

# **The makings of an exclusive community: students' perceptions of dangerous others**

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## **Abstract**

Contemporarily, universities are perceived as neoliberal entities, self-absorbed, driven by corporate interests, markets and economic goals, rather than perceived as providing a public good, concerned for the wider world (del Cerro Santamaria 2020). This perception of universities as individualised communities rather than collective communities (Rousseau 2020), accentuates the responsabilisation of individuals who are viewed as responsible for solving their own problems (Martinez and Garcia 2000), including ensuring their own safety (Garland 1996). Set against this social-political backdrop, this paper, using data from an online survey about students' perceptions of on-campus safety at a university in the north of England, shows how some students, particularly women students, view others as dangerous, rather than view them as vulnerable groups who are residing on the margins of an inequitable society. The porous borders of the university campuses amplify some students' perceptions of dangerous others and students' suggestions for Campus Security to keep out such others arguably serve to aggravate rather than relieve their perceptions of unsafety. Yet the porous borders of the campuses should be seen as advantageous because an ecological university can connect its students to the wider world to help facilitate care for the other (Barnett 2018). In doing so, this may enhance students' own sense of well-being and safety in the urban environment. This is a timely argument amidst a global pandemic, where the university restricts access to unauthorised others, and in doing so, facilitates the makings of an exclusive community.

**Keywords** Neoliberalism, Ecological university, Students' perceptions of safety, Dangerous others, Campus security

## **Introduction**

We live in a society characterised by risk, insecurity and uncertainty (Bannister and Flint 2017; Sibley 1995; Young 1998). This affects individuals' perceptions of safety and subsequent behaviours, including demands for enhanced security (Loader and Walker 2007). The dearth of research in the UK on students' perceptions of safety on university campuses is concerning because research shows that as students move away from the campus and into the city, they are less likely to say they never felt unsafe (Roberts et al. 2022). This is particularly important for city campuses where the boundaries between the campus and the city bleed into one another. The research presented in this paper was driven by an appreciation of these contexts. The first part of the paper sets the backdrop of the study. It begins by reviewing the literature on the impact of neoliberalism on higher education (HE) and the implications of this for a caring university. The perception of universities as individualised communities rather than collective communities (Rousseau 2020), accentuates the responsabilisation of individuals who are viewed as responsible for solving their own problems (Martinez and Garcia 2000), including ensuring their own safety (Garland 1996). Set against this wider backdrop of neoliberalism, HE, and the responsabilisation of individuals for their own safety, the methods of the online student survey, which also allowed for open responses asking students about their perceptions of on-campus safety and security, are outlined. The themes of (perceptions of) dangerous others and porous borders of the campuses, which arose out of the thematic analysis of the qualitative data, are then presented in the findings, illustrated by students' quotes.

Students' perceptions about the role of Campus Security are also presented in this way. The discussion follows to consider the implications of the findings, particularly students' suggestions about keeping out dangerous others by implementing border controls, and how the university, most notably, an ecological university, might respond. The paper concludes with a summary of the study and recommendations for further research.

### **Neoliberalism, higher education and individualised communities**

Neoliberal ideology is driven by 'capitalist thinking' (del Cerro Santamaria 2020, p.22). It advocates individuals as responsible, particularly for solving their own problems (Martinez and Garcia 2000), and rational: promoting their own self-interests to gain competitive advantage (del Cerro Santamaria 2020). Neoliberalism therefore emphasises individual action rather than collective action (Rousseau 2020). When applied to HE, it commodifies education (Boden and Nedeva 2010), transforms 'students into customers and faculty into entrepreneurial workers', fundamentally altering the purpose and role of universities (del Cerro Santamaria 2020, p.22; Boden and Nedeva 2010; Giroux 2014). Curricula and pedagogies have altered so that knowledge is reconceptualised as 'intellectual capital' benefiting conservative political goals, corporate agendas (del Cerro Santamaria 2020, p.23; Boden and Nedeva 2010), and economic objectives (Barnett 2018). Consequently, funding is geared towards disciplines closely aligned to corporate interests and markets, such as the applied sciences rather than the social sciences (Bok 2004 cited in del Cerro Santamaria 2020, p.23). Universities are thus marketised (Maisuria 2010 cited in Maisuria and Cole 2017, p.606) competing for fee-paying students, using league tables to evidence how successful they have been in satisfying students in their learning and graduate outcomes (Boden and Nedeva 2020; Maisuria and

Cole 2017). This has led to universities providing less of a public good because academic work viewed as ‘public intellectual work’ and educating students in skills that are not explicitly linked to markets and monetary gain, are devalued (del Cerro Santamaria 2020, p.30; Boden and Nedeva 2010, p.50).

The impact of neoliberalism on universities has not been homogeneous and the elite older institutions that have their own financial resources have retained more control over their destiny (Boden and Nedeva 2010). Moreover, the university as *solely* an entrepreneurial entity, self-absorbed and advancing its own interests, is limited in perspective (Barnett 2018; see also Downes 2017). Barnett (2018, p.55) argues that the university is interconnected within the world, and as such, the economy, however dominant, is only one part of the ecosystem. The *ecological university* has responsibilities to the world that extend beyond economic concerns to advancing the well-being of all other ecosystems (persons, social institutions, knowledge, learning, culture, the natural environment) and thus impacting upon the wider world. Importantly, the ecological university cares. This care extends to both human and non-human elements, it hears and embraces the Other – in its broadest sense, and ‘leave[s] oneself behind’ (Barnett 2018, p.82). This is the antithesis of neoliberal ideology, where individuals and institutions are driven to promote one’s own self-interests to gain competitive advantage over others. In doing so, students and higher education institutions (HEIs) may fail to develop notions of civic and social responsibility, which may engender unequal economic and social outcomes between group of individuals (del Cerro Santamaria 2000; Barnett 2018; Boden and Nedeva 2010). The ecological university recognises such impairments in the ecosystem, and that humanity therein, is responsible for restoring the insufficiencies in them. For example, if in the ecological ‘zone’ (a preferred term by Barnett rather than ‘system’) of ‘persons’, individual’s relationship with the wider world has been impaired,

by the interplay of the economy ecological zone, resulting in an erosion of an ethics of care to the wider world, then the ecological university has an important role to play in restoring the insufficiencies. Rather than a sole focus on the usefulness of HEIs and students therein, and their contribution to the economy, the focus is also on developing ‘the student as a whole person’ (Barnett 2018, p.61). Thus, the ecological university has a responsibility: ‘in stretching its students into strange places, in opening dialogues with the wider society, in listening attentively to the world and attending to demonstrable large issues, and imagining new possibilities for itself and for the world’ (Barnett 2018, p.53). This caring about the world involves moving ‘away from the self’: becoming less interested in one’s own reality and more interested in the world of the other (Noddings 2013, p.15). When individuals step out of their ‘instrumental world’ into ‘the world of relation’, they ‘receive what-is-there’ without judgement and act based upon others’ needs (Noddings 2013, p.32). If individuals do not do this, they do not get to know the world, they do not get to know others – who will remain strangers: outsiders who are ‘socially distant yet physically close’ (Bauman 1993, p.153). This is problematic because perceptions of strangers can engender fear, as the following illustrates.

### **Risk, strangers and ‘the criminology of the other’**

Society is averse to the risks of strangers. Consequently, and particularly set against a social-political backdrop of the responsibility for individuals to ensure their own safety, they make decisions to reduce such risks and the ensuing dangers that could befall upon them (Isin 2004). Garland (1996, p.452) termed this ‘the responsabilization strategy’ where potential victims are driven into action by publicity campaigns that raise awareness about criminal victimisation and ‘create a sense of duty’ in potential victims to prevent

being a victim by modifying their own behaviours. This has subsequently given rise to debates about how well-founded individual's perceptions of the risk of criminal victimisation is, thereby questioning their rationality in the decisions they make to keep themselves safe. Yet, individuals make decisions about perceived risks of criminal victimisation in the absence of complete information. Instead, they fill in the gaps of what they do not know to keep themselves safe. In doing so, the decisions they make are affected, not only by reason, but by their emotions. The incitement to modify behaviours to manage anxieties about risks of victimisation therefore creates a neurotic subject (Isin 2004). This individual is a 'fearing subject', which in turn, creates a binary opposite of the 'feared subject' (Lee 2007, p.152). The latter is the 'unknown other' that fearing subjects fear (Lee 2007, p.152). This is what Garland (1996, p.461) termed 'the criminology of the other': 'of the threatening outcast, the fearsome stranger, the excluded and the embittered'. Historically, they have been thought of as 'the dangerous classes...the homeless, the vagrant...the idle, the ex-criminal, the unemployed' (Lee 2007, p.152). These others are demonised invoking 'popular fears and hostilities' (Garland 1996, p.461), and in doing so, perpetuating a spiral of insecurity (Loader and Walker 2007) where 'generalized insecurity and enforced exclusion are coming to prevail over the traditions of welfarism and social citizenship' (Garland 1996, p.462). In a 'welfarist criminology', the perception of others is those who are disadvantaged and improperly socialised, and responsibility to redress this imbalance of inequality falls with the state – not the individual's themselves (Garland 1996, p.462).

The fearful and neurotic subject who fears such others is produced in various domains. By fortifying and target-hardening the 'home' through security and surveillance measures to alleviate the subject's anxieties, these inadvertently exacerbate such

anxieties, in a spiralling quest to ensure the domain's security (Isin 2004). Loader and Walker (2007, p.206) refer to this as 'authoritarianism': a syndrome of security. If security is pervasive and viewed as the panacea for social problems, a spiral of insecurity is perpetuated. Individuals feel insecure. The neurotic and fearful subject, for example, who lives under conditions of pervasive security will continually demand such absolute security (Isin 2004). The impact of such security measures can create and/or exacerbate hostility to outsiders, i.e., others. Yet once such pervasive security measures are enacted, it is difficult to create the cultural and political conditions to reverse them. Rather, when measures of security appear to fail, there is a 'ratcheting-up' of them (Loader and Walker 2007, p.207). This embeds 'a form of security politics' that does little to enhance the safety of individuals (Loader and Walker 2007, p.207). Consequently, anxiety about the other is expressed in discourses about the border because the erection of border controls and related surveillance technologies serve to divide those who are perceived as risky and those who are not. The border itself then becomes a source of increased anxiety when it is perceived as porous (Isin 2004), due to the ever-perpetuating spiral of insecurity (Loader and Walker 2007). Set against this backdrop, the following outlines the methods of the research to assess students' perceptions of on-campus safety.

## **Methods**

### **Procedure**

This research builds on previous studies by the author at a post-1992 university in the north of England (Roberts 2019; Roberts et al. 2019, 2022) by assessing students' perceptions of on-campus safety more broadly, including perceptions of campus security.

In the author's earlier research, it was noted that 40%<sup>1</sup> of 192 students (n=76) did not know that a campus security service was available (Roberts et al. 2022). As this was fed-back to Campus Security, they were keen to build on this with further research, with a view to enhancing their relationship with students, to ultimately enhance the service they provide. The campuses of the university are best described as 'city' campuses because there are no clearly defined boundaries that mark out where the campuses begin and where they end. Rather, their blurred boundaries bleed into the northern city. For this reason, while this research did not explicitly focus on perceptions of safety off-campus, it implicitly did by an unintended focus on the spaces where the unmarked borders of the campuses meet the city.

The survey asked students about their perceptions of on-campus safety and campus security using both closed and open questions. The design and functionality of the survey was tested in Qualtrics by several social science staff and students, as well as some campus security staff, before it went live. After editing, and with the approval of the research ethics group, the survey was sent out via e-mail to almost 10,000 students studying on the city campuses between November 2019 and February 2020. The survey was open for 3 months to enhance the response rate. During this time, the survey was advertised on the university website and radio, and at two Campus Security stands. Students were also sent two reminder e-mails asking them to complete the survey. In total, 550 useable responses were received culminating in a 6% response rate. Most respondents were women (71%, n=387)<sup>2</sup>. Of these, 75% (n=290) were White British. Men comprised 29% (n=157) of respondents. First and second-year students comprised over half of

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>2</sup> Difference in figures is due to non-responses.

respondents (56%, n=311). Three-quarters of respondents were UK/home students (75%, n=407). Most respondents were full-time students (93%, n=508).

## **Data Analysis**

The focus of this paper is on the analysis of the qualitative data from the open questions, about why respondents feel unsafe on the campuses and what can be done about this. The data were analysed thematically for ordinarily repetitive patterns (Seal 2016), using a three-stage process of: i) initial open coding where themes are not connected; ii) grouping themes into literal categories; and iii) grouping categories into more abstract (although they can still be literal) categories that relate to one another (Rivas 2018). Given the relational nature of abstract/literal categories in the third stage of data analysis, the overarching themes that developed are over-lapping. The thematic model of data analysis explains why students feel unsafe on the city campuses. The focus of this paper is on students' perceptions of dangerous others and the porous borders of the campuses to explain why they feel unsafe on the campuses. The other key theme of the model, which may be alluded to here - lack of surveillance - is difficult to omit, given the relational nature of the themes to one another in explaining why students feel unsafe on the campuses. This theme has been written about in more detail in another paper.

## **Findings**

### **Places of unsafety on campus**

The findings must be situated in the context of the perception of the city campuses as predominantly safe. On a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being not at all safe to 10 being

completely safe from 7 and above, 81% (n=406) of respondents said that they feel safe generally on the city campuses. Just over one-fifth of respondents, 23% (n=116) said there were places on the city campuses where they felt unsafe: 74% (n=85) of these were women. An analysis of the open responses shows that the predominant places on city campuses cited as unsafe were car-parks, underpasses, bus-stops, train-station, buildings and areas around particular buildings: areas reported in the author's research carried out in 2016 – over 3 years prior to the current study (Roberts et al. 2022). Women were more likely to say they felt unsafe on the city campuses because of dangerous others, compared to men, which the following shows.

### **Dangerous others: threats to safety**

Out of the 88 students who responded to the question about why they felt unsafe on the campuses, 50 (57%) said it was because of a dangerous other. Of these 50 responses, 38 (76%) were from women students. The following were perceived by students as dangerous others: the homeless, drug addicts, beggars, 'chavs' (derogatory term for the working classes, Jones 2011), drunks, young people, (male) strangers, non-students. A woman student explains why she feels unsafe in one of the underpasses:

Encountered some homeless/drug addicts a couple of times that have been quite verbal. Made us feel very uncomfortable and walking across the road is not the safest alternative. Especially now with its getting very dark, rather quickly (White British Woman). [sic]

These individuals were viewed as dangerous classes (see Lee 2007) because of the perceived threats they present to students' safety, as these woman students explain why they also feel unsafe in the underpass:

Beggars harassing students (White British Woman).

Homeless people asking students for money while walking from [name of building] to [name of library] (White British Woman).

So, beggars and homeless people who harass students are perceived as dangerous. The next man student also explains why he similarly feels unsafe in the underpass, and in doing so, entrenches further that the ‘undesirable characters’ of beggars ‘are *known* to be violent’ (my emphasis), and furthermore, there is no protection from them:

A lot of undesirable characters loiter around there and beg. These people are known to be violent and aggressive, and when they're on university land I doubt security would be able to fully react to a violent outburst from them (White British Man).

The next woman student also explains why she feels unsafe in the underpass indicating the threat comes from homeless people who are similarly aggressive:

Some people hang out in there and dont think to walk there alone as well as homeless people being aggressive sometimes (White British Woman). [sic]

There's often homeless people/chavs hanging around under it asking for stuff (White British Woman).

‘Chavs’ are also explained as dangerous others who present a threat in the underpass according to the woman student above. These students are referring to one underpass, which is a symbolic local hotspot causing alarm to students’ perceptions of safety first documented in the author’s previous research (Roberts et al. 2022). In this research presented in this paper, students’ responses particularly highlight the connection of this local hotspot to dangerous others. This infamous underpass connects a main teaching building with the rest of the campus, so students do not have to navigate the busy

city road above, as the first student's account above says. Fig.1 shows the part of the campus map and the interconnecting underpass.

(Insert Fig.1 about here)

So, the design of the city and the city campuses, with their unmarked borders, leads to the presence of others, who are perceived as dangerous, in students' routine journeys on the campuses. Together, the geographical design and students' perceptions of dangerous others, provide a toxic mix threatening students' perceptions of safety. The next section of the findings considers further the problem of unmarked borders.

### **Dangerous others: being out of place**

Others are perceived by some students as dangerous because they are 'out of place' (Sibley 1995, p.15). They are perceived as out of place because the dangerous classes (Lee 2007) such as the homeless, drug addicts, beggars, 'chavs' as presented in students' accounts above, are not perceived by students as other students studying at the university. They are thus not perceived as part of the student community, and as such, they do not belong on university campuses. But the 'cut through' of the underpass, presents those who are perceived as out of place in the place of students. As this man student explains below:

[...]. [name of campus] is all over the place and lots of people who aren't of the uni are about there. A while ago, I passed two men drinking on the bench behind the library (White British Man).

The campus is 'all over the place', as the student says, because the borders of the campuses are porous: they are city campuses. There are no fences, no gates, and no walls: parts of the campuses are perceived as 'cut throughs', 'short-cuts', and scenic routes for getting from one part of the city to another part of the city, as these women students explain:

People who are not students waking through the campus (White British Woman).

It is not so much the campus [name of campus] more so that anyone can just walk in and you don't know who could be around (White British Woman).

Even though the last student explains 'it is not so much the campus', the problem *is* in part the design of the city campuses coupled with students' perceptions of dangerous others. Fig.1 above shows the unmarked boundaries of the campus and the way they bleed, without warning, into the unmarked boundaries of the city.

In a similar vein, as most campus buildings did not require authorised access to enter them, at the time this research was carried out, this provided an additional threat of dangerous others to students' perceptions of safety, as this woman student states:

Because I feel anyone is able to enter the buildings at any time with question...I was also followed then stopped in the street near [name of building] by a random person driving around the campus "looking for friends" whilst asking personal and invading questions (White British Woman).

This student is situating her perception of dangerous others in a previous experience, where she was approached by a stranger, which made her feel unsafe. When asked what incidents had happened to them on the city campuses that had made them feel

unsafe, 25 students wrote about incidents that implicated dangerous other/s. Of these, it was mostly women students (n=17, 68%) who provided responses, and they mostly and broadly described incidents of harassment, typical of the student's account directly above. Previous experiences of such incidents and accounts of these, can serve to enhance students' feelings of unsafety (Roberts et al. 2022), albeit 3 of these women said there were not places on the city campuses where they felt unsafe. Another woman student explains the extreme threat to life from dangerous others, as she states that anyone can enter the library on campus:

Because anyone can enter that room freely and if they have bad intentions everyone present there is at high risk of losing their life (Other White background Woman).

This woman student may be drawing on an account of an incident to explain why she feels unsafe because there had been an incident where a group of young people had entered the library building and behaved in an anti-social manner towards the students in there. The next section shows students' perceptions about Campus Security and what their suggestions were to improve the service to keep students safe on the campuses.

### **Dangerous others: keeping those out of place out**

The aims of Campus Security are rather generic, as displayed in their outward facing material: seeking to provide security, safety and well-being. Yet 32% of students (n=174) were not aware of Campus Security (8%, n=45 of students did not know if they were aware of Campus Security). Of the 330 (60%) students who said they were aware of Campus Security; they were asked what they thought the role/s of the service is/are. The dominant responses were broadly categorised, albeit they were overlapping, as providing

i) surveillance, ii) security and safety, and iii) protection. The following students' excerpts are indicative of the typical responses here, respectively:

Patrol campuses to ensure no trouble happens (White British Woman).

To keep students safe, keep unwanted persons/behaviours off campus (White British Woman).

to protect both universities bulidings, students and staff (White British Man). [sic]

There was a dominant view then that Campus Security were there to watch, keep safe/secure, and to protect the campuses and individuals therein. Of the 197 responses to the question about the role/s of Campus Security, 8 students (4%) made explicit responses to keeping out non-students, as this man student states:

To protect the university from threats of non-students walking into campus (White British Man).

When students were asked for suggestions about how Campus Security could improve their services to enhance students' safety on the campuses, of the 120 responses, 25 (21%) were about keeping out non-students, explicitly and implicitly. Of the 25 responses, 20 (80%) were from women students, as the following woman student explains:

Ensure that there are no homeless people asking us for money on University campuses (White British Woman).

Students' accounts above suggest that homeless people and beggars are found in the underpass, a connector route used by both students and others. Some students perceive that this is part of the campus, hence why it has been flagged-up in their accounts as a place of unsafety on-campus. Yet it is not (see Fig.1). As such, Campus Security have no

real jurisdiction in such a place, yet they do ask others to move away. So, while the unmarked boundaries of the campuses are problematic areas for security, it also raises questions about how students identify dangerous others in such places. The dangerous others students have identified and named in this research, as the homeless, drug addicts, beggars, ‘chavs’, drunks, appear dangerous because of what they do (drink, beg, loiter, harass) and how they look (strange/r). To ensure that those who are thought to be out of place are kept out, students’ responses implicitly suggest Campus Security must improve its services so that students can be easily identified, and campus buildings fortified to make entry difficult for those who do not belong, to ultimately enhance students’ safety on the campuses. This woman student encapsulates students’ suggestions:

I’d appreciate people wearing their [name of city] lanyards at every stage so we can identify people. I would also like security on the doors. Having gates to tap into like the library in main doors is also a good idea, [...] (White British Woman).

Less dominant responses about how Campus Security could improve its services to enhance students’ safety, were about caring - providing help and advice, as the following woman student explains:

To look after the students (White British Woman).

The predominant responses from students about demands for enhanced campus security are to relieve individuals of their anxieties over safety (Isin 2004), but instead they are likely to create an ever-perpetuating spiral of insecurity (Loader and Walker 2007), as the next section discusses.

## **Discussion**

Research shows that as students move away from the campus and into the city, they are less likely to say they never felt unsafe. Women students are less likely to say they never felt unsafe compared to men students (Roberts et al. 2022). In this research in this paper, in a similar vein, the unmarked boundaries of the campuses, where the campuses meet the city, are sources of anxiety for some students, particularly women students, because the borders are porous (Isin 2004). Given the responsabilisation of individuals and incitement for them to modify their behaviours to prevent their own criminal victimisation (Garland 1996; Isin 2004), others - the homeless, drug addicts, beggars, 'chavs', drunks, young people, (male) strangers, non-students, are viewed as a threat to their personal safety. The unfamiliarity and unknowingness of the other leads to their stereotype as dangerous. Such populations are excluded and marginalised further, because they too are viewed as responsible for solving their own problems (Garland 1996). Consequently, whilst the unfamiliarity of the other, their perceived differences and their ensuing stereotypes need to be addressed to fundamentally alter students' perceptions of these dangerous others, the wider social-political context of neoliberalism that advocates individual responsibility and action over collective responsibility and action (Rousseau 2020), may also need to be addressed. However, a responsabilisation strategy to keep oneself safe has advantages and disadvantages, as the following explains.

It was mostly women (n=38) who felt unsafe on the campuses because of a dangerous other. It was mostly women (n=17) that said they had incidents of mostly harassment implicating a dangerous other that made them feel unsafe, happen to them on the campuses. Other research shows that women (Kelly 1988; Pain 1991; Vera-Gray 2018), including women students (NUS 2011; Roberts et al. 2019, 2022), experience a great deal of harassment, particularly sexual harassment in public places. Consequently,

women students are more likely to adopt strategies themselves, such as not walking alone after dark, to reduce their risks of criminal victimisation, to keep themselves safe in such places (Roberts 2019, Roberts et al. 2019, 2022). These individual strategies, albeit restricting, arguably serve to protect women in public places (Roberts 2019) as surveys and official statistics show men are more likely to be victims of serious and fatal violence in public places (see *Crime Surveys for England and Wales* and the *Homicide Statistics*, e.g., Office for National Statistics 2021). In this sense, there seems to be some merit in advocating and adopting a responsabilisation strategy to avoid serious harm and fatal criminal victimisation in public places.

Yet inciting individuals to modify behaviours to manage anxieties and risks of criminal victimisation can create neurotic subjects (Isin 2004). This is particularly problematic for women because the social construction of them as likely victims (Jewkes 2015) add to their vulnerability as fearing subjects (Lee 2007). There is some evidence in this study to suggest that a small number of women students had a neurotic fear of dangerous others. This is because there were a greater number of women students (n=38) who said there were places on the city campuses where they felt unsafe because of dangerous others compared to the number of women students (n=17) who reported incidents that made them feel unsafe that had happened to them on the city campuses, implicating dangerous others. Yet of these 17 women, 3 had not reported feeling unsafe in places on the city campuses. It might be argued then those 14 women had a rational fear of dangerous others, and 21 women had an irrational (neurotic) fear of dangerous others, which is a small portion of all survey respondents (3% and 4%, respectively). Overall, most students felt safe generally on the city campuses. Further research is needed to ascertain whether a responsabilisation strategy of inciting individuals to manage

anxieties and risks of criminal victimisation creates neurotic subjects. Even without the empirical evidence here to link the two, such a strategy alone cannot account for engendering women's perceptions of feeling unsafe. Several factors mesh to influence women's perceptions of safety including previous victimisation (Sironi and Bonazzi 2016), the design of the built-up environment (see Roberts et al. 2022), wider social and patriarchal processes (Koskela and Pain 2000), such as media (mis)representations of men's violence against women (see Roberts 2019) and accounts about women's experiences of sexual violence in public places (Roberts et al. 2019, 2022).

It is no surprise then that it was predominantly women students (n=20) who provided suggestions about how Campus Security could improve their services to keep out dangerous others. However, students' suggestions to keep out dangerous others by using surveillance measures such as: swiping and tapping their university card to access campus buildings, security on the doors of such buildings to check who is entering them, and students wearing their ID lanyards - a sign to mark them out as different from others, are unlikely to alter students' perceptions of dangerous others. This is particularly so given the wider social and patriarchal processes at play that also serve to enhance women's feelings of unsafety (Koskela and Pain 2000). Such surveillance measures, which students suggested, are 'markers', which 'exhibit and establish a party's claim to territory' (Goffman 2017, p.202), and as such, they serve to spatially exclude others. They also serve to socially exclude them (Sibley 1995) because such markers serve as a 'cordon sanitaire of control' (Young 1998, p.83) creating both physical and 'moral boundaries' (Sibley 1995, p.39) between the in-group and the out-group, ultimately reinforcing the 'criminology of the other', and the exclusion and marginalisation of disadvantaged populations (Garland 1996, p.461). This is particularly important in the context of HE,

which offers the potential of higher earnings and power through having a graduate job. Yet opportunities for access to HE is not evenly distributed, more so since the introduction of student fees (Boden and Nedeva 2010). As such, HE and student communities become exclusive: they can and do, as evidenced in this research, 'turn against outsiders' (Sibley 1995, p.39) because dangerous others are viewed as 'out of place' (Sibley 1995, p.15): they do not belong to the HE and student community, and thus, parts of the city. This is despite parts of the city, such as the underpass, where some of the dangerous others were seen by students, as not being university land. As one student raised, the campus 'is all over the place' because of its unmarked borders. Others thus become 'physically close' inhibiting the chaotic social space of 'no-man's land' (Bauman 1993, p.153), which students need to traverse as part of their daily routines as students. In 'no-man's land', the rules are less clear, and others here are perceived as a threat to social stability (Becker 1963) and the safety of students. This is particularly acute for some women students, who have a perceived sense of vulnerability when in the presence of unknown others, i.e., strangers (Roberts et al. 2022), and particularly when the boundaries of the university land are unmarked. So exclusionary measures to keep out dangerous others are likely to exacerbate some students' perceptions of unsafety, perpetuating the fearful subject, who is incited to adopt their own safety strategies and thereby live under conditions of absolute and pervasive security (Isin 2004), as the following explains further.

It is difficult to undo the cultural and political conditions that foster such authoritarianism of the increased demands for security and the ever-perpetuating spiral of insecurity in a society consumed with risk and danger (Loader and Walker 2007). In this research, there is evidence of a perceived sense of privilege for students, including women students, to use university space exclusively for their own safety, given their suggestions

about how Campus Security could improve their services, by keeping out dangerous others, despite the city campuses being unmarked by boundaries, which in itself, serves to perpetuate the cycle of insecurity, anxieties and demands for security (Isin 2004; Loader and Walker 2007). A perceived sense of vulnerability when in the presence of dangerous others *and* a perceived sense of privilege over such others is problematic because advocating and implementing physical barriers and surveillance measures to territorialise land to keep others out entrenches and extends these privileged views into de-territorialised land, e.g., in the underpass. The upshot is that the exclusive HE community seeks to territorialise de-territorialised land, that is not their land, to satisfy students, by moving away the beggars, the homeless, because of the way they are behaving (e.g., begging, harassing), which contravenes the rules of public places, marking them out as a threat to students' safety. The exclusive community thus exercises power over these less privileged groups. Physically then, the dangerous other is always out of place because socially they are perceived as the 'outgroup' and 'scapegoat' for social problems (Young 1998, p.79). Hence why they literally and metaphorically reside on the margins of an inequitable society that engenders unequal economic and social outcomes between groups of individuals (del Cerro Santamaria 2000; Barnett 2018; Boden and Nedeva 2010). Ultimately, this sustains perceptions of the dangerous other and the potential harassment and harm they may cause; and enforces an exclusive community of the privileged and the powerful, consequently, doing nothing to challenge the stereotype of the other as dangerous.

An alternative approach is needed. Students' demands for enhanced surveillance measures to keep others out, can never be realised (Isin 2004) because separations between those who might be considered as privileged (e.g., students) and those who are

not privileged (e.g., dangerous others) are unrealistic (Sibley 1995). They are arbitrary divisions: physically and socially. Physically, the university campuses are embedded within the city – the boundaries of the university land are unmarked. Given that markers to territorialise land are likely to aggravate students' perceptions of dangers others, then border controls are not the solution, here. Socially, drawing on Barnett's (2018) ecological university, this may provide a worthwhile approach to engendering a more inclusive and open campus because it seeks to advance well-being in the wider world in all ecosystems. For example, by engaging in voluntary work to help the local community, the world is extended to the student and the other to the university. In doing this, students come 'into contact with differing social classes [...] and people in contrasting situations of dependency and powerlessness' (Barnett 2018, p.107) and poverty, inequalities and segregated communities are brought to students' attention. Students learn about 'an absence of acceptable living conditions' (e.g., for the homeless), an absence of 'a proper distribution of resources' (e.g., for the beggars), and 'an absence of acceptable levels of social and educational provision' (Barnett 2018, pp.51-52). Such experiences facilitate students' learning about and care for others, ultimately developing empathy for their material circumstances. Consequently, students develop 'a wider emotional repertoire and capacities for being in the world' (Barnett 2018, p.149), which may help them in turn, with their own sense of well-being and safety in the urban environment.

This 'ecological spirit' (Barnett 2018, p.77) should extend to the practices of Campus Security so that the university begins to 'take on its own ecological pattern' (Barnett 2018, p.67). The lack of physical boundaries marking the campuses out from the city should be seen as an advantage for the ecological university in helping connect students with the wider world. Despite students' suggestions that Campus Security should

improve its service by installing authorised access and security in campus buildings to improve students' safety on the campuses, the ecological university is not limited to satisfying students in this explicit way. Rather it can be more implicit, interpreting students' suggestions to have a concern for the wider well-being of the student by drawing them into a pedagogy of risk, as outlined in the above paragraph, because this is 'likely to extend students so that they may be able to meet the challenges', for example of fear of the unknown other, that the twenty-first century brings (Barnett 2018, p.149). This is important because if individuals understood the reasons why others are 'acting improperly or appearing out of place', then they would not be alarmed by the behaviour (Goffman 2017, p.240). If students understood why the homeless were asking for money, why the beggars were 'harassing', why the 'chavs' were 'asking for stuff', why the 'drunks' were drinking, and why the drug addicts were behaving the way they did, they may not feel unsafe by their presence. This is particularly salient for women students because they may not feel as vulnerable from dangerous others, who they know more about. If women are not constructed as likely victims (Jewkes 2015) and fearing subjects in urban space, then the binary opposite of the feared subject (Lee 2007), the dangerous other, would gradually dissipate. Campus Security then have an important role in fostering an ecological university by extending itself out in the wider world, into the ecosystems, with an 'active concern' (Barnett 2018, p.78) for others who literally reside on its unmarked borders. Rather than keep out dangerous others, as students suggested 'ensure that there are no homeless people asking us for money on university campuses', and in doing so, failing to address the absence of appropriate living conditions and equal distribution of resources for them, Campus Security should engage in the pedagogy of risk with students by mutually engaging in strengthening the ecosystems for a more socially just and equitable world. This may serve to raise awareness of Campus Security

and in ways that are more in line with the spirit of the ecological university (see Barnett 2018).

## **Conclusion**

This article has presented data about how some students, particularly women students, feel unsafe on the campuses because of the perception of dangerous others: the homeless, drug addicts, beggars, ‘chavs’, drunks, young people, (male) strangers, non-students. These others comprise demonised populations, and they can invoke fear and hostility (Garland 1996). Set against a social-political backdrop where individuals are encouraged to adopt safety strategies themselves to avoid criminal victimisation (Garland 1996), students felt unsafe by such others because of the way they looked and behaved: they were unknown and different to students. As such, they were perceived to be out of place (Sibley 1995): they did not belong to the student community. This in turn fuelled students’ feelings of unsafety and suggestions for improving security to keep out others from the university campuses. This perpetuates the fearful and neurotic subject (Isin 2004), and a spiral of insecurity ensues (Loader and Walker 2007) because surveillance measures, which are used to territorialise land to keep out others, are likely to aggravate students’ perceptions of unsafety and dangerous others, particularly when they are viewed as porous. Such demands for absolute security (Isin, 2004), whilst seeking to satisfy those students, particularly women, who consider themselves vulnerable, also extends the power of the privileged group (students) over the less privileged group (dangerous others) cementing the latter’s place on the margins of society. A more worthwhile strategy to address students’ perceptions of dangerous others is for universities to reclaim their roles as educators for the public good (Giroux 2014). In stretching students beyond the

university into their local communities, so that they mutually learn about others who are different (Barnett 2018), students step out of their instrumental world into a relational one where they view others with care and without judgement (Noddings 2013). While neoliberal ideology advocates individuals as responsible for solving their own problems (Martinez and Garcia 2000), this can be difficult for some populations, and an inclusive approach is needed. The ecological university adopts such an approach through its reach out into the wider world with the aim of mending impairments and inequalities in all ecosystems (Barnett 2018). This is particularly salient in recent times. During the global pandemic and due to Covid-19 restrictions, the university where the research was carried-out, had closed its doors to individuals who did not have an accessible student or staff card to enter. Inadvertently, students' suggestions for enhanced surveillance measures to keep others out were realised. Further research should consider the impact of this upon students' perceptions of on-campus safety *and* also the impact of this upon the exclusion of others who reside physically and socially on the margins of the university campuses.

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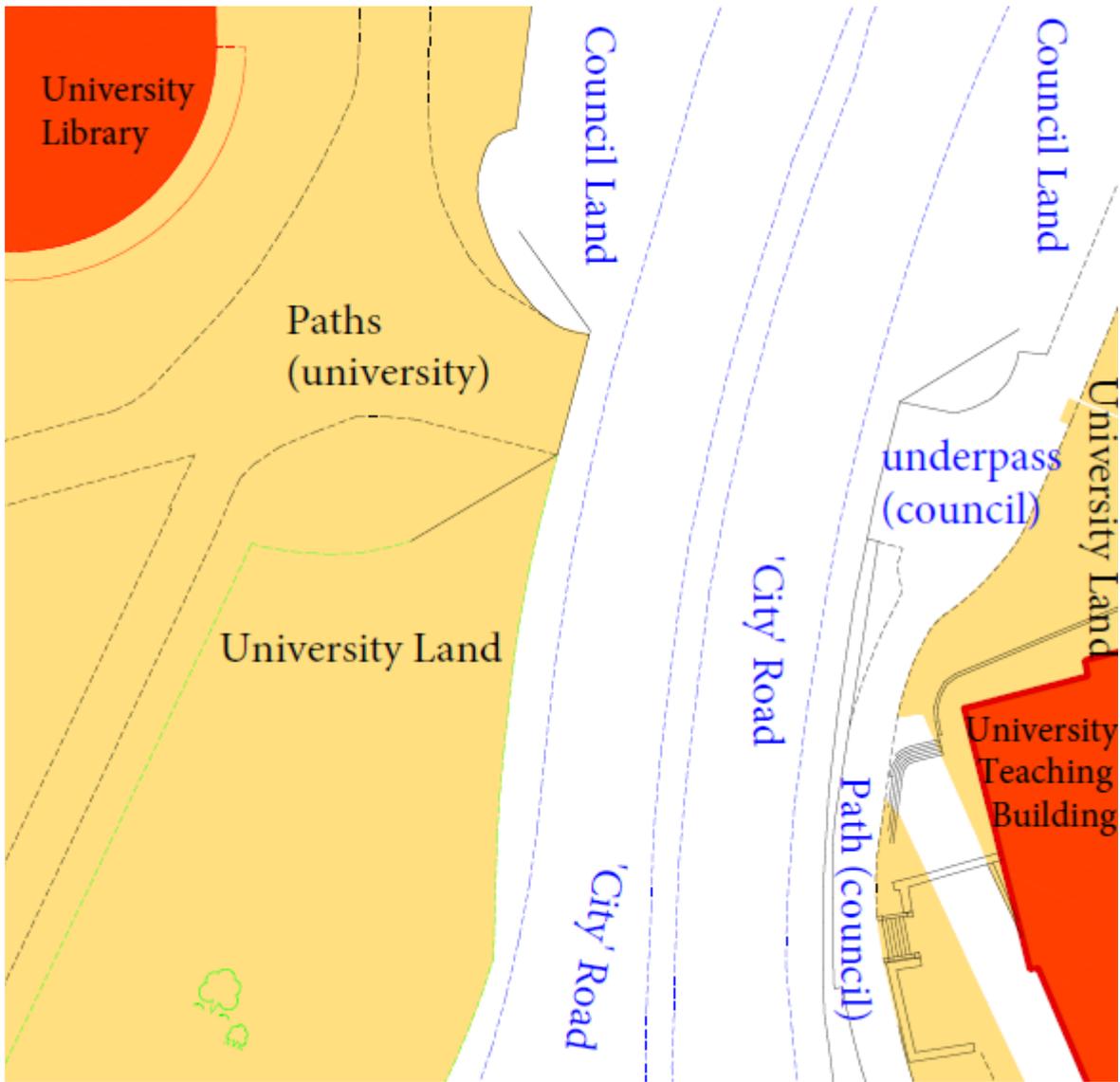
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**Fig. 1** Map of Campus (adapted from source: Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved).