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# Journal of Gender-Based Violence

## Gender, Sexual Danger and the Everyday Management of Risks: The social control of young females --Manuscript Draft--

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<b>First Author:</b>	Nicola Jayne Roberts, PhD
<b>Corresponding Author:</b>	Nicola Jayne Roberts, PhD University of Sunderland Sunderland, UNITED KINGDOM
<b>Corresponding Author Secondary Information:</b>	
<b>Corresponding Author E-Mail:</b>	nicola.roberts@sunderland.ac.uk
<b>Abstract:</b>	Women fear crime more than men (Cops and Pleysier, 2011), have heightened awareness of everyday risks particularly of sexual and physical danger (Stanko, 1990), and they engage in more constrained behaviours than men (Rader, May and Goodrum, 2007; Tomsich, Gover and Jennings, 2011). Little research had examined the adoption of such risk management strategies and the impact of gender (May, Rader, and Goodrum, 2010), in an English context. However, focusing on the most at risk age-group for criminal victimisation, 393 students completed an online survey, which was designed to assess whether gender effected the strategies they adopted to prevent victimisation of both acquisitive and personal crimes, on-campus, and to stay-safe. The findings indicate females are more likely to adopt risk-management strategies to prevent personal sexual attack during the day and after dark, compared to males. Females also adopt additional strategies after dark to stay-safe. The implications of the findings to convey accurate messages about risks of victimisation are discussed.
<b>Keywords:</b>	Gender; fear of crime; perceptions of risk; sexual attack; risk management strategies.
<b>Additional Information:</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Key Messages</b>  Please enter 2-3 single sentence bullet points describing the key messages of the paper.	Women fear crime more than men. This is partly linked to their heightened perceptions of sexual attack in public spaces. Adopting risk management strategies reduces women's risks of violent victimisation in public spaces, yet their fear remains.
<b>Word Count</b>  Academic articles should be between 5000 and 7000 words in length.  Policy and Practice articles should be between 2000 and 4000 words in length.  Open Space pieces should be between should be between 2000 and 4000 words in length.	6243
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## Introduction

1  
2 Generally, males are most at risk of being both the perpetrator and victim of violence,  
3 including homicide. However females are more likely to be victims of domestic and sexual  
4 violence compared to males (Office for National Statistics, 2014, 2015, 2016a). As such, the  
5 United Kingdom's governments' (past and present) *Call to End Violence Against Women and*  
6 *Girls: Action Plan/s* are predicated upon women and girls presenting the highest risk for  
7 experiencing such interpersonal violence (Home Office, 2010). But statistical calculations of  
8 risk are not necessarily related in a positive linear fashion to fear of crime. Rather it is  
9 *perceptions* of risk and fear of crime that are related (Rader et al., 2007; May et al., 2010;  
10 Moran, Skeggs, Tyrer and Corteen, 2003, 2004). For example, a trawl through the global  
11 literature on fear of crime shows that women consistently report higher levels of fear of crime  
12 compared to men (Cops and Pleysier, 2011), particularly sexual violence (see Pain, 1991).  
13 Albeit, in Moran et al's. (2003:143, 2004) research, gay men were more likely to report lower  
14 levels of perceptions of safety compared to lesbians, concluding that the fear of the  
15 'dangerous other', in this case 'straight' men, impacts upon individuals' reading of the safety  
16 of the urban landscape. In the large body of existing research about women's fear of sexual  
17 violence, the dangerous others are males. Gender identity seems then an important defining  
18 lens to analyse perceptions about risks of crime (Cops and Pleysier, 2011). Walklate (1997)  
19 argues that criminology and victimology has largely ignored gender. The failure of these  
20 disciplines to critically engage with gender, for example, in the fear of crime literature and  
21 criminal victimisation field, has led to the failure to view risk as a gendered concept.  
22 Writings about the 'risk society' also largely fail to consider risk as a gendered concept –  
23 believing that risks fall upon everyone equally. Kearney and Donovan (2013) argue that the  
24 rhetoric of risk promotes the need for individuals to take responsibility for looking after  
25 themselves. They state that 'risk thinking' 'constrains behaviour in the present in order to  
26 prevent bad outcomes happening in an uncertain future' (2013:4-5; and see Walklate, 1997).  
27 The empirical research discussed in this paper is concerned with how gender impacts upon  
28 the adoption of risk management strategies and thus how they constrain behaviours. The  
29 paper begins by reviewing the relevant literature that explores the rationality of women's fear  
30 of crime and the ensuing risk management strategies adopted. In doing so, a review of how  
31 the media represent risks of sexual violence and the subsequent impact of this on how women  
32 use public space, follows. Using a sample of young male and female students at a Northern  
33 University in England, this paper examines their adoption of risk management strategies,  
34 presenting and discussing the findings, as well as the implications of the research.  
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## Gender and Risk Management

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52 Retiring Judge Lindsey Kushner caused a backlash from victim support organisations when  
53 she said she did not 'think it's wrong for a judge to beg women to take actions to protect  
54 themselves' from predatory men. Such claims lead to perceptions that it is women's fault if  
55 they are victimised (BBC, 2017a). Yet, the Criminal Bar Association chairman, Francis  
56 Fitzgibbon, said women should be educated to know about predatory men out there (BBC,  
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2017b). Indeed, Garofalo (1981) stated that large proportions of respondents in general surveys report having done ‘something’ as a response to fear of crime. This response to fear of crime has arguably both beneficial and negative outcomes. On the one hand, fear of crime is necessary to signal to individuals to take precautions to avoid being victimised (Garofalo, 1981; Henson and Reynolds, 2015). In this sense, individuals are taking responsibility for looking after themselves by making rational choices to avoid harmful outcomes. On the other hand, excessive fear of crime, i.e., more than is perceived as reasonably necessary to protect oneself (Henson and Reynolds, 2015), can impact negatively upon one’s mental and physical well-being (Pearson and Breetzke, 2014), can reduce one’s social interactions with others (Garofalo, 1981): ultimately reducing the quality of life of many individuals (Rader et al., 2007; Henson and Reynolds, 2015). It is women who are more likely to say that fear of crime had an impact on their quality of life compared to men (Nicholas, Kershaw and Walker, 2007). Garofalo (1981:849) concluded that the fear of crime is not an important factor in causing a wide range of behaviours, but rather, ‘it acts to condition or modify behaviour in certain delimited situations or it produces a rationale for avoiding places and situations that the person would rarely enter in any case’. Yet, in stark contrast, Stanko (1990:13) argues adults carry out ‘everyday routines of safety...to avoid being constantly preoccupied with security’. They are not, she says, ‘the habits of paranoid people’, but rather they are ‘little rituals which seem to reduce [their] anxiety about danger’ (1995:13). Thus, adding weight to the argument that some fear of crime is necessary so individuals avoid bad outcomes in an uncertain future. Moreover, Stanko’s (1990:85) work explicitly illustrates the gendered nature of these ‘safety rituals’, particularly in relation to physical and sexual violence (e.g., rape and sexual assault). She argues that women report carrying-out a wider range and higher number of such strategies than men because ‘women’s lives rest upon a continuum of unsafety’ (Stanko, 1990:85).

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As indicated, individuals look after themselves by constraining and modifying behaviour to avoid harmful events (Walklate, 1997; Kearney and Donovan, 2013). Thus, responses to the fear of crime are risk management strategies and they can be divided into avoidance and protective behaviours. Protective behaviours – also known in the literature as defensive or adaptive - are those strategies that enhance one’s protection, such as carrying a weapon (Henson and Reynolds, 2015). Avoidance behaviours are those strategies where individuals change their routines and avoid certain places (Garofalo, 1981). Collective behaviours can be added, which include not going out alone, walking with someone and staying with others (see Nasar and Fisher, 1992). Some of the risk management strategies used ‘on the street’ and reported by predominantly women during interviews in the mid-to-late 1980s in Stanko’s (1990:16) research, include: avoiding areas that are dimly lit, never carrying valuable items in a handbag, having friends wait outside until the person is in their home, not going out at night on their own, and not walking home drunk. The Home Office’s (much criticised) Crime Prevention Campaign in 1988-89 provided particular and similar advice to women including when ‘out on foot’: ‘avoid short cuts through dimly-lit alleys’; ‘cover up expensive-looking jewellery’; and ‘if out late, arrange a lift home’ (cited in Stanko, 1990:86-87). Individuals

1 changing their activity to relieve fear may, in turn, increase fear as ‘part of an escalating  
2 causal loop’ (Liska, Sanchirico and Reed, 1988:835). This helps, in part, to explain women’s  
3 fear of crime, particularly of sexual violence. However, women’s fear of sexual violence  
4 may reflect their actual risks of sexual violence (see Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1990; NUS, 2011;  
5 Phipps and Young, 2015), particularly sexual harassment in public spaces (see Pain, 1991;  
6 Universities UK, 2016), but the non-reporting of such violence means it is difficult to  
7 evidence this claim (see Lee, 2007). Importantly, if women are advised to avoid public  
8 places, their behaviour is modified, but not their fear.  
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### 11 **Gendered Risks of Sexual Violence**

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16 Hanmer and Saunders (1984) interviewed 129 women about their experiences of male  
17 violence. A common thread throughout the violent incidents, over half of which were  
18 reported to have been committed in public spaces, was the inability of women to control the  
19 initial violent encounter and the ensuing interaction because the violent encounter was with a  
20 stranger. Hanmer and Saunders (1984; see also Valentine, 1992) argue that women’s fear of  
21 public attacks by a stranger - particularly the threat of sexual violence (Pain, 1991) - will also  
22 be impacted by previous knowledge about other women who have experienced violent  
23 encounters, whether fed by media, rumour or personal experiences . The women in Hanmer  
24 and Saunders’ (1984) research were interviewed after the serial rapist Peter Sutcliffe, the  
25 ‘Yorkshire Ripper’, had been arrested and during the period of his trial. Stories of the  
26 ‘Ripper’s murders’ heightened women’s fear of public and stranger violence leading women  
27 to restrict their movements, such as never walking alone or using a taxi service. Women held  
28 expectations that violence in public places occurs at night. The women thus adopted  
29 collective, protective and avoidance behaviours, e.g., withdrawing from public space at night  
30 to avoid the risks of an unmanageable violent encounter (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; see  
31 also Valentine, 1988).  
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42 American research carried out on university students has similarly found that females report  
43 being more fearful than males of victimisation and that women engaged in avoidance and  
44 protective behaviours more than men (Tomsich et al., 2011). Day (1999) carried out research  
45 on thirty-eight female students on two American College Campuses. She found that they  
46 feared sexual attack by strangers, particularly by entrapment and surprise. Women feared  
47 being alone at night, outdoors and in the dark or where visibility was limited – a place where  
48 a stranger could attack. This ‘cycle of fear’, Valentine (1988:389) argues, is ‘one subsystem  
49 by which male dominance, patriarchy, is maintained and perpetuated’. Thus, fear serves to  
50 socially control women and their use of public space (Pain, 1991; Day, 1999). In her social,  
51 historical, legal and explicit accounts of rape, Brownmiller (1975) argued similarly that: ‘rape  
52 is something awful that happens to females: it is the dark at the top of the stairs, the  
53 undefinable abyss that is just around the corner, and unless we watch our step it might  
54 become our destiny’ (1975:309). In other words, women have to take responsibility for  
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1 looking after themselves, making rational choices to avoid the risks of sexual attack. This  
2 message begins early in life. Young girls are warned to avoid strangers (see Stanko, 1990),  
3 are chaperoned by friends or picked-up by parents when out at night (Valentine 1992). As  
4 such, ‘boys become fearless men, girls fearful women’ (Cops and Pleysier, 2011:63).  
5 Brownmiller (1975:309) argues that women in childhood have thus been ‘indoctrinated into a  
6 victim mentality’ illustrating how the fairy tale *Red Riding Hood* is a parable of rape, where  
7 frightening males (wolves) linger in woods, to attack unaccompanied girls who have  
8 wandered into the forest. Tiby’s (2009) research provides further support for this. She asked  
9 young people, aged 16-19 to write, in their own words, about fear. The accounts about fear  
10 of sexual abuse, particularly rape, were predominantly drawn from young girls because  
11 accounts from boys were few, brief, and rarely described a fear for oneself. These young  
12 people perceived the following: i) that it is dangerous to be out after dark by oneself; ii) that  
13 the consequences of sexual attack are irreparable, and shameful, even death could result; and  
14 iii) that no-one can help or save you. These examples reinforce the messages to women to  
15 avoid public places, particularly at night; stay with your friends; and carry a personal alarm,  
16 thereby adopting avoidance, collective, and individual protective behaviours to manage the  
17 risks of sexual attack. Hence, Brownmiller’s argument that fear of rape is not only a social  
18 construction, but one that serves patriarchy: ‘rape has played a critical function’, historically  
19 and contemporarily, because it is ‘a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep  
20 *all* women in a state of fear’ (1975:15 original emphasis).  
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31 Individualist theories have proposed that women are more likely to fear crime because of  
32 their physical vulnerability and their perceived limited physical means to prevent  
33 victimisation (Henson and Reyns, 2015). Whilst this leans towards biological determinism  
34 by suggesting that females are physically smaller and weaker than males, the explanatory  
35 power lays in social constructionism by understanding how dominant societal constructs of  
36 crime depict a stronger aggressive predatory male perpetrator and smaller weaker submissive  
37 female victim. For example, Jewkes (2015) argues that two of the most important news  
38 values, which make stories newsworthy from the perspective of editors and journalists are  
39 ‘violence’ and ‘sex’. ‘‘Violence’ is an important news value because it fulfils the media’s  
40 desire to present dramatic events in the most graphic possible fashion’ (2015:63). ‘Sex’ is an  
41 important news value because it is frequently related to violence in the press ‘so that the two  
42 become virtually indistinguishable’ (Ditton and Duffy, 1983 cited in Jewkes, 2015:56).  
43 Consequently, stories about sexual violence are disproportionately over-reported and  
44 misrepresented in the media and may in turn feed the construct of fear of crime (Jewkes,  
45 2015; Walklate, 1997).  
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55 The media disproportionately publicises attacks as happening in public spaces rather than  
56 reporting about violence committed in the home. This re-frames the dangers for women in  
57 public places despite women being most at risk of violence in the home (Valentine, 1992; see  
58 also Jewkes, 2015). Most victims of serious sexual violence are women, yet they are attacked  
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1 largely by males they know, ordinarily (ex)-partners, rather than by strangers (Ministry of  
2 Justice, 2013). Suffice to say then that the majority of sexual violence happens in private  
3 spaces (Pain, 1991; see also Calkins, Colombino, Matsuura and Jeglic, 2015). This is not  
4 synonymous with the mass media's preoccupation with telling the story of the 'classic' rape  
5 which 'involves a stranger who attacks a woman late at night in the street and threatens to kill  
6 her' (Kelly, 1988:148). Media messages and ensuing rumours tell of uncontrollable risks at  
7 night in public spaces, which women are advised to avoid and/or take extra precautions when  
8 in such spaces, rather than such perceptions of sexual violence in public spaces being  
9 challenged (Pain, 1991). As Walby (1990) argues, the media is one of the key institutions  
10 influencing how the genders are socialised into feminine and masculine subjects, and thereby,  
11 it is integral to upholding a patriarchal social order and the ensuing 'public discourse on rape  
12 as a form of control over women' (Walby, 1990:140). Rather than women irrationally  
13 fearing crime, Walklate (1997) argues it is men who behave irrationally because of their  
14 heightened risks of violent victimisation and their reported lower levels of fear of crime.  
15 However, little statistical research has considered the impact of gender on the adoption of risk  
16 management strategies (May et al., 2010) and how behaviours are constrained/modified, in an  
17 English context.  
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## 27 **Methodology**

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29 This paper presents empirical research to address the research question: does gender impact  
30 upon the adoption of risk management strategies? The *Crime Survey for England and Wales*  
31 (formerly *BCS*), has consistently found that young people aged 16 – 24 are at an increased  
32 risk of violent victimisation compared to any other age group. A previous study by  
33 Universities UK (2016) found that 45% of all students were aged under 21 and that female  
34 students experience much interpersonal violence on-campus. For these reasons, in the current  
35 study 7,140 students, 42% of whom were male and 58% of whom were female, studying at a  
36 Northern University in England, were asked to complete an online survey, which had  
37 previously been piloted with several second-year undergraduate social science students<sup>i</sup>. The  
38 survey was kept short to maximise the response rate. Nonetheless the response rate was only  
39 6% of the 'on-campus' student population at the university, at the time, and comprised of a  
40 total of 393 students completing the survey, 129 males (33%) and 264 (67%) females. The  
41 response rate is low<sup>ii</sup>, and more females completed the survey compared to males and in  
42 comparison to the student population from which they were drawn. As such, the findings  
43 should be interpreted with these limitations in mind. Of the respondent sample, 45% were  
44 aged between 19 and 21: comparable to the national average of students at UK universities  
45 (Universities UK, 2016) and also comprising the most at risk age group regarding violent  
46 victimisation in England and Wales (see Office for National Statistics, 2014, 2015).  
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57 The survey was designed to test the variable of gender against variables related to the  
58 adoption of risk management strategies. To do this, questions were asked that allowed for a  
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1 range of options to be selected, some within a Likert Scale. Firstly, participants were asked  
2 about safety in terms of 'how safe they feel' given the fear of crime literature, which shows  
3 women are more likely to fear crime compared to men. Secondly, the survey asked questions  
4 about the adoption of risk management strategies across offence type to ascertain if there  
5 were any differences, here, according to gender. The literature review predominantly cites  
6 sexual violence as the conflict where women are likely to take precautionary measures to  
7 avoid victimisation. The four different categories of offences asked about were: theft from  
8 person; theft from motor vehicle; personal physical attack; and personal sexual attack.  
9 Thirdly, participants were asked whether they adopted a range of risk management strategies,  
10 which included avoidance, protective and collective behaviours. The range of risk  
11 management strategies asked about, were equally relevant to the four categories of offence.  
12 The survey asked about the adoption of these strategies 'during the day' and 'after dark', to  
13 ascertain whether there were differences across time. The literature review had  
14 predominantly noted the adoption of risk management strategies, or messages about these, at  
15 night compared to during the day. Fourthly, participants were asked whether the strategies  
16 they adopted made them feel safe, and fifthly, whether they thought the strategies they  
17 adopted prevented their victimisation. These latter questions were important to ask to  
18 understand the adoption of risk management strategies. Finally, all questions were asked  
19 about 'on-campus' to ground students' experiences in their everyday contexts, and because  
20 female students experience interpersonal violence on-campus (Universities UK, 2016).  
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31 SPSS was used to analyse the data. The independent variable of gender was cross-tabulated  
32 against all dependant variables to find correlations, culminating in 38 cross-tabulations.  
33 Correlations in the data were identified by Pearson Chi-Square. Significance is reported at a  
34 confidence level of at least 95% that the findings did not happen by chance. This paper  
35 presents 14 statistically significant correlations in the data. The strength of the relationship  
36 was also tested using Cramer's V. Where cell counts were low, and where categories could  
37 be collapsed and/or included missing data, they were recoded (resulting in: 3 cases of missing  
38 data for gender and the Likert scale for 'feelings of safety' was collapsed into safe, neither  
39 safe/unsafe, unsafe). This paper reports on statistically significant findings presenting  
40 correlations between variables. Respondents were asked about a limited number of risk  
41 management strategies and this must be taken into account when interpreting the findings.  
42 Finally, no demographic or identifiable data was collected from participants, other than their  
43 gender and age.  
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## 52 **Analysis of the Findings**

### 53 *The Dark as Dangerous*

54 Gender did not impact upon feelings of safety, on-campus, during the day. However,  
55 consistent with much of the existing literature in this field, gender did impact upon feelings of  
56 safety, on-campus, after dark. From the participants who completed the survey, more males  
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1 (72%) felt safe after dark on-campus, compared to females (46%) (p=0.000). More females  
2 (15%) felt unsafe after dark on-campus compared to males (5%) (p=0.000). Interestingly,  
3 too, more females (39%) were unsure about their safety after dark on-campus compared to  
4 males (23%) (Cramer's V=0.254) (see Table 1).  
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13 Among these respondents, female students were therefore more likely to perceive the dark as  
14 risky compared to male students. Previous research has found risk management strategies are  
15 mediated through fear of crime and perceptions of risk (Rader et al., 2007; May et al., 2010),  
16 and one might assume that more risk management strategies are carried-out by females than  
17 males after dark. The findings reported in this paper do support this claim, but they also  
18 show that females carry out the same risk management strategies during the day *and* after  
19 dark.  
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#### 26 *Sexual Attack as Imminent and Ever-Present: Time stood still*

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28 Gender did not impact upon the adoption of risk management strategies to prevent  
29 victimisation, on-campus, during the day *and* after dark for theft from person, theft from  
30 motor vehicle, and personal physical attack. However, as tables 2 and 3 shows, gender did  
31 impact upon the adoption of risk management strategies to prevent victimisation, on-campus,  
32 during the day *and* after dark, for personal sexual attack. The strength of the relationship  
33 between the variables is stronger for the 'after dark' finding. From those surveyed, females  
34 (15%) were more likely to adopt strategies to prevent personal sexual attack on campus  
35 during the day compared to males (8%). Most males surveyed (92%) therefore did not adopt  
36 strategies to prevent victimisation of personal sexual attack on campus during the day  
37 (p=0.038, Cramer's V=0.105).  
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50 Females (51%) were much more likely to adopt strategies to prevent personal sexual attack  
51 on campus after dark compared to males (11%) (p=0.000, Cramer's V=0.390) (see Table 3),  
52 also. Males (89%) were much more likely to say that they did not adopt strategies to prevent  
53 personal sexual attack on campus after dark compared to females (49%) (p=0.000, Cramer's  
54 V=0.390).  
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59 'Table 3 here'  
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2 These findings add to some of the existing literature that frequently reports women's  
3 modified behaviour in public space at night to avoid personal sexual attack (Hanmer and  
4 Saunders, 1984; Valentine, 1988; Day, 1999). However, the female students in the research  
5 presented in this paper were modifying their behaviour by adopting risk management  
6 strategies in public space *both* during the day and after-dark. They were, as Stanko (1990:13)  
7 argued over 30 years ago, carrying-out 'everyday routines of safety', in a time that has  
8 seemingly stood still, because women continue to modify their behaviour against the  
9 perceived ever-present threat of personal sexual attack. As such, messages about sexual  
10 violence combined with the reality of women being the main target of sexual violence, seem  
11 to continue to control and curtail women's everyday use of public space. The next section  
12 presents findings of the risk management strategies adopted by the female students.  
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### 21 *Increasing Visibility and Control to Decrease Risk*

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23 Gender did not impact upon the adoption of risk management strategies of carrying a  
24 personal alarm, use of car alarm/steering lock, or use of taxis. Gender impacted upon the  
25 other strategies asked about. Strategies used more by the female students surveyed to stay  
26 safe, on campus during the day and after dark, compared to the male students surveyed were:  
27 use well-lit/visible spaces; secure personal belongings out of sight; and tell someone of  
28 whereabouts (see Table 4). During the day: females (35%) are more likely to use well-  
29 lit/visible spaces compared to males (19%) ( $p=0.001$ , Cramer's  $V=0.162$ ); females (64%) are  
30 more likely to secure personal belongings out of sight compared to males (44%) ( $p=0.000$ ,  
31 Cramer's  $V=0.188$ ); and females (27%) are more likely to tell someone of their whereabouts  
32 compared to males (12%) ( $p=0.001$ , Cramer's  $V=0.170$ ). After dark: females (67%) are more  
33 likely to use well-lit/visible spaces compared to males (43%) ( $p=0.000$ , Cramer's  $V=0.221$ );  
34 females (63%) are more likely to secure personal belongings out of sight compared to males  
35 (46%) ( $p=0.001$ , Cramer's  $V=0.165$ ); and females (53%) are more likely to tell someone of  
36 their whereabouts compared to males (19%) ( $p=0.000$ , Cramer's  $V=0.315$ ). The strength of  
37 the relationship between the variables is stronger for the 'after dark' findings, thus adding  
38 weight to the argument that after dark is perceived as more dangerous.  
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53 Daytime and after dark strategies are more likely adopted by surveyed females compared to  
54 surveyed males to increase visibility in the environment by: using well-lit spaces (avoidance),  
55 securing personal belongings out of sight (protective), and telling someone of their  
56 whereabouts (collective). Female students may perceive themselves as 'attractive' targets for  
57 opportunist criminals, due to the messages about their risks of violence in public spaces. As  
58 such, they: i) 'target harden' themselves by hiding property, ii) increase the visibility of a  
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1 crime happening by walking in lit places, and iii) increase surveillance by telling somewhere  
2 where they are. By adopting such situational crime prevention techniques, it potentially  
3 reduces their vulnerability as an 'object' of crime (see Clarke, 1983). In doing so, authors  
4 argue it reduces the amount of crime the individual is exposed to and thereby reduces their  
5 victimisation (Garofalo, 1981; Lea and Young, 1984). One of the major critiques of using  
6 situational crime prevention techniques to prevent crime is displacement, i.e., that the crime  
7 still takes place but in another location or at a different time or with a different target (Clarke,  
8 1983). In the case of sexual violence, where women report experiencing this in public places  
9 (Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1990), including students (NUS, 2011; Phipps and Young, 2015;  
10 Universities UK, 2016), all women are potentially at risk, to varying extents, with younger  
11 age groups most at risk, hence the importance of them adopting risk management strategies.  
12 This may help to explain women's reported low violent victimisation levels in public spaces.  
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20 There were additional strategies adopted by the female respondents compared to the male  
21 respondents and compared to the strategies used during the day, for after dark, on-campus, to  
22 stay safe. These were: avoid drinking alcohol; not walking alone and avoiding strangers (see  
23 Table 5). Females (27%) were more likely to avoid drinking alcohol compared to males  
24 (18%) ( $p=0.038$ , Cramer's  $V=0.105$ ); females (53%) were more likely not to walk alone  
25 compared to males (29%) ( $p=0.000$ , Cramer's  $V=0.232$ ); and females (57%) were more  
26 likely to avoid strangers compared to males (45%) ( $p=0.020$ , Cramer's  $V=0.117$ ).  
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37 The additional risk management strategies adopted by the female students, in the study,  
38 compared to the male students, and compared to the strategies adopted during the day, are  
39 arguably for women to gain control in the environment by not walking alone (collective);  
40 avoiding strangers (avoidance) and avoiding drinking alcohol (avoidance). Hanmer and  
41 Saunders (1984) found, in over half of the violent incidents reported in public spaces, the  
42 inability of women to control the initial violent encounter and the ensuing interaction, led to  
43 women's perceived failure to manage uncontrollable risks of harmful events – despite the  
44 expectedness of such events. This links with women's adoption of mostly avoidance and  
45 collective risk management strategies after dark, found in this research presented in this  
46 paper, to reduce social interactions with unknown 'others' (Garofalo, 1981), walking with  
47 someone and staying with known others (see Nasar and Fisher, 1992) and feeling the need to  
48 be chaperoned to ensure their safety (Valentine, 1992). This reinforces the dominant  
49 messages to young girls and women that they should be watched, need to be seen and must  
50 never be alone to avoid harmful events happening to them. In the research presented in this  
51 paper, female participants (71%) were more likely to say that the strategies they adopt to  
52 stay-safe make them feel safe compared to male participants (63%) ( $p=0.017$ ) (see Table 6).  
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1 As Stanko (1990:13) says they are ‘little rituals which seem to reduce [their] anxiety about  
2 danger’.

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10 Drawing on the literature presented here in this paper, it may be that the constant exposure to  
11 misrepresented risks of violence in public spaces means that women are not sure if such  
12 strategies prevent their victimisation (see Table 7). Women’s curtailment in public spaces  
13 reduces their opportunities for victimisation, in such spaces, which women may not be  
14 explicitly aware of. For example, females (34%) surveyed were more likely to say they do  
15 not know if the strategies they use prevent their victimisation compared to males surveyed  
16 (26%) ( $p=0.037$ ).  
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23 ‘Table 7 here’  
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28 There thus appears to be a continual loop of individuals changing their activity to relieve fear,  
29 but which in turn, increases fear as ‘part of an escalating causal loop’ (Liska et al, 1988:835).  
30 This may be underpinned by the media’s misrepresented portrayal of sexual violence in  
31 public spaces and the ensuing perceptions of uncontrollable risks from unknown perpetrators.  
32 These portrayals serve to control young women’s use of public space (Valentine, 1988; Day,  
33 1999), which may also lead to women avoiding such space. This may help explain why their  
34 rates of recorded violent victimisation are lower in public compared to private spaces.  
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## 41 **Conclusion**

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43 Women’s fear and perceptual awareness of the risks of personal sexual attack leads them to  
44 adopt risk management strategies to reduce their everyday risks of such violent victimisation  
45 in public spaces. For female participants in this research, this model of fear, perceptual  
46 awareness of risks and ensuing risk management strategies may be deemed to be conscious  
47 rational processes to stay-safe, on-campus, during the day and after dark. Whether the  
48 strategies that lead women to curtail their use of public space, particularly at night, are  
49 intended to uphold ‘patriarchal control over women’, as Walby (1990:143) argues, the  
50 unintended consequence of such strategies seem to statistically reduce women’s likelihood of  
51 violent victimisation in public spaces. This paper raises three inter-related ways forward,  
52 which are premised upon making risk management of the environment *functional* for women.  
53 Firstly, women's comfort in the outdoors, visibility and safety, may be enhanced by  
54 increasing lighting and trimming back vegetation to reduce hiding and enclosed places (Day,  
55 1999). The female respondents were more likely to carry-out specific risk management  
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1 strategies to stay-safe during the day and after dark, such as using well-lit/visible spaces;  
2 securing personal belongings out of sight; and telling someone of whereabouts, compared to  
3 the men surveyed. This may also facilitate women's independent use of public spaces after  
4 dark (Day, 1999). The female respondents presented in this paper, were more likely to avoid  
5 walking alone and avoid strangers after dark, compared to the men surveyed. However this  
6 re-designing of the environment might not reduce women's fear of crime, as that is more  
7 pervasive than the built environment, involving broader social and patriarchal processes  
8 (Koskela and Pain, 2000). Koskela and Pain (2000) argue that 'many women empower  
9 themselves through their own negotiation of danger, but crime prevention policies, be they in  
10 the form of behavioural advice, rape alarms, or redesigned streets, have rarely done so'  
11 (2000:279). Moreover, gender was not a significant feature in the current research with  
12 regard to carrying a personal alarm. A second way forward, relates to portrayal and thus  
13 perception of risk. Given the influence of the media to misrepresent crimes with potential  
14 to impact on public perceptions of crime, the media should be required to i) report more on risks  
15 of crime from an informed perspective, including presenting the gendered risks of  
16 victimisation and ii) compare the risks of such criminal victimisation to other negative life  
17 events (Warr, 2000). This should provide more accurate information about actual risks of  
18 victimisation and potentially allow women a more proportional fear of crime and perceived  
19 risks. This may lead women to adopt risk management strategies that are more proportional  
20 to actual risks. That said, as Pain argues, 'the common occurrence of sexual harassment in  
21 public space acts to remind women of sexual danger' (1991:421, original emphasis).  
22 Furthermore, she argues that such harassment is 'trivialised as a crime, and consequently few  
23 women report it' (1991:426). More recent studies confirm this still to be the case (NUS,  
24 2011; Phipps and Young, 2015). Ascertaining actual risks of sexual harassment is thus  
25 difficult. More needs to be done to take seriously the sexual harassment of women, to enable  
26 reporting and thus make public a more realistic picture of the pervasive nature and impact of  
27 such abuse in women's lives and so that women may adopt appropriate risk management  
28 strategies that are synonymous with actual risks of victimisation.  
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<sup>i</sup> As only gender and age were collected from participants, it is impossible to know if any of the students involved in the pilot completed the final survey

<sup>ii</sup> It is difficult to ascertain reasonable response rates as these vary depending on the type of sample and the topics covered in the questionnaire. It is also difficult to ascertain whether differences exist between the sample who completed the questionnaire from the population who did not complete the questionnaire (Bryman, 2016).

**Table 1** Feelings of Safety after Dark

<i>Safety after dark</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Safe	72.1	45.6	p=0.000
Neither Safe/Unsafe	22.5	39.1	
Unsafe	5.4	15.3	

**Table 2** Strategies to Prevent Victimization of Personal Sexual Attack during the Day

<i>Strategies to prevent personal sexual attack during the day</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Yes	7.8	15.2	p=0.038
No	92.2	84.8	

**Table 3** Strategies to Prevent Victimization of Personal Sexual Attack after Dark

<i>Strategies to prevent personal sexual attack after dark</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Yes	10.9	51.2	p = 0.000
No	89.1	48.8	

**Table 4** Strategies adopted during the day and after dark to stay safe, on-campus

<i>Strategies adopted during the day and after dark</i>			<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Use well-lit/visible spaces	During the Day	Yes	19.4	35.2	p=0.001
		No	80.6	64.8	
	After Dark	Yes	43.4	66.5	p=0.000
		No	56.6	33.5	
Secure personal belongings out of sight	During the Day	Yes	44.2	64.0	p=0.000
		No	55.8	36.0	
	After Dark	Yes	45.7	63.1	p=0.001
		No	54.3	36.9	
Tell someone of whereabouts	During the Day	Yes	11.6	26.5	p=0.001
		No	88.4	73.5	
	After Dark	Yes	19.4	52.5	p=0.000
		No	80.6	47.5	

**Table 5** Additional Strategies Adopted After Dark

<i>Additional strategies adopted after dark</i>		<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Avoid drinking alcohol	Yes	17.8	27.4	p=0.038
	No	82.2	72.6	
Not walking alone	Yes	28.7	53.2	p=0.000
	No	71.3	46.8	
Avoiding strangers	Yes	45	57.4	p=0.020
	No	55	42.6	

**Table 6** Adopting Strategies to Stay Safe and Feel Safe

<i>Adopting strategies to feel safe?</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Yes	62.8	70.5	p=0.017
No	3.1	8.3	
Don't Know	21.7	14.4	
Not Applicable	12.4	6.8	

**Table 7** Adopting Strategies to Stay Safe and Prevent Victimization

<i>Adopting strategies to prevent victimisation?</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Yes	48.8	43.2	p=0.037
No	10.1	15.5	
Don't Know	26.4	33.7	
Not Applicable	14.7	7.6	