendered risk-management in public spaces, this paradoxical discourse of "girl power" through self-surveillance ultimately provokes a form of risk-management that entails dual layers of emotional labour: not only must women perform stressful and taxing routine "safekeeping" labour (e.g., vigilance, never letting their drink out of sight at a club) in public spaces, but they must also ensure—in order that they be perceived as "empowered"—that this labour is invisible, or, if it is recognized at all, is understood purely as a "personal choice".

In the next chapter, I outline the methodology and methods of the present research.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

[T]he little girl took a roundabout way, entertaining herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and gathering bouquets of little flowers.

(Charles Perrault, *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, 1697)

At its core, this thesis seeks to understand the "complex, multiple, and uneasy ways in which women, individually and collectively…live…agency [and]…oppression, within the current gender order" (Vera-Gray 2016a:1). I pay particular attention to the ways in which young (ages 19-26) women residents of the GVA negotiate, contest, and internalize positionalities as the "ever-vulnerable" yet "ever-defenseless" subjects of contemporary gendered fear discourse. Specifically (see Figure 3.1), I ask: How do women who reside in the GVA negotiate their positionalities as subjects of an implicitly disempowering gendered fear discourse? Further, and relatedly, I explore: (1) how young women's talk about fear in public space can be recognized as shaped in and

Research Question

> How do young (ages 19-26) women residents of the Greater Vancouver Area negotiate their positionalities as subjects of an implicitly disempowering gendered fear discourse?

Central Questions

> How is young women's talk about their fear in public space reflective both of their *material experiences* and their *immersion in discourse*?

> How are the *social* and *political* effects of gendered fear discourse (e.g., women's normalized marginalization in public space) rendered *audible in* young women's talk about fear?
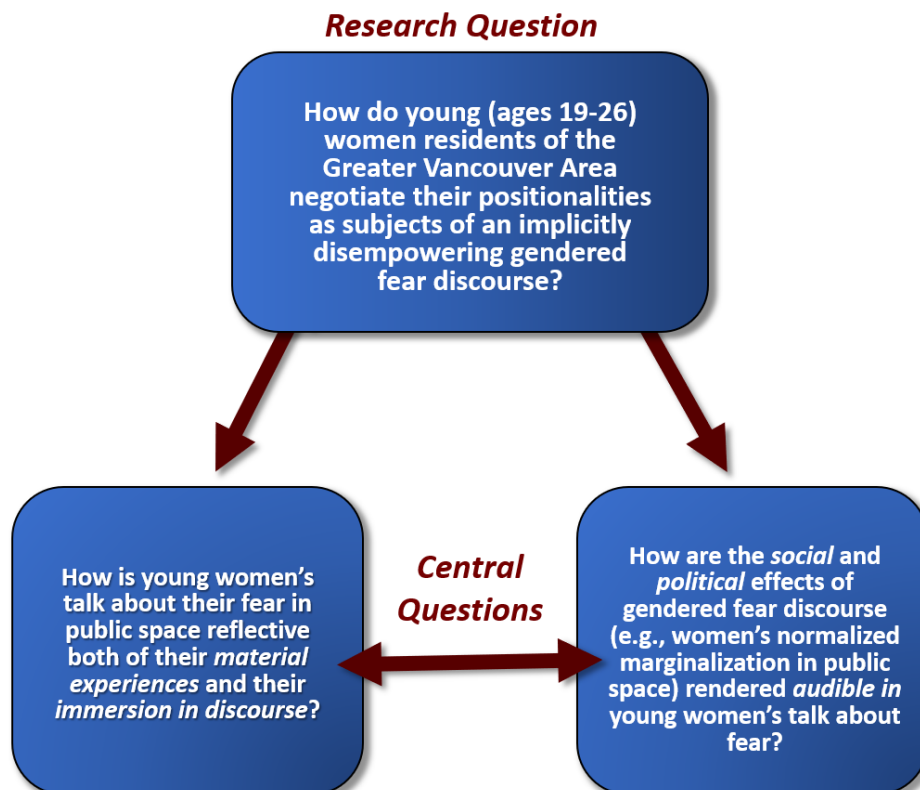
Figure 3.1.   Research Question and Central Questions

through material experiences informed by women's immersion in discourse; and (2) how the social and political effects of gendered fear discourse (e.g., women's normalized marginalization in public space) are rendered evident or "audible" (Meyers 1997) in young women's talk about fear.

The core foci of this thesis are informed by a feminist research ethos. Central to this ethos is an understanding of research as a sociopolitical endeavour that acknowledges the intrinsic value in studying women's lives, and that encourages critical examination of their lived realities with the goal of fostering emancipatory social change (Baker 2008; Frost and Elichaoff 2014). In the current research, I endeavoured to meet the ideals of a feminist research ethos through employing a Critical Discourse Analytic methodology, guided by deconstructionist (Czarniawska 2004; Martin 1990) analysis of 17 in-depth interviews with female residents of the GVA. CDA provides a generative methodology for feminist research, given its preoccupation with challenging the "naturalness" of the status quo, and its conceptualization of social research as a vehicle for emancipatory social change (Kurz and Donaghue 2013; van Dijk 2008).

In what follows, I define the central concepts underlying this research, namely "power", "discourse", and "gender". I then offer an overview of the key tenets of my guiding methodological approach, CDA, and I conclude by outlining the methods and analytical strategy employed in this research.

3.1. Key Terms: De-Mystifying "Power", "Discourse", and "Gender"

This thesis is grounded in a postmodernist conceptualization of power, one developed in the writings of Michel Foucault (see, e.g., Foucault 1980), and since widely adopted in critical and feminist social research. Foucault's (1980) theorization of power considers the stable functioning of the modern state a result of decentralized power, rather than an outcome solely produced through temporally discrete acts of blatant coercive control. In this theorization, power is *constructive*, rather than repressive; it is "*diffuse* rather than concentrated, *embodied* and *enacted* rather than possessed, *discursive* rather than purely coercive, and *constit[utive]* of agents, rather than…deployed by them" (Gaventa 2003:1, my emphasis). Of central interest to critical discourse analysts (see, e.g., van Dijk 1993) is the means through which this power

operates. "Discourse", or the mundane talk and text that backgrounds everyday life, is one of the primary mechanisms through which diffuse power operates: used interchangeably with terms like "sense-making story" (Locke 2004), "interpretive repertoire" (Talja 1999), "myth" and "meaning system" (Willig 2003), "discourse" , in its broadest sense, can be understood as the ways in which individuals "imbue reality with meaning" (Ruiz 2009:2). As particular modes of rationality and speech (i.e., discourses) are repeated and become sedimented in society, they are naturalized, and appear "common-sensical", reinforced by—and reinforcing—the central social institutions through which they circulate, such as news media, education, law enforcement, and the judicial system (Bruckert and Law 2018; Johnstone 2008).

Stemming from the postmodernist theory of power informing the analysis of this thesis is a poststructuralist conceptualization of gender. Understood through a poststructuralist lens, "gender" can be recognized as a performative enactment of discourse. In this formulation, the common-sense logic of gender as "fixed", "static" and essentially divorced from social structures is rejected (see, e.g., Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987). Rather, "gender" is understood as a subject position or "subjectivity" (Probyn 2003) performatively taken up by individual subjects in response to temporally, spatially, and socially variable discourses of masculinity and femininity. In contemporary society, one example of such discourse—and the focus of this thesis—is the normalized representation of women as essentially fragile, docile, and inherently deficient creatures whose diminutive physical size and "biologically inalterable" lack of physical strength renders them perpetually vulnerable, and simultaneously, perpetually defenseless, in public space (Hollander 2001; for more on gendered fear discourse, see Chapter 2).

In this next section, I outline the central tenets of CDA, and I discuss the implications of these tenets for social research.

3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis: Key Tenets and Their Implications for Research

CDA is distinct methodologically from the collective of analytical strategies typically recognized as "discourse analysis". While there is no single "discourse analysis" and no single set of methods associated with a discourse analytic approach, most such approaches share an analytic interest in, and focus on, close analysis of textual

"microstructures" (van Dijk 1993), such as word choice and sentence structure within a given text. In traditional discourse analysis, the raw materials of textual analysis include both "spontaneous" texts (e.g., archival materials produced outside of the context of research) and "induced" texts (e.g., transcribed interviews produced in a research context) (Ruiz 2009).

While traditional discourse analysis is informed by linguistics, ethnomethodology, and conversation analysis (Bauer and Gaskell 2000), CDA is influenced by postmodernism (Lupton 1995) and is principally concerned with examining the operation of power in society (Graham 2018; Meyers 1997). Thus, rather than ending analysis at the level of textual "microstructures", critical discourse analysts tend to abstract texts as discrete instantiations of broader power relations, recognizing all "text"—be it "spontaneous" or "induced"—as historically, socially, geographically, and politically contingent. As van Dijk (1994:435) describes it, CDA as a methodology encourages a "special focus on social power, power abuse, dominance and inequality. . .as they are enacted, sustained, legitimated or challenged by text or talk". Put more simply, critical discourse analysts examine the ways in which relations of power (e.g., masculine hegemony) are (re)produced and sustained through discourse.

Concerned both with identifying the discourses through which unequal social relations are sustained and in fostering social change through revealing such discourses, CDA is an "admittedly and ultimately political" (van Dijk 1993:253) endeavour, one that thus requires researchers to undertake politically-reflexive research in which their socio-political orientations and research goals are explicitly identified (Lupton 1995). The political aims of CDA, combined with its emphasis on the social constructedness of talk, render it a methodology incompatible with many traditional qualitative research approaches. Indeed, as Bauer and Gaskell (2000) note, employing CDA entails a radical "epistemological shift", one that carries with it an implicit critique of traditional social science.

Given CDA's conceptualization of talk and text as contoured by the social, political, and historical context in which it is produced, critical discourse analysts reject the realist claim that language/talk transparently reflects "reality" (Hammersley 2003). Rather than being conceptualized as a neutral mechanism for representing "reality", language in CDA is instead understood as the primary means through which "social

29

reality" is *produced*; that is, common-sense or "taken-for-granted" truths about the social world actively bring the "social world", as apprehended by individual social actors, into being (Kurz and Donaghue 2013).

Stemming from this unique ontological position is CDA's insistence that "everyday accounts [talk/language] must be included *within* the analytic focus, treated as *topic* not resource" (Hammersley 2003:752, my emphasis). In CDA, the talk of interview participants in a given research context is thus recognized as derivative of their social milieux; as socially constructed and thus politically, historically, and geographically contingent, such talk is necessarily *selective*, fashioned from "preexisting linguistic resources" drawn from participants' immersion in discourse (Talja 1999:470). From a CDA perspective, interview transcripts (texts) "are not *descriptions* of the object of research, they *are* the object of research" (Talja 1999:472, emphasis in original). Thus, in contrast to most interpretivist research, which apprehends participant talk as a means of uncovering "'what really happened' or what an individual's attitude to X, Y or Z really is" (Bauer and Gaskell 2000:4), critical discourse analysts study participant talk as a valuable object of research in its own right.

Since traditional qualitative research implicitly relies on a notion of the individual as authoritative narrator of personal experience and as the natural starting point for research, tensions, silences, contradictions and ambiguities in participant narratives are frequently analytically "managed" by means of restrictive coding or selective readings of transcripts. Indeed, as Talja (1999) notes, the apparent coherency of participant accounts in traditional qualitative research is more often a function of selective analytical strategies than it is an accurate representation of participants' talk. In contrast, CDA not only allows for, but specifically seeks out tensions, contradictions, and ambiguities in participant narratives, recognizing such textual disruptions as central means through which to identify the discursive structures informing participant talk (Starks and Trinidad 2007; Willig 2003).

Given its departure from what are arguably two of the core axioms of traditional social research—that is, (1) that research should be an "objectivist", "value-neutral" pursuit; and (2) that language is an effective mechanism through which to apprehend social reality—CDA is the subject of much critique. Critiques of CDA fall into two main categories: (1) that its critical and emancipatory orientation undermines its status as a

legitimate tool of social research, rendering it instead an inherently moralistic pursuit; and (2) that critical discourse analysts' understanding of talk and text as socially constructed undermines the credibility of their own research, which, within a CDA ontology, can only be seen itself as socially constructed. I address these critiques below.

Synthesizing a widespread criticism of CDA, Tyrwhitt-Drake (1999:1081) critiques the emancipatory goals of CDA by suggesting that its "major moralizing element [i.e., seeking to uncover and challenge inequality and domination] betrays an interest not so much in *finding* the truth as in *proclaiming* it" (my emphasis). Critiques of CDA as a problematically "a-neutral" or "moralist" pursuit, however, implicitly rest on the idea that "other" social science (e.g., positivist survey research) *is* (unlike CDA) "neutral". As critical discourse analysts have pointed out (see, e.g., Fairclough 1992), positivist research, like CDA, is inherently "political": maintaining the status quo and existing structures of dominance through failing to critique and challenge these structures is no less political than seeking to expose, disrupt, and critically comment upon existing social conditions. As van Dijk (1993:253-254) ironically notes:

> [M]ost male or white scholars have been shown to despise or discredit [CDA's] partisanship, and thereby show how partisan they are in the first place, by ignoring, mitigating, excluding or denying inequality. [In] condemning [the] mixing [of] scholarship with 'politics'…[such critics] thereby…do precisely that.

A second critique of CDA is, as outlined above, the assertion that a conceptualization of language as socially constructed undermines the analytic value of CDA research, since such research can only be recognized *itself* as socially constructed (see, e.g., Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). Critical discourse analysts do not dispute the constructedness of their own textual interpretations; relatedly, CDA is skeptical of existing mechanisms for assessing reliability and validity in qualitative research, many of which are arguably subjective (e.g., assessments of the extent to which a piece of qualitative research "minimizes" a researcher's bias through reflexivity, or speculations as to the "trustworthiness" of participant responses) (Creswell and Poth 2018). In CDA, reliability and validity are determined by a core criterion of "intersubjectivity", that is, the extent to which an analysts' interpretation of a given text(s) can concretely be identified as grounded in, and representative of, the research data, and would be considered valid by "anyone who evaluates it in a critical manner" (Ruiz 2009:26). To facilitate critical evaluation, a critical discourse analytic account should include an explicit

acknowledgement of the researcher's socio-political orientation and goals; open access to the texts underlying the analysis; and a detailed account of the specific analytic and coding strategies utilized to produce the final analysis (Fairclough 1992; Lupton 1995; Starks and Trinidad 2007).

Having outlined the core tenets of CDA and their implications for the practise of qualitative research, I now describe the methods and analysis of this thesis.

3.3. Doing Critical Discourse Analysis: Methods and Analysis

3.3.1. Rationale

As outlined at the outset of this chapter, the central question this thesis explores is: "How do young women residents of the GVA negotiate their positionalities as subjects of an implicitly disempowering gendered fear discourse?". I explored this question using a CDA methodology. Specifically, I conducted in-depth interviews with 17 young (ages 19-26) women in the GVA, using open-ended questions to assess their fear navigating public spaces. I transcribed all interviews verbatim, and analyzed the transcripts using a deconstructionist (see, e.g., Czarniawska 2004, and Martin 1990) coding approach.

My project extends and enriches existing literature on women's fear of public space through its use of a CDA methodology. Most work (see, for example, Bagheri 2013, van Eijk 2017, Lewis, Sharp, Remnant, and Redpath 2015, and Newcomb 2006) assessing women's fear in public space to date utilizes an interpretive research framework, and thus analyzes women's narratives at a micro-level that fails to explicitly consider how women's accounts—and indeed, how women's embodied *experiences*—are shaped by their positionalities as subjects of gendered fear discourse. In conducting analyses at the micro-level of the individual, and in failing to explicitly consider individual participants' accounts as artifacts of particular social, cultural, geographical and historical locations, existing work is arguably limited in its explanatory and emancipatory power. Here, I employ CDA to analyze women's accounts at a macrosociological level, with the goal of fostering emancipatory social change through critical understanding.

In the next section, I outline my sampling strategy, recruitment approach, and methods of coding and analysis.

3.3.2. Sampling Strategy and Recruitment

I used purposeful sampling to identify the women most likely to be information-rich for my analysis. Purposeful sampling centered on three main criteria: (1) age; (2) residency in the City of Vancouver (or GVA) for at least two years; and (3) usage of public space (defined in recruitment materials as spaces "other than your home") for at least 10 hours a week. I included a minimum 2-year residency in the GVA as a sample criterion to ensure that women who participated would be able to answer basic questions about various spaces in the GVA. Young women (ages 19-24)[4] were recruited for interviews for two reasons. First, women aged 15-24 are the most vulnerable to sexual assault in Canada and accounted for nearly half (47%) of all self-reported sexual assaults in Canada in 2014 (Statistics Canada 2014a). Secondly, women in the 15-24[5] age cohort report higher levels of fear of crime than women over 25, and than men (Statistics Canada 2009; Statistics Canada 2014b).

Vancouver is a diverse, multi-ethnic city, with a population that is nearly half (49%) non-white (Statistics Canada 2016b). Thus, conducting this research in the GVA enabled me to attend to a critique of existing feminist urban studies scholarship as over-representative of the experiences of white women (see, for example, Bondi and Rose 2003, and Longhurst and Johnston 2014). Although a representative sample was beyond the time and funding constraints of this research, I obtained a measure of diversity by ensuring that at least 3 of Vancouver's visible minority populations (including South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean residents) were represented in the sample. In addition, I ensured that at least half of the sample overall were visible minority women (for a full description of the sample, see Chapter 4).

---

[4] Three of the women who volunteered exceeded my ideal sample age of 24 (two women were aged 25, and one was aged 26). However, given time constraints and the proximity of the aforementioned participants to my desired age cohort, I retained their interviews for analysis.

[5] Although the accounts of women 15 to 18 years of age may have strengthened this research, I limited recruitment to women aged 19 to 24. While women aged 15-18 can provide consent on their own behalf (personal communication, Research Ethics Board, SFU), many women in this age group face informal restrictions on their engagement in extra-curricular activities (e.g., asking parents' permission before undertaking a new activity). Given the additional time commitment that including women 15-18 may have involved (e.g., coordinating with parents), this research only includes women aged 19-24.

I completed recruitment in Spring 2019, by contacting professors teaching undergraduate courses at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Capilano University (CU). I provided all professors whom I contacted with a short blurb describing my research, as well as a request to visit their classes to recruit interview participants. After obtaining professors' permission, I visited undergraduate classes at SFU and CU, and described my research to students. I provided all students in the classes I visited with a double-sided recruitment card detailing the purpose and focus of my study; the time commitment associated with participation; the project's sampling criteria; my contact information; and the research incentive. All participants who completed interviews were offered their choice of a $25.00 gift card[6] for one of fifteen retailers listed on the recruitment card, or $25.00 in cash.

Prior to participating in interviews, all participants read and signed an informed consent form. I audio-recorded all of the interviews in their entirety and met with participants at times and locations of their choosing; most interviews took place at SFU and CU. Interviews included open-ended questions designed to explore key areas of interest, including women's general uses of various public spaces, including the purpose and frequency of their public space usage; women's general feelings in public space; women's assessments of the most and least safe spaces in the GVA; and the nature and extent of women's safety concerns in public space. The recruitment, interviewing, and analysis procedures of this research were approved by SFU's Research Ethics Board.

All 17 interviews were transcribed verbatim. Given time constraints, I transcribed 9 of the 17 interviews; the remaining 8 were transcribed by a transcription company that offers secure, confidential file management. Although, as Johnstone (2008) notes, transcripts prepared for CDA should ideally include verbal and non-verbal elements (i.e., not only talk, but also pauses, hand gestures, laughter, and facial expressions), the time commitment associated with producing such a transcript is considerable. Thus, only the verbal elements of interviews, including discourse markers such as "uh", "like", and "well" were transcribed. While the absence of facial expressions, gestures, and other non-

[6] This thesis includes secondary analysis of two interviews conducted in Spring 2018, as part of the pilot phase of this project. The two women I interviewed at the pilot stage of the project received $5.00 for participation. I received ethical approval to include their accounts in this thesis.

verbal events impacted the "richness" of the transcripts, their verbatim quality offered a means of exploring latent emotions such as excitement, anxiety, and uncertainty.

In what follows, I outline the protocol I followed in analyzing the transcripts.

3.3.3. Coding and Analysis

As Bauer and Gaskell (2000:6) lament, there is regrettably no "cookbook style recipe" outlining the detailed mechanics of a CDA research approach. Given the diversity of data types (e.g., archival materials, transcribed interviews and focus groups, images, and even art forms) comprising the raw materials of discourse analysis, in addition to the multiplicity of approaches that fit within the "discourse analysis" umbrella, it is practically not possible for a single analytic "recipe" to fit all discourse analytic projects. There are, however, some general guidelines for conducting CDA research.

As described by Ruiz (2009), discourse analysis is carried out in three inter-related analytical phases: the first, textual analysis, the second, contextual analysis, and the third, sociological analysis. In the textual phase, basic, descriptive categorization is engaged to reduce individual transcript(s) into analytically meaningful segments of text, usually by means of simple descriptive coding (Saldana 2017; Rapley 2011). The goal of this initial, textual stage is to summarize and sort the manifest content of individual transcripts. In the second, contextual phase of analysis, the *context* of the discourse is centered upon. Specifically, understanding the geographical, political, historical and social "space" in which the discourse has been produced is key; at this stage, the descriptive segments produced in the textual phases are analyzed together. In the third, sociological analysis phase, Ruiz (2009) encourages researchers to "take a step back" from the raw materials of their analysis, and to consider the texts collectively, with the goal of establishing their connection to broader social structures. Although he describes them discretely, Ruiz (2009) notes that, in practice, the three analytical phases work together, informing one another in a "circular, bi-directional" fashion (Ruiz 2009:5).

In order to meet Ruiz' (2009) broad analytical goal of establishing the "social context" or "social space" in which my participants' accounts were produced, I completed coding in three phases, as outlined by Talja (1999). In the first phase, I analyzed the transcripts holistically, as individual texts, and I identified inconsistencies and

contradictions within the discourse of individual participants. In the second phase, I shifted the focus of analysis to consider multiple participants' accounts simultaneously: in this stage, I sought out "cultural regularities" through systematically coding repeated descriptions, explanations, and arguments within and between participant transcripts. In the third and final coding phase, I endeavoured to delineate the "background assumptions", or in Ruiz' (2009) language, the "social space" enabling and constraining the articulations offered by participants. With the exception of the first phase, which relied on holistic analysis of individual transcripts as discrete objects of analysis, I completed all analyses in *NVivo 12*, a qualitative data analysis software.

All three coding phases were guided by the principles of deconstructionist coding. A deconstructionist coding strategy proved fruitful in meeting the aims of CDA, since, as Martin (1990) notes, the primary aim of deconstructionist analysis is to "reveal the hidden ideology of. . .text" (345). This "hidden ideology" or "discourse" is revealed through analytic attention to textual disruptions (e.g., contradictions, silences, and ambiguities) at both the micro (individual participants) and macro (all participants' accounts) levels of analysis. "Fissures" or disruptions in a text allow the close and conscientious reader to perceive ideology; as Stern (1996) highlights, it is in fissures that the smooth, naturalized surface of discourse is disrupted and the cultural scaffolding (i.e., the taken-for-granted ideas, assumptions, and "truths" operating in society) underlying participant talk is rendered visible. Espousing the sociological imperative to "see the strange in the familiar", deconstructionist analysis encourages coding that considers what is not, or cannot be said; places in the transcript where participant narratives are ambiguous, contradictory, or do not continue; and the existence of regularities, such as repeated words or phrases, both within and between participant accounts (Czarniawska 2004; Martin 1990). Ultimately, these analytical foci are intended to answer such questions as "who benefits from this perspective/orientation/version?" or "what taken-for-granted 'truth' does 'X' account presuppose?".

In the next two chapters, I present and discuss the major findings of this analysis.

Chapter 4.

Findings: Gendered Fear of Violent Crime in Public Spaces

> *"Who's there?" [asked the wolf]. Little Red Riding Hood, hearing the big voice of the wolf, was at first afraid; but believing her grandmother had a cold and was hoarse, answered, "It is your grandchild Little Red Riding Hood, who has brought you a cake and a little pot of butter mother sends you." The wolf, seeing her come in, said to her, hiding himself under the bedclothes, "Put the cake and the little pot of butter upon the stool, and come get into bed with me." Little Red Riding Hood took off her clothes and got into bed.*

> (Charles Perrault, *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, 1697)

The findings of this study are informed by 17 in-depth, semi-structured interviews. All participants were living in the GVA in 2018-19 at the time of interviewing. While I did not aim to capture a representative sample, the sample is ethnically diverse and includes women from multiple areas of the GVA, including Burnaby, Vancouver, Coquitlam, Surrey, Richmond, and New Westminster. All of the women I interviewed had completed at least some post-secondary education (minimum 1 semester; maximum a completed bachelor's), and thus, while this sample captures some diversity, the participants are privileged relative to the general population in the GVA in terms of their educational attainment. Further details on participants' socio-demographic information are summarized below (see Table 4.1).

I began each interview by asking participants if they had always gender identified as female. All of the participants stated that they had always gender identified as female. As summarized in Table 4.1, about half of the participants ($n = 8$) had lived in the GVA since birth; 3 since early childhood; and 6 had moved to the GVA within the past 6 years. All participants had lived in the GVA for at least 2 years. Of all the places of residence participants reported, the City of Vancouver was the most common ($n = 5$), followed by Surrey ($n = 4$), Coquitlam ($n = 3$), and Burnaby ($n = 3$). Ages ranged from 19-26, with the largest proportion of women aged 22 ($n = 7$) and 21 ($n = 3$). No women reported a marital status other than "single" ($n = 6$) or "dating" ($n = 11$).

I asked women to self-identify their ethnicities and sexual orientations. Six women self-identified as "white", "Caucasian", or "European", and the remaining 11 participants self-identified as "Chinese" ($n = 3$); "Indian"/"Indo-Canadian" ($n = 3$); "Korean" ($n = 1$); "Filipino" ($n = 1$); "Iranian" ($n = 1$); "Hindu" ($n = 1$); and "Portuguese" ($n = 1$). Thirteen participants identified as heterosexual, 2 as bisexual, 1 as pansexual, and

Table 4.1.   Participant Socio-Demographic Information

Participant Pseudonyms	Age	Marital Status	Length of Residence in the GVA (Years)	Current Place of Residence	Ethnicity	Sexual Orientation
Fae	26	Dating	26	Surrey	Punjabi-Indian	Bisexual
Meisa	22	Dating	5	Coquitlam	Korean	Heterosexual
Kim	23	Single	6	Coquitlam	Chinese-Indonesian	Heterosexual
Alicia	23	Single	23	Coquitlam	European-Middle Eastern	Heterosexual
Taylor	22	Single	17	North Vancouver	European	Queer
Parisa	22	Dating	22	Surrey	Iranian	Heterosexual
Joana	22	Single	3	North Vancouver	Portuguese	Heterosexual
Kate	21	Single	2	Burnaby	Chinese	Heterosexual
Analyn	24	Dating	17	Surrey	Filipino	Heterosexual
Martina	21	Dating	21	East Vancouver	White-Italian	Pansexual
Shilpi	22	Dating	22	Richmond	Indo-Canadian	Heterosexual
Reena	22	Single	22	New Westminster	Hindu	Heterosexual
Carmen	21	Single	20	Burnaby	Indian-Italian	Bisexual
Jennifer	19	Dating	19	Surrey	Caucasian	Heterosexual
Emily	22	Dating	22	North Vancouver	Caucasian	Heterosexual
Alexa	25	Dating	6	Burnaby	Greek-White	Heterosexual
Jaslene	25	Dating	4	East Vancouver	Chinese	Heterosexual

1 as queer. With one exception[7], all of the women I interviewed attended post-secondary school full- or part-time. Given their status as undergraduate students, participants who were employed ($n = 14$) worked part-time, both on-campus at SFU and CU[8] and in off-campus jobs of various types throughout the GVA.

---

[7] Emily had recently completed an undergraduate degree and, at the time of the interview, worked full-time.

[8] I have omitted individual participants' levels of education and educational institutions to preserve their confidentiality. Given the fact that I recruited participants in undergraduate classroom settings, it is possible that such information could identify women who participated.

4.1. Women's Use of Public Space

At the outset of each interview, I collected basic information regarding participants' public space usage, including frequency (i.e., days per week and hours per day); places visited (e.g., work and school buildings, parks, restaurants); specific areas of the GVA frequented (e.g., Burnaby, North Vancouver); and purpose of use (e.g., leisure, entertainment, work). Near the beginning of each interview, I informally summarized the definition of "public space" I have utilized in this research, which I broadly define as "spaces other than participants' homes". This definition includes work and school buildings, commercial establishments such as cafés, grocery stores, and shopping malls, and open public spaces including streets, sidewalks, and parks.

All of the women I interviewed utilized public spaces at least 5 days per week. Excluding weekends, participants spent a substantial proportion (i.e., between 6 and 16 hours) of their waking hours in public space. The largest proportion of women's time was spent at school or at work, with women estimating that, excluding weekends, they spent between 4 and 9 hours per day in these locations. A considerable proportion of women's time was also spent in commercial establishments such as cafés, restaurants, shopping centres, and grocery stores. Participants' estimates of the time they spent in these spaces ranged from 1-10 hours per week.

All of the participants in this research reported spending at least 20 minutes and as much as 4 hours per day walking alone in open public spaces such as streets, parking lots, and parks, with most ($n = 12$) spending between 1 and 4 hours per day walking alone. Overwhelmingly ($n = 16$), women relied on public transit as their primary mode of transportation; for most, walking ($n = 12$) was a secondary means of travelling to their various obligations and desired activities. As I address later in this chapter, many participants reported that walking alone was not a preferred transportation, leisure, or exercise choice, despite the fact that their daily routines often necessitated it. Walking alone, many participants stated, made them feel generally unsafe, or as some women put it, "a little dodgy" (Alexa), "anxious" (Kate), or "freaked out" (Martina). Whenever possible, women navigated public spaces with a friend, romantic partner, or family member, all of whom generally made women feel "more secure" (Kim).

In addition to travelling to and from work and school and visiting commercial establishments, women reported visiting various spaces of the GVA for leisure, exercise, and entertainment. Some of women's leisure activities included visiting cafés (Alicia; Parisa; Martina), taking part in cultural events (Jaslene; Taylor), and sightseeing and exploring (Shilpi; Kate). Women also visited—or moved through—various spaces of the GVA to spend time with friends (Alicia; Alexa; Emily; Fae; Joana), visit their romantic partners (Emily; Fae; Jennifer; Martina; Shilpi), and run errands, including grocery shopping (Alicia; Joana; Meisa; Parisa; Taylor), clothes shopping (Alicia; Parisa; Reena), and visiting the library to complete homework (Reena). Participants also utilized outdoor spaces and indoor public facilities for physical activities including dance (Analyn; Carmen), yoga (Alicia), weightlifting (Martina), and jogging (Carmen).

Given their reliance on public transportation and their busy schedules as full- and part-time undergraduate students, most women conducted their errands and leisure activities close to their homes. Areas far from participant's homes were typically sought out for their perceived uniqueness as leisure or entertainment destinations, and included spaces of Vancouver such as Yaletown, Gastown, Stanley Park, and English Bay Beach. Notably, all of the participants in this research were able-bodied. Further, although I did not collect data on participants' personal or family incomes, none of the participants mentioned financial constraints as a factor limiting their overall mobility.

In the rest of this chapter, I present and discuss the central findings of this research in three main sections. In the first section, I discuss women's overwhelming FoVC, and I explore the intertwining impacts of "material experience" and "discourse" in informing this fear. In the second section, I address the various cognitive and embodied behaviours, routines, and strategies participants reported employing in public space, and I explore women's characterization of these habitual behaviours as a means of mitigating their personal risk of stranger violence. The second section also addresses women's implicit framing of personal safety as a "choice", and the related empowerment some participants gleaned from self-perceptions as "responsible", risk-averse users of public space.

In the final section of this chapter, I summarize the essence of participants' experience in public space as one of *normalized liminality*. I utilize the concept "normalized liminality" to capture a central disjuncture in women's narratives: that of the

notable "gap" between women's lived daily realities as detailed throughout their accounts, and that of their assessments of public space when asked direct questions. Specifically, I observe that, while FoVC contours and constrains nearly every aspect of women's lives, most women do not explicitly recognize its central—and limiting—role in their lives. Thus, women's spatial, temporal, and personal liminality in public space is normalized as "just the ways things are", and as such, generally exists outside of women's consciousness. I conclude this chapter by raising several questions that emerged from my deconstructionist analysis of women's accounts. These questions are substantively addressed in Chapter 5.

Before presenting the central findings of this project, I wish to reiterate the feminist ethos of my research approach. As feminist research, this project takes seriously and values women's experiences. Ultimately, my goal is to mobilize insights from a critical examination of women's accounts of their public space usage to create emancipatory social change. Although, as is central to CDA, my analysis centralizes the ways in which women's accounts reflect their embeddedness in discourse, I do not seek to portray women as "a-critical", as lacking agency, or as without their own critiques of the many contradictions and ambiguities of gendered fear discourse. Thus, while this chapter highlights the ways in which women's accounts suggest their internalization of discourse, I also explore women's contestations of their positionalities as subjects of gendered fear discourse.

4.2. Fear in Women's Accounts: Public Space as "Never Really 100% Safe"

Shilpi's statement—that is, the fact that she feels she is "never really 100% safe" in public space—succinctly captures the sentiments of the women who participated in this research. Echoing findings from previous research exploring the gendered dimensions of FoVC (see, e.g., Fanghanel and Lim 2017, Fileborn 2016, Hollander 2001, and Madriz 1997), fear occupied a central place in the accounts of women whom I interviewed. Indeed, many participants raised concerns about using public space before I addressed safety explicitly or responded to general questions about space usage solely in terms of various spaces' perceived safety or "riskiness".

While feelings of uneasiness, discomfort, and worry suffused women's accounts, few women used the term "fear" to describe their emotions, instead discussing a generalized sense of anxiety or describing the behaviours they regularly engage in to manage this anxiousness. Fae, for example, stated that she sometimes feels "on edge" in public space, while Taylor similarly reflected that she is "usually just like really on-guard…hyper-aware of the people around me." Some participants (Jaslene; Kate; Parisa) explicitly described their typical emotion in public space as one of "anxiety", while others discussed feeling "nervous" (Analyn; Jennifer; Joana) or "uneasy" (Shilpi).

When they discussed positive emotions in public space, many participants did so with a proviso, asserting that even when they use public spaces for leisure purposes, they still feel "guarded" (Carmen), or as though they must ensure their "walls are up" (Parisa). Alexa explained her feelings by noting that, unless she is in her own neighbourhood, there is "a certain level of stress" associated with being in public. Analyn summed up many participants' feelings of perpetual "guardedness", stating:

> Close to Waterfront Station, um, and Granville, I'm pretty like, comfortable. Just because I'm there so often. Like not, not like super comfortable. […] So safe-ish but like…*I'm still on guard* (my emphasis).

While such examples of "guardedness" were prominent in women's accounts, what participants feared—that is, what exactly women felt they needed to "guard" against—was rarely explicitly articulated, and instead remained largely implicit in participant's accounts. When I asked women to identify what made them feel unsafe, "at risk", or fearful in public spaces, most participants responded with vague assertions such as "[you] don't really know *what's* going to happen" (Taylor). Reena suggested that, as a woman, there is "always that, like, thing in the back of your mind that *something could happen at any time*" (my emphasis). Relatedly, when describing situations in which they felt fearful or anxious, participants routinely utilized the word "instance". As defined by the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, the word "instance" refers to "a particular situation, event, or fact, especially an example of something that happens generally". Notable in women's deployments of the term "instance" in the present research was that the "situation", "event" or "specific example" to which they referred was often unstated or implicit. Carmen, for example, stated "I've had instances…where people just make sleazy comments". Parisa similarly observed:

> I was going to meet my friend in Port Coquitlam, and that was sort of
> my first instance on public transit that just didn't really sit right with me.
> [...] [But] I never blamed my instances on how I was dressed.

While in these cases, participants' usages of the word "instance" can be deduced from context as referencing verbal street harassment, personal space invasion, or leering, other participants' uses of the term were much less clear. For example, in response to a question about safety in public space, Jennifer replied with an anecdote about "a particular instance…on a transit platform just waiting". While she spoke at some length, the precise nature of the "instance" (i.e., whether she referred to sexual harassment or some other unwelcome behaviour) remained unclear.

In addition to vague deployments of the word "instance" to describe their fears, women frequently articulated concerns about being "taken[n] advantage of" (Reena); a fear that being alone would lessen their ability to respond appropriately if "something ever happened" (Parisa); and generally, the feeling that, as women in public space, *anything* could happen to them at any time. These linguistic choices reflect previous research on young women's FoVC; specifically, their reluctance to explicitly name that which they fear (see, e.g., Day 1999, Griffin et al. 2009, and Nicholls 2019). In Nicholls' (2019) research, she deduced from contextual cues that women's repeated use of the phrase "unwanted attention" euphemized sexual harassment. In my own research, women euphemized sexual harassment with phrases such as "complications with men" (Jennifer) or "uncomfortable experiences" (Alexa).

When probed, women variously identified abduction (Alicia), sexual harassment (Parisa; Jennifer), brawls (Analyn), and being stalked (Carmen), killed (Kate), pierced with a dirty syringe (Meisa), punched (Alicia; Kate), and raped (Martina; Fae; Taylor; Jennifer; Analyn; Joana; Kim) as causes for fear in public space. Although women thus identified a wide range of violent crimes as cause for fear, the linguistic resources they drew upon in further describing their fears suggested that it is male stranger violence—particularly in unknown spaces and in the dark—that women predominantly fear. Phrases such as "something bad is going to happen" (Martina), that one is obligated to "hustle and pull out a flashlight" at nighttime (Emily), or most explicitly, that "a guy could just be like hiding in a bush or something" (Shilpi) signal women's internalization of a *Little Red Riding Hood*-esque myth of pervasive male stranger danger. Highlighting their fear of darkness and the danger it signifies, participants observed:

43

> I definitely feel like after a certain time in the city, I can't go anywhere anymore, like, I need to be home, because *danger is out there* (Jaslene, my emphasis).

> I'm more afraid if I'm walking…by myself at night. I'm more likely to be afraid because I, you know, like, you don't really know *what's going to happen* (Taylor, my emphasis).

> [Night] *lock[s] up*, like, different parts of the city. You're just like, okay, can't go there. Just, just stay home (Kate, my emphasis).

Other participants (Jennifer; Alicia; Emily) identified the quiet and darkness of nighttime, the absence of people in the street upon whom to call for help if necessary, and a general sense that violent crimes are "easier" to commit unnoticed in the dark as reasons they felt unsafe at nighttime.

That it was the looming, predatory figure of the "stranger rapist" that women feared became clearer when participants discussed features of spaces in which they felt safe. In contrast to dangerous spaces, which were unknown, infrequently visited, and dark, "safe" spaces were familiar to women, were visited in the daytime, and were populated by people whom women felt were "like themselves" in key respects. Women's "corporal" (Fenster 2005) knowledge of particular spaces, derived from repetitively walking in certain locations (e.g., campus, participants' own neighbourhoods) gave them a sense of confidence. Analyn stated that when she moved through familiar areas, she felt safer because she "know[s] what to avoid". Similarly, Fae emphasized her knowledge of specific physical features in her neighbourhood as a reason she felt safe near her home:

> I've been in this particular neighbourhood for the last almost twelve years […]. I [can] walk down there any time of the day, and I feel like, meh, this is my place. Like, if anyone's coming from there or there, I'm going to know it. And I know where everything is, and where I'm going to walk from, where like hidden driveways are, I'm very familiar [with the space].

Interestingly, it is that she "knows where everything is", even where the "hidden driveways are" that gives Fae a sense of security. The fact that knowledge of the physical features and layout of her neighbourhood provide her with a sense of security suggests that, like many participants in this research, Fae fears the lurking figure of the "stranger rapist" (Fanghanel 2018): the strange man who waits, concealed in darkness, ready to spring onto vulnerable female victims.

Many women, as noted above, explicitly mentioned that the presence of others like themselves—particularly, other students—made them feel safe(r) in public space. In addition to other students, people "like themselves" were also defined more generally as people who "know their manners" (Alicia) or are part of the "smaller world" (Kate) of the university generally (i.e., not only students, but also instructors and staff). Women also referenced classed signs of respectability as factors contributing to a sense of safety, and noted that they felt safer in cafés that catered to "young business people…[and are generally]…more upscale" (Analyn). Parisa observed that "when you see people walking around in, in suits, it kind of makes you feel a little better, I don't know why". Underlying these assessments of "safety" are biases that situate public spaces as most "welcoming" when they are visibly inhabited by bodies that "legitimately" belong therein. Women's language choices (e.g., "men in suits", "upscale") explicitly suggest that it is middle/upper-class (white) men whom women perceive as legitimate public space users.

In contrast to safe spaces, unsafe spaces were seen as being part of a "wider world" (Kate), in which there are no "filters" (Parisa), and in which one is thus likely to be surrounded by "random people that you've never really seen…before" (Reena). As criminologists and geographers have long noted (see, e.g., Lofland 1973, and Noble 2005), city-dwellers tend to fear "others", that is, bodies they perceive as being "different" from themselves. What is deemed "other" in the GVA is, given the colonial foundations of Canada, racialized. In Vancouver, the "Downtown Eastside", an area of the city dominantly populated by Indigenous Canadians, is dominantly sensationalized in media as a site of "illicit drug trade, commercial sex, and wanton violence and crime" (Robertson and Culhane 2005:18). The power of such discourse was evident in participants' characterizations of "unsafe" spaces in the present research. Overall, while few women explicitly identified specific neighbourhoods in the GVA as "safe", fully 11 of the 17 women I interviewed explicitly identified the "Downtown Eastside" or "East Hastings" as an area that they either actively avoid or have been cautioned to avoid. While some women's characterizations of the Downtown Eastside as an area to be avoided was informed by personal experiences of catcalling or harassment therein, most women did not identify a specific reason for their fear and avoidance.

Given the pervasiveness of FoVC in young women's lives, associating danger with "others" can be seen as a "fear management" strategy (Pain 1997), one that enables women to navigate a select number of spaces free from a feeling of imminent

45

danger and vulnerability. This strategy persists despite the fact that the spaces and bodies deemed "other" are often predicated upon stereotypes and frequently exist in tension with "common-sense knowledge to the contrary" (Pain 1997:236), something that was evident in some women's assertions that their fears of the Downtown Eastside resulted from their socialization as women who grew up in the neo-colonialist context of the GVA.

Uninterrogated, women's implicitly racialized "fear-management" strategies problematically perpetuate white and class privilege through the discursive elision of Canada's colonialist history and neo-colonialist present: rather than rendering visible the history of colonialism, discourses that figure the Downtown Eastside as "other" instead create a situation in which "rational", "risk-averse" citizens—dominantly imagined as white, middle-class women—make careful decisions to avoid the potential perils of the "bad areas of town", and the various historical processes that culminate to create "bad neighbourhoods" are discursively invisibilized (Robertson and Culhane 2005; Razack 2002).

As findings of this research underscore, many of women's fears are shaped not by material experiences of spaces, but by vague notions of particular spaces as "other", "unknown", and thus "dangerous", informed by education, familial socialization, and news and entertainment media. Indeed, at a micro, day-to-day level, women recognize the role of stories in informing their fear in public space. Many participants explicitly mentioned "horrible" things on local news as a reason for their FoVC. Interestingly, the power of stories to impact women's emotions in public space was such that some women reported feeling fearful in spaces they had rarely ever visited. Jennifer, who had recently begun university and lived off-campus stated:

> I'm recently 19, so…I don't have a ton of experience with that [being in clubs]. But, um, obviously the biggest fear is like sexual assault…out in public spaces. So those are more prevalent, say at like frat parties at universities, I think, or like in clubs or in bars. So I become a little more conscious in those spaces.

Interestingly, the power of discourse positioning bars and clubs as "high-risk" spaces for young women due to the presence of alcohol and the spectre of "drug facilitated sexual assault" (see, e.g., VPD, "Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault") has almost entirely shaped Jennifer's perceptions of such spaces. As she states herself, however,

46

she has limited experience inbars and clubs. As I discussed in Chapter 2, while it is certainly true that women can—and do—experience unwanted sexual attention in bars and clubs (see, e.g., Brooks 2008 and 2011; Statistics Canada 2014a), it is nonetheless interesting that, in a relatively short conversation, one of the few spaces Jennifer concretely locates her fear is one in which she has rarely (or never) been, but one that is the subject of an ongoing (and gendered) "crime-prevention" frenzy (see, e.g., Wolfson 2018). In particular, Jennifer's assertion that she becomes more "conscious" in clubs and bars reflects crime prevention advisories' continued—and misplaced—emphasis on strangers as gendered sources of danger. As I discussed in Chapter 2, crime-prevention strategies such as avoiding leaving a bar with a "new guy", or being careful not to accept a drink from a stranger (VPD, "Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault") do nothing to prevent women from men who pose the greatest threat (i.e., known men).

The power of vague, ill-defined myths to exercise tangible impacts in women's lives was perhaps even more apparent in my conversation with Kim. When I asked Kim to describe how she typically felt in some of the spaces she visited regularly, she responded by describing the "Lougheed Area" (in her words, the area around Lougheed SkyTrain Station) as a space in which she does not "feel as safe" as she would like. When I asked her to tell me why she did not feel entirely safe, she shared the following anecdote:

> [T]his is the story that somebody told me, that when they, so she has a son and then on their way home, they were walking home near Lougheed area, and then there was a guy in the car that was looking at his son, and he threatened him, or something. I'm not too sure what was really happening too, but that happened, so. It's a bit scary…it just makes me feel cautious in the area.

Kim's anecdote is extremely vague: it is unclear from whom the story originated; precisely what it signals; what tangible form the danger she implicitly discusses might take; and lastly, how she could possibly protect herself from such an amorphous threat, and relatedly, what purpose her "cautiousness" might serve.

While such a vague story should have no impact on women's perceptions of spaces—and much less, on their embodied *emotions*—it is clear from Kim's anecdote that the story of the "threatening man" has influenced not only her perceptions of the "Lougheed Area", but also her usage of the space and her emotions. Indeed, that such a vague narrative should have any sort of tangible impact in women's lives is

comprehensible only when considered within the broader social milieux in which young women are socialized. Within the context of a gendered fear discourse that socializes women at every turn to fear for their physical safety in public space, such a story understandably impacts women's perceptions of space, as it is just one instantiation of what they already "know" to be true; that is, that "stranger danger" lurks everywhere (Pain 1991; Stanko 1996).

While women are undoubtedly socialized to fear violent stranger crime through such narratives, the fears that women experience in public space are also reinforced by their personal and proximal exposure to sexualized hostility. Although I did not ask women directly about their experiences of sexual violence, given that I received ethical approval only for "minimal risk" research, many participants self-disclosed experiences of sexual violence or harassment, and some participants mentioned indirect exposure to violence—that is, hearing of sexual violence from peers—as a cause of their FoVC.

Women's self-disclosed experiences of sexual violence in the present research included stalking, sexual assault, unwanted touching, and verbal harassment. Despite this, women tended to euphemize or question the severity of their experiences, sometimes even questioning whether their experiences "counted" at all. Alexa began a remark about her own experiences of street harassment as a young adult by stating "*I think* I…had some unfortunate younger experiences, around…men feeling entitled to…being part of your experience" (my emphasis). Her choice of language (i.e., *I think…*) implies she is unsure whether her experiences "qualify" as "uncomfortable" at all. Similarly voicing hesitancy as to the "validity" of her own feelings, Martina shared that, when she goes to the gym:

> I always start off with cardio and then move over to the weights. But, like, sometimes I don't even get to the weights because…the majority of those people on the weights are men. And I feel like…kind of unwelcome when I go into that area. I don't know if that's me. *I don't know if that's actually how they're making me feel* (my emphasis).

As instantiations of a broader experience of normalized hostility within the public spaces of masculine hegemony, Alexa and Martina are uncertain whether their experiences "count" as "valid" reasons for unease and discomfort. Pain (1997) highlights the role of such "ambiguous" experiences in terms of their ability to explain the apparent incongruence between women's attitudes about rape (i.e., the pervasive fear of stranger

48

danger) and women's risk of experiencing stranger violence, which, as I discussed in Chapter 2, is minimal. Pain (1997) notes that several harms in public that are mostly suffered by women—such as leering, verbal intrusions, and frottage—are not accounted for in "official" victim statistics, but, as Martina and Alexa's stories underscore, are nevertheless phenomena that render public space unwelcoming for women and reinforce the anxiety and uneasiness that many women report feeling therein.

Given the centrality of fear in women's accounts, in conjunction with the fact that young women today live in a neoliberal culture in which personal responsibility for "managing risk" has intensified (see, e.g., Bernhardsson and Bogren 2012, and Rutherford 2018), all of the participants in the present research reported engaging in routinized strategies to "manage risk" in public space. As I discuss in the next section, women's FoVC in public space is paradoxically both *produced* by—and yet is sought to be *managed* through—women's embodied "safety strategies". These "safety strategies", as I discuss in what follows, are adopted by women in response to neoliberal and gendered pressures to "manage risk".

4.3. The Exhaustion of "Putting on Armour": Gendered "Risk-Management" in Public Space

Through a plethora of sources, including policing initiatives, familial socialization, and news and entertainment media, women are taught from an early age to maintain a limited presence in the "dangerous" realm of public space. As I discussed in Chapter 2, gendered "crime-prevention strategies" that normalize restrictions to women's spatial liberties perpetuate the idea that women have unequal claims to public spaces compared to men; reinforce notions of women's "natural" vulnerability and passivity in contrast to men's "innate" aggressiveness; and cumulatively assert the inevitability of rape and violence against women.

In the course of my conversations with women in the present research, many noted considerable differences between their own familial socialization regarding "safe" conduct in public space and that of their male siblings, peers, and friends. While their male siblings were rarely cautioned as to the "dangers" of public space and were largely socialized to believe they were "strong enough" and could thus "stay out late" (Kate; Reena) or generally "do as they pleased" (Fae), women learned early of their

49

"immutable" vulnerability. Alexa, for example, noted that her mother had been "forcing pepper spray" on her for a long time, while Martina discussed the fact that her guardedness in public space had been "built-in" to her consciousness as a result of years of parental safety advice.

The "risk-management" strategies women engage as a response to fear and a sense of gendered vulnerability considerably impacted their daily lives. In the present research, women reported engaging in a diverse array of "risk-management" strategies when they felt fearful in public space, including walking fast or faster (Jaslene; Reena; Emily; Parisa); checking their surroundings or looking over their shoulders (Alicia; Alexa); and changing their transit routes to avoid certain areas of the city, people they perceived as dangerous, or to get home sooner (Martina; Jennifer; Alexa; Carmen; Kate; Analyn).

Further "risk-management" strategies included walking under or near streetlights in the evening (Alexa); carrying an umbrella (Alicia); wearing a hood (Jaslene); phoning a friend (Meisa; Fae); avoiding empty spaces (Kim); and letting people walk past them (Meisa). Women also reported wearing small purses that do not "flop around", in case running becomes necessary (Analyn); planning their errands and transit routes in advance (Joana); using a flashlight after dark (Emily; Jennifer); listening to music (Meisa); taking their headphones out or turning their music volume down (Jennifer; Taylor; Alexa; Analyn); keeping their phones put away (Emily); keeping their phones out (Carmen); being polite and avoiding giving strangers "dirty looks" (Kim; Carmen); displaying a "Resting Bitch Face", tired expression, "don't talk to me" face, or crossed arms (Kate; Parisa; Carmen; Analyn); and leaving public space altogether (Taylor; Reena).

Women also generally avoided being alone in public spaces, especially in the late evening. Although some women mentioned that the presence of friends and family made them feel safer, others reported that the presence of "anybody at all" increased their confidence: as Joana remarked, she simply feels safer when she is not alone, and the person with her "could be anybody". Many participants also mentioned that the presence of their male partners decreased their FoVC in public space. Interestingly, male partners were appreciated not only for their perceived physical ability to abate

50

danger, but also because of the relief they provided from "risk-management". As Alexa stated:

> [I'm] definitely more secure [with my partner]. Yeah. He's like, he's like a burly dude. It's like, "we're okay!". Yeah, but um, certainly, *the guard goes all the way down*, I'm not really looking around and observing…*I can kind of just walk* (my emphasis).

Fae relatedly remarked that the presence of her male partner made her feel "more secure", because she feels he "knows what he's doing", while Parisa observed that, when she is with her male partner, "*obviously* the amount of spaces [she could visit] would be more broad" (my emphasis). Latent in Parisa's remark is the notion that her male partner's "obvious" physical strength lessens her own female vulnerability. As she later observed, "my boyfriend is over 6', and he's like 220 pounds, and so like, I would not think anybody would want to take him in a fight". Indeed, many women's feelings of safety when accompanied by their male partners carried a latent admission of their own "innate" vulnerability. In contrast to their male partners who were "obviously" physically strong and thus capable of abating danger, women understood femininity as linked to vulnerability, weakness, and marginalization, something I explore later on in this chapter.

Termed "safety work" by Liz Kelly (1988), the embodied labour that women engage in to "manage risk" is undoubtedly costly, and impacts their day-to-day usage of, and enjoyment in, public spaces. Summed up by Jaslene as "a performance you [women] get used to, to...avoid attention", such labour is nevertheless emotionally and cognitively taxing. As Taylor observed, "having to go out and having to put on that armour in case something happens can be extremely exhausting". Despite the costliness of safety work, many aspects of "risk-management" were understood by women as something that is expected, normal, and necessary. For example, after presenting me with an extensive list of the various "risk-management" strategies she regularly employs in public space, which included removing herself from situations she perceives as unsafe, walking faster, looking over her shoulder "a lot", keeping track of the people around her, and approaching strangers and engaging them in conversation to "make it look like…[she's] not alone", Reena summarized her strategies as "just stuff like that". Her choice of the phrase "*just* stuff like that" suggests that, although safety work impacts women's free, unfettered usage of public space, it is normalized.

In some cases, the mental maps that women relied on to navigate public spaces "safely" had become routinized and participants did not explicitly recognize limitations on their spatial mobility. As Taylor stated in response to my question about whether she feels spatially restricted:

> It's hard because like maybe there are spaces [that I don't visit], but I just don't really even think about them, because I've already just programmed myself to avoid them, that they don't even come up. […] I guess when you just avoid a place for so long it doesn't even come up in your head anymore.

As has been noted elsewhere (see, e.g., Brooks 2011, and Valentine 1989), women's safety work strategies often operate subconsciously as a routinized part of daily living and are thus naturalized as "common-sense". Yet, as women's perpetual engagement of costly risk-management strategies in response to their overwhelming FoVC suggests, whether or not this work is subconscious, gendered "risk-management" perpetuates a gendered status quo in which women occupy public space on very liminal terms. In the words of Hadleigh-West (qtd. in Darnell and Cook 2009), for women, public space is experienced as a "war zone"; a normalized environment of "sexual terrorism" (Kissling 1991), in which anxiety, fear, and even "panic" (Carmen) are paramount.

Much of the language deployed by participants in the present research suggests a normative condition of navigating public spaces as though "under siege": Taylor wears "armour" and fears being "overpowered", while Analyn ensures her attire is "convenient for running". Emily and Reena watch their backs, look over their shoulders, and peer into parked cars to ensure nothing unexpected will "pop up". Shilpi regrets the fact that "it's…illegal to carry pepper spray". Parisa reports that she "use[d] to carry dog spray" and that she still "*know[s]*…[she] could be a potential target" (my emphasis). Analyn holds onto something she can "punch with…something sharp", while Joana walks with her hands "like fists". Despite the prominence of practised—or wished for—responses to perceived risk, the source of danger (i.e., that which women guard against) is, as I discussed previously, forever hazy and amorphous, a latent terror only implicitly addressed in women's accounts.

That the "stranger rapist" rarely explicitly surfaces in women's accounts reflects their immersion in gendered fear discourse. As Fanghanel (2018) discusses, within the contemporary gender order, the "stranger rapist" is ever "strange"; he is unlike "normal"

men and is forever unknown/unknowable. The unknowable quality of the stranger rapist is sustained both discursively and materially. In texts (e.g., news articles) discussing stranger violence, writers often use the passive voice (e.g., "two women were attacked"), thus discursively invisibilizing the rapist (Johnstone 2008; Kitzinger 2009). The discursive invisibility of the stranger rapist subsequently renders a survey of his lifestyle and sexual history (akin to the interrogation to which female victims of violence are routinely subjected) impossible.

Given the invisibility of the "stranger rapist" in public discourse broadly, it is unsurprising that he was discursively invisibilized in women's accounts in the present research. Yet, his invisibility is not without consequence. It is precisely this invisibility— this paradoxical "presence-absence" of male danger—that renders women's actions, choices, and behaviours the focal point of gendered safety advice. As Campbell (2005:130) notes, since gendered crime-prevention discourse invisibilizes the body of the stranger rapist, it forever "strike[s] the [female] body, bending and contorting it", reinforcing the "common-sense" status of "risk-prevention" strategies that are often contradictory[9] and based on stereotypes and myths rather than empirical research on the nature of violence against women. As Walsh (2015) further notes, *whatever* "risk-prevention" strategies women employ, they can never adequately embody the "illogical hodgepodge" of crime-prevention strategies they are mandated to adopt: within masculine hegemony, femaleness *itself* is risk, and women are "encouraged to think of [and police] their bodies as *risk itself*" (125, my emphasis).

The fact that gendered fear discourse has little to do with ensuring women's physical safety became clear in the accounts of women in the present research. Many women's accounts of their "safety socialization" revealed that ideas about what is "safe" for women frequently blend and merge with ideas about what is "appropriately feminine", as defined by euro-western standards that equate "appropriate" femininity with implicitly racialized notions of "proper" womanhood as tied to virginity, docility, sexual inexperience, physical frailty, and whiteness. As Analyn stated of her "safety

---

[9] See, for example (p. 47), the contradictory strategies women in the present research reported employing (i.e., keeping their phones out/putting their phones away; keeping their headphones in/taking their headphones out; and being polite and avoiding giving strangers "dirty looks"/looking "serious and unapproachable").

socialization":

> It's like, you should, um…don't sit like that, like…if your legs are like too out. Like *don't take up so much space* (my emphasis).

Carmen shared that, when she was younger, she and her sister "used to wear…cami[sole]s. […] My mom would always be like…'oh, you went out in public *like that*?'". As Reena's remark suggests, attire or behaviour that is not "appropriately feminine" is dangerous:

> Even though it [being exposed to violence or harassment] is not your fault, it's just you…have to, like, be constantly aware of, like, who you're talking to, what you're wearing …[and] how you're doing something, how you're acting. […] Even though you, um, aren't trying to, maybe, show somebody something…*people just get the wrong message because you're a girl* (my emphasis).

Latent in Reena's remark is the acknowledgement that it is "being a girl" *itself* that is dangerous, an acknowledgement that reflects her internalization of a masculinist perspective on her own body and emphasizes the decentralized, but nonetheless powerful, operation of masculine hegemony in contemporary society. Jennifer similarly implicitly acknowledges that to exist as female is to exist as the embodiment of "risk":

> We're taught about like sexual assault as a child. So, um, and from there, my parents like telling [me to] be careful in different areas and be conscious on what's going around me. […] I feel almost like it [the knowledge that women are vulnerable in public space] is common knowledge for the most part among women…like we all kind of know this [sexual assault] is a thing that could happen.

Some participants explicitly located their fears of physical and sexual attack as resultant of their gender identities. Grounded in one of the foundational myths of male supremacy—that is, that men are inherently strong and aggressive while women are inherently weak and passive—women often understood themselves as vulnerable precisely (or only) because of their female gender identities. As Alicia explained, she fears violence because she "would not be able to fight back. […] I don't have any strength…so like whatever happens would just happen." Parisa similarly observed that "based on my size, I wouldn't be able to take anybody in a fight. I look like I wouldn't be able to defend myself".

Given their association of femininity with vulnerability, some participants sought to establish a sense of control in public spaces by distancing themselves from their gender identities. As Kate reflected:

> Around 13 to 16 especially, I definitely got a sense that being female/feminine means being weaker. […] I only have brothers. […] It's always, like, little things, like, how if we're all playing, um, my dad would only call me back to the house. […] If I ever asked, it would be like, oh, it's dangerous for you. And so that was when I knew, oh, being a girl means that…I'm not able to defend myself.

Later, Kate reported that presenting androgynously lessens her feelings of vulnerability in public space:

> I…walk more guyish. […] I definitely feel, like, there's a difference between how people see and treat me, ah, when I have makeup on versus no makeup on. […] Some guys just feel extra comfortable when you're looking, like, feminine, like…to come on to you. […] I almost have a more angry or serious look to me when I'm trying to be, trying to, like, close myself off from, like, the public…and I feel like, people don't sense that or, like, *there's no way of me giving that vibe off when I'm looking extra feminine* (my emphasis).

Carmen similarly reflected that:

> When I dress feminine, I think of it almost to be a weakness in a way, I feel weaker when I dress feminine. […] Yeah, I feel like I hold a lot more power when I dress in a way where people don't really look down at me, or feel like they can talk condescending to me, or catcall me.

As I explore below, for women who did not "contravene" the vulnerability of femininity through presenting androgynously, embodying the "in-control" subjectivity of the "postfeminist" woman provided a means of distancing themselves from the disempowering subject position of the "woman-as-victim".

As women's accounts in the present research underscore, contemporary femininities are increasingly "articulated through an…array of contradictions" (Gonick 2004:207). Not only are they expected to emulate the tamed, regulated, and responsible femininity of the "ideal victim" as represented in gendered fear discourse, but young women are also the subjects of a postfeminist imperative to be endlessly empowered, agentic, and "in control" of their safety, sexuality, and life circumstances (see, e.g., McRobbie 2007). As I discussed in Chapter 2, while postfeminist emphases on choice and empowerment represent an arguably positive shift away from the focus of gendered

fear discourse on women's "innate" vulnerability, postfeminist discourse is not without limitations.

Articulated within a culture of neoliberalism in which the management of risk through "self-responsibilization" is paramount (see, e.g., Rutherford 2018), postfeminist discourse ironically promotes self-surveillance as a central means through which to "control" risk: modern women, this discourse posits, can be more effective "risk managers" than their historical counterparts through engaging in more intensive self-policing and surveillance (Gill 2007). In positioning self-surveillance as the means through which to "choose" safety, postfeminist discourse ultimately increases gendered "risk-management" pressures, something that is evident in the accounts of women in the present research.

As Taylor discussed, she "knows" to choose "safety" over "risk":

> I would just like leave [an unsafe space]. […] I'll just be like, I can't be there, and I've just left the space. Because, at the end of the day, I know what's going to cause me hurt and I don't want to put myself in that situation, kind of like, *putting yourself into harm* (my emphasis).

In this anecdote, "choosing" to move within places that are "safe" and avoiding places that are "unsafe" is presented as the outcome of rational cost-benefit analysis. Yet, considered within the context of other women's accounts in this research which overwhelmingly suggest that it is the unknown that women most fear, a strategy of "choosing" safety predicated upon leaving certain spaces deemed "unsafe" is questionable at best, since it implies an ability to recognize "risk" or "danger" pre-emptively.

Some participants' narratives suggested they gleaned an internal sense of empowerment from being "self-responsibilized". Alicia, for example, reflected that she used to avoid particular areas of the GVA based on the advice of family, friends, and co-workers. Now, however, she states that she is "still aware" of her surroundings, but for "different reasons":

> I'm…aware of my surroundings…because I *know* to be aware. […] I think I've grown like smarter and more mature. So like *I know what to be aware of* (my emphasis).

56

Here, Alicia quasi-glorifies "self-responsibilization", emphasizing that she has now internalized years of "risk-avoidance" advice. Much better than needing to be *told* to manage risk and ensure her own safety in public space, Alicia is responsible, "smart", and "mature". Jennifer similarly emphasized that in her life, empowerment stems from self-responsibilization:

> I think as I've gotten older [I've experienced] a bit more of the empowerment. […] So, I'm more focused on…kind of *watching my behaviour*, how, like what am I doing in a certain situation.

In Jennifer's narrative, as in Alicia's, empowerment is linked to self-responsibilization: becoming responsible through "watching her behaviour" is something she takes pride in and from which she seems to glean self-assurance. Together, Alicia's and Jennifer's comments exemplify what Foucault (1997) termed "productive power", a concept denoting a form of internalized regulation wherein the subject(s) of decentralized power structures (e.g., masculine hegemony) come to participate in self-regulating forms of discipline willingly and even pleasurably, achieving a sense of self-worth from participating in inherently disempowering self-regulation.

While internalizing the mandate to ensure their own safety provided some women with a sense of control or empowerment, for others it promoted shame and self-blame. As Burgess et al. (2009:859) have argued, the ever-increasing pressure to manage risk within neoliberalism is such that "a new morality of caution" is emerging whereby *pre-emptive* risk management is expected: within this "new morality", women who do not anticipate risk or "risky" situations *before* they even occur can be judged as imprudent or naïve. Within such a morality of risk, shame and self-blame are rampant.

In my conversation with Reena, she related an experience of being approached by an "older gentleman" on public transit who commented upon her body, much to her discomfort. Reflecting on the experience, Reena wondered:

> Did I, like, do something that caused that person to come up to me and, like, approach me, and, like, say something? […] Was I, like, just, like, too much, like, in his, like, space, like, making myself visible to him? And is that why he felt, like, he could, like, come and approach me, kind of thing?

The uneasiness of feeling "blamable"—that is, that she could and should have more adequately managed the situation—is evident in the hesitancy of Reena's articulation.

57

Notably, her account is filled with stalling discourse markers, with the word "like" occurring ten times in three sentences. Similarly reflecting the shame and self-blame that stem from perpetual pressure to "manage risk", Taylor reflected:

> It's super, super, super just like hurting and just like terrible when you go out [to a club] somewhere and you just feel like *disgusting* by all the amount of people that just like touch you and you don't want them to, you know? You just feel *disgusted with yourself*. Because even though you don't want it to happen, like, women just accept it. And it really just upsets me (my emphasis).

Notable in Taylor's anecdote is that she feels disgusted *with herself*; being touched non-consensually by strangers in a club is "super terrible" precisely because it signals her "inability" to "manage risk", or as Taylor terms it, women's general propensity to "just accept" unwanted attention. Latent in Taylor's account is a "disgust" with her own "inability" to embody the postfeminist subjectivity of the "in-control" woman who would never tolerate sexual harassment.

As women's accounts of their shame and self-blame highlight, "managing risk" is anything but empowering. Rather, it represents an intensification of the gendered pressures women have long faced to ensure their own safety in public space, and it further exacerbates the anxiety many women experience in navigating public spaces.

In the next and final section of this chapter, I discuss how women's overwhelming FoVC and routine employment of costly "risk-management" strategies belies their characterizations of public space as "generally safe". This central disjuncture in women's accounts suggests that women navigate public spaces in a state of normalized liminality.

4.4. Navigating the Femininity-Vulnerability Nexus: A Condition of Normalized Liminality

As findings of this research highlight, women navigate public spaces on very liminal terms: overwhelmed by a FoVC which produces anxiety, uneasiness, and even panic, women attempt to mitigate their anxiousness with cognitively and emotionally taxing safety work strategies which seemingly serve only to intensify the generally negative affective quality of their experiences in public space. Yet, despite the impact of FoVC on almost every aspect of women's use of public spaces—including how they walk, where they go, what they wear, whom they socialize with, and when or even if they

traverse public spaces at all—many women report that they are "oblivious" (Fae) to gendered risks; that they are generally "not worried" (Joana) when they visit various spaces of the GVA; and that, overall, they "feel safe" (Kim) in public.

Analyn, whose responses throughout her interview included that she feels "nervous", "on guard", chooses clothes she can "run in", and even carries sharp objects she can "punch with", responded to my request to identify a specific time or place she had felt fearful by stating that no such time or place existed: "luckily, nothing has happened so far". Reena's response to the same question echoed Analyn's. Despite the fact that she alluded repeatedly throughout the interview to the fact that "something could happen at any time", Reena responded to my query by observing that she usually "feels safe" in public spaces because "nothing really bad can happen". Kim similarly reflected that, in all the time she has lived in the GVA (a period of 6 years), there were "only two" specific occurrences where she felt unsafe.

That women are unable to identify their liminality in public space when asked direct questions suggests that they navigate public spaces in a state of normalized liminality: one in which their temporal, spatial, and personal marginalization has become routinized and thus exists largely outside of their consciousness. As a fixed feature of their everyday lives, FoVC is as apparent to women as the air they breathe. Both reflective and preservative of the broader discourse in which their talk is embedded—namely, gendered fear discourse—women's inability to describe the "air they breathe" reflects the fact that, like all mythologies, gendered fear discourse is naturalized and thus "goes without saying", requiring neither demystification nor interpretation (Walsh 2015).

When conceptualized as discrete instantiations of gendered fear discourse, it is unsurprising that the accounts of women in the present research closely mirror those of other women (see, e.g., Fanghanel and Lim 2017, Fileborn 2016, and Hollander 2001). Indeed, in reviewing existing research during the analytical phase of this study, I was often surprised by how closely the language and sentiments of my participants—even their word choices, silences, and hesitancies—mirrored those of women who had participated in research decades before them, often in geographical and cultural settings vastly removed from the current research (see, e.g., participant narratives in Day 1999, Madriz 1997, and Valentine 1989).

59

While women's narratives in the present research undoubtedly reiterate a very well-rehearsed script, a deconstructionist (Czarniawska 2004; Martin 1990) analysis of their accounts reveals a series of textual disruptions—contradictions, ambiguities, and disjunctures—at both the micro (individual participant's accounts) and macro (all participants' accounts) levels of analysis. Why, for example, do women hold their hands "like fists" (Joana) and carry sharp objects they can "punch with" (Reena) if they also "know" that they will never "fight back" (Alicia), and that, based on their size, they lack the physical capacity to "take anybody in a fight"? (Parisa). How, moreover, can *any* of women's cognitive and embodied strategies for "managing risk" tangibly mitigate their vulnerability, when it is the "unknown"/"unexpected"—ironically, that which by definition cannot possibly be prepared for or avoided—that women most fear?

As I explore in the next chapter, the fundamental disconnects apparent in women's narratives that this research highlights are not new. Yet, the questions that a systematic analysis of these disjunctures raise are arguably inadequately addressed in existing literature. In Chapter 5, I thus re-consider the function that women's embodied safety work serves. While in past work, researchers (see, e.g., Fileborn 2016, and Vera-Gray 2014, 2016b) have noted that women's safety work strategies coalesce to create an "achieved state" of physical safety, or tangibly mitigate women's exposure to male violence, findings of my research (see also Ferraro 1995, 1996, and Stanko 1996) point to the opposite conclusion. In the present research, women's embodied attempts to "manage risk" paradoxically only intensify their FoVC, coalescing to produce a stable state of physical *unsafety* in public space.

Given women's routinized engagement of costly safety work strategies that seemingly only increase their fear in public space, Chapter 5 considers what purpose women's safety work serves. If safety work only exacerbates women's fear and anxiety in public space, why is it in engaged at all? In seeking to answer this question in Chapter 5, I engage the work of Giddens (1990) to consider women's routinized safekeeping labour as a means of securing not *physical* security, but *ontological* security.

Chapter 5.

Findings: Reconsidering the Protective Function of Gendered "Safety Work"

> *[The huntsman] took a pair of scissors and cut open [the wolf's] belly. He had cut only a few strokes when he saw the red cap shining through. He cut a little more, and the girl jumped out and cried, "Oh, I was so frightened! It was so dark inside the wolf's body!" And then the grandmother came out alive as well. The three of them were happy. And Little Red Cap thought to herself, "As long as I live, I will never leave the path and run off into the woods by myself if mother tells me not to."*

(Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Little Red Cap,* 1857)

The cognitive and emotional labour that women routinely engage in public spaces as a response to FoVC is well-documented (see, e.g., Day 1999; Hollander 2001; Valentine 1989). Variously termed "safe-keeping strategies" (Campbell 2005), "constrained behaviour" (Ferraro 1995, 1996), "sexual vigilance" (Fanghanel and Lim 2017), and "safety work" (Kelly 1988; Vera-Gray 2014, 2016b), women's safe-keeping labour in public spaces is rarely centralized as an object of study, and is typically examined only as a more or less "immutable" effect of women's vulnerability to sexual violence and their routine exposure to discourse that exaggerates gendered risks in public spaces. Unlike other effects of women's vulnerability to sexual violence (e.g., fear), however, safety work is *intentional*; it is something that women "do", even if subconsciously.

As I explored in Chapter 4, women's safety work takes various forms, and can include perpetual vigilance or alertness; routine curtailing of desired activities; and alterations to self-presentation, including types of clothing worn, body language, and facial expression. Research to date (see, e.g., Borker 2017, and Kearl 2014) documents that these and similar safety work strategies exert a plethora of negative impacts in women's lives, both direct and immediate (e.g., anxiety, foregoing desired leisure activities) and indirect and long-term (e.g., reinforcing women's physical and symbolic marginalization in the public sphere).

Despite the documented deleterious impacts of safety work in women's lives, in addition to the fact that such work is so widely adopted it is regularly referred to as

"habitual" (see, e.g., Bruckert and Law 2018), there is a paucity of research critically exploring the *function* of gendered safety work. Implicit within much of the literature addressing gendered harassment and violence in public spaces is the suggestion that: (1) women practice safety work because it tangibly mitigates gendered risks in public space (see, e.g., Wise and Stanley 1987, and Vera-Gray 2016b), or (2) women practice safety work because they *perceive* that it mitigates risk, and thus experience diminished FoVC in public spaces (see, e.g., Fileborn 2016). Yet, empirical scholarship exploring the relationship between safety work and fear (see, e.g., Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed 1988) and safety work and risk mitigation (see, e.g., Brooks 2011, and Thompson 1993) suggests that the embodied safety strategies women engage in public spaces neither reliably mitigate their risk of exposure to male violence, nor diminish their fear.

There are notable exceptions to the general paucity of scholarship exploring the function(s) of women's safety work in public spaces. One of the most extensive explorations to date (Vera-Gray 2014; see also Vera-Gray 2016b) examines safety work in the context of sexual harassment. Based on her conversations with 50 women aged 18-63 in London, England, Vera-Gray (2014, 2016b) suggests that women's safety work does precisely what it purports to do. Safety work "manages risk", effectively curtailing men's harassment of women:

> Recognising the sheer scale of the effort women are habitually putting in to avoid public sexual harassment could help us to change a culture that makes victims accountable for not preventing assault. […] [W]omen are only ever able to count the times when such strategies don't work – when they are harassed by a man, or assaulted. The work put into the successes – the number of times women's actions prevent men from intruding – go unnoticed. […] *[P]reventing sexual assault is something women do daily, often without realising it* (Vera-Gray 2016b, *The Conversation,* my emphasis).

While an emphasis on the "risk-reductive" impacts of women's safety work positively emphasizes women's agency, celebrating women's safety work as an effective deterrent of male violence is problematic for two reasons. First, in re-centering women's "risk-avoidant" actions, decisions, and behaviours, male violence is problematically re-invisibilized, and the deleterious impacts of safety work in women's lives are ignored. Is constant watchfulness and anxiety the price women must pay for men's normalized spatial freedom and entitlement in public spaces? Secondly, celebrating the "agency" of

women who effectively deter male violence[10] through safety work tacitly accepts the postfeminist imperative of self-surveillance and the related notion that women can glean "empowerment" from monitoring themselves to the extent of "deterring" male violence.

Campbell's (2005) work is another of the few studies to date that centralizes women's safety work as an object of study. Building on the work of Stanko (1997), Campbell suggests that the "Good Woman"—the ever-vulnerable, yet perpetually vigilant female subject—is reinforced through gendered crime-prevention advisories that encourage women to internalize self-perceptions of innate vulnerability. As women internalize the disempowering rhetoric of "innate" gendered defencelessness, and as they subsequently engage in gendered "safekeeping acts" to "manage risk" in public spaces, they:

> not only regulat[e]…themselves to the extent that it might save them from being raped, they critically discipline themselves to the extent that it *saves the category of femininity*, and dominant understandings of it (Campbell 2005:133, my emphasis).

Thus, in Campbell's formulation, the "Good Woman" is *produced* through safety work. In carrying out safety work, women actively and continuously (re)produce themselves as vulnerable and weak female subjects, thus reifying the discourse from which their actions stem.

Unlike Vera-Gray's (2014, 2016b) account of safety work, Campbell's (2005) interpretation leaves very little room for an acknowledgement of women's agency. For Campbell (2005), women who practice safety work are the principal agents of their own oppression, and gendered safekeeping labour does nothing more than "save" (133) an inherently disempowering feminine subjectivity. While this account sufficiently acknowledges the role of discourse in informing women's safety work practices, women's potential as social agents to resist, contest, and disrupt dominant discourse is unaccounted for.

---

[10] Even in the context of sexual harassment, an explanation of safety work as tangibly "risk-reductive" is limited. Some research shows that pre-emptive safety work is not successful in deterring harassers. For example, the common-sense notion that women's clothing choices may "encourage" harassers was debunked in 1992 by *Glamour*, when seven female employees of the magazine tested the validity of this claim by walking the streets of New York City in various styles of clothing. Regardless of the clothing they wore, all seven women were harassed (cited in Thompson 1993).

Like Vera-Gray (2014, 2016b) and Campbell (2005), Fileborn (2016) critically considers the function of safety work. Based on her mixed-methods research with young adults in Australia, Fileborn finds that young men and women generally report feeling safe in public venues such as clubs and pubs. However, noting the various cognitive and emotional safety work strategies that her participants reportedly engage on a regular basis, Fileborn suggests that "feeling safe" is a state of being actively produced in and through safety work strategies that reflect prevailing gender norms (e.g., young women moderating their alcohol intake). In Fileborn's research, young women "feel safe" precisely because they engage in safety work: "safety", she suggests, is not something that "naturally occurs", but rather is produced through "learnt strategies and acquired cultural knowledge" (Fileborn 2016:112).

While these (Campbell 2005; Fileborn 2016; Vera-Gray 2014, 2016b) notable exceptions to the general absence of theorizing on the function of safety work undoubtedly provide a more nuanced understanding of women's habitual vigilance in public spaces than paternalistic explanations that either deride the possibility of women ever adequately protecting themselves or benevolently indulge the irrationality of "little ladies" who feel safer carrying rape alarms in public spaces despite the rarity of stranger rape (see Stanko 1993 for a substantive discussion), existing explanations do not fully explain the findings of the present research.

As women's accounts in the present research highlight, safety work neither enabled participants to "feel safe" (as in Fileborn's 2016 research), nor did it appear to tangibly mitigate the risks participants discussed as informing their FoVC (as in Vera-Gray's 2014 research). In this chapter, I thus reconsider the function of gendered safety work, accounting not only for the ways in which this safekeeping labour suggests women's *internalization* of gendered fear discourse (as in Campbell's 2005 theorization), but also for the ways in which it can be recognized as a dexterous and considered means of managing an inherently disempowering subject position (i.e., the defenceless woman-as-victim). Centralizing textual disruptions (Martin 1990) in women's accounts, I suggest that, while safety work indeed serves a protective function, it does not, contrary to popular wisdom, ensure women's physical safety (i.e., ensure freedom from male violence).

As I argue in the rest of Chapter 5, despite failing to ensure women's *physical* security in public spaces, gendered safety work ensures women's *ontological* security (Giddens 1990). By routinely engaging safety work (e.g., constant watchfulness, relying on men for "protection"), women elide the subjectivity of the "Imprudent Woman": the failed female subject whose inadequate "risk-management" justifiably denies her care, trust, and even access to the symbolic and material resources required for living. In this way, practising safety work ensures that, when they navigate public spaces, women are read by others as "appropriately feminine": as rational, risk-averse, and vigilant subjects, suitably aware of their "immutable" gendered vulnerability to violent crime, and thus deserving of care, trust, and protection should they encounter male violence.

5.1. Be(com)ing the "Good Woman"

In this study, safety work functions in a manner akin to what Stanko (1997) theorized as a "technology of the soul", and is practiced by women because of its functionality in serving two, interrelated protective roles. First, by routinely practicing safety work in public spaces, women present themselves, and even more importantly, are *read* by others (i.e., men), as "appropriately feminine" (i.e., immutably vulnerable, yet hyper-vigilant). Secondly, since safety work ensures that women are read (by men) as "appropriately feminine" in public spaces, practicing safety work allows women to mitigate the risk of a "sullied self" (Stanko 1997), and ultimately, to evade the subjectivity of the "imprudent", incautious", or "bad" woman, who, because of her inadequate embodiment of appropriate femininity, deserves neither trust nor support should she encounter men's violence.

Together, the interrelated protective functions of safety work—that is, being read as "appropriately feminine" and thus avoiding the subjectivity of the "Imprudent Woman"—enable women to experience ontological security in public space. As Noble (2005) discusses, drawing on the work of Giddens (1990), "ontological security" is a state of being comprising a broad sense of security and certainty. Ontological security is:

> the "fit" we experience in relation to the spaces we inhabit. […] Our "fit" in an environment requires the "acknowledgement" of other actors…that we fit…and [rests] on our ability to be acknowledged as rightfully existing there (114).

In the context of gendered safety work in public spaces, ontological security crucially hinges on women's ability to evade the subjectivity of the "Imprudent Woman"; as crime prevention advisories and news stories addressing violence against women make clear, "imprudent" women may be denied care and protection and may even be considered "blamable" in their own assaults precisely because, as the antithesis of the "Good Woman", they do not "rightfully exist" (Noble 2005:114) in public space. Paradoxically, as I explore in what follows, women's ontological security is gained at the cost of their physical security, since the routine engagement of safety work exacerbates women's anxiety, fear, and stress in public space.

5.1.1. Achieving Ontological Security

One of the notable textual disruptions in women's accounts in the present research regarded their implicit characterization of the "purpose" of safety work as being about ensuring their own physical safety. While, as I explored in Chapter 4, many women reported being hyper-vigilant in public space and even discussed the fact that they carry—or *wish* they could carry—(pseudo) weapons in public spaces, most participants also explicitly asserted their "immutable" physical vulnerability, and emphasized the fact that, as women, they would never be able to "fight back" (Alicia) against a would-be assailant. Thus, a decided tension exists in women's accounts between their ostensible readiness to physically "fight" (Parisa) attackers, and their simultaneous acknowledgement that they would never undertake such a "fight" due to their "innate" physical frailty.

> Emphasizing her physical readiness to deter physical assault, Analyn stated:
>
> I might have like…something that I could like punch with. Um, like I guess something like, kind of, sharp if I have it. Um, like I'll have my keys, like in my pocket.

Shilpi similarly voiced that she "know[s] it's like illegal to carry like pepper spray. But…I really want something like that as like protection. Yeah, like self-defence." Despite their apparent readiness to deter would-be attackers with physical force, most women recoiled at the idea of physically confronting an assailant in public space. Alicia, for example, stated that she frequently carries an umbrella when alone in public spaces because she heard that "you can, like, use it as a weapon" and that would-be attackers

are thus "scared to…try and like grab…or harass" women carrying umbrellas. Later in the interview, however, Alicia stated that "being attacked" is her "number one fear", because:

> I would not be able to fight back. It's like I don't have any strength. […] So like *whatever happens would just happen*. Like I think it's because I would never, like, fight somebody that [being attacked] scares me (my emphasis).

Similarly, Parisa, who reported that she "used to carry…a dog spray", stated:

> Based on my size, I wouldn't be able to take anybody in a fight. Yeah, I look like I wouldn't be able to defend myself.

Given women's acknowledgement that they would never "fight back" (Alicia) against an assailant in public space, I suggest that, while women in the present research exert considerable effort to feel physically ready to deter violent crime, this effort is not exerted to ensure their physical safety. Rather, enmeshed as they are in a gendered fear discourse that holds women solely accountable for ensuring their own safety in a climate wherein men's violence is normalized, women "go through the motions" of physical readiness to deter violent crime as a means of feeling "appropriately feminine" in public spaces. By carrying pseudo weapons in public spaces, and by practising constant watchfulness, vigilance, and "guardedness", women feel that they adequately embody the "Good Woman" (Stanko 1997) of gendered crime prevention advisories.

In the present research, participants' desire to embody the subjectivity of the "Good Woman" reflects their precarity within masculine hegemony. As Stanko (1997:489) discusses, women's fear in public spaces is inspired by much more than "just an encounter with men's violence. [I]t is also *a risk of self*, a fear of being judged to be imprudent" (my emphasis). Reflecting on the fact that an encounter with men's violence often means the denial of protection and care as a result of women's presumed "imprudence", Stanko (1997) suggests that men's violence against women poses a dual threat: not only do women fear physical endangerment, but they also fear the social disapproval that being judged "imprudent" provokes.

Here, I extend Stanko's argument and suggest that, living as they do within a system of masculine hegemony in which they are systematically denied equal access to economic, political, and ideological power and thus exist in a perpetual state of liminality

and precarity, a potential encounter with men's violence threatens women not only with physical endangerment and short-term social judgement, but also with the possibility of lost access to the symbolic and material resources required for living, since these resources are dominantly controlled by white, middle/upper class, cis-gender, heterosexual men. As liminal and precarious actors within the public spaces of masculine hegemony, women thus engage in cognitively, emotionally, and physically taxing safety work practices that ostensibly signal their readiness to deter attackers with physical force, not as a means of ensuring their physical safety, but as a means of ensuring that they are read as "prudent". While being read as prudent does not eliminate the threat of male violence, it does afford women the comfort and certainty—the "ontological security" (Giddens 1990)—associated with eliminating, or at least mitigating, the threat of social ostracism, judgment, and lost access to the material and symbolic resources required for living that a potential encounter with male violence threatens.

However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, safety work alone does not render women legible as "appropriately feminine". Which bodies have historically belonged to, and which bodies have been excluded from the category of "appropriate femininity", is informed by colonialist, ableist, classist, and heteronormative standards, such that women who exist outside of this limited construction are largely "pre-emptively" denied statuses as "Good Women", regardless of their lifestyles, choices, and (dis)engagement in safety work. While middle/upper class, physically frail, slender, able-bodied heterosexual white women have disproportionately been afforded statuses as "Good Women" and "worthy" victims when they have encountered male stranger violence in public spaces, women who fall outside of this narrow category have been much less likely to be considered "credible" and "worthy" of care, protection, and trust when then encounter men's violence. Thus, although all women in the present research routinely engaged in safety work, the racialized and classed dimensions of what has historically— and continues to—"count" as "appropriate femininity" means that it is a very particular woman whose safety work is most likely to ensure access to care, protection, trust, and ongoing access to the material and symbolic resources required for living, should she encounter men's violence.

The fact that women's engagement of safety work strategies ostensibly signaling readiness to deter assault via physical force ultimately had little to do with ensuring their

physical safety was particularly evident in Joana's account. Discussing the behaviours she typically engages when she feels "fearful" in public spaces, Joana stated:

> [I walk with] my hand[s] like fists. [...] Like, I know *nothing's going to really happen*, but [I do it] *just to make me feel better* (my emphasis).

Here, Joana's linguistic choices suggest that her "physical readiness" has nothing to do with physical safety; rather, physical readiness to deter violent crime is enacted as a form of gendered performativity because it makes her "*feel better*". Considered within the context of her immersion in gendered fear discourse, Joana's desire to "feel better" is a desire to be read as "prudent", "risk-averse" and responsible. If she should indeed encounter men's violence, her "prudence" will preclude a characterization of her behaviour as reckless or careless and will thus mitigate the threats to her ontological security that such a judgement may provoke.

Women's uses of the word "safe" in their accounts of public space usage in the present research further suggested that, for many women, *feeling safe* (i.e., genuinely experiencing physical security) and being acknowledged as *staying safe* (i.e., being "risk-averse" and "responsible") are two very different affective and embodied experiences. As Carmen reflected about her internal sense of physical safety when she is in her own neighbourhood:

> Even if it's like, very late at night, and I'm coming home from some place at like 3AM, and it's like really dark out, *I still feel really safe and comfortable*, even though I know that *it's better to be safe than sorry* (my emphasis).

There is a notable disjuncture in Carmen's account. In the first half of the sentence ("I still feel really *safe* and comfortable"), Carmen's usage of the word "safe" is synonymous with being "really comfortable", and thus logically denotes the absence of anxiety and stress. In the second half of the sentence ("even though I know that it's better to be *safe* than sorry"), Carmen's use of the word "safe" cannot logically imply comfort or the absence of anxiety or stress. How can Carmen feel "*safe*", even though she knows it is "better to be *safe* than sorry"? In the latter part of Carmen's articulation, the word "safe" seems to reflect her implicit acknowledgment of the fact that "*being* safe"—that is, performing "appropriate femininity" through vigilance and general "risk-aversion"—is in no way associated with genuinely *feeling* physically safe.

The fact that women's attempts to "*be* safe" produced anything but an internal sense of physical safety was particularly evident in Fae's detailed account of the cognitive and emotional safety work she routinely engages in public spaces. As she reported:

> I used to listen to music in those cases [where I felt unsafe], but then I realized, you're kind of blocking off things around you, with like earplugs in your ears. So, I'll put them in, and I'll pretend I'm listening, so it looks like I'm occupied…but I'm constantly looking around. […] Usually if I'm…at a train stop if I'm waiting to be picked up, I'll go where it's well-lit and I'll sit down, and I'll pretend to just, like bop to my music, and just be like very um kind of like fake calm chill vibe. I've learned how to like fake it very well. […] Or, worst comes to worst, I have made calls sometimes where it does feel like a bit too sketchy for me.

Here, safety work occurs at multiple levels: at a cognitive level, Fae is assessing whether a given situation is merely "unsafe" or is "sketchy". Emotionally, she internally experiences stress and anxiety while outwardly projecting a "fake calm chill vibe", which includes pretending to listen to music so that it "looks like" she is "occupied". Alongside her emotional and cognitive labour, Fae is "constantly looking around", making sure she is seated where it is "well-lit", and is always prepared to "make a call" should things become "too sketchy". The cognitive and emotional labour that this routine necessitates in undoubtedly taxing, and as such, presumably does little to enhance any internal sense of physical safety Fae may have been experiencing prior to engaging in safety work. Rather than ensuring her physical safety, Fae's safekeeping labour is engaged as a gendered performance of vulnerability, one that leaves little doubt of her vigilance, "prudence", and risk-aversion, and thus ensures her ontological security.

The fact that stressful vigilance and other routine safety work behaviours do little to minimize women's FoVC in public spaces has been documented elsewhere. Liska, Sanchirico and Reed (1988), for example, documented that although women's constrained behaviour (e.g., limiting or changing their daily activities, or carrying something with which to defend themselves) is intended to *minimize* women's fear, FoVC *increases* as a result of constrained behaviour. Ferraro (1995, 1996) similarly found that constrained behaviour heightens fear of crime. While Ferraro (1996:688) notes that constrained behaviour does not "create" FoVC, but rather "intensifies such feelings if present", it is safe to assume that, given their characterizations of their typical emotions in public space as ones of "anxiety" (Jaslene; Kate; Parisa), "nervousness"

(Analyn; Jennifer; Joana), and "uneasiness" (Shilpi), women's constrained behaviours in the present research only exacerbated their FoVC.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, while women rarely explicitly articulated the source of their fear(s) in public spaces and typically described their FoVC with vague statements such as "*anything* could happen", the linguistic resources drawn upon by women in further describing their fears (e.g., "a guy could just be like hiding in a bush or something" [Shilpi]) suggest that it is the lurking, unknowable figure of the stranger rapist that women fear. Paradoxically, then, that which women most fear—the unpredictable, unknowable stranger—is precisely the danger which, as unexpected/unknowable, cannot possibly be prepared for or avoided. Despite women's routine engagement of costly safety work, it is thus unlikely that any of this work tangibly mitigated women's risk of experiencing stranger violence. As Stanko (1996) ironically notes, violent men who attack women are unlikely to be deterred by women successfully enacting the role of the "responsible, risk-averse" female subject. Presuming the usefulness of safety work as a means of mitigating physical danger makes the dubious claim that "men, when they encounter us 'duly protecting ourselves', will not act on impulse and foresight and attack, rob, beat, or rape us" (21).

In contrast to previous theorizations of the of the function of gendered safekeeping labour (Fileborn 2016; Vera-Gray 2014, 2016b), women's safety work in the present research appeared neither to mitigate their risk of violence, nor cause women to feel physically safe. While women's performative assimilation of the "Good Woman" trope of gendered fear discourse undeniably highlights their immersion in discourse (as Campbell 2005 emphasizes), a careful consideration suggests of this work that it is not entirely without protective function. While safety work did not ensure women's physical safety (and seemingly only exacerbated their FoVC), women's performance of the "prudent" risk-averse female subject served the protective function of ensuring their ontological security. When considered as a practice that ensures women's *ontological*—rather than *physical*—safety, gendered safekeeping labour is legible as a rational coping response to an experience of normalized liminality within masculine hegemony.

While the theorization of the protective function of safety work I present in this chapter seeks to acknowledge women's dexterity in managing what is an undeniably disempowering and precarious subject position within gendered fear discourse, the

measurable and costly effects of women's safety work cannot be ignored. While safety work may indeed ensure women's ontological security in public space, it also negatively impacts their spatial mobility; personal autonomy; ability for "authentic" self-presentation; and generally curtails unrestricted, unfettered access to public spaces for leisure, exercise, and work (Borker 2017; Kearl 2014). At a macro level, women's personal, social, and spatial immobility in public spaces reinforces men's spatial privilege. As Hollander (2001) notes, gendered fear of crime—and all of the repressive safety "self-imposed" practices it encourages women to assume—remains "one of the most pervasive differences between the lives of women and men" (84).

As subjects "indoctrinated into a victim mentality" even before they "learn to read" (Brownmiller 1975:331), women know only too well what happens to "little girls" who "leave the path" when their "mothers tell…[them] not to" (Grimm and Grimm 1857). Much more than encountering male violence, women who do not practice safety work risk be(com)ing the amoral woman; the incautious, *imprudent* "bad woman" whose inadequate embodiment of "appropriate femininity" justifiably denies her care, protection, trust, and even access to the symbolic and material resources necessary for living, should she encounter male violence. Such a "failed" feminine subject is, to misquote Puar (2007), worthy of being "folded *out* of life". Surely, she "*knew better*".

In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I explore the ways in which women's normalized liminality in public space might be transformed, and I centralize the possibility of transforming gendered fear discourse as a means of achieving one of the core ideals of CDA: that of emancipatory social change.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion

> *"Bother, bother, bother and* bother*!" said the wolf. "It hasn't worked out right this time either. And I did just what it said in the book. Why can't I ever get you, Polly, when that other wolf managed to get his little girl?". "Because this isn't a fairly story", said Polly, "and I'm not Little Red Riding Hood, I am Polly and I can always escape from you, Wolf, however much you try to catch me". "Clever Polly", said Polly's grandma. And the wolf went growling away.*

(Catherine Storr, *Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf*, 1967)

In his work exploring the impacts of racist microaggressions in public spaces, Noble (2005:108) uses the term "comfort" synonymously with "ontological security", noting that "the capacity to be comfortable [in public spaces] is unevenly distributed amongst the population." This observation succinctly captures the ongoing racism, colonialism, ableism, and sexism that continues to define which bodies "legitimately" exist in public spaces.

As findings of this research highlight, gender remains a central axis of exclusion in public space. Indeed, women's affective experiences in public spaces remain powerfully contoured and constrained by fears of violent crime that are discursively informed. Not only do women's fears of violent crime in public spaces cause unnecessary anxiety, concern, and uneasiness, but gendered FoVC also prompts women to engage in cognitively, physically, and emotionally taxing forms of safety work that do little to ensure women's physical safety, while problematically reinforcing their liminality in public spaces. As I noted in Chapter 5, while women's gendered safety work undoubtedly serves the protective function of ensuring their ontological security, the ongoing and deleterious impacts of this labour on women's social, economic, and political statuses in contemporary society cannot be ignored. Further, the precariousness of working to maintain a subjectivity of "Good Womanhood" that ultimately relies on the recognition of others cannot be overlooked.

Moreover, the racialized and classed dimensions of "appropriate femininity" mean that some women are less likely than others to experience the benefits of ontological security associated with engaging in gendered safety work in public spaces.

In *Going Stealth*, a book exploring the social vectors that determine access to public space, Toby Beauchamp quotes Joy James, observing that:

> some bodies appear more docile than others because of their conformity in appearance to *idealized models* of class, color, and sex; their bodies are allowed greater leeway to be self-policed or policed without physical force (Beauchamp 2019:39-40, my emphasis).

As an *idealized model* of femininity that is rooted in colonialist, ableist, racist and heteronormative standards, contemporary renderings of "appropriate femininity" are such that queer women, women of color, women with disabilities, and gender non-conforming women are less likely to ensure their ontological security through the engagement of safety work. These women's ontological security, and the absence of shame, presence of care, and long-term access to the symbolic and material resources required for living that safety work purportedly provides, is thus distinctly precarious. Further research explicitly geared toward understanding women's multiply informed experiences of gendered precarity in public spaces as they relate to violence and the aftermath of violence are needed.

While women's accounts in the present research overwhelmingly emphasize their immersion in gendered fear discourse, women's self-disclosed experiences of sexual harassment in public spaces also suggest that their negative affective experiences in public space are produced, not only by discourse, but also via the *reinforcement* of discourse through material experience. As I discussed in Chapter 2, although the violence many women fear (i.e., stranger rape in public spaces) is very rare, women's routine exposure to widely trivialized forms of sexual harassment in public spaces has the effect of reinforcing gendered fear discourse by causing women to feel generally unwelcome in public spaces and to associate strangers and public places with hostility and sexual violation (Mellgren and Ivert 2019; Pain 1991).

Findings of the present research suggest that substantively altering women's generally negative, uneasy, and anxious experiences in public spaces thus requires not only the transformation of the discursive context backgrounding women's public space usage, but also redressing societal norms that trivialize harassment in public spaces. In what follows, I thus suggest concrete strategies for promoting emancipatory change through the transformation of gendered fear discourse, and I address mechanisms for redressing the trivialization of sexual harassment.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, news media representations of violent crime are a powerful arena in which gendered fear discourse circulates. The ways in which violent crime is represented on-screen—given the racial history of this representation—plays a important role not only in reinforcing women's fears of stranger violence in public spaces and thus limiting their spatial mobility, but also in perpetrating a colonialist, white supremacist status quo. As media scholars (see, e.g., Sutherland et al. 2019) have noted, holding the media to greater accountability in terms of the ways in which violent crime is represented, is—given the increasingly global reach and influence of news media—notoriously difficult. However, a national conversation about news media's sensationalistic portrayal of violent crime and violent crime victims is a necessary first step toward transforming misrepresentations that exercise tangible, deleterious effects in Canadian's lives. Further, given the role of gendered crime-prevention advisories in reinforcing media misrepresentations of violent crime, community-university partnerships designed to assess the suitability of law enforcement agencies' current crime-prevention foci are needed to ensure that the crime-prevention strategies that are available to women accurately represent and adequately address gendered harms.

Addressing street harassment and other normalized forms of sexual harassment in public spaces is also integral to transforming women's generally negative affective experiences therein. In a recent (2017) report released by Status of Women Canada, street harassment was discussed as a pervasive form of gender-based violence that has considerable impacts on Canadian women, profoundly limiting "their opportunity to participate equally in Canadian society and their right to lead successful and fulfilling lives" (Gladu 2017:1). Based on the testimony of 93 witnesses, including federal anti-violence organizations; representatives of Status of Women Canada; and representatives of provincial anti-violence organizations including the Ottawa chapter of the anti-street harassment movement *Hollaback!*, the report makes 45 recommendations to address gender-based violence in Canada. These recommendations include that the government fund initiatives, including further research, to address the impacts of street harassment and raise consciousness of its prevalence and harms, and that the criminal code be strengthened by expanding the definitional parameters of what constitutes "reasonably" fearing for one's safety (Gladu 2017:88).

However, more than taking seriously the sexual harassment of women in public spaces and transforming gendered fear discourse through critically re-assessing

gendered crime-prevention foci and endeavouring to hold the media to greater accountability, a transformation of women's constrained usage of public space requires addressing the societal values that render women "most comprehensible as victims" (Hunt 2019).

Discursive emphases on women's "innate vulnerability", and on the actions women "could" or "should" have taken when they do encounter men's violence reinforce a fundamentally disempowering message to young women: that their experiences, safety, and bodies are eminently less valuable than men's normalized spatial and embodied entitlements. Ultimately, it is liminal configurations of femininity that position "Good Women" as those who exist firmly within the extremely marginal spaces carved out for them within white masculine hegemony that must be altered.

While it is difficult to re-vision a future characterized by spatial justice, one in which "appropriate femininity" is not merely the "management of risk" through the performance of classed, racialized, and gendered "respectability", such a future is one in which, undeniably, women take up space.

References

Anderson, Irina, and Kathy Doherty. 2008. *Accounting for Rape: Psychology, Feminism and Discourse Analysis in the Study of Sexual Violence.* London, UK: Routledge.

Aykan, Bahar, and Sanem Güvenç-Salgırlı. 2015. "Responsibilizing Individuals, Regulating Health: Debating Public Spots, Risk, and Neoliberal Governmentality in Contemporary Turkey." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 53(1):71–92.

Bagheri, Nazgol. 2013. "Mapping Women in Tehran's Public Spaces: A Geovisualization Perspective." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(10):1285–1301.

Baker, Joanne. 2008. "The Ideology of Choice. Overstating Progress and Hiding Injustice in the Lives of Young Women: Findings from a Study in North Queensland, Australia." *Women's Studies International Forum* 31(1):53–64.

————. 2010. "Claiming Volition and Evading Victimhood: Post-Feminist Obligations for Young Women." *Feminism & Psychology* 20(2):186–204.

Bauer, Martin, and George Gaskell. 2000. *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Beauchamp, Toby. 2019. *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices.* Durham, UK: Duke University Press.

Becker, Dana. 2005. *The Myth of Empowerment: Women and the Therapeutic Culture in America.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Bernhardsson, Josefin, and Alexandra Bogren. 2012. "Drink Sluts, Brats and Immigrants as Others: An Analysis of Swedish Media Discourse on Gender, Alcohol and Rape." *Feminist Media Studies* 12(1):1–16.

Blommaert, Jan, and Chris Bulcaen. 2000. "Critical Discourse Analysis." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29(1):447–466.

Bockman, Johanna. 2013. "Neoliberalism." *Contexts* 1(3):14–15.

Bolin, Alice. 2018. *Dead Girls : Essays on Surviving American Obsession.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Bondi, Liz, and Damaris Rose. 2003. "Constructing Gender, Constructing the Urban: A Review of Anglo-American Feminist Urban Geography." *Gender, Place & Culture*10(3):229–245.

Boris, Eileen. 1998. "You Wouldn't Want One of 'Em Dancing with Your Wife":
Racialized Bodies on the Job in World War II." *American Quarterly* 50(1):77–108.
Borker, Girija. 2017. *Safety First: Perceived Risk of Street Harassment and
Educational Choices of Women*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown
University. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://voxdev.org/topic/health-
education/perceived-risk-street-harassment-and-college-choice-women-delhi.

Britto, Sarah, Tycy Hughes, Kurt Saltzman, and Colin Stroh 2007. "Does 'Special' Mean
Young, White, and Female? Deconstructing the Meaning of 'Special' on Law &
Order: Special Victims Unit. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*
14(1):39–57.

Brooks, Oona. 2008. "Consuming Alcohol in Bars, Pubs and Clubs: A Risky Freedom for
Young Women?" *Annals of Leisure Research* 11(3–4):331–350.

———. 2011. "'Guys! Stop Doing It!': Young Women's Adoption and Rejection of
Safety Advice When Socializing in Bars, Pubs and Clubs." *British Journal of
Criminology* 51(4):635–651.

Brownmiller, Susan. 1975. *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. New York, NY:
Simon and Schuster.

Bruckert, Chris, and Tuulia Law. 2018. *Women and Gendered Violence in Canada: An
Intersectional Approach*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Burgess, Adam, Pamela Donovan, and Sarah E. H. Moore. 2009. "Embodying
Uncertainty? Understanding Heightened Risk Perception of Drink 'Spiking.'"
British Journal of Criminology 49(6):848–862.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New
York, NY: Routledge.

Byler, Lauren. 2016. "Makeovers, Individualism, and Vanishing Community in the *Harry
Potter* Series." *Children's Literature* 44(1):115–293.

Cambridge University Press. 2019. "Incident". *Cambridge Dictionary Online*. Retrieved
June 20, 2019 from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org.

Campbell, Alex. 2005. "Keeping the 'Lady' Safe: The Regulation of Femininity through
Crime Prevention Literature." *Critical Criminology* 13(2):119–140.

Carll, Elizabeth K. 2003. "News Portrayal of Violence and Women: Implications for
Public Policy." *American Behavioral Scientist* 46(12):1601–1610.

Chmielewski, Jennifer F., Deborah L. Tolman, and Hunter Kincaid. 2017. "Constructing
Risk and Responsibility: A Gender, Race, and Class Analysis of News
Representations of Adolescent Sexuality." *Feminist Media Studies* 17(3):412–
425.

Clare, Eli. 2017. *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*. Durham, UK: Duke
University Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and
Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299.

Creswell, John W., and Cheryl N. Poth. 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design:
Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Czarniawska, Barbara. 2004. "Close Readings: Poststructuralism, Interruption,
Deconstruction." Pp. 85-96 in *Narratives in Social Research*. London, UK: Sage
Publications.

Darnell, Doyanne A, and Sarah L. Cook. 2009. "Investigating the Utility of the Film *War
Zone* in the Prevention of Street Harassment." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*
33(3):266–274.

Davis, Deidre. 1994. "The Harm that Has No Name: Street Harassment, Embodiment,
and African American Women." *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 4(2):133–178.

Day, Kristen. 1999. "Strangers in The Night: Women's Fear of Sexual Assault on Urban
College Campuses." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 16(4):289–
312.

Domosh, Mona, and Joni Seager. 2001. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers
Make Sense of the World*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Dowler, Kenneth. 2006. "Sex, Lies, and Videotape: The Presentation of Sex Crime in
Local Television News." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 34(4):383–392.

Duncan, Nancy. 1996. "Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private
Space." Pp. 127-145 in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and
Sexuality*, edited by N. Duncan. New York, NY: Routledge.

Edwards, Sarah R., Kathryn A. Bradshaw, and Verlin B. Hinsz. 2014. "Denying Rape but
Endorsing Forceful Intercourse: Exploring Differences Among Responders."
Violence and Gender 1(4):188–193.

Fairclough, Norman. 1992. "Introduction." Pp. 1–29 in *Critical Language Awareness*,
edited by N. Fairclough. London, UK: Longman.

Fairchild, Kimberly and Laurie A. Rudman. 2008. "Everyday Stranger Harassment and
Women's Objectification." *Social Justice Research* 21(3):338–357.

Fanghanel, Alexandra. 2014. "Approaching/Departure: Effacement, Erasure, and
'Undoing' the Fear of Crime". *Cultural Geographies* 21(3):343–361.

————. 2018. "How to Break a Rape Culture: Gendered Fear of Crime and the Myth of the Stranger-Rapist." Pp. 417–428 in *The Routledge International Handbook on Fear of Crime*, edited by M. Lee and G. Mythen. London, UK: Routledge.

Fanghanel, Alexandra, and Jason Lim. 2017. "Of 'Sluts' and 'Arseholes': Antagonistic Desire and the Production of Sexual Vigilance." *Feminist Criminology* 12(4):341–360.

Fenster, Tovi. 2005. "Gender and the City: The Different Formations of Belonging." Pp. 242–256 in *A Companion to Feminist Geography*, edited by L. Nelson and J. Seager. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Ferraro, Kenneth F. 1995. *Fear of Crime: Interpreting Victimization Risk*. SUNY Press.

————. 1996. "Women's Fear of Victimization: Shadow of Sexual Assault?" *Social Forces* 75(2):667–690.

Fileborn, Bianca. 2016. "Doing Gender, Doing Safety? Young Adults' Production of Safety on a Night out." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23(8):1107–1120.

Fisher, Bonnie S., and John J. Sloan. 2003. "Unraveling the Fear of Victimization among College Women: Is the 'Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis' Supported?" *Justice Quarterly* 20(3):633–659.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London, UK: Penguin Publishers.

————. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Frost, Nollaig, and Frauke Elichaoff. 2014. "Feminist Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Critical Theory." Pp. 42-73 in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by S. N. Hesse-Biber. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

García-Del Moral, Paulina. 2011. "Representation as a Technology of Violence: On the Representation of the Murders and Disappearances of Aboriginal Women in Canada and Women in Ciudad Juarez." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 36(72):33–62.

Gardner, Carol B. 1989. "Analyzing Gender in Public Places: Rethinking Goffman's Version of Everyday Life." *The American Sociologist* 20(1):42–56.

Gardner, Carol B. 1990. "Safe Conduct: Women, Crime and Self in Public Places." *Social Problems* 37(3):311–328.

Gaventa, John. 2003. *Power After Lukes: A Review of the Literature*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://www.powercube.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/power_after_lukes.pdf.

Gekoski, Anna, Jacqueline Gray, Joanna Adler, and Miranda Horvath. 2017. "The Prevalence and Nature of Sexual Harassment and Assault Against Women and Girls on Public Transport: An International Review." *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice* 3(1):3–16.

Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Gilchrist, Kristen. 2010. "'Newsworthy' Victims? Exploring Differences in Canadian Local Press Coverage of Missing/Murdered Aboriginal and White Women." *Feminist Media Studies* 10(4):373–90.

Gill, Rosalind. 2007. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10(2):147–166.

Gladu, Marilyn. 2017. *Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls*. Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FEWO/Reports/RP8823562/feworp07/feworp07-e.pdf.

Godfrey, Phoebe. 2003. "Bayonets, Brainwashing, and Bathrooms: The Discourse of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Desegregation of Little Rock's Central High." *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 62(1):42–67.

Goh, Kian. 2018. "Safe Cities and Queer Spaces: The Urban Politics of Radical LGBT Activism." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(2):463–477.

Gonick, Marnina. 2004. "Old Plots and New Identities: Ambivalent Femininities in Late Modernity." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 25(2):189–209.

Government of Ontario. 2011. *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives: Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan*. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: http://www.women.gov.on.ca/owd/english/ending-violence/sexual_violence.shtml

Graham, Phil. 2018. "Ethics in Critical Discourse Analysis." *Critical Discourse Studies* 15(2):186–203.

Greer, Chris. 2007. "News Media, Victims and Crime." Pp. 20–49 in *Victims, Crime and Society,* edited by P. Davies, P. Francis, and C. Greer. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Griffin, Susan. 1986. *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Griffin, Christine, Andrew Bengry-Howell, Chris Hackley, Willm Mistral, and Isabelle Szmigin. 2009. "'Every Time I Do It I Absolutely Annihilate Myself': Loss of (Self)Consciousness and Loss of Memory in Young People's Drinking Narratives." *Sociology* 43(3):457–476.

Grimm, Jacob, and Grimm, Wilhelm. 1857. "Rothkäppchen". Pp. 113–118 in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, 1st ed. Translated by D. L. Ashliman. Accessed June 20, 2019 at http://pitt.edu/~dash/grimm026.html.

Hammersley, Martyn. 2003. "Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: Methods or Paradigms?" *Discourse & Society* 14(6):751–781.

Hanhardt, Christina B. 2013. *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Harris, Mary B., and Kari C. Miller. 2000. "Gender and Perceptions of Danger." *Sex Roles* 43(11):843–863.

Hetsroni, Amir. 2012. "Violent Crime on American Television: A Critical Interpretation of Empirical Studies." *Sociology Mind* 2(2):141–147.

Hindes, Sophie, and Bianca Fileborn. 2019. "'Girl Power Gone Wrong': #MeToo, Aziz Ansari, and Media Reporting of (Grey Area) Sexual Violence." *Feminist Media Studies* . https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1606843.

Hirtenlehner, Helmut, and Stephen Farrall. 2014. "Is the 'Shadow of Sexual Assault' Responsible for Women's Higher Fear of Burglary?" *The British Journal of Criminology* 54(6):1167–1185.

Hollander, Jocelyn A. 2001. "Vulnerability and Dangerousness: The Construction of Gender through Conversation about Violence." *Gender & Society* 15(1):83–109.

Hunt, Elle. 2019. "The Dead Girl Trope: What Netflix's Love of Female Victims Says About its Viewers." *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/shortcuts/2019/feb/17/dead-girl-trope-what-netflix-love-of-female-victims-says-about-its-viewers.

Jiwani, Yasmin, and Mary Lynn Young. 2006. "Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31(4)895–917.

Johnstone, Barbara. 2008. *Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Kassam, Ashifa. 2017. "Canada Judge Resigns Over 'Keep Your Knees Together' Comment in Rape Trial". *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/10/canada-judge-resigns-keep-your-knees-together-comment-rape-trial.

Kearl, Holly. 2014. *Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces: A National Street Harassment Report.* Report commissioned by Stop Street Harassment. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/our-work/nationalstudy.

Keller, Jessalynn, Kaitlynn Mendes, and Jessica Ringrose. 2018. "Speaking 'Unspeakable Things': Documenting Digital Feminist Responses to Rape Culture." *Journal of Gender Studies* 27(1):22–36.

Kelly, Liz. 1988. *Surviving Sexual Violence.* Oxford, UK: Polity Press.

Kissling, Elizabeth A. 1991. "Street Harassment: The Language of Sexual Terrorism." *Discourse & Society* 2(1):451–460.

Kitzinger, Jenny. 2011. "Rape in the Media." Pp. 74–98 in *Rape : Challenging Contemporary Thinking*, edited by M. Horvath and J. Brown. Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing.

Koskela, Hillie. 1997. "'Bold Walk and Breakings': Women's Spatial Confidence Versus Fear of Violence." *Gender, Place & Culture* 4(3):301–320.

Kurz, Tim, and Ngaire Donaghue. 2013. "Gender and Discourse." Pp. 61–77 in *The Sage Handbook of Gender and Psychology*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Laniya, Olatokunbo Olukemi. 2005. "Street Smut: Gender, Media, and the Legal Power Dynamics of Street Harassment, or 'Hey Sexy' And Other Verbal Ejaculations." *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 14(1):91–130.

Lee, Chelsey, and Jennifer S Wong. 2019. "99 Reasons and He Ain't One: A Content Analysis of Domestic Homicide News Coverage." *Violence against Women*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219832325.

Lenton, Rhonda, Michael D. Smith, John Fox, and Norman Morra. 1999. "Sexual Harassment in Public Places: Experiences of Canadian Women." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 36(4):517–540.

Lewis, Ruth, Elizabeth Sharp, Jenni Remnant, and Rhiannon Redpath. 2015. "'Safe Spaces': Experiences of Feminist Women-Only Space." *Sociological Research Online* 20(4):1–14.

Lipsitz, G. 2007. "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape." *Landscape Journal* 26(1):10–23.

Liska, Allen E., Andrew Sanchirico, and Mark D. Reed. 1988. "Fear of Crime and Constrained Behavior: Specifying and Estimating a Reciprocal Effects Model." *Social Forces* 66(1):827–837.

Listerborn, Carina. 2016. "Feminist Struggle Over Urban Safety and the Politics of Space." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 23(3):251–264.

Locke, Terry. 2004. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London, UK: Continuum.

Lofland, Lyn H. 1973. *A World of Strangers. Order and Action in Urban Public Space*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Longhurst, Robyn and Lynda Johnston. 2014. "Bodies, Gender, Place and Culture: 21 Years On." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(3):267–278.

Lord, Tracy Lynn. 2009. *The Relationship of Gender-Based Public Harassment to Body Image, Self-Esteem, and Avoidance Behavior*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/04/2009Thesisonstreetharassment1NPA.pdf

Lupton, Deborah. 1995. "Postmodernism and Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 6(2):302–304.

Lykke, Lucia C. 2016. "Visibility and Denial: Accounts of Sexual Violence in Race- and Gender-Specific Magazines." *Feminist Media Studies* 16(2):239–260.

Malamuth, Neil M., Scott Haber, and Seymour Feshbach. 1980. "Testing Hypotheses Regarding Rape: Exposure to Sexual Violence, Sex Differences, and the 'Normality' of Rapists." *Journal of Research in Personality* 14(1):121–137.

Macmillan, Ross, Annette Nierobisz, and Sandy Welsh. 2000. "Experiencing the Streets: Harassment and Perceptions of Safety Among Women." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 37(3):306–322.

Madriz, Esther. 1997. *Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls: Fear of Crime in Women's Lives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mason-Bish, Hannah, and Irene Zempi. 2018. "Misogyny, Racism, and Islamophobia: Street Harassment at the Intersections." *Feminist Criminology*. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.1177/1557085118772088.

Martin, Joanne. 1990. "Deconstructing Organizational Taboos: The Suppression of Gender Conflict in Organizations." *Organization Science* 1(4):339–359.

May, David C. 2001. "The Effect of Fear of Sexual Victimization on Adolescent Fear of Crime." *Sociological Spectrum* 21(2):141–174.

Maxwell, L., A. Sanders, J. Skues, and L. Wise. 2019. "A Content Analysis of Personal Safety Apps: Are They Keeping Us Safe or Making Us More Vulnerable?" *Violence Against Women*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219832124.

McCurn, Alexis S. 2017. "'I Am Not a Prostitute': How Young Black Women Challenge Street-Based Micro-Interactional Assaults." *Sociological Focus* 50(1):52–65.

McRobbie, Angela. 2007. "TOP GIRLS? Young Women and the Post-Feminist Sexual Contract." *Cultural Studies* 21(4–5):718–737.

Mehta, Anna, and Liz Bondi. 1999. "Embodied Discourse: On Gender and Fear of Violence". *Gender, Place & Culture* 6(1):67–84.

Mellgren, Caroline, and Anna-Karin Ivert. 2019. "Is Women's Fear of Crime Fear of Sexual Assault? A Test of the Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis in a Sample of Swedish University Students." *Violence Against Women* 25(5):511–527.

Meyers, Marian. 1997. *News Coverage of Violence against Women: Engendering Blame*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Newcomb, Rachel. 2006. "Gendering the City, Gendering the Nation: Contesting Urban Space in Fes, Morocco." *City & Society* 18(2):233–311.

Nicholls, Emily. 2019. *Negotiating Femininities in the Neoliberal Night-Time Economy: Too Much of a Girl?* Cham, CH: Springer International Publishing.

Noble, Greg. 2005. "The Discomfort of Strangers: Racism, Incivility and Ontological Security in a Relaxed and Comfortable Nation." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26(1–2):107–120.

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). 2010. *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2010-What-Their-Stories-Tell-Us-Research-Findings-SIS-Initiative.pdf.

Odem, Mary. 1995. *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Olszewski, Deborah. 2009. "Sexual Assaults Facilitated by Drugs or Alcohol." *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 16(1):39–52.

Özascilar, Mine. 2013. "Predicting Fear of Crime: A Test of the Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis." *International Review of Victimology* 19(3):269–284.

Pain, Rachel. 1991. "Space, Sexual Violence and Social Control: Integrating Geographical and Feminist Analyses of Women's Fear of Crime." *Progress in Human Geography* 15(4):415–431.

————. 1997. "Social Geographies of Women's Fear of Crime". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22(2):231–244.

Patil, Vrushali, and Bandana Purkayastha. 2015. "Sexual Violence, Race and Media (In)Visibility: Intersectional Complexities in a Transnational Frame." *Societies* 5(3):598–617.

Perrault, Charles.1697. *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé, avec des Moralités: Contes de ma Mère l'Oye.* Translated by Andrew Lang in *The Blue Fairy Book*, 5th ed., Pp. 51–53. London, UK: Longmans, Green and Company.

Peters, Michael A. 2016. "From State Responsibility for Education and Welfare to Self-Responsibilisation in the Market." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 38(1):138–145.

Probyn, Elspeth. 2003. "The Spatial Imperative of Subjectivity." Pp. 290–299 in *The Handbook of Cultural Geography*, edited by K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile and N. Thrift. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Puar, Jasbir. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rader, Nicole E. 2008. "Gendered Fear Strategies: Intersections of Doing Gender and Fear Management Strategies in Married and Divorced Women's Lives." *Sociological Focus* 41(1):34–52.

Ramirez, Renya. 2004. "Healing, Violence and Native American Women." *Social Justice* 31(4):103–116.

Rapley, Tim. 2011. "Studying Discourse: Some Closing Comments". Pp.126–132 in *Doing Conversation, Discourse, and Document Analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Razack, Sherene (ed). 2002. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society.* Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.

Roberts, Nicola Jayne. 2019. "Gender, Sexual Danger and the Everyday Management of Risks: The Social Control of Young Females". *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 3(1):29–44.

Robertson, Leslie A., and Dara Culhane (eds). 2005. *In Plain Sight: Reflections on Life in Downtown Eastside Vancouver.* Vancouver, BC: Talon Books.

Roychowdhury, Poulami. 2013. "'The Delhi Gang Rape': The Making of International Causes." *Feminist Studies* 39(1):282–292.

Ruiz, Jorge. 2009. "Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logic". *FORUM: Qualitative Social Research* 10(2):1–30.

Rutherford, Alexandra. 2018. "Feminism, Psychology, and the Gendering of Neoliberal Subjectivity: From Critique to Disruption." *Theory & Psychology* 28(5):619–644.

Saldana, Johnny. 2017. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Schweik, Susan M. 2009. *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Senn, Charlene Y., and Katalin Dzinas. 1996. "Measuring Fear of Rape: A New Scale." *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 28(2):141–144.

Skeggs, Beverley. 2002. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Shamir, Ronen. 2008. "The Age of Responsibilization: On Market-Embedded Morality." *Economy and Society* 37(1):1–19.

Stanko, Elizabeth. 1985. *Intimate Intrusions: Women's Experience of Male Violence.* London, UK: Routledge.

————. 1996. "Warnings to Women: Police Advice and Women's Safety in Britain." *Violence Against Women* 2(1):5–24.

————. 1997. "Safety Talk: Conceptualizing Women's Risk Assessment as 'Technology of the Soul.'" *Theoretical Criminology* 1(4):479499.

Starks, Helene, and Susan Brown Trinidad. 2007. "Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory". *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10):1372–1380.

Statistics Canada. 2009. "Canadians' Perceptions of Personal Safety and Crime, 2009". *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X, Statistics Canada.

————. 2014a. "Self-Reported Sexual Assault in Canada, 2014". *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X, Statistics Canada.

————. 2014b. "Canadians' Perceptions of Personal Safety and Crime, 2014". *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85–002–X, Statistics Canada.

————. 2016a. "Victims of Police-Reported Violent Crime in Canada: National, Provincial and Territorial Fact Sheets, 2016." *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X, Statistics Canada.

————. 2016b. "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Vancouver [Census metropolitan area], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province]". Statistics Canada.

————. 2017a. "Police-Reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2017." *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X, Statistics Canada.

————. 2017b. "Homicide in Canada, 2017." *Juristat* article. Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X, Statistics Canada.

Stern, Barbara B. 1996. "Textual Analysis in Advertising Research: Construction and Deconstruction of Meanings." *Journal of Advertising* 25(3):61–73.

Stillman, Sarah. 2007. "'The Missing White Girl Syndrome': Disappeared Women and Media Activism." *Gender & Development* 15(3):491–502.

Sullivan, Harmony B. 2011. '*Hey Lady, You're Hot!' Emotional and Cognitive Effects of Gender- Based Harassment on Women.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://knowledge.library.iup.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1237&context=etd.

Sutherland, Georgina, Patricia Easteal, Kate Holland, and Cathy Vaughan. 2019. "Mediated Representations of Violence Against Women in the Mainstream News in Australia." *BMC Public Health* 19(1):1–8.

Storr, Catherine. 1967. *Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf*. London, UK: Puffin Books.

Talja, Sanna. 1999. "Analyzing Qualitative Interview Data: The Discourse Analytic Method." *Library and Information Science Research* 21(4):459–477.

Thompson, Deborah M. 1993. "The Woman in the Street: Reclaiming the Public Space from Sexual Harassment." *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 6(1):31–348.

Tudor, Deborah. 2012. "Selling Nostalgia: Mad Men, Postmodernism and Neoliberalism." *Society* 49(4):333–338.

Tuerkheimer, Deborah. 1997. "Street Harassment as Sexual Subordination: The Phenomenology of Gender-Specific Harm." *Wisconsin Women's Law Journal* 12(2):166–206.

Tyrwhitt-Drake, Hugh. 1999. "Resisting the Discourse of Critical Discourse Analysis: Reopening a Hong Kong Case Study." *Journal of Pragmatics* 31(8):1081–1088.

Valentine, Gill. 1989. "The Geography of Women's Fear". *Area* 12(1):385–390.

————. 1992. "Images of Danger: Women's Sources of Information about the Spatial Distribution of Male Violence." *Area* 24(1):22–29.

Vancouver Police Department (VPD). 2019. "Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault". Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://vancouver.ca/police/organization/services/special-investigation/drug-facilitated-sexual-assault.html.

————. 2019. "Personal Safety". Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://vancouver.ca/police/crime-prevention/for-individuals/personal-safety.html.

van Dijk, Teun. 1993. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 4(2):249–283.

————. 1994. "Editorial: Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 5(4):435–436.

————. 2008. "Towards a Theory of Context." Pp. 1–27 in *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

van Eijk, Gwen. 2017. "Between Risk and Resistance: Gender Socialization, Equality and Ambiguous Norms of Fear of Crime and Safekeeping". *Feminist Criminology* 12(2):103–124.

Vera-Gray, Fiona. 2014. *The Great Problems Are in the Street: A Phenomenology of Men's Stranger Intrusions on Women in Public Space*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, London Metropolitan University. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: http://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/1079.

————. 2016a. "Situating Agency." Trouble and Strife. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: http://www.troubleandstrife.org/2016/05/situating-agency.

————. 2016b. "Have You Ever Wondered How Much Energy You Put into Avoid Being Assaulted? It May Shock You." *The Conversation*. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from: https://theconversation.com/have-you-ever-wondered-how-much-energy-you-put-in-to-avoid-being-assaulted-it-may-shock-you-65372.

Walsh, Sara M. 2015. "Safety Spheres: Danger Mapping and Spatial Justice". *Race, Gender, and Class* 22(1):122–142.

Warr, Mark. 1984. "Fear of Victimization: Why are Women and the Elderly More Afraid?" *Social Science Quarterly* 65(3):681–702.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1(2):125–151.

Wilcox, Pamela, Carol E. Jordan, and Adam J. Pritchard. 2006. "Fear of Acquaintance Versus Stranger Rape as a 'Master Status': Towards Refinement of the 'Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis.'" *Violence and Victims* 21(3):355–370.

Willig, Carla. 2003. "Discourse Analysis". Pp. 143–167 in *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, edited by J. A. Smith. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Wise, Sue, and Liz Stanley. 1987. *Georgie Porgie: Sexual Harassment in Everyday Life*. London, UK: Pandora Press.

Wolfson, Alisa. 2018. "You Can Now Discreetly Test Your Drink for Date Rape Drugs".
Market Watch. Retrieved June 20, 2019 from:
https://www.marketwatch.com/story/you-can-now-discreetly-test-your-drink-for-date-rape-drugs-2018-09-07.