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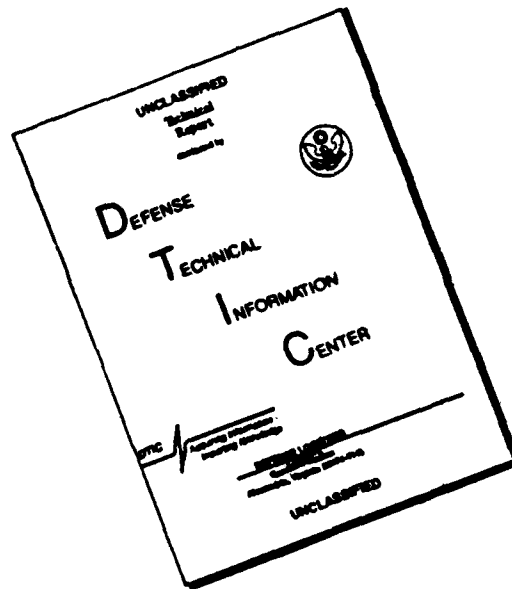


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TESTING A FEAR OF CRIME MODEL  
ON AIR FORCE INSTALLATIONS

REX E. OGLE, JR.  
MICHAEL TRAPP

This research explores the differential effects of victimization, perceived community incivilities, and perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood on fear of crime at two Air Force Installations located in the Southeastern United States. Households were randomly selected and assigned (N = 266), and administered a survey by telephone.

Air Force bases provide a unique environment in which to conduct fear of crime research due to a younger population, the absence of unemployment and low income earners, higher education, and lower perceived incivilities and perceived crime than are generally reported in the literature.

Despite these differences, sufficient variation exists to test the fear model. The results indicate a positive association between conceptual variables and fear of crime. Respondents who indicated a household member was victimized during the past 12 months, perceived community incivility problems or perceived crime problems, generally reported higher fear levels than respondents who indicated lower levels of these conditions.

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Crime and its associated consequences remain important issues at the local, state, and national levels. A specific consequence of crime, central to the present focus, is fear of victimization. Fear of criminal victimization remains a modern-day reality for most Americans. Despite its importance as a social issue, researchers continue to search for answers which one day may reduce, or even eliminate, these negative consequences of crime.

### **A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

An extensive review of the literature on the fear of crime discloses three widely accepted models--the victimization model, the social control model, and the combination model. The victimization model theorizes that crime rates (Lewis and Salem, 1981), perceived risk of victimization, vicarious victimization (such as knowing or hearing about a victim), and vulnerability to victimization (Baumer, 1978; Clemente and Kleiman, 1977; Greenberg et al., 1982, 1985; Jaycox, 1978; Skogan et al., 1981; Garofalo, 1981; Lewis and Maxfield, 1980; Taylor et al., 1979) are the basic causes of fear of crime and all reactions to crime. The social control model theorizes that a breakdown of social control in an area is a major determinant of fear (Greenberg et al., 1985; Lewis and Salem, 1981; Podolefsky and DuBow, 1980; DuBow and Kaplan, 1979; and Skogan et al., 1982). A collapse in social control is most frequently associated with signs of incivility such as broken windows, litter, local vandalism, loitering, distribution of drugs and other observable social and physical problems (Gates and Rohe, 1987). But, neither model has

been successful in predicting fear of crime without considering the effects of the other (Gates and Rohe, 1987). Thus, any current attempt to explain fear of crime must take into account factors from both models, and must deal with interaction effects between these factors. This was attempted by Gates and Rohe (1987), Ortega and Myles (1987), and Donnelly (1988) who developed strong support for combining the models.

#### Relationship Between Crime and Fear

The expected relationship between crime and fear of crime is straightforward: being criminally victimized will make one more cautious and more fearful (Smith and Hill, 1991a). There is considerable evidence supporting this view (see e.g., Balkin, 1979; Liska et al., 1988; Skogan, 1986), although others have found the strength of the relationship less significant (Hindelang et al., 1978; Garofalo, 1979; Braungart et al., 1980; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981; Smith and Huff, 1982) or nonexistent (Hill et al., 1985).

Taylor and Hale (1986) present three significant points concerning the patterning of fear. First, rank ordering age-sex groups on fear levels is exactly opposite their respective ordering on victimization rates. For example, young males exhibit the least fear but are victimized at the highest rate; elderly women are the most fearful but are the least victimized. Second, more people are fearful than are victimized, and fear levels are higher than should be warranted by actual crime rates, even assuming a liberal amount of unreported crime. Third, the

pattern of fear across areas does not match the pattern of crime levels across the same areas. In other words, areas with higher crime rates do not always have residents who are more fearful.

### Methodological Issues

Efforts to address these issues have been hampered by weaknesses in what have become accepted measurement practices in fear of crime research. Expounding on this point, Smith and Hill (1991a) identify three specific measurement weaknesses: measuring fear of crime, fear of specific types of victimization, and seriousness of victimization.

#### Measuring Fear of Crime

The most common method of measuring fear of crime has been a dichotomous response to the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) question, "Is there any area near your home--that is, within a mile or so--where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" Lee (1982), Taylor and Hale (1986), and Smith and Hill (1991a) contend the question is conceptually ambiguous and may not be a valid indicator of fear of crime. Thus, measuring fear using the NORC question may inflate estimates of fear among some groups (e.g., women) and may produce misleading results.

#### Measuring Fear of Specific Types of Victimization

A related problem, according to Smith and Hill, is the NORC question may be a more valid indicator of fear of personal victimization, versus property victimizations, than of crime more generally. They believe the NORC question more accurately measures personal victimizations which represents the types of

imagined experiences the general public fears most, but fails to tap property victimizations, the most likely to occur. If this is the case, the measure would permit a bias toward personal victimization while limiting an assessment of the unique effects of nonpersonal crimes.

#### Measuring Seriousness of Victimization Experiences

Smith and Hill's third issue concerns the utility of developing scales to reflect the seriousness of victimization. In the literature, victimization experiences are typically deduced by a simple count of the number of crime experiences. The sum of these experiences are then used as an index of the degree and seriousness of prior victimization. But, as Smith and Hill point out (see also Warr, 1987), it is very reasonable to expect a person to experience differing levels of fear depending on the crime. For example, a rape should cause a greater degree of fear in a person than several thefts from the yard.

#### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research explores how victimization experience, perceived community incivilities, and social background characteristics influence perceptions of crime seriousness in the neighborhood and fear of crime. Our model was derived primarily from three sources. First, Smith and Hill (1991a) published multi-item measures for fear of crime and victimization experience to explore the differential effects of property and personal victimizations on fear of crime. Second, Smith and Hill (1991b) expanded their first study by exploring how perceptions

of crime seriousness mediate the effects of vulnerability to victimization on fear of crime. Third, LaGrange et al., (1992) examined the influence of incivilities on perceptions of risk and feelings of fear. These sources support continuing research in the area.

Although these sources inform the current study, there are several major differences: our concepts are combined into one general model; the fear scale used by Smith and Hill (1991a, 1991b) has been expanded to distinguish between fear on base and off base; and, two Air Force communities were selected for study which are thought unique from any previously studied in fear of crime research.

Figure 1 presents a path analytic representation of the connection between concepts, followed by a brief explanation of each. The diagram is signed (+/-) for direction of hypothesized effects.

(FIGURE ONE ABOUT HERE)

#### Victimization Experience

The victimization measure consists of 16 questions (See Appendix A), developed by Smith and Hill (1991a/1991b). The sum of the scaled score is collapsed into four categories: no victimization; single (property) victimization; multiple victimization (consisting of two property or one personal victimizations); and serious victimization (everything scored

above multiple victim).

#### Social Background Characteristics

The six social background variables (gender, education household composition, income, age, and race) are incorporated into the model as controls, their proven effects on fear of crime seemingly independent of actual risk.

Gender is simply whether the respondent is male or female (Box et al., 1988; Liska et al., 1988; and Donnelly, 1988).

Education is the level of formal education completed by the respondent, ranging from some high school to post-graduate work (Smith and Hill, 1991b). Education level was later collapsed into three categories, high school, some college, and college degree, because of the limited number of respondents on both ends of the education measure.

Household composition is a simple count of the number living in the respondent's household (Smith and Hill, 1991b). The household number is divided into three categories, one member (respondents living alone), two members (married or a single parent), or three or more members (single parents with two or more children or married with one or more children).

Annual income is the respondents reported total annual income for the household. Seven incremental measures of income were initially collected (Riger et al., 1982; Gates and Rohe, 1987; Liska et al., 1988); but, due to the limited cases reported in the extreme categories, income was collapsed into less than \$20,000, \$20,001 to \$40,000, and over \$50,000. No respondents

reported incomes of \$40,001 to \$50,000.

Race was determined by the respondents selection from among the following categories: white, black, hispanic, asian or other (Miethe et al., 1990; Box, et al., 1988). Due to the limited cases selected for hispanics, asians, and other, race was later collapsed into white and nonwhite.

Age was indicated by respondent's selection from one of five age categories (Smith and Hill, 1991a, 1991b) which was later reduced to three categories: 18 to 25, 26 to 35, and over 35.

#### Perceived Community Incivility

A common research finding is that community incivilities are often as powerful in generating feelings of fear as crime itself (LaGrange et al., 1992). Previous research also discloses that fear of crime is increased by signs of disorder (incivility), despite the fact that these signs of incivility have little to do with the actual amount of serious crime (Lewis and Maxfield, 1980).

Community incivility was measured by having respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement with seven statements. Responses are coded using a four point Likert Scale.

1. I have noisy neighbors. (Gates and Rohe, 1987)
2. Most of my neighbors keep their homes and yards in good condition. (Gates and Rohe, 1987)
3. Juvenile loitering, fighting, cursing, and similar activities are a problem in my neighborhood. (Box et al., 1988)
4. Drugs and alcohol are a problem in my neighborhood. (Box

et al., 1988; Lewis and Maxfield, 1980)

5. My neighbors frequently have loud parties. (Box et al., 1988)

6. Vandalism is a problem in my neighborhood. (Lewis and Maxfield, 1980)

7. In general, would you say that conditions in your neighborhood are (getting worse, staying the same, or getting better)?

Respondents were then classified from the sum of their scores into one of three categories: low (scored from zero positive answers to one positive response), moderate (scored from two to three positive responses), and high (more than three positive responses).

#### Perceived Crime Seriousness

Perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood is most likely influenced by actual and perceived risk. McPherson (1978) argues that individuals have reasonably accurate perceptions of the seriousness of crime in the neighborhoods in which they live; however, Lewis and Maxfield (1980) found only a weak relationship between crime perceptions and official crime rates.

Perceived Crime Seriousness in the Neighborhood was measured by how respondents feel about the seriousness of ten crime problems (Appendix B) developed by Smith and Hill (1991b). Scores from the index were then collapsed into none (no perceived problems), low (one or two perceived problems), moderate (three or four perceived problems), and high (five or more perceived

problems).

### Fear of Crime

Fear of Crime was measured by two separate indexes consisting of eight questions each. The primary index replicates that of Smith and Hill (1991a; 1991b) with one exception: three questions (questions 2, 6, and 7) were modified to distinguish between "on base" and "off base". It is thought that this alteration will permit a more exact geographical reference in the first index and permit a previously unused measure in the second index (See Appendix C).

As with many of the other variables, the fear of crime index was recoded based on the sum index scores (possible range of 0 to 24). The following new categories were created: low fear (index scores from 0 to 8); moderate fear (index scores from 9 to 12); and, high fear (index scores 13 or higher).

### Methodology

#### Sample Selection

The data for the present study were collected between November 1992 and January 1993 from Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, and Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. Base telephone directories were used to identify phone numbers for persons living on base. From these lists, a reference number was randomly assigned and all remaining numbers were numbered from that point. Using a random number table, 200 numbers were selected from Tyndall and 150 numbers were selected from Moody, proportionate to 12 percent of the active duty military personnel living on Tyndall and 17

percent of the active duty military personnel living on Moody. The greater percentage selected from Moody was necessary because only 871 active duty live on base, compared to 1,708 active duty living on Tyndall.

The telephone survey was administered to persons 18 or older from each household who volunteered to participate in the survey. Phone numbers determined to be out of service were replaced.

#### Bases Selected for Analysis

Tyndall is located adjacent to Panama City, Florida. It has a population of approximately 150,000, and is in close proximity to the cities of Mexico Beach, Florida, and Panama City Beach, Florida. The area serves as a tourist attraction for people who enjoy the local beaches. This close association with seasonal tourism and population density is representative of other Air Force bases located in the southeast (i.e., Myrtle Beach AFB, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi; and Patrick AFB, Cocoa Beach, Florida).

Moody is geographically more remote than Tyndall. The nearest city is Valdosta, Georgia, a city with a population of approximately 50,000, located 18 miles away. The primary industry in the area is agriculture. Moody is thought to be geographically similar to Robins AFB, near Elberta, Georgia; Columbus AFB, Kolola, Mississippi; and Altus AFB, Altus, Oklahoma.

Dobbins Air Force Base, located by Atlanta, Georgia, was the only base in the southeast located near a major metropolitan area

(population over 500,000). It was not selected because the base is in the process of closing and an appropriate sample would be difficult to obtain.

#### Rationale for Selecting Military Communities

Air Force communities were selected because they are distinct from communities previously studied in fear of crime research. Although military personnel and their families mirror society at large, there are several major differences concerning community life. First, at least one member of every household is employed. Second, military personnel are restricted to careers which do not exceed 30 years service, and a large percentage are expected to exit the service after the first four year commitment. Thus, the age distribution should be younger and is not representative of larger society. Third, military wages are above the poverty level. This may be significant given that Patterson (1991) found absolute poverty (defined by Patterson as households earning below \$5,000 annually) is significantly associated with higher community crime rates. Fourth, the area surrounding the Air Force community is fenced and posted with legally enforceable warning signs, continuously patrolled internally by security personnel, and entry can only be gained through periodically manned entry points. The combined security measures are designed to limit access solely to community residents, their sponsored guests, personnel employed on the installation, and other personnel authorized to visit the installation. Fifth, Air Force installations are devoid of many incivilities such as run down

buildings, dense population centers, uninhabited buildings, and unkept yards. Altogether, the Air Force community is a more controlled environment than any community previously studied; thus, serving as a unique environment in which to study fear of crime. It is believed these combined controls increase feelings of safety and well-being among community residents unequaled in larger society.

#### Methodological Weaknesses

The survey was verbally administered to respondents by telephone. This form of data collection suffers from many of the weaknesses of National Crime Surveys (i.e., sampling errors, social desirability responses, forgetting about past events, telescoping, etc.,) as well as from the added problems associated with conducting unbounded interviews (see O'Brien, 1985) which have proven to provide inflated estimates of victimization.

Another source of bias in this type of sample is that some households do not have a telephone. Although the most current census data reflects this number to be under 5% nationally (LaGrange et al., 1992), fewer dorm residents will have telephones. The dormitories are equipped with hall phones and have eliminated the need to have individual phones in each room.

A final bias associated with this sample is that persons under the age of 18 years have been excluded. Therefore, any influence these persons have on the survey will be mediated through an older household member (See Note 2).

These constraints should be kept in mind when interpreting the

data and generalizing from the results.

### Testing the Survey

Although survey questions were extracted from the literature, some of the questions were developed from only one or two words such as litter, age, income, loud noise, etc. Also, in generating this model, there were questions as to flow and ordering of the questions. These factors led to the decision to test the survey prior to data collection.

In November 1992, the survey was tested by calling 25 randomly selected households at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. Only minor alterations were made to the survey.

## **FINDINGS**

### Response Rate

The response rate for Tyndall was 79 percent (n=157) and 73 percent (n=109) for Moody (N=266). The refusal rate was low at both installations, less than 5 percent. The remaining proportion of the sample could not be reached by phone after at least seven phone calls. (More detailed data are presented in Appendix D, Table 8.)

### Social Characteristics of the Sample

As anticipated, the specific characteristics of respondents in the sample proved to be unique from any previously studied in fear of crime research.

The first of these characteristics relates to combined annual income of the household. Forty-one percent of the respondents earned between 10,000 and 20,000 dollars annually, 51 percent

earned between 20,001 and 40,000 dollars annually, and eight percent earned greater than 50,000 dollars, and six percent earned below 10,000 (See NOTE 3). Somewhat surprisingly, no respondents indicated an income of 40,000 to 50,000 dollars.

The second of these characteristics relates to the education level of respondents in the sample. Over 98 percent of respondents indicated they had attained a high school diploma. This was expected given the Air Force requires either a high school diploma or the GED equivalent. Nearly 48 percent of all respondents had some college, while 17 percent had a two year degree and 13 percent had completed a bachelors degree or higher.

The third significant characteristic associated with this sample concerns age of the respondents. Over 98 percent of respondents were between 18 and 45 years old as of their last birthday: 26 percent were between 18 and 25; 52 percent between 26 and 35; and, 23 percent indicated an age over 35. Only 4 respondents (1.5 percent) were between 46 and 55, and no one indicated an age over 55.

The fourth characteristic concerns race. Approximately 74 percent of the respondents were White, 20 percent were Black, 2 percent were Hispanic, 3 percent were Asian, and 1 percent indicated they were Other. Although this may accurately represent the ethnic population of Moody and Tyndall Air Force Bases, it cannot be considered representative of other bases in the southeast. For example, bases in Texas and Oklahoma may have higher hispanic populations than indicated in this sample.

Other social characteristics of respondents in the sample relate to gender, household composition, and military status: sixty percent of respondents were male; nearly 15 percent of respondents lived alone, while 70 percent consisted of three or more persons in the household; and, 89 percent were enlisted with the remaining 11 percent officer households.

#### Victimization Experiences

The most frequently reported experience was something stolen from outside the home such as a bicycle or garden hose, 36 incidents (14 percent) were reported out of the 266 households surveyed. In line with the literature, property crimes were the most often reported and personal crimes were rare event occurrences. Under personal victims, respondents reported one murder of a household member, one rape, nine incidents of physical attack, three incidents of physical attack with a weapon, and three incidents of robbery by force.

#### Perceived Community Incivility

Perceived incivilities were measured using a scale of seven survey questions, and scoring ranged from 0 (no perceived incivilities) to 20. One question concerning conditions in the neighborhood had only three answer options (scored 0 to 2), while the other six questions used a four-point Likert scale answer option. The majority of respondents (90 percent) indicated low (47 percent) or moderate (43 percent) incivility scores. Only 16 (6 percent) respondents indicated high incivility scores. These findings are in line with the general literature concerning

incivilities, except for the smaller proportion of respondents in the sample who indicated high perceived community incivilities. Although this was anticipated given the nature of the Air Force community, LaGrange, et al. (1992), found a higher percentage (20 percent) of respondents who expressed five or more incivility problems which would have been scored in the high category of this research.

#### Perception of Crime Seriousness

The perceived crime seriousness scale consisted of ten questions concerning crime problems in the neighborhood. Scores on the perceived crime index ranged from 0 (not a problem) to 24 and extreme scores were infrequent. This is in line with the literature. As expected, 50 percent of respondents indicated no perceived crime problems in the neighborhood. Of those remaining, 28 percent indicated only low crime, 11 percent moderate crime and 8 percent perceived high crime problems in their neighborhood. Although the same perceived crime seriousness questions developed by Smith and Hill (1991b) were used, Smith and Hill found most respondents in their sample felt that crime was somewhat of a problem. At Tyndall and Moody, most respondents indicated no crime problems. This difference may be associated with the additional security measures and unique community settings found on Air Force installations.

#### Fear of Crime

On and off base fear of crime were measured using two scales

and scoring ranged from 0 (no fear) to 24 on each scale. Respondents indicated a mean on base fear score of 8.492 (sd = 3.244), and an off base mean of 11.188 (sd = 3.898). Most respondents in the sample express neither extremely high nor extremely low levels of fear. Approximately 80 percent of the sample indicated levels of fear in the 5 to 12 range on base, and 7 to 15 range off base. Only two respondents, on base, reported no fear at all.

Although there was no posited connection between on and off base fear, the strength of the relationship warrants discussion. A T-Test was used to test the null hypothesis that the two population means were equal. Skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable range: On base, .205/-.649; Off base, -.417/.323, respectively. The test failed to support the null, t value -22.12 and a 2-Tail Probability less than .001. The crosstabulated results revealed that 231 respondents exhibited higher fear off base, 30 indicated the same degree of fear on and off base, and only 5 indicated more fear on base.

In order to view these findings in more detail, two new variables were developed by separating the three distinct on and off base variables from the eight-question scales--the other five questions were identical in each scale. The three variables on base were crosstabulated with the off base variables which produced a Kendall's Tau C of .18, significant at the .001 level.

Most respondents in the study indicate increased fear off base. This may be due to a greater perceived threat outside the

installation; but, may be a natural tendency to fear communities outside one's own immediate neighborhood.

#### Association Among Concepts and Social Characteristics

All hypothesized associations between the social background characteristics and perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood and fear of crime were posited earlier. Rank is also shown in the table for information and comparison only. Table 1 illustrates the Kendall Tau C and statistical significance of each relationship.

(TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE)

Gender (females), age, and race (whites) were hypothesized to be positively associated with perceived crime and fear of crime. Gender proved statistically significant in the anticipated direction with fear, but was not significant for perceived crime. Age was statistically significant for both fear and perceived crime, but in the negative direction. Race was statistically significant for on base fear, but was not significant for perceived crime. Except for age, these findings are in line with the general literature. Smith and Hill (1991b) found age positively related with fear of crime. The ages of persons in this sample are generally younger than are found in most studies, and may contribute to this anomaly.

Education, household composition, and income were hypothesized to be negatively related to perceived crime and fear. Education

and income were statistically significant for fear in the anticipated direction, but were not significant for perceived crime. Household composition was statistically significant in the anticipated direction for perceived crime, but was not significant for fear. These findings were in line with Smith and Hill's (1991b).

Two other points should be addressed concerning the data presented above. First, none of the social background variables are significant in predicting victimization. This is not surprising given the unit of analysis, the household. Specific questions were not used to determine information concerning the victim. Second, all of the social background variables proved significant in predicting fear except household composition. These findings are generally supported in the literature.

#### Association Between Concepts Using Social Characteristics as Controls

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the multivariate relationships among victimization experience, perceived community incivilities, perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood, and on base fear of crime with gender, age, race, rank, income, education, and household composition entered into the analysis as controls. This analysis tests under which conditions the original relationships among concepts are strengthened or weakened.

(TABLES TWO AND THREE ABOUT HERE)

### Victimization Experience and On Base Fear of Crime

The association between victimization experience and on base fear of crime was hypothesized to be positive. The magnitude of this association was established by a Kendall's Tau C of .12, significant at the .01 level. By controlling for the sociodemographic variables of respondents in the sample, we found that for females, those 18 to 25 and over 35 years old, whites, those earning less than \$20,000 and over \$50,000 dollars annually, those with some college, and households consisting of one member victimization is positively related to fear of crime. While the association remains positive and significant, it was weakened modestly by those respondents who lived in enlisted member households and households with three or more persons. There was no association between victimization experience and fear of crime among persons in the sample who were male, aged 26 to 35, nonwhites, officers, persons earning \$20,000 to \$40,000 dollars annually, those with a high school education or at least a bachelors degree, and in households with only two members.

### Perception of Crime Seriousness and On Base Fear

The association between perception of crime seriousness in the neighborhood and on base fear was hypothesized to be positive, supported by a Kendall's Tau C of .17. Respondents in the sample who were female, aged 18 to 25 or over 35, white, officer, earned \$20,000 to \$40,000, had at least a bachelors degree, and households with either one or three members strengthened the original relationship. For those persons with some college, the

relationship remained the same, and enlisted member households weakened the relationship moderately. There appears to be no association between perceived crime seriousness and fear of crime among males, persons 26 to 35, nonwhites, those earning less than \$20,000 and over \$50,000, high school graduates, and two member households in the sample.

#### Perceived Community Incivilities and On Base Fear

The original hypothesis predicted a positive relationship between perceived community incivilities and on base fear of crime. This was supported by a Kendall's Tau C of .21. Males, persons over 35, whites, persons with a bachelors, and households with one member or three or more members strengthened the original relationship. Females, persons 26 to 35, enlisted households, households earning \$40,000 or less, and persons with some college in the sample were the same or weakened the relationship slightly. There was no association for persons in the sample who earned \$50,000 or more, high school graduates, two member households, officers, nonwhites, and persons 18 to 25.

#### Victimization and Perceived Crime Seriousness

The original relationship between victimization experience and perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood was hypothesized to be positive, supported by a Kendall's Tau C of .17. Respondents in the sample who were female, persons 18 to 25, whites, officers, those earning less than \$20,000 or more than \$50,000 had some college or a bachelors, and households with three or more persons strengthened the original relationship.

The relationship was moderately weakened by those respondents who were male, age 26 to 35, and enlisted. The association was not significant for those persons in the sample who were over 35, nonwhites, households earning \$20,000 to 40,000, high school graduates, and one and two member households.

#### Perceived Incivilities and Perceived Crime Seriousness

A Kendall's Tau C of .26 supported the original relationship hypothesized between perceived community incivilities and perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood. Only four respondent sociodemographic categories in the sample (those earning over \$50,000, high school graduates, and households with one or two members) failed to support the hypothesized relationship. Females, persons over 35 years old, nonwhites, officers, households earning \$20,000 to \$40,000, persons with some college or a college degree, and households with three or more members in the sample strengthened the original relationship. Respondents in the sample who were male, those 35 or younger, whites enlisted member households, and households earning less than \$20,000 weakened the relationship very modestly.

#### Impact of Victimization, Incivilities, and Perceived Crime on Fear of Crime

Table 4 illustrates the multivariate association between victimization experience and perceived community incivilities with fear of crime using perception of crime seriousness in the neighborhood as a control. The purpose is to determine whether the effects of victimization and community incivilities are

direct on fear of crime or mediated through perception of crime seriousness in the neighborhood.

The results indicate a conditional relationship between victimization and fear of crime when controlling for perception of crime seriousness in the neighborhood. For those respondents in the sample who indicated no (-.01) or low (.02) perceived crime problems in their neighborhood, the original relationship (.12\*\*) disappeared. This finding supports the intervening effects of the respondents' perceptions of crime on fear of crime. On the other hand, the original relationship is strengthened for those respondents who indicate moderate (.17) and high (.32\*) perceived crime seriousness scores, indicating both direct and indirect effects on fear. Respondents who were victimized by more than a minor incident were more fearful and perceived greater crime seriousness in their neighborhood. Victimization appears to increase respondents' fear both directly and indirectly by increasing perceptions of crime seriousness in the neighborhood. These findings generally support those of Smith and Hill (1991b), and Baker, et al. (1983), who argue fear of crime cannot be measured accurately without accounting for perceptions.

The data in Table 4 also indicate respondents' perception of incivilities in their neighborhood has an almost entirely direct effect on fear. The original relationship (.21\*\*\*) remained unchanged for respondents who indicated low (.21\*\*) and moderate (.21) perceived crime seriousness, and dropped modestly for those

indicating high (.18) perceived crime.

(TABLE FOUR ABOUT HERE)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary focus of this study was not to replicate previous research simply to determine which subgroups of the population are more fearful. Many fear of crime research findings do an excellent job in this area. The objective was to bring forward the most current conceptual and measurement instruments to study a set of communities which have not been analyzed in fear of crime research.

### Discussion

This research studies an environment thought to be devoid of many social problems often present in previous fear of crime studies. The underlying assumption behind this rationale is that reduced problems in a community should translate into reduced fear among residents. While Moody and Tyndall proved unique from other communities studied in fear research, our basic assumption was generally supported by a reduction in fear among residents.

At least one member in every household surveyed was employed and household income was not representative with previous studies. The lowest household income was more than double the absolute poverty level defined by Patterson (1991) as an annual income of \$5,000 dollars or less. Patterson's findings supported a strong positive association between absolute poverty

and crime, making this finding noteworthy.

Education and age distribution were also distinctive at Moody and Tyndall. Respondents indicated higher education levels than are generally found in fear of crime studies. Over 98 percent of respondents in the sample indicated at least a high school education. Most respondents (65 percent) indicated they had completed some college. As for age, respondents in the sample were generally younger than normally represented in fear of crime studies. Ninety-eight percent were between 18 and 45 years old as of their last birthday. No one in the sample indicated an age over 55 years. Age has been consistently reported to have a strong, positive association with fear, while education has been reported to have a negative association with fear in previous research.

While the findings relating to victimization among those sampled at Moody and Tyndall were in line with the general literature, perceived community incivilities and perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood revealed important exceptions. In both instances, respondents indicated lower proportions of incivilities and perceived crime in their neighborhoods than are generally reported in the literature. For example, LaGrange, et al. (1992), reported 20 percent of respondents in a national study of adults indicated 5 or more incivility problems in their neighborhood. Only 6 percent of respondents at Tyndall and Moody reported the same proportion of neighborhood problems. As for perceived crime seriousness in the neighborhood, the same measure

developed and used by Smith and Hill (1991b) produced different proportions. Smith and Hill reported most respondents in their North Carolina sample indicated they felt crime was somewhat of a problem. Conversely, most Tyndall and Moody respondents reported no problems in their neighborhood.

Despite these differences, fear of crime among respondents at Tyndall and Moody was significantly correlated with all posited variables except household composition (Smith and Hill also found no association between fear and household composition). After separating the fear index into two distinct fear measures (on base and off base), it was determined that most base residents were more fearful off base than they were on base. More importantly, respondent's off base fear was more in line with Smith and Hill's (1991a) findings than was their lesser on base fear.

### Conclusion

This research builds on existing literature by employing more elaborate measures for fear, victimization, and perceived crime seriousness following the guidance of Smith and Hill (1991a, 1991b), and to a lesser extent the work of LaGrange, et al. (1992). Our research clarifies several specific needs for future research.

Learning more about the relationship between the victim and offender would be beneficial in measuring fear. For example, we know most violent crimes are committed by relatives or acquaintances (Smith and Hill, 1991a). What researchers don't

known is how fear is affected. Any knowledge of the victimization and offender would be helpful in understanding the patterns of fear.

Our findings indicate that victimization, individual social characteristics, perceived incivilities, and perceived crime seriousness influence one's fear of crime. While fear is generally influenced directly by these variables, victimization appears to influence fear both directly and indirectly through perceptions of crime seriousness. This suggests that simply reducing either victimization or perceptions of neighborhood problems alone may not eliminate fear.

Fear of crime still exists among residents at Moody and Tyndall even though many community problems are reduced. While these findings support the belief that altering the social environment will decrease fear of crime, it also suggests that crime, community problems, and perceptions of both crime and community problems must be simultaneous targets of public policy. Without a combined approach to these problems, unaddressed issues will likely work against any possible gains.

## NOTES

1. The model and methodology used in this research are much like that presented by Smith and Hill (1991b). Their work informs our measurement issues for fear of crime, perceptions of crime seriousness, and victimization experience. This work deviates from the former by including race which they were unable to measure. They also conceptualized community incivility and perceptions of crime seriousness in the neighborhood together; yet, measured it by crimes. This is thought to lack face validity given that previous research associates community incivility with perceived and physical signs at the local level, not crime. Third, a distinction should be made between the two sampling designs. Smith and Hill surveyed holders of driver's license in the state of North Carolina; whereas, Air Force bases are studied in this analysis. The fourth and final difference involves the fear of crime measurement. Smith and Hill's fear index has been expanded to distinguish between fear of crime on base and off base. This will permit two fear of crime indexes, one like that of Smith and Hill measuring respondents' perceptions in their neighborhoods (on base) and a second measuring perceptions associated with areas off base.

2. It is important to note the measurement is household rather than the individual. This may create problems in interpretation of victimization data. For property crimes this should not pose a significant problem if one assumes an event is most likely perceived as a crime against the household. However, personal victimizations may be very different. For example, the victim may exhibit more fear than a respondent when the two are not the same. Also, there may be an instance when the offender is a member of the family, such as in spouse abuse.

3. In addition to taxable military pay, military members also receive either a quarters allowance, if they elect to live off base, or may reside in government quarters on the installation (this is the case for respondents in this sample). In the later case, both water and electricity are paid for by the military. Similarly, first-term (first four years) airmen living in the dormitories receive free meals in military dining facilities while everyone else receives an additional allowance for subsistence. These untaxable benefits combined with free medical and dental coverage conservatively boost the annual household salary up between 4,000 and 8,000 dollars annually.

## APPENDIX A

## VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of times any of the following types of victimization occurred to either themselves or a household member:

1. During the past 12 months, did anyone damage, destroy or attempt to destroy your home or any property around your home?
2. During the past 12 months, did anyone steal or try to steal a car, truck, or motorcycle owned by you or other members of your household?
3. During the past 12 months, did anyone steal anything from inside your home, such as a stereo, TV, jewelry, gun, or purse, etc.?
4. During the past 12 months, did anyone steal anything that is kept outside your home such as a bicycle, or a garden hose?
5. During the past 12 months, did anyone steal parts attached to a car or truck owned by any member of your household, such as a battery, hubcaps, or tapedeck?
6. During the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household have anything stolen from them while they were away from home, for instance, at work, school, in a theater, in a restaurant, or while traveling?
7. During the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household have a purse or wallet snatched or pockets picked?
8. During the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household have something stolen from inside a car or truck, such as packages or clothing?
9. During the past 12 months, did anyone break into or somehow illegally get into your house, apartment, garage, or another building on your property?
10. During the past 12 months, did you find a door jimmied, a lock forced, or other signs of attempted break-in (do not include second home, business property, or camps)?

During the past 12 months, were you or any member of your household a victim of any of the following violent crimes?

11. Did anyone take something or attempt to take something directly from you or any member of your household by using force, such as a stick-up, mugging, or threat?
12. Did anyone beat-up, attack, or hit you or any member of your household?
13. Were you or any member of your household knifed, shot

- at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone?
14. Did anyone threaten to beat-up or threaten you or any member of your household with a knife, gun, or some other weapon?
  15. Did anyone rape or attempt to rape you or any member of your household?
  16. Were any members of your household murdered?

## APPENDIX B

### PERCEIVED CRIME SERIOUSNESS

Respondents were asked to indicate their preceptions about the seriousness of the following crimes in their neighborhood (coded 0 = not a problem, 1 = a problem, and 2 = a serious problem):

1. Burglary
2. Illegal Drugs
3. Drunk Driving
4. Rape
5. Assault
6. Robbery
7. Theft or Larceny
8. Trespassing
9. Vandalism
10. Obscene or Threatening Phone Calls

## APPENDIX C

### FEAR OF CRIME

1. When I am away from home, I worry about the safety of my property.
2. (On base/Off base), I worry a great deal about my personal safety from crime and criminals.
3. Even in my own home, I'm not safe from people who want to take what I have.
4. There are some parts of the county that I avoid during the day because of fear of crime.
5. There are some parts of the county that I avoid at night because of fear of crime.
6. I feel safe going anywhere (on base/off base) in the daytime.
7. I feel safe going anywhere (on base/off base) after dark.
8. Crime is more serious than the newspapers and TV say.

## APPENDIX D

## DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviation, Frequencies, and Valid Percentages Among Conceptual Variables in the Model for Respondents at Tyndall and Moody Air Force Bases (N=266)

|                               | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Std Dev</u> | <u>Freq</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b><u>Victimization</u></b>   | .673        | 1.065          | --          | --             |
| None                          | --          | --             | 177         | 66.5           |
| Single                        | --          | --             | 30          | 11.3           |
| Multiple                      | --          | --             | 28          | 10.5           |
| Serious                       | --          | --             | 31          | 11.7           |
| <b><u>Gender</u></b>          | --          | --             | --          | --             |
| Male                          | --          | --             | 157         | 59.7           |
| Female                        | --          | --             | 106         | 40.3           |
| <b><u>Education</u></b>       | .902        | .583           | --          | --             |
| High School                   | --          | --             | 59          | 22.2           |
| Some College                  | --          | --             | 172         | 64.7           |
| Bachelors                     | --          | --             | 33          | 12.5           |
| <b><u>Household Size</u></b>  | 3.208       | 1.302          | --          | --             |
| One                           | --          | --             | 39          | 14.8           |
| Two                           | --          | --             | 39          | 14.8           |
| Three Plus                    | --          | --             | 186         | 70.4           |
| <b><u>Income</u></b>          | .678        | .625           | --          | --             |
| Less 20,000                   | --          | --             | 105         | 40.7           |
| 20 to 40,000                  | --          | --             | 131         | 50.8           |
| 50,001 Plus                   | --          | --             | 22          | 8.5            |
| <b><u>Race</u></b>            | --          | --             | --          | --             |
| White                         | --          | --             | 197         | 74.3           |
| Nonwhite                      | --          | --             | 68          | 25.7           |
| <b><u>Age</u></b>             | .970        | .696           | --          | --             |
| 18-25                         | --          | --             | 68          | 25.7           |
| 26-35                         | --          | --             | 137         | 51.7           |
| Over 35                       | --          | --             | 60          | 22.6           |
| <b><u>Incivilities</u></b>    | .569        | .610           | --          | --             |
| Low                           | --          | --             | 126         | 49.4           |
| Moderate                      | --          | --             | 113         | 44.3           |
| High                          | --          | --             | 16          | 6.3            |
| <b><u>Perceived Crime</u></b> | .759        | .950           | --          | --             |
| None                          | --          | --             | 133         | 51.8           |
| Low                           | --          | --             | 74          | 28.8           |
| Moderate                      | --          | --             | 29          | 11.3           |
| High                          | --          | --             | 21          | 8.2            |
| <b><u>Fear of Crime</u></b>   | .635        | .613           | --          | --             |
| Low                           | --          | --             | 116         | 43.6           |
| Moderate                      | --          | --             | 131         | 49.2           |
| High                          | --          | --             | 19          | 7.1            |

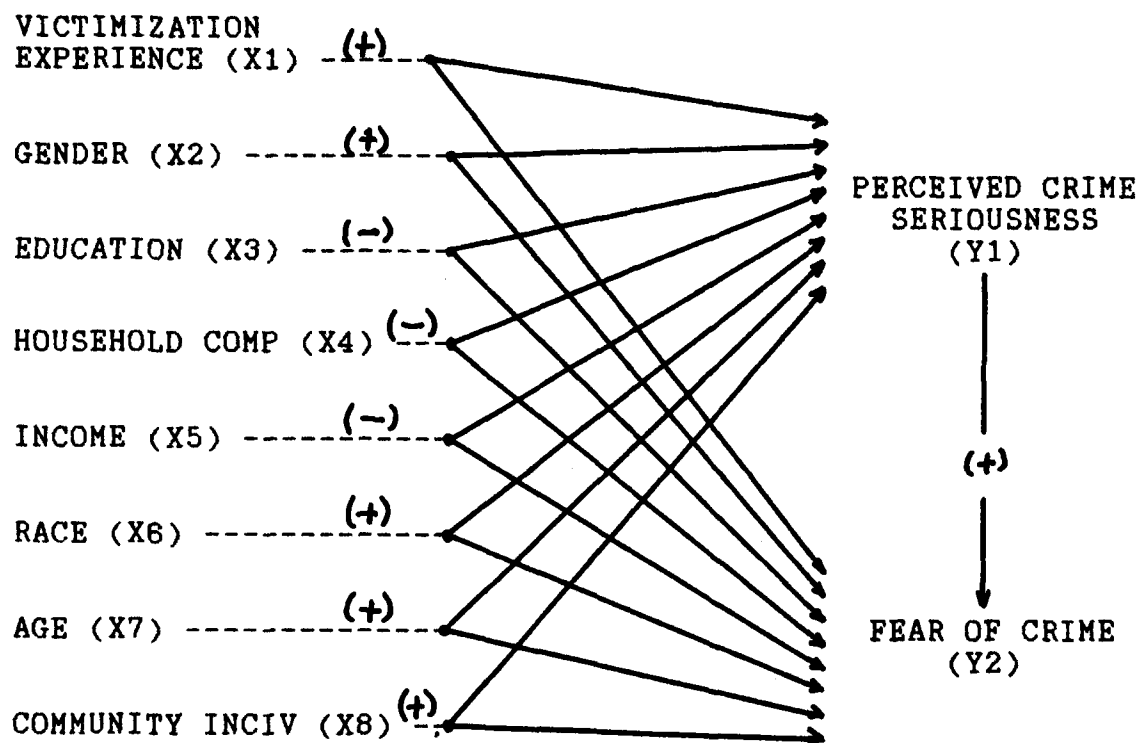
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**FIGURE 1.** Conceptual Model with Fear of Crime as the Ultimate Dependent Variable. (See Note 1)

**Table 1.** Kendall's Tau C Associations Between Victimization Experience, Perceived Community Incivilities, Perceived Crime Seriousness in the Neighborhood, and On and Off Base Fear of Crime and the Social Background Characteristics (Gender, Age, Race, Household Composition, Income, Education, and Rank) Among Respondents at Moody and Tyndall Air Force Bases (N = 266)

| Variable       | Victim          | Incivil            | Percept            | Fear<br>On Base   | Fear<br>Off Base |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Gender         | .03<br>(n=263)  | .06<br>(n=253)     | -.01<br>(n=254)    | .19***<br>(n=263) | .18**<br>(n=263) |
| Age            | -.03<br>(n=265) | -.20***<br>(n=254) | -.12**<br>(n=256)  | -.09*<br>(n=265)  | -.01<br>(n=265)  |
| Race           | -.05<br>(n=265) | .00<br>(n=254)     | -.03<br>(n=256)    | .11*<br>(n=265)   | .08<br>(n=265)   |
| House-<br>hold | -.04<br>(n=264) | -.16***<br>(n=254) | -.17***<br>(n=255) | .08<br>(n=264)    | .13**<br>(n=264) |
| Income         | .04<br>(n=258)  | -.17***<br>(n=248) | -.08<br>(n=250)    | -.10*<br>(n=258)  | -.02<br>(n=258)  |
| Educa-<br>tion | .06<br>(n=264)  | -.05<br>(n=253)    | .00<br>(n=255)     | -.13**<br>(n=264) | -.08<br>(n=264)  |
| Rank           | .04<br>(n=264)  | -.08*<br>(n=253)   | -.04<br>(n=255)    | -.07*<br>(n=264)  | -.05<br>(n=264)  |

\* Significant at the .05 level

\*\* Significant at the .01 level

\*\*\* Significant at the .001 level

**Table 2.** Kendall's Tau C Association Among Victimization Experience, Perceived Community Incivilities, Perceived Crime Seriousness in the Neighborhood, and On Base Fear of Crime, Controlling for Respondents' Gender, Age, Race, and Rank at Moody and Tyndall Air Force Bases (N = 266)

| Control Variable  | a X d            | c X d             | b X d             | a X c             | b X c             |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Zero Order</b> | .12**<br>(n=266) | .17***<br>(n=257) | .21***<br>(n=255) | .17***<br>(n=257) | .26***<br>(n=249) |
| <b>Gender</b>     |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Male              | .08<br>(n=157)   | .08<br>(n=153)    | .22***<br>(n=151) | .11*<br>(n=153)   | .22***<br>(n=149) |
| Female            | .18**<br>(n=106) | .33***<br>(n=101) | .20**<br>(n=102)  | .25***<br>(n=101) | .30***<br>(n=98)  |
| <b>Age</b>        |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| 18 to 25          | .16*<br>(n=68)   | .19*<br>(n=67)    | .15<br>(n=63)     | .18*<br>(n=67)    | .19*<br>(n=63)    |
| 26 to 35          | .06<br>(n=137)   | .04<br>(n=131)    | .17**<br>(n=132)  | .14**<br>(n=131)  | .20**<br>(N=128)  |
| Over 35           | .16*<br>(n=60)   | .37***<br>(n=58)  | .42***<br>(n=59)  | .14<br>(n=58)     | .40***<br>(n=57)  |
| <b>Race</b>       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| White             | .14**<br>(n=197) | .20***<br>(n=190) | .24***<br>(n=190) | .23***<br>(n=190) | .25***<br>(n=185) |
| Nonwhite          | .09<br>(n=68)    | .15<br>(n=66)     | .13<br>(n=64)     | -.02<br>(n=68)    | .31***<br>(n=63)  |
| <b>Rank</b>       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Officer           | .20<br>(n=28)    | .34**<br>(n=27)   | .13<br>(n=27)     | .45***<br>(n=27)  | .31*<br>(n=27)    |
| Enlisted          | .09*<br>(n=236)  | .13**<br>(n=228)  | .19***<br>(n=226) | .12**<br>(n=228)  | .24***<br>(n=220) |

a = Victimization  
b = Perceived Incivilities  
c = Perceptions of Crime Seriousness  
d = On Base Fear  
\* = Significant at the .05 level  
\*\* = Significant at the .01 level  
\*\*\* = Significant at the .001 level

**Table 3.** Kendall's Tau C Association Among Victimization Experience, Perceived Community Incivilities, Perceived Crime Seriousness in the Neighborhood, and On Base Fear of Crime, Controlling for Respondents' Income, Education, and Household Composition at Moody and Tyndall Air Force Bases (N = 266)

| Control Variable  | a X d            | c X d             | b X d             | a X c             | b X c             |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Zero Order</b> | .12**<br>(n=266) | .17***<br>(n=257) | .21***<br>(n=255) | .17***<br>(n=257) | .26***<br>(n=249) |
| <b>Income</b>     |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Less 20,000       | .19**<br>(n=105) | .06<br>(n=101)    | .21**<br>(n=99)   | .13***<br>(n=101) | .23**<br>(n=97)   |
| 20 to 40,000      | .04<br>(n=131)   | .24***<br>(n=127) | .16**<br>(n=127)  | .09<br>(n=127)    | .30***<br>(n=123) |
| Over 50,000       | .41*<br>(n=22)   | .30<br>(n=22)     | .31<br>(n=22)     | .31*<br>(n=22)    | .30<br>(n=22)     |
| <b>Education</b>  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| High School       | .10<br>(n=59)    | .03<br>(n=56)     | .11<br>(n=54)     | -.03<br>(n=54)    | .09<br>(n=52)     |
| Some College      | .13*<br>(n=172)  | .17**<br>(n=166)  | .20***<br>(n=166) | .20***<br>(n=166) | .28***<br>(n=162) |
| Bachelors         | .11<br>(n=33)    | .38**<br>(n=33)   | .33**<br>(n=33)   | .27**<br>(n=33)   | .36**<br>(n=33)   |
| <b>Household</b>  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| One               | .25*<br>(n=39)   | .26*<br>(n=38)    | .26*<br>(n=37)    | .07<br>(n=38)     | .03<br>(n=37)     |
| Two               | .02<br>(n=39)    | .02<br>(n=39)     | .08<br>(n=37)     | .17<br>(n=39)     | .12<br>(n=37)     |
| Three Plus        | .11*<br>(n=186)  | .23***<br>(n=178) | .27***<br>(n=180) | .16***<br>(n=178) | .27***<br>(n=174) |

a = Victimization  
 b = Perceived Incivilities  
 c = Perceptions of Crime Seriousness  
 d = On Base Fear  
 \* = Significant at the .05 level  
 \*\* = Significant at the .01 level  
 \*\*\* = Significant at the .001 level

**Table 4.** Kendall's Tau C Associations for Fear of Crime by Victimization Experience and Perceived Community Incivilities, Controlling for Respondents' Perceptions of Crime Seriousness in the Neighborhood at Moody and Tyndall Air Force Bases (N = 266)

|                        | Fear of Crime<br>By<br>Victimization | Fear of Crime<br>By<br>Incivilities |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Zero Order</b>      | .12**<br>(n=266)                     | .21***<br>(n=255)                   |
| <b>Perceived Crime</b> |                                      |                                     |
| None                   | -.01<br>(n=133)                      | .14*<br>(n=129)                     |
| Low                    | .02<br>(n=74)                        | .21**<br>(n=72)                     |
| Moderate               | .17<br>(n=29)                        | .21<br>(n=28)                       |
| High                   | .32*<br>(n=21)                       | .18<br>(n=20)                       |

\* Statistically significant at the .05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at the .01 level

\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level