

Copyright
by
Lycia Champagne-Buckley
2019

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

by

Lycia Champagne-Buckley, BA

MASTER'S PROJECT

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Houston-Clear Lake

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in Criminology

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

December, 2019

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

by

Lycia Champagne-Buckley

APPROVED BY

Kimberly D. Dodson, PhD, Chair

Henda Hsu, PhD, Committee Member

RECEIVED/APPROVED BY THE COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES AND
HUMANITIES

Samuel L. Gladden, PhD, Associate Dean

Rick Short, PhD, Dean

Dedication

To all those striving to make your dream come true while learning the balancing act of dreams and reality.

Acknowledgements

To all that have supported me along this journey, especially friends and family who encouraged me and kept me going even when I was ready to quit. To those educators who support their students and believe in them.

ABSTRACT

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

Lycia Champagne-Buckley
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2019

Master's Project Chair: Kimberly D. Dodson, PhD

Media outlets' influence on individual perceptions of crime has increased over the years. Crime related events have become a way to increase ratings and revenue. This is a study of the (1) relationship between media perception of crime and society's fear and also (2) the effect this media perception of crime has on specific elderly, female and minority demographics and their fear of crime. The survey method for the study is a questionnaire, delivered by social media and to undergraduate criminology classes. The hypothesis tests outside factors such as race, gender, income, education, marital status, and residence. The sample population consisted of 83 participants. The results indicate outside factors do influence individuals' misperceptions on fear of crime.

Keywords: fear of crime, media and crime, crime

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	4
Dowler’s Research	4
Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti’s Research.....	5
Britto’s and Noga-Stryron’s Research	6
Callanan and Rosenberger’s Research.....	7
Feedback Model Research	8
Hollis, Downey, Carmen, and Dobbs Research.....	9
Roche, Pickett, and Gertz’s Research	10
Internet Usage among Participants	11
Miller, Tewksbury, and Hensley’s Research	12
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	14
Procedure	14
Sample.....	14
Hypotheses	15
Measures	16
Dependent Variables	16
Independent Variables	17
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	18
Descriptive Analyses	18
Type of Media Usage.....	18
Hours of Media Usage	19
Neighborhood Incivilities	20
Crime Victimization.....	20
Perceptions of Crime.....	21
Bivariate Analyses	24
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	28
Hypotheses	28
Limitations of the Study.....	30
Directions for Future Research	31
REFERENCES	32

APPENDIX A: SURVEY 36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Bivariate Correlation.....	25
-------------------------------------	----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Reported Media Usage	18
Figure 2. Hours of Media Usage.....	19
Figure 3. Fear of Crime Types	21

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The public's perception of crime and justice has changed throughout the decades. The news today is camouflaged as entertainment and regularly includes stories of violence with gruesome details to maintain audience attention and ratings. This type of coverage bombards consumers of both newspapers and television news programs, and emphasizes the frequency of violent events and heightens fear amongst members of society. The media's publication of crime influences society's perception of crime, both negatively and positively. Hollis, Downey, Carmen, and Dobbs (2017, p. 48) reported, "Recent research findings examining the relationship between the media and the fear of crime indicate that there is an association between high levels of media consumption and fear of victimization."

It is essential to broaden viewpoints on crime beyond the standpoint of media in order to understand crime and how it is conveyed through the media. Much of what society knows and understands about crime and justice is obtained from the media. According to Cashmore (2014, p. 3), Graber (1980) "found that 95% of the American public cite mass media as their primary source for information about crime."

When the media reports serious crimes repetitiously, the media's representation can create an unrealistic perception that serious crimes occur more frequently. This type of dramatization can produce a distorted view of crime and unwarranted fear amongst society. Williams and Dickinson (1993) reported, "while media sources were reporting 65% of crime involved violent crimes, in reality only 6% of crime made up these types of crimes," (cited in Cashmore 2014, p. 3).

The fear media creates not only influences poor communities, which also includes those living in the inner cities, but also female and elderly populations that are recorded

as having low victimization experiences. For these two populations, a decrease in social obligations increases the percent of the time at home. This allows more time for television viewing, which increases the opportunity to view reports of crime on television. The increased in this type of television viewing also increases the fear of victimization by viewers who watch it, even in their own home. Research has focused on associating psychological factors with fear of crime, by looking at low reported victimization populations and self-esteem that would influence a protective mode, but have found no relationship, according to Petersen (2016, p. 26).

When looking at fear within neighborhoods or at social-psychological factors, the focus is on risk rather than fear. For many inner-city neighborhoods and poor communities, four sets of physical features apply. These four sets of physical features include physical incivilities, absence of cues of upkeep and local involvement, the influence of specific types of land use, and influence of micro-level design and landscape. Within these inner-city populations, the police are stereotyped as an enemy rather than a friend resulting in low trust and a decline in self-reporting of crimes. This in turn results in residents in these communities lacking the desire to become active members of the community, or to upkeep and make improvements to their homes for fear of victimization by their surrounding neighbors.

An accurate perception of news stories focused on crime is important because it gives the view a better understanding of the fear that inadequate reporting can cause. An individual's demographics can also contribute to their perception of how much crime is occurring in their community. This study focused on addressing the relationship between media and an individual's fear of crime, and took into consideration demographics that are particularly susceptible to this fear. The results indicated the amount of time one spends on media outlets is not important, but the type of crime media viewed by

individuals can directly influence fear of crime. Another result indicated that fear can be associated with both age and gender. According to Callanan and Rosenberger, "Gender is the most significant demographic correlate of fear of crime," (2015, p. 324).

Media outlets will continue their push to make ratings by selling news in order to attract the attention of society. "The public's perception of victims, criminals, deviants, and law enforcement officials is largely determined by their portrayal in mass media," cited by Dowler (2003 p. 109).

CHAPTER II:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dowler's Research

Dowler's (2003) research examines how the media has affected society's perception on fear of crime through media consumption. The author looks into prior research of Gerber et al. (1980, p. 10), who hypothesized that, "individuals who watch a large amount of television are more likely to feel a greater threat from crime, believing crime is more prevalent than statistics indicate, and take more precautions against crime." The author described this as society developing a "mean world view" on crime but was unable to find support for the hypothesis that television viewing had any "direct, substantial effect on fear of crime" (Dowler, 2003, p.110). Dowler (2003) also reviewed research that stated news of local crime cause a greater impact on citizens living within the viewing areas than citizens who do not. Dowler explained that a person's vulnerability towards crime depends mostly on that individual. The author discovered through other researchers' work of Gerber et al. (1980), that white females were most highly influenced and afraid of crime, although they are least likely to be a victim. The National Opinion Survey on Crime and Justice (NOCJS) showed that local crime news was a significant factor for "fear of crime except the fear of being carjacked, murdered, or burglarized while at home," Haghighi and Sorensen (1996). Yet, this fear of crime was not dependent on the type of crime media source. Dowler's research-derived its sample from the NOSCJ (1995). The 1995 NOSCJ sample was taken by telephone calls from adults within the U.S. Participants were asked questions based on television viewing of crime news, crime shows, and the amount time spent watching. The survey had a 62% response rate. Results also specified race, age, income, residence, education, gender, and marital status.

Through univariate and bivariate analysis, Dowler (2003) found that viewers averaged about 15-hours of television per week, 42% of the respondents reported being regular crime shows viewers, while 20% received their news from newspapers. His results indicated the average score was 13.65 for fear of crime based on scaled variables as both dependent and control variables of seven to twenty-eight. These results suggest that viewing of crime (drama) shows significant correlation with fear of crime. Yet, those who get their news from newspapers and the amount of television viewing did not have a significant correlation to fear of crime, indicating that the actual amount of television viewing was not the dominating factor. These findings suggest that the type of crime-show viewed related to fear of crime.

Regular crime show viewers are more likely to be fearful of crime regardless of age, gender, race, income, education, and marital status. Because the finding is statistically weak, Dowler (2003, p. 116) suggests, "It is necessary to conduct multivariate techniques to further address these relationships because of many factors that mitigate or enhance the relationships." For this reason, a more accurate account could be accomplished through triangulated strategies such as content analysis, experimental, and survey research designs. (Dowler, 2003).

Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti's Research

Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti's (2006) article focuses on the conversation of crime as "popular culture." As we have seen in this new age of reality television, programs are incorporating actual events and stylizing it as one researcher described as "infotainment" (Surette, 2007). This stylizing combines entertainment with news by exaggerating the facts and formatting it to intrigue the viewer. This distortion of communication blurs the lines between fact and fiction. Unfortunately, this type of programming confuses real news from entertainment by leading viewers to believe it is

real. This also forms people's perception of what occurs in the courtrooms and the justice system in general. Because of this broadcasting phenomenon, we must consider what people understand to be "knowledge of crime," according to Dowler, Fleming and Muzzatti (2006).

Currently we have many television shows that use crime as entertainment like *NCIS*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Law & Order.*, and documentaries that educate the viewer on real events by dramatizing these events into movies and mini-series. Television news outlets reference these shows as factual. We live in an age of entertainment instead of facts. Viewers have come to believe content they see on television shows are real and accurate. Reality television also depicts crime through shows like *COPS*, *Dateline*, *The First 48*, and *Forensic Files*. It is through many of these "infotainments" that people assume corruption occurs as often as television portrays it. Viewers have come to expect crimes solving to have the quick turnaround as television describes, when in reality it can be quite time consuming and tedious. As Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti (2006) discuss, this unrealistic portrayal of crime has been coined "CSI Effect." This has become a big issue for the criminal justice field, as expectations of forensic evidence are higher than before.

Britto's and Noga-Stryron's Research

Throughout history, researchers have theoretically connected the general public consumption of news via newspapers, radio, television, and the internet in relationship to their attitude towards capital punishment. "Theoretically, the news influences public perceptions of crime and criminality and helps shape perceptions of how the crime problem should be managed," (Britto & Noga-Stryron, 2014, p. 81). Receiving news from the above outlets informs the public of criminal events, but does not help the public to have a better understanding of how the death penalty works. This decreases the

public's ability to have a better understanding of how the death penalty works. Criminal reality shows, both fiction and non-fictional, heighten individuals' perceptions associated with the death penalty perception.

The purpose of the study was to measure the relationship between media consumption and attitude towards capital punishment. Variables race, sex, age, attitude toward the police, collective efficacy, and justice. Four hundred seventy-seven participants completed individual questionnaires during 2010. Survey participants were derived from 25 research students in a criminal justice research methods class who each provided 50 emails of acquaintances. The survey was emailed requesting participants to use survey monkey in order to complete. The independent variable was media consumption, and the control variable was demographic control.

The findings support the hypothesis that "the death penalty is dependent upon the general public's knowledge, and the availability of information, regarding both the administration of the death penalty and available alternatives," (Britto, and Noga-Stryron, 2014, p. 95). Increased viewing of television news, crime shows, and police reality shows were viewed the higher attitudes in support of the death penalty was observed. Individuals who used newspapers, radio, and internet as news consumption portrayed lower attitudes toward capital punishment and were able to consider alternative punishment due to a more in-depth and realistic view of the death penalty.

Callanan and Rosenberger's Research

This study broadens the scope of gender and considers the relationship of race, economic status, and media consumption related to crime coverage and fear in their daily lives. "One of the most consistent findings in the large body of literature on fear of crime is that women express significantly higher levels of fear in comparison to men," according to Callanan and Rosenberger (2015, p. 322). The theory indicates single,

lower educated individuals, and the poor have a higher fear of crime due to lifestyle and availability offered. The population of society that is married and more educated have a more secure lifestyle that allows them to be less fearful of crime.

Callanan and Rosenberger (2015, p. 327) stated, “The purpose of this study is to examine gender differences in the effect on crime-related media consumption on perceptions of a neighborhood crime risk and fear of crime.” Media plays a negative role when focusing on females and their perception of crime. In California, 4,245 adults completed interviews via a computer-assisted telephone survey in 1999. The study mainly done in English lasted about 20-40 minutes and asked 100 questions related to the risk of victimization, fear of crime, media consumption, and the criminal justice system. The survey compared race and social status. Females made up for the majority of study participants. As predicted, women have a higher risk of victimization than men do. When looking at race, Asians felt less threatened of victimization. African Americans and Latinos experienced a higher level of fear related to neighborhood crime. Income and education resulted in higher risk on fear of crime.

Feedback Model Research

The Fear of Crime Media Feedback Model investigated how media influence an individual’s level of fear and how it affects their daily routine and activities. The more exposure an individual has to crime via the media, influences their ability to leave the house and perform daily routines. The purpose of the model is to acknowledge problem-solving methods in order to reduce the risk of victimization.

“Functional fear” helps explain how the fear of crime allows for problem solving, according to Jackson and Gray (2010). The Fear of Crime Media Feedback Model has positive outcomes, but needs more research. The model uses fear of crime with the reality of crime to reduce the risk of victimization. The higher an individual’s outlook on

being victimized results in a higher amount this individual is homebound, which increases their television consumption allowing the media to heighten the individual's fear of victimization.

Hollis, Downey, Carmen, and Dobbs Research

The purpose of the study analyzed correlations between fear of crime and the utilization of protective behaviors. An increasingly important contributor to perceptions of fear in public involves the presentation of crime concerns in certain media outlets (Hollis et al., 2017). The two key research questions for this study are: (1) what is the relationship between media portrayals and fear of crime in the study community, and (2) what are the key demographic correlates of fear of crime. The authors examined how the media are related to the use of social media to communicate information in real-time.

The sample size for this study consisted of 148,489 valid residential addresses for multi-or single-family residences provided by the IT department for a large, southern metropolitan city. Random sampling was used to include 3,200 addresses. Due to non-deliverable, vacant property, or returned addresses the sample population decreased to 1350 addresses. Out of 1350 addresses, returned surveys netted at 320, which was a 23.7% response rate.

The results of this study were analyzed using cross tabs and Chi-square. The first set of analyses examined the relationship between "Crime rates reported by the media affecting perceptions of crime and overall feelings of safety," (Hollis et al., 2017, p. 53). This analysis indicated a weak positive correlation between feelings that the media does have an impact on perceptions of crime, which would affect someone's quality of life. A set of contrasts were used determine how much of an individual's knowledge of crime came from the internet and social media. The result of the study determined that the contrasts did not have statistically significant results. The final group of analyses

individual perceptions on fear of crime based on where the participant lived. This looked at demographic characteristics such as sex, race/ethnicity, education level, marital status, and employment status. The significant relationship identified feelings of safety within the individual cities. Higher educated individuals were more likely to feel safer than those who only had a high school education. Research findings indicate that additional research may be necessary to examine the relationship between media exposure and one's fear of crime. This research demonstrates that we must continue to understand and change the nature of how the public receives information regarding crime. Internet advances have changed how individuals access news, prompting research to understand how these new forms of communication impact feelings of safety, fear of crime, and other perceptions of crime.

Roche, Pickett, and Gertz's Research

The purpose of this study is to examine whether internet news consumption is a predictor of an individual's perception of crime resulting in anxiety. Since the internet has become a form of news, public views of crime have changed. The theoretical assumption underlying cultivation theory is that heavy media consumption may result in higher levels of anxiety as a direct misperception of crime. It involves exposure to criminal justice content, “virtually monopolizes anxieties about crime as well as a worldview that is “demanding [of] protection and even welcoming [of] repression in the name of security (Roche et al., 2016).

This study used four separate national surveys. Two of the samples (1 & 2) were general population samples conducted via telephone and samples (3 & 4) conducted by online questionnaire.

Sample 1: Included 961 completions, which had an overall response rate of 35%. Sample 1 measured three aspects; *Police Powers, Punitive Attitudes, and Perceived Victimization Risk*.

Sample 2: Included 520 completions and had a response rate of 30%. Sample 2 measured two aspects: *Punitive Attitudes and Perceived Victimization Risk*.

Sample 3: Included 926 randomly selected adults using the Survey Monkey's Audience Panel. Sample three measured *Perceived Victimization Risk* with a two-item index.

Sample 4: Included individuals interviewed as part of the 2007-2008 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project. This yielded a sample size of 11,536 respondents. Measures were *Favors the Death Penalty* and *Internet news exposure* measured by days.

During the years of 2007 through 2013, collectively, surveys were used to receive various responses regarding the public's use of the internet to receive news. Approximately 13,000 Americans were surveyed, and these included randomly selected interviews.

Internet Usage among Participants

This study tested two theoretically driven hypotheses: Internet news consumption positively associated with perceived victimization risk resulting in support for harsh criminal punishments, and support for increasing police officer's investigative powers. The second focused on the fact Internet news consumption relates to attitudes when respondents become disaggregated according to their demographic and attitudinal characteristics.

This study found that internet access and usage in the US between 2000 and 2010 has increased by 72 percent. Eighty-four percent of Americans have internet access and use it to gain information regarding crime and justice. No evidence was found that the

internet is positively associated with any crime anxiety. There were significant differences based on political ideology and one's view on crime and justice.

The availability of the internet has provided a significant source for individuals to receive news (world and local). This has provided for individuals beginning at a very young age looking at the internet. This can shape a person's news experience; therefore, the chance of it being completely true multiplies. The internet news is less censored or fact-checked, leaving out essential parts of the story.

Miller, Tewksbury, and Hensley's Research

This study assess the perceptions and degree of accuracy in the information that university students have regarding basic criminal justice issues that they have heard thru entertainment media sources. Individuals "learn" about specific criminal justice issues via their personal experiences, others' experiences, and the media. Sometimes these views represent stereotypes and assumptions. This research addressed some of the common myths about crime and justice in the U.S. that frequently portrayed in the media (Miller et al., 2004).

The sample for this research study came from criminal justice and sociology students from four state universities in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida. These students submitted surveys in the fall 2001 semester. Five hundred and seventy-five students participated, 37% were freshmen, 28% were sophomores, 23% were juniors, and 12% were seniors.

The six dependent variables used: number of homicides, number of prison inmates, number of inmates killed by inmates, number of correctional officers murdered by inmates, number of male consensual sexual acts in prison, and number of male sexual assaults. The students overestimated—often by substantial amounts—the number of

prison inmates, homicides, killings of imprisonment, and sexual assaults among inmates. The upper-level students had the same perceptions/knowledge as the lower level students.

The implications of this research suggest for society to understand the size and scope of crime and criminal justice problems, there needs to be changes in both educational efforts and mass media presentation of crime and justice issues (Miller, Tewksbury, & Hensley, 2004). It is clear that the media plays an essential role in a person's perception of crime; therefore, it is society's obligation to set standards to decrease this misperception.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

Procedure

The survey was conducted on social media via Facebook and through recruitment from undergraduate criminology classes at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Participants were presented with a statement of consent describing the study and requesting their participation (see Appendix A). These individuals obtained access to participate and complete the survey.

Sample

Eighty-three participants completed the survey. Out of the 83 respondents, 64 (77.11%) identified as *female*, 18 (21.69%) as *male*, and 1 (1.20%) as *other*. The average age was between 26-30 years old with 22 (26.51%) self-reporting their age within this category. There were no participants under 15, 3 (3.61%) for 15-20, 10 (12.05%) for 21-25, 4 (4.82%) for 31-35, 9 (10.84%) for 36-40, 5 (6.02%) for 41-45, 5 (6.02%) for 45-50, 10 (12.05%) for 51-55, 10 (12.05%) for 56-60, 3 (3.61%) for 61-65, 1 (1.20%) for 66-70, and 1 (1.20%) for *above 70*.¹ For race/ethnicity, *Whites* represented 45 (54.22%), *Hispanic/Latino* 27 (32.53%), *Black or African American* 7 (8.43%), *Native American or American Indian* 0 (0.00%), *Asia/Pacific Islander* 3 (3.61%), and *Other* at 1 (1.20%).² The sample did not specify what *other* category represented. Within the sample, 30 (36.14%) reported being *single*, 40 (48.19%) *married*, 0 (0.00%) *separated*, 10 (12.05%) *divorced*, and 3 (3.61%) classified as *other*. The sample did not specify what *other* category represented. In the income category, 1 (1.20%) reported *no income*, 7 (8.43%) reported \$1-\$999, 8 (9.64%) reported \$10,000-\$24,999, 13 (15.66%) reported \$25,000-

¹ The total for age is 99.98% with .02% missing.

² The total for race is 99.99%, with .01% missing.

\$49,999, 28 (33.73%) reported \$50,000-\$74,999, 14 (16.87%) reported \$75,000-\$99,999, and 12 (14.46%) reported above \$100,000 income. ³

When asked who the respondent lives with, 11 (13.25%) *live alone*, 18 (21.69%) live with *immediate family*, 49 (59.04%) *live with children/spouse*, 3 (3.61%) *live with a roommate* and 2 (2.41%) classified as *other*. The sample did not specify what *other* category represented. Most of these families live in *suburban communities* at 45 (54.22%), followed by *urban communities* 23 (27.71%), and *rural communities* 15 (18.07%). The education level for the sample reflected 3 (3.66%) with either a *high school diploma or GED* 41 (50.00%), *some college*, 23 (28.05%), *Bachelor's Degrees*, 10 (12.20%) with *Graduate Degrees*, and 5 (6.10%) with *other*. This sample did not include any participant that had less than a *high school diploma or GED*. The sample did not specify what *other* category represented. ⁴

Hypotheses

The seven hypotheses tested in this study include:

H₁: Females are more likely than males to report fear of crime.

H₂: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report fear of crime.

H₃: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report neighborhood incivilities.

H₄: Minorities are more likely to report misperceptions about crime.

H₅: Neighborhood incivilities are positively related to fear of crime.

H₆: Misperceptions of crime are positively related to fear of crime.

H₇: Being a victim of a crime are positively related to misperceptions of crime.

³ The total for race is 99.99% with .01% missing.

⁴ The total for education is 100.01% with .01% over.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Fear/Worry about Crime. According to Haghighi and Sorensen (1996), fear of crime can be measured in significant fear of sexual assaults, muggings, carjacking, attacks, knifings, shootings, and burglaries. There was no significant data indicating one type of media source resulting in manifesting these fears, but reflects across all media sources (Dowler, 2003, p. 109). For this study, fear of crime was measured using seven items that examine the respondents' fear/worry toward crime. Respondents were asked if they worry about being the victim of sexual assaults, carjacking, muggings, attacks, stabbings, shootings, murders, and burglaries. Each question on fear/worry of crime has a four-category responses ranging from *very frequently*, *somewhat frequently*, *seldom*, and *never*. The seven items were scaled to establish an index on fear of crime that ranges from seven (low worry) to twenty-eight (high worry). Higher scores indicate a more significant amount of fear/worry about crime. Question design reflected the participants' attitude: ex. *I worry about being sexually assaulted*. Then the rating ranked from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, allowing the participant to pick one actively.

Perception of Crime. Crime perceptions were measured by using five items that examine the respondent's attitudes towards violence in the media. Respondents were asked what they think are the national crime rate, prison population, the cost of incarceration, and number of individuals killed by police. Each question has four-category responses ranging from *very high*, *high*, *low*, and *very low*. The four items established an index scale of the perception of crime ranging from four (very low) to 20 (very high). Higher scores indicate a more considerable amount on perception of crime, and lower scores indicate a negative appraisal on the perception of crime. Question design reflected participants' attitudes: e.g., *I feel the media portrays too much violence*

when airing. Then the rating allowed the participant to rate *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Independent Variables

Mass Media. The media variables include crime-show viewing, viewing hours, and crime viewing source. Crime-show viewing was measured by asking respondents if they are frequent viewers of a crime shows. Viewing hours were measured by asking respondents how many hours of media violence they watch per week. Finally, respondents were asked their primary source of crime media. The categories include television, newspaper, radio, friends/family, and smartphone apps. These categories were dummy coded for the analysis. Question design reflected participants to self-report: e.g., *How many hours of crime-related media do you view a week?* The choices were: *0-5-week, 6-10-week, 11-15-week, 16-20-week, 21 + a week.*

Control Variables. Several control variables were employed in this research to ensure that media effects were adequately measured. Demographic variables such as race, gender, age, income, residence, level of education, and marital status were employed in the analysis. Race, income, residence, level of education and marital status are dummy-coded. A scale measured the respondent's attitudes toward problems in their neighborhoods. Respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of several issues in their communities. The problems included trash and litter, loose dogs, unsupervised youth, graffiti, vacant houses, noise, people drunk/high in public, and abandoned cars. The answers were ranked *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Type of Media Usage

When asked to report the type of media used, participants were able to choose all categories that applied to them. The top three categories reported were the *internet* at 71 (85.54%), *social media* at 69 (83.13%), and *television* 64 (77.11%) (see Figure 1). *Radio* and *word of mouth* signified that a moderate number of participants are still using these mediums as a way to gather information. The survey reflected *radio* at 34 (40.96%) and *word of mouth* at 33 (39.76%). The decreased percentages for reading were supported by the low number of *newspapers* 13 (15.66%) and *magazines* 10 (12.05%), which indicates the majority of society is using the *internet* for consuming information related to crime coverage.

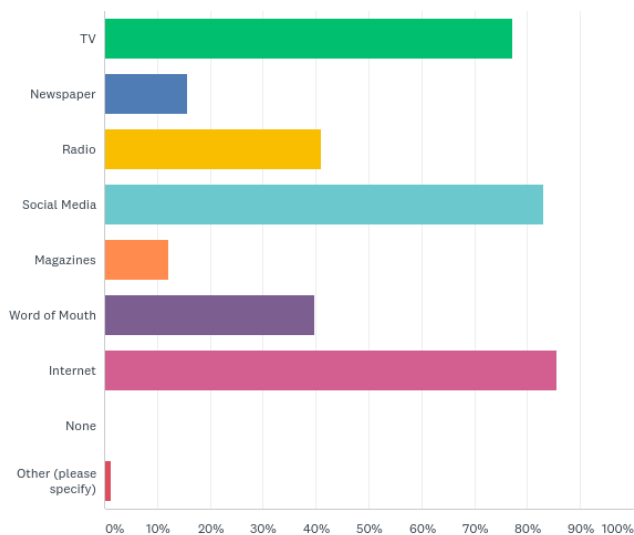


Figure 1. *Reported Media Usage*

Hours of Media Usage

Respondents were asked to indicate how many hours of media they viewed each week. The hours were broken down in increments of five-hour blocks. For *0-5 hours* 21 (25.30%) responded, 21 (25.30%) responded to watching *6-10 hours* per week, 19 (22.89%) reported watching *11-15 hours*, 13 (15.66%) responded to *16-20 hours*, and 9 (10.84%) indicated they watched *over 21 hours* a week.⁵ For the individuals who watched *0-5 hours* per week, 53 (63.86%) participants spent their hours watching crime-related media. For participants who spent *6-10 hours*, 19 (22.89%) reported hours watched focused on crime-related media, in the category of *11-15 hours* 7 (8.43%) included crime-related media, *16-20 hours* 3 (3.61%) reported crime-related media and the 1 (1.20%) individual *over 21 hours* reported time focused on crime-related media.⁶ The data reflected that more than half of the sample used their media time watching crime-related media regardless of how many hours per week they watched in general.

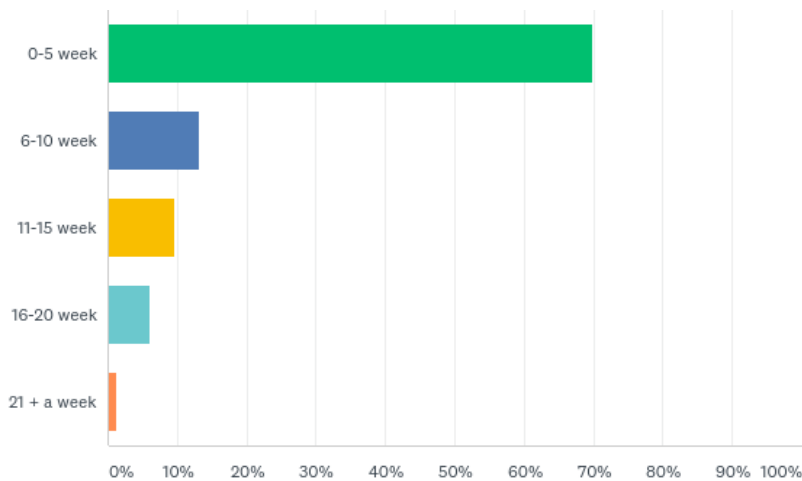


Figure 2. *Hours of Media Usage*

⁵ The total for hours of media watched is 99.99%, with .01% missing.

⁶ The total for crime-related media watched is 99.99%, with .01% missing.

Neighborhood Incivilities

The survey addressed neighborhood incivilities to determine the type of living conditions contributing to fear of crime for the sample population. For the majority of the sample, their neighborhoods did not provide any significant concerns that might warrant an individual's fear of crime. In fact, the majority of the sample reported that they *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that neighborhood incivilities, such as vacant houses 46 (48.19%), abandoned cars 54 (60.98%), intoxication or drug use 50 (50.03%)⁷, and the presence of graffiti 58 (62.65%) were present. The two questions that individuals within the sample did experience in their neighborhoods were trash or litter 51 (61.24%)⁸ and loose dogs 49 (59.03%).⁹ When the sample group was asked if they observe unsupervised youth within the neighborhoods, it was almost an equal distribution between *agrees* 46 (44.58%) and *disagrees* 33 (43.37%), with 10 (12.05%) individuals neither *agreeing* nor *disagreeing*. This data are concessive for the type of neighborhoods the majority of the sample resides.

Crime Victimization

The data indicate a high percentage of the sample have been victims of crime with 50 (60.24%) reporting, but the survey does not break down the type of crime. The sample was asked overall how fearful they are of being a victim of a crime. For *not fearful* 24 (25.92%) responded, *somewhat fearful* 40 (48.19%) responded, *fearful* 12 (14.46%) responded, and *very fearful* 7 (8.43%) responded. For the types of crimes participants are *fearful of* 57 (68.68%) indicated burglary, 56 (67.47%) indicated mugging, 51 (61.44%) indicated physical assault, 57 (68.67%)¹⁰ indicated carjacking, 40 (48.78%) indicated sexual assault, 45 (58.54%) indicated attacked at knifepoint, 57

⁷ The total for intoxication or drug use is 99.98% with .02% missing.

⁸ The total for trash or litter is 99.99%, with .01% missing.

⁹ The total for loose dogs is 99.9%, with .01% missing.

¹⁰ The total for physical assault is 99.99% with .01% missing.

(69.48%) indicated attacked at gunpoint, and 51 (61.44%) indicated murder.¹¹ For both *fear of being attacked at knifepoint or gunpoint*, one participant did not answer.

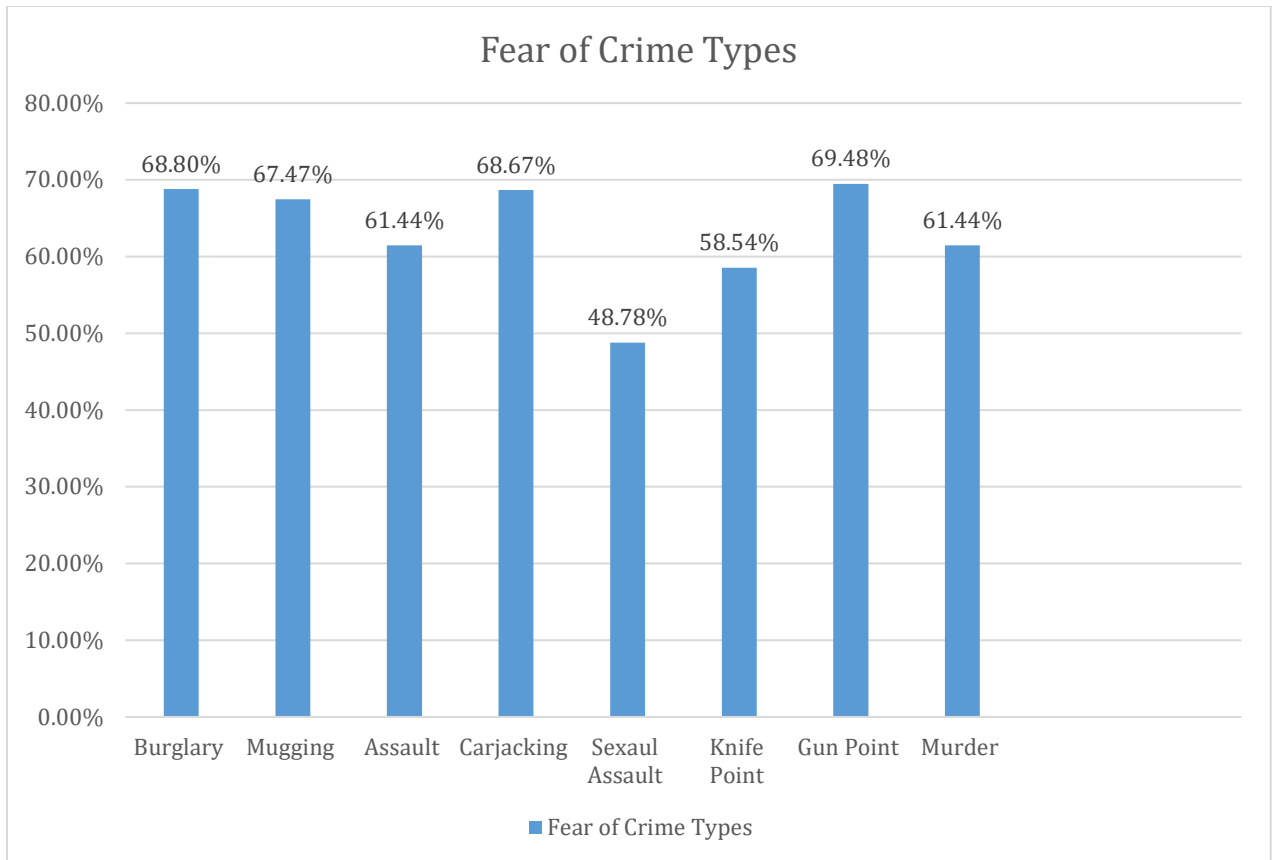


Figure 3. *Fear of Crime Types*

Perceptions of Crime

The survey also focused on if rather the perpetrator would be a stranger or someone the victim knew. The two questions focused on sexual assault and murder. The results indicated that the majority of respondents believed that they were more likely to be sexually assaulted 33 (39.76%) or murdered 28 (33.73%) by someone they know rather than a stranger.¹² These results are consistent with research on sexual assault and

¹¹ The total for murder is 99.99%, with .01% missing.

¹² The total for sexual assault is 99.99% with .01% missing.

murder, according to Callanan and Rosenberger (2015, p. 324). However, it is interesting to note that 31 (37.34%) on assault and 39 (46.98%) on murder respondents believed the perpetrator would be a stranger rather than someone they know. In addition, 19 (22.89%) of assault, and 16 (19.28%) of murder reported they were unsure who the perpetrator would be. In other words, respondents either had a misperception of crime or were unsure about how victimization occurs in situations involving sexual assault and murder.

When looking at women and perpetrators of abuse and sexual assault, results indicate intimate partners are more responsible rather than strangers. For sexual assault, 60 (72.29%) *agreed to strongly agree* that they were more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner than a stranger. In looking at abuse, 77 (92.78%) *agreed to strongly agree* that an intimate partner was more likely to abuse them than a stranger. In examining the influence that intimate partners have on women to commit criminal acts, 45 (54.22%) *agree to strongly agree* that an intimate partner encouraged them to commit their crimes. An additional 20 (24.10%) reported that they were *neutral* about whether an intimate partner influenced them, and 18 (21.68%) reported *somewhat disagree to disagree* that an intimate partner had influenced their criminal behavior. This response coincides with data provide that women have a higher risk of being victimized due to their gender. "Women are more likely to be victims of sex crimes, generating an ever-present fear of sexual victimization," according to Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum. (2006, p. 285).

The majority of the sample *agreed* 47 (56.63%)¹³ that crime is on the rise in the United States, including violent crime 51 (61.44%)¹⁴ with the national rate ranging between *average* 32 (38.55%), and *high* 32 (38.55%).¹⁵ According the Federal Bureau

¹³ The total for crime is on a rise is 100.01% with .01% over.

¹⁴ The total for violent crime is 99.99% with .01% missing.

¹⁵ The total for how high national rate is 99.99% with .01% missing.

of Investigations and Department of Justice, violent crime has been on a decrease since 2016 (Criminal Justice Information Services Division, 2019). Since 2018, violent crimes decreased 3.3% from 2017. The misperception the sample represents contribute to the self-reporting of hours spent on crime-and news-related to television. According to Roberts and Doob (1990), and Surette (1998), the majority of public knowledge about crime and justice derive from the media (Dowler, 2003, p. 109).

For the number of prisoners in the United States, the sample indicated an above average of 67 (80.72%) for *high* and *very high* categories.¹⁶ The participants illustrated the cost to incarcerate an individual as costly by 78 (93.98%) participants selecting *high* and *very high* categories. The sample's responses indicate a misperception associated with number of inmates incarcerated, but indicates accurate perceptions of the cost of incarceration. In statistics according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, incarcerations have been decreasing over the last two years, (BJS, 2019). The misperception of the sample reflects the hype in numbers media outlets report in order to instill fear of crime among their viewers. For the cost of housing inmates according to Henrichson and Delaney (2012), over the past 40 years, the United States has seen a dramatic increase in the use of prisons to combat crime. The cost of incarceration fluctuates between states, but averages around \$80.00 per day during fiscal year 2017, according to the bureau.

For the number of individuals killed by police officers, the survey reflects 13 (15.66%) indicated *very low*, 22 (26.51%) indicated *low*, 35 (42.17%) indicated *average*, 10 (12.05%) indicated *high*, and 2 (3.61%) indicated *very high*. Though the news media perceives these numbers to be higher by the significant reporting these incidents receive, the sample has an adequate perception of how many individuals killed by the police.

¹⁶ The total for prisoners is 99.99% with .01% missing.

When asked if blacks are more likely to sell drugs than whites resulted in 28 (33.74%) *somewhat agreed* to *strongly agree* responses, 29 (34.94%) for *neutral* and 26 (31.5%) *somewhat disagree* to *strongly disagree*. This response coincides with the BJS statistics indicated from 1999-2001, where blacks ranked highest for perceived drug use. The response related to immigrants being more likely to commit criminal acts reflected what statistics indicates, that they do not (Schaible and Hughes, 2012, p. 247). Stereotyping and negative interactions with police increases misperceptions about immigrants resulting in inadequate representation.

Bivariate Analyses

A bivariate correlation allows us to determine the relationship between two variables. A bivariate correlation shows the relationship between several variables in this analysis, including race, gender, and fear of crime (FOC), neighborhood incivilities, and misperceptions of crime (MOC). Fear of Crime, neighborhood incivilities, and misperceptions of crime represent individual scale measures. Two of the measures had an acceptable level of reliability for the current analysis: fear of crime ($\alpha = .94$) and neighborhood incivilities ($\alpha = .87$). Misperceptions of crime ($\alpha = .66$) had a lower level of reliability than the other two scales, and DeVellis (2002) recommends minimal reliability of 70 for research purposes. However, the misperceptions scale was retained for the current analysis. Table 1 presents the results of the bivariate correlation. Each of the hypotheses were presented below, and support or non-support for the hypotheses was discussed.

Table 1.

Bivariate Correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender	-					
2. Race	-.01	-				
3. Incivilities	-.01	-.04	-			
4. FOC	-.15	-.12	-.31***	-		
5. MOC	.23*	-.10	.03	.06	-	
6. Victim	-.13	-.01	-.17	.13	.21*	-

*Significant $p = .10$

**Significant $p = .05$

***Significant $p = .01$

H₁: Females are more likely than males to report fear of crime.

The findings of the bivariate correlation results show that gender was positively and significantly related to fear of crime ($r = .23, p = .042$) at the .05 level. That is, males fear to be victims of crime more than females, which is not consistent with previous research. One reason for this finding may be the result of having a low number of males in the sample. In addition, most females reported living in suburban communities where crime is lower; therefore, the perceived threat of victimization may be low. Gender was not significantly related to perceived neighborhood incivilities or misperceptions of crime.

H₂: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report fear of crime.

H₃: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report neighborhood incivilities.

H₄: Minorities are more likely to report misperceptions about crime.

Race was not significantly related to fear of crime, neighborhood incivilities, or misperceptions of crime. In addition, the findings are not in the theoretically expected direction. That is, the findings show minority individuals report a lower level on fear of crime ($r = -.12$, $p = .272$) and fewer neighborhood incivilities ($r = -.04$, $p = .701$). Again, these findings are most likely related to the fact that respondents reported living in suburban areas where the perceived incivilities are low, which drives perceptions on fear of crime.

H₅: Neighborhood incivilities are positively related to fear of crime.

Neighborhood incivilities were significantly and negatively related to fear of crime ($r = -.31$, $p = .005$), which is not in the theoretically predicted direction. In other words, greater perceived neighborhood incivilities were positively related to an increase in fear of crime. The current findings suggest more neighborhood incivilities decrease perceptions on fear of crime. The reason for this finding is not completely clear, but participants may not view the neighborhood incivilities as incivilities related to criminal behavior. In addition, most respondents reported an absence of such incivilities in their neighborhoods.

H₆: Misperceptions of crime are positively related to fear of crime.

Misperceptions of crime and fear of crime ($r = .06$, $p = .621$) are positively related, although the relationship is not statistically significant. This means as misperceptions of crime increase, so does one's fear of crime. However, although the relationship is in the predicted direction it is not statistically significant.

H₇: Being a victim of a crime is positively related to misperceptions of crime.

The findings also showed that being the victim of a crime is positively and significantly related to misperceptions of crime ($r = .21$, $p = .063$) at the .10 level. That

is, if respondents are the victims of previous crimes, they are more likely to have misperceptions about crime. This finding is consistent with theoretical expectations because those who have been crime victims may believe that crime is on the rise and hold other misperceptions regarding crime.

CHAPTER V:
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For this proposal, seven hypotheses were developed and tested to determine if the media influences individuals' perception of crime, which in turn, influences fear of crime. Below each hypothesis are presented and the findings are discussed within the context of the empirical literature.

Hypotheses

H₁: Females are more likely than males to report fear of crime.

Gender is a significant factor when looking at the perception on fear of crime. "Gender is the most significant demographic correlate on fear of crime, with women consistently reporting higher levels of fear than men," (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2015, p. 324). Even though females are less likely to be victims of violent crime, the heightened sense of physical vulnerability plays an integral part in female fear of crime. The data collected from the current survey indicated the opposite, reporting that males are more likely to report fear of crime than females. This finding may be partly due to the sampling design used for this study. Specifically, there was a disproportionate number of female criminology majors in the sample and they would have more knowledge about the realities of crime victimization in comparison to the public.

H₂: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report fear of crime.

H₃: Minorities are more likely than Whites to report neighborhood incivilities.

H₄: Minorities are more likely to report misperceptions about crime.

Studies indicate minorities report higher levels on fear of crime. The factors associated with this fear focus on environmental and contextual factors. In other words, minority populations are prone to living in run-down neighborhoods, which is a reflection of lower-income status. There is empirical evidence that police frequently stereotype

minorities, resulting in negative interactions. This heightens minorities' fear of crime, crime reporting, and perception of crime and neighborhood incivilities. According to Schaible and Hughes (2012), contemporary theories suggest that, because of limited access and generalized distrust, residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods are relatively unlikely to report crime to the police.

Looking at the effects that neighborhood incivilities have to fear of crime, data shows these two are related. As a neighborhood social organization and informal social control start to weaken, opportunities for delinquent behaviors, crime, and disorder increase. For many individuals, especially the elderly and female, this has a direct link to fear of crime. Skogan (1986) explored fear of crime and neighborhood incivilities stating, "Fear of crime in 'disintegrating' neighborhoods can result in residents physically withdrawing from community life and focusing their concerns with the household," (as cited in Roberts & Indermaur, 2007, p. 61). At this point, fear of crime initiates the risk of crime and neighborhoods focus on preventive measures to avoid the risk. For this study, the fear of crime related to neighborhood incivilities reflected low rates. This maybe a direct result of suburban living self-reported by the participants. Suburbs were designed to provide the middle-class population an alternative to social problems associated with disproportionately large and poor communities.

H₆: Misperceptions of crime are positively related to fear of crime.

Misperceptions of crime does influence an individual's fear of crime. Misperceptions occur when false and incorrect information is delivered to society via media outlets. These outlets use this type of tactic to improve their ratings. As discussed in the introduction, media outlets focus on heinous crimes to catch their audience's attention, providing a false perception that these types of crimes occur repeatedly and frequently, creating a perception of fear within society.

H₇: Being a victim of a crime is positively related to misperceptions of crime.

When focusing on victims and fear of crime, research indicates the effect is lower than society thinks. Outside sources contribute to the misperception of crime. For example, Skogan (1986) contends, "people often inflate, deflate or garble the actual crime risks through perceptions derived from extraneous considerations," (as cited in Myers, Samuel, Chung, & Chanjin, 1998, 3222). He elaborates on this statement to focus on secondhand information and perception, a racial succession of neighborhoods, and irrational prejudices as causes for misperceptions, even for actual victims. The majority of the sample in this study reported there was a rise in crime in the United States including violent crime, but they did not report a fear of crime. The correlation between the high percentage of crime and violent crime and low percentage on fear of crime may be that the majority of the sample felt there is a high percentage of both prisoners, and incarcerated individuals, resulting in the opinion that police are keeping them safe.

It is important to note that one's perception contributes to one's thoughts about crime. Media influences perceptions by reporting false and incorrect information, emphasizing on heinous crimes, and subsiding to political restraints within the organizational structure. As illustrated in this study, other outside factors can contribute to these misperceptions of fear of crime.

Limitations of the Study

Sampling design was the main limitation of this study. Dissemination of the survey to criminology students may have influenced the findings. These students consisted of registered undergraduate students attending University of Houston, Clear Lake. This caused a biased outcome for the survey. Criminology students study crime and make conclusions supported by research evidence, unlike the average individual who relies on the media for information. As indicated in the study, the media provide society

with misperceptions related to actual life events. Tsoudis (2000, p. 225) notes, “The media influences the public in many of these misperceptions, often shaping beliefs and ideologies.” Therefore, it is not surprising the outcome of the survey reflected the student’s knowledge of crime resulting in lower levels on fear of crime. The lack of male respondents answering the survey also influenced the outcome by preventing accurate representation by this gender. Although females are typically more fearful of crime victimization, it is important for the sample to be gender representative to determine the level of fear between both genders.

Directions for Future Research

The influence media has on fear of crime and the perception of crime is a vital topic to decipher. It helps researchers to discredit society’s false perceptions on this subject matter, and lowers levels on fear of crime within society. Researchers should continue to explore the factors that influence the fear of crime and how individuals form misperceptions about crime.

In addition, future surveys should eliminate the neutral response in the measures on fear of crime. Giving respondents a neutral category does not accurately measure the level on fear of crime individuals might actually be experiencing. Instead, this option provides the opportunity for responds to express no opinion of the subject matter to avoid any consequences the individual might feel is associated with their response. As indicated in this survey, respondents would frequently select a neutral category when provided.

REFERENCES

- Britto, S., & Noga-Styron, K. (2014). Media consumption and support for capital punishment. *Criminal Justice Review*, 39(1), 81-100.
doi:10.1177/0734016814522645
- Bronson, J., & Carson, A. (2019). Prisoners in 2017 (NCJ 252156). Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Callanan, V., & Rosenberger, J. (2015). Media, gender, and fear of crime. *Criminal Justice Review*, 4 (3), 322-339. doi:10.1177/0734016815573308
- Cashmore, J. (2014). The “fear of crime-media feedback” cycle. *Internet Journal of Criminology*, ISSN 2045 6743, 1-19. doi:10.3138/cjccj.48.6.837.
- Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2018). Crime in the United States. Retrieved from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/topic-pages/violent-crime>
- Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10(2), 109-126.
- Dowler, K., Fleming, T., & Muzzatti, S. L. (2006). Constructing crime: Media, crime, and popular culture. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 48 (6), 837-850. doi:10.3138/cjccj.48.6.837
- Henrichson, C., & Delany, R. (2013). The price of prisons: What incarceration costs taxpayers. *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 25(1), 68-80.

- Hollis, M., Downey, S., Carmen, A., & Dobbs, R. (2017). The relationship between media portrayals and crime: perceptions of fear of crime among citizens. *Crime Prevention & Community Safety*, 19(1), 46-60. doi:10.1057/s41300-017-0015-6
- Lopez, K. (2016) *Neighborhood incivilities: Effects of disorder on fear of crime, perceived risk of victimization, and constrained social behavior*. (Master's Thesis).
- Miller, A. J., Tewksbury, R., & Hensley, C. (2004). College students' perceptions of crime, prison and prisoners. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 17(3), 311-328. doi:10.1080/147860104200028113210
- Parmigiani, P. (1995). *Suburban hybrids for city living: The making of new middle-class family neighborhoods in central cities*, (Master's Thesis).
- Parker, K., & Ray, M. (2010). Fear of crime: An assessment of related factors. *Sociological Spectrum*, 10 (1) 29-40, doi: 10.1080/02732173.1990.9981910
- Peterson, N. (2016). Neighborhood context and media: Constructions of murder: A multilevel analysis of homicide newspaper coverage in Los Angeles county. *Homicide Studies*, 20(1) 25-52. doi:10.1177/1088767914554616
- Pfeiffer, C., Windzio, M., & Kleimann, M. (2005). Media use and its impact on crime perception, sentencing attitudes and crime policy. *European Journal of Criminology*, 2(3) 259-285. doi:101177/1477370805054099
- Roberts, L. & Indermaur, D. (2007). Predicting Punitive Attitudes in Australia, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 14(1), 56-65, doi:10.1375/pplt.14.1.56

- Roche, S. P., Pickett, J. T., & Gertz, M. (2016). The scary world of online news? Internet news exposure and public attitudes toward crime and justice. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 32(2), 215-236. doi:10.1007/s10940-015-9261-x
- Schafer, J., Huebner, B., & Bynum, T. (2006). Fear of crime and criminal victimization: Gender-based contrasts. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 285-301.
doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2006.03.003
- Schaible, L., & Hughes, L. (2012). Neighborhood disadvantage and reliance on the police. *Crime & Delinquency* 58(2). 245-274. doi:10.1177/0011128708322531
- Schmitt, J., Warner, K., & Gupta, S. (2010). *The high budgetary cost of incarceration*. Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research
- Skogan, W. (1986). Fear of crime and neighborhood change. *Crime and Justice* 8. 203-229. doi:10.1086/449123
- Simmons, A. (2017). Cultivating support for punitive criminal justice policies: News sectors and the moderating effects of audience characteristics. *Social Forces* 96 (1), 299-328. doi:10.1093/sf/sox031
- Surette, R., & Otto, C. (2002). A test of a crime and justice infotainment measure. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30, 443-453. doi:10.1016/S0047-2352(02)00147-2
- Tamborini, R., Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1984). Fear and victimization: Exposure to television and perceptions of crime and fear, *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 8(1), 492-513.
doi:10.1080/2380898531984.11678587

Tsoudis, O. (2000). Does majoring in criminal justice affect perceptions of criminal justice? *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 11(2), 225-236.

doi:10.1080/10511250000084881

APPENDIX A:

SURVEY

1. What is your gender?
(Female, Male, other)
2. What is your age?
(Under 15, 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66-70, above 70)
3. What is your Race/Ethnicity?
(White, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Native American or American Indian, Asia/Pacific Islander, Other)
4. What is your estimated annual income?
(\$0, \$1 - \$999, \$10,000 to \$24,999, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, above \$100,000)
5. Who do you live with?
(Live alone, living with immediate family, living with children/spouse, live with roommate)
6. Where do you live?
Rural Community, Suburban Community, and Urban Community
7. What is your level of education?
(no schooling completed, 8th grade or lower, some high School, High School diploma or GED, Some College, Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Degree, Other)

8. What is your Marital Status?
(Single, Married, Separated, Divorce, Widow)
9. Are you frequently home?
(Very infrequently, somewhat infrequently, occasionally, somewhat frequently, very frequently)
10. Which of the following do you use for media? (Choose all that apply).
(tv, newspaper, radio, social media, magazines, word of mouth, internet, none)
11. How many hours of media watched per week?
(0-5 week, 6-10 week, 11-15 week, 16-20 week, 21 + a week)
12. How many hours of news related media watched per week?
(0-5 week, 6-10 week, 11-15 week, 16-20 week, 21 + a week)
13. How many hours of crime related media watched per week?
(0-5 week, 6-10 week, 11-15 week, 16-20 week, 21 + a week)
14. What do you think is the percentage of prisoners in the United States?
(Very low, low, average, high, very high)
15. What do you think it cost to be incarcerated?
(Very low, low, average, high, very high)
16. How many individuals do you think are killed by police each year?
(Very low, low, average, high, very high)
17. How high is the national crime rate?
(Very low, low, average, high, very high)

18. Violent crime is on the rise in the United States.

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

19. Crime is on the rise in the United States.

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

20. Immigrants are more likely than United States citizens to commit criminal acts.

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

21. Blacks are more likely than Whites to sell drugs.

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

22. How fearful are you of being a victim of a crime?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

23. How fearful are you of being a victim of sexual assault?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

24. How fearful are you of being a victim of a car-jacking?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

25. How fearful are you of being a victim of a mugging?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

26. How fearful are you of being a victim of a physical assault?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

27. How fearful are you of being attacked at knifepoint?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

28. How fearful are you of being a victim attacked at gunpoint?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

29. How fearful are you of being murdered?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
30. How fearful are you of being a victim of a burglary?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
31. Have you observed trash or litter in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
32. Have you observed loose dogs in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
33. Have you observed unsupervised youth in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
34. Have you observed graffiti in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
35. Have you observed vacant houses in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
36. Have you observed loud noises in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
37. Have you observed individuals intoxicated or under the influence of drugs in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)
38. Have you observed abandoned cars in your neighborhood?
(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

39. I am more likely to be sexually assaulted by a stranger than someone I know.

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

40. I am more likely to be murdered by a stranger than someone I know?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

41. I am more likely to be robbed by a stranger than someone I know?

(Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)