

NAVIGATING PUBLIC SPACE, NEGOTIATING PATRIARCHY:
DAILY EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN A CANADIAN URBAN
CONTEXT

by

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Abstract

Background: Three key concepts in the fear-of-crime literature comprise the gender-fear paradox (Ferraro, 1995, 1996). First, while men are more often the victims of violent crimes in public space, women are more fearful of victimisation in public (May, Rader, & Goodrum, 2009). Second, women are most fearful of being victimised by a stranger although they are more likely to be victimised by known others (Scott, 2003; Stanko, 1995). Third, women, more than men, make adaptations to their routines and lifestyles in response to crime-related fear (Keown, 2010). **Purpose:** The purpose of the present study was to elucidate the underpinnings of the gender-fear paradox by examining the psychological, social, emotional, and behavioural experiences of women in everyday public spaces. The study also sought to situate women's spatial realities within a context by explicating how they are shaped by patriarchal influences. **Method:** Interviews were conducted with 40 women in a Canadian urban setting to gain insight into their thoughts, feelings, and actions when navigating public space. Subsequently, institutional responses were obtained from five organisations representing public interests to further contextualise the interview data. **Analysis:** The Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace (P-SEC) methodology was used to uncover Organisational Moments—instances where patriarchal influences complicated the lives of women and, in turn, operated to sustain and perpetuate patriarchal ideologies. **Results:** The following Organisational Moments were identified: *Street Harassment*, *Urban Public Spaces*, *Public Transportation*, and *Danger Messages*. Organisational Moments revealed specific occasions where women's uses of space were negatively affected through direct actions

of others, through problematic physical and functional aspects of space, and through public promotion of spatial constraints. Women evoked a variety of schemata to interpret their experiences that centered on gender, power, and privilege. The cognitive- and action-based strategies employed to manage complications were often dependent upon the schemata that informed women's understanding of their situations. **Discussion:** The discussion highlights specific ways in which the analysis of Organisational Moments contributes to a more informed and contextualised understanding of the gender-fear paradox and of women's realities in everyday space. Clinical and political implications are deliberated, and policy directions are offered with the view to promoting women's uninhibited use of public space.

Dedication

With love and respect, I dedicate this dissertation to four of the most influential women in my life—my mother, Jacqueline, and my sisters, Diana, Darlene, and Dana. Each of you has enriched my life in so many ways, not the least of which is to show by example how to live life as an independent, loving, and spirited woman. You have also taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which opens the mind and heart. There is no doubt in my mind that without your love and support, I would not have completed this journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

They say people should start worrying when violent crimes in their city become increasingly random, where innocent victims don't know their attackers. After several weeks of random attacks in this city—including . . . a string of random sexual assaults in parks and on city streets—is it time to start worrying?

—Winnipeg Sun, July 7, 2010

This quotation is taken from the opening paragraph of an article that appeared in the Winnipeg Sun newspaper (Brodbeck, July 7, 2010). The article goes on to give detailed accounts of incidents in which seven women had been sexually assaulted by complete strangers while walking through public parks and on city streets. Aside from merely reporting the news, crime-based articles that emphasise random sexual attacks undoubtedly evoke fear in female readers by reminding them of the ever-present threat of sexual violence. What is more, the symbolism of its message leaves a stark impression: Women are in danger of predatory men who lie in waiting in dark and isolated public spaces.

Over the past three decades, the phenomenon of women's fear of crime has become a focus of study in academic literature (e.g., Britto, Van Slyke, & Francis, 2011; Ferraro, 1995; Fox, Nobles, & Piquero, 2009; Hilinski, 2009; Koskela, 1997, 1999; May et al., 2009; Pain, 1991; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Woolnough, 2009). Research has widely recognised that women are among the most fearful of victimisation, even though men experience criminal victimisation in higher numbers (e.g., Fox et al., 2009; Vaillancourt, 2010). The location of women's fear is quite often attached to public spaces, and they are most likely to fear victimisation by strangers. This is paradoxical given that women are much more likely to be victimised in private by someone they know (Stanko, 1995; Vaillancourt, 2010).

At first blush, it appears as though women's fears are misdirected to some extent and so are, in a sense, irrational. However, such conclusions would be erroneous. These paradoxes appear to exist when police-reported criminal victimisation rates are compared with surveys on women's reported levels of fear of crime, but this comparison is problematic. First, it has been widely noted in the literature that police-reported crime against women, especially sexual violence, is seriously under-reported and under-recorded (Pain, 1995; Perreault & Brennan, 2010; Stanko, 1995; Vaillancourt, 2010). Second, what constitutes victimisation in criminal surveys is often narrowly defined and ignores oppressive acts whereby the vast majority of victims are female, such as harassment and stalking. Yet, these "hidden offenses" have major implications in women's lives by contributing to a heightened sense of insecurity and fear (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Fox et al., 2009).

When information sources about where dangers exist for women are examined, the spatial mismatch of women's fear is also more comprehensible. There is a profusion of information that informs women to be afraid of the dangers that lurk in public places, but women are rarely warned about where most danger exists; namely, from familiar men in familiar circumstances (Politoff, 2013; Stanko, 1995). Some women may know firsthand about instances where women were followed, threatened, or sexually assaulted in public, or they may have been exposed to such violations in the media. Television crime dramatisations and news media sensationalise violent crimes and disproportionately publicise attacks committed in public places, while at the same time scarcely cover issues of domestic violence (Politoff, 2013; Stanko, 1995). Women's fear also may stem from rumours and warnings from well-meaning friends and family who

advise women of the perils of street danger and what they should do to keep themselves safe (Brooks, 2011; Gardner, 1990).

The views that women hold about sources of danger and their personal vulnerability to harm influence their ensuing strategies for self-protection (Jackson, 2009; Nurius, Norris, Young, Graham, & Gaylord, 2000; Woolnough, 2009). For women who are given the message that threats to their personal safety are located in the public domain, the consequential responses are adaptations to behaviour and lifestyle (Pain, 1991). Women may avoid particular places at certain times of the day, or avoid them altogether. They may also alter their travel routes, secure escorts, carry protective devices, or move hyper-vigilantly through public spaces while enduring significant fear and discomfort. These adaptations have the effect of reducing women's freedom to participate as equal citizens in their communities, and therefore decrease women's overall quality of life (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008).

Actions that threaten women's personal safety and well-being represent a complex societal problem. Attitudes, behaviours, and institutions that condone and perpetuate violence against women contribute to unequal power relationships between women and men in society (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995; Stanko, 1987). Equal participation in public life for women may be challenged by a host of barriers including strains on time and energy due to their many responsibilities (Lyndsay, 2008; Valentine, 1989), perceived threats in public spaces (Dolan & Peasgood, 2007; Gordon & Riger, 1989), or challenges to their presence there, such as sexual harassment (Sullivan, Lord, & McHugh, 2010). Therefore, in a patriarchal society that allocates space into public (masculine) and private (feminine) domains, that socialises men to dominate and control, and women to

adopt a passive position, and where male violence is an ever-present cultural norm, women continue to fear for their safety as they navigate public space.

The present research is a study of women's fear of victimisation within the context of a patriarchal society, through a focus on women's experiences in public space. Women live within an imposed and invisible system of oppression that has the power to shape their realities as they navigate public space. When a woman experiences fear in public, the question becomes how this system of oppression influences her thinking and coping strategies. As such, the goal is to uncover the schemata and ways of coping that arise in the context of patriarchal influences, and which shape and constrain women's everyday lives. This research, therefore, is a feminist analysis of patriarchy, with specific attention to the intersection of gender and space.

Chapter Overview

This chapter grounds the study in the current literature regarding fear of crime, experiences of victimisation, and their intersection with gender. This information provides the backdrop and context for examination of current literature on the paradoxical nature of women's experiences with victimisation and fear in public spaces. Consequences derived from women's fear are then noted. Next, explanations for incongruities between women's spatial expression of fear and experiences of victimisation are explored. Following this, the next section underscores the patriarchal influences that shape women's participation in the public sphere. Within this section, women's use of public space is described within a context of a gendered division of space. How gender socialisation, gender roles, and attitudes toward women affect women's spatial experiences is also delineated. Further, violence and threat of violence

that shapes women's realities as they use public space is reviewed. The chapter ends with a discussion of gaps and problems in the literature on women's fear experiences and public space, and a statement of purpose for the present study.

Fear of Crime

In 1982, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* enshrined that personal safety is fundamental to every person's psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual sense of well-being (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Two major factors that can seriously destabilise a person's sense of safety are crime and the fear of crime. Crime is defined as an unlawful behaviour or norm-violating act committed by an individual or group (Gabriel & Greve, 2003). Criminal acts committed toward property, such as car theft and burglary, and criminal acts committed toward individuals or groups, such as assault and rape, generally make up two broad categories of crime. The latter, known as violent crime, is considered to be the most serious and damaging kind of crime and also evokes the most fear (Ruback & Thompson, 2001). This distinction has directed researchers who study fear of crime to ask questions addressing the level of fear related to specific crimes. To do so, they separate property crimes from crimes against the person (Chadee & Ditton, 2003). However, this process of making distinctions proves to be complex. For example, crimes that at first appear to be property crimes may actually be crimes of a personal nature (e.g., stealing a personal item as part of an act of stalking).

Criminologists and other social science researchers involved in the scholarship of crime have defined and conceptualised crime-related fear in various ways. Within this body of research, several definitions of fear of crime have been used, including worry about being victimised (Smith & Torstensson, 1997), perceived risk of victimisation

(Chadee, Austen, & Ditton, 2007; Jackson, 2011), feelings of vulnerability (Snedker, 2011), an emotional response to a perceived threat (Moore & Shepherd, 2007; Pain, 2001), and even behavioural actions rather than evaluations or emotions (San-Juan, Vozmediano, & Vergara, 2012). Recently, to more fully encompass this complex construct, some researchers have taken a multidimensional approach to studying fear of crime. This approach helps to explicate the interrelatedness among victimisation, perceived vulnerability, risk perception, emotional fear, and behavioural manifestations of fear (Alper & Chappell, 2012; Ferraro, 1995; May et al., 2009; Sacco, 2005; Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008; Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007).

Crime is experienced in various ways, both objectively and subjectively, and these experiences mesh to create a specific and unique reality for those who fear crime. Fear of crime is constructed not only through actual encounters of victimisation but also as a result of vicarious experiences (Mesch, 2000; Fox et al., 2009). The former is a result of crime directly experienced by the individual and is associated with negative physical or psychological outcomes. Alternatively, information gathered vicariously (e.g., crime exposure through media, family, and friends) also produces crime-related fear (Minnery & Lim, 2005). In this case, direct victimisation has not occurred although a generalised fear of crime is present. The concept of vicarious fear of crime helps to explain that, although direct experience of crime and reaction to victimisation is specific to the individual, the basis for the development of fear of crime is collective (Fox et al., 2009). Perceived in this manner, examination of fear of crime explored in the broader social context would invariably lead to a more complete understanding of the fear of crime experience.

In addition to the real or vicarious experiences that induce fear of crime, the concept of fear of crime itself is multifaceted and comprised of actual and anticipated fear (Moore & Shepherd, 2007). Actual fear is triggered by some environmental cue, such as walking alone at night with a stranger walking close behind. In comparison, anticipated fear occurs in response to thinking about crime (e.g., being asked to imagine a fearful situation during a survey interview, or being in an environment that invokes thoughts of crime). It is likely that the *in vivo* experience would elicit a different type of fear reaction than that evoked through imagery. However, “assuming that people avoid or try to minimize the effects of stressful situations before they occur, we can expect that anticipated fear—as well as actual fear—will produce behavioral responses” (Garofalo, 1981, p. 841).

Perceptible in the fear of crime literature is a disconnect between levels of crime-related fear and actual rates of victimisation, with some studies reporting a positive relationship between fear of crime and previous victimisation (Fox et al., 2009; Hilinski, 2009; Rountree, 1998), and with others finding inconclusive results (Lane & Meeker, 2003; May, 2001; Pryor & Hughes, 2013). Researchers have explained this discrepancy in terms of a conceptual distinction between the emotion of fear and the cognitive judgment of risk (Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 1995; Warr & Stafford, 1983). For example, Warr and Stafford (1983) posited that fear is a multifaceted construct that is based on the combination of perceived seriousness of an offense and perceived risk of experiencing the crime. These researchers concluded that fear of crime is the culmination of one's perception of the severity of a crime and the evaluation of one's likelihood of becoming a victim to that crime. In addition, research has found a loose coupling between previous

victimisation and behavioural components of fear in terms of constrained behaviour and safety precautions. Ferraro found that previous victimisation experiences were not predictive of precautionary behaviour, whereas Rountree and Land (1996) provided evidence for a direct relationship between victimisation and subsequent safety precautions.

Statistical Profile of Gendered Crime in Canada

Statistics Canada published a report in 2010 entitled *Gender Differences in Police-reported Violent Crime in Canada, 2008* (Vaillancourt, 2010). The statistical profile highlighted the nature and scope of gender differences in police-reported violent victimisation between male and female adults aged 18 years and over. This report included specific data gathered on violent crimes in all provinces and territories in Canada and encompassed 98% of the population. This report indicated that overall rates of victimisation of violent crimes are similar for adult females and males. Closer examination of the data, however, revealed a very different landscape of the gendered experience of criminal victimisation of violent crimes.

For both women and men, the age group found to have the highest rate of police-reported criminal victimisation was young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. The lowest rate of police-reported criminal victimisation was among seniors aged 65 and over (Vaillancourt, 2010). When taking both sex and age into account, noteworthy differences in victimisation patterns were observed. Higher rates of violent victimisation were consistently found among females between the ages of 18 and 44 compared to males of the same age, with females between the ages of 18 and 24 years having the highest rate of

victimisation. Conversely, males consistently reported high rates of violent victimisation after the age of 44, compared to females.

According to the Statistics Canada report (Vaillancourt, 2010), gender differences were evident in the type of police-reported violent offenses experienced by female and male victims. Victimisation rates were higher among males for physical assault, homicide, and robberies, while sexual assault victims were almost entirely female. In the case of physical assault, the majority of assaults on males were found to occur in public spaces, whereas physical assaults toward females mostly occurred in private domains. Another contrast between genders was that women were more often physically assaulted by someone with whom they had a current or former intimate relationship, while men were more frequently assaulted by a stranger or acquaintance (Vaillancourt, 2010).

Females accounted for 92% of victims of sexual assault in Canada (Vaillancourt, 2010). Regardless of the gender of the sexual assault victim, in approximately half of the incidents the non-familial perpetrators were known to the victim (e.g., current/former dating partner, friend, or other non-family members), while strangers were the aggressors in approximately one quarter of sexual assaults. Family members accounted for the remaining 25% of sexual assault perpetrators. The majority of sexual assaults were found to occur in private dwellings. Significant to understanding the landscape of violent crime is that sexual assaults are unreported to authorities more often than any other category of violent offenses, with reporting rates estimated to be approximately 8% of all sexual assault cases. In addition, no difference was found between the probability of male and female victims reporting sexual assaults to authorities (Vaillancourt, 2010).

In homicide statistics, females were much more likely to be murdered by a current/former partner in a residential dwelling (Vaillancourt, 2010). Males, in contrast, were more likely to be murdered by strangers in a public place. Regardless of the type of victimisation experienced by both men and women, in the vast majority of cases the perpetrators were male. Statistics revealed that in violent crimes against women, 81% of identified perpetrators were male. In crimes against men, 79% of the identified violators were male (Vaillancourt, 2010).

Statistics Canada's report on criminal victimisation (Statistics Canada, 2010) indicated that 93% of the Canadian population is comfortable with their overall personal safety from crime. However, despite the high level of satisfaction with personal safety, the survey revealed three particular situations that Canadians linked to crime-related fear: (a) walking alone at night, (b) waiting for or using public transit alone at night, and (c) being home alone at night. Moreover, women tended to be more fearful of being victimised in these situations than men. Specifically, women were three times as likely as males to fear walking alone at night (24% versus 7%). Fifty-eight percent of female transit users reported fear of victimisation versus 29% of males, and 27% of females versus 12% of males feared for their safety in their homes at night (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Factors other than gender have been found to interact with victimisation in Canada. For example, statistics have shown that young people are at greater risk for victimisation than other age groups (Statistics Canada, 2005). In fact, statistical data have revealed that victimisation rates are three times higher for people between the ages of 15 and 24 in comparison to those in the 35 to 54 age group. Similarly, single people are at

greater risk of victimisation, with 11% of single people being victims of violent crime compared to 2.6% of people in a married or common-law union reporting victimisation (Statistics Canada, 2005). Behavioural activity has also been shown to play a role in victimisation rates. For example, participating in a greater number of evening activities has been found to be associated with a higher risk of becoming a victim of a violent crime. Statistics show that the risk of victimisation is approximately 5% for those who participate in 10 or less evening activities per month. For those who participate in 30 or more evening activities per month, the risk of victimisation increases to approximately 20% (Statistics Canada, 2010). In addition, increased alcohol consumption is associated with higher rates of violent victimisation in Canada. Specifically, victimisation rates were found to be three times higher for individuals who consume five or more alcoholic beverages per episode of drinking than for those who consume fewer or none at all (28% versus 9%, respectively; Statistics Canada, 2010).

When these statistics are integrated, a characterisation of women's victimisation and fear experiences is formed. Clearly, the most dangerous localities for women exist within their private lives, and women tend to know their aggressors. Demographically, women are at highest risk for victimisation if they are young and single. In addition, the risk of victimisation increases for women who consume more alcohol and participate in more nighttime activities. In contrast to where victimisation is most likely to occur, women are more fearful of being attacked in public by a stranger, particularly after dark and in transit settings. These spatial mismatches between women's victimisation and fear experiences have been well-documented in the literature (e.g., Ferraro, 1996; Gordon &

Riger, 1989; May et al., 2009). Collectively, these inconsistencies have been referred to as the “gender-fear paradox” (Ferraro, 1995, 1996).

Although crime data and surveys provide a useful, yet cursory, understanding of victimisation and fear of crime in Canada, they do little to provide a deeper understanding of how Canadians experience these matters in their everyday lives. Such surveys are also limited in scope in that they reflect only the aspects of crime that come to the attention of police authorities (Stanko, 1995). This limited understanding results in an incomplete picture of the landscape of fear of crime and victimisation. These surveys do, however, provide evidence to indicate that women and men do not experience criminal victimisation or the fear of crime in the same way. Only through examining contextual factors that merge to shape the experience of crime-related fear and victimisation can a deeper understanding be known.

Gendered Fear of Crime: A Closer Look at the Paradox

One of the most pronounced characteristics consistently found to influence fear of crime is gender (Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Day, 1994; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; May et al., 2009; Rader, 2008; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Rountree, 1998). Women fear crime more than men, and this holds true across contextual settings and operational definitions (Ferraro, 1995; Reid & Konrad, 2004). In fact, women's reported level of fear has been consistently found to be from three to five times higher than the level of fear reported by men, despite the fact that, according to police-reported crime data, men are more frequently the victims of most types of violent crimes (Reid & Konrad, 2004; Vaillancourt, 2010). Moreover, surveys on fear of crime have found that while women and men are similarly worried about property crime, women are far more worried about

personal crime, and most notably about sexual offences (Day, 1994; Dobbs, Waid, & Shelley, 2009; Ferraro, 1996). On one hand, this finding is predictable given that females are the overwhelming majority of victims of sexual crimes, but on the other hand, it is paradoxical given that women experience higher rates of physical than sexual violence (Perreault & Brennan, 2010; Vaillancourt, 2010).

Another contradiction relating to women's fear of crime is that, in general, women report being more fearful of being victimised by a stranger, and are significantly less fearful of being victimised by someone known to them (Scott, 2003; Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2006). This fear is mismatched given that the majority of actual victimisation experiences of women occur in the context of intimate partner violence (Vaillancourt, 2010). Moreover, women's level of fear is at its highest in public spaces even though they are more likely to be victimised in the private sphere. Police data and crime surveys have demonstrated that, in comparison, men are more likely than women to be attacked in public spaces (Vaillancourt, 2010). Taken together, while the violence in women's lives occurs mainly by known others in private settings, women tend to fear victimisation far more by strangers in public space.

Crime-related fear is also experienced differently by women in terms of its effects. Women are more likely to make adaptations to their lifestyles, use of space, and behaviour (Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; Green & Singleton, 2006; Rader, Crossman, & Allison, 2009). For example, women may engage in self-imposed restrictions such as staying indoors at night, securing an escort to and from places, and avoiding certain areas altogether. These adaptations and restrictions have implications for personal liberties and

decreased general quality of life for women (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Gordon, Riger, LeBailly, & Heath, 1980; San-Juan et al., 2012).

In summary, women's experience of crime-related fear differs in the extent of fearfulness, in the context in which it is experienced, in its relation to actual risk, and in its resulting effects. Together, these findings clearly indicate that men and women experience fear of crime differently and provide a sound rationale for studying women's experiences separately. Further, the correlates of women's fear (e.g., how they make sense of the complications that arise from their fear experiences, as well as their strategies for navigating these complications) are of key importance in gaining a better understanding of the gender-fear paradox and of women's psychological and behavioural processes.

Current Explanations for Gendered Fear of Crime

Most research that has examined the gendered experience of crime-related fear has focused on women's heightened level of fear and its loose coupling with actual rates of victimisation and the particular circumstances under which victimisation occurs. The previously described contradictions have come to be known as the gender-fear paradox, as mentioned above (Ferraro, 1995, 1996). To explain these quizzical findings, scholars have put forth five main rationalisations: cumulative effects of victimisation experiences; vulnerability of women; hidden and unacknowledged victimisation of women; appraisal of risk; and women's overarching fear of sexual assault. Each of these concepts is explained in turn.

Cumulative effects of victimisation. To explain women's higher levels of fear of crime, some have reasoned that a significant portion of women's fear may be the product

of an accumulation of victimisation experiences that are not generally experienced by men (Fox et al., 2009; Keane, 1995; Pain, 1991). For example, Pain (1991) argued that several acts of victimisation are not taken into account in the conceptualisation of women's fear, such as unwelcome sexual comments, invasion of personal space, unwanted touching, and being followed. Painter (1992) noted that:

Women experience a range of offensive behaviour directed at their sexuality, which they may perceive as victimization but which would not necessarily be deemed 'criminal' which, nevertheless, profoundly shapes women's lives creating a very different social reality for women than for men. (pp. 168-169)

In other words, these unwanted intrusions are significant forms of indignity that target women and work to destabilise their overall quality of life.

Sexual harassment has been generally regarded as consisting of three main categories: gender harassment, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual attention (Yoon, Funk, & Kropf, 2010). Gender harassment involves the degradation of women at the group level, such as telling female-based derogatory jokes or distributing pictures that portray women as sex objects. Sexual coercion refers to subtle or overt threats or bribes for sexual cooperation in exchange for some type of personal gain (e.g., a promotion). Unwanted sexual attention involves degradation of women at the individual level, such as sending a woman unwanted or degrading messages through social media, accosting her, and inappropriately touching or leering at her (Yoon et al., 2010).

Research has shown that women experience victimisation through several forms of harassment at very high rates (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Yoon et al., 2010). For example, Yoon et al. (2010) found that 97% of the women in their study reported at least one previous experience with sexual harassment. In examining the subtypes of

harassment, their study revealed that 94% of women reported experiencing gender harassment, 43% reported experiencing sexual coercion, and 92% reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention.

In a study that explored Canadian women's experiences of harassment, MacMillan, Nierobisz, and Welsh (2000) documented the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, and found that 85% of the women reported experiencing stranger harassment. In comparison, 51% of women reported experiencing non-stranger sexual harassment, indicating that stranger harassment is more of a pervasive problem in society, more reported, or both. MacMillan et al. (2000) argued that "stranger harassment reduces feelings of safety while walking alone at night, using public transportation, walking alone in a parking garage, and while home alone at night" (p. 319). Fairchild and Rudman (2008) examined women's harassing experiences that were perpetrated by strangers. They found that sexual harassment by strangers was associated with women's self-objectification, and increased fear of sexual assault through greater perceived risk of victimisation. Because of its association with heightened perceived risk of victimisation and fear, street harassment has been argued to constrain women's freedom of movement, thus preventing them from fully benefitting from educational, employment, and political opportunities (Crouch, 2009).

Most harassment does not involve extreme behaviour, but rather "consists of smaller, cumulative intrusions that are demeaning and disempowering" (Larkin, 1991, p. 110). However, sexual harassment has been found to negatively impact women's psychological well-being whether the harassment is mild or severe (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999; Sullivan, 2012). Moreover, Pain (1995) asserted that rather

than being a direct result of a singular incident, “there is growing evidence that the development of fear of crime in individuals is a cumulative process taking place over a far longer term” (p. 594). Taken together, the preceding assertions imply that women’s victimisation experiences, which are both subtle and common, accumulate to significantly contribute to women’s higher levels of fear and perceived likelihood of further victimisation.

Vulnerability hypothesis. Extending the theoretical development of the fear of crime construct to understand why women report high levels of fear, scholars have focused on socio-demographic characteristics that are associated with physical vulnerabilities (inability to fight off an attacker) and social vulnerabilities (heightened exposure to crime that is linked to economic status, level of education, geographic location, race, ethnicity; Bennett & Flavin, 1994; Goodey, 1997; Jackson, 2009; Snedker, 2011). Physical vulnerability denotes accessibility of becoming the target of an attack, incapability of resisting an attacker, and the emotional and physical consequences of being attacked (Bennett & Flavin, 1994; Snedker, 2011). Physical vulnerabilities affect those who perceive themselves to be physically disadvantaged against potential assailants, causing a fear response (Bennett & Flavin, 1994). Gender has been found to interact with perceptions of vulnerability. To illustrate, Jackson (2009) found that personal crime was more of a concern for women than for men (but not property crime), and that this dissimilarity was associated with perceptions of vulnerability. Specifically, women felt less in control of their ability to prevent criminal victimisation than men, and judged the consequences of crime to be greater, leading to increased levels of crime-related fear. In addition, researchers have argued that socialisation processes play a role

in the vulnerability hypothesis by teaching females to be less aggressive and more accommodating, which in turn, reduces women's capacity to identify risk and respond to potential threat (Franklin, 2008). For instance, Franklin (2008) found that women who held more traditional feminine ideologies tended to tolerate threatening sexual situations for longer periods of time, which in turn increased their exposure to potential risk conditions.

Social vulnerabilities contribute to fear of crime when they contribute to exposure to high crime areas or high-risk lifestyle behaviours, thus increasing the possibility of victimisation. Research has shown that people of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to live in neighbourhoods that have higher crime rates (Keane, 1995). Additionally, lower income impairs the ability to cope with the physical and financial impacts of crime, and thus is related to higher fear levels (Bennett & Flavin, 1994; Moore & Shepherd, 2006). This finding is associated with a lack of financial resources to rebound from the costs associated with victimisation (e.g., lost wages), and the inability to afford costs associated with self-protection (e.g., security alarms). Research has provided support for the interactive effect of gender and social vulnerability. In particular, Painter (1992) found that women were disproportionately represented in socially disorganised neighbourhoods, which, in turn, increased their exposure to crime. As such, Painter (1992) posited that greater exposure to neighbourhood incivilities contributed to women's feelings of vulnerability and increased levels of fear.

Hidden victimisation. Some researchers have suggested that women's heightened fear of crime is not unjustified. That is, some have argued that women are not victimised less than men, but more so, and that such victimisation is 'hidden' by narrow

conceptualisations and under-reporting (Pain, 1991, 2001; Stanko, 1995). Surveys and police-reported crime data show that women are at lower risk for most forms of victimisation, with the exception of sexual offenses (Vaillancourt, 2010). However, such data have been criticised for reflecting measurement error and limited sensitivity to all aspects of victimisation. It has been argued, for example, that most surveys operationalise victimisation in such a way that female victimisation risks, such as harassment, are underestimated (Pain, 2001; Stanko, 1995). These researchers posit that if conceptions of victimisation were broadened to encompass all forms of sex crimes, including sexual harassment, women's fear would be proportionate to their level of risk.

Research has consistently shown that intimate partner violence, rape, and sexual assault are seriously underreported, as well as other crimes that target women for victimisation (Pain, 1995; Painter, 1992; Perreault & Brennan, 2010; Vaillancourt, 2010). In Canada, it is estimated that only about 8% of sexual assaults are reported to police each year (Vaillancourt, 2010). Disinclination to report sexual assault to police has been found to be the result of several factors, including embarrassment, stigma associated with victims of sexual assault, fear of being disbelieved, perceptions of insensitive and unjust treatment of sexual assault victims by police and court systems, and fear of being re-assaulted by the offender (Pain, 1991; Taylor & Gassner, 2010; Thompson, Sitterle, Clay, & Kingree, 2007). Two factors that increase the likelihood of reporting are increased severity of the offense and if the perpetrator is a stranger (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003).

In summary, researchers have argued that narrow constructs of victimisation and underreporting of sex-related offenses are factors that contribute to the gender-fear

paradox. Because data sources do not capture data on many types of offenses that are almost entirely experienced by women, and because many crimes against women go unreported, women appear to be less victimised, leaving their higher fear levels largely unexplained. Several authors in the literature have proposed that if actual victimisation rates for women were known, then the higher fear levels reported by women would no longer be paradoxical (Pain, 1991; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Stanko, 1995).

Risk appraisal. Researchers have studied global and specific risk perceptions in crime-related fear. Perceptions of disorder in the community (global risk perception) have been found to contribute to community members' fear of crime (Brunton-Smith & Sturgis, 2011; Doran & Lees, 2005). Some researchers have argued that women are more likely than men to appraise their surroundings as unsafe (Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Wilcox et al., 2006). For example, Smith and Torstensson (1997) found that even though particular neighbourhoods had relatively low crime rates and therefore could be considered as low-risk environments, women more so than men rated these neighbourhoods as high-risk environments. These researchers also found that women were less likely than men to mislabel high crime areas as safe environments, indicating that regardless of the actual level of risk (low or high), women are more likely to evaluate their surroundings as having a higher risk for victimisation than men. Smith and Torstensson (1997) situated their findings in conjunction with Pain's (1997) research, which indicated that because women's experiences in public include often-present harassment experiences, women develop an overall heightened sensitivity to risk in their environments.

At the individual level of risk appraisal, studies have found that while women possess a general awareness of the increased risk of sexual violence toward women, this awareness does not necessarily translate directly to personal judgments of risk. For example, Hughes, Marshall, and Sherrill (2003) found that although women reported being fearful of sexual assault and generally recognised the increased risk of the offense for women, they perceived themselves to be less likely than other women to be victimised, even when they reported being in high-risk situations (e.g., bars and parties). In another study, Hickman and Muehlenhard (1997) found that women considered themselves to be at a lower risk than other women to experience sexual assault, either by a stranger or an acquaintance. Additionally, Norris, Nurius, and Dimeff (1996) found that women reported being aware of the heightened risks for sexual victimisation but believed that they were able to control their own safety by reducing or eliminating their exposure to such risks.

In the literature on individual risk perception, attempts have been made to explain these equivocal findings. The finding that women generally perceive themselves to be at lowered risk than their peers for sexual victimisation has been explained in terms of the robust phenomenon whereby individuals tend to possess unrealistic optimism and exaggerated perceptions of personal control (Weinstein, 1987). According to Gidycz and colleagues (2006), these positive illusions are manifested through a fundamental belief that “bad things happen to bad people (and not to me),” and are sustained through cognitive processes that distort incoming information to corroborate this belief (Gidycz, McNamara, & Edwards, 2006). With regard to perceptions of personal control, there is a tendency to exaggerate perceptions of one’s ability to influence outcomes and, in turn,

reduce one's risk through personal abilities and choices (Weinstein, 1987). Together these cognitive biases work to lower perceptions of risk at an individual level.

When previous sexual victimisation is taken into account, however, a different pattern of risk perception emerges. Specifically, research has found that women with sexual abuse histories perceive greater risk for future victimisation and view themselves as having less control over their own safety (Brown, Messman-Moore, Miller, & Stasser, 2005; Jackson, 2009; May et al., 2009; Norris et al., 1996). This finding has been described in the trauma literature as the result of traumatic experiences leading to a reduction in the optimistic bias (Weinstein, Lyon, Rothman, & Cuite, 2000). That is, women who have experienced victimisation are more likely to identify with the victim role and have psychological distress that leads to feelings of increased vulnerability and a decreased sense of control (Brown et al., 2005; Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, research has indicated that women often take personal responsibility for their victim experiences, particularly if they have been victimised in the past (Arata, 2000). This form of self-blame has been found to be associated with cognitive appraisals that encompass the expectation that, based upon previous victimisation experiences, one should be able to recognise potentially dangerous situations (Nurius et al., 2000).

To conclude, the literature between risk appraisal and women's fear is complex. Within the context of global risk perception, some research suggests that women are more likely than men to perceive the environment as risky, regardless of actual level of risk. In the case of specific risk perception, studies have indicated that women consider themselves to be at a lower risk for victimisation than other women, even in high-risk situations. The risk appraisal literature is further complicated by incongruent findings

when considering previous victimisation experiences. These findings have led researchers to conclude that risk is evaluated on two levels, with the first encompassing a general estimate of overall risk, and the second pertaining to recognition of situational risk (Gidycz et al., 2006). Gidycz et al. (2006) posited that the above-noted facets of risk appraisal intricately contribute to the subjective experience of fear (Gidycz et al., 2006).

The shadow hypothesis. Another explanation put forth regarding women's heightened fear of crime emerges from the notion that any act of victimisation has the potential to result in sexual assault (Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Hilinski, 2009; Lane, Gover, & Dahod, 2009; Warr, 1984). Researchers argue that support is given to this idea based on the fact that women report higher fear levels for sexual victimisation than for any other type of personal victimisation (Ferraro, 1996; Warr, 1984). Specifically, Warr (1984) argued that particular offenses have the potential to be perceptually connected to other offenses (e.g., being at home while a burglary is in progress could potentially lead to assault or murder). Warr (1984) posited that for women, any personal offense has the potential to become a sexual assault offense, leading women to fear most other types of crimes. Supporting this hypothesis, Ferraro (1996) found that in crimes where face-to-face interaction was more likely to occur (e.g., burglary, assault), women's reported levels of fear for sexual assault increased. From these findings, Ferraro (1996) concluded that "the fear of rape or sexual assault is always present in a woman's mind during personal or violent victimisations, especially if the crime is anticipated to be committed by a man or a group of men" (p. 686). Thus, sexual assault serves as a "master offense" and women's fear of sexual assault "shadows" all other personal crimes (Ferraro, 1995, 1996).

Recent research findings have provided additional empirical support for the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis (Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Hilinski, 2009; Lane et al., 2009; Wilcox et al., 2006). For instance, Fisher and Sloan (2003) found similar fear levels between college women and men for most crimes when controlling for fear associated with sexual assault. Once fear of sexual assault was taken into account, college women's fear levels for all crimes became significantly higher than men's. In addition, Fisher and Sloan (2003) found that temporal factors played a role in reported levels of fear. Specifically, this fear relationship was demonstrated to be more robust for crimes committed at night than those committed during the day. Moreover, Lane et al. (2009) demonstrated that risk perception plays a role in the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. Specifically, Lane et al. (2009) found that when controlling for other factors, women's greater perceived risk of sexual assault was a significant contributing factor in differentiating women's and men's fear levels toward other violent offenses (e.g., robbery, physical assault).

Hilinski (2009) identified an important gap in the literature on the shadow hypothesis by pointing out that the victim-offender relationship (i.e., whether the offender was an acquaintance versus a stranger) was not examined. Hilinski (2009) argued that without defining the relationship between the victim and offender in these studies, it is likely that previous studies assumed the offender to be an unknown assailant. In her study, Hilinski (2009) examined the relationship between fear of sexual assault and fear of other crimes while considering the relationship of the offender to the victim. She found that women's fear of sexual assault increased their fear of nonsexual crimes in both acquaintance and stranger conditions. Thus, Hilinski's (2009) findings indicate that

regardless of whether or not women know their attackers, their fear of sexual assault significantly “overshadows” their fear of all crimes, including fear of nonsexual crimes. Finally, Wilcox et al. (2006) found that while both fear of acquaintance- and stranger-perpetrated sexual assault influenced women’s fear of other offenses, the strongest associations were found between fear of stranger-perpetrated sexual assault and fear of other stranger-perpetrated offenses.

Regardless of the factors contributing fear levels, it is without question that fear is a reality for many women, particularly in the public context. Moreover, this fear has significant and far-reaching consequences. The next section discusses the responses and strategies that women use to relegate their fear.

Responses to Fear of Crime

In addition to gender differences in levels of crime-related fear, research has uncovered gender differences in responses to fear of crime (Keown, 2010; Rader et al., 2009; Vaillancourt, 2010; Woolnough, 2009). In Canada, for example, statistical data show that women are seven times more likely than men to avoid particular areas to protect themselves from crime (Vaillancourt, 2010). Canadian statistics also show that women are six times more likely than men to use particular precautionary measures when they enter the public sphere, such as planning a route to maximize safety or checking the backseat before entering a vehicle (Vaillancourt, 2010). Furthermore, even after other variables (e.g., fear levels, previous victimisation) are taken into account, gender differences in avoidance and precautionary behaviour remain essentially unchanged (Woolnough, 2009).

Researchers have noted three broad responses to fear of crime. These responses include precautionary actions, routine behavioural and lifestyle changes, and participation in collective activities (Keane, 1998; Miethe, 1995; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Each form of response is discussed in turn.

Precautionary actions. Precautionary actions are often employed in response to fear of crime and generally involve two strategies: avoidance behaviour and protective strategies. Avoidance behaviour is one of the primary responses to fear of crime, and is carried out with the notion that avoiding risky situations or dangerous people will reduce the risk of being victimised (Miethe, 1995). Examples of avoidance behaviours include staying indoors after dark, avoiding precarious settings, and avoiding particular individuals or groups that evoke fear. Social ecologists have identified several “hot spots” (i.e., areas that have been identified as having higher incidents of crime) that are most likely to be avoided, such as alcohol-serving establishments, vacant buildings, and public transit terminals (Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989). Avoidance of particular categories of individuals or groups (e.g., juveniles and transient populations) and particular times of day (e.g., night time) have also been noted (Sherman et al., 1989).

The concept of hot spots associated with criminal activity has been extended to include hot spots associated with fear of crime. Fear hot spots are particular areas that evoke a sense of danger, regardless of actual crime rates in those particular localities. Nasar (2000) found that fear-induced hot spots, in addition to actual high crime hot spots, are associated with avoidance behaviour (Nasar, 2000). According to Nasar (2000), fear hot spots are developed via information received from various sources that create cognitive images and associated emotions attached to particular areas. The media, for

example, have been shown shape women's fear of public space (e.g., public parks, dark alleys), thus contributing to the development of fear hot spots, through a tendency to over-report the sexual crimes that occur in those areas (Politoff, 2013; Stanko, 1985). The conveyed message through such reporting biases is that these public areas are risky for women and therefore to prevent victimisation, women should avoid these spaces.

Another type of avoidance involves limiting one's participation in society (Miethe, 1995). Generally, these forms of avoidance include restricting social, leisure, and mobility patterns. Those who use avoidance in this manner may avoid social settings, or they may reduce or eliminate participation in outdoor recreational activities, example (Miethe, 1995). Interestingly, analysing data derived from a Canadian national survey, Keane (1998) found that women who restricted their use of public space in these ways indicated that they would take fuller advantage of public opportunities and life choices if they felt safer. These finding suggests that increasing women's feelings of safety would increase their public participation and broaden their life choices, and, in turn, enhance their quality of life.

In addition to avoidance behaviours, protective strategies are often used as a response to fear of crime. Protective actions involve activities that are employed to deter or resist being criminally victimised (Miethe, 1995). Deterrent behaviours include wearing loose and full-cover clothing, locking doors immediately upon entering a vehicle, or walking with an escort, to name a few. Resistance behaviours include carrying a weapon, taking self-defence training, or carrying a rape whistle/personal alarm. From a criminal-opportunity perspective, these actions are assumed to decrease fear of crime and

risk of victimisation by lowering the appeal of being criminally targeted and reducing exposure to victimisation (Miethe, 1995).

Even when women choose protective actions rather than avoidance strategies, these actions also have implications for their mobility and life choices. For example, women often rely on escorts to get to their desired destinations, especially at night (Gordon et al., 1980; Rader et al., 2009). Implementing this protective strategy means that if an escort is not available, women may be less likely to go out after dark alone. Additionally, Rader et al. (2009) found that previous victimisation experiences were associated with less reliance on escorts for women, making this strategy a less viable safety option for them. As another example, women often choose to drive rather than walk or take public transit, again particularly at night, which also restricts their freedom of choice in mobility in the public sphere (Gordon et al., 1980). Moreover, research has indicated that women internalise notions of spatial restrictions. For example, Meyer and Post (2006) reported that the women in their study perceived that being out at night should be something that is avoided if a person is (a) alone, and (b) a woman.

While women employ both avoidance and protective strategies, research has found that women are more likely to use avoidance rather than protective actions as a response to fear of crime (Woolnough, 2009). For example, in her study of university students' safety strategies on campus, Woolnough (2009) found that women were more likely to avoid being in areas with a lot of shrubbery or with poor lighting, while men were more likely to carry a weapon. Some have argued that attitudes about sex-appropriate behaviours are a factor in the differences in protection strategies between men and women, and also why women more often opt to avoid dangerous settings rather

than use strategies to protect themselves (Riger, Gordon, & LeBailly, 1978). Specifically, traditional sex role prescriptions connote that females are expected to be timid and avoid danger, while men are expected to be fearless and defend themselves in dangerous situations (Goodey, 1997; Riger et al., 1978). Finally, in another study that looked at the predictor variables associated with women's use of avoidance versus protective behaviours, Riger, Gordon, and LeBailly (1982) found that decreased perception of physical competence predicted avoidance strategies, while increased perceptions of social disorder were better predictors of protective actions.

Routine activities and lifestyle changes. A second type of response to crime-related fear involves a more general approach than direct avoidance or protection to ward off danger. This more extensive practice involves overall changes to routine behaviours and lifestyles. Routine activities are those actions that are frequent and necessary for daily living, for example, employment outside the home, shopping, and leisure activities. Painter (1992) noted that some routine behaviour modifications stem from fear of victimisation. Individuals who perceive a particular part of town to be dangerous may choose to seek employment elsewhere and opt to participate in leisure activities in another area of town. In fact, fear of crime and criminal victimisation has been found to be associated with job changes, school transfers, and moving out of particular neighbourhoods (Miethe, Stafford, & Sloane, 1990).

Similar to routine behaviours, lifestyles may also be amended because of crime-related fear (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). Overall patterns in social interactions, employment behaviour, and leisure activities may be curbed in order to gain a sense of safety. To illustrate, a woman may choose to leave her place of employment

(e.g., service industry, law enforcement) after being sexually harassed or assaulted on many occasions at her work. Alternatively, temporal and spatial patterns in which social, occupational, and leisure lifestyles are carried out may be adjusted due to fear of being victimised (Dolan & Peasgood, 2007). Moreover, the attractiveness of certain activities at certain times in particular places may change dramatically in the face of public knowledge of the dangerousness of these endeavours (Miethe, 1995). For example, jogging in city parks may decrease dramatically for women after they have learned that a violent sexual offense transpired in this particular locale. Hindelang et al. (1978) suggested that lifestyle adaptations, rather than precautionary behaviours, play a substantial role in preventing victimisation, since “lifestyles are related to the probability of being in places (streets, parks, and other public places) at times (especially at night) when victimisations are known to occur” (p. 225).

Researchers have noted that some routine activity and lifestyle choices clearly increase the likelihood of becoming a victim of a crime by increasing exposure to dangerous settings and dangerous others (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Wilcox, Tillyer, & Fisher, 2009). For example, in their study of college women, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) found that women who socialised with friends with no structured activity and women who were college athletes had a significantly higher chance of being sexually victimised. In the case of unstructured socialisation, these researchers argued that it may be that male pressures to have sex are more effective when there are no other specified activities to focus on. With regard to victimisation of female athletes, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) suggested that female athletes may be more likely to experience sexual assault because of increased exposure to male athletes, which thereby increases

the probability of the assault occurring. In addition, Wilcox et al. (2009) noted that behaviours and lifestyles occur within cultural influences and societal norms, which sanctions females as appropriate targets for victimisation. Explicated from a feminist framework, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) posited that “while individuals’ lifestyles influence their exposure and proximity to potential offenders . . . [it is] the larger context of society that finds women to be more suitable targets for certain crimes” (p. 93). As with the case of precautionary behaviours, altering daily routines and overall lifestyles limits women’s full participation in society and contributes to impoverished lives for them. Gordon et al. (1980) noted that “the irony, of course, is that these restrictions do not guarantee their safety and may, in the final analysis, result only in increased fear” (p. 159).

Participation in collective activities. A third reaction to crime and fear of crime involves participation in collective activities. These collective endeavours may comprise taking part in neighbourhood watch programs, participating in events that demonstrate public cohesion on crime prevention (e.g., ‘Take Back the Night’ marches), and engaging in political activism (Miethe, 1995). For some, it may even involve enrolling in a class or lecture for the purpose of becoming educated about gender inequalities or the victimisation of women. According to Miethe (1995), there is inconclusive evidence to indicate whether participation in collective activities actually decreases fear of crime and risk of victimisation. For instance, participation in a neighbourhood watch program may function to reduce the actual rate of crime in the area, but at the same time may also serve to increase fear of crime because of increased exchange of victimisation narratives between neighbours (Miethe, 1995). Thus, while participatory action in community-based

activities is a general response to crime-related fear, it is inconclusive as to what extent this type of response benefits those who respond in this manner.

In summary, responses to fear of crime may involve avoidance strategies with the notion of reducing exposure to crime or protective strategies that decrease the attraction or ease of becoming a criminal target. Other, more pervasive, responses include altering daily activities and adjusting lifestyles in response to broader conceptions about when, where, and how crime takes place. Another form of response to fear of crime involves becoming active in community initiatives or crime prevention groups. Although there may be some benefit to adopting some of these responses, it is evident that overall they place restrictions on personal freedom and diminish opportunities for those who carry them out.

Women's Fear and Reactions to Victimization: Sensible Incongruities?

As outlined previously, inconsistencies exist with regard to fear of crime for women. Women are more fearful of becoming victims of crime although men are more often the victims of violent crimes. Women fear victimization in public spaces by strangers when they are more likely to be victimized in private by someone they know (i.e., spouse, dating partner, acquaintance, or friend). In response to fear of victimization, women are more likely than men to change their behaviours, and to alter their daily routines and lifestyles to avoid victimization. Stanko (1987) argued that these findings are paradoxical only if women's fear is conceptualised as a direct result of overt violence. Widening the scope of understanding to include women's everyday experiences suggests that these ostensible paradoxes may be better regarded as sensible incongruities.

First, to better understand women's fear of crime, one must comprehend the phenomenon in broader terms of women's fear of victimisation. This clarity in definition is necessary because by legal standards, criminal victimisation does not encompass all forms of victimisation, particularly for acts that are mostly experienced by women, such as harassment. Results of a Canadian national survey on violence against women found that 87 percent of women reported experiencing sexual harassment, leading the authors to describe harassing experiences for women as "commonplace" (Johnson & Sacco, 1995, p. 299). Harassment and unwanted invasion of personal space range from uncomfortable annoyances to terrifying encounters for women, but rarely do such actions result in criminal sanctions (Pain, 1995).

Gardner (1990) posited that women are regularly subject to inferior treatment by men in public spaces, mainly through sexually harassing behaviours. Although some forms of harassment are extreme and terrifying, most harassment falls into a more subtle category of small, mundane, and cumulative incidents (e.g., catcalls, evaluative "compliments," or ogling; Larkin, 1991). Wise and Stanley (1987) maintained that these "dripping tap" behaviours result in an eroding effect by being ever-present in a woman's awareness, particularly when she navigates public space. Further, while these "subtle invasions" may not elicit a sense of immediate danger, they nonetheless serve as reminders that women are continually vulnerable to the threat of male violence. As a result, these male behaviours are limiting and disempowering for women, yet they are so familiar that they become a regular undercurrent in women's public lives (Larkin, 1991).

While some forms of harassment are veiled and subtle, other forms of harassment are more blatant and fear-provoking. If, for example, a woman is followed and then

threatened by a man as she walks alone at night, undoubtedly she would subsequently be fearful of venturing out at night by herself. Moreover, Wise and Stanley (1987) purported that the less frequent but more severe “sledgehammer” violations that women experience render every intrusive male action a threat to personal security because of the blurred boundaries between threatening and non-threatening behaviours. Because women cannot be sure which of a man’s harassing activities presage more serious offenses, a basic sense of danger is evoked through all forms of harassing behaviours (Larkin, 1991).

Closely related to harassment are intrusions that women experience on a regular basis. Intrusions are defined not by their content, but rather their context (Larkin, 1991). For example, being approached by a male stranger who attempts to initiate a conversation is one such form of invasion for women. Another example includes a man’s persistence in asking a woman to dance at a nightclub after she has indicated that she does not want to dance with him. Larkin (1991) purported that these ostensibly harmless events that are frequent in women’s lives “are intrusions on women’s private space to which men assume they have a territorial right” (p. 112). Arguably, if the overall scope of victimisation experiences is broadened to include harassment and invasion of space, women’s heightened fear in public spaces becomes explicable.

Other than a limited scope of what constitutes victimisation for women, additional difficulties exist in knowing women’s true victimisation experiences. Consistently found in the literature on violence is that most violent acts towards women go unreported and therefore are only known by the women themselves (Perreault & Brennan, 2010; Stanko, 1995; Vaillancourt, 2010). Thus, women’s fear cannot be explained by crime data alone. Reasons why women do not report the violence in their

lives are varied and complex. Thompson et al., (2007) examined reasons for not reporting sexual and physical assaults for women. Overall, they found that women were less likely to report both sexual and physical assault if the perpetrator was known to them, and the most frequently cited reason for not reporting both sexual and physical violations was that the incident was not serious enough. They also found reporting differences when the nature of victimisation was examined. In particular, reasons for not reporting that were unique to sexual victimisation included the belief that they would be partially blamed for the assault, and feelings of shame and embarrassment by the invasive and intimate nature of the assault. Other researchers have found that women do not report sexual assault to the police because they have little confidence in the response of the police and court systems, and feel that the justice system does not take their victimisation seriously (Meyer & Post, 2006; Taylor & Gassner, 2010). Still other women do not report their violence for fear of retaliation by their perpetrators (Pain, 1995).

The research also demarcates a spatial mismatch in women's fear: While violence is more likely to transpire in their private spaces, women tend to be most fearful in public spaces (Pain, 1991; Vaillancourt, 2010). The main sources of information from which women learn about potential dangers consistently tell women that danger lurks in the public world. For example, stereotypical ideas of the dangerous stranger perpetuated by the media have been demonstrated to shape women's fear of public space (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Politoff, 2013). This influence is generated by the tendency for the media to only report on the types of crimes that are most severe and fear-provoking, such as rape and brutality committed by an unknown assailant (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Politoff, 2013). Even crime-prevention literature, which is purported to give authoritative advice

on crime, corroborates with the media messages that public spaces are risky for women (Campbell, 2005; Gardner, 1990). To illustrate, much of the literature in street crime prevention books and articles is directed to women (Gardner, 1990), with the message that in order to keep themselves safe, particular areas (e.g., alleys, parks) at particular times (e.g., night time) should be avoided.

Another influence over women's fear of victimisation in public space is derived from pervasive and subtle socialisation processes. Women learn about the dangers of sexual violence from a young age and are told to take precautions, especially with strangers (De Groof, 2008; Stanko, 1995). For example, parents inadvertently instil a sense of vulnerability when they ensure that girls are chaperoned or by instructing them to avoid particular places if they must travel alone. Talking to girls about the perils of being sexually assaulted when they leave the house, especially in remote places and at night, yet failing to caution them about the dangers of victimisation in familiar places by familiar people, inculcates erroneous notions of where the preponderance of danger lies (Rader & Haynes, 2011; Valentine, 1992). On the surface, the socialised messages that females receive from a young age make good sense given that public areas are the very sites where the majority of stranger rape occurs. Yet, stranger rape is relatively uncommon in comparison to all other forms of female victimisation (Ledray, 1986; Vaillancourt, 2010).

Traditional data sources are also likely to play a role in creating the ostensible gender-fear paradox. Despite their shortcomings in fully capturing women's victimisation experiences, crime survey data continue to be used as main information sources to illustrate the paradoxical nature of women's fear. Because so much of what women

experience in terms of victimisation is left out of crime survey data, including public harassment and intimate partner violence, surveys are not able to exclusively discern what makes women fearful in the public context (Koskela, 1997). When considering all forms of victimisation, research has indicated that women are victimised more, not less, than men (Fox et al., 2009). It is therefore conceivable that women may be responding to overall gestalt feelings associated with multiple and varied victimisation experiences (e.g., sexual harassment and intimate partner violence) when reporting fear associated with crime. This hypothesis is supported by Carcach and Mukherjee (1999) who found that women's fear levels were highest when victimisation occurred both in and outside the home. Women who experience violence by a current or former male partner, in addition to victimisation by a stranger, were over twice as likely to experience fear as those who were victimised by either perpetrator alone, or those who had not been victimised at all. This finding indicates that women who experience victimisation in both their public lives and private dwellings are most likely to live in fear and feel most vulnerable to victimisation.

In addition, evidence for specific traumatic experiences to affect overall feelings of fear comes from the literature on betrayal trauma theory (DePrince & Freyd, 2002). Within this literature, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim is the focus of the trauma, in which case the perpetrator is someone known and trusted. Women experience betrayal trauma at high rates stemming from victimisation by partners or family members in the form of intimate partner violence or childhood sexual abuse. Betrayal trauma theorists argue betrayal trauma is cognitively processed so that trauma memories are segregated from autobiographical memories as a form of adaptive coping. However, the

trauma is processed at an implicit level, so women still have the experience of anxiety, fear, and shame, but without the autobiographical connection to its source (DePrince & Freyd, 2002). Thus, it can be argued that in these contexts, at least, quantitative measures are limited in their ability to provide an understanding of the complexities of the psychological processes of fear.

Even women's paradoxical responses to fear of victimisation are demystified when the broader context is examined. Women are often guided, through informal and formal sources, on how to decrease the likelihood of being victimised in public through simple prudence (Brooks, 2011; Campbell, 2005; Gardner, 1990; Winnipeg Police Service, n.d.). For example, popular literature advises women to keep men's belongings in their parked cars to imply that they will not be returning to the car alone, or to wear a wedding ring, even if single, to discourage being approached by men in public (Gardner, 1990). Regardless of the strategy used, the popular literature on women's safety is clear: To avoid victimisation at the hands of unknown men, women must "take necessary precautions" and be "streetwise" (Gardner, 1990, p. 312). More formal sources that advise women on how to keep themselves safe come from crime-prevention initiatives that outline precautionary measures for women when venturing into the public. Common crime prevention literature suggests, for example, that women should avoid isolated bus stops and high-crime areas, such as park areas at night (Pain, 1997). Stanko (1995) argued that crime prevention campaigns that describe individual strategies for safety place the onus for crime prevention directly on the shoulders of women. In addition, Campbell (2005) argued that rather than disrupt gender myths, crime-prevention

literature rearticulates women's vulnerability by imbedding women's victimisation as a stable reality. Specifically, Campbell (2005) stated that:

Safekeeping techniques, a mechanism of gender iteration, produce a feminine subject marked by bodily vulnerability. The consequence of this is 'self-governance,' as women internalise the belief that they are innately vulnerable. They in turn engage in self-protective acts which appear to confirm these qualities. Safekeeping strategies become acts of self-surveillance, as women position themselves as fearful and at risk, thus seeming to authenticate their vulnerable natures. (p. 131)

Ubiquitous gendered socialisation messages also contribute to women's responses to fear of victimisation, and this occurs in such a way that these responses become an unquestioned and unchallenged way of life for many women (De Groof, 2008). Griffin (1986) posited that the agencies of socialisation imply that the threat of violence for women is inevitable and inherent in the environment, and therefore precautionary strategies are essential. There becomes an unspoken rule about how women should conduct themselves in public, how they should dress, and what activities they should and should not engage in to promote their own safety (Pain, 1991). Koskela (1999) cautioned that these seemingly independent decisions do not represent women's "preferences," but instead embody structural and social aspects of gender, violence, and fear.

In their everyday lives, women are subtly and perceptibly told when and where they need to be careful, and when and where they can feel secure. Therefore, if the realities of women are examined with the understanding that fear of victimisation is comprised of a complexity of factors (i.e., common and hidden victimisation, pervasive messages that purport "stranger danger," and individual responsibility for protection strategies), rather than a formulation of crime statistics and risk calculations, then the paradoxes become sensible incongruities. Thus, instead of trying to explain women's fear

in terms of calculable measures—which, from a perspective of women's realities, is actually an illogical idea—a critical examination of the complexities that shape women's experiences is warranted. Given that women's victimisation is mostly male-perpetrated and that women's fear of victimisation is greatly shaped by societal messages, a justifiable approach to examining women's fear experiences in the public sphere includes a critical analysis of women's realities within the framework of patriarchal society.

To date, few attempts have been made to integrate concepts from current data on women's fear of victimisation and use (or non-use) of public space into a composite explanatory model. However, there is a shared understanding by feminist scholars that women's spatial fear is a consequence of their unequal status in society (Chant, 2013; Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Koskela, 1999; Pain, 2000; Valentine, 1989) and therefore represents a “spatial expression of patriarchy” (Valentine, 1989, p. 389). In the following section, women's realities when navigating public space in a patriarchal society are further examined through a feminist lens. In this fashion, women's fear of victimisation is situated as a sensitive indicator of gendered and complex power relations comprising society and space (Koskela, 1997). A definition of patriarchy is given, along with elucidation of how patriarchy forms an ideological institution that shapes women's day-to-day realities when using public space. Women's fear experiences and consequential responses are situated within this institutional framework through examination of patriarchal structures that create and maintain power and control over women.

Space and Patriarchy

In order to understand how space and patriarchy intersect, the concept of space as a multidimensional construct is essential. In the physical sense, public space is broadly

defined as spaces that are accessible to all members of society (Koskela, 1997). By this definition, public space may include streets and sidewalks, public transportation portals and vehicles, shopping centres, parking lots, nature trails, public buildings, nightclubs, and university campuses, for example. However, public space can also be understood as sites where the dynamics of power work to create and sustain marginalisation of particular groups (Valentine, 1996). Public space is also dynamic in the sense that its social composition is in a constant state of flux that coincides with lifestyles and time-space routines (Hindelang et al., 1978). In addition, space can be conceptualised to influence the cognitions, emotions, and behaviours of its users. For example, women perceive public space to be dangerous at night, and feel that their freedom to move throughout space varies with time (McDowell, 1993). Thus, to understand the concept of public space, the changing attributes of space and how space is experienced, as well as the built environment, must be considered.

As described in the feminist literature, women's fear of victimisation in public space serves to produce and sustain their social positions (Pain, 1991; Valentine, 1996). Space is "simultaneously the medium and the outcome of social practices" (Koskela, 1999, p. 112). That is to say, space is experienced and produced through the power relations and practices embedded in everyday life. Conceptualising public space as a site for producing and sustaining social positions provides a basis for the understanding that women's use of public space is not based on autonomous choice, but rather is experienced within social power relations (Koskela, 1999). For example, women's decisions about the routes they take and the places they go are shaped by threat of violence. In many instances, women withdraw from public life, particularly at night (Day,

1994). By withdrawing, women unwittingly reproduce domination by their oppressors who gain further control over public space (Koskela, 1999). The final result is a reproduction of the patriarchal system of which public space is part (Pain, 1991).

To understand how gender intersects with public space in the context of social and power relations, deeper understanding of patriarchy is necessary. To begin, patriarchy has been defined as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women” (Walby, 1989, p. 214). Within patriarchy, social structures are institutionalised features of society that are constituted through a series of gender-related practices. Male violence, including the threat of it, is one such social structure. Waters (1989) argued that there is now a “reorganised patriarchy” that represents a shift from more direct forms of oppression to more covert social arrangements that indirectly secure men’s interests (p. 207). To illustrate this point, one such shift is in the way in which control over women is exerted in the public sphere. Historically, women’s confinement to domesticity served as a way to limit women’s full participation in public life, and to some extent, still influences women’s use of space in the present-day (Lyndsay, 2008). As women entered the public realm in greater numbers for work and other pursuits, public harassment and the threat of violence became a prominent source of control of women’s use of public space (Valentine, 1989). Patriarchy is also evident in the use of public space when women alter their use, restrict their behaviour, or withdraw from the public sphere altogether. In the broader spectrum, women’s fear and decreased participation in public life gives men more opportunity for power, resources, and social status (Bergmann, 1986; Kern, 2010; Waters, 1989).

Patriarchy as an institution. Social institutions and the power distribution networks they generate are kept in place by ideologies. Ideologies offer interpretations, even justifications, for the contradictions and imbalances of power and resources (Harding, 2004). In addition to providing interpretations, ideologies offer approaches for dealing with paradoxes: Accept them because they are rooted in human nature; accept them as necessary for the collective good; accept them because they are traditional and unchangeable (Harding, 2004). Furthermore, to maintain the status quo, ideologies that perpetuate unequal power maintain that the ruled individuals lack the qualities necessary to dominate; that those in charge are benevolent and all-knowing; and that the rulers are predestined to rule (Harding, 2004).

Patriarchy is an ideological institution that shapes and organises people's beliefs and behaviours (Rich, 1986). In this sense, it pervades assumptions, attitudes, and interactions in society. Institutions promise security and order through clearly drawn structures tied to a unifying ideology, with norms, values, and sanctions. Institutional rules are designed not only to achieve certain values the institution upholds, but also to create an atmosphere of institutional control (Rich, 1986). Patriarchy's institutional structure is that of male leadership and dominance interwoven with female followership and subordination. The gender power relationship, the model for every other power relationship among human beings, is enacted within the context of all social institutions, e.g., economic, political, and occupational systems (Epstein, 2007). Epstein (2007) argued that "of all the socially created divides, the gender divide is the most basic and the one most resistant to social change" (p. 3).

The institution of patriarchy is hegemonic. That is, its structures and practices are so deeply entrenched in society that they become invisible and are accepted as normal and natural (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Mouffe, 2013). Hegemony, a concept derived from Gramsci (1971), refers to the process by which dominant elites or groups secure consent to the established order through the production and dissemination of beliefs and values. Legitimacy of this order is maintained and perpetuated through cultural, political, and social institutions (e.g., through laws, media, religious organisations; Gramsci, 1971). Through hegemonic processes, “patriarchy naturalises sexual identity and masks the cultural construction of gender, thereby continually reproducing women in the subordinate position” (Ebert, 1988, p. 19). Applied to gender and the public context, the hegemonic processes that serve to limit women’s spatial liberties go largely undetected unless there is a close examination of patriarchal assumptions about women’s use of public space.

This conceptualisation of the “spatial expression of patriarchy” (Valentine, 1989, p. 389) raises the following question: Through what mechanisms does a patriarchal society create and sustain women’s fear of victimisation—which might be better understood as women’s fear of men—and its various constraints? As outlined above, three such mechanisms that shape and produce the spatiality of fear include (a) the division of space into masculine (public) and feminine (private) spheres; (b) the construction of gender through socialisation, gender roles, stereotypes, and attitudes; and (c) victimisation of women that includes harassment and the omnipresent threat of violence.

Gendered divisions of space: The groundwork for women's fear. Historically women have been identified with the home environment. Since the 19th century when the production of goods moved outside the home, gender roles were organised so that women took on the roles of child-rearing, domestic chores, and all other work necessary for the subsistence of day-to-day living (Hook, 2010; Laslett & Brenner, 1989). The husband's role was to provide the financial basis for the household's daily needs, and to protect the family (Hayden, 1980). The wife had delegated authority over the family, and the husband had authority over the entire household. The home became the haven from public life, such that a man would return from his wage-earning employment to a doting family, a tidy house, and cooked meals (Hayden, 1980). This structure of the private domain became the hallmark of a respectable suburban lifestyle (Valentine, 1992). As a result of the idealisation of this private structure, women's identity became solidified with motherhood, domesticity, and submissiveness (Laslett & Brenner, 1989).

This historical development of private and public spheres led to confinement of women to the family-household system and created a virtual monopolisation of the public domain by men (Waters, 1989). Urban development further supported the stratum of gendered space. Single dwelling homes became situated on the suburban fringe away from the core where much of the labour force was located. This core came to represent choice, freedom, and consumption for those who used it, namely men (Waters, 1989). Later when women entered the paid labour force, the ideology of women being tied to the private sphere maintained the rationale that women were still responsible for most of the work in the home (Orloff, 1993). As women entered into the public realm, the gendered

organisation of public space was enforced through limited acceptance, and even disdain for women in the public by men.

This gendered division of space has had lasting effects for the social geography of how, when, and by whom public space is used. For example, during the day, public places are found to be inhabited mostly by women in part-time employment, women who work in the home, young children, and the elderly (Valentine, 1989). Flexible time schedules and the need to carry out domestic tasks, such as shopping, are two factors that create and support this social geography. Men who are present in public spaces during the day are typically in work roles. At night, the social geography shifts to younger people, most of whom are men. With the workday over, and with fewer home and family responsibilities, men numerically dominate public space at night (Valentine, 1989).

Historically and in modern life in most societies around the world, men are advantaged with more power and privilege than women (Barnes, Bouchama, & Loiseau, 2011). The public realm continues to be dominated by men, albeit in a more contemporary sense. Women now occupy many more roles outside the home, but the most powerful positions in society continue to be almost exclusively occupied by men (Staples & Staples, 2001; United Nations, 2009). Men continue to control most of the wealth, and hold the highest positions in the political and economic spheres (United Nations, 2009). As well, the unequal division of labour and responsibilities within households leaves women with less time and energy to pursue other goals in the public forum (Hyde, 2007). The result is a male-dominated hierarchy that retains control of the governing institutions and public sphere, while perpetuating women's oppression by rendering private responsibilities as the woman's domain (Pain, 1991).

Another outcome shaped by the division of space is the notion that private space is tied to safety and security for women. Women are informed by multiple sources to perceive the home as a place where they are safe from harm, and the male partner can and should be trusted as the protector of the home and family (Gardner, 1990; Rader, 2008). Conversely, women are warned to beware of the dangers of the public sphere where they risk encountering strange men with unpredictable behaviour. This private-public, safety-danger dichotomy is constructed, perpetuated, and maintained through warnings by friends and family, coverage of public crimes against women in the news, and crime-prevention advice that informs women to prepare for something violent to happen when they leave their homes (Campbell, 2005; Gardner, 1990).

However, as crime statistics reveal, it is within private spaces that women are most likely to experience victimisation (Vaillancourt, 2010), thereby making these spaces most unsafe for women. Crimes that are mostly experienced by women in private, such as intimate partner and acquaintance violence, contribute to the production of fear. As Koskela (1997) explained, “feelings of vulnerability cannot be expected to be spatially divided; in women’s minds there is often no opposition between private and public dimensions of fear” (p. 313). In concert with Koskela’s (1997) assertion, Pain (1991) argued that experiences of victimisation in women’s private lives subsequently affect feelings of security in public space at the individual level as well as at the societal level.

Taken together, women’s use of space and images of safe and dangerous environments are strongly related to the ideology of family and perceptions of gendered division of space. Although there have been significant changes to the home structure over the past several decades, women continue to have more responsibility for housework

and childcare (Milan, Keown, & Urquijo, 2011), thus creating limitations relating to use of public space. One of the consequences of these limitations is that women develop a sense that they are not safe in public space and need the protection of one man within the family structure to maintain safety. To conclude, the ideology of gendered division of space creates an implicit awareness for women that entering public space is effectively entering male territory, and that this male territory is a dangerous place for women to be.

Gendered constructions and women's oppression. One of the most pervasive and invisible mechanisms through which patriarchy is perpetuated is through the various constructed components of gender. These constructions are created and reinforced through socialisation, gender roles and norms, attitudes, and internalised oppression. Socialisation is the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and characteristics that facilitate participation as more or less effective members of society (Hyde, 2007). Through this process, behaviours are socially encouraged or discouraged according to social values. Being male or female is biologically determined, and is an ascribed status, along with race and age. However, through the process of gender socialisation, society conveys to females and males its expectations for gender-appropriate behaviours, values, and beliefs (Hyde, 2007).

Feminist socialisation theories (Bem, 1981; Haug, 1987) describe how females learn passivity and acceptance of their unequal status in society. Females are socialised to believe that the danger of victimisation in their lives is inevitable, and that their inability to use space freely is a normal and accepted reality. As a result, women consider spatial constraints to be an accepted consequence of gender, and reason that it is fairly easy to organise life in such a way to manage constraints (Koskela, 1999). The effects of

socialisation are deeply embedded in women's psychologies, which can have the effect of limiting their ways of coping. For example, women who perceive the threat of danger for women as "just the way it is" would more likely react by protecting themselves through restrictions and avoidance rather than challenging the hegemony (Koskela, 1999).

A social role is attached to one's sex status and known as a gender role. Gender roles are "socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotions of men and women" (Anselmi & Law, 1998, p. 195). Gender roles have clear divisions of masculinity and femininity and the behaviours and activities that are connected to each have hierarchical value. As Rosaldo (1974) noted, "male, as opposed to female, activities are always recognised as predominantly important, and cultural systems give authority and value to the rules and actions of men" (p. 19). In line with patriarchal power imbalances, greater value is placed on individualism, competition, and domination, which are understood to be associated with masculinity. At the same time, relatedness, compassion, and nurturance—or characteristics associated with femininity—are undervalued and oppressed (Hertzberg, 1996).

The ubiquity and strength of gender role messages leads to internalisation. Children from a young age begin to accept the norms of society as part of themselves, so that the attitudes and behaviours approved by society seemingly have no possible alternatives. Children acquire an understanding of how culture and society defines the roles of females and males and then internalise this knowledge as a gender schema, or an unchallenged core belief (Bem, 1993). The gender schema then acts to organise subsequent information and is incorporated with the child's self-concept, and this guides gendered behaviours and attributions. For example, boys are defined as strong and

independent and their behaviours encompass acts to prove such strength, while girls are defined as weak and dependent so they behave in ways to reproduce these characteristics (Bem, 1993). These internalised behaviours then act to justify and perpetuate the norms and values of society that shaped them in the first place (Hertzberg, 1996).

The establishment of gender roles has the consequence of deeming certain activities and behaviours as being intolerable to each biological sex. As institutionalised cultural rules, gender beliefs about difference and inequality have a prescriptive edge that is socially enforced (Day, 1994). For example, when social norms that outline acceptable places for women, who they should be with, and how late they should be out, are violated, women are perceived to be “out of line” and “asking for trouble” (Day, 1994). Society governs this sexual stratification by sanctioning gender performance practices that are congruent with gender roles. For example, women in leadership roles who demonstrate an autocratic style are more negatively evaluated than if they possess a democratic style. However, the opposite is true for men in leadership roles (Hyde, 2007). This negative outcome is based on the role expectation that women are nurturing and accommodating, and the negative evaluation of women who do not conform to this expectation is a form of hostile sexism. Hostile sexism is the holding of hostile attitudes towards women and endorsement of confining women to roles associated with less status and power than men (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Further still, Walby (1989) argued that women who step out of their gender role, or who attempt to cross gendered boundary lines, arouse an uncomfortable fear in men that sometimes blurs into misogyny.

Social rules are also intertwined with socialisation and gender roles. Social rules are unspoken norms that shape many aspects of everyday life. Social norms create

particular codes for attire, actions, lifestyle, sexuality, and feminine devotion and modesty in relationships for women (Pain, 1991). Guided by social rules, women know that to keep themselves safe, precautions are necessary and particular physical and social boundaries should not be over-stepped. When women venture into public space, they often take careful preparations to present themselves in a “gender-appropriate” manner by dressing femininely, passively positioning their bodies, and avoiding eye contact (Day, 1994). To avoid victimisation, women may try to portray the image of a “good girl” who is undeserving of harassment or assault. They may also secure a male escort to walk them home, which itself reinforces the notion of women’s vulnerability and dependence on men (Day, 1994). In effect, women are socialised into being afraid so that even when they “dare to be bold” by entering public space alone at night, for example, they regard their own actions as daring or stupid (Koskela, 1997). As delineated by these examples, social rules can be oppressive by restricting women’s full and equal access to public spaces.

Feminine and masculine gender identities are often in negotiation with each other. For example, one way for men to “prove masculinity” is to protect women who are vulnerable and fearful in public space. A central tenet of the gendered socialisation stratagem is that men have women’s best interest at heart and therefore women can trust men to protect their welfare. The concept is related to the notion that women are weak and in need of protection, and is known as benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1997, 2001). Benevolent sexism consists of seemingly positive attitudes toward women in traditional roles (i.e., protective paternalism, adoration of women, and desire for intimate relations; Glick & Fiske, 1997).

As women use public space, they are very aware of their disempowered gender location and how this influences their psychologies. For example, women are cognisant that simply due to being female, they are acceptable objects for men's gazes and advances (Scruton & Watson, 1998). Their personal space is not their own and is there to be violated and intruded upon by men. Harassment experiences are common and women feel "put in their place" by these experiences. Because women tacitly understand that they are responsible for their own safety, women also feel that they must use space carefully and must not take "unnecessary risks" that could potentially lead to victimisation (Scruton & Watson, 1998). The consequence of these psychologically altering events is a fragmentation of women's psychologies and bodies. Through these oppressive messages, women are informed that their presence in public is subject to sexualisation and objectification, and their seemingly innocuous behaviours are risky and in need of regulation (Koskela, 1997).

Just as the characteristics of masculinity and femininity can be internalised, so can beliefs about one's place in society. For example, the denigrating messages that are propagated by the dominant group (e.g., men) regarding the oppressed (e.g., women) may lead to internalised devaluation (Hertzberg, 1996). The values, perceptions, and beliefs of the dominant group are ever-present and often below the level of awareness and articulation. Therefore, they become a part of the assumptive experience of the oppressed. Because women experience themselves as greatly different from the prevailing norm, their sense of being different is often experienced as lacking or devalued (Hertzberg, 1996). These internal experiences and reflections become part of an autonomous internal dialogue and set of conditioned emotional responses known as

internalised oppression (Lipsky, 1977). Hertzberg (1996) noted internalised oppression has damaging effects for women as it contributes to self-blame, alienation, and disempowerment.

To conclude, the complexities of gender are constructed within a highly rigid regulatory framework that converges over time so that it appears to be an innate and natural way of being. In the same manner, the social and physical spaces in which gender is enacted are also highly regulated (Valentine, 1996). As outlined above, there are a host of gendered (read: male-centered) assumptions embedded within everyday life about how, when, and by whom space is to be used, with men as the originators and overseers of its use. Public space is a forum where men have a great deal of power and freedom, while women are restricted through a system of external factors and internalising processes that organise their daily realities. However, more than any other oppressive mechanism, arguably the most significant factor in shaping women's fear experiences and restricted realities is male violence. Outlined next are the ways in which violence and harassment toward women play a clear role in the spatial and social exclusion of women.

Male violence, power, and control. Within a patriarchal framework, the use of violence is a significant way that male dominance over women is sustained. Examples of violence against women are intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking, rape, and child sexual abuse, to name a few (Walby, 1989). In a male ideological culture that condones and encourages violence, violence against women is justified on the basis that men have recognised power and authority over women (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Within this belief system, violence against women is a consequence of a patriarchal society where women are viewed as appropriate targets for violence (Buzawa & Buzawa,

1996). Indeed, research has demonstrated that men who abuse women hold more patriarchal attitudes that condone violence as an acceptable form of behaviour (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996).

In a patriarchal society where violence against women is common and normalised, women learn that it is inappropriate and unsafe to be alone in male-dominated space (Valentine, 1989). The threat of gender-based violence in women's lives contributes to a sense of fear and danger. The resulting fear inhibits women from enjoying independence and freedom to move safely in public space. Violent attacks and sexual harassment are constant reminders to women that they are intruding onto spaces where they are not meant to be (Koskela, 1999; Pain, 1991). In an effort to regain control of their lives, women then modify their activities to lessen their perceived risk, which also has the deleterious effect of hampering their access to educational, employment, and leisure opportunities (Pain, 1991; Stanko, 1995). An inadvertent effect of women's withdrawal is that it allows men to appropriate public space and hence reinforces their dominance over it (Valentine, 1989). Therefore, the results of gendered violence and the threat of it are two-fold: The threat of violence creates a fear that excludes women from participating in public life, and by the act of self-restricting, women unintentionally keep the hierarchy of patriarchy intact.

Many forms of men's violence are rarely classified as criminal offenses (Stanko, 1995). By criminalising only the more serious sexual offenses, women experience an array of events that are threatening and degrading (e.g., sexual comments, being followed) that go unacknowledged as part of women's oppressive experiences. The reality for women is that a basic aspect of being female is to experience intrusions of

varying degrees, whether from known or unknown men (Stanko, 1995). In addition, mainstream analyses of women's fear have ignored much of the violence in women's lives, including harassment, stalking, and flashing, for example, and instead relies on official crime statistics that are not representative of the true nature of women's victimisation. However, these acts of violence toward women have a significant role to play in women's subordination and fear (Stanko, 1987). When men use their power in these contexts, in addition to physical and sexual violence, they interfere with women's right to fully participate in public life without fear, and to be treated as equal and respected members of society.

Feminist writers have argued that men use women's fear as a way to control their behaviour, to prevent them from participating in public life, and to maintain control of social institutions (Pain, 1991; Stanko, 1995). Implicitly and explicitly, the threat of violence defines where women can go and when; it shapes their behaviours and thoughts; and limits their possibilities for work, leisure, and full participation in society. Furthermore, this power imbalance is reinforced when women are belittled or pacified when they voice their experiences of limitation and confinement. For example, women may hear comments like "you worry too much," thereby trivialising their experience and giving the message that they are being irrational. A common response by men might be, "I'll escort you to keep you safe," which places women in vulnerable and child-like positions (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Thus, violence and the threat of violence toward women by men, and the dismissal of their experiences, represents the need of the patriarchal system to deny women equal power by limiting their control of their own existence.

Women have an implicit understanding of the likelihood of experiencing male violence and harassment, including the understanding that there is inadequate protection against such violations in their everyday lives (Meyer & Post, 2006; Smith & Torstensson, 1997). Women also have a general impression that they will continue to be in harm's way unless society changes significantly. For example, a study examining women's perceptions of violence found that women believe that male violence is still acceptable in society, and that community-level agencies (e.g., police and courts) do not treat these offenses seriously enough (Meyer & Post, 2006). Holding these perceptions, women feel they must do what they can to keep themselves safe. They may act in ways so as not to draw attention to themselves or disrupt their surroundings. Women are never sure exactly where the violence in their lives will come from and where they will be when violence occurs. As a result, the threat of violence regulates women's most intimate cognitions as they must anticipate what men will do and then adjust their own lives in accordance with this anticipation (Koskela, 1997).

In addition to an awareness of responsibility in keeping themselves safe, other psychological outcomes may consist of conflicting thoughts and feelings (Koskela, 1997). For example, women may become uncomfortable and wonder if they are dressed too revealingly as they notice men's stares in public. They may worry that they are inviting a personal attack, and may see themselves as "tempting fate." Also, women may feel uneasy and unsure of how to respond when unfamiliar men approach them in a friendly manner. They may think about ignoring the person or fleeing, but at the same time wonder if these reactions would seem impolite or over-dramatic. They may feel paranoid about their fears but, at the same time, feel imprudent for ignoring them

(Koskela, 1997). Likewise, when women go against the gendered norms of public space, it is as if they have agreed to participate in the interplay that may or may not be called harassment. Overall, these experiences constitute uncertainty and reprimands that serve as forms of social control over their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

Violence toward women is not considered to be isolated individual acts of aggression, but rather is situated within a larger cultural and contextual framework that fosters patriarchal ideologies. The violence in women's lives is regularly occurring and systematic, and is based on deeply entrenched social patterns and inequalities (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). One mechanism for culturally perpetuating such violence is through social learning. Social learning theorists posit that violence is learned through role models that teach children who have witnessed abuse between parents that violence is appropriate in relationships, and thereby is perpetuated and sustained through this mechanism. As such, men are more likely to be accepting of violence and more likely to become violent if they have witnessed aggression and derogatoriness toward women (Sellers, Cochran, & Branch, 2005). In addition, sexual violence is found to occur more often in a patriarchal society that condones and rewards violence toward women (Sellers et al., 2005).

Violence and the fear of violence in women's lives are both products and reinforcers of their social location. Gender imbalances of power underlie violence against women (Jasinski & Williams, 1998). For men, power is established through women's fear of victimisation, and is germane to the control of women's actions and movements. Furthermore, when power is firmly established, explicit use of rewards and punishments

is hardly necessary. Awareness of power imbalance that suffuses everyday reality becomes enough to evoke compliance of the less powerful (Pain, 2009).

Within a culture of violence, women's fear is normalised as an accepted part of everyday life (Garland, 1996). This normalisation, in turn, dismisses women's plights and fosters men's power to keep women off the streets and in their homes. The result of culturally-sanctioned violence is that women live with a constant level of fear that is ever-present, unacknowledged, and undefined. Instead of trying to navigate their lives with unspecified fear, Valentine (1989) argued that women attach their fear to particular places as a way to maintain an illusion of control over their own safety. By designating their fear to spatial locations, women may adapt by developing coping strategies (e.g., moving about with vigilance and caution, avoiding feared places, and altering routine activities) designed to ease the uncertainty of the dangers that exist for them. However, while these behaviours are adaptive, they are exceedingly costly. When fear-reaction strategies are essential aspects of daily life, it becomes difficult for women to be self-asserting, to act volitionally, and to live their lives without fear (Valentine, 1989).

Gaps in the Literature and Purpose of the Present Study

As outlined in the literature review, gaps exist in the scholarship of women's fear of victimisation and its relationship to public domains. While several studies have examined the relationship between women's fear and use of space, most of these have been situated within geography and criminology studies, and have not incorporated theories on women's fear and oppression (Shirlow & Pain, 2003). Geography studies have informed the literature about the types of spatial and temporal factors contributing to women's fear (e.g., wooded parks at night), but have done little to explain the gender-

fear paradox outlined in the literature. Criminology studies have provided evidence of women's unequal experiences of criminal victimisation, but have ignored the multiplicity of women's victimisation experiences and their relationship to fear. Moreover, an understanding of the problem from a psychological perspective, including a fundamental knowledge of women's lives and psychologies, is lacking.

Although feminist studies have examined the social factors that contribute to women's fear, they have largely focused on women's fear of sexual assault (Day, 1994; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Hilinski, 2009). While this is a step toward understanding women's oppressive experiences, attributing women's fear to a single form of victimisation ignores the other means by which women are victimised (e.g., harassment) and various oppressive mechanisms (e.g., gendered divisions of space and socialising factors). This gap leaves room for understanding how harassment and other violations influence patterns of fear, and how women understand their social locations and behaviours in response to them.

Additionally, although gender differences have been studied in the fear of crime literature, patriarchy has not been acknowledged as a leading causal structure (Pain, 1991). Based on the above-noted literature, there is room for argument that women's fear is embedded within this broader framework than within the context of fear of crime specifically. To date, there is nominal literature that enmeshes the notions of how women experience their public selves and how they are given the message that they are out of place in a public environment, with the kinds of changes that would help women to feel that they are both legitimate and entitled persons in the public environment (Fenster, 2005; Wekerle, 1980; Whitzman, 2007).

Currently, there is no known research that explores the schemata that are evoked in fearful situations that women use to make sense of the complications that arise for them as they navigate the public environment. In addition, while the consequences of restricted mobility for women have been addressed in the literature (e.g., reduced opportunities and life choices; Coble et al., 2003; Day, 1994; Green et al., 1990), ways in which their psychologies have adapted to these complicating experiences remains largely undocumented. There also has not been an exploration of the personal (e.g., financial) and interpersonal (e.g., relationship) costs for women as they attempt to keep themselves safe. Further, little is known about the conditions in which some women reject their realities and seek to redefine themselves through resistance (Koskela, 1997).

To understand women's realities and to challenge current thinking that perpetuates the rhetoric of dominant cultural ideologies, women's own descriptions of embodied knowledge must be known. Extant research that seeks to understand these phenomenological issues has largely been defined and spoken for by other people. As a result, a phenomenological study is ideally suited to reveal how women navigate through their fear and oppressive experiences, and how they make sense of and cope with the resulting challenges. A better understanding of the connections between women's cognitions and behaviours, on the one hand, and the hegemonic practices and rules of the patriarchal structure on the other is advantageous: It aids in uncovering possible ways to break some of the oppressive links between women's fear and use of space.

Other methodological issues are present in the literature. Firstly, surveys that measure fear are compared with crime statistics so that a comparison can be made between the two. However, these sources of information do not allow for understanding

women's fear and how this fear affects their lives. As noted in the literature review, women's experiences of victimisation are derived from a host of intimidating and frightening experiences that create an overall sense of fear. Many of these experiences are not recognised as criminally prosecutable acts, and therefore are not identified by these sources of data. Secondly, due to a number of barriers, crimes against women are among the most under-reported and under-recorded personal violations, also skewing the picture of women's victimisation. In the conceptualisation of fear, then, Shirlow and Pain (2003) argued that fear is not wholly measurable by these methods and its connection with space cannot be evinced. To that end, an analysis of the deeper structures that create a culture of fear and the schematic processes that women use to interpret and function within their experiences is still missing.

The current research provides insight into patriarchal structures and practices by examining the material, social, and psychological realities of women's use of everyday space. The knowledge obtained serves to challenge the invisible, yet controlling and limiting ideologies that women must negotiate. Further, the current research highlights the phenomenological nature of how women's lives are shaped by such ideologies. In essence, participants' narratives help to uncover the ideological blind spots that serve to inform and shape women's experiences.

How are women's daily lives and psychologies structured by patriarchal influences as they navigate their surroundings? This study is unique in that it seeks to advance knowledge by elucidating the underpinnings of the gender-fear paradox through the examination of the psychological, social, emotional, and behavioural experiences of women in everyday public spaces. Finally, it looks to inform our understanding of the

psychology of women by uncovering how women make sense of and negotiate the hegemony that limits their full participation in the public sphere. The research questions are as follows:

1. How does the institution of patriarchy, through its various mechanisms, structure the daily lives and psychologies of women when navigating public space?
2. In what ways do the organising influences of the physical, social, and symbolic aspects of public space influence the daily experiences of women?
3. How do women make sense of and cope with the tensions, limitations, and exclusions that such a structure places on them?
4. What are the personal, interpersonal, and social costs associated with the patriarchal organisation of public space?
5. What changes could be made to positively influence women's use of space?

Examining women's experiences in public space will inform our understanding of why the gender-fear paradox exists, including an understanding of some of the mechanisms that maintain and reinforce this paradox. To answer the research questions, the present study documented the daily routines, activities, and experiences of women's navigation of public space. Then, the specific ways in which the organising mechanisms of patriarchy shape, constrain, and complicate their lives were examined. Following an exploration of these complicating factors, the study sought to uncover the socially-available schemata that women used to understand the difficulties experienced. Finally, the cognitive and behavioural strategies that women used to cope with these difficulties were investigated. The next chapter describes the methodological approach and its epistemological basis.

Chapter 2: Method

Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace: Overview

The Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace (P-SEC; Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005) is a qualitative feminist methodology to study the psychologies and sociologies of women. To be effective in understanding women's lives, Lerman (1986) posited that a theory should centrally locate women, remain close to women's experiences, and recognise the effects of social and historical processes on their psychologies. Theorising women's lives in this regard calls for an acquisition of women's first-hand knowledge of their everyday world. In a similar vein, P-SEC methodology positions women's experiences as fundamental to the knowledge of women, and contextualises their realities within social, historical, and political frameworks. P-SEC methodology ensconces aspects of philosophy, sociology, psychology, and feminist ideology. Within its framework, P-SEC methodology draws upon aspects of feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1987, 2004), institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987, 2004), and schema theory (Beals, 1998). In this section, an overview of P-SEC's keystone epistemological assumptions and theoretical foundations are described.

Theoretical overview. Feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1987, 2004) provides the epistemological assumptions for P-SEC. Feminist standpoint epistemology claims that knowledge is socially situated, meaning that different aspects of knowledge are held by individuals on the basis of social location, resulting in its holders having "partial and situated knowledge" (Harding, 1987, 2004). Underlying this claim is that some knowledge comes from experience. It follows that specific experiences depend on social location (i.e., dominant and oppressed locations), and that some social locations are

advantaged epistemologically. Social location is determined on the basis of power relations, which are affected by variables such as race, gender, and class (Haraway, 2004; Harding, 2004; Smith, 1987). In order to manage their everyday lives in accordance with the demands of being subjugated, oppressed individuals must not only hold knowledge about their own experiences, but they must also understand and anticipate those of the oppressors. Thus, according to Jagger (2004), the standpoint of the oppressed is not only different but also “epistemologically advantageous,” as she states that “whereas the condition of the oppressed groups is visible only dimly to the ruling class, the oppressed are able to see more clearly the ruled as well as the rulers and the relation between them” (p. 57). Further, because the oppressed have no vested interest in the particulars of their social relations, they have no vested interest in protecting a positive presentation of reality. Following these assumptions, standpoint epistemology asserts that marginalised groups hold “less partial and distorted accounts” of the world (Harding, 2004, p. 128). Thus, by examining the views of oppressed individuals, standpoint theory unearths a more complete understanding of familiar and customary practices that shroud, normalise, and justify the taken-for-granted ways of organising life (Harding, 2004). Hence, feminist standpoint epistemology is a way of knowing that recognises and values the struggles of the oppressed over that of the oppressor (Hartsock, 1987).

Methodology. The Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace derives its methodological foundations from institutional ethnography, which supports the analysis of the organisational and functional aspects of social institutions (Smith, 1987, 2004). This feminist standpoint methodology seeks to reveal and explicate the ruling relations of institutional complexities that organise the everyday experiences of women (Smith, 1987,

2004). These relations of ruling are hegemonic (i.e., they are largely invisible, yet powerful), and serve to coordinate people's activities and practices, and give them meaning. These ruling relations are firmly rooted in social realities so that they are perceived as logical and independent ideas (Smith, 1987, 2004). For example, the relations of ruling are evident in the mindsets and behaviours of women who indicate that certain areas of the city (e.g., the downtown core) are perceived as dangerous and hostile to women, and are places to remain away from, especially at night. This perception organises women's thoughts and lives by limiting their mobility, and is inherently accepted as a legitimate version of the world and their location within it.

Organisational Moments are the cornerstone of P-SEC inquiry. Gouliquer and Poulin (2005) defined Organisational Moments as ordinary, regularly-occurring events that serve to meet the needs of an institution, and which shape a marginalised group's (e.g., women) activities and thoughts, while complicating their lives. Complications occur when disparities arise between the social organisations' ideological foundation and practices, and the needs of the individuals whose realities are shaped by the organisation. Complications can be exacerbated for marginalised individuals because historically, marginalised groups have not held power to influence organisational structure. The basis for such conflicts, however, is difficult to identify, as the institutional aspects are commonplace and accepted as normative. To illustrate, an Organisational Moment occurs when women secure male chaperones to and from places of employment, which is a common practice for women who work night shifts. This organising event that shapes women's lives also has meaning for the institution of patriarchy because not only does it support a male-fearing milieu, it also situates the male as the overseer and guardian of

women's night-time mobility and safety. At the same time, it positions women as weak, vulnerable, and in need of protection, in addition to restricting their free movement in society.

Women's narratives provide the foundation for unpacking Organisational Moments. P-SEC methodology requires a critical examination of institutional rules, practices, traditions, and sanctions as experienced from the standpoint of the oppressed (e.g., women). Knowing the standpoint of the oppressed is of particular importance in elucidating how institutions affect the lives of those who have limited influence and power within them. Within the relations of ruling, the power of oppressors gains strength if those they are trying to rule inherently accept as legitimate dominant structures and practices and dismiss their own interpretations of the world. In other words, to subsist, marginalised people adapt their belief systems and carry out daily activities that reinforce and maintain the hegemony. Thus, in a society that sidelines women's experiences, P-SEC inquiry repositions women as central by examining women's accounts of the underlying practices that create and reinforce the structures of power (i.e., the relations of ruling; Smith, 1987, 2004).

As a means to better understand how individuals psychologically make sense of and manage Organisational Moments, P-SEC methodology draws upon the workings of schema theory. Schemata are socially and readily available units of cognitively organised networks of information, which influence and simplify perception, communication, and sense-making, as well as guide behaviour (Beals, 1998; Bem, 1993). To illustrate, gender schema encompasses social norms and practices that defines and regulates the qualities and behaviours that are socially acceptable for females (e.g., nurturing, emotionally

expressive, and commonly associated with domestic activities) and males (e.g., assertiveness, independence, and commonly associated with public activities; Bem, 1993). When socially-available schemata conflict with individual experiences, the result is complication, confusion, or struggle. An integral part of P-SEC methodology is to analyse the schemata evoked by Organisational Moments to better understand how marginalised individuals cognitively resolve contradicting actualities. By examining these schemata, insight is gained regarding how the marginalised adapt psychologically to the disjunctures in their lives. P-SEC then brings the researcher to examine how women resolve the conflicting realities by uncovering the cognitive and behavioural strategies employed to deal with the complications.

In brief, the present study explores the daily lives and experiences of women as they navigate space and place. Next, the specific ways in which the institution of patriarchy shape and constrain women's navigation of public space are examined. As part of this investigation, Organisational Moments (i.e., events that benefit the institution while complicating the lives of women) are identified. The psychological or practical difficulties that women experience are examined. Following an analysis of these complications, the study reveals the socially-available schemata that women use to understand the basis of their difficulties. Finally, the cognitive and behavioural strategies that women use to cope with the complications are examined.

Participants

Interviews were conducted with 40 women residing in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The number of participants chosen for the current study was selected to allow for sufficient data to conduct a detailed analysis, and to support generalising statements about the

study's findings. A participant age group ranging from 19 to 35 was chosen for the present study to represent the portion of the population who are most likely to engage in activities that increase their use of public space, e.g. night-time social activities (Hindelang et al., 1978), and who are among the most likely to be victimised (Vaillancourt, 2010). A descriptive profile of participants' demographics, including age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, relationship status, employment status, personal income, education level, and primary and secondary methods of transportation, can be found in Table 1. The mean age of participants was 27.8 years. To the extent possible, ages were balanced within the chosen range, resulting in 18 participants falling between the ages of 19 and 27, and 22 participants falling between the ages of 28 and 35. Among those who participated, the majority were White, heterosexual, and over half were single or in non-cohabitating relationships. The majority obtained post-secondary college diplomas or university degrees, all were employed, and most earned salaries well above the national median of \$29,900 (Statistics Canada, 2011a). Participants' most used methods of transportation were, in descending order of preference: (1) private vehicles, (2) walking, and, (3) public transportation. For secondary modes of transportation, participants cited the following, in descending order of preference: (1) walking, (2) public transportation, (3) private vehicle, (4) carpool, and (5) bicycle.

Table 1. *Descriptive Profile of Sample by Demographics*

Demographics	<i>n</i> = 40	
	<i>n</i>	(%)
Age		
19-27	18	(45)
28-35	22	(55)
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	30	(75)
Lesbian	4	(10)
Bisexual	6	(15)
Ethnicity		
White	35	(87.5)
First Nations	3	(7.5)
Hispanic	2	(5)
Relationship Status		
Single/Dating	24	(60)
Married/Common-Law	14	(35)
Divorced/Separated	2	(5)
Employment Status		
Full-Time	30	(75)
Part-Time	10	(25)
Personal Income		
\$14,999 or less	6	(15)
\$15,000 and \$29,999	6	(15)
\$30,000 and \$49,999	12	(30)
\$50,000 and \$74,999	12	(30)
\$75,000 or more	4	(10)
Education		
High School	1	(2.5)
Some College/University	7	(17.5)
College Diploma	7	(17.5)
Bachelor's Degree	14	(35)
Graduate/Professional Degree	11	(27.5)
Transportation – Primary		
Private Vehicle	27	(67.5)
Walking	7	(17.5)
Public Transportation	6	(15)
Transportation – Secondary		
Walking	20	(50)
Public Transportation	10	(25)
Private Vehicle	5	(12.5)
Carpool	3	(7.5)
Bicycle	2	(5)

City of Winnipeg

Demographic profile. The population of Winnipeg proper in 2011 was approximately 663,600 (Statistics Canada, 2012). According to the 2006 Canadian Census (Statistics Canada, 2006), approximately 200 ethnic origins were reported by Winnipeg residents. The majority of Winnipeg residents' ethnic origins were reported to be Canadian or of Western European decent (e.g., English, French, Scottish). Aboriginal people (North American Indians, Métis, Inuit) accounted for 10% of Winnipeg's population (approximately 64,000), rendering Winnipeg as having the largest population of Aboriginal people in Canada, both in terms of percentage and actual numbers. The 2006 census also specified that visible minorities make up approximately 16% of Winnipeg's population (approximately 110,000), with people of Asian heritage accounting for approximately 75% of visible minorities. In 2011, the median hourly wage in Winnipeg was \$18.50, and Winnipeg's unemployment rate of 5.5 percent sat below the national average of 7 percent (Chartier, 2012). Winnipeg's median family household income in 2011 was \$74,040, which was slightly above the national average of \$72,240 (Statistics Canada, 2013).

City data. The city of Winnipeg is the provincial capital of Manitoba, and is the seventh largest city in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012). The city has a land area spanning 464 square kilometres and a population density of 1,365 per square kilometre. Presently, 236 neighbourhoods make up the city of Winnipeg. The residential population of the downtown district of Winnipeg is approximately 13,000 (Statistics Canada, 2006), which is approximately 2 percent of the city's population. Additionally, nearly 25% of Winnipeg residents work in the downtown core (City of Winnipeg, 2011). The city of

Winnipeg has a single form of public transportation, which is an above-ground bus system comprised of approximately 585 buses and 5100 bus stops, including 800 bus shelters and 1500 transit benches ("Interesting Transit Facts," n.d.). According to a report released by the Working Group on Public Transportation Policy in 2000 (the most recent report available on Winnipeg Transit's website), it is estimated that approximately one-third of Winnipeg residents use public transportation on a regular basis (i.e., one or more times per week), and 15 percent of residents rely solely on public transportation for the majority of their transportation needs (De Smedt, Eadie, Gerbasi, Lubosch, & Bordland, 2000). This report also estimated that adolescents and young adults comprise 50 to 60 percent of Winnipeg Transit's ridership. In terms of local newsprint media, Winnipeg has three main newsprint establishments, including Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg Sun, and Metro News Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Free Press has the largest readership base ("History: Partners in Progress," n.d.) and is considered to be Winnipeg's official newspaper.

Crime statistics. Statistics Canada measures crime through two broad categories: volume and severity. While volume accounts for the total number of police-reported crime to generate overall crime rate data, the severity of such crimes is also taken into account by the use of the Crime Severity Index. Instead of solely counting the number of offences, the severity of offenses is measured by giving court-granted sentences numerical values and then combining these values with actual crime rates to produce the Crime Severity Index. This index is used to more accurately reflect the nature and seriousness of crimes that take place in a particular jurisdiction, as well as to provide a measure to compare crime data across several jurisdictions (Perreault, 2013). Two

separate severity indexes are generated from the Crime Severity Index: (1) the Police-Reported Crime Severity Index (PRCSI), which includes all police-reported offenses, including property and traffic offences; and (2) the Police-Reported Violent Crime Severity Index (PRVCSI), which encompasses all violent crimes that are perpetrated against the person. In 2012, despite a downward trend in overall police-reported crime in Manitoba (including Winnipeg), Winnipeg's crime rates were well above the national average (6,222 versus 5,588 per 100,000 population, respectively). The PRCSI indicated that Winnipeg had the fourth highest overall crime severity rate among Canada's metropolitan areas. Additionally, according to the PRVCSI, Winnipeg was demonstrated to have the highest overall severity of violent crime compared to all other major metropolitan areas in Canada (Perreault, 2013).

Similar to Statistics Canada data, a statistical report released by Winnipeg Police Services reflecting 2012 crime rates indicated an overall decline in rates of violent crimes in Winnipeg. Specifically, a total of 8151 violent crimes were reported in 2012, while the five year average between 2007 and 2011 was 10,232 (Winnipeg Police Services, 2013). Within the category of violent crimes, among the most reported in 2012 were common assault (37%), robbery (20%), assault with a weapon (17%), uttering threats (10%), and common sexual assault (8%) (Winnipeg Police Services, 2013).

Materials

A semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A) was used to organise the interviews with participants. In the first section, demographic information was obtained. In the second section, women were asked to describe their use of public space during a typical weekday and weekend day. Questions were asked to clarify between public and

private use of space and to provide general details about how, when, where, and why they used public space. Once usage patterns were established, women were asked to focus on the specific details regarding their experiences as they used public space for various reasons (i.e., work and school; leisure and social activities; errands and outdoor tasks; fitness and exercise; and other identified uses of public space). For each identified use of public space, women were asked to give details about how they cognitively and emotionally experienced these spaces. When difficulties or restrictions were noted, participants were asked to describe how their behaviour was shaped or restricted and how they made sense of these restrictions. In the third section of the interview guide, women were asked broader questions such as how they understand their use of public space in connection to their gender and social locations. If not already clarified, they were asked to give general details about previous victimisation experiences in public spaces. They were asked about activities they engaged in to protect themselves against being victimised, and which types of victimising experiences they protected themselves from.

In practice, the interview guide served as an organisational tool to provide structure to interviews; however, deviations from the structure occurred. The open format allowed for the potential to uncover ideas and explanations not depicted in the current literature. In addition, the order in which topics were covered was not intended to be static. This allowed for uninterrupted flow of participants' recollections and schemata evoked by discussion of their use of public space. In other words, the interview questions provided women with the opportunity to convey a chronological and cohesive narrative outlining the most significant aspects of their experience, while also ensuring that personally relevant information was discussed.

Procedure

Ethical clearance. In compliance with the ethical requirements for research at the University of New Brunswick, appropriate documents were completed and submitted to the Research Ethics Board, which provided ethical clearance to commence the study.

Recruitment. Participants represented a purposive sample and were recruited using the “snowball approach” (word-of-mouth), although other forms of recruitment were attempted, i.e., ads in printed newspapers, e-newsletters, and public bulletin boards (see Appendix B). After becoming informed of the study, potential participants contacted the researcher by e-mail or telephone to indicate their interest in taking part in the study. Upon contacting the researcher to inquire about the study or express interest in participating, the researcher answered any questions and then scheduled an interview with each participant at a mutually convenient time and place. All individuals who manifested an interest in the study by contacting the researcher opted to participate. Recruitment concluded when two criteria were met: (1) data saturation, and (2) evidence of generalisability. Specifically, the recruitment phase of the study concluded when there was indication that data saturation was reached (Mason, 2010). Saturation was observed at approximately the thirteenth interview, at which time the researcher found that no new data (particularly relating to complicating aspects of navigating public space) were shared by participants. Subsequent interviewing served to confirm and provide additional descriptive information related to previously identified themes and Organisational Moments. In addition, recruitment ceased when the number of enlisted participants reached the upper range that is typically necessary for a P-SEC analysis to support

generalised statements based upon evidence of shared experiences among participants (C. Poulin, personal communication, October 10, 2010; Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005).

Interviews. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and the majority (92.5%) either took place in private offices at participants' places of employment, or at a temporary private office location provided by the researcher. Two interviews took place at participants' homes and one interview was conducted at the researcher's home. In all cases, only the researcher and participant were present during the interview process. Interviews were arranged at times most convenient for participants, which resulted in the majority of interviews (80%) being conducted during participants' weekday lunch breaks or at the end of their workdays. A minority of interviews (20%) were conducted mid-afternoon, in the evening, or on the weekend. At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to read a consent form (Appendix C) that explained (a) their right to decline answering questions and their right to terminate the interview at any time; and (b) the methods used to maintain participant anonymity and ensure that personal information would remain confidential. The form specifically requested participants' permission to record the interview. These consent issues were also explained to participants by the researcher. After the consent form was read and explained, participants were asked to sign and date the form if they decided to participate in the study.

After consent was obtained, interviews proceeded according to the interview guide (Appendix A). At the close of each interview, participants were given a debriefing letter (Appendix D) and an opportunity to be placed on a mailing list so that they could receive copies of the study's results. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher

responded to questions that participants had regarding the study. Additionally, each participant was given a list of telephone numbers for local and provincial resources available for various concerns (see Appendix E). Participants were also instructed to inform the researcher if the interview process had elicited difficult memories or emotions related to any of the topics of discussion. One participant indicated that she experienced difficult or traumatic memories during the interview process. At that time, the researcher gathered adequate information and provided the participant with appropriate contact information for support services related to her circumstances. The researcher also had in-depth discussions with the participant to help process her memories and emotions, and encouraged her to contact the researcher in the future if she wished to engage in follow-up discussions. At the time of writing, no further follow-up discussions were initiated by the participant.

Institutional response. As prescribed by the P-SEC method, upon completion of a preliminary analysis of interview data, 18 institutional representatives of various organisations were solicited to provide contextual information regarding the difficulties that women raised in relation to the public context. The purpose of this contact was to obtain additional information regarding the particular organisations' policies and practices to gain further insights regarding the institutional perspective, and to document the institutional responses to preliminary findings. Requests for comment were made to the following: elected officials and policy consultants at the municipal and provincial levels; advocates for women's rights organisations; spokespersons for police services; reporters for local news media, urban planning and design professionals; and administrators of the public transportation system. The selection of specific organisations

was informed by the findings, in keeping with the focus of developing and improving policies and practices to enhance women's spatial experiences.

Institutional representatives were contacted via electronic mail, which detailed the purpose of the study and requested their reactions to a summary of the study's findings (Appendix F). More specifically, representatives were asked to react to the findings in terms of how their institution explains and helps to resolve the complications experienced by women. In addition to inviting representatives to respond to the findings, the letter also explained the limitations of their participation. Namely, although efforts would be made to protect their anonymity (i.e., through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information), because of the public nature of their positions, anonymity could not be assured. Those who did not respond after two weeks following the initial e-mail were sent a second e-mail requesting a response to the invitation to participate. Thirteen initial replies were received. Six indicated that they did not wish to participate, two initially indicated that a response would be forthcoming but then retracted, and five provided reactions to the study's findings. The five institutional responses that were obtained were comprised of the following: one police services representative, two women's rights advocates, one urban planning representative, and one provincial policy consultant. Of the five reactions received, two provided specific written reactions via e-mail, two elected to be personally interviewed (these interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed), and one provided written comment via e-mail that did not directly speak to the findings, but referred to a particular change to policy that was being instated to enhance public safety in and around alcohol-serving establishments. In the case of the interviews, materials used to elicit an institutional response (see Appendix F) were

forwarded to participants prior to the interviews being conducted, which then guided the focus of discussion topics. Upon receiving written responses and completion of the interviews, the researcher made herself available to answer any questions that institutional representatives had regarding the study.

Analyses

Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and the resultant data were analysed using a qualitative data analysis software program (NVivo, version 9; QSR International, 2009). Through the transcription process, the anonymity of participants was protected by using pseudonyms and by altering identifying information (e.g., place of residence, employment details). To further prevent possible identification of participants, discontinuous identities were used. That is, not only were participants' given pseudonyms, these pseudonyms were applied inconsistently for differing participants in the presentation of the results (Poulin, 2001). For example, "Jane" might be used as a pseudonym for two different participants, and those two participants might also have additional pseudonyms. When necessary, the quotes were edited to improve readability.

Data analysis occurred in three stages. An overview of the levels of analysis is included in Table 2.

Table 2. *Overview of Levels of Analysis*

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Thematic Coding	Identifying Organisational Moments	Schematic Analysis
Purpose: Facilitates familiarity with the data and organises the text into manageable blocks	Description: Instances or events that complicate women's everyday lives while providing institutional benefits (e.g., reinforcing institutional ideologies)	Explication: Identifying schemata and cognitive/behavioural strategies to deal with the complications of the Organisational Moment

First, recurrent themes were identified and coded to facilitate familiarity with the data and arrange the text into manageable blocks (Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005; Seidel & Kelle, 1995). These themes emerged from the data, and were also informed by the literature on women's emotional and behavioural responses in relation to public space, as well as patriarchal ideologies of space and gender. The themes were applied to interview sections of women's narratives that exemplified particular contexts, processes, or ideas. When necessary, themes were hierarchically organised to reflect sub-themes for greater clarity. Thematically coding the data assisted in data retrieval in the later stages of analysis.

The second level of analysis entailed the uncovering of Organisational Moments (Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005). As previously indicated, the identification and examination of Organisational Moments helps to unearth the ways in which patriarchal norms, rules, and attitudes function to organise and constrain women's daily lives and psychologies. In addition, this stage of analysis also uncovers how these institutional aspects serve to maintain and reinforce its institutional structure. These Organisational Moments were

detected and detailed through the researcher's analysis of the data and are therefore researcher-identified.

For the third level of analysis, the data were examined for schemata that women evoked to understand and manage the complications that arose from Organisational Moments. As previously stated, schemata are cognitively organised networks of information that act to filter and interpret incoming stimuli, and which serve to guide behaviour (Beals, 1998; Bem, 1993). In particular, the analysis proceeded by examining the cognitive schemata that illustrated how women interpreted and made sense of each Organisational Moment. The data were also analysed for cognitive and behavioural strategies that participants used to cope with complications derived from Organisational Moments.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, institutional representatives were asked to comment on participants' experiences to help contextualise the results. These reactions are incorporated at the end of each Organisational Moment.

Trustworthiness of Results

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is established when meanings produced through participants' verbalisations are reflected as accurately as possible in the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Threats to trustworthiness can include such problems as biases and reactivity on the part of the participant and the researcher (Padgett, 2008). In order to manage threats to trustworthiness, the following steps were taken to maintain the accuracy of representations (i.e., reliability) and integrity of interpretations (i.e., validity): (a) piloting of the interview guide, (b) relationship building to enhance inquiry,

(c) persistent observation of the data, (d) peer feedback, (e) researcher reflexivity, and (f) attending to reactivity. This section addresses each of these aspects of trustworthiness.

Piloting of the interview guide. Prior to commencing the data collection phase, interview questions were piloted with two women whose ages represented the lower and higher range of participants sought for the study. These women, ages 23 and 35, were not included as participants in the study, nor were their data analysed for the purposes of this study. Rather, the aim was to pilot test the interview guide to ensure that questions were clear and meaningful, and that they captured relevant and intended data. From this piloting process, eight questions were rephrased for clarity, and five questions were removed due to irrelevancy. The testing of the interview questions helped to establish procedural trustworthiness by adding to the strength of the interview guide and interview process.

Relationship building to enhance inquiry. Relationship building is integral to the interviewing process to enhance inquiry (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007). During the interview phase, a distinct goal was to spend sufficient time establishing rapport and gaining the confidence of participants. For example, a common practice was to “check in” with participants to ensure their physical and psychological comfort. In addition, extensive liberties were taken to understand the perspectives and meanings that participants attached to their verbalisations. As a clinical psychology doctoral student trained in interviewing and attending to sensitive matters, I have specific knowledge in rapport-building as well as how to explore implicit assumptions and meanings attached to descriptions. These aspects of interviewing are important because as rapport builds, participants may divulge different and more

sensitive information than if rapport has not been sufficiently established (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). Hence, my clinical training was an important part of data collection that facilitated data integrity and depth of understanding.

Persistent observation of the data. Persistent observation of the data was achieved through active and prolonged engagement with data collection, processing, and analysis. Specifically, I conducted all interviews, and I immersed myself in the data handling stage through the process of transcribing, and through multiple transcript readings. Reviewing each interview transcript in this way facilitated the discovery of novel accounts not present in the previously gathered data. This process allowed me to then check perspectives with subsequent participants. Finally, my immersion in the data was further supplemented during the analytical phase, where analysis involved simultaneous readings of transcript data to detect and verify themes, Organisational Moments, schemata, and coping strategies. This back-and-forth inspection (iterative cycling) of transcripts ensured that interpretations were inclusive and grounded directly in the observations. These strategies increased the worth of the findings through enhanced understanding of emerging concepts, which in turn directed the focus toward the most relevant aspects of the data.

Peer feedback. Several peer researchers knowledgeable in qualitative methods, and particularly in P-SEC methodology, reviewed the analysis of the data. Peers examined drafts of data interpretations to evaluate accurate application of the research methodology and clarity of interpretations. For example, exchanges included peer-generated questions or comments meant to elicit justification for specific interpretations, or in a consultative capacity whereby new ideas were presented to the group to elicit

reactions and reflections. In addition, the results of Organisational Moment #1: *Street Harassment* were presented at a conference (Chomiak & Poulin, 2012), which generated feedback from academics who were unfamiliar with P-SEC methodology. By engaging in this process, I was more accountable for my own biases and statements made about the data, which improved the overall quality of analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researcher reflexivity. Lather (2004) highlighted the necessity of reflexivity in establishing rigor for qualitative research, calling for researchers to acknowledge their biases and subjectivities. Such reflexivity is important because it acknowledges how one's biases and social location could both facilitate and impede interpretation of narrative data. First, my research orientations (biases) are evidenced throughout the introduction and methodology. In particular, as a qualitative researcher, I have resisted the dominant ideology of positivism, which reputedly adopts the view that the research endeavour is a neutral exercise where the researcher, method, and data are independent (Harding, 1993). In resisting this notion of impartiality, I consider my role as the researcher to be central to the enterprise, not separate from it, and therefore I understand that my own preconceptions influenced the derived data and interpretations (Harding, 1993). To elucidate my preconceptions, I feel strongly and very passionately about working toward equality, especially by bringing into awareness the oppressive hegemonic forces that perpetuate and maintain these inequalities. This passion has influenced my development as a feminist researcher, and has impelled me to want to investigate the inequalities that I have formally studied and informally observed and experienced. As a feminist standpoint researcher, I have explicitly chosen to accentuate particular knowledge claims over others. Precisely, I view that the most truthful and

accurate accounts of the matters being investigated can only derive from the standpoint of women, as only women can know and make known what problems exist for them (Harding, 1993). It is for these reasons that my main research objective is to value the voices of the women who participated in my study over that of the “dominant” voices that are typically privileged in the research enterprise in general, and on the subject of gender and public space in particular.

Second, in the interest of reflexivity, it is also important to elucidate how my own experiences and social location informed the research process and analysis. First, I recognise that my identity and status as a White, heterosexual, married, middle-class, formally-educated female researcher in my 30s (at the time of interviewing) suggest that I hold a privileged position relative to many women in the larger society (McCorkel & Myers, 2003). As well, my spouse's position as a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the province that the study took place (which was information known to participants) associates me with a particular political power and status. It is important to point out that the sample of women who participated in this study generally characterised similar identities and status sets to my own (e.g., mostly White, heterosexual, middle to upper middle-class, formally-educated women who hold substantial sociopolitical knowledge), which suggests that participants also hold privileged positions relative to the larger society. Therefore, it is also important to note that such similarities suggest that my experiences and worldviews may be comparable to those who took part in my study. For example, my views that reflect feminist principles were also shared by many of the participants, which invariably shaped discussions whereby participants applied a feminist analysis to their own experiences. These shared views strengthened the data analysis, as

interpretations were often generated directly from participants own verbalisations.

However, I recognise that the data represent a particular perspective of a homogeneous subset of women that may not reflect the realities of a diversity of women. Therefore, this research can be concluded to be descriptive of the main concepts (Organisational Moments) but may not be definitive in terms how all women construe and respond to particular circumstances.

Where I diverged from the sample were at the points of exposure to urban diversities and realities. Specifically, my geographical background is that of a small rural community in eastern Canada largely consisting of a homogenous population (mostly those of White, Western European decent). In contrast, participants' experiences were grounded in a culturally and socially diverse urban context in Western Canada. For these reasons, I examined the day-to-day lives of these urban women from the periphery. This view from the periphery benefitted the reflexive process by inciting a deeper examination of matters that may have otherwise been understood as common knowledge. For example, having very little experience taking public transportation in a large urban centre, I had little knowledge of the substantial complications that women experienced in this context (discussed in Organisational Moment #3). I had also originated from a place where particular social problems (e.g., gang violence, racial divisions, and abject poverty) were generally not visible or prominent, as they were in the context in which the study took place. Therefore, part of what unfolded was my expanding awareness and ensuing examination of topics that subsequently progressed to be key findings.

Attending to reactivity. Although similar status sets and identities were shared with participants, I recognised that it was important to explore how participants were

responding to my social identities that may have incited a power discrepancy. In particular, I was mindful of participants' awareness of my authority as a researcher, as well as my political affiliation (stated above). Measures were taken to reduce the unhelpful aspects of reactivity, or the ways in which the researcher's position may interfere with participants' voices and experiences (Maxwell, 2012). To help offset the reactivity that may have resulted from these aspects of my social location, I openly spoke about my own background and shared personal knowledge related to the research topic, particularly when solicited by participants. I also shared my standpoint that participants hold unique and expert knowledge related to the matters being investigated. I further explained my objective to disseminate the findings to bring increased attention to the difficulties for women as they negotiate public space, as well as to provide direction for changes that would enhance women's use of space. In emphasising these issues, I sought to minimise power disparities and prioritise the voice of participants over that of my own. Moreover, I sought to promote participants' awareness that their personal contributions were integral to both the collection of data and potential outcomes.

Finally, although the aforesaid methods were utilised to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's findings, elimination of interpretative authority is neither wholly attainable nor desired. It is important that feminist researchers maintain the ability to critically interpret the data, while at the same time remaining adequately critical of assumptions (Smith, 1987). Hence, the purpose of utilising these methods is to present as trustworthy a depiction of the data as possible; however, as the primary researcher, I am accountable for the interpretations in the text that follows.

Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

Organisational Moments: Overview

Four Organisational Moments were identified in the data, which include:

1. Street Harassment
2. Urban Public Spaces
3. Public Transportation
4. Danger Messages

The formatting for reporting Organisational Moments is as follows: First, the Organisational Moment is introduced and defined. Second, a detailed account of the complications the Organisational Moment created in the lives of women is presented. Third, the schemata that women evoked to make sense of the Organisational Moment are explicated. Fourth, particular ways that women coped in response to the complications are examined. Fifth, an explanation of the ways in which the institution of patriarchy benefitted is presented, which completes the description of the Organisational Moment. Following the presentation of each Organisational Moment, a section describing the responses of institutional representatives to an overview of the study's findings is provided. A summary of the results is found in Table 3.

Table 3. *Summary of Results*

Organisational Moment	Schemata	Coping Strategies
1. Street Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Burden of Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's Just Our Reality - Individual Responsibility • Men's Entitlement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They Do It For Attention - It's All About Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evoking Schemata - Minimising/Dismissing - Individual Responsibility • Behavioural Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoidance/Circumvention - Self-Protection - Resistance
2. Urban Public Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gendered Spaces • The Male Advantage • Top-Down Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evoking Schema • Behavioural Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilising Support Networks - Creating Women-Only Spaces - Producing Legitimacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Demonstrating Purpose ◦ Negotiating Gender
3. Public Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-Down Governance • City Bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evoking Schema - Calculating Risk - Self-Talk • Behavioural Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scanning/Profiling - Shielding - Body Positioning - Constructing False Appearances - Route Planning - Using Alternate Methods of Transportation
4. Danger Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media is a Business • Benevolent Other • Limits of Authority • Responsible Womanhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evoking/Challenging Schemata - Filtering • Behavioural Coping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the Rules - Avoiding the Media - Resisting the Rules - Editing the Information

Organisational Moment #1: Street Harassment

Definition

Street Harassment meets the definition of an Organisational Moment because it complicates and interferes with women's use of public space in both immediate and enduring ways. Women must navigate through space against the backdrop of intrusions, infringements, and threats, which require instant attention and response. Specifically, when a woman experiences street harassment, she is required to do many things at once: She must redirect her focus, take in a multitude of details, assess the level of danger and intent of the harasser, and make rapid and vital decisions in response to the harassment. At times the harassment includes a threat to women's personal safety, and when it does, the peril of sexual violence and associated fear have direct and enduring negative outcomes for women's free and full use of public space. Street harassment benefits the institution of patriarchy by reinforcing the assumption that women's space has permeable boundaries, which men have the territorial right to cross, and by further entrenching the patriarchal concept of the male-centric public sphere.

The next section begins by highlighting women's lived experiences of street harassment and then presents in detail the complications this harassment produces for women in public space. This is followed by the schematic analysis and presentation of coping strategies. Finally, an in-depth exploration of how street harassment reinforces the patriarchal structure is provided.

Street harassment is a form of sex-based harassment that emerges in the public sphere and occurs in myriad ways (e.g., verbal remarks, including unsolicited conversations, unwanted compliments, or sexually explicit comments; whistling; leering;

following; stalking; public masturbating; horn-honking; groping; intruding upon personal space; inhibiting movement; and physical and sexual assault) by unknown perpetrators (MacMillan et al., 2000). Most women in the present study described instances of street harassment that they experienced in various public places. The following participants' descriptions exemplify the frequent experience of stares, comments, and gestures:

People honk at you while you're walking down the street. [Stacy]¹

I've had that a lot where people just stand across the street from you and watch you and they're not doing anything, there's no bus stop there. I just pretend that I'm doing something and just keep on walking. [I'll also get] sexual comments like, "Oh you have a nice shape" or "You walk nice." [Janine]

There was a guy who wasn't normal and he just kept talking to me and kept talking to me and as soon as he said I was pretty I just took the next bus, which wasn't even the bus I wanted. [His comments] were putting me on edge. [Ingrid]

There was a gentleman in broad daylight behind a garage masturbating and called for attention. We were walking down a busy street and he called out, "Hey you!" We turned around and there he was. [Mandy]

These types of experiences were a common thread through participants' narratives. Horn-honks, catcalls, staring, and sexual comments and behaviours were everyday occurrences for participants when they ventured into public spaces. Such harassing instances had an immediate impact on these women's experiences of public space whereby their spatial realities were intruded upon and altered. For example, Janine's comment above reflects how being watched while walking in public required her to more closely take notice of her harasser's behaviour and to determine her own actions as a result. Her realisation that she is being scrutinised complicates her use of public space as she then tries to portray herself as engaging in some form of activity to ease the scrutinising glares. Ingrid's

¹ Pseudonyms have been used, identifiers (e.g., work titles, places of residence) have been removed, and identities have been discontinued between quotations to conceal identities. Quotations were edited in the following ways: Repeated words and hesitations were removed, and grammatical modifications were made to facilitate reading comprehension. Participants' meanings and intentions remained intact (Poulin, 2001).

comment highlights her uneasiness as an unknown male persistently converses with her, and when he comments on her appearance, she feels compelled to remove herself from the situation and consequently alter her travel route in the process.

Most women spoke of the regularity with which intrusive behaviours and unwanted attention were imposed upon them. In fact, some women talked about street harassment as occurring so commonly that they had trouble with recounting specific details of particular events:

People yell at you from their cars and say things so often that you don't even really take in the details because there'd be too much to take in. [Dorothy]

My experience with street harassment? Oh gosh, which time?! [Candace]

I'm not in any way unique. All of my co-workers, my friends, the female ones have experienced the same thing all the time. You almost come to expect it. [Brittany]

The frequency with which street harassment occurs for women is exemplified in the quotations above. As Brittany points out, repeated intrusions in women's everyday lives for simply entering the public domain become somewhat expected. To give these intrusions any amount of cognitive resources, Dorothy points out, would bring too much to bear on women's psychologies.

Several participants articulated their perceptions of street harassment as unprovoked and unpredictable events that created insecurity, as Alice and Abby describe:

You never really see it coming. Like, it's somebody random [and] it could happen at any time, any person walking past you. [Alice]

It's hard because catcalling and verbal harassment create a climate—an unsafe climate. [Abby]

Women experience street harassment as unforeseeable intrusions for which they have little ability to prevent or control. As Alice states, women are never sure when or where

they will be harassed or who will harass them. However, in some cases, women's harassing experiences developed into predictable patterns. Kaitlin's experience with street harassment is an example of consistent harassment that she endured as a part of her daily experience as she walks to and from work:

I have to walk by a [car repair] shop everyday where there's a really creepy guy (she laughs) who is hanging out there all the time. He's always just hanging out in the back lane and making comments. He's yelled stuff at me after I've walked by, like telling me I have a nice ass and just crap like that. [Kaitlin]

Another participant, Jackie, described a similar reality where she and a friend experienced an escalation of impositions that began as panhandling and subsequently turned into sexually suggestive comments and requests:

My friend and I would walk to school together and every single day he [unknown male] would ask us for a cigarette or some money. Then he started asking us if we wanted to have fun and if we wanted to do something [sexual] with him or whatever. It happened every single day and we just got so fed up. [Jackie]

Kaitlin and Jackie's quotations indicate how, in some cases, street harassment can come to be expected when it is experienced by the same harassers in the same locations. In these instances, the harassers had become aware of the women's regular travel routes and patterns and harassed the women with persistence and increased intensity. For Kaitlin and Jackie, these harassing experiences became the backdrop of their daily routines in public space.

Women in the present study also reported episodes of being followed. In some instances participants sensed that they were being followed but found it difficult to establish this with certainty:

Sometimes you do have a little check over your shoulder, "I thought I heard somebody," you know? "Is this person really following me?" [Trish]

At times women wondered if it was just coincidence that someone would have such a similar route to their own. In these instances, they employed strategies, such as changing their routes or making themselves more visible, to determine whether they were, in fact, being followed.

I was just walking down [the street] and there was this person who was in close proximity to me, following, but once I crossed the street [he] went the other way, so I'm not sure if it was just me being hyper-sensitive. [Ciara]

One specific time I was walking home at night and I got a sense that this guy was following me. I got off the sidewalk and stood underneath the streetlight, which is what you're supposed to do, right? And this guy that had been behind me turned around and went the other way. I got really freaked out. [Tori]

I was walking home and then I thought, "Hmm, I wonder if he's just coincidentally walking in the same direction or not?" so I kind of took a side street and dippy-doodled in an odd way that would be conspicuous for someone to follow the same kind of path. [He went the same way] and so I was like, "Oh, I think he is [following me]." [Kathryn]

In other cases, participants felt more certain that they were intentionally being followed.

Hanna's quotation describes this experience:

I was taking a walk and this creepy guy was following me on his bike. I just kept walking and kind of figuring out a plan in my head. [Holly]

In some cases women described how harassers had made their intentions known by way of direct verbal threats. Adriana's quotation illustrates this experience as she described being threatened by a group of men who stated that they intended to follow her home and alluded to the threat of harm:

I was taking the bus home and these guys were sitting at the back of the bus talking about how they were going to follow me home and do whatever with me, and I'm just like, "Oh my God!" I moved to the front of the bus, but they just kept getting louder and louder. [Adriana]

In another example, Dana's experience of being followed turned into a frightening experience where she was chased to her front door by a group of several men.

They chased me down the street to my apartment and catcalled outside of my door for about half an hour. I just went upstairs and cried. [Dana]

Some women in the study described explicit experiences of intentional restriction of their use of public space, as well as physical and sexual assault. The following examples are provided:

I wanted to use a pay phone and there was a guy standing there [who would not move out of the way]. I said, "Oh I'm sorry, I'm just trying to use the phone" and then he just started yelling, "Fuck you, get the fuck away!" so I just backed away from him. [Sophia]

I was walking down [the street] and there was a guy on a bike. I moved to one side of the sidewalk to let him go by on the bicycle and he leaned over and very purposely spat on me. [Karissa]

This man behind me, up and under, grabbed my crotch from behind! It was horrible! I was just like, "What the hell do you think you're doing?!" I was mad and I swore profusely and he just laughed as if it was nothing. [Trina]

These instances of street harassment demonstrate a range of intrusive behaviours that are imposed upon women with regularity as they navigate public space. The above quotations exemplify how male intrusions are invasions not only of physical space, but of women's cognitive space as well. Women's experiences of street harassment produced feelings of confusion and fear, and required women to mentally strategize amidst the uncertainty of the circumstances and threat of personal harm. These invasions into women's personal space create an array of difficulties for women who are forced to evaluate, monitor, and react to the behaviour of their harassers. These complications are outlined next.

Complications for Women

Harassment, as experienced in the public realm, had numerous deleterious effects for women and significantly complicated and compromised their use of public spaces.

Women's realities of male intrusions complicated women's experiences of public space in the following ways: (a) Street harassment detracted from women's use of space for their own purposes, while at the same time negatively impacted their psychological and emotional states, (b) attempts to construe and respond to street harassment created a milieu of confusion that centered around perceptions of risk and safety, and (c) street harassment instilled a sense of vulnerability and fear, most notably a fear of sexual assault. These complications are detailed next.

The first complication identified by women in the present study was that experiences of street harassment detracted from their satisfaction in public life and reduced their ability to maintain their physical and psychological boundaries:

[Street harassment] *affects my enjoyment* [in public space]. *I just want to go about what I'm doing without people getting in my space.* [Maddy]

Some women in the present study discussed specific ways that these instances diminished their use of public space. For example, Diana noted that the incursions that she encountered while exercising prevented her from fully engaging in her own activities:

I've gone outside for serious runs three times in my life and each time somebody has yelled at me. The first time, four or five people just standing on their lawn started clapping for me and saying, "Go! Keep running! Keep running!" Then I had somebody else tell me that I looked really good, and the third time a person ran after me saying, "Keep running, you have to run faster! Run faster!" I just stopped [running outside] because it seemed like they weren't going to let me be. [Diana]

Because Diana experienced verbal intrusions with each attempt to run outdoors, she deduced that these remarks were not likely to stop, which resulted in her decision to discontinue her outdoor exercise routine. Similarly, Rose's quotation below describes how being harassed negatively impacted her as she walked her dog:

A guy yelled out, "Hey bitch, nice tits!" while I was walking my dog, and I was [thinking to myself], "Really? Did you ever get a date that way? Is this an effective method for you?" I feel really disrespected by that. [Rose]

Rose's quotation illustrated how her experience of street harassment evoked feelings of contempt. In addition, her words highlight her frustration with the harasser's behaviour, which she perceives as unimpressive and pointless.

As the following quotation denotes, random harassment by strangers creates the sense for women that they may be approached by anyone, anywhere, and at any time:

It's a concern; you feel like quite literally that you're open to comments, open to people approaching you, looking at you. [Beth]

As the above comment illustrates, intrusions into women's personal spaces leave them with a sense that being in public space provides authorisation for men's transgressions. As noted in the *Definition* section of *Street Harassment*, women experience an array of trespasses into their personal space that leave them feeling perpetually open and accessible; however, it is not compulsory that these instances be overtly threatening or harmful to create this sense of approachability and susceptibility. Barbara's quotation demonstrates this:

It doesn't even have to be something necessarily nasty. It could just be someone calling you "dear" or something. And I believe that sometimes the person [who is] saying it has absolutely no intention of (pause) . . . they're not trying to be a jerk but that still doesn't change the fact that now you have to pay more attention. [Barbara]

As Barbara suggested, even seemingly harmless flattery requires redirection of psychological resources in the form of increased attention to the situation. In another example, Trudie noted how she repeatedly experienced esteem-reducing blandishments by an individual whom she encounters as part of her routine use of public space:

This guy is always calling me “sweetheart” and “baby.” He thinks I should be thrilled that he’s giving me so much attention but it makes me feel very uncomfortable—it makes me feel less of a person. [Trudie]

Street harassment requires women to be vigilant in their surroundings, particularly due to its commonly-occurring, unpredictable, and at times threatening nature. Several participants discussed the negative psychological outcomes of their experiences of street harassment:

You’re getting so wrapped up in your own head about what could happen . . . “What if? What if? What if?” that you are missing out on everything around you because you’re too caught up in your own head. [Annette]

It’s hard to think your best when your thoughts are consumed with [avoiding harassment] because you’re busy worrying about that when you could be worrying about something else. [Bailey]

[Being harassed in public places] restricts everything because you have to actually, consciously think about what you’re doing when you’re just trying to live, you know? [Shonda]

These participants’ quotations exemplify how street harassment interrupts women’s streams of consciousness and forces an examination of themselves and their surroundings. Moreover, these remarks exemplify how assimilating vigilance further leads to restriction of women’s minds and bodies. Such negative outcomes stemming from the processes of vigilance and self-examination are further typified in the following quotations:

You’re more nervous because you’re obsessing. I’m more conscious of my surroundings—Where am I? Where should I go? Who’s that over there? What do they look like? What are they doing? [Aubrey]

As far as public spaces you’re totally self-aware. You’re aware of yourself all the time and you just can’t blend in no matter what. [Kassidy]

We can’t always be our authentic selves and there’s a cost to that psychologically. [Theresa]

These quotations demonstrate how women integrate vigilance and self-examination into their conscious awareness, which comes at a cost for women. As Aubrey's quotation illustrates, adopting a cautious stance further complicates her experience in public space as she evaluates her vigilance as "obsessive," thus creating additional psychological dissonance for her. Cassidy and Theresa's comments illustrate how this heightened self-surveillance disconnects women's minds and bodies from public engagement and separates them from their authentic selves.

Participants also referred to the depletion of energy that they experienced as a result of street harassment. Beverly and Addison described this exhaustion:

You just want to get your groceries or you just want to get a coffee and you have to put up with [being harassed]. Yeah it's kind of hard. It's mentally exhausting and physically exhausting. [Beverly]

There's that sort of strain on your psyche. Somebody says something that sort of rubs you the wrong way, or there's something wrong, and you're [thinking to yourself], "Oh thank God they walked by!" [Addison]

Beverly's comment refers to the notion that the frequency with which women experience intrusions as part of the backdrop of daily life may result in mental and physical fatigue. Addison's quotation supports this concept as she indicates that the necessity of evaluating the behaviour of others is a burden that places undue stress upon women's psychologies.

To conclude, the first complication illustrates how street harassment shaped women's public lives by detracting from their use of space in their own right. Participants' enjoyment of public activities was reduced and their views of themselves were negatively impacted. Women's emotional and psychological resources were redirected to examine their surroundings and themselves, which further detracted from their public experiences. Moreover, the ambiguity and hazards inherent in their harassing

experiences required women to invest increased psychological resources that resulted in mental and physical fatigue.

A second complication for women as they experienced harassment was that it forced them to analyse and predict the outcomes of ambiguous and potentially dangerous situations. In such instances, women were aware that their responses were a factor in securing their safety and were forced to make rapid and vital decisions with regard to how specifically to address (or ignore) the violations. Lana spoke to the conflict that emerges from the ambiguous nature of street harassment:

While these experiences [of street harassment] are happening, it's a conflict between your rational mind, because rationally you're like, "Nothing's going to happen, this person's going to talk himself out, [just] keep calm," but there is this irrational little fear that pops up that you're like "Whoa, I don't know what this guy's going to do and he's bigger than me." I don't know what he has going on and what's going to happen. [Lana]

Lana's comment reflects the difficulty in estimating the situation, and how it is virtually impossible to know the intentions of the harasser. In an effort to understand the situation more clearly, she takes in a multitude of details, including the harasser's physical stature and whether she is able to detect other telling issues (i.e., "what he has going on"). She describes the conflicting nature of her internal struggle in terms of considering both her "rational" and "irrational" thought processes. This method of "psychologising" the situation is further described through Lori's words:

You shake it off, rationalise, just kind of figure it out, "Okay, there's anger." I guess we psychologise a little, "What's really going on here?" [Lori]

Here, Lori described how she attempts to cognitively process the situation as she "shakes off" and "rationalises" the experience. She also estimates the emotional content of the interaction to assist in making sense of the situation. While participants reinforced the

importance of understanding these contextual factors, they also express that having to decipher their harassers' intentions was an unfair reality for women. This concept is highlighted by Jessica's quotation:

I suppose [street harassment] could be taken two ways, either degrading or as a compliment. It depends how you think about it and who it's coming from. But I also think that it's just highly inappropriate and not fair to put [women] in that position to have to make that distinction between the two. [Jessica]

Participants' narratives highlight how attempting to fully understand the intent of the harasser is an extremely difficult and unfair task that women must undertake when they are catcalled, propositioned, followed, or threatened. Danielle described her thought process as she attempts to draw conclusions on harassers' motives for their behaviour:

I don't even understand what the reasoning is for doing that. I guess to get a reaction out of somebody. I feel like that's why people do that. They want to see somebody get scared or they want to see somebody be offended. They want some kind of reaction because I can't see any other reason for doing it. [Danielle]

Because of the unpredictability of the situation, women were left feeling conflicted about how to react. They described the following conflicts in determining their responses: (a) If they vocalised their disapproval, they worried that speaking out against the harassment could induce anger within the harasser and lead to continued, or even intensified, harassment toward them; and (b) if they remained silent, they were concerned that this would be perceived as showing interest in the harasser and as tacit permission for the harassment to continue. Remaining silent was also problematic because women perceived that a lack of retort further perpetuated the notion that street harassment is an appropriate form of conduct toward women. In addition, self-silencing further created conflict for women in terms of self-disapproval due to their perceived inability to guard or defend themselves from these violations. The complexities of these conflicts are exemplified in

the following quotations that elucidate how some women came to the conclusion that in order to reduce the chance of “provoking” the situation, ignoring the harassment was indeed the best course of action:

In the summer there is tons of construction that goes on and I have been catcalled by the construction workers. I just usually nod a little bit and keep walking. It's not like I stop and necessarily say anything, that doesn't help. Generally if you say anything it eggs them on more, so just kind of keep going. [Alayna]

It depends what they're saying or the type of situation. If I felt threatened I probably wouldn't say anything. I'd just remain calm and know the guys are being idiots. [Alexis]

These comments highlight how women perceive that retaliating may further encourage the harassment or increase the threat to their personal safety. Additionally, Alexis's comment indicates how she surmises that the best approach to redress the situation is to regulate her own behaviour and emotions (i.e., remaining silent and calm), particularly when she detects a threat to her personal safety.

Although some women felt the best approach to street harassment was to remain silent, this practice had significant implications for women's psychological well-being, especially when they felt forced to act in discordance with their self-principles:

You open yourself up to creating a more dangerous situation by reacting to it. It almost feels like you're forced to accept [street harassment] which isn't very nice. You should at least be able to express your disapproval. [Becky]

Sometimes [harassing comments] can hurt your feelings or upset you [to the point where] you're almost too stunned to make a comment, and you know that you're never going to get an opportunity to say, "Hey wait a minute!" To me that's a big part of having respect for yourself. [Brigit]

Indeed, as outlined in the introduction, research has found that self-silencing significantly increases women's feelings of shame associated with harassment (Yoon et al., 2010). The above comments highlight how self-silencing was imposed upon women through fear and

degradation, which in turn further negatively influenced women's psychological health and well-being.

In contrast to self-silencing as a safety strategy, some women perceived that attempting to ignore the harassment may actually aggravate the situation. In the following quotations, participants perceived the best response was to strike a fine balance between cordiality and standoffishness:

The best [way to respond to harassment] would be to make a comment that is as un-inflammatory as possible but it's hard to do sometimes in the moment. [Bella]

Some stranger just started walking beside me and asking me a bunch of really strange questions like, "How are you? How's it going?" and I remember thinking "What am I going to do if he attacks me?" I answered [his questions] and I was friendly enough, not inviting-friendly, but friendly enough because I was almost thinking that not answering might have been worse for some reason. [Justine]

However, when women did verbally respond in accordance with their internal states, again they feared that their retorts would be met with retaliation by the harasser. This fear of reprisal is exemplified in Kalia's remarks:

He yelled at me and when I looked, he grabbed [his genitals]. I was really furious! I yelled at the guy but thinking about it now that could've put me in danger. The guy just kind of laughed but that situation could've turned into something really dangerous. [Kalia]

These quotations highlight the complications that arose for women as they attempted to negotiate the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of street harassment. Specifically, women feared that their reactions to these intrusions, be it silence or riposte, would consequently have the effect of intensifying the transgressions and further jeopardising their personal safety.

In summary, when confronted with street harassment, women are forced to choose from a selection of suboptimal response options. They must determine what

action may stop the harassment or spur it to continue, or escalate. Some women perceived the consequences of not responding as a silencing of their own selves, which, in turn, had a further negative effect on their self-esteem. In some cases, when women were approached under the pretense of friendliness, they felt forced to quiet their discomfort and cordially engage in the exchange as they feared that refusing to interact may have worse consequences for them. In contrast, some women also felt that responding to the situation, particularly in the form of exhibiting disapproval towards the harasser, would instigate further harassment or evoke anger, thereby increasing the risk to their personal safety.

A third complicating effect that street harassment created for women was a sense of vulnerability and fear, which was often related to physical vulnerability and fear of sexual victimisation. Women in the present study connected their lived realities of unpredictable and recurrent incidents of leers, comments, gestures, groping, and threats to the development of a sense of vulnerability in public space. Alisha describes this connection:

Women are so much more vulnerable because some men just seem to think that they have the right to do what they want [to women in public places]. [Alisha]

Daphne describes her feelings of vulnerability in terms of her physical inability to defend herself as she considers whether to intercede at times when she has been verbally harassed:

I'm pretty small and a lot of the people that I've had yell at me before are quite a bit larger than me and I'm not going to say anything back to them because I don't want to provoke anything. [Daphne]

Bianca also explains how this sense of vulnerability is inextricably connected to her perception of her limited ability to protect her body from violation:

Whether it's their body or property, [men] are more able to defend themselves whereas a woman, because of the weakness factor, would be more like, "Take it" [handing over her personal belongings] to avoid confrontation. I would be one of those people [who] would just be like, "Whatever you want is yours, just leave me alone." [Bianca]

Daphne and Bianca's quotations illustrate how women's perceptions of safety were influenced by the degree to which they felt able to fend off an attack and ultimately avoid sexual assault.

The perception of physical vulnerability was inextricably connected to women's thoughts and emotions as they navigated public space. Specifically, the psychological derivatives of women's perceptions of vulnerability included estimating potential harm and safety planning, as demonstrated by the following quotations:

When I'm walking and if I hear people behind me I always turn around to see who's there and to see if I should be worried or not. I don't even know if I would know if I should be worried, or what I could do about it anyway. [Samantha]

[If I feel threatened] my mind goes to, "Can I knock on a door? Can I stop a car? Can I hoot and holler?" I don't think I could physically stop them so I'd have to figure out something else. [Kelli]

Several participants engaged in the above-mentioned rationalisations and linked these cognitive processes to fear of victimisation. In the next quotation, Bonnie explained how she struggles with her feelings of fear and chastises herself for engaging in reflexive responses that she deems are ineffective strategies for protecting herself in any meaningful way:

It's something that I do struggle with, if I look over my shoulder or whatever the case may be and I keep saying [to myself], "Why do you do that?" Nothing terrible has happened and clearly that's not an effective way to . . . (she laughs). What I'm trying to say is I'm really not doing anything to prevent [a random attack] other than looking around when I walk. I might just see it happen five seconds before. [Bonnie]

When participants considered asserting their right to a harassment-free public life, the fear of retaliation (as described previously) was sometimes described as a fear of sexual violence. Next, as Angelique's quotation illustrates, when a harasser reacts with anger, this retaliation specifically evokes a fear of being sexually assaulted:

If a guy comes up and starts talking to you and if you try to stop it, even if it's polite, all of a sudden well now you're getting called a whore and a slut. I don't know if it's just people with small self-esteem, but [it reminds you of] these sexual assaults that you hear about. [Angelique]

Several participants specified that sexual violence is the most feared form of violation and has the most damaging effects for women. Darla and Robyn's quotations emphasise how violent sexual assault is the quintessence of women's fear in public spaces:

I'm most scared of being raped. [Darla]

It's just natural to fear the threat of sexual assault. If you got beat up and you had broken bones or scratches or bruises, those would be very minor considering the potential [harm resulting from] sexual assault. I think that sexual assault is always more of a fear than physical assault. [Robyn]

As demonstrated above, the boundaries are blurred when men enter women's spaces uninvited and threaten women's security with harassments that are specifically sex-based. For women, the threat of sexual assault is especially menacing due to the devastation and irreparable damage that result from such violence. In light of their awareness of these damaging effects, women apprise themselves of the dangers of random attacks by unknown men as they navigate public space. Macie's quotation describes this fear, and at the same time distinguishes the disconnection between her fear and lived experience:

What exactly am I afraid of? It's just a question that I ask myself a lot. I think it's random sexual assault by random strangers that I'm most scared of because I don't have domestic violence in my house. I don't have any abusive violence so I don't know (she laughs). Now that I'm speaking about it I'm like, "What the hell is wrong with me? Why am I creating these monsters in my mind?" [Macie]

Macie's description exemplifies a cognitive struggle to reconcile her fear of being randomly attacked with never having experienced such violence, either publicly or privately. The quotation illustrates her thought process as she draws the conclusion that she is engaging in irrational thinking. Thus, the difficulty lies with her for engaging in this train of thought. Similarly, Deborah identifies a fear of sexual assault but also engages in "watering-down" the effect to quell the discomfort of her fear by attributing the damaging effects of sexual assault to women's heightened emotionality:

I feel like women are a lot more emotional than men. I don't want to say that being attacked affects us more because that's not quite the right term but, you know, something like being sexually assaulted or any kind of assault I think has more of an impact on women. [Deborah]

These quotations exemplify the difficulty for some women in rationalising their fear when the emotion seemed to have no logical basis for them. However, when women reflected on these emotional experiences more deeply, new insights came to the foreground to help explain these fears. The following quotations from Deirdre and Elaina illustrate this expansion of their thinking about why they experience such fear in public spaces:

I'm just afraid, I guess, of what people are capable of. I am most afraid of being raped. I'd never get over something like that. [Deirdre]

If they are so violent in their heads that they will rape you, they're only one decision away from killing you. [Elaina]

These quotations illustrate women's perceptions of the detrimental effects of sexual violence for their overall health and well-being. Indeed, severe sexual assault is perceived to be closely linked to femicide on the continuum of violence toward women. However, women also explained their awareness of the relatively low probability of such severe

violence in public settings compared to the probability of it occurring in their private lives, as Mada and Annise's words illustrate:

I know that rapes happen with people you know, only 2% happen—I don't know if that's even correct—but something like 2% happen like random violence. [Mada]

There are a lot more serious assaults happening all the time between people who know each other. So I know that [there is a small] risk of being assaulted by strangers, but really there's a much greater risk of [sexual assault] in a relationship. [Annise]

While women are aware that they are most at risk of being severely victimised in their private lives, being harassed on the street reminds women of the threat of such victimisation and its potential for occurring anywhere. Bernadette's quotation succinctly elucidates this concept:

I do think, at least rationally, that the chances of being attacked violently probably are pretty low. I think there's a much greater chance that you could be verbally harassed or just threatened, or made to feel like you might get hurt. I honestly think that's probably much more likely than the bad things but it is the threat that is upsetting. I think once you sort of get over the fear, [there's] anger there too. It's a total invasion of your space and it's taking away your identity as a free person being able to move where you want. [Bernadette]

Taken together, these participants' comments establish a psychological account of perceived vulnerability and its connection to street harassment and fear of sexual violation. Similar to research findings discussed in the introductory chapter regarding women's fear, perceived risk, and vulnerability, particular in relation to stranger-perpetrated victimisation (Jackson, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2006), the above quotations extend these findings to elucidate how women's perceptions of vulnerability are intrinsically linked to commonly-occurring and unpredictable intrusions by strangers. Moreover, participants' narratives bring into view the intersections between the daily

realities of street harassment and the threat of sexual violence, as well as the fear and public restrictions that arise from these transgressions.

In conclusion, street harassment complicated women's lives by diminishing their own experiences in public space and causing them to redirect their focus to the harasser. In addition, these intrusions left women confused and conflicted about how to respond to the harassment while maintaining their safety. Finally, women were left with a sense of vulnerability and fear due to the frequent nature, unpredictability, and threat to personal safety that is inherent in street harassment. Thus, these incursions are a reminder to women that they have limited control over their personal spaces in public places. Next is an analysis of the schemata that women employed to make sense of these intrusions that transpire as part of their daily realities.

Schematic Analysis

The analysis revealed that women evoked schemata informed by patriarchal ideologies to make sense of the complications stemming from the Organisational Moment *Street Harassment*. Two meta-schemata emerged from the data: *The Burden of Women* (subschemata: *It's Just Our Reality* and *Individual Responsibility*) and *Men's Entitlement* (subschemata: *They Do It For Attention* and *It's All About Power*). In the case of *The Burden of Women*, participants gave meaning to their complications through a patriarchal filter that viewed street harassment as inexorable male conduct and thus placed the onus of reducing and avoiding street harassment on self-management. Conversely, through the schema *Men's Entitlement*, women understood these male transgressions through the lens of sexual politics and the hierarchy of patriarchy.

The burden of women. The first meta-schema, *The Burden of Women*, refers to the cognitive interpretations of the Organisational Moment *Street Harassment* that arise from the patriarchal concept that street harassment is an inevitable reality for women who venture into public space, and that women themselves are responsible for managing these intrusions in their lives. Because women's understandings of their experiences of street harassment are, in this case, viewed through the lens of patriarchy, these oppressive experiences become immutable socially-embedded practices that are women's burden to bear. Two subschemata emerged to produce *The Burden of Women* meta-schema: *It's Just Our Reality* and *Individual Responsibility*.

It's just our reality. Several women in the study evoked the subschema, *It's Just Our Reality*, to make sense of street harassment. For example, Helen and Natasha's quotations highlight this schematic understanding:

It's reality and we live in it. You just don't know, you could be going in the grocery store and [get harassed]. You just don't know. [Helen]

You just can't stop [street harassment] because it's not the same men that are doing it over and over. It's too frequent and random. [Natasha]

Helen and Natasha's comments distinctly outline the link between the way in which street harassment occurs (i.e., repeatedly and unpredictably) and, as a result, women's perceptions of street harassment as unpreventable and unstoppable. Next, Brooklynn describes how the recurrent nature of street harassment allows these intrusions to blend into the background, and therefore render them as indiscernible aspects of women's realities:

You almost come to expect [street harassment] and you don't even think about it really anymore. I think some people are probably better able to deal with it, maybe they just accept it. You really don't have a choice actually. [Brooklynn]

Brooklynn's quotation illustrates how these commonplace occurrences become an unquestioned and expected price to pay for using public space. Further, she underscores how the schema, *It's Just Our Reality*, reproduces itself by the notion that because these intrusions are viewed to be incontestable, acceptance becomes the best method for negotiating one's reality. Consequently, the frequent but unpredictable nature of these intrusions leaves women with limited ways to comprehend their realities and thus some women adopted the schema of *It's Just Our Reality*. However, this schematic understanding afforded women a sense of self-validation through legitimating its existence as a burden to women and characterising its complexities that serve to complicate women's daily realities.

Although this schematic understanding is grounded in logic, as indeed street harassment is a daily reality for women, evoking this schema left some women with a sense of resignation and loss of control over their own realities. In other words, this schema encompasses a feeling of hopelessness and a belief that women have little choice but to endure the violations imposed upon them in public spaces. Within this interpretation, however, women also described ways in which they psychologically compartmentalised this schematic understanding in order to overcome its disparaging effects. Bethany's words elucidate this cognitive process:

You've got to sort of remind yourself [that] you're experiencing this [harassment] but don't start to believe it yourself. Give it a proper place in your own mind, address it, accept it, and move on. [Bethany]

For some, finding a place in their own minds to make sense of these experiences allowed them to move past the complications arising from this Organisational Moment and evoke

more active schematic interpretations to aid in their negotiation of public space, as described next.

Individual responsibility. Most women in the study drew upon the subschema of *Individual Responsibility* to reduce the element of inevitability and powerlessness that emerged from the *It's Just Our Reality* subschema. The subschema *Individual Responsibility* conjured a sense of empowerment and allowed women to regain a sense of control and view themselves as effective agents of change. Jody's quotation illustrates this point:

I am most responsible for my safety in public because I have the most influence over it in the decisions that I make and the way I choose to carry forward, with whatever I'm doing. It's other people's responsibility as well, but definitely I'm number one in making the decisions that lead to me being more safe or less safe.
[Jody]

The subschema, *Individual Responsibility*, served to mitigate the futility that women experienced as part of the cognitive interpretation of *It's Just Our Reality*. Similarly, Tara and Belinda explained that risks are built into the public structure and exposure to these risks is women's burden to manage.

There are always risks when you go out so I just don't invite danger. [Tara]

I always felt like it's a matter of control. If you look like a target you kind of make yourself a target. [Belinda]

These participants' quotations underscore how women turn the unpredictability of street harassment into a more workable state by placing expectations upon themselves (and other women) to reduce harassment through self-modulation and risk avoidance. Next are depictions of how Anita and Melissa personally incorporate this mindset, and then how Annabelle relates this schematic understanding toward other women:

I'd really like to have a perfect record of never having anybody approach me, so I think if you [develop] street smarts—thoughts and feelings—then you just say, "Yeah, I'm never going to put myself in that position again." [Anita]

You have to be smart, I guess, and just know, you know? Maybe you should dress so that you're not inviting that attention, you know what I mean? Which is wrong, but . . . [Melissa]

I've got some girlfriends that make bad choices so if I'm going to go out at night with them, I'm going to stay sober because I know they're going to do something stupid like walk home by themselves. At least I am the sober one to say, "Are you ready to make that choice? Are you ready to experience anything that could happen to you?" [Annabelle]

Anita and Melissa's comments suggest that women may avoid street harassment by working to develop a particular set of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, or in other words "street smarts," from which self-protective judgements and actions emerge. As Annabelle notes, her perception of friends' poor decision making that increases their risk of harm suggests that women also evaluate the behaviour of other women from the subschema *Individual Responsibility*. Thus, this subschema also served as a cognitive conciliation to *It's Just Our Reality*, which made room to develop strategies and a view of themselves as active agents of change.

Although the *Individual Responsibility* schema had an empowering effect for women, it was not evoked without consequence. In fact, some women's interpretations reflected the internal struggle to reconcile its likeness to the socially-available schema of victim-blaming. These tensions are highlighted in the following quotations:

I think that it always comes back to being your responsibility and I think it's sort of a pervasive idea that you brought it on yourself. So I think a lot about my behaviour, but what is the message to that? What is my message? So then I always get mad because I'm like, "Why is it about me? It's not about me!" [Kara]

This is going to sound really bad, but if you put yourself into [a potentially dangerous] situation in the first place, and I don't necessarily mean about the way

you dress or act, but if you do feel uncomfortable, if you're kind of nervous about something, then leave. [Cynthia]

I believe that there's no place I shouldn't be, but I'm also aware that there probably are places I shouldn't go. There's a difference. [Jenny]

These participants' comments highlight the struggle for women to avoid internalising the schema of victim-blaming while evoking the schema of *Individual Responsibility*. As described by Kara, the victim-blaming schema is a socially-available way of understanding the violations that women experience. In her struggle to resist the victim-blaming schema, she rejects the notion to examine her own behaviour for fault, but only after she has engaged in the process to some degree. Cynthia's comment illustrates her struggle to fully resolve this concept, which is evident in the disclaimer, "this is going to sound really bad" before she explains the schema of *Individual Responsibility*. Jenny's quotation illustrates how in theory women should be afforded the opportunity to move freely in the public arena; but she also shares that in reality, she necessarily imposes limits on her own movement in public space. Indeed, it appears that women may struggle to reject the victim-blaming aspect of the *Individual Responsibility* subschema on the one hand, but adopt the individual empowering nature of this subschema on the other.

Taken together, the subschemata of *It's Just Our Reality* and *Individual Responsibility* highlight how, on a cognitive level, women take on the burden of street harassment through mindsets of acquiescence and personal obligation. As a logical derivative from this understanding, women deduce that the most effective way to manage and negotiate their lived experiences of street harassment is to decrease their exposure to harassers and control particular aspects of themselves. The myriad ways in which women

adapt and cope with street harassment are outlined in the section on coping strategies that follows the schematic analysis.

Men's entitlement. The second overarching schema that women evoked to make sense of street harassment is structured around an awareness of greater power and privilege afforded to men in public spaces. Women conceptualised their harassing experiences as men's assumed entitlement over women's bodies, as illustrated by the following quotations:

When we go out we have to cover up so men don't comment on us, and if we don't, then they feel like they can. [Elsie]

Men feel like they can come up to you and touch you. They feel like they have that privilege. [Ellen]

It's a good high percentage of men that feel, "Oh, she's got boobs, I like boobs, I can touch those." [Tabitha]

Most women in the study endorsed the notion of male entitlement as a central aspect of street harassment and defined their experiences within a patriarchal framework. From this understanding, two broad schematic interpretations emerged from the data: *They Do It For Attention* and *It's All About Power*.

They do it for attention. The subschema, *They Do It For Attention*, refers to the idea that harassment is derived from men's desires for attention and pleasure-seeking. Several participants conjured this subschema as a way of understanding these everyday intrusions, as Bobbi and Eva described:

They're looking for a response of attention and, I mean, what do they expect me to do? Say, "Pull over your truck so I can jump in?" (she laughs). [Bobbi]

When random guys come to you and start talking to you, they're just doing it for the attention so they don't want you to talk back. They want you to be sweet and laugh at their jokes. [Eva]

Like Bobbi and Eva, several women interpreted their harassing experiences as a result of men's need for attention, which they satisfy through various forms of intrusion. Further, as Eva identifies, within this schematic understanding is a gendered social script that highlights the expectation for women to respond within a context of supporting men's need for attention.

Evoking this subschema of *They Do It For Attention* stimulated further cognitive appraisal of these intrusions for some women. Specifically, within this schematic framework some participants perceived that men either viewed the transgressions as harmless or were unaware of the negative impact on women's daily lives.

They [harassers] view catcalls as harmless, right? I think that probably I view it as relatively harmless too. I guess what I mean is that I haven't really been too upset by that behaviour. [Amber]

They [harassers] don't even see it as negative, like, "I want her, I'm going to pursue her." But then it's like, "Wait a minute bud, you're stalking, you're being creepy, you're being inappropriate, and it's very negative. You're not doing something that's good." And they don't even see it. [Tessa]

These quotations highlight the intrinsic privilege afforded to men by a patriarchal society that renders harassment towards women a socially acceptable, and thus invisible, form of public interaction. Further, because such experiences are viewed through a patriarchal lens that organises social realities, some women viewed these transgressions as normal and nondescript:

I think of [street harassment] as just somebody saying something so it doesn't really bother me. [They're doing it] just to get a reaction, I'm assuming—for you to look maybe or say something back. [Edwina]

It's a guy thing, you know? It's a group of guys that will be catcalling or construction guys will yell at you, but you just kind of smirk at it or laugh it off and say, "Have a nice day guys," and keep walking. As long as I don't feel a threat to that then it's not a big deal to me. [Annemarie]

These quotations illustrate how male-centric ideologies shape women's interpretations of their realities. Here, Edwina and Annemarie describe street harassment in terms of men's need for attention and as regular instances to be brushed aside. Other women, however, described the difficulty with which they endured harassment as an aspect of male entitlement:

I think what really bothers me is just the fact that [men think], "I'm a man and you're a woman so I'm free to talk to you or do whatever I want." [Bryn]

They think we should just accept it [street harassment] as part of what happens because you're a woman. It's really frustrating. [Kimberley]

Some women supplemented their understanding of the *They Do It For Attention* schema with the rationale that these attention-seeking behaviours are intrinsically connected to men's self-esteem. Specifically, participants described how their reactions to men's trespasses directly impacted the male ego. Charlene and Brenna's comments elucidate this analysis:

I think it [harassment] makes them feel good, like it boosts their ego somehow. [Charlene]

Their feelings get hurt by the fact that you're not open to [their comments], and that creates the possibility of verbal abuse. [Brenna]

Here Charlene and Brenna highlight the consequences to men's self-esteem of having their attempts to gain attention either accepted or rejected. Further, Brenna's quotation illustrates how denial of this attempt holds the possibility of negative consequences. That is, given men's perceived sense of entitlement, women comprehend that thwarting men's attempts to gain attention may evoke anger, thus turning a seemingly innocuous interaction into a hostile situation. In other words, when women close off their personal spaces to men's trespasses, they sometimes think that by doing so they risk a backlash.

This backlash would come from those who believe that men have a territorial right to invade women's personal spaces. This notion is closely connected to the complication described above that highlights how women have difficulty knowing how or whether to respond to their harassers for fear of escalating the situation. Taken together, this schematic understanding and previously defined complication highlight how what begins as men's attempts to gain attention may quickly advance to more dangerous encounters if their patriarchal rights are not obliged.

It's all about power. Most participants evoked a second subschema, *It's All About Power*, as a means of making sense of street harassment. This second subschema refers to women's understanding that men harass women on the streets for dominance and control, which they do through intimidation and the threat of violence. This subschema consists of the concept of male domination that substantiates men as the proprietors of public spaces. In this subschema, women who enter into male territory are perceived as assenting to men's intrusions. When women enter into this masculine arena, their femaleness becomes the subject of attack as men assert both their territorial right to the streets, and to women's personal spaces and bodies. Participants almost invariably linked the subschema, *It's All About Power*, to the emotions of intimidation, anger, shame, and fear. Eleanor and Dixie share examples of this schematic framework that encompass men's assertion of power over women, as well as emotions of shame and intimidation:

I've never whistled at a dude on the street so I don't know what that would be for (she laughs). I think it's just demeaning, it's like ascertaining control or dominance of a situation. [Eleanor]

I have no idea what goes on in anyone's mind that's going to yell at somebody but I think it's just the power feeling. Like, "I have the power that I can say anything I want and you just have to take it." [Dixie]

A few women described men's assertion of power over women as innately connected to masculinity. Esther offers an example of this concept:

I just figure it's sort of like the primitive basic male instincts. They clearly haven't thought before they do it. I always just kind of feel like it's a display of dominance or a display of control, the same way that male peacocks show off their feathers. "Look how big and pretty I am!" and I just always assumed that's the same with guys. [Esther]

Esther's notion of street harassment falls under a powerful hegemonic belief of male dominance and control that is rooted in biology.

While a few participants offered this rhetoric as a way of understanding this schema, most participants described a different viewpoint that included harassment as deliberate and volitional acts of control and power. Next, Karmell evokes the *It's All About Power* schema in this way as she shares her insights and emotions regarding an incident where she was physically struck by a male cyclist as she walked home from work:

It was pretty disturbing as I was automatically aware of the power difference. I was so dazed and I thought maybe it was just an accident, like he wasn't judging his direction. But he wasn't going very fast and when he looked back at me—his expression—I knew I didn't imagine it. It definitely felt very disrespectful. Somehow I was chosen to receive some kind of specific anger. [Karmell]

Next, Kristen expressed the perception that her harasser intentionally attempted to evoke anger within her as he repeatedly harassed her on her route to work:

He's expecting to get away with it or thinking that it's really funny because I'm sure he knows that I'm pissed off because I glare at him. He knows exactly what he's doing. I think he just finds it hilarious, like it's really entertaining. [Kristen]

Finally, Angelina expressed her presumption that men possess the awareness of women's plight regarding violence against women and thus should maintain appropriate spatial and

personal boundaries. She asserted that men who cross these boundaries are choosing to ignore women's difficulties and therefore are perceived to have ill intentions:

I think most men have the sense to understand a woman's perspective in terms of the threat to her own safety and risk of violence, and so if he still chooses to come up to me, then I can only assume that he has nefarious reasons for doing so and I'm going to say, "Stay away from me!" I'm not going to entertain what he wants.
[Angelina]

As the above comments suggest, participants construed acts of harassment as forms of men's exertions of power and control over women. In turn, this asymmetrical power imbalance effectively transformed public space into male territory where women felt unwelcome and out of place, as exemplified by the following remarks:

You hear the comments, sometimes they're funny, sometimes they're not, and you have a lot of attitude about you don't belong here. [Tasha]

Every time it [street harassment] happens it makes me feel like I'm somewhere I shouldn't be, and that I should not be doing whatever it is that I'm doing.
[Denise]

The *It's All About Power* subschema was also linked to patriarchal concepts of masculinity and femininity, which included the notion that femininity and its correlates (e.g., passivity, insecurity) are devalued and deemed as appropriate targets for chastisement. First, Julia explained her perception that exhibiting passive behaviour is likely to make her an easy target for harassment, and second, Adelaide articulated that exhibiting confidence and directness reduces the prospect that she will be targeted for street harassment:

For women I think it's more that I have to stand my ground and don't seem so passive and kind of like, "Oh I'm so sorry," because I think that they feed on that more, that kind of behaviour, and they're like, "Oh let's pick on this one she seems like someone that would be easy to pick on." [Julia]

I think the way I carry myself tends to be confident and forward enough that I might not be as much as a target for [street harassment]. [Adelaide]

This way of understanding induced the conclusion that developing a masculinised persona would effectively render public space more accessible and less hazardous for women:

I don't get bothered as much as other people because I dress more masculine and my actions are more masculine and I'm more forward in that people don't often approach me to bother me. [Jocelyn]

An interesting trick that I actually started doing is I think of myself as looking like a man when I walk at night. No matter what I'm wearing or where I'm going I try to look big and masculine and confident, which makes me feel more safe. [Krystal]

In full, *The Burden of Women* meta-schema, which encompassed the subschemata of *It's Just Our Reality* and *Individual Responsibility*, served as a way of making sense of the barrage of transgressions that have become anticipated aspects of women's daily realities. The subschema of *It's Just Our Reality* helped women to legitimise their experiences and allowed for psychological compartmentalisation of street harassment and its deleterious effects. To cognitively reconcile the despondence inherent in a system of gendered oppression, women evoked the *Individual Responsibility* subschema. Using this schema promoted self-authority and created a psychological space that women drew upon to circumvent men's violations. As a way to exonerate themselves of the burden of street harassment, women turned to the schematic framework of *Men's Entitlement*, which included two subschemata: *They Do It For Attention* and *It's All About Power*. This approach to making sense of public violations eased the psychological tensions created by the victim-blaming and empowering components of the *Individual Responsibility* subschema. Women made sense of men's transgressions through a patriarchal lens that afforded men the territorial right to cross women's boundaries, either for the purpose of

attention-seeking, or to gain power over women's psychological and physical spaces. Finally, evoking the overarching schema, *Men's Entitlement*, helped to reconceptualise street harassment as a system of sexual oppression inherent in the hierarchy of patriarchy.

Next is a review of the strategies that women employed in response to problems created by the Organisational Moment of *Street Harassment*.

Coping Strategies

The schemata women relied on to reduce the tensions created by street harassment also serve as cognitive coping strategies. In addition, women employed several cognitive and behavioural coping strategies to manage the complications arising from street harassment. Next is a description of the ways in which women cognitively coped, followed by an explanation of the behavioural coping strategies used to manage and negotiate their daily realities.

Cognitive coping strategies. Some women made efforts to dismiss their experiences of verbal harassment by perceiving it as something not to dwell upon. Agnes provides insight into how she processes her experiences of harassment in public by developing a dismissive stance that serves to invalidate the experience, and by also developing a tolerance to those who harass:

I describe [myself as having] a tolerance to men catcalling because I just dismiss it rather than give it any validity. [Agnes]

As Agnes indicates, women often dismiss the less invasive or threatening incidents.

Women are more readily able to disregard or ignore street harassment when they perceive the harassers' intentions as attempting to compliment in some way:

I've heard [remarks like], "Oh I love you, marry me" and stupid things, superficial, you know? It's just a joke to me, basically. [Estelle]

As Estelle's quotation illustrates, when women perceive the incidents as being non-threatening, they are able to disregard them and occasionally even find humor in the situation. These cognitive strategies of dismissing and minimising through various cognitive interpretations (e.g., viewing the interactions as "invalid," a "joke," or "stupid") help women to psychologically manage the harassing experiences.

Even though women acknowledge that street harassment is bothersome, they still attempt to diminish its effects by viewing it as an issue not worthy of concern. Ashlynn's and Starr's quotations demonstrate this approach to dealing with street harassment:

[Being harassed] *does sort of bother me but I don't make a big deal of it.*
[Ashlynn]

Guys will watch you like you're a piece of meat and it's super uncomfortable, but I don't usually let that stuff get me down too much. I just sort of ignore it and move on. [Starr]

These women remark how street harassment negatively affects them; however, they dismiss or minimise the negative psychological outcomes of the experience as a strategy to reduce its impact.

To summarise, women cognitively cope with street harassment by evoking various schemata, by minimizing or dismissing the harassing encounters, or by minimizing or dismissing the psychological consequences of the harassment. However, as Ella's comment below indicates, women also recognise that in some instances seemingly harmless compliments have the potential to develop into more invasive situations:

We all like to be admired, right? But it's to keep the admiring from going to the next level, whether it be groping or unwanted [sexual comments]. I mean, conversation is usually always nice, but it's that unwanted conversation or it's the expectation [of something further happening] so it's just like, "No, let's just shut

this down early so you don't think anything's going to happen." There's a line that can be crossed fairly quickly. [Ella]

As Ella's quotation suggests, women perceive that what begins as a rather innocuous interaction has the potential to spiral into a threatening or aggressive situation. Thus, even though some women cognitively minimise as a strategy, the unpredictability of the circumstance requires that they must still evaluate for potential threats to their safety.

As discussed above, the schemata and cognitive coping strategies are effective at reducing tensions at the cognitive level; yet, they do little to reduce or deter acts of street harassment. Consequently, women also coped by taking concrete measures to deal with these violations. This section highlights the behavioural and practical strategies women employed to moderate these violations and, where applicable, brings to light how some strategic practices had the inadvertent effect of further complicating women's daily lives and spatial freedoms.

Behavioural coping strategies. All women interviewed employed concrete strategies in an attempt to counter men's transgressions. Women's real-world coping strategies were found to fall into three broad categories: (a) avoidance/circumvention, (b) self-protection, and (c) resistance. These practical strategies have been described in the introductory chapter, and are well-documented in the literature (see Keane, 1998; Koskela & Pain, 2000; Pain, 1991; and Valentine, 1989). Thus, a brief account of coping strategies is offered and, where applicable, this summary extends the literature to identify specific schemata linked with various methods of coping.

Avoidance/circumvention. The first category of strategies used by participants to reduce street harassment included methods of avoidance and circumvention. In terms of avoidance, women described particular public locations as areas that they were likely to

avoid, including wooded areas, parking lots, public transit vehicles, bus stops, parkades, alleyways, residential back lanes, parks, and particular neighbourhoods that were generally known to be “risky” areas. The following quotations provide examples of this behavioural method of coping:

I mostly go for a run in the evenings and there's a park with trails close to my home, but I don't run there because there's large bushes right next to the trails and someone could hide there if they wanted to, so I mostly just run along busy streets. [Rebecca]

I don't use parkades because you've got to use that sketchy stairwell that's all contained, and you have no idea who is in there. It's a place where a lot of people will sit to be warm and do drugs and whatever else, and you may just walk in on something unpredictable. It's not safe. [Allie]

I am less likely to go into some of the core areas, like downtown or the central north end because I know a lot of crime happens there. [Christina]

As these quotations illustrate, avoidance strategies were a method of coping used among several participants as ways to manage their safety. Here, as Rebecca and Allie point out, it is not the geographic locations that are inherently threatening, but rather the potentially precarious nature of its occupants. In addition, as the following quotations illustrate, various contextual factors, such as time of day and uninhabited spaces, further influenced women's avoidance of public spaces:

I assess things on a case by case basis, like on a Saturday afternoon [the local walking trail] would be a highly populated path and I would use it without hesitation, but on a weekend at 9 o'clock [at night] it would be isolated and so I wouldn't use it then. [Avery]

During the day, I feel very safe downtown and yet at night it's not really a place that you [women] should be by yourself, unless you're super aware and you're going somewhere, in my opinion. [Tamara]

As these participants' remarks illustrate, women assess whether to avoid particular areas with the changing social dynamics of space. Tamara's remarks also reiterate the notion

that a high level of vigilance is required if women are to risk venturing into public space at night.

Women also used circumventing strategies as a way of coping with street harassment and managing their safety. Specifically, this strategy entailed using public space with various restrictions or alterations:

[The neighbourhood close to my work] is not a super safe neighbourhood, so I wouldn't walk through it. I would probably ride my bike there because I feel safer on a bike because I feel like threats are usually guys walking down the street, and if I'm riding my bike on the road they don't have access to me in the way that they would if I'm walking down the street. [Autumn]

If I'm waiting for a bus, I'll stand on the other side of some kind of barrier so I'm less in the line of vision because in a lot of ways I feel like out of sight out of mind. If people don't see me they're less likely to make comments. [Karina]²

These quotations highlight how some women, while using public space, restricted themselves in various ways in an effort to minimise accessibility or reduce their appeal as targets of public violations. Thus, circumvention strategies offer alternatives, albeit restricted ones, as ways of navigating the public arena.

The schematic understanding that was closely connected to this method of coping was the *It's Just Our Reality* subschema. When construed in this way, a useful approach to managing the ever-present and unpredictable threat to women in public space is to avoid or circumvent the violations through altering spatial patterns or avoiding particularly risky spaces altogether.

It's the unknown, like being the victim of something unknown and unpredictable. Like you have to remove yourself at some point, right? And that's how you control it. [Kayley]

² Women's strategies for managing difficulties related to public transportation are further detailed in Organisational Moment #3: *Public Transportation*.

However, this strategy, as a method of coping, has far-reaching consequences on women's freedom of movement and lifestyle choices. Options are limited with respect to the locations they feel they may safely enter, as well as reduced lifestyle choices when navigating public spaces. For example, some women reported how this strategy limited their options for places of residence:

When my partner moved in with me, he said he wanted to live downtown. I said no because it was worth it to me not to have that extra layer of worry with harassment and the possibility of being sexually harassed. [Adara]

When I was apartment hunting, mom would tell me about [available] places in [the downtown area] and me and my dad would both go, "No!" She'd ask why and I would say, "Because I'd never go out at night." [Adele]

In addition, several women described how their limited choices had financial and social costs, as exemplified by the following quotations:

There's also the monetary thing—I'm stuck somewhere, now I have to [get a] cab because [walking home] is not worth the risk. [Aileen]

You can't just go for a walk when and where you'd like and that was part of my reason why I got a gym membership. I'd like to start running but I can't go for a run around my block [because] I don't know who's there. [Sabrina]

This is going to sound terrible, but I will not go out with my girlfriends if they're dressed provocatively. I won't do it because I know we're going to get catcalls and everything else, and, "Oh look at the way she's dressed, she's out for a good time" and so I won't go. It's just asking for trouble. [Hazel]

In short, avoidance and circumvention as methods of coping had the unintended effect of further reducing women's mobility and lifestyle options.

Protective strategies. In coping with their realities, most women described engaging in various protective techniques in public spaces. Some women sought training specifically to defend themselves against an attacker, and some purchased and carried protective devices with safety in mind, as exemplified by these participants' comments:

I took Taekwondo and they taught me everything I need to know so I'm quite comfortable walking around. I know where to hit somebody if I need to (she laughs). [Hannah]

Because I worked downtown and often would walk home I had bought pepper spray. I even [carried] brass knuckles at one point. [Therese]

As these quotations illustrate, employing protective strategies provided women with more freedom to navigate the public sphere and, as Hannah commented, also served to increase spatial confidence and reduce fear of victimisation.

Commonly, women purported to use cell phones and keys as safety devices when navigating public space. For example, Brandi discusses how she uses her cell phone as a means of disengaging from her surroundings, and also to establish a connection with someone in the event that she needs immediate help:

I'll pull out my cell phone if I'm somewhere that I'm feeling really uncomfortable. Even if I don't have anybody to communicate with I'll just busy myself with checking e-mails or I'll send a text message that I don't really need to send just so that I've got that line of communication open. [Brandi]

Next, Kayla describes the dual purpose of carrying her keys in a defensive manner for protection and, if forced to use in this manner, would also aid in identifying an assailant:

I carry my keys in my fist like a weapon. It's a good way to get DNA if you need to. [Kayla]

For most women, these commonly employed protective strategies served to bolster spatial confidence and reduce avoidance of the public sphere; however, some women perceived these strategies as either unlikely to be utilised or otherwise ineffective as a means of protection:

If I'm walking in the parking lot at night or even sometimes going from work to the bus, I'll hold my keys so that I could poke someone with them, although I think that's ridiculous (she laughs). If something actually happened I think the likelihood of me being able to stab them with my keys is very low (she laughs). [Sally]

Talking on the phone is not a good idea if you're feeling unsafe because you're more vulnerable to not hearing things around you. [Alaina]

Using various protective techniques allowed women to expand their use of public space while reducing their feelings of vulnerability to attack. However, for some, these strategies were perceived as providing little in the way of protection in the face of an actual attack.

The schematic interpretation most often associated with this strategy was the subschema *Individual Responsibility*, as women viewed themselves as having the most influence over, and in turn, the most responsibility for ensuring personal safety:

You can do defensive things such as keep your cell phone on, talk to someone, keep your keys in your hand, or things like that. I think that if you're by yourself somewhere, you're ultimately responsible for your own safety. [Cecelia]

Using self-protective strategies had the positive effect of promoting self-efficacy and empowerment, but at the same time works to validate and reinforce underlying mechanisms of patriarchy that create the social space for street harassment. As a result, this strategy does little to challenge the status quo.

Resistance. As a third strategy for negotiating public space, some women described patterns of resistance. For some women, resistance as a strategy entailed rejecting the notion to avoid public spaces or use protective strategies, despite feelings of fear and vulnerability:

Sometimes I feel like I want to take authority over the fear that's coming over me. You want to challenge this and you know that's what you have to do and you do it, but you have to do it with so much discomfort sometimes. [Michaela]

For others, resistance entailed presenting an authoritative attitude and powerful physical presence:

Don't just kind of hide yourself. Be known, make a presence, and make noise when you walk. [Anastasia]

Within this method of coping, women actively worked to reclaim physical space and bolster spatial confidence, while reducing spatial fears.

In addition to reclaiming physical space, resistance as a way of reclaiming power also had psychological benefits, as exemplified by Blaine's quotation:

[I've experienced] lots of derogatory comments [and] being hit on, but I'm pretty strong and I stand my ground, which helps with your confidence as well. [Blaine]

Evinced through the above quotations is that by employing this strategy, some women rejected other forms of coping (e.g., avoiding, ignoring, and making oneself less visible) and instead exerted control through resistance of internal and external barriers to public space.

This strategy most closely related to the *Men's Entitlement* overarching schema as resistance emerged from recognition of masculine forms of power that are at the crux of street harassment:

Whether they think it's harmless or not, I usually don't react positively [to street harassment]. I feel really disrespected by that and so I tend to say something back, and not in a nice way. There's just no reason why women should be treated like that. [Raine]

Finally, Blanche's quotation links the *Men's Entitlement* schema to resistance by underpinning this schematic understanding to principles of standpoint and feminist theories. Specifically, her quotation highlights how changing the dominant power structures, which is achieved through resistance, is the burden of the subordinate group. She also explains how patriarchal privilege affords men the power that would render such change possible:

You know it's so funny, if men were living in an area where they were getting attacked all the time they'd be like, "Oh this is bullshit, I'm not doing this! We've got to do something about this!" (she laughs). They'd attack it as a problem, but [for women] it's just accepted as a part of life. [Blanche]

Benefits to Patriarchy

Male verbal harassment and the physical forcing of attention upon women, as illustrated above in participants' quotations, are encapsulated within an institutionalised system of male dominance. The fear of violence, which is commonly incited by men's public violations, changes the meaning of particular spaces for women, resulting in a continuum of avoidance and restrictions. Therefore, within this patriarchal system, women are denied the right to enjoy independence, choice, opportunity, and freedom in the public arena. In other words, fear creates and reinforces divisions in public space because for women as a group, a sense of perceived safety is strongly related to civic participation, while a lack of perceived safety is associated with broad spectrum civic disengagement (Caiazza, 2005). This concept is succinctly articulated by Kendra:

You're always thinking, "What if I'm attacked, or what if I go this way and this will happen?" It [potential for violence] affects where you choose to live. It even affects the professions that you go into or things that you do in your spare time. I only volunteer at places where I know that I can get to easily. I wouldn't necessarily volunteer in certain areas of the city because I do walk and I know that I would feel unsafe going there. Although I would love to volunteer at a women's shelter, I don't think I would feel safe going there by myself. [Kendra]

Street harassment, as a mechanism of appropriation and control over public space, benefits the institution of patriarchy in two main ways: 1) women's disengagement from the public arena maintains and reinforces the masculinisation of public space, and 2) fear invoked by street harassment forces women to redirect efforts toward safety and survival, and in effect diverts attention away from root causes of women's spatial oppression.

First, patriarchy benefits from women's spatial oppression by its effect of reducing women's public engagement and use of space and, by default, situating men as the dominant occupants of public life and its offerings. When harassing violations intersect with women's spatial liberties, women are implicitly told that they do not have authority over their own bodies, spaces, and boundaries. In this way, street harassment creates a diffusely threatening atmosphere where women experience degradation, intimidation, and fear. Mostly, this fear emanates from the omnipresent threat of sexual violence at the hands of unknown men. In other words, street harassment regularly reminds women that assault is possible and that they are suitable targets. Avoiding potentially dangerous situations, then, becomes a sensible response given that no woman ever knows where, when, by whom, or to what extent her body, space, and boundaries will be violated.

Men's greater presence in public, especially in particular areas (e.g., downtown) at particular times of day (e.g., night), is reinforced as normative simply due to greater numerical inhabitation. Virile activities and behaviours are established and reinforced as the standard by which all social practices are measured. Masculine characteristics of dominance, aggression, and competition remain the basis of civic interactions, thus perpetuating a stronghold of masculinity in the public sphere. Moreover, through appropriation of public space, the resources and opportunities that are embedded in public life are skewed in favour of the dominant group. To that end, women are effectively barred from pursuits by which men gain these advantages. In other words, women's reduced engagement in public life translates into more social and spatial

opportunities in all aspects of public life for men, including physical activities, leisure, education, employment, social, and political life.

As described above, men's trespasses push women indoors and reduce engagement in activities that men take for granted, such as simply walking in one's neighbourhood in the evening. Women's self-imposed restrictions make it seem as though they are willingly giving up space, which in turn makes men's claims to public space seem to be an artifact of women's choices. Indeed, with spatial movement purported to be a self-directed and uninhibited behaviour, self-imposed restrictions of mobility is also deemed to be a deliberate choice. Thus, when women reduce their spatial mobility, it can be viewed that women are doing so in the absence of external restraints. However, Anja's comment highlights how public life and its offerings are indeed externally shaped and restrained:

Oh that would be nice if we could go about our business without having to worry about [being harassed]. We could go where we wanted to and see the things that we want to. I'm sure there are great restaurants, shopping, and things to do [around the city], but we [women] can't get to experience that. If we had more opportunities, I'm sure we would all have a much better life. [Anja]

Research has indicated that women's presence in the public arena works to legitimise and normalise the public domain as appropriate places for women (Koskela, 1999). Logistically, then, with reduced female participation (ostensibly through volitional actions), other women are likely to perceive public space to be less female-friendly. In other words, lack of women's civic participation is likely to have the reverse effect: it legitimises the public domain as unsuitable spaces for women. Therefore, fewer women entering the public domain unwittingly reproduce public space as a masculinised sphere.

With public space established as masculine terrain, women who enter the public sphere are essentially (and knowingly) encroaching on men's turf. With this concept in mind, as well as the notion that women are suitable targets for men's transgressions, women are held accountable for their own victimisation. In this regard, the socially-available victim-blaming ideologies that scrutinise women's behaviour (e.g., her attire, location, and purpose for using public space) and place blame upon women are upheld within the system of patriarchy. Kyla speaks to this ideology:

I think women—or at least my experience with me and my friends—we think about the consequences of drinking too much, or going to a certain part of the city, or maybe it's not okay if I wear this, or not okay if I wear that, or do this, or say this, whereas I think as a man you have a lot more freedom to just be yourself. [Kyla]

Within this framework, women who are sexually assaulted can be—and often are—blamed for being in places where they do not belong, wearing things that they should not wear, and doing things that they should not do. Thus, the ideologies of victim-blaming and of individual responsibility remain dominant in the understanding of violence toward women, which further pushes women to the periphery of public space.

The second way that the institution of patriarchy benefits from street harassment is through the various efforts that women are forced to direct toward safety and survival, which, in effect, redirects focus away from identifying and dismantling root causes of spatial oppression. As described in the section on the complicating effects of street harassment, when women enter the public forum they are on high-alert for danger, which ensnares women's psychologies in a threat-fear-protection cycle and compromises mental and physical energy. In addition, women are forced to negotiate public space through micro-scale coping strategies (e.g., clothing choices, carrying keys in a defensive manner). Women become focused on trying to figure out how to best respond (i.e., day-

to-day survival strategies) in order to bypass or reduce the harassment in their lives. Thus women's psychologies and behaviours become entrenched in diversions of thoughts, planning, strategies, decision-making, and emotion management. It is within the minutiae of these diversions that women are caught, thus averting energy away from collective efforts needed to challenge the status quo and effect meaningful change in the system.

Next, Kris's quotation provides an example of this averting effect on women's psychologies as she considers how her own behaviour may be "inviting" harassment:

Inviting harassment is what I'm afraid to do, but I consider that a dangerous mindset [for women] when you start going into that territory where everything's black and white, when what is really needed is education towards respect for women. [Kris]

Indeed, in describing their responses to street harassment, women almost exclusively focused on negotiation strategies entailing personal safety and survival. Conversely, only a few participants spontaneously communicated long-term solutions to end street harassment, even after they expressed dissatisfaction with these injustices that they clearly identified as sex-based oppression. Instead, most women described the problem as having no real long-term solution and deemed it an unstoppable social problem that is merely manageable through micro-scale strategies. This concept was explicitly articulated by participants who evoked the *It's Just Our Reality* subschema to make sense of street harassment, and further evinced by the *Individual Responsibility* subschema. Moreover, negotiating street harassment through individual coping strategies has the unintended effect of further entrenching the notion that violations are women's fault for failing to skillfully execute such strategies, and that women are personally accountable for initiating change. Unfortunately, what occurs is a vicious cycle where individual psychological and behavioural responses that women use to manage and

negotiate street harassment also work to reinforce the hegemony of masculinised public space.

For the institution of patriarchy, individual management of street harassment is a way that the status quo is maintained rather than challenged. When women are reacting to threat, proactivity is difficult to initiate. When reacting, women are left with little psychological, spatial, and social room to assert authority, to decide on their public goals, or to fully and freely experience themselves in public life. In other words, the threat of violence causes women to focus on reacting to potential threat rather than concentrating efforts on social change:

It's about exercising my freedom and feeling that I belong here and you can't impose your power and you can't violate me, you know? I guess it's just about finding ways around [the threats to safety] and on some level feeling more empowered. [Kyra]

In summary, street harassment is a form of sexual politics that sits snugly within the continuum of patriarchal power and control. Within a patriarchal system, as in all systems of inequality, it is not all individuals within the system who hold authority over their own space, but rather the dominant group who define its use and control its users through various mechanisms (e.g., fear). The myriad violations that women encounter result in women living more fearful, less autonomous, and less authentic lives, which ultimately leads to fewer opportunities. Further, the microcosms in which street harassment occurs evoke individual response patterns that work to prevent women from challenging the status quo that subjugates them (Cleveland & McNamara, 1996; Stanko, 1990).

Institutional Response

Institutional representatives reacted in various ways to the Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*, described in a summary of the study's results (Appendix F). While no respondent disputed the existence of this problem, responses generally reflected epistemological frames of reference associated with professional knowledge. For example, in responding to the findings, the Urban Planning Representative provided the following comments:

How was the sample selected? What were the exact questions asked? Was there any spatial component to women's reports of harassment (i.e., a part of town or time of day or night)? [Urban Planning Representative, male]

That this query was the sole response provided to the first Organisational Moment suggests that emphasis is being placed on methodological factors (i.e., sample selection and data collection), presumably to evaluate the credibility of the data. In addition, the latter question suggests a focus on the spatial and temporal conditions in which violations occur, rather than what such violations might mean in terms of socio-spatial consequences for women. The perspective that is reflected in the above quotation is not surprising given urban planning approaches are often associated with quantitative research and positivist epistemologies (Bell & Reed, 2004; Elwood & Cope, 2009). While the inquiries raised are important to elucidating the specific variables associated with these violations, such questions can have the inadvertent effect of marginalising ways of knowing that are grounded in women's lived experiences (Harding, 1993). In some ways, the aforementioned quotation infers that it is the researcher's task to "prove" that such violations are indeed a common feature of urban everyday life for women.

The Police Services Institutional Representative who responded to the request for reaction to the results focused his comments on Police Services' commitment to improving public trust, as well as undertakings to ensure appropriate sensitivity to the exploitation and sexual victimisation of women. In his comments, he outlines ways in which police have sought to protect the public, and how the risks of gendered violence in the public context are managed within this protecting organisation, such as informing the public when dangerous offenders are known to be in the area. The following quotation illustrates this focus:

Police Services routinely seeks to improve citizen trust and engagement through a variety of means. Police Services routinely sends out public service announcements on seasonal and emerging issues such as: reminding people to not leave cars running and unattended, be aware of surroundings, processes for reporting suspicious behaviours and people. Police Services also routinely sends out public notifications about dangerous offenders being released from prison, or relocating into the region. Notifications are also routinely sent out requesting public assistance in identifying suspects and notifying the public about arrests and ongoing investigations. Police Services maintains a "Sex Crimes Unit" with highly specialized officers who are sensitive to exploitation and sex related violent crimes. Most notably, this unit views women being exploited in the sex trade as victims, focussing on reducing the market (arresting customers) rather than criminalizing exploited women. [Police Services Representative, male]

As will be seen in Organisational Moment #4, *Danger Messages*, the notifications of dangerous offenders, mentioned above, raise specific challenges related to women's use of public space. No direct indication was provided with regard to how Police Services targets and manages common street harassment, which suggests that this type of violation continues to fall outside of the realm of police involvement. Notably, this quotation emphasises a law-in-action standpoint (Mosher & Brockman, 2010) that focusses on tactical approaches to sex-related crimes (e.g., arresting customers), but which is negligible in addressing violence on a broader level (e.g., public education).

As would be anticipated, reactions from women's advocacy organisations were directly in accordance with the findings of the Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*. Women's Rights Advocates who responded acknowledged the pervasiveness, public apathy, and the gender power imbalance rooted in street-based violence. They also described particular ways that their organisations or they themselves have addressed these issues:

I think we live in a society where there is too much apathy around street harassment. As women we all live it every day. I mean just the other day I was on my bike and somebody yelled at me out of a Doritos truck! It startled me to the point where I nearly crashed into the curb! I wrote a letter to Doritos and they followed up with me, and now I'm helping them to write policy [on street harassment]. [Women's Rights Advocate #1, female]

We're now organising this year's "Take Back the Night" march, and this year will be the 35th protest. If you think about it, it is discouraging because it's now 35 years later and we're still fighting for this most basic right. It's kind of a funny thing because we want to celebrate community, but we don't want to celebrate the fact that essentially street-based violence continues to go unchecked 35 years later. [Women's Rights Advocate #2, female]

There is still the assumption that anyone can have access to women's bodies—that you are allowed to comment on them, stare at them, or touch them. It's about access, and it really opens up the door for worse things to happen behind closed doors, I think, in terms of women tolerating that sort of treatment, like saying "oh it's fine, people have access to my body, it's not really mine to own, what I feel doesn't matter." We normalise harassment so if women [negatively] react to it, it's like "oh she's just sensitive" or "she's a bitch." So it just creates a problematic relationship right from that level because their [women's] voice is taken away from them about their own bodies. People don't get why it's such a big issue, but right there, that's what it is. [Women's Rights Advocate #1, female]

Finally, both Women's Rights Advocates highlighted the importance of holding men accountable for their actions, but acknowledged that it is an extremely difficult task in a society that normalises *Street Harassment*.

Organisational Moment #2: Urban Public Spaces

Definition

The term “public space” connotes open and accessible expanses where all persons move freely and unrestrained. Women generally have more opportunities in urban environments than in rural settings due to increased options for employment and leisure (Chant, 2013). However, according to Kallus and Churchman (2004), most urban women experience deep disadvantages compared to men in their daily realities, reflecting gender-based inequalities entrenched in the urban landscape. Moreover, as this Organisational Moment reveals, urban dimensions of public space converge to create a milieu where women are relegated to the margins of public life. Thus, despite the fact that “public space” implies accessibility for all, gender continues to shape and constrain the lived dimensions of the urban public sphere.

This Organisational Moment examines the gender-based disadvantages entrenched in the urban public domain. *Urban Public Spaces* meets the criteria of an Organisational Moment as women's lives are impeded by socio-spatial and symbolic barriers embedded in the urban landscape. Specifically, this analysis demonstrates how particular aspects of the urban environment (i.e., infrastructure and the urban core) are often inaccessible to women. In addition, this Organisational Moment reveals how women's liberties are further complicated by the symbolic interpretations of space (e.g., reduced sense of belonging). Consequently, women decrease their use of the urban public sphere. As a result, the institution of patriarchy benefits in the following ways: (a) The masculine male continues to be cast as the normative public image, and (b) the feminine female is reconstituted as being “naturally” connected to the private sphere. Hence, the

primary binaries of patriarchy (e.g., public/private, masculine/feminine) are reinforced.

Next is an explanation of the constraining influences of three aspects of *Urban Public Spaces*: Infrastructure, the urban core, and symbolic spaces.

Complications for Women

Infrastructure. Public life unfolds in the streets, buildings, and landscapes that comprise the backdrop for everyday living. Material spaces have a direct influence on women's well-being inasmuch as they enhance or constrain the activities of daily life (Kallus & Churchman, 2004). In the present study, women identified specific aspects of infrastructure—including design, aesthetics, functionality, intended or implied use, and signifiers of danger and safety—as shaping and constraining their use of public space. First, Kaitlin described how poorly-designed infrastructure interfered with her travel choices, forcing her to drive when she preferred other modes of transportation:

When I think about being connected to the city, I think about infrastructure. In [this city], I feel like everything's disconnected. You can't get to where you need to go easily and so I take a car because it's just the fastest way around. There's no real bike trail or path, and if you're [riding a bicycle] on the sidewalk you get in trouble, if you're on the car path it's dangerous. [Kaitlin]

For Kaitlin, the lack of biking trails impeded her ability to develop a sense of fluidity and connection to her surroundings. Next, Abigail described how aesthetics and functional aspects of the material environment interacted with her use of outdoor space for physical activity:

I think that I would probably exercise outside more if it was nicer out. Like, not even nicer weather, but [my neighbourhood] is not a very attractive neighbourhood for street jogging. If I lived in [name of affluent neighbourhood], I would definitely want to do it more because it's beautiful and there are trees everywhere. In this neighbourhood there are no trees, the boulevards aren't as big, and there's more vehicle traffic. There's a lot of condemned housing, and so I wouldn't jog in this area because it would just be so unpleasant, so it really

discourages me from wanting to go out for very long and so I intentionally get out of this neighbourhood to go somewhere better. [Abigail]

For Abigail, a mixture of uninviting aesthetics, congested traffic, and signs of neglect impel her to choose an alternative area for physical activities. As these quotations illustrate, the built environment shapes perceptions of space and the events that take place in it. For these women, problems with the infrastructure evoked sensitivities to safety issues, and required them to negotiate around their health and mobility needs.

Additional aspects of urban infrastructure that posed challenges for women's full use of space included insufficient lighting, or structural and physical signifiers that created an atmosphere of insecurity. For example, the degree of illumination was an important contributor to women's level of comfort and safety in public space, as illustrated by Jenni and Macie:

I don't like the parkades that are underground with no lights, like under the Convention Centre, I'm not a big fan of those. I don't really feel safe in them so I try not to park there. [Jenni]

At night I take the main routes with lots of lighting, even though going down the side streets would be quicker. [Macie]

Next, for Carole and Debra, poorly designed parking lots deeply affected their employment options:

I left a job because of safety reasons. I didn't like working there because my shift would end at around 11 o'clock at night and I'd have to walk through this sketchy parking lot. The lighting was bad and there was a chain-link fence around it. I felt like if I had to get away, there was no way to escape. [Carole]

There are parts of town where I wouldn't work, depending on the parking situation. There's a restaurant in [area of city] and I know they're hiring there right now but there's just no safe place for me to park in that area so I wouldn't want to work there. [Debra]

Clearly, the negative feelings conjured by poorly-lit spaces affected women's ability to move freely and, in some cases, resulted in avoidance of specific places altogether.

Conversely, well-maintained and adequately illuminated spaces were construed as places of greater security, as Jennifer's quotation illustrates:

I think when there's proper lighting, and when the area looks fixed up—you know, when people are proud of where they live—I think people just automatically feel safer. [Jennifer]

Finally, ill-planned green spaces were problematic urban design features for women. For example, Jess described how obstructed views in public parks prohibited the use of these spaces for her:

I think if they just made their green spaces more open, I would use them more often. They seem to plan them in neighbourhoods and then surround them all by trees, which doesn't make a lot of sense. They put in these little trees, which is great until they get to be big trees and then, once they're big trees, you've enclosed the whole park and there are no visible angles from any of the streets anymore. [Jess]

Jess's quotation underscores how poorly planned spaces can undermine their intended purpose.

A particular urban design feature that several women raised as a problem was the common back lane or alley. Back lanes, which generally exist in high-density urban spaces, provide access for deliveries and parking, and are often the locations for utility structures (Wolch et al., 2010). These alleyways often have high fences with concealed angles, large garbage bins, and storage buildings. Participants described these areas as dirty and unsafe physical spaces, and perceived them as urban zones fraught with incivilities and criminal behaviour:

I'm not saying back lanes are bad but I don't want to be in a dark back lane coming home at night by myself. It's very hard to manoeuvre with the back lane,

then there's the garbage, there's the graffiti. I just find that my friends who have back lanes have way more crime than I do. [Mallory]

For several women, these spaces translated into unusable places where they experienced significant fear and unease. Next, as Jillian and Rebecca describe, the urban back alley was directly correlated with increased criminal activity due to its physical layout where potential assailants could conceal themselves:

We don't actually park in our back lane. We park in the front street just because there's more visibility out there and the way our house is situated, we're totally enclosed, so unless the neighbours out the back of us are looking, nobody would ever see if anything was happening. It also puts a big bulls-eye on our house on the back too. [Jillian]

I get uneasy in my back lane. I know that the house that I settle down in will never have a back lane. I don't really find them ever to be safe regardless of the area. You hear about a lot of crime happening in back lanes, like spray painting, car vandalism, and there are a lot of dark, looming places to hide and they're not generally well-lit. [Rebecca]

As the above quotations illustrate, these spaces signified high risk for damage to property and for personal violation. Consequently, women either avoided back lanes and alleys altogether or moved through them quickly with a high degree of discomfort and fear.

In total, women's narratives elucidate how the urban landscape is not merely a compilation of configured spaces or aesthetic features, but rather represent spatial barriers that shape and constrain women's daily lives. As the above quotations illustrate, an unfortunate outcome of poor spatial design is the reduced opportunity for women to prosper from the social, physical, psychological, and economic benefits that outdoor public spaces can bring about.

The urban core. For several women, the urban core represented a space that ranged from unwelcoming to hazardous. For example, Renatae described how she felt like an intruder when she traversed the downtown district:

I was in the north Main Street area [of downtown] and it was kind of a feeling of being on the wrong side of the tracks, like I shouldn't be there, it's not my area. I just couldn't wait to get out of there. There was no direct thing that happened, but it felt terrible. [Renatae]

The city centre was also a place where women felt “out of their element” and moved into and out of hurriedly and with purpose:

I feel out of my element [when I'm downtown]. I mostly spend time at the university and in my own house. I usually just use downtown as a drive to place in the day, like if I'm going to my hair place or something like that, and when I'm there, I'm pretty cautious. [Edna]

Next, Anna's perceptions of the dangerous city centre are highlighted as she discussed the need for the city to “portray itself” as a more secure place for people to be:

I think the downtown needs to somehow portray itself as a safe and secure place to be, whether that's through city design, more businesses, or encouraging more people to get out walking around. [Anna]

However, as reflected in Anna's comment, the core was also perceived as flexible enough to alter its image through design, function, and promotion of its use. As described next in Monique's words, in particular downtown spaces where women felt a connection in some way, their sense of hurry and tension faded:

There are places where I feel more comfortable, even sometimes like in certain areas of the downtown there's flowers, there is a public water fountain, there would be something worth looking at to give you the impression that you can rest here, have a sip of water, sit down. [Monique]

As Monique's quotation illustrates, attractive aesthetics and inviting functional qualities infused spaces with tranquility where women felt that they could slow their pace and engage in their surroundings.

Several women articulated how the state of repair—or disrepair—influenced their use of the downtown core. For instance, Donna described how poorly-maintained areas

impeded her use, which inevitably resulted in a lack of familiarity with the downtown area and its offerings:

I would love to see downtown just get completely renovated and fixed up because it has some beautiful areas in it but I just can't feel comfortable walking down the streets there, and that leads to another problem—nobody knows what to do in this city! [Donna]

As Donna's quotation reveals, familiarity is a crucial element to “unlocking” public spaces as places women feel entitled to appropriate. In the same way, lack of familiarity appears to detract from women's use of the downtown core, as illustrated next by Helen's narrative:

My girlfriends and I will not go [downtown] at night just because of the fact that we're uncertain of what's out there for us to do, and also how to avoid the hassles with the buses and how we're going to make it home safely. So we just kind of feel like what's the point? [Helen]

For Helen, lack of knowledge of the social opportunities within the city centre, combined with public transportation issues (discussed in Organisational Moment #3) and safety concerns, significantly influenced her decision to retract from public social life at night. Unfortunately, as a consequence, these factors have reduced women's participation in the urban core, particularly at night:

The downtown area at night, there's barely even a splash of female—just a couple of drops of girl. [Taylor]

Symbolic spaces. As outlined above, key aspects of the cityscape (i.e., infrastructure and the urban core) were consistently identified as shaping and constraining women's movements and activities. Löw (2008) posited that spaces are produced when dwellers share similar cognitive interpretations of the space, thus creating symbolic or material boundaries. Although not straightforwardly visible, a synthesis between the material and social aspects of public spaces, and women's corporeal

experiences within them, materialised into a complexity of perceptual spaces—or *symbolic spaces*. Consequently, the “conventions” of urban public space merged as a system of representations that had negative consequences for women’s lives, including their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. The ways in which symbolism, the third and final complicating aspect of *Urban Public Spaces*, manifested and affected women’s lives and psychologies are described next.

Through routine patterns of use, physical spaces are transformed into places of accumulated attachment and increased proprietorship (Fenster, 2005). As noted above, familiarity with urban core districts promotes use of these spaces. Furthermore, as Kali’s quotation illustrates next, when fluency and connection with particular places are established, feelings of personal control, security, and spatial confidence are increased:

In my own neighbourhood I feel I have space and opportunity to exercise choices should I need to. I guess what I mean is if I’m walking in [my own neighbourhood], I know where things are, I know each corner of the place, and I feel safer because should I need to get attention or something, I could easily walk into a place. I can be aware of why I would make a choice of where I’m walking, how I’m walking, and when I’m walking, and I’m not scared to be here. It’s like, “This is my neighbourhood, just try it!” [Kali]

Kali underlines how a sense of security and control over her spatial movements helps to produce notions of legitimacy in public space for her. Thus, when women find affirmations of their spatial experiences, they acquire feelings of proprietorship that promote a deeper connection to the space. Equally, the inverse is also true. As an illustration of this point, Susie described how, when she moved beyond spaces that were well-known to her, she experienced a sense of insecurity and discomfort:

I think there are landmarks where people feel more connected that are based on where they feel safe, like at home or areas that you know well. For me, I feel like where I live is my community but when I go past that point then I start to feel uncomfortable because it’s unfamiliar. [Susie]

Spaces are considered symbolic when they communicate something intangible (e.g. a value, a feeling, an idea) to a group of people. Monnet (2011) asserted that symbolic spaces produce meaning in such a way that they shape social practices and contribute to the identity of the group. As demonstrated in the *Infrastructure* and *Urban Core* sections above, design and function of public space can evoke a sense of danger and feelings of fear, which in turn reduces women's presence in the public context. Moreover, women feel out of place when they appropriate spaces where there are few other women. Together, these factors produce an overall sense of insecurity and lack of belonging. The next two quotations demonstrate the link between material spaces, the presence of women in public space, and feelings of security and belonging. First, Eleanor's quotation highlights the interrelations between the rhythms of the city and those who occupy it. Second, both Eleanor and Rhonda's quotations reveal how the presence of other women in a particular space incites an element of security within that space:

Honestly, the more women that are around in any given place at any given time, the more comfortable other women are going to feel in it. The revitalisation process that's trying to go on in the core of [the city] is obviously going to help—stores being open later, lights being on later, people being around later—that's going to make women obviously feel more comfortable in that environment.
[Eleanor]

I feel better when there are other women around. To me, it signifies that the space is safe. [Rhonda]

Women's sense of security is reduced when fewer women occupy particular spaces. Moreover, it is the groups who generally appropriate particular spaces that define who belongs and who is entitled to appropriate those spaces. Marie, who resides in an area adjacent to the city centre, described her perception of the public representation of women in her community, as well as in the neighbouring downtown area:

In the daytime in my neighbourhood, there are women, there are moms and strollers, well not even downtown that much, but then at night it just dies, it's unbelievable! I think the people that are downtown usually tend to be people without families . . . and are places where women just don't go. [Marie]

As a result of her experiences, Marie perceived the urban core to be devoid of women, and in particular of mothers and families. Similarly, Meghan articulated how women strive to leave the inner city due to the stigma that families living in the urban centre are “struggling,” while those residing in suburbia are “up-and-comers.”

Once you have a family you move to the suburbs for a bigger space and green space because living [downtown] in a condo with two kids and a husband, I'm not sure that's seen as an up-and-comer. I could say that would be seen as like a struggling family. [Meghan]

Lack of belonging and lack of entitlement to space become engrained concepts in women's own minds, which then develop into notions of places where women “should not go” or “don't need to be.” This exclusionary influence is brought to the surface through Etta's quotation:

Where I live right downtown, I know that after 10 o'clock at night I don't really need to go to the corner store by central park to get some milk. I could wait until the morning; it's just not the place that you want to go. [Etta]

This internalisation of the lack of women's right to public space comes at a high cost. Kyla explained how women's self-restriction reduces opportunities that are within the public realm. This self-restriction plays into the hegemony of women's fear and volition to remain out of public spaces:

If we're not in public spaces then we're not out, we're not having the same opportunities, and we're not being able to overcome the myths and to dispel them because we're participating in them. [Kyla]

Together, these quotations illustrate how the physical and social constructions of space shape women's perceptions of security and belonging. When women do not

belong, they simply cannot wander freely around the streets, parks, and downtown spaces. Stephanie's quotation summarises how internalised lack of belonging is associated with a sense of spatial confinement, making it difficult to occupy and use public spaces:

I think when you don't feel like you belong, you feel like you don't have the right to go somewhere, so you really are trapped. [Stephanie]

Feelings of trust or distrust of others also correlated with the degree to which women felt that they belonged in their surroundings. For example, Beth explained how her trust of others is tied to her sense of belonging. Specifically, she described how she attempts to gauge whether she could reasonably place confidence in others to assist her should she encounter a threat to her personal safety:

I think that not feeling like you belong [in public spaces] affects how you see other people. Often when I'm walking by a group of people, I try to get a sense of whether I can trust them, like if something happened would they help me? Hopefully they look like I could trust them, but at the very least whether they come to my aid or not, it might dissuade someone else who might consider targeting me because there's someone right there. Maybe that's naïve. [Beth]

Similarly, Blaine's quotation elucidates how feelings of distrust are associated with increased fear of victimisation, as she described her embodied spatial experiences as having instinctual underpinnings:

When there's a feeling of disconnection and that I'm an outsider in the community, that makes me feel like there's probably more of a likelihood that I'm going to get attacked. I don't know, maybe I would just be a more relaxed person if I was a little more trusting of others in public space, but I don't think that it's something that I could stop. It's almost like an animalistic thing. [Blaine]

Here, Blaine connects the concepts of being an outsider with distrust, which for her is associated with increased likelihood of victimisation because of her "outsider" status. As these quotations underline, such tensions find their antecedents in a lack of connection to

public spaces and to those who use them. Inversely, as Kristen and Ester point out, these fears dissipate as spatial connections are established:

I think that being out and using space can help alleviate some of the fear problems. My girlfriends and I are mostly women who have always walked and taken buses or biked, and so I think that helps to develop a different knowledge of space. There is some danger involved but it is also nice to be independent and just getting out there can help to get over that fear. [Kristen]

If people recognise you from being around in the area, then fear is less of an issue [because] they know you live around there and you're obviously not an outsider. [Ester]

According to Lico (2001), the built environment “is saturated with meanings and values and contributes to our sense of *self* and our culturally constructed identity” (p. 31, emphasis in original). The connections among the built environment, its symbolic meanings, and women's sense of self and identity also were revealed in the data. Several women described a deep connection between public autonomy and self-awareness, and linked these constructs with physical and psychological well-being. For example, Stacy identified the benefits of being able to use public space for personal growth, and for physical and psychological health benefits:

For psychological health it's good to get out and see people and be more social, to pursue your interests, and generally establish more support and connections in your life. Also, it's good to be more active and that has psychological benefits to it too. [Stacy]

Participants described public space as a medium where individuals come to develop identities and know themselves through interactions and community affiliations. By way of example, Jolene integrated aspects of the city into her own identity, as she described herself as a “community centre person:”

When I think of nice safe places, I think of green spaces and open public facilities. I'm a community centre person so I'm really big into nice big safe community centres and things for families to do. [Jolene]

Because space is interrelated with identity, when women's spatial liberties are impeded, the cost is substantial in terms of self-awareness and psychological well-being. Several women described extensive personal and psychological costs associated with the inability to freely and fully experience public space. For some, such restrictions interfered with aspects of individual growth and development. For instance, Bryn articulated how a restricted sense of entitlement to space reduced her overall self-awareness and self-confidence:

I certainly would love to feel like an equal participant of the public and to be as comfortable out in public as I am in my own home. I can't be free to be who I am. I can't be too bold or too loud, I can't show anger—really I can't show much of any emotion except positive emotions. I don't really know who I am in that regard or if I have a "public self," but I think at any time that a person genuinely feels that they can't be their true selves, it limits them. It limits their self-confidence. For right or wrong, I'm made to feel like I'm just a bit of an outsider—this is the impression I get. [Bryn]

As Bryn's quotation underlines, participating in public life is a necessary component to fully know oneself and develop as a self-assured individual. Conversely, reduced participation stifles personal development and fosters a psychological sense of being an outsider.

Finally, a few women described the emotional toll that came as a consequence of limited freedom to experience themselves as integrated individuals in public life. To illustrate this point, Marlee indicated how constrained spatial experiences are closely connected to difficulties with identity development:

I think not really knowing ourselves as individuals in public interferes with just knowing how to kind of deal with our emotions, right? Just learning that process takes integration of experiences and being familiar with public space. [Marlee]

The above excerpt clearly speaks to the emotional and psychological repercussions of women's internalised sense of being out of place. Experiencing themselves as marginalised beings resulted in an internal foreignness and fragmentation, which adversely affected women's psychological, physical, and emotional well-being.

In summary, as articulated by participants in the quotations above, spaces, places, and their physical constructions are more than just backdrops in people's lives. They are saturated with significance and symbolise varying degrees of security and belonging. Entitlement and belonging develop from the use of space that is void of barriers, fear, contestation, and threats to personal safety. Furthermore, a sense of belonging and a connection to one's surroundings is an emergent feature of the material properties of space, which are affected by one's knowledge of the landscape, degree of participation, and sense of appropriation by similar individuals (i.e., women). These factors converge in complex ways to create perceptual spaces that symbolise the boundaries of belonging, which accentuate the power to include some and evict others. To the extent that women are able to move freely and participate without barriers in the public realm, they experience themselves as autonomous and entitled persons. When these basic rights of everyday life are denied, the consequences to women's overall mental and physical health are substantial. How women psychologically make sense of and negotiate the complications arising from *Urban Public Spaces* is examined next.

Schematic Analysis

When making sense of the difficulties resulting from this Organisational Moment, participants employed a hierarchical analysis of gender, power, and political responsibility to form the basis of their schematic interpretations. Specifically, women

evoked three main schemata to conceptualise these complicating factors: (a) *Gendered Spaces*, (b) *The Male Advantage*, and (c) *Top-Down Governance*.

Gendered spaces. In articulating their perceptions of spatial barriers encountered in the urban landscape, women evoked a rich and detailed schema that comprised the gender schema, and linked this schema to the concept of space. Specifically, *Gendered Spaces* encompasses the co-socialisation and co-constitution of space and gender. Women's everyday realities in public spaces were influenced by activation of this schema that links feminine constructs of fear, vulnerability, and lack of entitlement to space. Importantly, as Sara explains, gender is not perceived as a fixed set of biological and psychological traits, but rather a socially constructed category that is learned and experienced in specific contexts:

I'm always so interested in people's perceptions, particularly about safety and how we as women experience our spaces. I don't want to create a divide between women and men, but there are clearly lots of things that are not the same. I don't base it biologically at all. I base it almost all socially. There are many things that can be equalised and are not based on biology. [Sara]

Gendered Spaces is a subset of associations that are part of the overarching gender schema. Gender schema theory describes the cognitive process by which defining features of gender are organised into the concept of self (Bem, 1981, 1993). Bem (1981) stated that the universality of gender forms a network of associations from which there is "a generalised readiness to process information on the basis of sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema" (p. 355). As children are taught to organise themselves based on the overlaying of gender on their biological sex, they are simultaneously taught how gender is bound together with space through entitlement and enactment (McGann & Steil, 2006). In the same way that the gender schema organises and facilitates processing

of incoming information, *Gendered Spaces*, as a schema, links gender and space through sense-making (e.g., notions of gender-appropriate uses of space), and which produces enactment (e.g., using space in perceived gender-appropriate ways).

The specific representations that comprise notions of gender and space are learned through agencies of socialisation (De Groof, 2008; Maccoby, 2000), which are the “teachers” of society. Participants’ narratives provided rich examples of how their early socialising experiences intertwined gender and space. For example, Belinda remembered how she received socialisation messages connecting female vulnerability and avoidance of “dangerous” public spaces:

I grew up with my mom saying, “Don’t cut across the park. Call me as soon as you get to where you’re going.” My brother didn’t really have these concerns, so he wasn’t monitored as closely. It’s just engrained in your brain as a child that I need to be careful because I’m a girl and things can happen to me if I don’t watch my back or keep myself out of dangerous places. [Belinda]

As Belinda’s quotation illustrates, danger-laden images of distinct public areas (e.g., the park) are accompanied by a prescribed necessity for females to restrict themselves in order to maintain a degree of personal safety. Likewise, Amy remembered how her spatial perceptions were formed through abstract descriptions of social dangers in unsafe neighbourhoods:

I wasn’t exactly told, “Men are going to hurt you,” or anything like that. It was more like, “That neighbourhood is unsafe,” or “There are social dangers in that neighbourhood.” It was a bit more abstract. [Amy]

Gendered Spaces also connects space and female sexual vulnerability. For example, Ellen and Barbara articulated how the social construction of public space, for them, was fused with the risk of sexual assault:

I was always told, “Let us know where you’re going and when you’re coming home.” If it was dark, I was told to call [my parents] and they would come and

get me instead of walking by myself. I think they thought that it was more dangerous for me as a girl. I remember being ten years old and my mom sitting me down and saying, "Do you know what rape is?" She was trying to keep me safe. [Ellen]

My brother was allowed out later than I was, and my mom wouldn't call him to make sure he was somewhere safe, or it was okay that he snuck out at night but it would not be okay if I snuck out at night. I think it was probably because they were worried about sexual assault, but definitely we were not treated on the same level. [Barbara]

As these quotations elucidate, gender and space are foundationally connected: Gender socialisation teaches females that the world, and in particular the public realm, is a sexually dangerous place. Inherently, this schema reflects the widely-held presupposition that females, due to lack of physical strength, are incapable of self-protection. Ashley further speaks to this concept as she explained her perception of how physical factors become society's predominant justification for women's exclusion in public spaces:

I think women in general are perceived a lot differently than men, and we get this impression that sometimes we cannot take care of ourselves because of our physiology. Society tells us that we are weaker and easier to target than guys, and teaches us that we need to keep ourselves safe by being more aware and staying out of places, like the downtown area at night. [Ashley]

Here, Ashley highlights how, implicitly, females are taught that it is their susceptibility that equates to risk, rather than the risk existing outside of themselves. Moreover, she explains how females are taught that being afraid is normal and expected, and that this fear is what is likely to keep them safe.

Not only does the *Gendered Spaces* schema internally organise women's own perceptions, but it is also an overarching organising principle of society. Societal views of female weakness and risky public spaces evoke social pressure for women to remain out of public space and to assume the role of the fearful, weak female. These

socially-available ideologies can largely remain invisible, but as Janice's quotation elucidates, it is the "gender dissidents" who can easily bring these ideologies to light:

I think the attitude [toward women in public space] is definitely a barrier—that women should stay at home and that we should act safe. So it's that kind of attitude that problematises women in public. For example, if you see a woman walking around outside at midnight, you think something must be wrong with her. [Janice]

These gendered messages, as well as expectations for women to follow specific rules for safety, are reinforced through public sentiments, as we will see in Organisational Moment #4: *Danger Messages*.

The result of strongly-linked associations between space and gender is that they are almost always inseparably evoked in everyday spatial transactions. Sasha's narrative demonstrates the concurrent evocation and intertwined associations between gender and space:

I think guys wouldn't think twice about walking through a wooded park or trail, but I start to feel closed in and it's not very visible, and I'm just thinking ahead—what if somebody approaches me? No one's going to see us. It's really secluded and there's just no way that I would walk down it alone. It's really hard for me to overcome that gut feeling. [Sasha]

Sasha's description reflects how when this schema is activated, a cascade of associations is made: That particular public spaces are inherently dangerous; that males may easily traverse these spaces due to the patriarchal dividend—male entitlement; and that innately fragile, weak females should stay away from these spaces, especially unaccompanied. While Sasha's description reflects some level of conscious processing, she also indicates that this schema evokes a "gut feeling" to guide her actions, which is difficult to overcome. Similarly, in some cases this schema was activated without conscious

awareness. Julia's quotation illustrates how for her, the ways in which spaces are negotiated often take place on an implicit level:

If something doesn't feel right, I cross the street or take a different route. Whenever I get that little feeling—I can't think of anything specific—but I just sort of go with it. It's never a conscious thought like, "Oh, there's a dark corner," or "Oh, there's an isolated pathway," it's just a gut feeling and you just go with it. [Julia]

Women's descriptions revealed how space and gender are inextricably bound together by this schema. In their everyday lived experiences in public space, evoking the *Gendered Spaces* schema was a way of cognitively understanding feelings of fear, vulnerability, and lack of entitlement to spaces. However, often this schema operated outside of conscious awareness to shape the ways in which women constructed meaning and negotiated public space.

The male advantage. This schema underlines the notion that the urban environment holds different realities for women and men. Supporting this schematic framework is the belief that men continue to benefit from, and have power over, the public realm in ways that women do not:

In society there is still an advantage to being a guy because women have restricted options for where they can go or what they can do and guys just don't have that. [Andrea]

In their perceptions, women associated the public domain with the male form in numerous ways. Some women perceived that the city more closely represented male interests and therefore the city's offerings reflected that:

I think in the city there are just not as many offerings for women as there are for men. [Kate]

Women characterised the city as a place that represents the needs and interests of men over women. For example, women noted a greater number of services and facilities that

have historically been connected to men's activities (e.g., sports facilities; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

I don't think that everyone is able to use space equally. A good example is community centres, which are basically just glorified hockey rinks. They are supposed to be open to the community but they really aren't. I mean, who plays hockey? Boys play hockey. I know some girls do too but I think if you look at the numbers, there's no comparison. [Carrie]

When drawing upon this schema, women perceived that the urban public domain places greater importance on the male public experience. This interpretation was supported by Doris's narrative as she spoke of the lack of social opportunities for women in the city:

There isn't much for women to do [in the city]. I'll go to a [sports] game with my boyfriend, but that's more for him than for me. My girlfriends and I are always trying to find things to do. [Doris]

Finally, in her quotation, Allie verbalised her perception of the downtown core as a business-oriented, male-centric space:

Sometimes I just think of downtown as concrete buildings where business transactions take place. You'll see businessmen in suits walking around downtown, talking on their cell phones. They're working up in their 20-story office buildings and then they all go home after work and downtown is deserted. [Allie]

These understandings of the city are tied to common hegemonic notions of urban prosperity that are represented by sports stadiums, commercial development projects, and business ventures (Gotham, 2001), which by-and-large represent men. Correspondingly, Allie continued her thoughts on why the downtown endures as a male-centric space:

In the daytime the downtown area is geared toward men's activities, and at night the area is perceived as dangerous and so I think it's assumed that we [women] won't go to these places, especially at night. [Allie]

In Allie's perception, the downtown core is not a place that is convivial to women, either during the day or at night. What can be extrapolated from Allie's quotation is that it is

unlikely that there will be impetus to change the inherently masculine form of the city, as women are unlikely to appropriate the spaces anyhow (ensured by the influences of the *Gendered Spaces* schema).

This schema was further evoked through the notion that masculine-associated features (e.g., bravery, fearlessness, and aggression) are important characteristics to embody when traversing the public sphere. Holly's quotation reflects *The Male Advantage* schema as she described how males are reprieved from the worries and fears of space due to masculine ideology (Day, 2001):

I think [men] don't worry about [public space] in the respect that they're supposed to be braver. If you're a male, it just hasn't been engrained in you to stay away from certain areas of the city. I think it's just kind of one less thing for them to have to worry about. [Holly]

This notion of bravery was also described in contrasting terms by Adele, who articulated that men's failure to embody such courage may have negative results for their masculine personas:

I think for guys, there's definitely much more of a 'you can fend for yourself and just be street smart' mentality, and perhaps it's perceived as weakness if you're not comfortable doing that. [Adele]

Furthermore, Melissa described how there is an idealised representation of the public body that mimics the characteristics of masculinity:

In our society, in our culture, male characteristics are valued more, like independence, acting more aggressively, and going for what you want. That is the ideal way to be in society, and I think public space reflects that, like you have to be fearless to go in certain areas [of the city]. [Melissa]

Likewise, this schema encompasses the notion that women are doubly disadvantaged when it comes to gender displays as a way of appropriating public space. Specifically, Melody's narrative reflects the viewpoint that space is successfully negotiated through

the exploitation of characteristics associated with masculinity (e.g., dominance, aggression), which women are forbidden to display:

In society, it's not a welcomed role for women [to act aggressively]. We want women to act very accommodating, and there are severe consequences if you're the dominant, "not sorry" woman. You're probably going to be treated differently. But then there's a huge cost to being that way because I think [access to public space] depends a lot on whether you can pull off a confident, powerful thing, or using space for a specific purpose. It kind of takes women out of the competition of life almost, like we can't be on the same playing field with men. [Melody]

As Melody understands it, this restricted autonomy reduces women's ability to compete in public life.

Top-down governance. The third and final schema that women drew upon to make sense of the spatial challenges embedded in urban topographies is entitled *Top-Down Governance*. This richly detailed schema refers to a grouping of suppositions encompassing a hierarchical, gender-blind scheme of urban governance. Participants connected their experiences of marginalisation within the urban landscape to decision-making processes that create and maintain those spaces. They believed that decisions were made without consideration for women's unique spatial needs, or without awareness of the impact of unidirectional decisions in their everyday lives. This schema was most often conjured when respondents made meaning of shortcomings embedded in essential aspects of the city (i.e., infrastructure, the urban core). The essence of this schema is represented in Kim's quotation:

I think most [decision-makers and planners] are men, and I think they see themselves moving through the city, so they don't have the necessary information to know whether their decisions will work for us. [Kim]

Kim's quotation indicates that when it comes to urban design and safety, females and males clearly have different perspectives and sensibilities. As she sees it, it is primarily

men who hold the power to make decisions affecting all citizens. It follows, then, that current decision-making trends lack a gendered perspective. Samantha's understanding supports this belief as she applies a gender analysis to challenge the universal "male logic" of the city:

I do think it is taken for granted that [the city] is accessible to all people and assumed that people have the same experience in it, but really, it reflects how a small group [of decision-makers] feel about it and how [they perceive] it works best for everyone. If those positions are held by men, then it is men's perceptions that are going to be reflected in these [spaces]. [Samantha]

Combined, these quotations form a cohesive schema that contextualises women's experiences of marginalisation and challenges prevailing hegemonic assumptions of public space. First, women's insights challenge the implicit view that the city is "working" for all citizens; and second, they challenge the commonly-held view that urban planning is inherently democratic and scientific, and therefore, void of bias. Participants dismantled these assumptions by raising salient counter-issues. Specifically, Kim surmises that acquiring information related to women's spatial experiences is necessary to fully comprehend the inner-workings of public spaces. Additionally, Samantha's analysis resists the hegemony of expert knowledge. Specifically, she deduces that decision-makers who have never been challenged by the socio-spatial components of a system can neither be privy to its problems, nor know how to solve them. Reflectively, these quotations bring to light a core underpinning of this schema: Often those who have authority over such matters are the ones for whom the existing state of affairs is working rather well. This is consequential, given that they are typically the majority at the decision table when planning takes place (Dalton, Hoch, & So, 2000).

Women's perspectives also reflected the belief that urban decision-making involves limited transparency and lack of opportunity for input or feedback. Participants described the point of view that decisions are made unilaterally despite widespread implications of their outcomes. Some generally viewed this process to be an "open house" approach to urban governance—notifying the public of previously-made decisions via displays of plans already underway:

This is part of my ideology, but I think that it's important to educate the public before decisions are made, and having some sort of system for our concerns to be handled. I don't think there's anything like that now. [Charmaine]

Next, Meg suggests that decision makers need to do two things: first, educate themselves about the gendered nature of the city, and second, educate the public in an effort to debunk misinformation. These efforts, she maintains, are important in reducing the barriers that prevent women from appropriating public space:

Interview women from around the city and find out what our concerns are. It's not a coincidence that women aren't going out at night, especially downtown. It's not that we don't want to go out and enjoy life, but I think there needs to be an effort to educate people [with accurate information about the city] and to demystify a little bit of what's going on. [Meg]

Charmaine and Meg elucidate the importance of urban governance engaging the public through education and information-sharing in an effort to transform public space.

Moreover, as Meg suggests, not only can such participatory models contribute to the redefinition of public spaces, but they may also hold the power to shape the course of events in women's lives by fostering a sense of entitlement to space.

This schema not only indicates the importance of soliciting input from the female population, but also of including women as decision-makers and planners. Explicitly, Shelby views the advancement of women's safety and accessibility as concomitant with

women's increased involvement in the decisions-making practises affecting the urban environment:

I think that for sure whoever designs the environment has a part in helping women to feel safe [in public spaces]. I don't know what it's like right now, but I think that there should be women deciding on how space is designated and doing more planning because I think they would identify some things that men might not think of. [Shelby]

As Shelby's quotation suggests, there is not necessarily an intentional plan to curtail the integration of women's needs into spaces. Instead, she suggests that this inertia may simply reflect the staying power of the status quo (i.e., inevitable "male blindness" toward socio-spatial challenges faced by women). However, not everyone shared this viewpoint; rather, some women were skeptical of the inaction of decision-makers. For example, Elisha's thoughts represented the view that women's spatial oppression is not being adequately addressed by those holding the power to change it:

I don't think that enough is being done in our communities [to address women's spatial inequalities]. I mean, I'm not really aware of what our community is doing to make women feel safe or even designate spaces for women. I don't think this is a problem that is really seriously being addressed. [Elisha]

Moreover, some women felt that even when attempts to remedy women's spatial concerns were made, such solutions were implemented in a brash and dismissive manner:

Sometimes I feel like [inequality in public space for women] is one of those issues where a lot of people kind of—not brush it aside—but feel like, "Okay, we have some programs in place [e.g., SafeWalk], and so there you go! You guys don't have to worry anymore." [Lorraine]

Lorraine further analysed the problem by situating women's spatial experiences of marginalisation within a larger ideological framework of public space that interconnects with hegemonic male privilege:

I think [women's] exclusion is acknowledged and being taken seriously as an issue because women recognise it [as an issue]. I feel as a gender, women to

women, or perhaps other people, such as trans, gay, or bisexual, feel like they are trespassing on [heterosexual] men's territory too. So I feel like it's not necessarily just a total gender issue but it is an issue that is acknowledged in certain groups. However, there are a lot of men, mainly, who don't necessarily acknowledge it, or think they have acknowledged the situation because there are programs in place. I sometimes still feel that it's not necessarily taken seriously the extent that it could be, and the extent of how people feel as a consequence. [Lorraine]

In Lorraine's view, diverse groups are vying for the right to space within the entrenched hegemonic masculinity in the public domain. She suggests that if it was not for women and other marginalised groups striving for the right to freely appropriate public spaces, such injustices would be given little priority within the dominant power hierarchy. As a final point, Lorraine's quotation touches on a nearly undetectable nuance of this schema: The paternalistic underpinnings that normalise the view that the privileged are the rightful overseers of space who know best how to organise its resources and assemble its parts.

Coping Strategies

Cognitive coping strategy. Women coped with the complications arising from this Organisational Moment in various ways. One cognitive strategy was to evoke the schema, *Top-Down Governance*. The data revealed that when this schema was evoked, it led to a more positive, forward-looking, and problem-solving attitude on the part of women who used it. When drawing upon this schema, women explicitly spoke of ways to move forward (e.g., public education, participatory engagement in urban space issues, more women in roles of urban governance and planning). Generating solutions to a problem suggests optimism for change, which has both cognitive and affective benefits (Snyder et al., 2000). Thus, evoking this schema not only facilitated meaning-making, but also stimulated hope by charting a solution-oriented path to address some of the inequities of *Urban Public Spaces*.

Behavioural coping strategies. The data revealed that women engaged in complex and sophisticated interpersonal and intrapersonal strategies in order to have better access to the city or to create more opportunities in their daily lives. Three main ways in which they attempted to achieve these goals were: (a) utilising support networks, (b) creating women-only spaces, and (c) producing legitimacy (i.e., demonstrating purpose, negotiating gender).

Utilising support networks. One commonly-employed interpersonal strategy involved support networks, which allowed women to have greater temporal and spatial access to public spaces. Women aligned themselves with other women in order to cultivate opportunities for exercise, leisure, and social activities, and even to facilitate parental obligations. The next three quotations illustrate how these networks assisted in expanding women's options for mobility, fitness, and leisure, respectively:

I have one friend whose family drove her everywhere [when she was growing up] because they hated the idea of her walking anywhere after nine o'clock, and so they would leave whatever they were doing to go pick her up. Now sometimes she'll ask us to walk her to her car and I'm usually the one who does it. [Kristy]

There are women who I work with [downtown] and we have a walking group at lunch and we walk together for safety. [Alice]

As women, or at least my experience with me and my friends, we do think about one another and we look out for each other. We will get together as a group and if we have been drinking, we'll make sure that there is one of us in the group who will see that everyone gets home okay, that sort of thing. It's just a nice thing that we have that network and so that gives us more options. [Kourtney]

As these quotations demonstrate, support networks functioned as a way for women to expand their spatial boundaries, which had direct benefits for their daily lives. Some women described how support networks allowed them the opportunity to explore unfamiliar areas of the city by planning specific aspects of their outings (e.g.,

coordinating arrival times and parking locations). Hanna verbalised the details of how this support system operated for her:

Usually if we're going out, I'll call one of the others and say, "What time are you leaving?" "Okay I'm leaving at seven." "Where are you going to park?" "I'm going to park over here." "Okay let me know when you're there," and she'll call me or she'll text me, "Okay I'm here," so then we'll usually wait for each other and then we go [together], especially if it's unfamiliar territory. [Hanna]

This method of coping also extended to participants' family obligations. For example, Hillary described how she and several mothers utilised this support network for neighbourhood trick-or-treating:

Last Halloween my girlfriend was like, "I'm not taking my kids out for Halloween." I'm like, "Why? We're in a safe neighbourhood." [She then said] "How do you know nothing is going to happen?" and I'm like, "Well you don't, but you can't live like that. You're going to live in a bubble for the rest of your life and you can't deny your kids because you're paranoid, like just go." From then on we decided to get the mothers together as a group in the neighbourhood and take our kids out together. [Hillary]

Finally, an element of social conformity also appears to influence this interpersonal coping strategy for some participants. For instance, Linda recalled a time when she was chided for failing to properly carry out this pre-arranged strategy within her friendship circle:

Sometimes I do get in my own little head, and after a few drinks, I'll just leave my friends and go home, and so then I get a phone call, "Linda, you shouldn't have done that, we didn't know where you were." We look out for each other and so we have this arrangement where we are supposed to make sure that each other gets home okay. [Linda]

Creating women-only spaces. As another interpersonal strategy for handling urban socio-spatial challenges, participants created "women-only" social spaces where they felt a sense of security and belonging. This strategy served to accommodate their lack of spatial entitlement by substituting the public domain for private (or semi-private)

contexts in order to meet their social needs. For example, when planning get-togethers with friends, Kendra elected to forgo evenings out in the urban core and instead opted to stay within the boundaries of her local neighbourhood:

When my friends and I are planning an evening out, especially if it's downtown, often I'll say, "I don't want to go for dinner there, it's too far, or it's too sketchy," or whatever. "Let's just meet here [local neighbourhood], it's a lot easier for me." And that makes me realise that we definitely have to reclaim our public spaces, don't we? [Kendra]

Notably, it appears that while describing her self-extraction from the city centre, Kendra concomitantly recognised the scope of exclusion that she and her friends experience on a regular basis. Hence, Kendra's realisation that women must "reclaim their public spaces" suggests that this coping strategy may operate implicitly, without consideration for why women extract themselves, or for the larger hierarchies that subsume such actions.

The implementation of this coping strategy requires some negotiation within one's social support system. For example, Harriet described the parley that takes place in her social circle, including her reluctant pacification when others choose a "girls' night out." When she holds decision-making authority, she always opts for a "girls' night in."

Sometimes it's hard because I don't want to be the one to put a damper on our fun but I don't really like going out for a night on the town [when my girlfriends want to go]. It's just too much of a hassle. There are too many creeps and then there's the issue of being downtown late at night and we've all been drinking. There's just too much you have to think about. . . . If it's someone's birthday or if we're having a girls' night, we each take turns picking what we want to do each month. If one of the girls is like, "We're going out for drinks," I'm like, "Great" and they're like, "Okay are you coming?" "I don't really want to go there." They're like, "Oh come on" and I'm like, "Ugh fine! Peer pressure, I'll go." It sounds ridiculous but I'd rather stay home, and always when it's my turn to choose what to do, it's a girls' night in. [Harriet]

As these quotations indicate, women relinquish their right to urban social life due to the challenges and barriers within the urban landscape. As a substitute, numerous participants

aligned their social lives with other women in private contexts where the complications associated with *Urban Public Spaces* could be avoided.

If this coping strategy results in diminishment of women's social worlds, why then would women relinquish their territorial right to the city? While explaining her use of this coping strategy, Heidi sheds light on the focal points that influence her cognitive reasoning process:

My girlfriends and I would rather all get together at people's houses than go out to public places because we know each other's surroundings, we know the neighbourhood, and we know the neighbours. For us it's a lot more comforting to stay where we know than to go out. We're not adventurous. [Heidi]

For Heidi, choosing to facilitate her social life through the creation of women-only spaces is a logical reaction to the problems of discomfort and lack of familiarity with the urban landscape. She further insinuates that both she and her female friends lack the boldness required to traverse the city, signifying activation of the *Gendered Spaces* schema.

However, even though this commonly-employed coping strategy provided ease and comfort for some women, others perceived this approach as having an element of social deprivation:

My [female] friends have sort of removed themselves from going out at night. Instead it'll be coffees or watching movie or wine at someone's place, but it's all stuff I pictured I'd be doing when I was 40 (she laughs), going to someone's place for a glass of wine and calling it a night at 11 p.m. [Kelley]

Kelley reluctantly implements this coping strategy as part of her socio-spatial negotiations, mainly because her friends have chosen to do so, thereby reducing her own personal choices for social engagement. As she sees it, life happens in the core, and so she finds this way of managing the difficulties of urban space as an infringement of her personal liberties. She continued her thoughts on the matter:

Sometimes [downtown] is where your life is, especially if you're a young person. You want to go dancing and you're going to be out late—we don't have awesome parties at 7 p.m.! If you live with that mentality, you'll never have any freedom, right? It's not fair. It's very restrictive. [Kelley]

As the above quotations illustrate, the use of this coping strategy is not without its problems, for embedded within it are strong elements of self-responsibility, personal sacrifice, and in some cases, even subtle features of self-blame.

Producing legitimacy. The last method of coping consisted of strategies intended to demonstrate legitimate use of space, and was related to women's lowered sense of entitlement and lack of belonging. *Producing legitimacy*, as a coping strategy, refers to a complex set of behaviours that women enacted to portray themselves as valid and appropriate users of public space. This method of coping relates to the schematic underpinnings of *Gendered Spaces* and *The Male Advantage*, which teaches women that they have lower entitlement to space, and informs them that the public environment is masculine territory. The behavioural coping strategy, *producing legitimacy*, was implemented in two main ways: (1) demonstrating purpose, and (2) negotiating gender.

Demonstrating purpose. Like many of the women interviewed, Becky and Elise described how they move through space with purpose, underlined by a sense of determination to traverse the public domain in a hurried, single-minded manner:

I don't dawdle. I try to walk fairly quickly. I've heard that walking with a purpose is helpful so I try to do that. When I'm out I usually have those things on my mind, but nothing really out of the ordinary. [Becky]

When I'm walking somewhere from A to B, I don't worry myself about what's going on around me. I mean, I observe my surroundings in the same way that anybody walking around would, but I don't watch closely what other people are doing. I don't listen to other people's conversations; I just worry about my own business and get to where I'm going. [Elise]

As these quotations typify, moving through space with intention, hurriedness, and concentrated focus is an ordinary aspect of navigating through the public landscape for women. The aim of this purposeful movement is to project an outward appearance of entitlement and belonging in the space that they are occupying. Thus, by moving through space in this way, women are signalling their rightful claim to space. At the same time, this strategy also necessitates that women do not encroach upon or take up the space of others; and that they do not occupy more space, or take up more time in space, than is necessary for their purpose:

I tend to put myself in the back corner in places. I don't want to be noticed. I just want to get to where I'm going. [Eva]

Eva also noted how, in purposefully using space to “get to where she’s going,” she reduces her physical presence as much as possible. Interestingly, after describing her actions, she continued her narrative, which signifies a deeper awareness and, subsequently, an internal conflict:

It's kind of funny because as we're talking about the stuff that I do, now I'm just kind of thinking, “Why doesn't that bother me?” and I think it is because it has never occurred to me otherwise and it still doesn't. On one side my brain [I'm thinking], “That's a stupid idea, why am I doing that?” and the other side of my brain [thinks], “Why? It's fine.” [Eva]

Eva's thought process provides a glimpse into how such behaviours are so deeply entrenched in women's everyday lives that they happen outside of conscious choice. Moreover, her inner dialogue reflects how this coping strategy becomes internally justified as a normal way of manoeuvring the public domain.

Producing legitimacy reflects the notion that there are specific conditions under which women may justifiably access public spaces, and by implication, specific conditions under which they may not. That is, women need only use public spaces in

sensible, gender-sanctioned, purposeful ways, and not for leisure or personal pleasure (Phadke, Ranade, & Khan, 2009). Accordingly, women indicated that they do not use open outdoor spaces arbitrarily. Instead, when women used outdoor public spaces for leisure, it was either for health-related purposes (e.g., exercise), or was consistent with stereotyped gender-appropriate activities (e.g., shopping):

I don't typically just spend time just hanging around outside. I did a bit more when I was a teenager, but not really anymore. I play baseball in the summer so I'm out more then, but I'm there for a specific purpose. [Julia]

I prefer usually to have somebody with me most places when I go out, but if it's to the mall or the grocery store, I'll go by myself because it's kind of like my alone time, but if I'm going out somewhere in public it's usually with somebody. [Amber]

Also antithetical to purposeful use of space is the occupation of space for no observable reason. Thus, when the purpose of their appropriation of public space was not obvious, some women felt compelled to invent a purpose. For example, Jody described her strategy for presenting herself in public spaces as she awaited the arrival of a friend:

My girlfriend and I get together every Saturday for coffee, and a lot of the time I'll be sitting on the bench [outside of the coffee shop] waiting for her. Sometimes it's uncomfortable, like people are staring, wondering why I'm there or what I'm doing. I just don't like people trying to figure me out and trying to know my business and what not, so I'll just look through my bag or get on my phone and pretend that I'm doing something. [Jody]

Jody's quotation illuminates how women's acceptance into public space is often conditional upon them engaging in specific tasks or activities. This way of coping encompasses the notion that when women are in public spaces without observable purpose, it is important to invent purpose in order to demonstrate legitimate grounds for occupying the space. This strategy of self-evaluation and subsequent action suggests that women internalise the concept of purpose. Specifically, women internally monitor their

spatial representations and regulate their own actions based upon whether or not they see themselves as demonstrating purposeful behaviour in public spaces.

As illustrated above, using space with intentionality is a part of acceptability of women in public space. In the public realm where males are afforded greater privilege, men are entitled to a much broader range of public presentations. Phadke et al., (2009) succinctly describe how purposeful use of space is observably different for women and men in everyday life:

The visible [. . .] woman accesses space purposefully, she carries large bags, parcels and babies to illustrate per purpose, uses her cellphone as a barrier between herself and the world [. . .]. Women's demeanour in public is almost always full of a sense of purpose; one rarely sees them sitting in a park, standing at a street corner smoking or simply watching the world go by as men might (p. 189).

Negotiating gender. The production of legitimacy is also closely connected to negotiating aspects of gender. Women negotiated gender by altering their feminine/masculine appearances and managing their sexual bodies in public spaces. The rationale behind this set of strategies was to acceptably present themselves in the context of public (masculine) spaces.

One way that women described physically arranging themselves to gain access to space was through attire. For example, Kimberley provided a description of the careful planning that she undergoes to properly manage her public appearance:

I try very hard to dress appropriately and I try really hard to sort of honour myself, because I feel good about myself that I work out, but I also want to not ever look inappropriate or wear things that are too tight. I feel like you always have to be conscious of how you look, like you want to make sure you're dressed appropriately and you're not wearing revealing clothes, and so it's this weird sort of dichotomy of trying to balance the two and trying to figure out what's appropriate and what's not. [Kimberley]

Next, Elisha and Simone described how they manage their public bodies through minimised displays of femininity and sexuality:

I wear appropriate clothing. I don't usually wear high heels or skirts. I cover myself up. [Elisha]

When I'm out [in public] I think about things like whether my panty line is showing or if the high heels I am wearing are too high. There's just always something that's sort of related to how I look. It's something that's always there. [Simone]

Evident from these quotations, being out in public space has a way of making women see themselves as gendered and sexual beings. In addition, it appears that there is a limited characterisation of the public female body that will allow women the most liberty to appropriate space. Therefore, the underlying aim of these strategies is to strike just the right balance of a modest and respectable feminine presentation, presumably to offset the transgressions they are making by being in the public domain.

Women's spatial negotiations also included management of body postures, emotions, and facial expressions. The following quotations exemplify how women negotiate their bodies in these ways:

I kind of have facial expressions, looking straight ahead with my shoulders back and no smile. I kind of generally like to speak through my eyes a lot, so they are usually hard and focused. [Emily]

When I am walking through the downtown by myself I pay attention to who's around me. Sometimes I think that making eye contact with someone brings their attention to you, so I probably have a bit of a strategy around it, like I'm looking at them until they're close to me and then I look away. [Sonya]

I tend to look away, generally. I don't make too much eye contact with people unless I intentionally feel pretty confident about myself. When you make eye contact with some people they get really timid and they look away, so it depends where I am. Sometimes I'll make eye contact when I'm downtown so people don't think I'm so weak because generally when you're making eye contact with strangers they get a little bit scared. [Otherwise] I usually smile at people when I look at them. [Sue]

Through their bodily gestures, facial expressions, and gaze, participants manipulated aspects of femininity and masculinity in public space. Strong posture, solemnity, and sustained and direct eye contact, particularly in stranger interactions, are associated with greater dominance (Brooks, Church, & Fraser, 1986; Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & de Turck, 1984; Henley, 1977); therefore, by presenting in this way, Emily, Sonya, and Sue have effectively lowered their display of femininity. Sonya and Sue specifically made reference to prolonging their gaze in the urban core, indicating that greater dominance is required to traverse these spaces. Thus, depending on the context, women negotiate their bodies to either blend in to the backdrop of space or stand their ground. By effectively decreasing aspects of femininity and increasing displays of masculine performance, women negotiated their personal territories and claims to spaces through their bodies.

Finally, negotiating gender was also a method for securing safety, having greater access to others' personal spaces, and gaining acceptance in various aspects of public life (e.g., the business and social worlds). April and Aaryn described how aspects of gender are negotiated in these ways:

As a woman, I know that I can utilise my sexuality to be in certain places or act in certain ways. I can get help if I need it, I can approach people differently, and interact with people differently than men can. For example, it's more acceptable for women to stand closer than it is for men to get into another man's personal space. [April]

[My girlfriend is] trying to establish herself as someone who can compete in a male workplace and someone who carries herself in a more masculine way, which sounds so bizarre to say but she does that. But then on the flip side when she's out socialising and dating she finds it really bizarre how men don't like that, and are intimidated by that. She tries to be more feminine when she's out in the social world because that's what men seem to want, and I think she's definitely having a bit of an identity crisis because it's hard to flip that on and off. [Aaryn]

The complications, schemata, and coping strategies associated with this Organisational Moment make clear the powerful link between gender and public space. *Urban Public Spaces* continue to be constructed as masculine spaces where women's access is challenged and constrained. As a result, women's presence in the public context requires that women engage in complex strategies to negotiate space. Sometimes such negotiations take the form of creating support networks to gain better access to space, or by the reconstruction of space itself (i.e., women-only social spaces). Other times, negotiations take place within a woman's most basic personal territory—the body.

Benefits to Patriarchy

How does patriarchy benefit from the generalised sense of discomfort and lowered sense of entitlement that women experience in relation to the urban landscape? Likewise, how does the patriarchal system stand to gain from women's sense of lack of belonging to the public (masculine) arena? Patriarchy benefits by reinstating its binaries (i.e., private/public, safety/danger, feminine/masculine), and making these binaries seem natural through the linking of the biological body. Because space continues to be organised through patriarchal binaries, women remain primarily connected to the private domain and men predominantly to the public sphere in fundamental ways. Moreover, the patriarchal establishment continues to advantage men through inequitable divisions of labour in the private sphere, which frees up men to achieve greater success in the public realm. The particulars of how these benefits unfold are explained next.

A fundamental way in which the institution of patriarchy benefits from the challenges within *Urban Public Spaces* is through the reestablishment of the public/private dichotomy and its gendered correlates. Within a patriarchal society, the

public and private spheres are developed and defined in relation to one another.

Historically, the division of space developed in kinship with constructions of gender. In most societies, public spaces (particularly urban spaces) developed as predominantly masculine spheres, while the home and neighbouring areas were established as the feminine domain (Duncan, 1996; Massey, 1994). While some shift has taken place in the gender order in socio-spatial settings (e.g., women's greater presence in the workforce and academic settings; Statistics Canada, 2011b), these changes have not significantly dismantled the underlying dichotomies of patriarchy. Material and symbolic constructions of space continue to provide support to the patriarchal arrangement in untold ways. Undeniably, the ways in which women experience and negotiate urban spaces continues to be a key marker of the stabilisation of the public and private binaries.

As described in the *Complications to Women* portion of this Organisational Moment, the public domain constitutes an assembly of spaces where women experience discomfort and distress, as well as lack of entitlement and belonging. In very real ways, the socially constructed public/private dichotomy serves to organise women's (and societies') perceptions about where they best fit within the gendered hierarchy, and to what extent they think they can change the ascribed roles placed upon them:

[Women's reduced use of space] is related to what society expects you to do and some of it I think we place on ourselves. We've been given this role and it's hard to get out of. The past is obviously an influence, where we were and where we want to go, and if we think we can go there. [Abigail]

In the dualistic foundations of patriarchy, which organises societal thinking, the private domain is constructed in relationship with the meanings associated with public space. Specifically, private spaces are constructed as places where women are entitled, where they belong, and where they are the safest. The organising influences of these patriarchal

binaries were evident in several women's psychological constructions of space, as the following quotations illustrate:

There are so many factors that go into how we experience space. We have to be aware, we have to restrict ourselves, and we have to be in places that are unacceptable for women to be in. It doesn't end until you're home in bed, doors locked, safe at night. [Robyn]

It never occurs to me when I'm walking my dog that I have to be aware of my surroundings or that someone might approach me for money or whatever. I guess a way of describing it [is that] I almost feel like it's more of a private sphere when I'm walking the dog in my neighbourhood versus downtown [where] I feel like it's more public. [Bobbi]

I would never [exercise outdoors] at night and if I do run by myself or walk by myself, I only usually do it in my neighbourhood which kind of feels pretty safe. It's like a little family-oriented neighbourhood. It's bright and the paths are really open so I don't mind running there so much. [Isabelle]

These quotations illuminate the internalisation of public/private dichotomies. To be sure, in women's own minds, they have constructed layers of more or less protective zones—the home, the family, the neighbourhood. Specifically, these layers are cast as safe and welcoming spaces where women can escape the undesirable characteristics of the public sphere. Further adding to this concept, Elsie's quotation elucidates how widely-held beliefs regarding the dichotomous nature of public and private are “structurally set” within constructions of danger and safety:

I think there's the whole idea that you're always supposed to fear the unknown, and that translates into women's use of space. There's this idealised [set of assumptions]—like your family wouldn't hurt you, your husband won't hurt you, those are safe things. There's some kind of dichotomy that's been created where home is safe and [public] space is unsafe, and it's kind of very structurally set. [Elsie]

As illustrated through Elsie's quotation, unknown risks are reputed to exist in the public realm, and women (presumably due to physical vulnerability) are expected to be fearful of such risks.

Patriarchy's binaries make the gendered division of space seem natural through the linking of the biological body (Goodey, 1997). The partition of safety in private spaces and risk in public spaces is a significant contributor to the patriarchal dichotomy of private being implicitly linked to femininity and fear, and public being implicitly linked to masculinity and bravery. The connection becomes that men's greater appropriation of space stems from the patriarchal assumption that males have a "natural" ability to dominate and control their spaces due to superior physical strength. Likewise, women remain out of public spaces because they lack the ability to govern their own safety due to lesser physical strength (Goodey, 1997; Stanko, 1995). Indeed, women in the present study described the perception of having more control over their safety in the private context, as illustrated by Ruby in the following quotation:

I feel like I set myself up to be safe in my private life. I mean, I feel like I am more able to control keeping myself safe in my private relationships. [Ruby]

In Ruby's perception, she is better able to secure her safety in the private domain as a result of the increased ability to control that environment. This assumption, however, further supports the patriarchal underpinning that women are fearful, weak, and vulnerable, and therefore should refrain from venturing into unsafe public spaces. All the while, the myriad organising influences of patriarchy that occur completely outside of the biological body remain unspecified. Consequently, patriarchy sharply creates a societal consensus—even in women's own minds—about the need for women to remain out of public spaces. The following quotation reflects this concept:

Personally, I don't often go to high-risk areas of the city. I mainly just stay in the areas that I know well, like close to home and through my own residential area. [Phyllis]

Broadly speaking, the institution of patriarchy profits from women's general unease within the public context by re-establishing women's connection to the private domain. As a logical outcome of perceptions that public spaces are barrier-laden, unwelcoming, and unsafe, women spend more time within the comfort and security of the private realm. This outcome has been demonstrated through many of the coping strategies identified in this and other Organisational Moments, including the above-mentioned strategy, *Creating Women-Only Spaces*. These outcomes have both symbolic and material consequences that reinforce patriarchal dichotomies. Symbolically, the consequence of such gender segregation is that particular spaces become "marked" by the gender identity of the dominant group (e.g., the downtown core is perceived as men's territory). Moreover, it is by whom space is occupied, in combination with the associated tasks and practices that are carried out in that space, that synthesise material spaces and gender (Hill Collins, 1998; Peterson, 1996). For example, the city centre is commonly understood to be the domain of men, and it is also understood to be the space of commerce, politics, and law, thus tying these features of society with men. As its binary opposite, the private context also links the female body to domestic and reproductive tasks in the same way. For example, unpaid domestic work (e.g., meal preparation, child rearing) has long fallen under the umbrella of "women's work" (i.e., work naturalised/normalised as women's tasks; Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Plausibly, the more time that women spend at home, the stronger the associations form between women and domestic tasks, and thus the greater probability that women will spend more time carrying out such tasks. Indeed, research has indicated that women's roles at home reflect such realities. Within the heterosexual family unit, women spend more of their day

performing tasks to maintain the household in comparison to their male partners (Sayer, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2011b). As well, consumer spaces (e.g., department stores and grocery markets) are considered to be extensions of the private sphere because women carry out the majority of consumer errands (Bondi & Domash, 1998). In this way then, consumer spaces are also interlinked with gendered divisions of space through domestic tasks. Darlene provided a synopsis of the relegation of women to private spaces, which she indicates is the reality for most women:

I think just being a woman means that you don't get to experience all your public space. You're not condemned but you are trapped in this little bubble around your house, the park, the school where your kids go, and maybe the mall—all those environments. [Darlene]

To be sure, while domestic and reproductive tasks are not problematic in and of themselves, it is their relatively lower value in society, as well as women's reduced access to public space and valuable public resources in society that maintain the inequalities of the gender hierarchy (Reskin, 1988).

These divisions of space also materialise to benefit men in tangible ways. Due to the historic division of masculine public space and feminine private space, men have long been advantaged in society. Throughout history and continuing in the present day, men have dominated the public sphere through their control of society's economic and political environments (Barnes, Bouchama, & Loiseau, 2011; United Nations, 2009). Within the patriarchal arrangement, women's assignment to domestic roles has augmented this hierarchy as they carry out the private activities that "free up" men's time. Indeed, Canadian statistics have recently demonstrated that women are still largely responsible for tending to the family and household (Statistics Canada, 2011b). Adriana

describes how this gendered division of labour supports patriarchal binaries and privileges men:

I think there are benefits for men that [women] feel safer at home and stay home more. You're at home, and you can cook, you can clean, you can look after the home. If we're out walking we are afraid unless we're with our partners. Men don't feel that. So I think in that way inequity persists. That advantage—the male advantage—they still have that. [Adriana]

As Adriana's quotation denotes, when men are freed up from domestic roles and are spared the spatial fear that is characteristic of femininity, men continue to benefit in society. The advantage of having greater freedom and authority over the public context translates into men's accumulation of greater wealth, including higher salaries, more property, and larger investment and savings portfolios (Bergmann, 1986).

Men's greater control over the public domain also produces a public space that is conceptualised and constructed by men (Fainstein, 2005). This male-centric organisation of space is advantageous as it further limits the degree to which a diversity of ideas and opinions are integrated into the public domain (Spain, 1992). For example, earmarking substantial resources for construction of major sports arenas in urban centres represents prioritising of an androcentric set of values (Burstyn, 1999). Problems do not necessarily occur from the building of such establishments per se, but rather the diversion of often-scarce resources away from the interests that represent priorities that may be more germane to women, at least traditionally and numerically at this point in time. Put simply, some public interests are not advanced due to prioritisation of male-centric interests. Based on the results of this Organisational Moment then, the hierarchies are best revealed when the following questions are raised: Who is empowered by *Urban Public Spaces*?

Who is disempowered? When it is taken for granted that public space is neutral ground, all hierarchies that create, define, and reinforce the public/private divide are collapsed.

Institutional Response

Representatives from Urban Planning, Police Services, and Provincial Policy provided a response to the second Organisational Moment. First, the Urban Planning Representative focussed his comments on how physical environments might be designed and changed to reduce insecurity and produce more positive environments:

Sense of safety is a serious issue. Given the concerns and comments above there is much merit in drawing more attention to not only the issues highlighted but also solutions. One area that I have knowledge in is that of design and CPTED [crime prevention through environmental design] principles...that is, how can design interventions help in a small manner to create more positive environments that all persons feel safe and secure in? In the downtown, better lighting and design can help in some small ways but certainly other interventions are needed to address how women use space and how space can be better designed. [Urban Planning Representative, male]

This representative's response reflects agreement with participants' experiences, and affirms that physical spaces indeed have real influence on women's lived experiences and feelings of security. In his emphasis on producing solutions, the respondent stressed the importance of a multi-faceted approach in promoting women's use of space.

Underlying the response from the Police Services Representative was the verification that the urban environment creates challenges for women, and recognition that such problems are solvable with collective and focussed efforts:

With respect to the concerns about some areas feeling unsafe due to isolation and poor lighting there is a great deal that the police and other relevant agencies can do to improve them. [Our] police service is currently in the process of enhancing its role in multi-agency efforts to enhance crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). This is not solely a police mandate, but the police bring expertise and leadership in building networks around such issues. [Our] police service has been involved in consulting and training, and this focus and network is currently being enhanced. [Police Services Representative, male]

In his response, the police services representative described the potential role of police services in bringing “leadership and expertise in building networks” around the barriers to full use of public spaces, which again suggests a multi-sector, community-based approach. While the precise steps taken to produce multi-agency efforts are not known, the comments above suggest that relevant organisations have awareness of these matters, and recognise the importance of coming together with the common goal of reducing spatial barriers for women.

Finally, a response was provided by a Policy Consultant for the Manitoba Government. His response refers to recent Liquor Law reform and its focussed attention toward enhancing both the social and physical aspects of public spaces—in this case, places where alcohol is served. While not exclusively related to the study’s findings, this response provides a practicable example of how provincial policy can play a role in shaping the public context:

I have reviewed the findings of your study. I have identified one area—Liquor Law reform—on which I can provide relevant comment from the perspective of my role in the Manitoba Government and on behalf of the Manitoba Government.

I would begin by noting that beginning in 2012, the Manitoba Government undertook a complete review and overhaul of the Liquor Control Act. In 2013 it introduced to the Legislative Assembly a brand new act that will replace it.

Perhaps the most relevant aspect of this reform process to your study has been attention to Hotel Beer Vendors—and specifically that women may feel unsafe in (many) of these environments. This has been described as due to the physical setting including the frequent occurrence of features of beer vendor including tightly enclosed spaces, unclean (smelly) or poorly lit environments, and absence of female staff. The general “social atmosphere” of many beer vendors has been described as highly charged and even threatening.

These concerns have been raised with the Manitoba Hotel Association who have agreed to work with the Province to address and attempt to improve them. Some progress has already been made, and Regulations are being created to address

the issue. New regulations may be able to establish a framework for “public safety standards” for all premises that act as licenced vendors, including beer vendors. These might include lighting requirements, visibility requirements, exits and compliance with municipal safety codes.

Beyond beer vendors, there are other public safety issues in urban spaces that have been identified in the context of Liquor Law reform. Most relevant is in regard to licensees being held responsible for public safety for the “in vicinity” area around their establishments. (This area of the law has yet to receive extensive testing.) More generally, the new Law licencing regime intends to make public safety a major priority with respect to the regulation of Liquor in Manitoba. [Provincial Policy Consultant, male]

Organisational Moment #3: Public Transportation

Definition

Public transportation is a fundamental system that facilitates access to essential urban amenities and activities, and increases opportunities to engage in substantive citizenship (Chant, 2013). Without this system, access to vital resources, such as employment, education, healthcare, and other necessities and leisure activities is limited. From a social perspective, public transport is often the primary mode of transportation for some socially- and economically-disadvantaged groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities) (Levy, 2013). Collectively, women have less access to private vehicles compared to men, and comprise the majority of public transport's ridership (American Public Transportation Association, 2007). Women also have unique travel requirements. For example, women's mobility requirements are more complex than those of men, as many combine travel patterns to include work, childcare, domestic responsibilities, and extended care roles (Hamilton & Jenkins, 2000). To that end, transport systems are considered to be a vital aspect of daily life for many urban women.

A common assumption regarding public transportation is that all urban dwellers have equal travel choices and similar travel and safety needs. This assumption, however,

ignores the social factors and power relations that are produced and perpetuated in public space. Even though access to public transportation represents a basic liberty of all citizens, it is a public service where women worldwide continue to experience recurrent obstacles, including restricted access, coercion, discrimination, and violence. The following are examples of the violations and unequal access that women experience in the public transport setting.

Within the Canadian context, in a survey conducted by Hollaback! Ottawa, the local chapter of the international movement to end street harassment, 44 percent of females surveyed reported encountering at least one incident of harassment while riding on public transportation in the previous year (Hollaback! Ottawa, 2013). As another example, in May of 2013, a man was arrested after he repeatedly propositioned and sexually harassed women for months on Vancouver's SkyTrain ("Vancouver Man Arrested," 2013).

Violations and limited access also occur around the globe. For example, in Israel a woman who sat with her children at the front of a segregated bus ignited a local riot (Sommer, 2013). According to the news article, passengers had insisted that the female passenger move to the back of the bus to comply with the ultra-Orthodox religious view that unmarried women and men should not intermingle in public. Because official transit policy permitted all passengers to sit wherever they chose, the transit operator alerted authorities, which resulted in rioters blocking and attacking several buses (Sommer, 2013). As a final case in point, in December of 2012, a 23-year-old woman was gang raped and murdered by five men after she boarded a bus in Delhi with a friend (Nessman & Sharma, 2013).

In addition to the discrimination and violence experienced in public transit settings, women also encounter difficulties reporting these incidents to transit authorities, police, and government officials. For instance, in Ottawa, four men forcefully took a woman from a transit stop to a nearby area where she was robbed and sexually assaulted (Roche, 2013). According to the news report, city transport officials distanced their involvement by asserting that the incident did not occur on transit property (Roche). In addition, when Hollaback! Ottawa provided transport officials with the harassment survey results described above, they were initially informed that harassment was not a sufficiently pervasive problem to warrant substantial changes to OC Transpo, the national capital's bus system (Hollaback! Ottawa, 2013). More recently, however, OC Transpo officially announced new measures to enhance transit safety (Willing, 2013). Furthermore, in some cases public authorities' responses to violations toward women support victim-blaming ideologies. For instance, in Beijing, China, police issued guidelines on how women could avoid violations in transport settings. Women were instructed to avoid wearing mini-skirts and tight pants, and to shield themselves with bags and newspapers (Mohan, 2013).

Not all transportation services have responded by negating and victim-blaming. In several major cities, measures have been taken to address the problem of violence toward women in transport settings. For example, British Transport Police have recently launched a joint initiative with London Transport Authority to help reduce sexual assault and unwanted sexual behaviour on public transit (Holdsworth, 2013). Two main focusses of this initiative are: The increased presence of both uniformed and plain-clothes officers patrolling London's transit network, and encouragement for women to come forward and

report harassment, as it is rarely officially reported (Holdsworth, 2013). Additionally, mass transportation sectors in major cities around the world (e.g., Tokyo, Dubai, and Rio de Janeiro) have implemented women-only transport services with the goal of increasing safety for women (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013). While there are some initiatives to address the violations that women endure while using public transit systems, in general, problems continue to persist across cultures and national borders. In the ways described above, women's public transit mobility options, including the ability to benefit from public transit conveniences, is significantly reduced (Levy, 2013; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008; Vasconcellos, 2001; Yavuz & Welch, 2010). According to Vasconcellos (2001), public transport systems contribute to the proliferation of "unfair distribution of accessibility and reproduce safety and environmental inequities" (p. 5).

Research has indicated that there remains a general lack of knowledge concerning women's travel and safety requirements in public transportation settings, and even less information on whether current safety implementations are meeting the needs of the female ridership (Loukaitou-Sideris & Fink, 2009). In their widespread survey of 245 transport companies in the United States, Loukaitou-Sideris and Fink (2009) found that several existing safety and security practices of transit operators are incompatible with the needs of the general female ridership. For example, while increased security measures are directed toward protecting transit vehicles, minimal attention is given to security needs of passengers at transit stops. This priority to secure vehicles appears to be misplaced given that most commuters—especially women—report greater fear levels while waiting at stops than when actually riding on transit vehicles (Loukaitou-Sideris,

2008). The present data supported this notion as several women called for increased security at transit stops, as Jenn's quotation illustrates:

It would be kind of nice to have cameras in the bus stops. I know [the cameras] could get vandalised but at least it's something [that can be done to address safety]. [Jenn]

Researchers have argued that this mismatch is partly due to the fact that few transit agencies have attempted to elicit women's involvement or sought to identify women's safety needs directly; instead, women and men are assumed to share similar transit experiences and security requirements (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008). Additionally, while the majority of transport agencies identify that women have specific safety needs and travel requirements, only a small portion of them believe that transit services should attempt to accommodate these needs (Loukaitou-Sideris & Fink, 2009).

The present study revealed that women experience substantial disadvantages within the transport system. *Public Transportation* meets the criteria of an Organisational Moment in the following ways: First, women faced many challenges in accessing and using public transport, including prohibitive costs, inadequate geographical coverage, and insufficient frequency in the schedules of transport vehicles at various stops. Second, several women described problems with safety, including difficulties with other riders (mainly men), as well as with safety protocols that were (or were not) in place to assist in the safety of passengers. Finally, the institution of patriarchy benefitted from these gendered inequalities embedded within the public transportation system in significant ways. The particulars of this Organisational Moment are described next.

Complications for Women

Based on the data in the present study, participants identified complications that *Public Transportation* brought to their everyday lives in both practical and psychological ways. These difficulties fell into four distinct but interrelated themes: (a) quality and cost, (b) safety issues, (c) ill-treatment of women, and (d) practices and protocols.

Quality and cost. On a practical level, women described difficulties with a system that was expensive and did not meet their travel needs. First, Jackie described how transit fees were prohibitive for her, particularly when her travel needs were compounded by various activities:

I think the bus system here is too expensive for a lot of people. When I was working and going to school, I used to use it and it would cost me upwards of \$10 a day, depending on how many places I had to go. I could barely afford it at the time. [Jackie]

Next, Abbie verbalised how the expense of public transit, the limited geographical coverage, and infrequent bus schedule created travel challenges for her:

The bus system is terrible in this city and it costs way too much! The routes don't go to all areas and [the buses] don't come often enough. The bus that I would take to work would come once every 40 minutes. If you missed it you're standing at these stops that aren't that safe for another 40 minutes. Who wants to stand downtown by themselves for an hour [waiting] for a bus?! [Abbie]

Similarly, Arlene described how the infrequent and disconnected transit routes meant that she would have to spend more time waiting at transit stops:

The transit system is not good because there are no dedicated bus lanes. Because buses are on the road and you stop so frequently, it's slower than driving, and the buses aren't frequent, you have to transfer a lot, which means you spend a lot of time waiting at bus stops. [Arlene]

In addition, Ada's quotation illuminates how inadequate delivery of transportation services raised difficulties in her attempts to socialise at night:

The buses here stop running at like 1:30 in the morning. So what happens if you get stuck downtown at 2:00 in the morning? You went out with your friends and now they've gone home, how do you get home? It's not an option to walk and a cab ride costs \$40, and some people just don't have that kind of money. [Ada]

What can be extrapolated from the narratives above is that current transit operations translate into more crowding on buses and more time spent at transit stops, due to infrequent and disconnected transport services. Moreover, travel patterns that combined daily activities were costly, and nighttime social options were restricted due to limited transit coverage. These deficient transport operations also incited safety issues, which are described next.

Safety issues. Women's difficulties with inadequate transport services are closely connected to issues of safety. For example, the infrequency of buses created significant difficulties for women who were made to wait at isolated bus stops for extended periods of time, increasing their exposure to potentially dangerous situations:

There are long wait times between buses and you end up standing for quite a long time. Safety is definitely an issue, especially depending where I need to transfer, so I try to think about how to reduce the time that I'm going to be standing somewhere if it's somewhere where I don't feel safe. [Sabrina]

Most participants described commuting experiences through public transport as challenging, fear producing, and frustrating. Specifically, several women described numerous intimidating and fear-provoking accounts of being intruded upon, harassed, and threatened while waiting at transit stops and while riding on transit vehicles:

I don't ever feel comfortable [using public transit] for so many reasons. Just the other day I got to the bus stop and there were four men drinking in the bus shack so I stood outside and then there was some guy on a bicycle that circled me until the bus came. [Sadie]

Women have been denied access to, or even forced to disembark from, public transportation vehicles through intimidating experiences which threaten their personal safety. Lana's quotation exemplifies this experience:

I find that there is an unwritten code of conduct on public transit where you're supposed to sit in an empty spot before you'll sit next to somebody, and you don't sit next to somebody until that's the only spot left. There was one time recently when I got on the bus and sat down, which was half empty, and a gentleman got up from his seat and came over and sat right next to me. I think he was a little intoxicated, in his mid-40s, and he was much bigger and more muscular than me. I was never so uncomfortable and I just got off at the next stop. I think a large part of it was to make me feel intimidated. [Lana]

Several participants described distressing encounters with passengers on buses that ranged from obtrusive intoxicated individuals to the peddling of illicit drugs:

There are people on the bus who are intoxicated and who become harassing or belligerent. It happens too often. They're intoxicated and not really coherent so I don't know what else to do so I just tell them to go sit down and if they keep bothering me then I just find somewhere else to sit. [Jacinta]

It didn't seem to matter what time of day I took that bus, there was always somebody drunk or high, and people often trying to sell you drugs, and drunks end up sitting next to you and getting in your space. The whole ride was always uncomfortable. [Addison]

As a result of frequent intimidating and threatening experiences, several women labelled using public transit, especially at night, as one of the most fear-inducing activities in public space:

At night I'm just tired and I want to go home. I don't want to be standing at a bus stop waiting for a long time and feeling on edge. I don't feel safe. [Candace]

I typically avoid [public transit] at night if I can because I don't feel safe. Sometimes it's unavoidable and you have to kind of suck it up and go for it, but it's not comfortable. [Bailey]

Ill-treatment of women. A third difficulty that participants raised was related to the effects of experiencing and witnessing transgression of personal boundaries,

discourtesy, and contempt towards women within the transport milieu. Several women described how these forms of ill-treatment of women seemed to be taken-for-granted as acceptable behaviour. More specifically, participants described experiences of intrusion into their personal space, or identified times when attempts to enforce their personal boundaries were ignored. First, Emma's quotation exemplifies the commonly reported experience of being infringed upon, although she much preferred to remain uninterrupted:

There are always times on the bus when someone sits down next to you and, you know, half the time that you're on the bus you're sort of in your own little world but you can't [remain there] because someone intrudes onto it. Sometimes it's nothing, it's not a big deal, but sometimes it's a little more intrusive. [Emma]

Next, Anne recounted a recent experience where she attempted to resist the intrusion by a male transit rider who continued to enter her personal space:

A few months ago, it was like 11:30 at night and I was taking the bus home and there was a guy who came and sat down next to me and started asking all these questions, and just sort of being inappropriate. I ignored him but he kept right on [talking], and finally I said [loudly], "What can I do for you?" and then he got up and moved. He went and sat down by the only other woman on the bus and started doing the same thing. [Anne]

Another way that participants perceived that women were mistreated on transit vehicles was through disregarding women's needs when they boarded the vehicle with children. Betty's quotation highlights the refusal of riders to accommodate these situations:

I've got to say, I've noticed that if a woman [gets on the bus] and has a kid or two kids, it's very awkward. Oftentimes not everyone would give them room [to get through the aisle] or give them a seat and they end up sitting apart. So, in my own feelings, it just seems disrespectful. If I had a child with me I'd want them with me, so I can understand why [women with children] would be hesitant to [use public transportation]. [Betty]

Overt mistreatment or abuse left some participants with a general impression that there was a lack of concern for women's overall well-being. As Janine reflected, because

she frequently witnessed aggression toward women on buses when no one intervened, she developed the sense that this was a tolerable form of behaviour on public transit vehicles:

I just find that there are a lot of women who have abusive boyfriends on the bus with them who are just being so aggressive with them and nobody says anything. It's really upsetting because it just makes me feel like no one is concerned. I don't know, maybe people are afraid to intervene or they just want to mind their own business. [Janine]

Witnessing such contempt was psychologically distressing for participants, and left them with the understanding that public transportation was neither an equal nor tolerant place for women.

Practices and protocols. The fourth and final complication relates to practices and protocols of the transit system meant to enhance the safety and security of its ridership, including the lack of enforcement of such protocols. Several women described how current transit practices and protocols for safety were not meeting their needs, thus creating further barriers to free and full access to public transit. For example, women's narratives above demonstrate how intoxicated transit users posed particularly problematic and unsafe situations. As a result, women indicated a strong need for protocols and practices that prohibit intoxication on public buses:

There needs to be something in place where bus drivers can safely tell people to get off the bus if they're causing a disturbance, or not let them on in the first place if they look intoxicated. [Adelaide]

Transit systems have implemented various safety features in an attempt to address the concerns of its ridership. For example, one policy that has been implemented on many bus systems is the request-stop program, allowing women to disembark from transit vehicles at unscheduled stop-points closer to their final destination after nightfall. On the

surface, this service appears to increase women's personal safety; however, Alicia articulated how this provision may actually compromise women's safety by drawing attention to lone women exiting the bus in more isolated areas:

There are the stop cords you can pull to be let off between stops, but that's just going to stop the bus and draw attention to you. It sort of tells people that, "Hey, I'm afraid," and perhaps even making you more of a target. Then you still have to get off alone and walk several blocks to your home after that, so I am not sure if that's worth calling attention to yourself when maybe you could have gotten off the bus unnoticed. [Alicia]

Adding to the complication of safety policies, women noted that oftentimes neither female riders nor transit employees are fully aware of protocols. First, Agnes's quotation articulates the perception that women may not be aware of transit protocols for safety, thus rendering them underused. However, she also highlighted the need to examine the reasons underlying under-utilisation to determine whether protocols are effectively meeting women's safety needs. As Agnes stated:

Maybe we need to re-examine the current safety protocols on buses to find out if these things are useful or are working for women. I've used the buses a lot and I have never seen one female request to get off the bus in between stops. I don't think it's very publicly known that a person can [request this service] or why it's not being used. [Agnes]

Moreover, Lori described what she perceived as a need for staff to receive up-to-date training with regard to these programs:

A lot of these programs, I'm going to assume, are 20 years old. I think maybe refresher safety training is needed for the drivers. Let's be honest, how many bus drivers actually know that I'm allowed to say, "Stop here, I want to get off?" [Lori]

As illustrated by the above quotations, women often felt that these services were not accessible safety options for female transit users. Without adequate knowledge regarding options to promote safe transit experiences, or with protocols that may not be meeting the

needs of the female ridership, women may be further curtailing their use of public transport facilities.

Other transport practice- and protocol-related difficulties included misdirected safety efforts, and protocols rendered ineffective due to operational inadequacies within the transport system. The following quotations exemplify these issues. First, Janelle described that, while educational efforts are needed to promote women's safety in transport settings, the current approach that focusses on what women should or should not do, is misdirected:

There should be a campaign for safe bus rides for women—but a campaign that's not geared towards women. I think that's where the biggest fallback has been. It's always geared toward women and how to protect yourself. I think they should have big signs [on buses] that say, "If you harass a passenger, you will be removed from the bus" or "Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated."
[Janelle]

Second, Julie's quotation exemplifies that, although some worthwhile safety measures have been implemented, other transport shortfalls (e.g., infrequent transit schedules) render such measures virtually futile:

They changed the walls of the bus shacks to be clear glass and that made a lot of sense to me, but it just seems like you're still kind of waiting for quite a while for a bus, and that can be unsafe. [Julie]

Overall, as illustrated by the complications described above, women face specific and unique challenges in using public transportation (e.g., violations, ill-treatment, and ineffective/absent safety protocols). What the data indicate is that for women, this seemingly public service is not fully accessible, and that they do not have complete autonomy to choose when, where, and how to navigate this integral component of public life.

Schematic Analysis

Women evoked two schemata to make sense of complications related to the Organisational Moment, *Public Transportation*. These schemata included (a) *Top-Down Governance*, and (b) *City Bus*.

Top-down governance. Akin to the *Top-Down Governance* schema evoked in the preceding Organisational Moment, women drew upon a set of beliefs that reflected a hierarchical, gender-blind structure of transit governance. As details of this schema were provided previously, a brief description of how this schema was evoked to make sense of the complications stemming from *Public Transportation* is provided here. Most often, this schema was conjured up when respondents tried to make sense of the shortcomings embedded within the day-to-day operations of the transport system. Specifically, this schema included the view that transport decisions are made by out-of-touch elites with minimal knowledge of the day-to-day needs of transit users. Sonya's narrative elucidates this schematic understanding:

I don't think people should be making decisions about public transportation if they never take the bus. They [decision-makers] don't have to use it so it doesn't matter to them how much sense it makes, or they might not even realise what the problems are. [Sonya]

Sonya's quotation indicates that there is a unique knowledge that may only be acquired through everyday grounded experiences (i.e., use of the system). The assumption is that when knowledge is acquired at this corporeal level, the implicit aspects of the system are more deeply felt and understood. Importantly, she also asserted that those who make decisions about this vital service are least likely to be affected by their ramifications. Additionally, participants linked public transit problems to the system's failure to recognise women's unique safety needs. Next, Ashley illustrates this viewpoint as she

iterated that, because transit is largely governed by men, women's safety is not a priority on the planning agenda:

It's too bad. Women in society are still not equal but probably if there were more women in charge of public transit, they would look at safety as a problem and find more ways to fix it, whereas now it's not on the radar. [Ashley]

As reflected in the quotations above, this schema implies that decisions are made in a gender-blind way because mostly men plan, administer, and manage the public transportation system. Moreover, as Shay's quotation illustrates next, this schema encompasses the notion that because decisions are made from an uninvolved, privileged, masculine point of view, they are ineffective in equalising the gendered disparities within the public transportation system:

You can't improve services if the people who are using them are not involved because they have this insight at the ground level that you're just not going to get from someone who has a driver drive them into town every day. Why would he know what the problems are? [Shay]

City bus. In constructing meaning of the many intrusions, violations, and intimidation that women experienced within the public transportation milieu, women evoked the schema of *City Bus*. Women who drew on this schema construed the difficulties arising in the transport setting as an inevitable consequence of clustering women and men in close proximity in unregulated and encapsulated spaces. Additionally, this schema included the perception that complications are foreseeable outcomes of amassing underprivileged and socially oppressed groups. In other words, public transportation creates a milieu whereby the underprivileged and oppressed come together in close (and poorly regulated) quarters; thus, problems are inevitable.

First, women described perceptions that intrusive and unwanted behaviours were part of the overall transit experience—unavoidable, inevitable, and to be endured. First,

Jessica's quotation illustrates how she perceives that women are inescapably at risk simply based upon routine practice of congregating in unregulated spaces with others (i.e. public transit stop):

You're making people wait together and you're huddling them, so you're also exposing them at the same time, and that's when things are obviously going to happen. [Jessica]

Likewise, Kate's quotation highlights how this schema provided a scripted understanding of problematic and inevitable, yet customary practices on transit vehicles:

There are always the extremely aggressive or assertive men on the bus who are overly friendly or [who] don't understand signals, and what can you do? You're literally trapped until either you move [seats], or you or they get off. [Kate]

Finally, we see in this schema an idea about why violations, coercion, and the ill-treatment of women are common experiences on mass transportation. The answer, according to this way of thinking, is that this milieu permits harassers to remain anonymous, and allows for a quick and easy escape. Abby's quotation speaks to this concept:

My experience of the bus has been the worst—crowded, sweaty buses where people are touching you, either accidentally or intentionally. I think what makes it more intimidating is that you're on this tin can trapped with whatever idiot's doing something and there's not much you can do about it. There's no way to identify him and he can just take off if you yell or make a fuss. [Abby]

Taken together, women understood the violations of their boundaries while using public transportation as an inevitable outcome of the public transport system that facilitated physical proximity in the context of anonymity. As participants saw it, public transportation creates opportunistic conditions where invasions and violations can be carried out with few, if any, consequences for the perpetrators.

Also reflected within the *City Bus* schema is the concept that the transport system is used by a microcosm of disadvantaged groups. The notion here is that for such underprivileged groups, the primary means of travel is the public transportation system due to their social or economic circumstances. For example, Raine's quotation specified how people who experience economic hardships have no alternative but to use this system as a primary mode of travel:

I think that socio-economic status has a lot to do with safety. I mean, if people have no option but to take the bus, then they have to be in places that are unsafe and that's stressful. [Raine]

Next, Rebecca indicated that particular groups, as a result of hardships and disadvantages, tend to be overrepresented in public transportation settings:

I think some people don't have any other choice but to use the bus, and so you're going to see evidence of this. There are a lot of ethnic minorities or low income people with social problems [on the bus] who you know have suffered a lot in their lives. [Rebecca]

Some women articulated that individuals with mental health problems are also common users of the transport system:

There's always somebody sketchy [on the bus] for sure and I'm just not sure of them, so I'll get up and move to another seat. You can tell that maybe they've got mental problems. Something's just not right about that person by the way they're talking and even if they're talking to themselves. [Amanda]

Additionally, as illustrated next, public intoxication was a common occurrence in the transit setting, which women viewed to be directly related to the social reality of substance abuse and addictions:

Where I transfer on the bus to the school route is kind of a rough area. There are a lot of people who have addictions and a lot of people who are underprivileged. They look like they might be dirty, like they haven't showered. They could be doing drugs. I feel bad saying this but you kind of hope that they don't sit down next to you because you just don't want any problems. [Rachel]

If someone's sleeping in a bus shack, you know they're just clearly sleeping off their hangover, and then they're told to take it somewhere else. It's hard socially, but I also feel like just keeping [transit] looking safe and clean is important. No one wants to see stuff like that, but it's also a social reality. [Melissa]

As a further illustration of how this schema was evoked, when asked to conceptualise how public transportation could be improved upon, Alyssa gave the following answer:

Definitely having a good transit system means addressing issues of poverty, and alcoholism, and social and racial inequality in our communities . . . and that's probably a more complicated answer than you wanted. [Alyssa]

What can be concluded from the quotations above is that the spatial concentration of underprivileged groups seems to foster an anticipation that problems are more likely to occur in this setting. Put another way, there is a wide spectrum of interactions that are considered “normal” between disadvantaged groups. Moreover, this way of understanding also brought about some level of tolerance regarding the complications that women encounter on the transit system. Ada and Mona's quotations provide evidence for the functioning of the schema in this way:

There is always going to be somebody around you doing something or saying something to you and you just kind of consider what their situation is. I just think [to myself], “They're on the bus going where they need to go.” [Ada]

The buses are a bit more iffy for me in this area [of the city]. There's a lot of crime and it's a high First Nations population, and so there's a lot of pre-judgment that every Native person is bad or in a gang, but I try not to do that. If someone's causing a problem [on the bus], I'll try to think about the circumstances and why he might be doing that, like [I'll think to myself], “What's wrong in his life?” [Mona]

For some participants, evoking this schema appears to have the effect of facilitating a sympathetic analysis when the plights of others are taken into account. In other words, problems were rationalised—and to some extent, tolerated—when transit riders were viewed to be oppressed or marginalised in some way. Finally, some participants

rationalised the common intrusions and violations that women experience in the transit setting by situating them within “broader” issues in society:

Without a doubt there's a lot of inappropriate conduct toward women on buses, but maybe we shouldn't be framing it as a gender thing—like it's just a realisation for everyone [who uses public transportation], you know? We all need to be aware of our safety and be aware of others, so I see it almost like a broader [issue] in society. [Bonnie]

In summary, women have limited control over who enters their personal space in the public transport system. To make sense of the above-described complications, women evoked the schema of *City Bus*. By drawing upon this schema, women presumed that (a) violations to women are concentrated in this milieu due to the access and anonymity that this setting provides, (b) public transportation is the primary mode of transportation for society's underprivileged, (c) problematic interactions between disadvantaged groups are normal and expected, and (d) transgressions towards women are situated within the context of other social problems that are associated with underprivileged groups (e.g., addictions, gang activity, drug trafficking, racism, poverty, mental health problems).

Coping Strategies

As just described, evocation of the schema *City Bus* served as a way of normalising and garnering sympathy towards others' struggles in order to accept an uncomfortable and heavily gendered situation that is not under one's control. As such, this schema may also serve as a cognitive strategy to buffer the discouraging reality that around the world, simply being female means that women become the targets of innumerable transgressions and violations. Nonetheless, both schemata described above generated little hope that necessary changes would be implemented to create better travel conditions. Women saw little point in interacting with a governing structure that

impressed upon them that there was no conceivable way to change the status quo. This concept was glaringly demonstrated by the fact that only one participant spoke of attempting to report her distressing experience to transit authorities:

I phoned transit and told them that I was harassed on the bus and they were like, "Well you can tell the driver," but what is a bus driver going to do? Like is the driver going to pull the bus over and say, "Quit being rude"? [Amy]

Unfortunately, as Amy's quotation clearly illustrates, her attempt to involve authorities did not result in actual solutions or changes to the system; rather, she was left with a sense of disillusionment from the futile reporting experience.

The majority of coping strategies that women adopted resulted from the viewpoint that the problems were largely uncontrollable from within the system itself. When women viewed their unequal realities to be an inevitable product of transit operations and composition of the ridership, they were left with few options but to individually manage their realities. As is common, women took on the burden of inequality through individual cognitive and behavioural coping strategies.

Cognitive coping strategies. Participants used cognitive strategies to manage the complications that arose from the Organisational Moment *Public Transportation*. These included calculating risk and self-talk.

Calculating risk. When making decisions about whether to use public transportation, some women cognitively calculated the risk of using the transit system. Ava's quotation illustrates this cognitive coping strategy as she weighs the perceived risks against the protective factors in deciding whether to use the transport system:

During the day, I feel fairly safe [taking the bus]. I mean, the bus I take isn't very busy so it might not be the best choice, but it seems reasonable and it outweighs the danger I perceive. [Ava]

Next, Bev explained how she calculates risk by extrapolating that the daytime composition and volume of riders increases the overall level of security within the transport system:

When I had to wait for the bus, I was a little bit hesitant at first because I'm like, "Ugh, you know, bus stops [are unpredictable]" but during work hours when I was leaving on the bus, it's all business people waiting at the bus stop trying to get home so, (a) there's a huge volume of people, and (b) it's all work people so everybody's in the same boat. It's not like coming there at midnight waiting for the bus when gosh knows who else could be around, so those are things that I take comfort in. [Bev]

Through assessing risk based on who was most likely to be using public transit, for what purposes, and at which times of the day, women were able to draw conclusions about when transit was likely to be the safest. When the risk was calculated to be too high, women drew the conclusion that using the system was not worth the risk:

The number of transfers you have to take to get to a certain destination and the wait in between stops just isn't worth the risk. [Ruth]

Self-talk. Some women described using self-talk as a strategy for tolerating the general discomfort felt in transport settings. Allie described how she implemented this method of cognitive coping as a way of self-encouragement to use transit:

I don't really like taking the bus but occasionally I have to take it to school, and so I'll just tell myself there's nothing really to worry about, like, "You're on the bus when all those people who would bother you are asleep. What are you worried about?" sort of thing. [Allie]

Next, Lauren described how she cognitively coped during an intimidating experience on public transit. After searching through a mental list of possible coping strategies, Lauren used self-talk as a means of resisting the intimidation that she felt during a harassing experience:

I was thinking, "Okay, do I move seats? Do I go sit with another woman?" but then part of me [thought], "I'm not letting you intimidate me, like fuck off!"
[Lauren]

Behavioural coping strategies. Nearly every participant indicated that she used at least one, and often more than one, action-oriented strategy to navigate the public transportation system. Such behavioural coping strategies included scanning/profiling, shielding, body positioning, constructing false appearances, route planning, and using alternate methods of transportation. The following are examples of how these strategies were applied.

Scanning/profiling. Several women described using a sequence of scanning and profiling as a strategy for selecting the best option in situating themselves on transit vehicles. Scanning was a way to both locate empty seats and to determine whether there were familiar passengers with whom they could sit. Profiling was a process of assessing visible cues of unknown passengers occupying the seats in close proximity to empty seats. This strategy created a brief pause that gave women time to choose the *right* seat:

When I come on the bus I do a quick scan to see who's on it. Sometimes it's to avoid sitting next to someone who could cause a problem, but sometimes it's also to see if I know someone on the bus and can sit next to them. [If I don't know anyone] and I have a choice of seats, I'll look around to see if there's someone who looks like I can trust them, and I might go and sit down by them first. [Beth]

When you get on the bus and have to sit with somebody you don't know, you profile everybody. [You ask yourself], "Who is the least likely to bother me if I sit next to them?" [Abigail]

Shielding. Using personal items, such as reading materials and music devices, was a strategy that women used in securing personal space. Women created a space where they remained quiet and appeared to be contented to remain immersed in their personal activity, thus indicating that they wished to remain uninterrupted in their journey:

[When using transit] I'm just kind of into myself. I kind of just keep to myself, I either have my iPod on me or I'm reading. I try not to interact. [Ellen]

Likewise, this strategy was considered to be a mutually inferred understanding among riders. Specifically, when shielding was enacted by others, this behaviour provided cues that those passengers were not likely to be troublesome:

I just find that typically, people who keep to themselves usually have headphones in and I don't mind that because they obviously are focusing on something else. Like I'm not going to poke them and ask them what they're listening to, and then they'll mutually leave me alone. They're minding their own business and I'm minding mine. We'll just sit together on the bus and that'll be our only real contact. [Bethany]

Body positioning. Participants used body positioning as a tactic for safeguarding themselves within the transport system. While riding on transportation vehicles, women kept their bodies still, sat close to exits, stayed out of concealed areas, and remained within the visual range of transit operators:

I generally sit quietly, not looking around or reaching into my bag or anything, sort of just looking out the window. I try to blend in with the rest of the people so as not to stand out in anyone's head. If I feel uncomfortable I'll sit closer to the driver. [Bobbi]

I sit in the middle of the bus because you're right next to an exit door if you want to get off, and you're close enough to the front to [be in the driver's line of vision]. I never sit in the back because you're sort of tucked and hidden. [Alice]

The use of body positioning was also implemented at transit stops, although in a somewhat different manner. When spaces were less regulated or secure, women attempted to reduce their visibility by minimising gestures and occupying peripheral spaces:

[When waiting for transit] I tend to stand on the side and try not to make eye contact because you know there might be people having a conversation and you don't want (pause) . . . well it's kind of like you don't want someone to single you out so you want to kind of separate yourself. You hope that they won't see you if you don't see them (she laughs). [Bonita]

If I'm waiting for a bus, I'll stand on the other side of some kind of barrier so I'm less in the line of vision because in a lot of ways I feel like out of sight out of mind. [Elsie]

Constructing false appearances. Participants also used strategies that included constructing false circumstances, either through creating the appearance of being accompanied, by evoking false emotions, or by falsifying information to deflect propositions:

If I am taking the bus later at night, I'll often get off [at an] earlier [stop] where there are a couple of people getting off so that it looks like I'm with them. [Linda]

I've actually pretended to be really upset and cried just so [other passengers] would leave me alone. [Ramona]

If someone's sitting too close and making [propositioning] comments, I'll try to be nice, like, "Oh well I have a boyfriend" or I just try to make something up. I'm getting better at that (she laughs). [Karen]

Route planning. To compensate for the infrequency of transit vehicles and lack of security at transit stops, women coped by planning travel routes that limited the amount of time spent waiting to transfer vehicles, or by taking routes that avoided isolated transit stops:

I'll plan my routes so that I can avoid standing [at transit stops] if it's somewhere where I don't feel safe. [Samantha]

I'm particular about which bus stops I will stop at to catch my connecting buses because you can stop where there's hardly anybody there and if somebody happens to come by and gives you a hard time, there's no one there. But if I got to [name of transit stop at major intersection], it's way more populated and plus there are more patrols there, so if there is a problem ever with anything, I know that there's not going to be somebody far behind. [Tabitha]

Using alternate methods of transportation. Finally, several women indicated that they arranged for and used other means of transportation to either compensate for

operational discrepancies, or because the transport system was deemed to be an unviable travel option. This strategy is illustrated by the following two quotations:

I'll finish my shift and it's eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and I'll end up walking home because I'd have to wait for the bus and it's a 40 minute wait in the city. It doesn't make sense to me to stand there waiting when I can be home in the time it takes for the bus to get there. [Kailey]

I usually don't take the bus at night. If I am out somewhere and it's late, I'll get one of my family members to come pick me up. [Cara]

This strategy is also supported by demographic data (see Table 1, p. 69), which lists private vehicles as the main mode of transportation for participants.

Collectively, these strategies illustrate how public transportation influences women's realities and how they navigate through public space. Women's compensatory strategies are not so much about choice, but rather a lack of choice. Women employ strategic approaches before, during, and after interacting with the public transportation system. They calculate risk and use self-talk to bolster the confidence required to use it. They profile others, and they shield and position themselves to minimise breaches. They limit themselves to where assistance is available. They occupy the periphery, and they falsely present themselves within it. They minimise wait times, and they limit travel within isolated areas. Last of all, they avoid using public transportation altogether and secure other means of transporting themselves through public space.

Benefits to Patriarchy

The institution of patriarchy benefits from disparities within the public transportation system that disadvantage women and advantage men. First, disadvantages are generated and supported by the intrusions, violations, and misogyny that women commonly experience in the public transportation milieu. Second, gender inequalities are

reproduced by the bureaucratic structure and delivery of services that fail to meet women's travel and safety needs. Together, these factors create barriers to public transportation and restrict women's mobility, which in effect reduces overall opportunities in women's daily lives. Conversely, men continue to dominate and control the public transportation system. Therefore presumably as a result, men collectively benefit from more opportunities facilitated by greater access and mobility. Consequently, inequalities embedded within the public transport system support the gendered hierarchy.

Around the world, public transit is one of the most necessary services for women to access employment, education, health care, and recreation. This is especially true for those in low-income brackets (Garrett & Taylor, 1999). However, when women repeatedly experience interfering, threatening, and violating encounters, the transit setting itself becomes an intimidating and hostile environment, and is often rendered an unviable option for travel (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008). As described above, crowded public vehicles provide the opportunity for unidentified perpetrators to trespass on women's personal territory. Dark, isolated, and unmonitored transit stops allow offenders to take advantage of lone females waiting at transit stops. Moreover, unviability is also constructed in another way: When women's presence in public transit is negligible, the transit setting is further construed as a space not fit for appropriation by women. Chelsie's quotation elucidates this notion:

Before I got my license, I used to have to take the bus all the time. There were a few times when I'd be going somewhere at night on the bus and I'd feel very out of place more than anything. Sometimes I'd be the only female on the bus, which made it that much more uncomfortable. It was a big reason why I didn't take late classes [while attending university]. [Chelsie]

Lacking an equal sense of freedom to use public transportation results in lost opportunities for women to further their lives. In Chelsie's case, being relegated to the sidelines within the public transportation milieu translated into fewer academic options.

Clearly, women are not permitted full integration into this vital realm of public life. Pain (1997) argued that constraints resulting from coercive and harassing behaviours in public transport constitute a means by which social disadvantages are reproduced. When women's basic right to public transportation is denied, so too is their right to benefit from urban affluence and participate in public life. Denied or controlled freedom of movement means that women are deprived of full independence to access important public offerings (e.g., employment, education, healthcare, politics, religion, social opportunities), which are already limited for women. Thus, restricting mobility can actively maintain the disadvantages that exist in women's lives. On the other hand, (most) men reap the benefits of unrestricted access and mobility within this system, thus creating advantages in all facets of life for which this system provides access. Therefore, benefits to the institution of patriarchy that are borne out of public transportation could be said to extend far beyond gender disparities in mobility alone. Mobility, including control over it, reflects and reinforces power. Inasmuch as it obstructs women's freedom to engage in public life, the denial of basic transportation reinforces the stratification of gender.

Unintentionally, the schemata and ways of coping evoked and adopted by women also supported and reinforced gendered inequalities within the transport milieu. Specifically, the schema *City Bus* reflects the assumption that transgressions are unavoidable and embedded within larger social problems, thus surmising inevitability

and inflexibility for systematic changes in women's own minds. In other words, this schema creates sharp boundaries between notions of what changes are necessary to meet women's travel needs and what is possible to change within the system. Evocation of this schema resulted in a tempering effect where women were more likely to tolerate or manage their realities at the individual level. When coping strategies include individual tactics of self-protection and avoidance, the oppressing forces of men's violations remain invisible and masked as women's fear or personal preferences. The pervasive problem of men's violations remains unchallenged, and when incidents do occur, they are separately labelled as isolated incidents where unpredictable men arbitrarily create problems for individual female riders. When cast in this light, the *pattern* remains invisible, and the underlying assumption is that changes to the system are not warranted or feasible.

It is not only the conduct of commuters that advantages men and disadvantages women. In fact, the transportation system itself has a direct role in reinforcing and maintaining gender disparities in the transport setting. As Anna's next quotation demonstrates, threats of violence do not represent a standalone problem that keeps women from using public transportation:

I think women really can be targeted anywhere. On the bus, I mean, assault can happen there too, but for me, I would actually use transit if it was more convenient, like easier to get around. [Anna]

Patriarchy is not only carried on through individual acts of discrimination, but also through the unnoticed bureaucratic operations that assign privilege to men. To preserve power, patriarchy—and the bureaucracies that strengthen it—must maintain the status quo. Restricting the opportunity for a multiplicity of voices to inform transport operations, and maintaining men in top decision-making positions are two such ways that

male privilege is supported and the status quo is upheld. Another way for the status quo to be maintained is through bureaucratic values that endorse fiscal management over safety and equality for all users. Enhancing security and increasing services are costly endeavours. Because the values of the transportation system are fiscally-driven and not equity-driven, fiscal issues take precedence over problems of inequity. Next, Ruby's quotation reflects her perception of how the public transportation system prioritises fiscal values over safe and equitable transport:

I feel like it's [city government's] job to help make public transit usable for women and we pay taxes. Even if there are other reasons why I may not use transit at night, because of safety [concerns] or whatever, I at least think that the service itself should be functional and safe. It's not an excuse [for public transit to operate improperly]—they're separate issues. [Ruby]

Ruby's quotation raises a key concern: That transport authorities can use the logic of women's reduced use of the system as justification for fiscal restraint and to maintain the status quo. In other words, if women avoid using transit, especially during certain times of the day, then altering the system for women is unpractical and perhaps even fiscally irresponsible.

When those in power are mostly men, decisions are based on the male-normed experience without knowledge or insight into women's realities. Chant (2013) stated that:

Gender-blind transport planning often assumes male labour patterns, prioritizing travel from peri-urban areas to city centres during "peak hours". This ignores women's dominance in domestic, informal, part-time work in non-centralized zones, non-peak journeys and disproportionate household and care burdens" (p. 13).

Decisions based on the male viewpoint tend to privilege men and disadvantage women.

When public transportation is operationally defined by the male experience, male-normed travel patterns are embedded into the day-to-day operations of the service. Priority is

given to travel between suburbia and the urban core, and trips that involve alternate routes (e.g., neighbourhood trips for reproductive or care work) are given lower priority in transport planning. Prioritising travel in this manner also signifies the value of paid employment over unpaid work (Levy, 2013). This is most noticeable when travel routes are direct and fastest from suburban areas to the city centre, while routes that deviate from this travel pattern comprise long delays and interruptions. The following two quotations illustrate the prioritisation of the “rush-hour, suburbia-to-core” travel route:

We hear the city [government] encouraging people to come downtown and work downtown, but how the hell is anybody supposed to get there?! The bus is not an option because it takes over an hour just to get [downtown], especially if it's not during normal work hours. So, then if you have a car, you can drive, and well now there's nowhere to park and it's expensive to park downtown. So it's just this perpetual problem that the city doesn't fix. [Cathy]

It would be nice if we ever got the rapid transit system so that it is more efficient and you don't have to take a bus that takes you to a completely different part of town just to loop back to get to where you're trying to go. The route that my apartment is on doesn't really make sense because you have to go [downtown] and then come back to the [shopping centre] and so I think they need to improve the lines to make more sense. [Natalie]

Because women are more likely to require travel that does not reflect the “male-normed” travel route, more of their time must be spent waiting, transferring, and travelling on indirect routes.

The ways that safety issues are managed send very strong signals regarding public transportation's priorities and concerns. Minimal attempts to reduce travel barriers for women, including failure to implement rules and regulations regarding harassment and ill-treatment towards women, are important factors in maintaining gender hierarchies within the transport system. Women's narratives also identify changes that could be made

to the system that would facilitate women's travel needs, as illustrated by the following two quotations:

The buses need to be more frequent and bus drivers need to be more aware of people who are being obnoxious or coming on with armloads of alcohol. Why do people need to be moving their liquor on the bus? People are dealing drugs on the bus too, so there needs to be something in place where bus drivers can safely be able to tell people, "Okay get off, we're not going to [sell drugs] here today." [Tracy]

I think bus stops should all be monitored. Each bus stop doesn't necessarily have to have a shack but I think they should be more monitored than they are. [Janet]

Even though women's voices clearly underline the need for usable and safe transport, their unified concerns seem to go unanswered. Moreover, without opportunity for women's input, there is no system of checks and balances that ensures that gender equality is maintained, or ensures that women's concerns are addressed. For Lori-Anne, the system impressed upon her that women's safety concerns are not a high priority as they are lost in the din of day-to-day transport operations:

There are already these programs in place, such as at night women are allowed to get the bus to stop in-between stops, or you can sit up next to the driver. I don't think women are aware that these exist, and so they might not be getting utilised. There are the signs but they are in the background, and they get washed into the background noise. [Lori-Anne]

When the biases in transport are integrated and part of the functional hegemony, the public transportation system supports the male passenger, with his direct travel to the downtown core, and who does not require complex routes to carry out domestic or care responsibilities. Further, this male transit rider has resources to pay, and has privileged status that requires minimal safety provisions to be in public space in the first place.

As a final point, there is an important distinction to be made between *choice* and *non-choice* female transit users. Participants in the present study were predominantly

choice transit riders who did not rely on public transportation as their main mode of travel. They mostly had resources to own their own vehicles and to pay for alternative travel methods. They also had systems to call upon to support their travel needs. Joanna and Hailey's quotations illustrate how women in the present study generally did not prefer, and therefore did not opt to use public transportation:

I have occasionally taken the bus but it's not my preferred mode of transportation. [Joanna]

I don't really like using metro or taking a bus so when I'm out with friends, I'll be the one to suggest that maybe we should just cab it. [Hailey]

Most women in the present study were from middle-class backgrounds, were gainfully employed, and many held advanced education degrees. With few exceptions, transport issues did not significantly obstruct access to basic services, or limit work or school options, as most women had access to (and used) other means of travel. Having the option to use other modes of transportation also meant that participants were not geographically limited to areas where public transportation routes were offered. Conceivably, having alternative travel choices may have facilitated participants' educational achievements, and enabled them to prosper from economic and social stability. On the other hand, non-choice users—women who solely depend on public transportation to access their most basic needs, and generally those who are already disadvantaged in other ways—likely experience the most severe losses from transport inequalities.

Institutional Response

Responses to the *Public Transportation Organisational Moment* were received from the perspectives of Urban Planning, Police Services, and Women's Rights. It is

worth mentioning here that public transportation authorities declined the invitation to respond to the study's findings, citing lack of anonymity as the key reason.

In general, institutional respondents acknowledged complications within public transportation services in their commentaries, which again were reflective of their professional backgrounds. First, the Urban Planning Representative's comment emphasised design and location issues related to transit stations. Namely, this respondent pointed out the importance of lighting and neighbourhood conditions in contributing to the safety of transit stations. He also pondered whether monitoring might help to offset safety issues:

If you look at the new rapid transit stations, I find them [to be] quite challenging spaces, isolated as well. Lighting around station stops and bus stops and location is key, and points as well to broader neighbourhood based issues. As a general comment, I wonder if the inclusion of security cameras [at transit stations] would play any role in helping with safety. [Urban Planning Representative, male]

Second, the Police Services Representative remarked how technology has been particularly helpful in supporting transit-based criminal investigations:

With respect to the observations that are specific to buses and transit infrastructure, I recommend you speak with transit authorities. From an investigative standpoint, high quality cameras in buses have been a great assistance to police investigations in recent years. [Police Services Representative, male]

While affirming key areas of difficulty relating public transportation in general (e.g., problems related to transit stops and passenger activities), these responses lacked both a pre-emptive and gendered focus. That is, responses did not explicitly identify how transit problems may be dealt with on a preventative basis, nor did they acknowledge how such problems may interfere more extensively with female transit users' travel choices. While not likely deliberate, at issue here is that these omissions suggest that from these

authoritative perspectives, what counts as transit problems lacks recognition of the issues that are salient and exclusive to women. The Police Services Respondent's remarks also suggest that there are unclear distinctions regarding who has responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of transit users. His comment regarding surveillance cameras infers that while clear-cut law-breaking activities on buses are a police matter, conduct that is less clearly classifiable as criminal activity falls under the jurisdiction of transit authorities. This is significant as it may imply a lack of decisive action on either part due to the perception that problems are the concern of the other. For example, Police Services may assume that it is up to transit employees to ensure that intoxicated individuals do not board transit vehicles, and transit employees may view public intoxication as a matter for law enforcement to manage. However, without the perspective of transit officials and further survey of such issues, this supposition is speculative at best.

One of the Women's Rights Advocates spoke to her view of authorities' failure to recognise and take responsibility for problematic passenger conduct, which she perceived as being a key reason why public transportation continues to be inaccessible for women:

We know that most transit systems have surveillance on them now, and it's still a huge problem for women to take transit without encountering problems. It comes down to accountability. We can even put up signs [stating] that 'these buses are being monitored' but if transit isn't taking responsibility and doing the work with their bus drivers, and police don't see it as their responsibility, then there's nowhere to go. We can put in all the cameras we want but if women are still getting the same response of, "Well, what do you want us to do because someone was rude to you?" then we are still stuck. [Women's Rights Advocate #2, female]

The above quotation highlights how technology itself does not solve transit issues when women's concerns continue to be dismissed by authorities. Her remarks similarly reflect the experience of the sole participant in the study who coped by reporting her distressing situation to transit authorities, who in turn responded in a dismissive manner (see p. 198

for the participant's description). Unfortunately, failure to take responsibility for handling problematic passenger conduct seemingly provides a further way to maintain the status quo. That is, lack of ownership of the problem discourages women from reporting complications to authorities, and therefore such cases are kept off of official records.

Finally, one of the Women's Rights Advocates who deals specifically with helping women to fight against harassment outlined the advice that she offers to women who want to know what they can do in the immediate to thwart inappropriate passenger conduct:

Whenever we do workshops, public transit always comes up as a huge problem. We talk to women about how they can stop passengers from bothering them or harassing them. [We advise them to] first, identify the person, loudly, so that other passengers know who you're talking about, like, "Person in the purple shirt!" Identify the behaviour that you don't like, like, "Don't rub against me," or "Don't look at me up and down like that." Then give them a course of action, like, "Don't harass women" and make it a general statement so that they can't make it about you, like, "Oh, you're just a bitch." [Women's Advocacy Representative #1, female]

The representative emphasised that this information is by no means a solution to the problem; rather, it is offered as validation and supportive advice to help offset the current circumstances where there are no viable official interventions in place to assist women in dealing with problematic passenger interactions.

Organisational Moment #4: Danger Messages

The messages are built into our culture: You need to fear; you need to be afraid of being in spaces you don't know; you need to be on guard in spaces you don't know because you don't know what's going to happen. [Lacy]

Definition

The organisational moment *Danger Messages* refers to the information that women receive from various sources (i.e., media, authorities of crime and public safety,

and informal social networks) regarding threats to their safety and well-being in public places (e.g., stranger danger—attack from unknown men in isolated public spaces). These sources frequently propose advice, caution, and warnings about how to negotiate such dangers. *Danger Messages* meets the criteria for an Organisational Moment because these messages of violence toward women, which are often sensationalised and inaccurate, perpetuate the fear discourse of danger. This fear works to reduce women's spatial freedoms in various ways. In addition, *Danger Messages* encompasses the advice offered to women to negotiate these dangers. This advice consists of individually-based strategies, rendering women responsible for their own safety and, in effect, their own violations. *Danger Messages*, as an Organisational Moment, perpetuates individual responsibility and victim-blaming ideologies, and encourages women's dependence on others (mostly men) for personal safety and to aid in spatial mobility. Moreover, this fear discourse skews the reality of the spatial distribution of male violence toward women by redirecting attention away from a fundamental pillar in the patriarchal structure: Violence by intimates in private spaces. The specifics of this Organisational Moment are delineated next.

Women's use of public space is shaped through various information sources that produce perceptions of danger, vulnerability, risk, and safety. In this research, women identified three key information sources that influence their use of public space: media, crime and public safety authorities, and informal social networks.

[Women receive messages about the dangers in public space] *from all over the place. It's everywhere from friends and family, to public announcements, to commercials, and just different geared media.* [Jayden]

A brief overview of these information sources, including how they shape and situate messages of danger in the public context, is provided next.

Media. Media sources have significant influence in shaping fear images, including perpetrator images (e.g., unknown male assailants), and the spatial and temporal aspects of fear (e.g., isolated and unregulated public spaces at night). In the following quotations, Sadie and Ilene described the organising influences of news and entertainment media in shaping their psychologies and spatial realities in the context of public space:

[Hearing about sexual assaults] in the media makes me more aware, and so if I'm going out at night, I'm thinking about it. If there are any guys hanging out in the parking lot, I pay close attention. [Sadie]

I wouldn't go into a [wooded area] by myself, no, and that's from watching too many shows where everything always happens when a woman is running along in a treed area by herself (she laughs). [Ilene]

Media are particularly effective in delivering these messages by reporting myriad stories about random attacks that occur as women walk alone at night, wait at bus stops, or venture into isolated spaces (e.g., parks, trails, and alleyways):

TV shows, like CSI and Criminal Minds, really reinforce the idea that a woman by herself at night is vulnerable. I mean, you've just watched a show about a woman who got raped and murdered while walking down a dark pathway so now you're not likely to go down a dark pathway at night by yourself. [Evana]

Recently in the news they've been talking about a serial rapist. They said his behaviour is escalating. It is something to think about but I also think that it perpetuates the myth of stranger rape and that you're not safe outside. [Kiah]

These quotations demonstrate how news and entertainment media have a twofold effect of defining and situating women's fears in public, and also offering rationalisations for why women's fears should be placed in this context (i.e., women are vulnerable *and* male sexual violence in public spaces is highly probable).

Media also shape the conceptions of the dangers of public space through the manner in which the messages are presented. Specifically, participants described how reporting practices shape the notion that violent crime in public is escalating:

It's always bothered me that the media only reports on violent crime and always reports it as if it's getting worse. [Stephanie]

The media constantly tell you how [public space] is so dangerous. [Miranda]

Participants' perceptions of crime in the media are consistent with research findings regarding the sensationalised reporting practices of mainstream media, which demonstrate that violent crime, especially murder and sexual violence, are disproportionately reported (Williams & Dickenson, 1993). With this over-reporting of random sexual violence toward women, the media portray an image of the dangerous stranger and imply that women are at increased risk for victimisation in the public domain.

Crime and public safety authorities. While the media work to shape and situate women's fear in the public context, authorities of crime and public safety work to support such danger messages. They do so through the rhetoric of crime prevention and safety initiatives that focus on the public domain. Generally, women in the present study indicated that messages from law enforcement, university campus security, the justice system, and governments shaped their perceptions of fear and danger. These various agencies and services are typically perceived as experts in crime prevention and public protection; therefore, the messages originating from them are considered accurate and educative. Participants identified two main categories of information provided by these sources: warnings regarding the risks to public safety, and self-protection information and advice.

The warnings and advice offered by crime and public safety authorities are linked with danger messages derived from media sources. Nell and Jacinta articulate this dynamic:

For the majority of murders and rapes you hear about, the media will always make it seem like you're at risk everywhere you go. But the cop was telling us that [victims of crimes in public] are people who are walking alone or walking in back alleys instead of going in well-lit areas. [Nell]

There's this whole 'you should be fearful' message from the media. The police don't necessarily come right out and say that directly, but they do put these little warnings out to be alert for random attackers. [Jacinta]

These quotations highlight two specific features of the relationship between media and experts in the field of crime and public safety: First, women's spatial fears and images of danger, which are shaped through media, are reinforced by messages from authorities that confirm the existence of public threat to women's safety. Second, expert information seems to narrow the focus of women's spatial fears to specific factors and locations (albeit the public domain). Women regarded this information useful in reducing general fears because it implies that they do not have to fear all places at all times, but rather are on alert for specific threats. In other words, messages provided by authorities offer reprieve from a widespread fear of public space, and instead advise women to be watchful for specific threats, such as lone assailants in isolated areas after dark.

Other messages from crime and public safety authorities that have significant influence on women's spatial behaviours are tips, strategies, and advice regarding how to reduce the risk of harm and increase personal safety. These messages are offered through several sources, but women most often identified law enforcement as providing the vast majority of this information, as Tania and Abigail describe:

About those keys, like going through the fingers, cops say not a good idea, but the cop did tell us another way of holding your keys. He said just to try and put them all in your hand to support your fingers. That way if you are going to hit back at least you'll get a better punch out of it. [Tania]

A police officer told me not to carry pepper spray because I'd get charged with assault and with carrying a concealed weapon. He mostly [gave me] safety advice like, "If you see something sketchy on the street, cross the street. Try to walk in groups of people if you're downtown, and try to stand at well-lit bus stops." [Abigail]

In addition, some women identified authorities as keepers and distributors of public safety information that women could draw upon when necessary. Misty described how police services hold and disperse public safety information:

If you want to take a self-defence course, if you want to take a first aid course, if you want to take anything like that, or like how to get away from a mugger, you can call the cops and they will tell you where and when the courses and workshops are and how to access them. [Misty]

Informal social networks. Perhaps most common in women's everyday lives are messages from informal social networks that advise them to prepare, use caution, and avoid risks in the public domain. Women described how partners, parents, friends, and co-workers influenced their spatial behaviours in the public domain in various ways. For example, participants described how parents often reminded them of the dangers in the public arena for women, as illustrated by Alicia's quotation:

The police have a website where you can look up [specific locations on a map] where women have been raped, or assaulted, or stolen from. My mom is always bringing it up. She's like, "I'm sorry if I seem like I'm being rude, but I'm being safe." [Alicia]

Alicia's quotation demonstrates how informal social networks may use data available via crime and public safety authorities as a tool to reinforce danger messages. Inga and Annika provided further examples of safety messages from employers and partners:

We were at work and we got an e-mail [telling us] that somebody got attacked in the parking lot, so they told us to be extra careful when leaving work and to leave with a co-worker. [Inga]

My partner will be the one who reminds me of [safety]. He's always telling me to make sure I park close to the entrance [of buildings], and make sure I lock my doors as soon as I get into my car. [Annika]

As these quotations illustrate, women are encouraged by informal social networks to adopt safety strategies when using public space. While some safety strategies appear to be gender neutral, at least on the surface, other safety advice is highly gendered. The following quotations exemplify such gendered safety messages:

I have a friend who works [downtown] and she says to never wear a ponytail and never wear a hoodie because you can get grabbed from behind really easily with those things. [Kyleigh]

My husband told me that I should wear my purse under my coat. That way nobody could see that I had a purse, and then too you also look pregnant and so there's even less of a chance that someone would attack you. [Jenni]

Another recurring message from informal social networks was that supervision or chaperoning was necessary for women in public places, particularly after dark. Oftentimes this message was most strongly received from male friends and intimates, as demonstrated through the following quotations:

[My partner] is actually very good, sometimes too good to the point where it's like, "I'm just walking to the car, it's not going to be that bad," but he has told me that he actually secretly watches me walk to my car every time I leave. [Barb]

I actually find my women friends are less worried than my male friends. I've had my male friends say, "I think you should just take a cab" and I'll be like, "No, it's fine, I'm going to walk," but they'd be very persistent and even offer to escort me home. [Kim]

In some cases, women received contradictory messages from informal sources. For example, Sis described receiving a negative reaction from a former dating partner each time she refused to enter into places that she perceived as dangerous:

I was dating somebody who thought it was crazy that I was afraid to go places. It definitely impacted him too, like we'd be walking and I'd tell him that there was no way I'm walking down this street. He was just kind of weird and not very supportive about the fact that there are places that you have to drag me to if you want me to go down that sidewalk (she laughs). [Sis]

In total, the messages that women receive regarding public space are ubiquitous. Women are continuously provided strong messages that foretell the dangers that lurk in dark and unregulated public places, and that personal safety is not a guarantee should women enter the public domain. Media sources appeal to women's fear of sexual violation by both overtly stating and covertly implying that they are most at risk from dangerous strangers. These messages are reinforced by authorities of crime and public safety who provide warnings based on information about criminal activity (e.g., police-reported sexual assaults that occur in public places), and offer safety advice that includes avoidance, restriction, and self-protection strategies aimed at reducing the likelihood of victimisation by such crimes. Messages from friends, acquaintances, and loved ones also entail encouragement to avoid public space, or at the very least, to use space accompanied and with caution. In some cases, informal sources contradict the rhetoric of the dangers of public space by suggesting that women's fears are unfounded and that avoidance and restrictions are unnecessary measures. The result of these omnipresent danger messages is succinctly captured in Charlotte and Lauren's quotations:

You just hear so many stories from so many places and it just makes you very afraid. It's a wonder that women go out at all! [Charlotte]

Who are we fearing or what are we fearing? All of society, but not quite. We're fearing the unknown stranger, the unknown assailant—we're fearing the unknown. [Lauren]

Complications for Women

Specific difficulties affecting women's daily lives and psychologies either emanated from myths of the dangerous stranger, or from safety advice and precautions. The next segment is organised as follows: The first main complication entitled *Myths of the Dangerous Stranger* is presented, followed by the second main complication entitled *Safety Advice and Protection*. The second complication is further subdivided into the following categories: *Restricted spatial freedoms, victim-blaming, psychological complications, interpersonal difficulties, financial costs, and conflicts of personal philosophies*.

Myths of the dangerous stranger. The first difficulty emerging from the Organisational Moment *Danger Messages* was related to the omnipresent myths of the dangerous stranger. Specifically, such messages perpetuated and reinforced the notion that women are most at risk for severe sexual violence by dangerous strangers in the public context. One major source of this perpetuation was sensationalised media reporting. Specifically, women described how media shaped and situated their fear of attack on the streets through recurring themes of vulnerable females who fall victim to random attack. For example, Jess describes how popular entertainment media shaped her fear and spatial behaviour through crime shows that often portray women as unsuspecting victims of random violence:

I used to like walking in the evening but I stopped doing that, partly because I've watched too many shows where a woman is grabbed off the street and thrown into the river, never to be seen again. [Jess]

Likewise, Toni describes her perception that because women are most often portrayed as victims in the media, this gives the message that female victim role is the most

newsworthy portrayal of women, thus reinforcing the stereotype of the helpless female victim:

Women are mostly portrayed as victims in the media. The only things we hear about of women are, "A woman was raped at the corner of this street and that street," or "Women were being groped in the park." [Toni]

Probably the strongest effect of danger messages is their ability to perpetuate the image of the dangerous stranger and instil the impression that women are at risk every time they enter the public realm. The image of the unknown male attacker who lurks in the dark corners of public space, waiting to sexually violate unsuspecting women is a readily available representation of the most serious threat to women's personal safety. One way that this message is disseminated is through public advisories issued by police that inform the public of potential threats to their safety. Specifically, women identified that such warnings have significant psychological and spatial consequences, as described by Santana:

There was [a police-issued warning] recently and I was just really irritated by it. It was saying that somebody was randomly approaching women [in public], one woman was 20 years old, and one was 60 years old, and one [incident] occurred in the [west end], and one was in the [north end]. Basically they're telling all women of every age in every area of the city that they have to look out for this guy, and it even said, "Be careful when leaving the house or when getting out of your vehicle." So you want me to stay inside no matter what area I live in or how old I am?! That's not okay. What are we supposed to do? [Santana]

Santana's quotation reflects how such warnings significantly influence women's fear, particularly through the details of random attacks that indicate that all women are at risk for attack as soon as they step outside their door. Next, Anne described how nonspecific police-issued public warnings result in a diffuse fear of public space:

I don't really want to live in a state of fear. If the police were seeing a pattern in a certain area and they wanted to put out a public announcement, if there was an analysis done and [it was determined] that yes, this is a serious danger, fine!

Report on that and tell people that this specific area is one to watch out for, but [instead] the message is saying, "It could be in any part of the city and you could get attacked." Come on, seriously?! I'm pretty sure there are a lot of spaces that are quite safe for women to be in. [Anne]

Finally, Kristine explained how these warnings significantly complicated the everyday aspects of her life:

The police have put out a warning on this sex offender and to be extra careful not to go places alone. It made me annoyed because I think these messages are off-the-cuff without realizing how it might complicate people's lives. I don't own a car and I walk to work, so now what am I supposed to do? I just felt like there was a lack of understanding for people who don't own a vehicle. [Kristine]

These participants' quotations elucidate how ominous warnings created complications for women's spatial freedoms. These quotations also reveal the depth of scepticism that women feel about the validity and utility of such warnings, which are publicised under the mandate of public protection.

As a contrast to diffused fear stemming from general warnings, Aria articulated how when the risk is geographically pinpointed through specific data on criminal activity, these areas become construed as places to be negotiated with caution or to be avoided altogether:

I would never take the bus to go straight downtown, or any of the high crime areas that you hear about that are frequently in the news. I would rather avoid those areas completely, get a ride, or have somebody take me. [Aria]

As exemplified by Aria's quotation, when specific crime locations are known, women integrate this information into their spatial routines by generating mental maps of safe and unsafe spaces based on "hot spots" of criminal activity. In this way, to some extent they are able to free their spatial mobility in a way that does not happen when the warnings are diffuse. However, while such information seemingly reduces women's spatial restrictions, it is also problematic because it divides public space into safe and

unsafe places. This division continues to be based on an inaccurate conception that public space is the most dangerous context for women. Whether through widespread warnings or pinpointed details, such danger messages interfere with women's daily spatial routines and psychologies. Women are left to navigate fear-provoking messages that emanate from institutional practices that are, at the very least, inconsiderate of the complications that such messages create for women's daily lives and spatial freedoms.

Such sensationalism and fear-provoking warnings culminate into an assemblage of powerful and extensively perpetuated ideologies which communicate that women are open to attack by male strangers from the moment they step outside the home. However, these messages create psychological tensions for women due to clashes with their understandings of public space that contradict these messages. Indeed, such ubiquitous danger images contradicted women's embodied knowledge that the true nature of women's dangers exists in the private domain. Kandace identified this discordance of knowledge:

I think that the idea of stranger rape is still extremely prevalent but reality is that you're not at risk there as much as you are at home. I mean, [stranger rape] can happen but it doesn't happen that often. [Kandace]

Kandace's quotation highlights how socially-available representations of the ominous male stranger conflict with her own knowledge of where the true nature of the threats to women's safety lies—in the private context. Next, Melanie verbalised her understanding that the private domain is where the true threat to women's personal safety lies:

I think how we're informed about crime and the threats to our safety builds up a lot of fear. I think it builds up more fear than necessary, definitely, because if you look at the statistics, it's 90 percent, if not more, assaults [to women] happen by somebody you know. [Melanie]

Correspondingly, Ruth's quotation highlights the contradictions to women's embodied knowledge by describing how the perpetuation of the perils of public space for women overshadows the idea that it is indeed males who are more at risk for victimisation in the public forum:

I think there is fear mongering [in the media] that for women [public space] is unsafe and strangers will rape you, which is not reality. And I think that there's a misconception that men are safer outside than women, but I don't think that is necessarily true either, but I feel like that's what we're pushed to believe. [Ruth]

In addition to highlighting how omnipresent messages of the perils of public space contradicted women's own embodied knowledge, these quotations also indicate that such inconsistencies produce tensions and negative emotion states (i.e., "unnecessary fear"). These messages are so influential that despite knowledge to the contrary, women fear the dangerous stranger and restrict themselves accordingly. Not only do they supersede factual and embodied knowledge, they also become internalised images. These messages amalgamate into a rich and detailed schema. Consequently, these incongruities create a psychological bind: women must negotiate the tensions that emanate from an ideological system that is foreign to their own knowledge, while at the same time negotiating the conflict stemming from the internalisation of these danger messages into their own common-sense thinking. These tensions between fear and fact are unmistakably apparent in Kendall and Savannah's quotations:

I feel like when I'm walking around, there's this level of fear, like I start thinking, "Is someone going to jump out of the bushes and attack and/or rape me?" Then I think, "No, no, that's not really realistic (she laughs). I'm just creating more fears because I'm listening to flawed media." So then I usually am like, "Nah, it's ok." [Kendall]

It does make you feel like you're paranoid because I know the difference. I know that women are most at risk in private, so then I question myself. Am I being too hypersensitive? At the same time, there are some places I just wouldn't go. Like,

I'm sorry but I would rather walk further and take a longer route than take a short cut through some really dark little grassy area with bushes. There's just no way I'm going there. [Savannah]

To be sure, these statements reveal women's internal discord stemming from incompatible ideologies of the spatial geography of women's violence and fear. Specifically, evident in Kendall's quotation is her struggle to negotiate the conflict between the ideology of the dangers in public space, and her own grounded rationalisation that she is responding to flawed danger messages. Likewise, Savannah's quotation highlights her cognitive struggle in managing competing ideologies. This struggle results in an undermining of her own psychological processes by questioning the paranoia of her thoughts and the hypersensitivity of her emotions. Also evident in Savannah's quotation are the behavioural ramifications of women's spatial mobility when overpowering ideologies are assimilated with personal philosophies.

Participants identified a final way that pervasive messages of public danger further complicated their lives. They described how information that would most benefit their safety and well-being is lost in the omnipresent discourse of the dangerous stranger. For example, Mallory articulated how messages that caution women to beware of unknown and unpredictable strangers leave little room for dissemination of accurate information and advice regarding the dangers in the private domain:

We're not getting the proper messages as women. We're certainly clearly told about the stranger—beware of the stranger—but the message seems to be lost to look at the signs at home, and how to protect yourself from the men who actually abuse you. [Mallory]

Similarly, Susie indicated that accurate information that reflects women's realities is needed to reduce the tensions and fears created by flawed messages. Accurate

information would free up women's psychologies so that they could move through space without fear of the shadowy stranger:

The fact that we're getting these messages—stranger danger messages—is frustrating. We need to change the education that women and girls are getting, but for boys and for men too. The fact that it is more likely to be somebody that you know who is going to victimise you is important for people to know so that they're not as terrified of what might happen 'out there.' [Susie]

Safety advice and protection. The second grouping of complications resulted from the pressures, constraints, and rebukes imposed upon women's use of public space. Such governing of women's spatial freedoms stemmed from safety endorsements that advised women how to manage the risks to their safety through restriction, avoidance, and chaperoning. Several problems arose from *Safety Advice and Protection*, and therefore the second complication is further subdivided into the following sections:

Restricted spatial freedoms, victim-blaming, psychological complications, interpersonal difficulties, financial costs, and conflicts of personal philosophies.

Restricted spatial freedoms. Women interviewed in the present study indicated that there exists a set of basic safety rules that shape and constrain their spatial behaviours and mobility, as the following quotations highlight:

[I've always been told] to be really alert, to really watch everything, and if you're walking on the streets and you're listening to music, never have both ear buds in your ears. [Donna]

On the university campus they really stress safety, like if you're leaving a building at night they don't want you to leave alone, particularly as a female. [Ariana]

People are always telling you all the basic rules and it just kind of grows . . . "Be careful when you're walking to your car. Make sure there is nobody around. Walk with a friend." [Irene]

Advice to women that includes avoidance and behavioural strategies is commonly available as part of the rhetoric of public safety. By way of example, the Winnipeg Police

Service website offers a collection of tips with regard to personal safety that includes: Avoid walking alone; take the busiest and most populated route possible; walk near the curb and avoid concealed areas (i.e., bushes and dark doorways); try to use well-lit and frequently used bus stops; if you must walk home late at night from a bus stop, try to have somebody meet you; don't hitchhike (like playing rape roulette); and if being followed by a car, run in the opposite direction (a common ploy of attackers is to pull the female into the car) (Winnipeg Police Service, n.d.). Such messages mesh well with the previously described danger images and public warnings that situate women's greatest risk of victimisation in the public context. Next, as Elaine describes, precautionary tactics become woven into the fabric of women's spatial behaviours, which are construed as a reasonable approach to negotiating the dangers of public space:

You hear about things in the media, like harassment and sexual abuse, so you are aware of it. You obviously don't want that happening to you, so you're going to take these different precautions. [Elaine]

While advice and strategies are offered to the public as a whole, many of the women interviewed indicated that there is an implicit subtext directed specifically toward women. Juanita and Andi's comments reflected this implied understanding of the gendered nature of public safety advice:

There's the attitude that women shouldn't go out when it's dark, and that we should act safer, and protect ourselves more because we need to protect ourselves more for some strange reason. But if you're a guy and it's 11:00 [at night] and you feel like going for a walk, go ahead. No one is going to tell you not to. [Juanita]

We [as women] are told that we have to put restraints on ourselves, but no one's coming out and saying it (she laughs). [Andi]

Next, Kitty and Rhianne discussed the precautions that they, as women, must undertake that significantly differ from the safety measures that men would have to consider:

You do think about the steps like, "I can't wear these shoes because I can't run in them. I won't be able to escape somebody attacking me on the street." What man has ever thought that?! Or not being able to listen to your headphones because you don't want someone to come up behind you. It's just all of the extra steps and the extra process of thinking about your evening that [men] don't really have to think about. [Kitty]

I think that I have some anger towards gender-specific safety [rules] and I think that if I were a man I wouldn't have to do some of these things, like don't leave anywhere by yourself, stick with the group, that kind of thing. [Rhianne]

Victim-blaming. Safety advice that proposes individual tips and strategies

supports personal obligation to reduce the risk of victimisation and at the same time lauds prudent citizenship when such strategies are adopted. Through such messages, women are told that they bear the burden of reducing personal risk by controlling their own behaviour. In addition, these messages imply that adopting such strategies is an expected aspect of womanhood and responsible citizenship. In the following quotations, women's narratives exemplify the ways in which they experienced this expectation of prudence and responsible citizenship. First, Suzanna expressed her perceptions of the underlying subtext of individual responsibility resulting from police-issued safety warnings:

When police issue those public warnings about sex offenders, I feel like they're telling [women], "I've warned you, you've gone out anyway, there's nothing we can do. Whatever happens, happens. It's your responsibility." I definitely get that impression when I read them. [Suzanna]

As illustrated by Suzanna's comment, women felt that they were expected to change their lives and spatial freedoms in order to generate a solution to *their problems*. Next, Krista described a friend's reaction in learning that Krista had walked alone in her neighbourhood at night:

She's like, "You walked from the concert hall on a Friday night to your home? Are you insane?! You're going to get raped or killed?!" [Krista]

Krista's quotation exemplifies how women's spatial movements are scrutinised and judged by others. On occasions where women are deemed to be acting irresponsibly, the inclination is to remind women of the perils of public space and of the recklessness of their behaviour. Similarly, Terri-Lynn described receiving a negative reaction from her partner, who voiced his displeasure with her assertion that she wished to walk to various locations by herself:

I really like walking to the mall and to work, but [my partner] always offers to drive me. I have to tell him, "No, I really need the walk." For him, it is definitely about safety because he'll say, "I'm not a fan of you doing that." [Terri-Lynn]

Interestingly, some women in the study identified a further subset of counter-messages that they received when they took precautionary measures for the purpose of safety. Specifically, several participants described receiving negative feedback from informal social networks when they followed the ubiquitous safety advice:

A lot of people, sometimes guys too, will make a joke about how I won't go to certain areas at night because it's hard for them to understand. Then it's easy to get caught up in that insane feeling. [Alexia]

When I'm out walking late at night with my boyfriend past some places that are kind of sketchy I would instinctively say, "We should cross the street here, we should walk around," and he would be like, "Lori-Anne, you're just being worried, nothing is going to happen." We've had this debate many times and I keep trying to explain to him why I don't want to go in certain areas. [Lori-Anne]

Once my girlfriend and I were walking and I carried my keys in between my fingers and my friend said, "Really Chrystal? Is that really necessary?" My friends sometimes think I'm ridiculous for doing those things. [Chrystal]

These quotations highlight how oftentimes women's emotional and psychological capacities came into question when they took up the rhetoric of safety in public. In these instances, the underlying message that some women received was that they were over-reacting or being dramatic. Overall, the subtext within such safety information is that it is

up to women to use good judgement and adhere to safety rules, and if they choose to ignore them, they are being irresponsible and reckless. Ashley succinctly articulated this subtext:

The underlying [message] is that you're dumb; you're a reckless person if you don't stay inside. [Ashley]

As Ashley's quotation makes clear, if women attempt to ignore these warnings and advice, such disregard is considered reckless, defiant, or foolish. With the rules in place for women's appropriate conduct, and the expectation firmly entrenched that responsible women will adopt these strategies, the framework is established for governing women's spatial freedoms. Likewise, the stage also is set for culpability of those deemed to have ignored the rules of responsible womanhood.

As described above, socially-held ideologies that place responsibility for public safety on the shoulders of women also creates an opening for women's spatial behaviours to be scrutinized. The following quotations elucidate how women's use of space is linked to victim-blaming through evaluation of risk:

Definitely, there's still the whole 'walk your girlfriend to her car' and stuff like that, and if you see [a woman] walking down the street late at night, the first thing [people think] is, "What is she doing out by herself?" [Ariel]

If a guy walked home from the bar after a few drinks, you'd think nothing of it, but if it was a girl you'd be like, "Oh my goodness, why would you do that?!" If something happened people would think, "Well, why did she take that risk?" [Anna]

These quotations indicate that women who are alone in public at particular times are taking unnecessary risks. They also indicate an element of judgement and blame for failing to exhibit prudent behaviour. In some cases where women act in opposition to expectations and are viewed to be behaving recklessly, they are considered incapable of,

or unskilled at, evaluating risk. For example, Korrine described how she experienced such punitive judgements from male co-workers:

When I worked at [name of restaurant] one reaction that I often got, which I really disliked, was when I told people I walked home, especially from some of the males who would say, "Oh that's not safe, you shouldn't do that." I would tell them, "I don't have another option, there isn't a bus that goes down my street and I don't have a car." I didn't like it because they made it seem like it was a crazy risk I was taking and that it was unreasonable for me to do that. [Korrine]

Women identified both the media and the judicial system as pivotal in shaping and reinforcing the notion of victim-blaming in both covert and overt ways. For example, Cindy verbalised how particular details often printed in news articles subtly suggest that women are at fault for their own victimisation:

It's not blatant. The article will say, "She was walking down the street at 2 o'clock in the morning." So basically the message is, "Well what do you expect to happen if you're out at that time?" It's more subtle but the message is there. [Cindy]

A glaring and timely example of unconcealed victim-blaming occurred during the data collection phase for the present study. This example of victim-blaming ideology stemmed from a sexual assault case in Manitoba whereby a provincial court judge made blaming statements regarding the behaviour of the victim. A newspaper article reporting on the trial indicated that the judge presiding over the case referred to the convicted offender as a "clumsy Don Juan" and stated that "sex was in the air." In addition, the article indicated that the judge made reference to the victim's "suggestive attire and flirtatious conduct" (Morrow, 2011). This court case, which was familiar to several participants, was construed as a damaging drawback to women based on sexist and outdated thinking, as exemplified by Aster and Tricia's statements:

That recent court ruling by that judge who basically said, "She was wearing a tube top and was asking to be raped"—really?! We're still there?! [Aster]

It's that kind of 1950s thinking [exhibited by the judge] that has made us so hyper-sensitive to [victim-blaming]. It doesn't matter if they're drinking or whatever! Clearly no woman asks for it! [Tricia]

Women's presence in public space is scrutinised and judged under the category of risk based on where they go, who they are with, how they are dressed, how they behave, and what time of day or night they are out. If a woman steps outside the parameters of the rules of responsible womanhood, she is seen as reckless or unable to make safe choices. If a woman is victimised and is also judged to have broken the rules of safe conduct, she is blamed for her own victimisation. In other words, a woman's movements, decisions, and behaviours are open to examination, opinion, and judgement. In the end, she is blamed for her victimisation if she is deemed to have failed to skillfully negotiate the perils of public space:

We're given the message that we're not careful enough. There's that whole thing too when something does happen then there's that whole backlash—what were you wearing or where you were at the time? I think we just get the message that whatever happens, you did something wrong, whatever it was. [Susan]

For women, the overall consequences to daily lives and psychologies as a result of the pervasive messages of danger are clear. Women have fewer options in how to go about living their lives and are unable to move freely without judgement and reprimand:

My general feeling is that I get a lot of feedback on how I should live my life. [Aletha]

Psychological complications. Participants identified several psychological difficulties relating to spatial restrictions by which women are expected to abide. First, Amy and Amalie outlined the emotional costs of these restrictions in women's daily realities:

From my perspective it's just like the loss of enjoyment. Walking around is fun, it's a good and healthy way to get around, but women feel scared doing it and so they can't enjoy it. [Amy]

Women just don't have the same options. It gets dark so early [in the winter months] and if you're by yourself downtown, you feel like you can't go out after 5:30 and suddenly your life is in your apartment, and there is an emotional cost to staying home and not doing what you want to do. [Amalie]

Women also described psychological consequences relating to self-perception as they struggled to reject views of themselves as weak, dependent, and personally at fault for creating the difficulties in their lives:

It's frustrating because you don't want to be perceived that you're not strong enough, or to think [of yourself] as weak. Women have notoriously been seen as less capable, so you want to prove to yourself that you can go out by yourself and that you don't have to have someone else watching out for you. [Alexa]

You can't have your own sense of independence. [Ray-Anne]

I didn't go out by myself. I stayed home at night. I start being the pseudo-victim. [Breanna]

Interpersonal complications. Women identified interpersonal tensions that resulted from others' comments and attempts to manage their behaviour. First, Anna described being irritated by others' inquiries and opinions regarding her spatial behaviour:

I was at a party last night and I was leaving at 2:30 and several people were asking how I was getting home and giving their opinion. I got irritated and I was just kind of like, "Don't worry! I'll decide how I'm going to go!" [Anna]

Next, Cassandra explained how her partner's concern over her safety led to conflict when he did not know her whereabouts and was not able to contact her to confirm that she was safe:

I don't like to be attached to my phone when I'm with other people because I want to give my attention to the people that I'm with so I had my phone in my bag on

silent and I didn't notice that [my partner] called me eight times, which actually provoked a huge argument later. [Kassandra]

Finally, Jordan articulated how her desire to walk to the coffee shop in the evening often elicited an angry response from her partner:

I like to get out on Sunday evenings after I put my daughter to bed. I usually walk to Starbucks just to have a bit of time to myself before the next work week begins. [My partner] will get angry. He'll just be like, "Why do you have to walk out there? Why are you going outside at 10:30 [at night]?" [Jordan]

Financial costs. Several women identified financial costs associated with following the rules of safety, as exemplified by the following quotations:

I definitely take cabs when I could walk or take the bus. I also pay extra for parking to be closer to where I need to be, especially at night, instead of free parking on the street and walking a further distance. [Rosslyn]

We're told we shouldn't be walking around at night, so what are the options? You can take a cab, which is expensive, or you can take transit, but again you're dealing with the same [issue of] walking to the transit stop and waiting there. [Sandra]

Conflicts of personal philosophies. Last, women communicated how they had difficulty living their lives according to their personal philosophies as a result of restricted parameters defined by safe and appropriate conduct for women:

I was driving home the other day and there was somebody on the road. It looked like they had a flat tire or something. Part of me wanted to stop and help because that's my nature to help someone in need but because I was alone I wasn't so convinced that I wanted to [help him] in the freak chance that he wasn't who he appeared to be. [Belle]

I would really like not having to drive everywhere and start taking buses because I think about the environment and how I could help, but as a woman there's no way, I mean, it's not safe and we're told not to travel on buses at night or to wait at bus stops by ourselves because it's too dangerous. [Nathalie]

Furthermore, Jessie highlighted her struggle to reconcile opposing messages that inform women to restrict their public lives, while at the same time telling them that they must fully engage in public life in order to experience life's offerings:

[It's hard because] *there's a lot of advice around protecting yourself by staying out of this place or that place, but then there's also a larger part of society that's telling you that you have to put yourself out there in order to accomplish your goals, whether it's a new career, getting a partner, all those kinds of things. So, I think it's telling you one thing but also telling you to do the complete opposite at the same time.* [Jessie]

In summary, the complications to women's daily lives and psychologies are evident in their narratives that elucidate how *Danger Messages* conflict with their embodied knowledge, interfere with spatial freedoms, hold them culpable for public persecutions, and create intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts in their lives. How are women to make sense of this disconcerting reality? Next is a description of the schemata that women drew upon to construct meaning relating to these organising influences in their lives.

Schematic Analysis

When making sense of the myriad messages that women received regarding the perils of public space and the advice to navigate such hazards, the sources from which the messages were derived were central to women's interpretations. The perceived credibility of the sources and intention of the communication greatly influenced how women attended to the messages. There were four main schemata that influenced women's thinking and action with regard to *Danger Messages*: (a) *Media is a Business*, (b) *Benevolent Others*, (c) *Limits of Authority*, and (d) *Responsible Womanhood*.

Media is a business. Women interpreted the sensationalism of mainstream media as stemming from the public's desire for stagy entertainment. Angie's quotation

highlights the perception that media cater to the public's demand for a sensationalised style of reporting:

[Violent crimes] are over-reported in the media. There's the whole 'media puts fear into people' but that's what people want to read about. I mean, nobody cares if a car gets stolen. It's not at the top of the list for anybody to really care about. There's no interest so there's no audience. [Angie]

This quotation illustrates how the media rely on audiences for profit, and a sure way to secure such an audience is through connecting the public's interest (and emotions) to their environment. Dramatised and shocking stories are among the most profitable commodities in media reporting, as identified by the following quotation:

I think [media] have to report about [violent crimes] because that's what sells. [Mona]

Participants perceived the media's reporting practices to be skewed in favour of the sensational, in order to serve a broader, commercial agenda. This perception is reflected in the following quotations:

I know that media and news stories like to print what is easy to print and going to the police report is a lot easier than reporting on the bigger [social] problems [that are] behind crime. [Instead] they go for a catchy headline because it catches people's attention. [Ranatae]

Media, I think, has lost all its power and credibility because it's just gone too Hollywood, essentially. I know the media's always going to present to the public what the public wants to hear. [Tracie]

As these quotations suggest, participants viewed sensationalistic crime reporting as reflecting a shortcoming of some mainstream media sources to delve deeper into complex social problems. In addition, some media sources were viewed to engage in negligent and biased reporting practices in the interest of entertainment-generated profits.

Participants believed that the media too often place women in objectified or victimised roles. Moreover, they believed that the media neglect to showcase women in

strong and positive roles. For these two reasons, participants regarded the media as harmful and discounted them:

I'm sceptical of the media because, as sad as it seems, a lot of media really encourages violence towards women or objectification so I think a lot of people sadly see women as props. There's always just a woman thrown in to look at. She doesn't get to have a brain or a personality. I feel like that really makes a difference in how people view women in general. [Sam]

I think women should be getting a lot more credit for what they do. There's no positive message. There's nothing about, "Oh it was a woman who discovered the cure for cancer." I know that hasn't happened yet but . . . [Trudy]

Benevolent others. Women drew upon the schematic understanding that informal sources (e.g., partners, family, friends, and workmates) provided cautions and safety advice with caring intentions and genuine concern.

I think my partner's got a very good awareness [of my safety], like if I'm going out on my own he's always telling me to be safe. For example, if I'm going to my sister's or going to my mom's and plans change, he'll say, "Give me a call as soon as you can" [so he] knows where I am. [Helena]

I live downtown and every few months I get nagged by my parents to move [because] they don't think it's safe for me to live there. [Rachel]

In my preparation to move, one of my boyfriend's stipulations for the location I chose was the fact of where I would be parking. He didn't want anything [bad] happening to me. [Betty]

Within the *Benevolent Others* framework of understanding, women perceived that intimates had their best interest in mind, which allowed women to place trust in these sources and accept the offerings of protection:

[My partner] is always worried for me, like if I'm walking to my car he'll be like, "Oh I'll walk you to the car." He won't let me walk around by myself. [Ida]

Working the night shift downtown, the security guards would walk us to our car. It wasn't policy at the time but it was strongly recommended for our safety and so none of us ever walked to our car without a guy, ever. [Molly]

Moreover, women construe others' concerns about their safety as developing from the same sensationalised media and public warnings that shape and constrain women's daily lives. In other words, flawed media influences all members of society in their perception that public space is dangerous for women, and that women should be afraid and cautious:

I just feel like I really don't need to be explaining [to my friends] how I'm getting home tonight or that I'm going to leave by myself, and I think, "Would we be having this same discussion if I was going on a date with somebody?" I mean, maybe this is an opportunity for me to say nicer things about men who [express concern for my safety] because I do think that at this point [the messages about danger to women in public] have been perpetuated so much that the fear is genuine with both men and women. [Alana]

My mom is always telling me, "You shouldn't be walking alone at night. You should take a cab. You should make sure you're with friends." And I understand where she's coming from because she hears the same messages about [the dangers in public]. [Kirstie]

The media portray powerful images where women are often attacked by male strangers, as well as conceptions of women as weak and vulnerable, thus creating the perception that women are accessible and easy targets. The above quotations indicate that these images are not only internalised by women, but by society as a whole, thereby influencing how informal social networks respond to these images. As a result, public perception continues to hold that women are at greater risk in public spaces, and therefore women must navigate within a distortion of reality held in the minds of society.

Limits of authority. A third schema that women evoked to make sense of *Danger Messages* was constructed around information disseminated by authorities that educates (and warns) the public of the threats to safety and provided advice on how to manage these threats. First, Teri and Edie's comments reflect how information offered from sources considered to be experts in the area of public safety is regarded as advice to be heeded, and construed as common-sense strategies for self-protection:

CBC had some lady on last week from [victim service agency, who was] talking about those sexual attacks that were happening in the [community] and she was advising of some of the things you can do [for self-protection]. As a woman, you pay attention to those things when they come up. It's a signal that, "Hey, I should listen to this." It just doesn't hurt to be aware and take some advice to make sure nothing happens. [Teri]

There's safety information on the screens by campus security, common sense things I would know already, like not to walk by yourself, to use Safe Walk or Ride, to be aware of your surroundings, etc. [Edie]

Next, Hillary explained that information provided by experts who possess factual data about the threats to public safety is advantageous for navigating risks to her personal safety in public:

I would rather hear and know about [the police-issued warnings] because if I'm more aware of what's going on in a certain area and I have to go there then I can take precautions but if I don't know about it and I go there and then, God forbid, something happens, I would be extremely upset because you knew what was going on, you knew that area was not safe, so why didn't you tell us? [Hillary]

Hillary's comment underscores the view that experts, who hold key safety information, have a duty to the public to share this information. Specifically, there is an expectation that experts will disseminate such information in the interest of public safety, and also that failure to do so is negligent. However, as Melody indicated, there are limitations to which the public should be informed about such dangers, as too much information would have an overall negative effect:

[Crime and public safety officials] cannot possibly warn us about everything that happens because no one would ever leave the house. What they do publish, the little bits that they do give us, I do believe in their own roundabout way, is to try to educate people and maybe try to enforce personal safety. [Melody]

Melody's quotation indicates the perception that authorities are, in some way, serving the needs of women by informing them of the risks to their safety (i.e., men's violence) inherent in the public domain. She also underlines how authorities control the

dissemination of such information and make judgements based on perceptions of how to best educate and serve the public.

Even though participants perceived that officials are experts in the area of crime (including crime prevention) and public safety, it appears that such expertise does not translate into risk and safety management for individuals in the public context. This schematic division became clear when women were asked to identify who they perceived to be responsible for public safety, and then probed about who they perceived to be responsible for their personal safety in the public context. First, Hanna's quotation identifies part of this schematic division:

First and foremost I think the police are directly responsible for public safety, and in a general sense, I think that making sure the streets are safe is the responsibility of our laws and justice system, and so you just kind of put your faith in that they're all working together to do their job properly. [Hanna]

Second, Christine's quotation provides a narrative for the splintering of this schematic interpretation of public safety:

You're ultimately responsible for your own safety. Obviously there are the police who are also there to help you but if you don't help yourself by using common sense then they can't help you. [Christine]

Christine's quotation provides clues to the rupturing of this particular schema regarding safety on the street: On an ideological level, experts are responsible for public safety; yet, on a practical (but also ideological) level, protecting the public is essentially an unachievable goal. Therefore, a woman's safety is best achieved through individual means—by heeding the warnings and applying the advice (e.g., self-restriction and avoidance of public spaces).

How do women make meaning of the notion that those whose mandate it is to protect the public have minimal influence over women's safety? In order to conceptually

justify the emphasis on individual responsibility for their safety, women extended their interpretation of the limited role of authorities to include the concept that experts are presently addressing public safety to the fullest extent possible. In other words, experts are doing their best to address public safety issues. The spillover of risk and safety thus becomes an individual issue that is addressed through self-management, as highlighted by the following quotation:

There's so much already in place for public safety and I think that everyone that works in that field does such a good job but it's up to the individual to take the onus on themselves to find out how to protect yourself. Honestly, you can't live in a fairy tale world. You can hope for the best but I don't know what else can be done. [Missy]

Next, Jillian provided a terse analysis of the problem from which she drew a practical resolution—that personal safety in public rests on the shoulders of the individual, which is achieved by managing risk:

The government plays somewhat of a role [in public safety]. They manage the laws and the resources but I find it hard-pressed to basically blame the government for the safety situation that's happening. I think there are so many other factors that play into it, like the police, they're there to protect, but the same point they can't be expected to be everywhere, and that's where I have to make that decision. Am I going to be out there and am I willing to put myself at risk? That's the way that I see it. [Jillian]

If experts offer limited ability to resolve the risks to women's safety from men's violence that is touted to exist in the public domain, then the logical deduction is self-protection. Management of risk through various strategies then becomes embedded in the rulebook of responsible womanhood. Moreover, failure to heed the warnings and advice (e.g., going out at night unaccompanied) is construed as reckless and irresponsible female behaviour. These concepts form the basis of the fourth and final schema evoked by participants.

Responsible womanhood. Women drew upon the *Responsible Womanhood* schema to construct meaning within the context of the limitations of experts in protecting women. Society informs women that there are responsible (and reckless) ways to navigate and manage themselves in the public domain. Women's narratives highlighted how the schema of *Responsible Womanhood* was elicited for them. First, Connie's quotation illustrates how she used the notion of responsibility to guide her decision to be escorted to her vehicle:

I've used the downtown Safe Walk a couple of times. At first I felt a little bit ridiculous because my car wasn't really that far. I could have sprinted to my car and I would have been there in two minutes, but then I thought, "No, no, this is the responsible thing to do." [Connie]

Next, Cori's quotation illustrates her awareness of the "rules" of individual restrictions in the name of safety:

Don't carry a purse, cover yourself up, don't go outside, don't go out by yourself, don't go out at night, or at least don't go out late at night. I'm still not sure what the magic time is that you're not allowed [to go] outside and which areas of the city [you're not allowed to go] by yourself. [Cori]

In addition, women even questioned their own behaviour upon the realisation that they have failed to act in accordance with the guidelines of *Responsible Womanhood*:

If I was travelling late at night and I was taking the bus, I would take it upon myself to call somebody to get a ride, and if I decided to take the bus and, I don't know, I got attacked, I'd be like, "Okay, I shouldn't have done that." [Cara]

When I get in my car, I do check in the back seat, so that's a part of not feeling safe. Other than that I feel safe walking downtown. Maybe this is me being naïve or gullible or stupid, like I think, "Why aren't I more protective?!" Like I don't carry any mace or . . . [Bonita]

Women's schemata reflect a parallel with the socially-available rhetoric of women shouldering the responsibility for keeping themselves safe: A responsible woman would use space sensibly (e.g., being prepared when going out, staying in at night, and using

chaperones), as well as managing her appearance and behaviour. On the other hand, a reckless woman would do none of these things:

In all fairness to girls, you can wear whatever you want. I'm not saying you deserve anything, but it may not be a good idea to be [walking around] with 7-inch spikes on and [with] your skirt barely covering your butt. I mean, of course people are going to look at you! So a part of it is you calling attention to yourself and if you are, great! Then take the compliments, take the hoots, the hollers, the whatever, but you have to be aware that [you're contributing to the situation] too. [Maddie]

If I'm going to be walking around at 1:30 or 2 o'clock in the morning in a specific area, I don't want to say you're asking for trouble but technically—well not technically—but you kind of are because you should know better than to go in these areas and when you read in the paper about assaults happening to somebody. So it's like, "Well why were you there? What made you go down there in that area at 4 o'clock in the morning by yourself when you know stuff like this happens?" [Hope]

These quotations exemplify how patriarchal notions of personal responsibility and controllability over social outcomes are so robust that they are also held in women's own minds. Embedded in the schema of *Responsible Womanhood* is a taken-for-granted assumption that if women take all necessary precautions for their safety, then victimisation is avoidable. Likewise, the inverse of this assumption is that failure to adhere to such precautions increases the likelihood of victimisation. In other words, they are "asking for trouble." Thus, the above quotations reflect women's cognitive struggle to reject patriarchal victim-blaming ideologies that causally link women's behaviour with victimisation when evoking this schema.

Coping Strategies

Women both cognitively and behaviourally coped with the difficulties arising from *Danger Messages* in the following ways:

Cognitive coping strategies. Through evoking the schema of *Responsible Womanhood*, women cognitively bridged the gap between the touted perils of the dangerous stranger and the limited protection that crime and public safety experts are capable of providing. Thus, by evoking this schema, women regained a sense of control (albeit based on myths and patriarchal ideologies) over their own safety:

Police can't be everywhere waiting for something to happen. No one else can make your decisions for you, no one else can tell you to do stuff—only you do that. You decide how you feel about something, you decide if you're going to take that risk. [Angel]

As described above, this schema has patriarchal underpinnings that draw the lines between “responsible” and “reckless” women. Patriarchy rewards those who follow the rulebook of *Responsible Womanhood* by casting them as blameless victims who deserve the care and concern of society. Inversely, women who behave recklessly (e.g., wearing “sexually-suggestive” clothing, or presenting in public at night without an escort) are cast as blameworthy victims. Therefore, there is a social and psychological price to pay for acting recklessly. To remain blameless in the judging views of society, it is in a woman's best interest to present herself as a responsible woman, and also to distance herself from reckless and blameworthy women. The following quotations illustrate how evoking the schema of *Responsible Womanhood* also functioned as a conceptual boundary marker to label both their own behaviour and the behaviour of other women in the public domain:

I'm responsible for my safety and just keeping an eye out and not doing stupid things like walking in places that are known to be rough after midnight. [Ada]

I think for the most part, you just have to be aware of your surroundings and take precautions, and you kind of see younger girls who aren't and I'm like, “Oh boy, you're in trouble” (she laughs). I don't know if they solicit unwanted attention but that's the impression obviously if you see somebody out late by themselves or dressed a certain way. [Hailey]

Even the sexual assault cases, I'm not saying anybody deserves that but you often read that it's the same kind of story—it's some woman who's living in a poverty-stricken neighbourhood who's out walking at 4 o'clock in the morning for some God-knows-what reason, who takes a ride with somebody she doesn't know, follows somebody into a back alley who offered her something. [Audrey]

By evoking and applying the schema of *Responsible Womanhood* as a way to categorise women's behaviour (including their own), some women cognitively coped by distancing themselves from other women they could cast as reckless, and by extension, blameworthy.

Another way that women cognitively coped with the difficulties resulting from contradictions inherent in this Organisational Moment was to bring the patriarchal ideologies embedded in these contradictions into full consciousness and allow them to remain as unrequited problems of society. For example, Sue and Anne raised the issue that socially-available ideologies provide inaccurate and unhelpful ways of understanding both the public domain and the victimisation of women:

What is missing are messages encouraging women to use public space, and realistic information regarding the safety of public space—be strong, go out at night, the streets are safe. [Sue]

I think we're warned a lot about strange men, but we never tell women, "Oh don't go on a date with a man. Don't marry a man. He could beat you up." [Anne]

Similarly, Roslyn and Edna rejected the notion of victim-blaming that is inherent in this Organisational Moment, and instead critique this pervasive ideology. First, Roslyn challenged the assumption that if a woman in some way alters herself or her appearance, she can reduce her chance of victimisation. Moreover, she challenged the victim-blaming ideology that scrutinizes women's behaviour for evidence of recklessness (and thus blameworthiness). Second, Edna rejected the burden of individual responsibility for the action of men, and places obligation on society to intervene and rectify the issue of

violence toward women:

I just don't believe that how I dress has anything to do with safety. If someone wants to assault you they don't care what you're wearing. I don't buy that. Instead of [focussing on] what we wear or where we happen to be, where's the campaign telling men that it doesn't matter if women are walking down the street naked at 2 in the morning, they still can't assault us? [Roslyn]

Instead of [being told to] be careful and to practice safety, I'd rather be informed about how [violence toward women] is actually going to be handled and what is being done to stop that kind of violent behaviour. [Edna]

By leaving the incongruities inherent in *Danger Messages* unresolved, women psychologically unburdened themselves by reducing the self-obligation to reconcile the contradictions, and instead placed the responsibility back on the shoulders of society. This cognitive coping strategy also signified a feminist analysis, whereby women identified pervasive victim-blaming views inherent in this Organisational Moment as reflecting inequalities embedded in a sexist society. In understanding their realities through a feminist lens, participants were able to diminish the blameworthy aspects of their own and other women's use of space through an understanding that spatial inequalities are rooted in a system of patriarchal oppression.

Another way that women cognitively coped was to filter and critically analyse the omnipresent danger messages. The quotations below illustrate how women filtered the messages by challenging the validity of them, as well as the reputability of the sources:

You can't believe everything you read and also everything is very censored and what they actually do publish is a lot of times not true and not factual. You can read about crime but you don't have to be inundated either so you have to find that balance. It's all about finding your balance. [Meri]

I think women need to educate themselves about the risks to their safety, [but] not by reading the newspaper because that's not educating yourself. [Ali]

Behavioural coping strategies. Other ways that women coped were through various action strategies. Because of the power of the danger messages and the clear expectation for women to engage in safety behaviours, most women indicated that they adopt various behavioural strategies that are part of the schematic understanding of *Responsible Womanhood*—in other words, they followed the rules. Mostly these strategies revolved around self-management (e.g., avoiding isolated areas, minimising the use of public transit, staying indoors, and securing chaperones—all to a greater extent after dark):

Personally, I'm a very cautious person so I do most of those things [safety strategies] in the first place. Generally if I'm going anywhere that wouldn't be a safe area of town to begin with I'd be with other people. [Analee]

I make eye contact (she laughs), I follow all the rules. [Sophie]

If I wanted to bus to a certain area of town at night, I wouldn't consider it. I'd always drive depending on where I was heading. [Romi]

If I am parked further than I'm comfortable with, I will either ask my boyfriend to watch that I get to my car or actually physically make him come down with me and walk me to the car. [Beckie]

Instead of avoiding public space, some participants actively coped by taking steps to avoid the messages. For example, Jerri identified how she takes action to reduce exposure to particular media that consistently cast women in a negative light:

I think it's important not to feel like a victim or else you end up being really scared all the time so that's why I don't watch crime shows or the news as much as I used to because over, and over, and over again, [the media] reinforce that feeling that you should be afraid and then you start to feel afraid for yourself, and I don't know that we actually have to be afraid. [Jerri]

Some participants challenged the images of the dangerous public sphere, and resisted the rules by deliberately acting in opposition to them:

I have to admit there's something in me, something in the back of my mind—for example, I have taken back lanes all the way to Main Street because I know that as a woman you have to be empowered to walk with authority down a back lane. [Monique]

It was important to me to be comfortable in different spaces than just my own neighbourhood. I've noticed as I've gotten older that I'm less comfortable because you only hear about the bad things, so I force myself to [challenge the fear] because I think that overall it is safe, so usually a couple times every winter I take the bus at night and it's always ok. [Sandra]

For my personal life I choose to walk at night, so like a challenge to the system that we live in, right? I definitely take an approach to my choices as, 'fear what needs to be feared,' and I don't feel that [walking at night] needs to be feared. I evaluate it a bit more on that line. [Mia]

Finally, women coped with danger messages from loved ones by acquiescing to the appeals of loved ones or by editing the information that they shared with concerned others. First, Jordan, who earlier described interpersonal conflict with her partner when she wanted to walk to Starbucks in the evening, articulated how she eventually yielded to her partner's behests:

[My partner and I] battled for a long time. I used to walk to Starbucks in the evening after putting my daughter to bed. It was just one block and I didn't want to drive, but there was this general theme—safety, safety, safety. I wasn't willing to give up my time to myself, so then after a while it was like, "Okay, you know what? I'll take the car instead of walking." Sometimes it's just not worth the fight. [Jordan]

Second, Kandi described how she edited the details of her use of public space with her mother and sister in order to avoid unsolicited safety advice:

I will edit quite a bit with my mom and my sister, actually. I don't tell them how much I walk alone at night because I know what they're going to say—"you shouldn't be walking alone at night, you should take a cab, you should make sure you're with friends," so I do a lot of editing of information with my mom. I don't tell her or I'll lie. [Kandi]

The above descriptions of various coping strategies illustrate the complexity with which women must manage disparate and disparaging danger messages. The convolutions

inherent in this Organisational Moment are made evident by the complex and varied ways that women coped.

Benefits to Patriarchy

Danger Messages, as an organising mechanism of patriarchy, teaches women to fear the dangerous stranger and to be model citizens by reducing risk through common-sense precautions. Ultimately, patriarchy benefits from this arrangement in two main ways: (a) Women's behaviours and activities are acutely managed through victim-blaming ideologies, and women's fear and restrictions are accepted as a problem to be managed individually. Society is absolved of this social problem and no efforts are needed to change the status quo, thus leaving the patriarchal mechanisms that sustain women's spatial oppression intact; and (b) Women are encouraged to trust in one man to keep safe from all men, and the true site of where the majority of violence toward women occurs—in the private domain—remains unacknowledged. The particulars of how patriarchy benefits from the Organisational Moment *Danger Messages* are provided next.

As previously described, ubiquitous images of dangerous strangers who lurk in dark public places are shaped, reinforced, and perpetuated by various sources. Such images have significantly influenced women's conceptualisations of the public sphere as a threat-holding and fear-producing environment. Traditional protecting institutions (e.g., police and the criminal justice system), and law and policy makers (e.g., various levels of government) have largely shaped the meaning of women's fear by labelling it as "fear of crime." In order to address the issue of "fear of crime," experts advise citizens to protect themselves by avoiding high-crime areas, by staying indoors, by limiting the use of public transportation, by altering their attire, etc. While this advice is typically couched in

gender-neutral language, the subtext suggests that this advice is largely directed towards women. For example, public notices of sex offenders often specify that women are at risk in the public domain, and safety information that accompanies such warnings reflects a gendered subtext by offering advice on specific attire (e.g., jewellery, purses, footwear).

Such advice is almost invariably focused on individual strategies, and by default, individual responsibility, in keeping oneself safe. As this body of information is perceived as stemming from leading authorities on the matter, it is presented (and interpreted) as common sense and prudent strategies for self-protection. In other words, it represents what any rational woman would do in the interest of personal safety. These messages of prudence and caution in the public context are supported and reinforced by informal social networks (e.g., partners, family, friends, and workmates) who advise women to restrict public behaviours and routines, and encourage them to stay within the protective boundaries of others. With responsibility for safety placed squarely on the shoulders of women, failure to adhere to the rules of *Responsible Womanhood* renders women as “blameworthy” victims.

Seminal work on the concepts of individual responsibility, and correspondingly victim-blaming, has demonstrated how these models of understanding work to absolve society of responsibility for social problems (Ryan, 1971). Specifically, the tendency to blame the victim distracts attention from root causes (i.e., the patriarchal structure) of social problems, and inhibits social change that conflicts with the interest of the dominant group (Ryan, 1971). Media can claim that they are “just reporting the facts.” Authorities can assert that they are “serious about crime” and upholding public safety. Intimate others can say that they are protecting women from the public threat of “stranger danger.”

Undeniably, there is an obscuring effect at play here: Authority over women's behaviours is justified, the priorities of media and experts of public safety go unchallenged, and women bear the burden of blame for the problem. Society is then absolved of ownership or responsibility to change the problems of women's fear, oppression, and exclusion. Instead, women's greater fear of public spaces is accepted as social fact, their restrictions are construed as women's choices, and the dominant groups' interests are then maintained. Indeed, society can have it both ways—it recognises the aberrant social and environmental factors that produce women's spatial oppression, and at the same time ignores the damaging effect of these factors on women's lives (Ryan, 1971).

It is through this obfuscating process that the institution of patriarchy benefits by blaming women for their own victimisation. This patriarchal ideology renders women's spatial oppression as a problem for each woman to solve on her own terms. Men, in general, are absolved of this problem, both in terms of contributing to women's spatial oppression and finding solutions for it. In addition, no concerted efforts or resources are needed by various institutions—including traditional protecting institutions, government agencies, and the media—to adequately address the issue of women's fear and spatial exclusion. Overall, the oppressing effects of patriarchy, which are imbued in society's dominant institutions, continue to work in uncontested ways: The myth of the dangerous stranger remains the dominant discourse while the risks to women's safety in the private domain remain muted, and the notion of public space as male territory is further entrenched through women's self-restrictions in the public sphere. At the same time, the broader oppressive issues of women's social and spatial exclusions go unacknowledged and unaddressed.

The second major benefit to the patriarchal structure is the reinforcement of the need for protection from all men by one man, and the obscuring of where the true nature of women's victimisation occurs—in the private realm. A key precaution that is recommended for women's spatial mobility is to avoid travelling in public domain unaccompanied. Instead, women are strongly advised to depend on others, mainly men, to aid in their spatial mobility. This pressure to manoeuvre the public terrain with the protection of males is exemplified in the following quotation:

Not too long ago there was an incident of a sexual assault in my area. My boyfriend was really worried for me and there was no way he was going to let me walk home alone after that. [Rudy]

Public space for women has been and continues to be a space where women manoeuvre with the benevolence and protection of males. In a society that instills a fear of unpredictable violence, women navigate the dangers of public space by attaching themselves to male protectors. Men take up this role of guardianship with the sole task of providing protection against violations or intimidation by unknown men. Thus, women who secure this arrangement are also positioned in relative subordination to the protector. Next, Alma described how this male-as-protector arrangement benefits men who gain a position of relative power:

I think that men perpetuate the notion that women need protection. I think it's in their best interest to make women feel like they need them because then they have the control, sort of physically but more on an intangible level. It's a basic denial of freedom in a way that's supposed to be socially acceptable because it's for women's own good. [Alma]

Couched in this common practice are the underpinnings of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1997, 2001). To explain, benevolent sexism operates in this male-as-protector relationship in the following ways: Men who protect women are doing so within the

assumption that women are weak and fragile, and are not safe without the protection of one man from all men. In this male-enhancing understanding, men's notions of themselves as stronger and more competent are reinforced. This understanding is steeped in the benevolent notion that men will fulfil the role of taking care of women's need for protection. However, women receive such protection only when they adhere to traditional feminine ideals of fragility and vulnerability (Glick & Fiske, 1997, 2001). The following quotation highlights Karol's experience of being escorted in public by someone who became persistent in his role as protector, especially when she attempted to retract her consent for him to remain in that role. In Karol's words:

A few months ago I went to my cousin's birthday party and I didn't ask, but one guy who was at the party who was a friend of my cousin's offered to walk me home and I accepted. I actually only wanted him to come with me [part of the way] but he insisted on walking me all the way, which was kind of annoying because I wanted him to leave and he wouldn't. I asked him politely to [let me walk the rest of the way by myself]. I tried to hint as hard as I could that, "No really, I'm totally fine, my house is just down this street so I'm good now," but you could tell that he did not want to stop—not that he meant it badly but in his mind he was playing the hero and he wasn't quite ready to give that up yet.
[Karol]

Karol's quotation exemplifies how this arrangement easily becomes something unexpected and unwanted for women. A critical aspect of this arrangement is that women must place their trust in others. It is within this acquiescence that women find themselves in precarious positions, as highlighted by Adrienne's quotation:

It's in men's best interest as a whole—men in general—because it helps them portray themselves to the women they know as protectors when really, these women know that they are at greater risk [in these situations]. [Adrienne]

Next, Aliah described her perception of how the powerful hegemony of men as protectors obscures the reality that what women need protection from in the first place are men's violations:

I think that having not been confronted with the problem themselves, men just don't question it. It's almost one of those things, "Well of course I'm going to walk you to your car. Why wouldn't I? That's what we do as men." And I think, "Do you also say 'As men we rape people?' Like is that in that list of characteristics that you do as men?" [Aliah]

Conceptions of dangerous male strangers preserve the patriarchal ideology that known men are safe in intimate relationships and are dangerous outside such relationships. Indeed, as outlined in the introductory chapter, the data on violence toward women have repeatedly shown that women are most likely to be victimised by those in whom they have placed their trust (Vaillancourt, 2010). Despite clear substantiation by police-reported statistical data—hence their own evidence—that home is the least safe place for women, crime and public safety authorities continue to direct warnings and advice to women in the public domain. Violence between intimates is portrayed as a less serious and less harmful problem than “true” violence—attack by the violent stranger. By excluding the domestic and familiar settings from collective concern, attention is diverted away from the majority of women's violence, as is any concerted effort to address this social problem. What happens instead is a validation of women's need for protection against unpredictable male violence, and an obscuring of the unspeakable: protectors, intimates, and other known males are the actual sources of danger. In closing, Marie's quotation succinctly highlights the irony of the pervasive ideology of the dangerous stranger by elucidating how she understands the opposite to be true:

I was never taught to fear strangers. In fact I was told the opposite. I was told that if I was ever really in danger, a stranger was probably going to be the one to help. [Marie]

Institutional Response

Three Institutional Representatives responded to this set of findings, including the Police Services Representative and two Women's Rights Advocates. Similar to the divisions that comprised women's schemata based upon originating sources, the Police Services Representative articulated that, although they are linked, a distinction between media-propagated and police-generated information is necessary. He also highlighted the delicate balance that police must achieve between their duty to notify the public of specific dangers and raising public fear:

It is important to distinguish between what the police release and how it is reported in the media. The police have a difficult balance to maintain between the duty to inform the public of potential dangers and not wanting to alarm the public. The police are often questioned about the focus and relevance placed around certain stories by the media. The police do not control the media or the "spin" that various media outlets place on certain facts as they are released. Some of the above statements and observations refer to media focus, which the police have no control over. Others refer to the balance that is mentioned, between the duty to inform and the duty to not needlessly alarm the public. [Police Services Representative, male]

Akin to the *Media is a Business* and *Limits of Authority* schemata, the respondent's quotation points out that (a) crime data are sensationalised by the media, and (b) police knowledge of public risk, when imparted, helps to guide the public in securing their personal safety. Also, implicit in his response is the verification that risks related to unpredictable public dangers continue to be a high priority, and that decisions to impart such information are based on how the public as a whole may benefit from knowing these risks. Therefore, it remains unclear whether, when making such decisions, specific consideration is given to how this information differentially affects women's lives.

One of the Women's Rights Advocates indicated that she saw an opportunity for police and the media to work together to provide accurate information to the public and help women to feel supported in their right to use public space:

There's a real problem with messages in our society around the dangers to women that really wear away at our sense of safety. We are reminded that being out in public is a risk. I think there is a role for the police and media to work together through education and public awareness. The media could also commit to more responsible reporting, [for example] by not excessively reporting on one random sexual assault, or by not hinting at victim-blaming, like, "She was out at 3 a.m. by herself." I think that getting the real message out to the public so that women can feel more assured that society stands with them on these issues is a way that they [police and the media] can work together. [Women's Rights Advocate #1, female]

Finally, a comment offered by the second Women's Rights Advocate provided an insightful reflection of how benevolent and hostile sexism are reciprocally linked through pervasive messages of danger and acts of protection:

We're told that it's our responsibility to make sure that we are safe, that we must protect ourselves from men. But we're also supposed to have men protect us and walk us to our car alone. If we refuse they get offended, or their feelings get hurt because we rejected their protection, so there is pressure to take their offer even if we don't want to. These messages are tied together, and so the guy that insists on walking you to your car is perpetuating this idea that you are not safe and need protection from other men. If you unpack the psychology of men warning women about other men, there's an unawareness that they are part of that collective and they are talking about themselves. There is no awareness that their behaviour is intimately linked to the behaviour of their brothers. [Women's Rights Advocate #2, female]

This quotation reflects how together, the notion of danger and the benevolent offerings of protection may work in concert to suppress equality. That is, perpetuated messages of the perils of public space, along with intimate pressures to consent to being protected, may demotivate women to resist or assert their own beliefs about their safety. What is more, this may create further problems regarding the uncertainty of whether they are placing

themselves at an increased risk by accepting such protection. These concerns were consistent with the difficulties articulated by some of the women in this study.

Chapter 4: Overall Discussion

Previous understandings of women's use of public space have emphasised notions of perceived personal danger relative to risk, and as such, have ignored the broader picture of the hegemonic influences in a gender-structured society. As feminist scholars have argued, these hegemonic influences, which are rarely named as the most decisive factors in impeding women's spatial liberties, acutely shape the context in which women live out their daily lives (Pain, 1991; Valentine, 1989). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how patriarchal influences shape and constrain women's everyday lives in the public context. The Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace (P-SEC; Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005) methodology was used to engage this critical position as it allowed for a contextualised investigation of women's psychologies within a socio-political context. This research approach is particularly important as it elucidates the underlying patriarchal mechanisms that frame women's spatial experiences. Particularly, women's psychologies were examined through their use of schemata and coping strategies to manage instances where mechanisms of patriarchy complicated their lives. These complications, schemata, and coping strategies, in conjunction with identified benefits to the ideological institution of patriarchy, formed the basis for the four Organisational Moments uncovered in the present study. Such a contextualised analysis of the factors that shape and constrain women's daily lives and psychologies provides a unique perspective and a deeper account of these issues than is typically found in this literature.

The overall discussion begins with a summary of the Organisational Moments presented in the previous chapter. Next, the results are integrated with the literature

through a discussion of how the Organisational Moments serve to clarify and further our understanding of the paradox of women's fear and spatial consequences. Then, clinical and political implications are drawn from the study's findings, followed by a discussion of the study's strengths and limitations. To conclude, new paths for inquiry are considered.

Summary of Results

Analysis of the data using the P-SEC methodology generated four Organisational Moments. Organisational Moments, the cornerstone of P-SEC inquiry, uncover how practices and ideological underpinnings that create and support a particular institutional ethos complicate the lives of a marginalised group. In the present study, the analysis of Organisational Moments illuminated the complicating effects of patriarchal powers and mechanisms on women's use of public space. At the same time, the institution of patriarchy profited through reinforcing a gender hierarchy and maintaining the status quo (i.e., women's spatial oppression).

The first Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*, reveals how men's intrusions and violations impede women's use of public space and have negative consequences for their general well-being. Women described how these transgressions detracted from engagement in personal activities, instilled feelings of vulnerability, and required them to promptly decide how to safely respond to unpredictable, demeaning, and potentially dangerous situations. The schemata that women drew upon to make sense of these complications influenced their understanding and guided their methods of coping with *Street Harassment*. In particular, two schemata predominated: *The Burden of Women* and *Men's Entitlement*. The first schema comprised the perception that street

harassment was an inevitable reality to be endured and individually-managed. The second schema provided a contextualised understanding of the privilege that affords men power over women's public bodies. In concrete ways, women coped by avoiding certain areas, altering themselves in various spaces, and using self-protection strategies. When a power analysis was evoked, some women actively worked to reclaim their power through strategies of resistance. The institution of patriarchy is reinforced through women's reduced engagement in the public sphere, which in turn situates men as the dominant occupiers of public space and beneficiaries of public prosperity. Individual strategies taken up by women also benefit patriarchy by diverting collective efforts needed to challenge the status quo.

The second Organisational Moment, *Urban Public Spaces*, highlights the ways in which women's lives are impeded by socio-spatial and symbolic barriers embedded in the urban landscape. Poorly-designed infrastructure and the absence of women in city spaces interfered with many women's use of these spaces. The analysis also indicated that deep feelings of lack of belonging and disconnection further complicated women's spatial liberties and psychologies. Women drew upon schemata that employed a hierarchical analysis of gender, power, and political responsibility to understand the practical and psychological complications experienced in relation to *Urban Public Spaces*.

Specifically, these schemata were *Gendered Spaces*, *The Male Advantage*, and *Top-Down Governance*. Several women implemented complex coping strategies in order to have better access to public space, such as constructing support networks and creating women-only spaces. Others strategically produced legitimacy by demonstrating purposeful use of space or by altering their gendered presentations. This Organisational

Moment upholds the institution of patriarchy by reinforcing the public/private binary: Experiences of disconnection and insecurity in the public realm ensure that women spend more time in private contexts. This, in turn supports an unequal division of labour within the home. Men's exoneration from domestic work affords them more time to engage in public life. In addition, men's greater presence in public space safeguards male privilege by ensuring that their interests are promoted in the structure and governance of city spaces.

The third Organisational Moment, *Public Transportation*, elucidates the obstacles to safe and efficacious travel for women in the public transport setting. Complications arose through deficient transit operations, prohibitive costs, and inadequate security features and safety protocols. Threats and violations to personal safety, and the general discourtesy shown to female riders further reduced the public transit system to an unviable travel choice. Women evoked the schema of *Top-Down Governance*, again, to explain the insufficient services offered within the public transportation system. This schema facilitated women's understanding that public transportation decisions are made by a select few who have limited knowledge of the needs of transit users. *City Bus*, the second schema evoked, characterised the understanding that transgressions in public transportation settings are an expected outcome of anonymity and the underprivileged composition of the ridership. These schemata informed women's methods of coping, which involved cognitive and action-based strategies, such as calculating the risk of using transit, adopting various self-protection strategies, or avoiding transit altogether. *Public Transportation*, as an Organisational Moment, supports the patriarchal arrangement by disadvantaging women while advantaging men. Specifically, restricted access to transit

limits women's travel options and mobility, and in turn limits their life choices.

Conversely, men's mobility and access to public life is facilitated by a system that is more accessible to them and which favours the typical male travel pattern (i.e. direct routes from the suburbs to the downtown core).

The fourth Organisational Moment, *Danger Messages*, explicates the adverse effect of pervasive danger warnings and safety advice on women's daily lives and psychologies. These messages, which originate from media, crime and public safety authorities, and informal social networks, perpetuate the myth of the dangerous public stranger and promote individually-based avoidance and protective strategies. Complications arising from this Organisational Moment included restricted spatial freedom, victim-blaming, psychological complications, interpersonal difficulties, financial costs, and conflicts of personal philosophies. Women drew on specific schemata to understand the contradictions between their knowledge and experience and the social messages that perpetuate dangers to women in public space. Specifically, the schemata were: *Media is a Business*, *Limits of Authority*, *Benevolent Others*, and *Responsible Womanhood*. The first three schemata aided women's understanding by evaluating the credibility, scope, and intentions of the sources. The fourth schema provided subjective justification for women to adhere to safety advice. Women cognitively coped by rejecting accountability for the problem, and by filtering messages. Finally, informed by the schemata evoked, women employed various action strategies to cope. Some women chose to avoid the media, and some chose to either follow or resist the rules of safety. In addition, they acquiesced to safety appeals from loved ones, and sometimes they hid the fact that they do not acquiesce to sidestep shame and blame. This Organisational Moment

supports patriarchal ideologies by providing an effective way for society to absolve itself of responsibility to rectify inequalities stemming from women's fear, oppression, and exclusion. At the same time, focus is redirected away from the majority of women's violence in the private context, thus reducing society's obligation to address this social problem. In addition, acts of benevolent sexism (e.g., male chaperoning), which are endorsed by society, validate the concept of the dangerous male stranger and vulnerable female, and secure men's power over women.

Integration of Organisational Moments with the Literature

A robust finding in the literature is that gender is consistently found to be a stable predictor of the emotional response to actual and anticipated crime (Cops & Pleysier, 2011; Day, 1994; Ferraro, 1996; May et al., 2010; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Warr, 1984; Woolnough, 2009). In many ways, the results of the present study map onto the literature on gender, fear, and spatial consequences. Consistent with previous studies, current findings indicate that women continue to experience fear and discomfort in the public domain, and that accordingly, they adjust their daily lives and routines. As a qualitative analysis, the present study does not endeavour to compare rates of victimisation, levels of fear, and spatial consequences between women and men; such differences have been well-established already (Coble et al., 2003; Harris & Miller, 2000; May et al., 2009; Rader et al., 2009; Schafer et al., 2006; Statistics Canada, 2010; Vaillancourt, 2010; Wilcox et al., 2006). Importantly, then, this study does not dispute that gender differences exist in the cognitive, emotional, and practical realities constructed within and through public space. Instead, this study takes issue with the assumption that women's psychological, emotional, and behavioural

responses, when situated within social politics of gender and patriarchy, are actually paradoxical. As such, this study attempts to move beyond the well-established data on gender differences to consider how and why these differences occur and are sustained.

As reviewed in the introduction, academic literatures demarcate several mismatches in women's experiences of fear, labelled the gender-fear paradox (Ferraro, 1996). Briefly, this paradox has three dimensions. First, women's fear is viewed to be incompatible with actual rates of victimisation. Second, women's fear is perceived to be incongruent with locations of risk. Third, even when fear is accounted for, women make more adaptations to their daily routines and lifestyles compared to men. Despite a now voluminous body of literature, the area remains theoretically under-developed (Koskela & Pain, 2000; May et al., 2010; Pain, 1991; Shirlow & Pain, 2003). As a result, equivocal and misleading interpretations persist. If anything, support for this paradox is mounting, not declining, as evidence of gender disparities accumulates. In light of the present findings, a return to the paradox is necessary to provide a more contextualised and cohesive understanding of women, fear, and public space.

A return to the gender-fear paradox. The first dimension of the gender-fear paradox refers to the finding that, whereas women generally experience lower rates of victimisation than men (Statistics Canada, 2010; Vaillancourt, 2010), they report higher fear of crime (Jackson, 2009; May et al., 2010; Rader & Haynes, 2011). First, as feminist scholars have argued, women's fear of crime is a rational response to the high levels of intrusions and violations perpetrated by men against women, most of which falls outside of criminally-prosecutable conduct and is not reported to police (Gardner, 1989; Pain, 1991, 2001; Painter, 1992; Stanko, 1995). In other words, women *appear* to be

groundlessly fearful because much of what contributes to their fear remains undocumented and unacknowledged. The present study provides strong support for this critique. For example, the Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*, revealed how women's level of fear was influenced by their common experiences of men's intrusions, defilements, and coercions. The volatility of *Street Harassment*, including its unpredictability and connotations of harm, resulted in all harassing encounters having the potential to become violent, thus evoking fear and apprehension. These violating acts were remindful of the ubiquitous threat to women's personal safety for which they had little ability to prevent or control. The psychological consequences were that *Street Harassment* left women feeling vulnerable and perpetually vigilant.

Added to this, for various reasons, rarely do women report these harassments or pursue formal intervention. As evidenced through the ways in which women coped with *Street Harassment*, women attempted to either reduce their exposure to harassment, or reduce their viability as targets through individually-based strategies (e.g., avoidance, self-protection). This lack of reporting or seeking formal protection means that these violations, which evoke much fear, remain unaccounted for in criminal statistics. Yet, it is these very statistics that are used to establish a relationship between fear levels and victimisation rates. In comparison, no analogous forms of "hidden" victimisation (i.e., gender-based violence) exist for (most) men (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Yoon et al., 2010). Much of the research that has investigated reasons why women do not report violence has been studied in relation to violence in the private setting (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Felson & Paré, 2005), or in the workplace (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina, & Fitzgerald, 2002; Gutek, 1985). In the private context, for example, identified reasons

for lack of reporting have generally been divided into two broad categories, which include personal reasons (e.g., fear of retaliation by the perpetrator, financial dependency) and societal reasons (e.g., anticipation that reporting will not result in punishment of the offender, victim blaming ideologies; Thompson et al., 2007).

Workplace harassment is often not reported due to organisational factors (e.g., organisational minimisation and dissatisfaction with procedural handling of complaints; Bergman et al., 2002). Presumably, the personal reasons for lack of reporting stated above do not apply to the types of violations outlined in the Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*. Therefore, it appears that it is mainly hegemonic ideologies (e.g., harassment is normal and is to be individually managed) and social-organisational factors (e.g., minimisation by police or transit authorities), rather than personal factors, that reduce the likelihood that women will report these experiences.

Support for this supposition is evidenced by the schematic analyses in the present study. In particular, considering that how the world is understood is powerfully linked to action, the schemata uncovered in the data provide insight into the absence of reporting as a response to commonly experienced public intrusions and violations. First, the overarching schemata evoked by women to make sense of their commonplace experiences of street harassment, *The Burden of Women* and *Men's Entitlement*, revealed that women interpreted their experiences within the purview of patriarchal privilege. That is, women perceived such harassment as an inevitable reality to be individually managed, and was embedded in societal notions that women's bodies are sources of men's gratification in the form of pleasure and control. Furthermore, the data revealed that street harassment is so hegemonic and familiar that women psychologically minimise their

experiences or dismiss them altogether. In other words, the experiences are so common that women seem to internalise the banality of it all by perceiving harassment as “just something that men do” or “a joke.” Reasonably, then, the likelihood that women will take the steps to report their harassing experiences is greatly reduced when these violations are conceived of and interpreted in this way.

Second, two schemata that women drew upon to make sense of complications arising within the *Danger Messages* Organisational Moment may also provide insights into the hegemonic and systemic barriers to reporting. In particular, the *Limits of Authority* schema revealed how women perceived traditional protecting institutions and the judicial system as having limited effect in securing women's overall safety. That is, by eliciting this schema, women made sense of police warnings that informed the public of particular dangers (e.g., the release of high-risk sexual offenders to the community) as a way for the public to protect themselves. At the same time, the police, who “can't be everywhere,” maintain due diligence by disseminating information to warn the public of such risks. The typical solution, then, is to offer self-protection advice in the interest of public safety (e.g., avoid isolated bus stops, walk with a friend). However, this approach generates the view that the police are not disposed to deal with violations for which they cannot control. Moreover, such advice has an implicit message—that female containment solves the problem. Public appeals for women to protect themselves through personal confinement have been associated with victim-blaming ideologies, and have been criticized for reflecting the continued failure to uphold women's rights to use space equally and be free from violence (Gardner, 1990; Stanko, 1995). Reasonably, this uninvolved approach by authorities has implications for reporting. That is to say, women

undoubtedly see little point in interacting with a system that is incapable of ensuring their safe use of public space and that sees women's containment as the most viable solution.

In addition, the *Responsible Womanhood* schema reflected the internalised and socially-prevailing view that victimisation is avoidable if specific safety precautions—including precautions delimited by police—are taken. That is to say, based on ubiquitous patriarchal assumptions, women evaluated their own behaviour (and the behaviour of other women) through the lens of victim-blaming. For example, the findings revealed that women judged their own behaviours (e.g., using transit at night) as “risky” or “stupid.” Also, within the purview of *Responsible Womanhood*, participants indicated that women who dressed and behaved in a particular way (e.g., wore scant attire while walking alone at night) were “putting themselves at risk.” Undoubtedly, if women surmise that their own behaviours have contributed to their victimisation, they would be less likely to report incurred violations to authorities. In addition, women held the implicit understanding that these same judgements are used by others to determine women's accountability for their own victimisation. That is, women were aware that their behaviours (e.g., attire) would be scrutinized by others (e.g., police) to determine whether they were “blameworthy” or “blameless” victims. If they were found to have not followed the rules of *Responsible Womanhood*, then they would be deemed blameworthy in their own victimisation. An unfortunate, yet timely, example of support for this notion was evidenced by victim-blaming insinuations made by a provincial court judge presiding over a sexual assault case in Manitoba (Morrow, 2011). Taking this idea a step further, women would reasonably be concerned that outcomes of reporting street harassment would range from their grievances not being taken seriously, to no action being taken at all, or worse, being

blamed for failing to avoid victimisation in the first place. In the end, women are left to assume that it would be a futile endeavour to report instances of threat, intimidation, or victimisation to authorities. As such, these schemata, along with the schemata drawn upon by women to make sense of *Street Harassment*, invariably reduce the likelihood that women would turn to traditional protecting institutions for support or protection. In fact, the likelihood of reporting—or for that matter, any attempt to contest these offenses—is significantly reduced in a society that tolerates or minimises gendered violence (Pina & Gannon, 2012). Rather than having feelings of powerlessness reinforced through an unsympathetic society, women elect to individually manage their own safety and by doing so, to some extent, take back their power. Unfortunately, however, an unintended consequence is that the status quo is largely perpetuated and reinforced. That is, lack of reporting obscures the immensity of the problem, and the individual ways of coping conceal the extensiveness of women's spatial inequalities.

Another factor upon which the first dimension of the paradox is hinged is with regard to measurement imprecisions (Callanan & Teasdale, 2009; Hardyns & Pauwels, 2010). Most fear of crime research continues to use measurements akin to traditional crime surveys' "walking in the neighbourhood" questions. For example, surveys that attempt to measure the construct of fear include such questions as, "How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighbourhood at night?" (Brennan, 2011; Vaillancourt, 2010). Within these measures, it is assumed that all respondents are conjuring estimations of personal safety and potential threat of harm in similar ways. These simplistic measurements are criticized on two levels: First, they do not explicitly identify the sources of such fear (Callanan & Teasdale, 2009), which have been demonstrated to

differ between the sexes (Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Stanko, 1995).

Second, they do not identify or control for other factors that may co-vary with fear (e.g., perceived risk, sense of vulnerability; Ferraro, 1995; May et al., 2009; Moore & Shepherd, 2007; Warr, 1995). In other words, common approaches to measuring fear of crime are used without any real determination of exactly what is being measured.

Therefore, such measures are undoubtedly limited in their ability to shed light on the intricacies of the social and psychological processes of fear. To illustrate this point, the *Public Transportation Organisational Moment* revealed how common violations of personal boundaries and the witnessing of ill-treatment toward women were psychologically distressing and left participants feeling particularly vulnerable.

With respect to the ill-treatment of women, when such acts of contempt were dismissed or ignored by others, as women often observed that they were, they developed the sense that this was an acceptable form of behaviour towards women. Participants also psychologically reconciled such experiences by positioning them along a continuum of social problems (e.g., racism, poverty, addictions, etc.), as evidenced by the *City Bus* schema. Namely, participants viewed that the difficulties that they encountered on public transit were linked to the underprivileged composition of the ridership, where transgressions towards women are situated within the context of other social problems (e.g. addictions, poverty). What is more, this Organisational Moment highlighted how indirect factors, such as absent, unclear, or unpracticed safety protocols influenced women's level of fear and discomfort in the public transportation setting. Together, and consistent with recent research (Callanan & Teasdale, 2009; Hardyns & Pauwels, 2010) these factors illustrate how fear is a complex and interactive emotive experience that

cannot be wholly recognised or understood by general survey measures that ask such questions as, “how safe do you feel using public transportation?” This is problematic given that most such surveys, which understandably find gender gaps in fear levels, fail to make clear the reasons for such differences (Koskela, 1997; Stanko, 1995). When these differences are not explicated, the tacit assumption then becomes that women, as a group, are inherently—and irrationally—more fearful. However, when considering the present study’s findings, it can be argued that what such measures are tapping into are a multitude of factors based on women’s unequal position in a gender-hierarchical society. Unfortunately, despite long-standing criticisms, such conceptually- and methodologically-flawed measures continue to shape and define the gender-fear paradox (Callanan & Teasdale, 2009). Since correlational data are sensitive to the preciseness of the constructs being examined, when such conceptual and methodological errors are made, paradoxical findings indeed do arise.

The second dimension of the gender-fear paradox points to the spatial mismatch of women’s fear. That is, women’s greater fear in the public domain (including the dangerous stranger) is contrary to where they are most at risk; namely, in the private context by known others (Scott, 2003; Stanko, 1995). The present study produced results that were consistent with previous research that has spatially located women’s fear in the public context. The details uncovered in the current findings, however, elucidate why this is so. To say that women’s fear is spatially mismatched is to assume that manifestations of fear are exclusively premised upon immediate dangers (i.e., direct victimisation) in women’s lives. In many ways, however, the results of the present study demonstrated how fear is woven into the public discourse and is a reflection of many different socio-

spatial influences and ideological systems. While all four Organisational Moments provide explicatory evidence for such underpinnings, in the interest of brevity, two Organisational Moments are presented to illustrate this point (i.e., *Urban Public Spaces* and *Danger Messages*). First, as was found in the Organisational Moment, *Urban Public Spaces*, women made complex evaluations of the security of public spaces. These evaluations were informed by several material and ideological factors. At the material level, through concerns for concealment and entrapment, the configuration of spaces impacted women's emotional responses to the space. For example, back alleys, which had both concealment and entrapment problems, were perceived as unsafe physical spaces, which in turn evoked significant fear and unease. The ideological framework upon which spatial judgements were made was informed by the patriarchal division of space into public and private contexts. That is, women felt safest and most entitled in the private setting, which was instilled and reinforced on a social, material, and political basis. For instance, the *Gendered Spaces* schema illustrated how, from an early age, females are taught that they are most vulnerable to unknown dangers outside the home, and that their fear and avoidance would keep them safe. This powerful socialisation process, which inextricably binds gender and space, continues to be evoked in present-day through feelings of vulnerability and implicit spatial judgements (e.g., a "gut feeling" to cross the street).

Other schemata, *The Male Advantage* and *Top-Down Governance*, were illustrative of how public space is advantageous to men, both through its material offerings and gender-blind governance. The data derived from the Organisational Moment *Urban Public Spaces* are particularly informative as they illustrate the

interconnections between gender and the material and contextual factors that produce conceived or symbolic spaces. For example, the core of the city represented a male-oriented and -dominated space where commerce, law, sports, and other “male-centered” activities took place. The core also symbolised a space that was devoid of women, and where women were not entitled and did not belong. Such material, ideological, and symbolic influences that produce unequal spatial patterns and gendered exclusions are difficult to unearth, and therefore remain undefined and unacknowledged in the gender-fear paradox. Instead, the simplistic assumption is that women remain out of public space due to an unfounded fear, and the aforesaid factors that deeply support men's use of space over women's remain unrecognised.

Second, the present study illustrates how erroneous constructions of risk and danger to women, produced by society's dominant institutions, directly and indirectly influence their fear in the public context. According to standpoint theory (Harding, 1987, 2004), the dominant class is positioned to shape, control, and determine societal beliefs and values through relations of ruling (Smith, 1987, 2004). Such societal beliefs and values become hegemonic institutional ideologies. As mentioned in the introduction, hegemony refers to the process by which dominant ideology becomes invisible as it is transformed into “common sense” through institutional structures (Gramsci, 1971). Relevant to the second dimension of the paradox, the present findings indicate how media and traditional protecting institutions create particular ideological constructs of gendered fear, including the ways it is patterned, reflected, and reinforced. For example, the Organisational Moment, *Danger Messages*, illustrated how powerful, ubiquitous messages of danger were central in situating women's fear in the public context, even

though these discourses did not typically reflect their reality. Notwithstanding the common harassing violations described above, relatively few women were forcefully attacked on the streets, and most were aware that the private context represents the greatest risk to women. However, by emphasizing the much rarer public assault to women, media and traditional protecting institutions not only construct notions of public risk, they normalise the perception of women as powerless victims in need of protection. Moreover, emphasis on the dangerous stranger diminishes the significance of the substantial violence that occurs in women's private lives. The hegemony is internalised by all, including participants who reported experiencing psychological tension and negative emotional states due to the disconnect between socially-prevailing ideologies and their own rationalities.

Likewise, the results indicated that because fear is intricately woven into public discourse, it shapes society's attitudes and expectations for how women should behave. That is, not only is women's fear viewed to be the appropriate emotional response to a dangerous public context, it is also the *expected* response. The present study found that when women did not display such fear (e.g., women who refused to be escorted), they experienced negative social consequences. As mentioned above, through the schema of *Responsible Womanhood*, women were cognisant that they would be seen as complicit in their own victimisation and therefore deserving their fate. Moreover, women expressed concern over strained interpersonal relationships when they defied expectations to restrict themselves within public space. In some cases, partnerships were damaged due to disagreements over safety, and participants concluded that withholding information was necessary to further avoid relationship conflicts. Therefore, elucidated by the data

uncovered in the Organisational Moment, *Danger Messages*, fear and distress are not only influenced by the hegemonic constructions of the dangerous stranger, but are in response to societal reprisal that ensures that women feel blame and shame. As far as is known, no previous studies have taken into account women's fear of social reprisal and potential damage to relationships when deducing the second dimension of the paradox.

In summary, the second dimension of the gender-fear paradox stems from the supposed spatial mismatch of women's fear. The results of this study broaden the concept of fear to include a more encompassing account of the hegemonic factors that shape women's psychological and emotional processes. These influences upon women's spatial experiences are difficult to elucidate through quantitative methods, which most often are used to construct the gender-fear paradox. It is reasonable to assume that complex institutional ideologies and ensuing discourses have a significant role to play with regard to the second dimension of the paradox (i.e., the spatial location of women's fear). That is, society's tendency to over-represent the dangers to women in public spaces, in addition to minimising the violence in women's private lives, can be assumed to account, at least partially, for the second dimension of the so-called paradox.

The third dimension of the gender-fear paradox—that fear significantly restricts mobility more so for women than men—is a function of the first and second dimensions of the paradox. Namely, the degree to which women's lives are constrained by such factors is only paradoxical when the influences that contribute to women's fear remain under-conceptualised, inaccurately measured, and explained by over-simplified statistical data. As is the case for women, fear of public space is more aptly labelled as fear of male violence that begins with socialisation and is perpetuated through patriarchal ideologies

of stranger danger, and structurally produced through gendered divisions of space. This fear is further produced through unaccounted harassment and social reprisal, and entrenched by society's failure to effectively respond to such gender inequalities. Because women are responding to factors that are fundamentally different from the experiences of men, the behavioural consequences of fear cannot logically be compared between the sexes.

While such comparisons between the ways women and men contend with public fear is impractical, the present findings necessitate a re-evaluation of the ways that women cope with the aforementioned effects of patriarchy. As described in the Introduction, researchers have noted three broad responses to fear, including precautionary actions (avoidance and protective strategies), routine behavioural and lifestyle changes, and participation in collective activities (Keane, 1998; Miethe, 1995; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). The first two responses are enacted at the individual level, while the third stems from collective efforts to address the problem. In the present study, participants were found to have engaged in two of the three previously identified categories of responses. That is, the most common behavioural strategies utilised by participants across Organisational Moments were precautionary actions and routine behavioural and lifestyle changes. For instance, as elucidated in the Organisational Moment, *Street Harassment*, women were commonly found to have engaged in precautionary strategies (e.g., exercising indoors, learning self-defence strategies). In the Organisational Moment, *Public Transportation*, it was found that women routinely altered their travel routes and methods of transportation (e.g., avoiding bus routes with stops in particular locations, opting to use personal vehicles). As was illustrated in the

Organisational Moment, *Urban Public Spaces*, they made lasting changes to their lifestyles (e.g., selecting employment/housing based on urban infrastructures).

Notably absent from the present results were strategies that involved collective political activism. While there was evidence that women engaged in collective strategies to access space and create social opportunities (i.e., utilising support networks and creating women-only spaces), these strategies were not intended to effect change within the broader scheme of women's oppression. The reason for the lack of collective action is unclear, but possible explanations may include perceptions of inevitability and individual responsibility for managing threats to personal safety, concern for backlash through benevolent/hostile sexism, or the influences of media associated with feminist issues. First, the present findings revealed that the schemata that women drew upon entailed the belief that men's violations are an inevitable reality, and that real and meaningful solutions are unlikely in a society that supports male privilege and authority over women's bodies and spaces. In addition, women's schemata reflected the understanding that individual management is the most effective way for a woman to gain control over her body and personal space. Consequently, these schemata, as well as the discrete coping strategies that emanated from them, are psychologically and behaviourally incompatible with collective action and thus likely worked to diminish the incentive for women to engage in social activism.

Second, the deeply rooted gender arrangement of benevolent/hostile sexism may have reduced activism efforts to change the status quo. To explain, many women in the present study experienced pressures to conform to spatial restrictions, such as stern safety warnings to avoid particular areas, and pressures to oblige being escorted by partners,

friends, co-workers, and family members. The relationship between benevolent and hostile sexism outlines how benevolence is only offered to those who embrace the dependent role, and elicits hostility if resisted (Glick & Fiske, 1997; 2001). This relationship was found in the present study, as women who resisted the spatial constraints placed upon them received opposition on multiple levels, including direct reprimand within close relationships and lack of support from institutional victim-blaming ideologies. To then object to the protection offered through the lens of benevolent sexism may be viewed as deliberate antagonism towards those who are endeavouring to protect them. Consequently, women may choose to forego political activism to prevent relationship conflict or societal backlash. Recent research suggests that not only does benevolent sexism create justification for women to embrace traditional feminine roles, it also more broadly reduces women's resistance to gender inequality. More precisely, studies have found that a strong culture of benevolent sexism leads women to perceive society as progressively more gender-fair (Jost & Kay, 2005), and diminishes their interest in social actions that promote women's rights (Becker & Wright, 2011). Finally, research has also demonstrated that when women are encouraged to consider the full scope of sexism and discrimination in their lives, they are more likely to engage in collective action geared toward reducing these social problems (Becker & Swim, 2011).

Third, the media may also play a role in women's engagement in political activism on issues of equality. Research has indicated that the media have a tendency to portray feminist philosophies and ideas in a negative way, which in turn fosters negative attitudes towards gender equality (Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997). While media effects related to participants' perceptions of women's issues was not directly investigated in the

present study, there was strong evidence to indicate that sensationalised, uncritical reporting of public dangers, and negative portrayal of women in the media (e.g., portraying them as victims and lacking in competence) influenced women's thinking and behaviour. As was found in the present study, these signals become internalised by many women as personal vulnerability and reduced spatial confidence. Plausibly, it may be that media are influencing women's political choices by perpetuating public support for traditional gender roles, and fostering anti-feminism attitudes (Beck, 1998; Danner & Walsh, 1999). More research is needed to determine the roles of benevolent sexism and the media on women's decisions to participate in political activism focussing on women's spatial oppression.

As a final point, the present study provided preliminary evidence of a distinct category of coping strategies (e.g., *demonstrating purpose, constructing false appearances*) that appears to be less directly associated with fear and self-protection, and more indicative of a set of responses intended to offset gendered spatial inequalities. That is, while all coping strategies were underpinned by patriarchal influences, most strategies were enacted on the basis of reducing fear and increasing self-protection. However, as was found in the present study, women engaged in a particular set of strategies that was not directly prompted by fear, and which neither provided immediate protection from harm, nor specifically lowered their appeal as potential victims. Instead, these behaviours represented strategies that women enacted to increase their public validity and spatial entitlement. For example, as was illustrated in the Organisational Moment, *Urban Public Spaces*, women engaged in coping strategies (i.e., *demonstrating purpose*) with the intention of producing an outward appearance of legitimacy. Such behaviours, which, for

example, included walking with determination and busily using their cellphones, were enacted so as to present themselves in public with observable purpose. That women enacted this set of strategies indicated that they were aware that it was socially unacceptable to appear in public unless they could demonstrate legitimate reasons for their presence. In the case of the coping strategy, *negotiating gender*, women were aware of how their displays of femininity and masculinity afforded them more or less acceptance into the public realm, and therefore altered such displays according to what they assessed to be required of the situation. Finally, the coping strategy of *constructing false appearances*, as described in the Organisational Moment, *Public Transportation*, was implemented as a way to present oneself as being under the protection of others. Importantly, while one way that this strategy was implemented was to disembark with a group to appear in the presence of others (and thus appear protected), another way that this strategy was employed was to simply declare one's status as being in a heterosexual relationship. This particular finding is akin to other research that has found that women present themselves as being attached to a male in some way (e.g., by publicly wearing a wedding ring or placing men's clothing in one's personal vehicle; Gardner, 1990).

Together, these strategies, which do not offer actual protection from harm, suggest that there are particular social conditions in which women may be granted more spatial privilege. That is, these findings suggest that there seems to be a greater tolerance for women who appear to have legitimate reasons for using space, who exhibit gender-appropriate behaviours and presentations, and who are attached to men. These strategies, which do not fit into the traditionally defined categories of avoidance and protection, remain outside the current conceptualisations of spatial consequences in the extant

literature on the topic. However, as clearly demonstrated in the present study, these strategies for coping with patriarchal influences are an integral component of women's spatial negotiations. Elucidating this category of coping is significant as it further substantiates the view that the problem is not simply a matter of responding to fear of crime. Instead, these coping strategies suggest that in the absence of formal control of space, the void is filled informally through patriarchal norms and assumptions (e.g., that women are "invalid" users of public space). Thus, this category of coping sheds new insights on how women negotiate the "spatial expressions of patriarchy" that fall outside of the extensively studied consequences of the gender-fear paradox (Valentine, 1989, p. 389).

In total, the so-called gender-fear paradox, which has been demonstrated to be beset with inaccuracies, has failed to advance beyond these challenges described above despite a now voluminous body of research. The perpetual labelling of women's fear and exclusion as paradoxical has important implications. First, it is significant because if conventional research cannot conclusively explain the paradox at the analytical and conceptual levels, it is likely that this complex problem will continue to be framed as an individual (woman's) problem with discrete solutions. Second, for women as a group, this flawed and simplistic understanding implies a level of emotional irrationality and impaired logic. Third, such an understanding normalises women's public exclusion and supports a culture of victim-blaming. Fourth, this decontextualized interpretation of the issue diminishes the impetus for change at the social and political levels. The next section takes the discussion beyond issues of conceptualisation and measurement to consider the clinical and political implications, and related policy matters.

Clinical Implications

This study explicated the relationship between women's lived experiences and particular urban environments. While clinical psychology functions at the level of the individual, through the psychological and the behavioural, it is important for clinicians to be aware that some problems are constructed almost entirely from the social and the political (Ussher, 1990). Although the complications in women's daily lives are institutionally-rooted, they create real and significant personal difficulties. As was evidenced throughout the present findings, fear, worry, hyper-vigilance, insecurity, distrust, self-doubt, and a felt sense of lack of belonging were the psychological consequences of negotiating the discriminations of public space. Likewise, behavioural and social consequences included avoidance, self-protection, social withdrawal, interpersonal tensions, limited opportunity to pursue personal and career goals, and being forced to live in ways contrary to personal values. To that end, the results of this study have the potential to inform clinicians working with women to assist with these difficulties in meaningful ways.

Perhaps the most salient of points relating to clinical therapy is the notion of normalising versus pathologising. As clinical psychology is by definition embedded in dysfunction and pathology, it is especially important for those working with women to identify and examine the underlying institutional factors that are contributing to their difficulties. Put simply, clinicians must understand how public problems create private troubles. For example, because women are so commonly harassed and intruded upon, these issues often become taken for granted as normal aspects of women's lives without much consideration of their effects. As the present findings revealed, these episodes made

women feel annoyed, disturbed, angry, and afraid, in addition to affecting their perceptions of space, their bodies, and their behaviours. Given that much of what occurs for women in the public realm is hidden, unacknowledged, and invalidated, these issues may be easily mislabelled or overlooked as a focus of therapy. Therefore, when developing case formulations with women who are challenged with these issues, it is especially important from a clinical standpoint to avoid conceptualisations of individual pathology and dysfunction. Rather, conceptualisation should emphasise how dysfunctional systems maintain clinical problems, including how such systems sustain individual behaviours (Tarrier & Calam, 2002). As such, by applying a feminist analysis, clinicians acknowledge that women's minority status in a patriarchal society produces psychological distress and regulates coping behaviours (Walker, 1988). Aligned with feminist principles, normalisation and validation of personal experience are key elements of the therapeutic process, which includes a clear prioritisation of women's experiences as a necessary first step.

As illustrated in the present findings, through hegemonic forces, society effectively disconnects women's experiences from their emotions. For example, women internalised hegemonic messages of danger and caution, even though they reasonably understood the low probability of their being a victim of a violent sexual assault in public. Even so, being frequently harassed on the street reminded them that the potential always exists, and was further exacerbated by media's persistent reminder of worst-case scenarios. For many women, these hegemonic ideologies were so strong that they manifested as internalised problems where judgment, emotion, and behaviour were disconnected (for a detailed example of this disconnection, see *Street Harassment*

complications). This disconnection is likely to create specific challenges in clinical therapy as women may have difficulty linking their experiences to their emotions and behaviours. In the clinical context, such disconnections may bring women to view themselves as paranoid or phobic, or feel that they have no rational basis for their emotions. At the same time, they may criticise themselves for discounting their inner experiences. The present findings provide a basis for particular ways that clinicians can help women to reconcile these inner conflicts. Namely, by implementing the feminist-oriented practice of social and gender-role analysis, clinicians can help women become aware and identify their own experiences in relation to gender role norms, as well as social and cultural norms and expectations (Brown, 1990). For example, clinicians can assist clients in deconstructing hegemonic social messages that inflate public dangers, including how such messages negatively affect women's lives. Then, clinicians can help clients in identifying inconsistencies between such messages and women's own experiences, and examining society's expectation that women will secure their own safety through individual behaviours. The process of drawing links between institutional influences and women's internal experiences would undoubtedly help women to make sense of their emotions and ground them to their own realities. Essentially, by contextualising and reframing their experiences, women can sort out their feelings, develop self-empathy, and begin to trust their internal discourses.

The schemata uncovered in the present study also provide a specific basis for intervention at the cognitive level. Cognitive behavioural therapy targets dysfunctional cognitions that are believed to be contributing to various forms of psychological distress (Beck, 1995). These distorted cognitions are restructured based on the cognitive errors

being made (e.g., overgeneralising, all-or-nothing thinking). Likewise, clinicians can help to identify and restructure schemata that are functioning in a similar manner, particularly those that espouse hegemonic patriarchal ideologies. Targeting schemata informed by such ideologies is vital for two reasons: (a) Internalised patriarchal views do not accurately reflect women's individual realities, and (b) schemata based upon powerful hegemonic notions seem so deeply embedded as to be unchangeable. For these reasons, these schemata are perceived to be maladaptive (i.e., they perpetuate gender inequality and cultivate resignation toward the status quo). Thus, intervention should teach and encourage reframing of problematic schemata, such as *The Burden of Women*, *Gendered Spaces*, and *Responsible Womanhood*. Rather than being taken as something that is unchangeable, the clinician can direct the client to examine the underlying reasons why the situation is as it is, which guides discovery into the circumstances upon which such schemata are constructed. Based upon such discoveries, intervention may include creating cognitive dissonance by contrasting injustices embedded in these schemata (e.g., that violations and intrusions are an individual women's problem) with women's own belief systems (e.g., that it is a woman's right to move freely without harassment or fear). A reasonable next step would be to guide women in examining the regulating effects of these schemata.

It is clinically relevant to examine the coping strategies that women are using, as certain aspects of coping can further erode quality of life and well-being. Clinicians are in a unique position to work collaboratively with women to unpack the assumptions that reinforce unhelpful coping strategies, as well as to cultivate personal resources associated with positive coping (e.g., self-esteem, personal control, and self-efficacy; Matheny,

Aycock, Pugh, Curlette, & Silva-Cannella, 1986). For example, women may experience tension between wanting to go out to socialise and exercise, but may be reluctant due to societal expectations of how women should behave (e.g., that women should not go out at night or alone, as underlined by the *Responsible Womanhood* schema). By deconstructing expectations that espouse patriarchal views (e.g., that women should adhere to their immobile, passive, and conventionally feminine positions), clients and therapists can develop strategies designed to challenge these assumptions. Namely, behavioural interventions that include counter actions can be implemented, such as planning an evening outing for socialising or an outdoor exercise session. By taking this approach, conceivably clients will increase familiarity and spatial confidence, which, as seen in the data, can promote personal control and empowerment. These experiences are likely to provide opportunities for mastery, which is a key component for developing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, akin to exposure-based models of therapy, these interventions can serve as “corrective” learning opportunities to disconfirm socially-contrived public risks to women, thus serving to neutralise fear and worry (Foa & Kozak, 1986).

Guided by feminist principles, it is important that the aim of therapy is change rather than adjustment to the status quo (Enns, 2004; Walker, 1988). However, those working with women must be aware that society has sufficiently taught women to accept their realities, and that changing the system is enormously difficult, if not impossible (Ussher, 1990). The present findings are an important reminder that it is easier to see a client's behaviour than to know her experience. A challenge that clinicians may encounter in effecting change in therapy is that on the surface, it may seem that women's

coping responses are so well-established as to seem inflexible. Women indicating that they want changes but not actively taking steps to effect change may present as ambivalent toward the issue. Also, women may question whether attempting to change their patterns of response is a worthwhile endeavour. By integrating feminist-oriented psychotherapy techniques with other modalities, clinicians may assist women in exploring possibilities for change and helping them to direct their efforts in the change process (Walker, 1988). For example, motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) would be an effective technique to help women overcome the ambivalence that keeps them from pursuing alternative actions. Apprehension for change may also indicate that women have had limited exposure to different coping possibilities. In this situation, one approach is to guide clients to fully examine alternative strategies using particular cognitive-behavioural techniques (e.g., generating a list of possibilities and of the pros and cons associated with action and non-action; Beck, 1995). In addition, interventions that extend beyond individual therapy, such as consciousness-raising groups, may be important avenues to explore with clients. These groups may be particularly beneficial for those wanting to learn from the experiences of others, or become part of a movement for broader societal change. Specifically, consciousness-raising groups provide benefits not achievable through individual therapy, such as empowerment attained through group identity and cohesion, and opportunities to fight oppression through collective social action (Home, 1992).

Regardless of the strategies used, in endeavouring to work through the change process, clinicians must be aware that other factors may be limiting women's options for change (e.g., encountering resistance from partners). In such cases, teaching effective

communication skills, such as assertiveness training, and constructing role-play scenarios that practice ways to deal with resistance may be particularly helpful (Enns, 1992). As a final point, in light of the distinctive category of bodily-mediated coping strategies uncovered in the present study (e.g., *producing legitimacy, negotiating gender*), clinicians must bear in mind that women may be coping in ways that are not ordinarily recognised as coping methods in the literature. A fruitful area for therapeutic inquiry would be to explore when, how, and to what extent such strategies are used, and whether or not they are effective in neutralising fear and gaining access to space.

Political Implications and Policy Directions

The present study reflects the demand for better urban quality for women. All participants described the impact of structural, functional, and social influences on their experiences of insecurity, lack of entitlement, and lowered spatial confidence. As illustrated in the data, a common characteristic of women's daily lives is that they must negotiate the public sphere in such a way that they are not victimised or reprovved. Their day-to-day lives consist of compensating for deficiencies in transport and infrastructure, and they face persistent barriers to equal opportunities for healthy living, leisure pursuits, and social and economic prosperity. Based on the findings, it would be fair to say that the factors relating to public injustices span far beyond barriers encountered at the individual level. Together, these matters represent a broader issue of gender inequality that is embedded in multi-layered power structures that create, define, and control public space.

As standpoint theory posits, women must not only understand their own perspectives, but also the standpoints and actions of their oppressors, which includes individual men, as well as the policies, regulations, and practices of the systems that

produce their oppression (Harding, 1987, 2004). To illustrate this point using the *Public Transportation* Organisational Moment, a woman must not only anticipate the actions of the transit passenger who intrudes on her space, but she must also be aware of how the transit system would function (or not function) should she need to initiate the safety mechanisms of the system. With these frameworks at play, women become attuned to how to function under multi-layered oppressive circumstances, and their conceptions of space become deeply complex and nuanced. Because women's spatial knowledge is closely acquainted with the imbalances of the system, they know what is needed to rebalance it. Consequently, they are best situated to inform changes.

There are direct connections between physical environments and women's perceptions and experiences of a vibrant, safe, healthy, and equitable city. Although it is widely accepted that the built environment is fundamental in matters related to women's spatial exclusion (Evers & Hofmeister, 2011; Koskela & Pain, 2000; Lico, 2001; Wekerle, 1980), it would appear that women remain largely invisible to those who are tasked with designing urban spaces. Remedying the material barriers that persist for women requires that discriminations outlined in the present findings be urgent matters for officials. It is clear that much needs to be done at the local planning level to address factors that would help women feel more secure. For example, better lighting, improved layout of city spaces (e.g., parking areas, alleyways, and green spaces), and gender responsive public transportation are fundamental ways to improve access, mobility, and women's sense of security. Certainly, it is not to say that better quality spatial conditions by themselves will sufficiently address what is essentially a social problem. Rather, such changes would help to diminish the hold that masculinity has on public space by helping

women to go out and use public spaces for the purposes that they see fit. Furthermore, women's use of public space becomes its own reinforcing process—women go where women are. Thus, the material changes that would help to increase women's sense of comfort and safety in city spaces would ultimately pave the way for a gradual dissolution of socially-accepted gender boundaries.

The wide-ranging discriminations that women endure in the public realm make it clear that gender equality is a multi-sector issue. In view of this, basic inequalities must be addressed in a systemic and comprehensive way. In fact, one of the most important preconditions for achieving gender equality is the political resolve to implement a collective action strategy (Burgess, 2008). A strong commitment to realising this goal is to bring together governmental agencies and partnerships for the common purpose of prioritising gender in planning, development, and governance (Burgess, 2008). From there, important areas for an organised gender focus would include healthy living, transport planning, safety, urban renewal, and resource allocation, to name a few. Partnerships with women's groups would also help to implement a coherent gender focus. Further still, an affirmative action plan that commits to 50 percent occupancy by women in political and decision-making structures is necessary to ensure that a balanced gender perspective is achieved. This would not only help to represent women within traditionally male-dominated fields (e.g., land development, policing), but would also provide a form of resistance against the traditionalism of bureaucracies (Elson, 1995).

However, it is important to note that to achieve equality from a gender perspective requires more than including women in a small number of decision-making positions. As mentioned above, because of their social locations, women most affected by the

disparities within a system are best suited to counsel and make recommendations in these matters. For that reason, the knowledge derived from women's day-to-day lives is paramount to the enhancement of urban spaces, and needs to be an integral element of any urban strategy. For all women to be represented there must be responsive connections that enable women in the public to engage with the bureaucracy at key stages (e.g., planning, implementation). This is the only way to ensure that a diversity of standpoints is incorporated into the socio-spatial complexity of urban systems. It would also help to diminish a top-down model where public consultation is mostly restricted to the latter stages (if at all), when policies and practices have already been established. Ultimately, a coordinated political movement, and a city that is conceived by and for women, is necessary for all women to attain greater equality in the urban public domain.

Of note, it is difficult to state with certainty whether any of the above-mentioned initiatives are currently in practice or are being developed. Although attempts were made to determine whether and to what extent gender was included in the vision of the city in which this study took place, this information could not be obtained. Specifically, because of the low response rate and absence of responses from officials who were in positions to speak to these matters, the commitment to gender equality in important public sectors (e.g., public transportation, urban renewal) could not be determined. Nonetheless, based on the present findings, it is anticipated that a strong prioritisation and coordinated effort to make city spaces accessible for all women is lacking. Even if such a commitment to gender equality does exist, evidently, there is much more that needs to happen for women to experience the full benefits of urban life. Clearly, a comprehensive focus on the needs of women who use cities must be a key goal for both the immediate and the future.

Above and beyond the necessary shifts within organisational structures, the hidden assumptions that bind patriarchy, power, and public space must be exposed and contested if an equal society is ever to be possible. First, there is a correlation between power and space—what gets built, where, and for whom—that privileges men over women (Greed, 2006; Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1992). Therefore, at the most basic level, the very politicisation of public space—challenging assumptions of neutrality, and recognition of hidden and unequal distribution of power—is a critical step in moving toward equality. From this vantage point, important questions can be raised, including: Who benefits by maintaining the status quo? Who is excluded by and from current priorities? Second, problems without a clear understanding of how they manifest and self-reinforce maintain their invisibility. By its very name, the gender-fear paradox connotes women's insecurity without a legitimate basis, while at the same time, conceals men's and society's treatment of women as objects and inferior citizens. Organisational Moments reveal how women's use of space takes shape around privilege, power, and the politics of space. By recasting women's fear and avoidance in differing terms of women's right to feel secure and to benefit from public prosperity, these matters are moved into socio-political territory.

While changes to social and ideological systems are formidable, they are not impossible. In particular, education has the potential to change the social order by instilling the message that women belong and are not acting irresponsibly in stepping out into the public domain. Strategies for social change may therefore involve awareness campaigns designed to inform the public of women's spatial rights. As two straightforward examples, signage throughout the transit system that clearly outlines and

denounces improper conduct, and media announcements clarifying that it is a woman's right to move freely and without harassment, are ways that this strategy could be implemented. Dissemination of this information would not only raise awareness of women's basic rights within society, but would undoubtedly go a long way in fostering women's sense of confidence and entitlement to use city spaces for their personal needs.

Strengths, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research

As an important part of any study, its strengths and limitations must be considered. The following section outlines the study's strengths and limitations with reference to qualitative research in general, the P-SEC approach in particular, and specific components of the data gathered. It is important to note that, in some cases, the limitations of this study are also its strengths. Directions for future research are derived from the study's limitations.

The application of the P-SEC methodology allows for the transposition of knowledge by examining participants' lives and psychologies in everyday space. By using women's experiences as the central data, this study enabled the analysis of the social and contextual factors that are part of the hegemony; often unnoticed, omitted, or too deeply embedded in the everyday world to be fully appreciated through other investigative means. While the present study's participant pool ($n = 40$) is a relatively large sample size in qualitative research terms (Mason, 2010), the question remains as to whether the present findings would generalise to other women in the urban context. Although the question of generalisability is an important one, it commonly originates from a positivist epistemological standpoint where quantification is used to describe a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). From this positivist position, a larger sample

promotes generalisability of a study's findings. However, the aim of the present study was to uncover the institutional circumstances that negatively affect women's material and psychological lives; thus, the premise of generalisability as a function of sample size is inapplicable. Rather than supposing whether results would hold true for other women, the focus of P-SEC is to unearth institutional conditions that shape and complicate the lives of these women. An assumption of P-SEC is that there is some consistency of the conditions that underlie Organisational Moments, particularly through engrained ideologies, customs, and practices (Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005). Therefore, some generalisation is possible in terms of shared experiences of institutional influences and Organisational Moments, as they are estimated to have a degree of spatial and temporal stability.

The P-SEC approach requires that two or more individuals must explicitly describe an organising event before the analysis is undertaken to establish it as an Organisational Moment. Once this has been observed, however, focal concepts raised by previous interviewees can then be explored with new participants to determine whether and to what extent a particular Organisational Moment has meaning for them. This allows for the detection of contradictory or confirming experiences that sharpen the scope and limitations of an Organisational Moment's generalisability. In addition, P-SEC involves the examination of schemata, which are, by definition, shared cognitive frameworks that facilitate communication and sense-making (Beals, 1998; Bem, 1981, 1993). These schemata can be linked to the broader socio-spatial context and dominant discourses that mediate public space. Thus, schemata can potentially be tapped by many, and so can be interpreted as generalisable within the parameters of the sample when evoked by multiple

participants. Similarly, when several women employ a particular strategy to manage complications arising from an institutional practice, then the prevalence of these responses again points toward some generalisability among participants. Notably, although commonalities among schemata and coping strategies can be indicative of a broader application of these findings, it is not an assertion of this work.

The question can also be raised as to whether local specificities of the urban context limit the findings' generalisability to other metropolitan areas. Undoubtedly, local factors, such as crime and poverty rates, racial relations, neighbourhood conditions, local media practices, social mores, and even a city's reputation play a role in the overall lived experience of a particular city's inhabitants. There is considerable evidence to indicate that the challenges that women raise in the present study are also present in other urban centres in Canada and abroad. For example, as illustrated in the *Public Transportation Organisational Moment*, public transit obstacles exist for women in the Canadian context and on a global scale (Hollaback! Ottawa, 2013; Levy, 2013). In addition, the prevalence of street harassment, as outlined in the introduction, suggests that many women contend with such violations on a widespread and ongoing basis (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; MacMillan et al, 2000; Yoon et al., 2010). It is also widely accepted that most, if not all, societies are structured on patriarchal principles (Epstein, 2007; Walby, 1989), and therefore the institution of patriarchy's *relations of ruling* are pervasive and widespread. As described in the methodology section, *relations of ruling* are invisible lines of power that create and strengthen the conditions that perpetuate existing power structures (Smith, 1987). Accordingly, the broader organising effects of patriarchy are presumed to be generalisable, but the local conditions require specific attention to identify precise

difficulties at the local level. Thus, a more strategic investigation tailored to specific sites would be essential in distinguishing local challenges and necessary changes.

The recruitment strategies (e.g., word-of-mouth) resulted in a nonprobability sample of volunteers rather than a randomly selected sample. This may have introduced bias by including only those who had a particular interest and knowledge on the topic, and who felt comfortable to express their views. Further, it eliminated the chance of soliciting participation from those who fell outside of this network. The sampling procedure also resulted in a sample of participants who were mainly White, heterosexual, educated, employed, and middle to upper-middle class. Feminist scholars caution against making generalised statements about all women as different social positions create a diversity of standpoints and experiences (Hill Collins, 2004; Ludvig, 2006). Likewise, generalised statements are limited in this study as women's lives and psychologies are unarguably shaped by their race, ethnicity, sexuality, income, marital status, age, and other, less obvious, factors. However, despite the fact that the sample's homogeneity and privileged position limit its generalisability, these aspects of the sample can also be seen as strengths of the study. First, as mentioned in the methodology section, participants' statuses and backgrounds resulted in many having acquired an understanding of issues related to power and social categories (e.g., gender, race, class) through formal study and through employment with a sociopolitical focus.³ This resulted in data that required fewer researcher-generated interpretations, as participants often offered a statistically-supported, feminist-based analysis of the subject matter. Second, such a homogenous

³ It is important to note that there are various ways to come to a feminist understanding of how experiences are shaped by power, privilege, and social identities. For example, such knowledge can be acquired through lived experience of oppression and discrimination, formal education, or both. While these paths to understanding are equally valuable and illuminating, how knowledge is acquired may differentially shape the means and words to formulate and express such insights.

sample allowed for a clearer depiction of how institutional influences and resulting complications centered on gender. A great deal of heterogeneity in research samples can be problematic because it can conceal commonalities or make it difficult to determine which factors are contributing to the results. In the present study, it can be assumed that issues of poverty, unemployment, and racism, for example, did not confound the findings. In addition, it can be assumed that spatial disparities are prevalent in women's lives despite privilege in several other social categories. Therefore, lack of diversity can also be seen as a strength by reasoning that gender was a core characteristic in shaping participants' experiences of everyday space. Nonetheless, social identities, including sexual orientations, races, cultures, socioeconomic status, and social roles, need to be theorised and taken into account. Therefore, an avenue for future research is to conduct similar studies with diverse groups of women. While it is anticipated that all women are likely to more or less experience complications revealed in this work, future work could seek to uncover other Organisational Moments that may not have affected the present sample due to their privileged positions.

As previously described, a component of the P-SEC approach is to garner the perspective of those in a position to speak to the complications derived from institutional influences. By doing so, further insights can be obtained through clarification or additional information, thus adding to the context and richness of the data. For example, transit authorities' descriptions of strategies for dealing with public intoxication, or the rationale behind particular safety protocols, would provide valuable information in understanding women's transit experiences. Attaining this information can be particularly helpful in revealing points of departure between expert knowledge and lived experience,

and therefore is a strength of P-SEC research. Unfortunately, however, the institutional perspective may be difficult to obtain by soliciting responses to pre-set results, as was the case with the current research. A low response rate was not surprising given that the findings may have been seen as a criticism of the particular organisation being solicited. While specific organisations were implicated as having a role to play in women's spatial limitations, conceivably, organisations would be hesitant to voluntarily respond to solicitations that have pejorative implications. Responding to these findings may have been construed as tacit assent or admission to the contribution of spatial inequalities experienced by women. It is also possible that individuals who did not respond may not have seen the relevance between the findings and their organisations. For example, municipal government representatives may not have viewed "fear issues" to be directly related to local planning decisions, or transit authorities may have considered problems associated with transit stops as falling under the jurisdiction of police.

The institutional response may have limitations in other, less obvious, ways. Specifically, it is also possible that the data retrieved from representatives does not necessarily exactly reflect formal policies and procedures in place within organisations. It is plausible that personal biases exist in deciding what aspects of the findings to respond to, and what aspects of the organisation the representative chooses to highlight when generating a response. In addition, due to the complex and layered administrations of many bureaucracies, an individual representative speaking on behalf of a particular organisation may not be fully acquainted with how her or his organisation handles a particular matter. Moreover, soliciting such a reaction to the findings also does not assess whether current strategies have been effective in meeting their objectives. For all of these

reasons, future research may approach such limitations by researching organisational factors based upon, yet separate from, the original work of uncovering Organisational Moments. This may be an especially useful strategy when the primary institution being examined (i.e., patriarchy) is obliquely linked to “brick-and-mortar” organisations that are solicited for a response. For this study, a corresponding direction would be to implement a mixed-methods approach by examining an organisation’s documented mandates and policies to determine whether and to what extent gender is prioritised. The organisational structure can also be examined to establish the number of women in key decision-making positions and the hierarchy for making decisions. From there, it would be particularly illuminating to interview key representatives to examine how issues are prioritised and resources allocated within organisations. Lastly, it would be informative to assess whether particular women-centered policies or practices translate into better access, mobility, and life choices for women.

Finally, in addition to the suggestions noted above, future research should examine how shifts from avoidance to resistance and from individual to collective responses occur, including what prevents such shifts from happening. If future research shows, as this study appears to and a study by Becker and Wright (2011) did, that influences of benevolent sexism may prevent women from resisting or organising against their oppressive realities, then efforts aimed at dismantling benevolent sexism’s role in maintaining spatial inequalities would be advantageous.

Transfer of Knowledge

An important aspect of the research enterprise is to distribute research findings to interested audiences and stakeholders to the topic of study. The findings of the present

study will be dispersed in three main ways. First, partial results (Organisational Moment #1: *Street Harassment*) were previously presented at a national psychological conference (Chomiak & Poulin, 2012), and a future goal is to present the findings of all results via similar networks. Second, a manuscript will be prepared and submitted for publication in a relevant journal. Third, a general summary of the research study has been prepared (see Appendix G). This summary will be shared with participants who took part in this study, as well as with relevant stakeholders in the community (e.g., elected officials, public transit authorities, police).

Summary

This study uncovered the role of the institution of patriarchy in organising women's daily lives and psychologies in the public domain. Women contend with hegemonic patriarchal ideologies that reinforce the inequalities embedded within the social, functional, and material aspects of public space. Men's violations and intrusions, insufficient infrastructure, inadequate public transportation, and perpetuated myths of public dangers created numerous complications and actively diminished the quality of women's lives. Participants adopted multiple strategies to cope with the limitations placed upon them, which mainly included individual adjustments to avoid victimisation and blame, protect themselves, and access as much space as possible. What is clear from this study is that the need to incorporate these strategies into their daily routines in the first place represents a fundamental lack of spatial equality. It is also clear that the extent to which public authorities have effectively responded to the needs of women has been limited. Presumably, this is at least partially due to the ways in which this social problem has been framed. It is neither sufficient nor accurate to frame women's spatial

inequalities as a paradox, or narrowly describe it in terms of fear of crime. Rather, only by examining the hegemonic influences that erode women's lives and psychologies can our understanding of women and public space be released from its paradoxical snare. A critical step in this direction is to bring women's voices to the fore and allow their unique and situated knowledge to guide the way forward.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide for Participants

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age _____
2. Sexual orientation Heterosexual Lesbian Bisexual Other: _____
3. Relationship status Single Dating Common-law
 Married Divorced Widowed
 Other: _____
4. Do you live alone? _____ If not, who lives with you?
5. What type of dwelling do you live in (house, apt, duplex, etc.)?
6. Highest level of education: Grade school High school Community College
 Bachelor Degree Masters/PhD
 Professional Degree (list): _____
 Some college/university (# of years completed): _____
 Other: _____
7. Employment status/student status: Full-time Part-time
8. Socioeconomic status: Individual yearly income: Household yearly income:
 \$0 to 14,999 _____ \$0 to 14,999 _____
 \$15,000 to \$29,999 _____ \$15,000 to \$29,999 _____
 \$30,000 to \$49,999 _____ \$30,000 to \$49,999 _____
 \$50,000 to \$74,999 _____ \$50,000 to \$74,999 _____
 \$75,000 to \$99,999 _____ \$75,000 to \$99,999 _____
 \$100,000 and over _____ \$100,000 and over _____
9. Most used method(s) of transit: Owned vehicle Bicycle Public transit
 Walking Car Pool Drive w others
 Borrowed vehicle Taxi Other _____

Section 2a: General Information about Uses of Public Space

1. I'd like to ask you about your general daily activities and routines. Can you please describe a typical **weekday** for you?

Morning: Activities:

Details:

Afternoon: Activities:

Details:

Evening: Activities:

Details:

2. Now I'd like to ask you about your **weekend** activities and routines. Can you please describe what a typical weekend day is like for you?

Morning: Activities:

Details:

Afternoon: Activities:

Details:

Evening: Activities:

Details:

Section 2b: Detailed Accounts of Specific Uses of Public Space**Work/School**

- a. Have you ever felt fearful or afraid for your safety in travelling to and from work/school? Please tell me about it.
- b. What was the source of the fear? (Explore all answers with participant)
- c. Have you ever felt fearful using public space for work/school purposes and wasn't sure exactly why? Can you tell me about it?
- d. Are there situations related to using public space for work/school (i.e., parking garages, having to park far away from work site, using public transit, etc.) that make you uncomfortable? Tell me about them.
- e. Have you ever experienced fear or been uncomfortable with the people around you when travelling to or from work/school? Tell me about this.
- f. Have you ever been the victim of harassment (explain definition if necessary) when travelling to or from work/school? Tell me about this.
- g. Have you ever seen someone become the victim of a crime or be harassed when you were travelling to or from work/school. Explain.
- h. Have you ever changed your route to or from work/school because of fear of crime, harassment, or other reason? Explain.
- i. Have you ever avoided going to work/school, or avoided particular areas or people travelling to or from work/school? Please elaborate.
- j. Have you ever chosen places of work/school courses to avoid travelling in public spaces at particular times of day or particular locations? Please explain.
- k. Have you ever used safety behaviours when travelling to and from work/school to keep yourself safe from being victimized? (Give examples to participant if necessary)
- l. Do you feel that your movement in public as you travel to and from work/school is restricted in any way? If yes or no, please explain.

Leisure/Socialising

- a. Please tell me about your leisure and social activities.
- b. (If not already mentioned) What time of day do you typically do these things?
- c. Have you ever been afraid for your safety when you were in socializing or doing these leisure activities in public?

- d. (If participant goes to night-time social events/drinking establishments) What are your perceptions about your safety when you are in drinking establishments or at parties? Do you feel as safe as in other public spaces? Please explain.
- e. Are you comfortable in leisure/social situations alone? Please explain.
- f. Have you ever gotten someone to escort you because you did not feel safe? Please share your experiences with this. How did you make sense of this?
- g. Have you ever left a bar alone after you have been drinking? What has been your experience with this type of situation?
- h. Have you ever chosen not to go to a night-time social event, or not to do a leisure activity because of where it was located? Please explain.
- i. Have you ever left a party alone after you have been drinking? Please describe your experiences with this type of situation?
- j. Do you change your behaviour in any way when you are in public for leisure and socialising? Please give specific examples and situations in which you've done this (for example, do you avoid eye contact, wear a wedding band, travel on well-lit streets, avoid parks, etc.?).
- k. What are some of the techniques and strategies that you or other women you know use to keep yourselves safe in public?
- l. Do you have a cell phone? (If yes) Do you consider your cell phone as a safety device when you are out? Please elaborate.
- m. If you felt safer, would you participate more in leisure or social activities? Ask to elaborate if answer is yes or no.

Public Errands/Tasks

- a. Tell me about errands or tasks (e.g., shopping, paying bills, mowing the lawn) that require the use of public space.
- b. Do you organize these things around safety? For example, do you take someone with you when doing errands, avoid particular shopping areas, or do most of your tasks during the daytime?
- c. Are there any areas that you may avoid conducting business in or shopping at due to the reputation of the area? Please explain. (If she says she has not avoided any areas because of reputation, ask if she is aware of any areas in her town/city that have negative reputations and to explain this).
- d. Please tell me anything else about your experiences with public space for errands and tasks that we haven't mentioned.

Fitness/Exercise

- a. Do you do any form of exercise outdoors (e.g., walking, running, rollerblading, bicycling, swimming, etc.)? If the person answers that they do not, ask if there is anything about being in public spaces that deters them from exercising outdoors.
- b. Do you avoid particular areas when exercising outdoors? Please explain.
- c. Have you ever been harassed or been given unwanted compliments while exercising in public? Please describe.
- d. Have you ever been victimised or have witnessed someone being victimised while exercising in public space? Please elaborate.
- e. What time(s) of the day are you most likely to exercise outdoors? Why?
- f. Do you exercise outdoors alone? Do you think it is safe for women to exercise outdoors alone?
- g. Do you ever feel unsafe while exercising? What are some things that create this feeling for you?
- h. Describe your preferred areas for exercising outdoors. What is it about these environments that you prefer?
- i. Do you use headphones when exercising outdoors? Do you have concerns about listening to music? Do you think it affects your vulnerability to being more easily targeted by a stranger?
- j. What are some things about the outdoor environment that could be changed to make you feel safer?

Other Uses

- a. Please tell me about any other uses of public space that you participate in.
- b. Inquire about feelings of fear, safety, and use of precautionary/avoidance behaviours.

Section 4: General Questions (if not already discussed)

- a. Who do you believe is responsible for your personal safety when you are using public space? Please explain.
- b. Where do you believe you are most safe? Why?
- c. Do you think that society allows for all of its members to use public spaces equally? Please explain.
- d. Where do you get your messages about the dangers of public space?

- e. How do you define public (street) harassment? Do you think that harassment is still an issue for women in public? Please explain.
- f. Have you ever been flashed, stalked, followed, or threatened by anyone when you were out in public? (Have participant explain each experience).
- g. What other factors do you think contribute to your experience of using public space?
- h. Overall, when using public space, do you pay attention to possible threats to your safety?
- i. Have you ever felt embarrassed or guilty for fearing public space? Please elaborate.
- j. Have you ever felt embarrassed or guilty for altering your behaviour in public space as a result of fear?
- k. Has anyone ever teased you or made you feel like you were overreacting because of fear of safety or precautionary behaviours?
- l. Have you been previously victimised in your private life? If yes, please describe. (Ask about relationship to offender(s), type of victimisation, approximate duration and frequency, and other details as necessary).
- m. Are you more fearful of being victimised in public or private because of this previous victimisation? Please explain.
- n. Have you been previously victimised in your public life? If yes, please explain. (Provide explanation regarding harassment, stalking, invasion of space, unwanted attention, etc., if necessary. Ask about relationship to offender(s), type of victimisation, approximate duration and frequency).
- o. Are you more fearful of being victimised in public or private because of this previous victimisation? Please explain.
- p. What makes you feel safer in public, i.e. lighting, busy streets, seeing more women in public spaces, etc.?
- q. Has fear of victimisation ever changed your level of enjoyment when using public space?
- r. Has thinking about and/implementing safety strategies ever changed your level of enjoyment when using public space?
- s. Why do you think women are more likely to fear victimisation than men in public?
- t. Do you consider it to be risky/dangerous to go out at night alone? Please explain.

- u. Do you think that women who go out at night by themselves are “asking for it”? (Have women explain what “it” means to them).
- v. How do you make sense of your fear and behavioural strategies when using public space?
- w. Is there anything about society as a whole that leads women to fear being in public?
- x. What do you do to ensure your own safety?
- y. What recommendations for safety would you give to women? What about women who go out at night by themselves? What would you say if they have consumed alcohol?
- z. How much of a role do you think the community should have in helping women to feel safer in public? Please elaborate.
- aa. Do you think that enough is being done to make women feel safe in their communities? What else could be done?
- bb. What recommendations would you give to police, politicians, and people who design and manage public places to help women to feel safer in public?
- cc. What barriers exist for women's safe and full use of public space?
- dd. In our society, we often hear ideas about appropriate behaviour for women in public that is different from men's behaviour. What are your ideas about how women are expected to act in public that might be different than for men, including places they should or should not occupy?
- ee. Do you think women are vulnerable targets for victimisation in public? Please explain?
- ff. In your view, what are the main sources of women's fear in public?
- gg. Has fear of being victimised or avoidance/restriction of public space ever affected your finances, academic progress, friendships, family relationships, or romantic relationships?
- hh. Have there ever been financial costs associated with trying to keep yourself safe, i.e. taking taxis when you could (and want to) walk or use public transit; buying cell phones, personal alarms, or pepper spray, etc.?
- ii. Do you think about your safety in the same way when you are home compared to when you are in public? What is the same? What is different?
- jj. Have you and your friends/family ever had discussions about crime in public and how to keep yourselves safe? Please give details.

- kk. Have you ever advised female friends/family not to go out alone at night? If so, why? What should they do instead?
- ll. Who do you fear most as an attacker in your home? In public? Please describe the demographics of this person (or group of people), i.e. stranger or known to you, gender, age, race, weapon, type of attack, etc.
- mm. Is there anything that I missed that you feel represents your experiences, behaviours, and emotions relating to public space?

Appendix B: Recruitment Poster

Study on Women's Experiences while using Public Spaces

A PhD student at the University of New Brunswick is doing a study on females' experiences of using public space. This study will document and analyse women's experiences of, and concerns about, violence, harassment, media messages, and socialisation that shape women's use of public spaces. Specifically, I am seeking to understand the circumstances in which you use public space (e.g., What are the reasons that you use public space? What form of transportation do you use? At what times do you enter public spaces? What types of spaces do you use?), and how previous experiences have shaped your use of space. The research questions will also focus on your thoughts about using public space and any challenges you may have while using public space. Your personal experiences are important and will contribute to the understanding of women's experiences in the public environment.

To participate in the study, you must:

- Live in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Be between the ages of 19 and 35, and
- Be employed or attend school outside the home, and
- Be willing to participate in an interview lasting approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or would like more information, please call Debbi Chomiak at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or send an e-mail to h1jc5@unb.ca (please put "Public Space Study" in the subject line).

Interviews will be held at a mutually convenient time and location. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured.

This research project is on file with the UNB Research Ethics Board as File # 2011-002.

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants

Before signing this form, please take your time to fully read and understand it.

PLEASE ASK ME TO CLARIFY OR EXPLAIN WHEN NECESSARY.

I (full name) _____ have agreed to participate in the study being conducted by Debbi Chomiak and supervised by Dr. Carmen Poulin.

My decision to participate in this study is based on my understanding that:

1. Debbi Chomiak (the researcher) will interview me at a mutually acceptable place and time and this interview will last approximately one to one and a half hours. The topic of discussion will be on my perceptions and experiences while using public space.
2. I will be asked if the interview can be audio-recorded. If I agree to this condition, I will show my consent by signing at the bottom of this form beneath the statement "I consent to the interview being recorded." If I disagree, the researcher will only take notes during the interview.
3. My participation in this research will be kept confidential. Only Debbi Chomiak (Researcher) and Dr. Carmen Poulin (Research Supervisor) will have access to the unprocessed data (e.g., the audio file, consent form, and interview notes) and thus, my identity. These people are all ethically bound by confidentiality principles. The confidential material will be kept securely locked, and recorded interview materials will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis. Transcribed interview files with identifying data removed, and consent information (kept separately from interview material) will be destroyed seven years post completion of thesis.
4. In any oral or written presentation of the results of this study, my personal identity will not be recognisable or traceable. Specifically, I will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying markers will be omitted.
5. I understand that I will be asked for sensitive information about my relationship status, socioeconomic status, my daily routines, as well as for information about my experiences and concerns about possible violence or harassment in public places. Disclosure of sensitive information during the interview may cause me to experience some emotional discomfort. I may withdraw from this study at any time during the interview, and I can choose to not answer any of the questions, without any penalty or

prejudice. I also can ask that the audio-recording and notes taken during the interview be destroyed (in whole or in part), at any time during or following the interview, prior to data analysis.

6. This research seeks to understand the experiences and challenges that women face when using public space. With the findings of this research, the researchers intend to make policy recommendations to various agencies with the intent of making public space more usable for women in various capacities (i.e. work, leisure, travel, exercise).

7. This research project has been reviewed by the Ethical Review Committee of the Psychology Department at the University of New Brunswick. This research project has also been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick, and is on file with the UNB Research Ethics Board as File # 2011-002.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS FORM AND FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

I agree to take part in the above-described study.

(signature)

(date)

I consent to the interview being audio-recorded, and my signature on the line below attests to this consent specifically.

(signature)

(date)

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact the researcher (Debbi Chomiak) at h1jc5@unb.ca or at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. You may also contact her research supervisor, Dr. Carmen Poulin, at Carmen@unb.ca or at (506) 458-7800. You may also contact the coordinator of the Ethical Review Committee in Psychology, Dr. David Clark, at psycethics@unb.ca or at (506) 452-6225, or the chair of the UNB Research Ethics Board at ethics@unb.ca, or at (506) 453-5189.

Do you wish to have a copy of the study results once available?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please provide an address to where it can be sent. It can be either a postal or e-mail address.

Appendix D: Debriefing Letter for Participants

Thank you for participating in this study and for sharing your experiences about your use of public space with me.

Below you will find some information on women's experience with public space with a specific focus on fear of victimization and various coping methods. I have also included a reading list if you would like more information. In addition, there is a list of agencies and their phone numbers (both local and provincial) that is attached to this letter. These are organisations that offer services for women who are having a variety of difficulties, whether they are related to problems that involve using public space or not. You can keep this list for yourself, or pass it on to other women who may find the information useful.

Literature Overview:

Personal safety is fundamental to every person's psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual sense of well-being. Crime and the fear of crime are two significant factors that can greatly destabilise a person's sense of security. Crime is experienced in various ways, both objectively and subjectively, and these experiences mesh to create a specific and unique reality for those who fear crime. Fear of crime is constructed through actual encounters of victimisation as well as vicarious experiences. The former is a result of a crime that is directly experienced by the individual and is associated with negative physical or psychological outcomes. Alternatively, information gathered vicariously (e.g. crime exposure through media, family, or friends) also produces crime-related fear.

Canadian statistics on police-reported violent crimes reveal gender differences in victimisation patterns. For example, victimisation rates are higher among males for physical assault, homicide, and robberies, while sexual assault victims are almost entirely female. The majority of victimisation occurs in public spaces for males, while most forms of victimisation occur in private domains for females. Another contrast between genders is that women are more often victimised by someone with whom they have a current or former intimate relationship, while men are more frequently victimised by a stranger or acquaintance.

Despite these statistics, women consistently report a high level of fear of being victimised in public by a stranger, rather than in private by someone they know. In addition, women are much more likely than men to use avoidance strategies, restrict themselves in public, or use other methods of coping when using public spaces. These behaviours have consequences on women's free and full use of public space.

Research on this phenomenon has focused on several areas to help explain women's heightened fear. Some explanations include:

- the notion that women's victimisation experiences are not being accurately measured and therefore women's fear seems higher when it is actually not,
- that women are more fearful of victimisation because of physical and social vulnerabilities,

- that women's victimisation experiences in public and private accumulate over time to create high levels of fear,
- that women perceive more threat in the environment and therefore are more fearful,
- or that women are actually most fearful of sexual victimisation and this fear carries over into a general heightened fear.

Clearly, gender is a factor in fear of victimisation and perceptions of safety in public. We are seeking to examine the broad contextual and societal factors that shape women's realities in the public domain. To date, there is little research that addresses these issues.

Women's perceptions of their fear experiences of victimisation provide the context for the ways in which they manage themselves in the public environment. Thus it is important to understand this context by hearing women's accounts of their use of public space, including how they act and use resources in ways to keep themselves safe. This study is taking a step toward addressing this issue. We hope that our research will bring increased attention to the difficulties for women as they negotiate public space, and also to provide insight regarding the changes that are necessary for them to feel an increased sense of safety and security.

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have questions or additional comments, you can contact me in the following ways:

Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

E-mail: h1jc5@unb.ca

Suggested Readings

Pain, R. (2000). Place, social relations, and the fear of crime: A review. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24, 365-387.

Pain, R. (1991). Space, sexual violence and social control: Integrating geographical and feminist analyses of women's fear of crime. *Progress in Human Geography*, 15, 415-431.

Painter, K. (1992). Different worlds: The spatial, temporal and social dimensions of female victimisation. In D. Evans, N. Fyf, & D. Herbert, *Crime, policing and place*. London: Routledge.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact the researcher (Debbi Chomiak) at h1jc5@unb.ca or at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. You may also contact her research supervisor, Dr. Carmen Poulin, at carmen@unb.ca or at (506) 458-7800. You may also contact the coordinator of the Ethical Review Committee in Psychology, Dr. David Clark, at psycethics@unb.ca at (506) 452-6225, or the chair of the UNB Research Ethics Board at ethics@unb.ca, or at (506) 453-5189.

Appendix E: List of Local and Provincial Resources

Manitoba Provincial Services

Emergency Calls	911
Toll Free Province-Wide Domestic Abuse Crisis Line	1-877-977-0007
See http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/pdf/dviu_resource_card.pdf for province-wide list of services	

Winnipeg Area Services

Manitoba Justice – Victim Services.....	(204) 945-6851
Osborne House Crisis Line	(204) 942-3052
Osborne House (shelter)	(204) 942-3052
Osborne House (hearing impaired).....	(204) 942-5209
Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin (shelter)	(204) 987-2780
Toll Free.....	1-800-362-3344
Elder Abuse Resource Centre	(204) 956-6449
Klinic (Evolve – Counselling Intake)	(204) 784-4208
Klinic (Drop In Counselling)	(204) 784-4067
Klinic Crisis Line.....	(204) 786-8686
Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line.....	(204) 786-8631
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre	
McGregor St.	(204) 925-0300
Spence St.....	(204) 925-0348
Anderson Ave.	(204) 925-0349
The Laurel Centre Inc.	(204) 783-5460
Immigrant Women's Counselling Service.....	(204) 940-2172
Women in Second Stage Housing (WISH Inc.).....	(204) 275-2600
L'Entre-Temps des Franco-Manitobaines	(204) 925-2550
Toll Free.....	1-800-668-3836
Pluri-Elles (Manitoba) Inc.	(204) 233-1735
Toll Free.....	1-800-207-5874
Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre.....	(204) 477-1123
Children's Counselling Program.....	(204) 946-0723
Native Women's Transition Centre	(204) 989-8240
North End Women's Centre.....	(204) 589-7347
Alpha House Project (Safe House)	(204) 982-2011
Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre	(204) 940-2080
Elizabeth Hill Counselling Centre	(204) 956-6560
Couples Counselling.....	(204) 956-6563
Men's Resource Centre.....	(204) 956-9528
Toll Free.....	1-866-672-3422
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba	(204) 944-6200
Winnipeg Children's Access Agency	(204) 284-4170
A Woman's Place: Domestic Violence Support and Legal Services.....	(204) 940-6624
Legal Aid Manitoba	(204) 985-8500
Toll Free.....	1-800-261-2960
Winnipeg Police – Non-Emergency	(204) 986-6222

Appendix F: Summary of Findings for Institutional Representatives

Dear Madam or Sir,

My name is Debbi Chomiak and I am a PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of New Brunswick. I am in the final stages of my dissertation project, which investigated women's experiences in public space. I am writing to request your reactions to the initial results of my study.

The results are based on interviews conducted with 40 women who reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba, ranging in age from 19 to 35 years. All women described their experiences in public spaces, including factors that influenced their behaviours, thoughts, and emotions in the public context. They described a number of barriers to their free and full use of public space. Note that these concerns (discussed below) were raised by a number of women, and therefore, represent issues common in their daily lives.

Because your organisation represents the interests of the public, or your organisation has knowledge of these topics, I am seeking your thoughts, ideas, and reactions to this study's findings. Your responses to the preliminary summary of results will provide clarification and offer your official perspective regarding the circumstances described by the study's participants. The responses from your organisation will become additional data, and will be treated seriously and respectfully. Please feel free to comment on findings as they relate directly to your organisation, or you may comment on all of the results.

Please be assured that your name and title will not appear anywhere in the documentation of these results. However, given that your position is one of prominence, I cannot guarantee anonymity. If I discuss your ideas or quote your responses, I will refer to you as an unnamed representative of your organisation (for example: "the following comment was made by a provincial government official/women's organisation representative," as the case may be).

Please be advised that *the contents of this document must remain confidential* until the dissertation is defended in accordance with the University of New Brunswick's regulations. Your reply to this survey indicates your understanding and acceptance of the above limitations and conditions. Responses received after *September 13, 2013* may not be included in my primary research report, but will provide additional information for presentations.

As one final point before you read this material, I want to point out that women raised difficult and complex issues during the interviews. I would also like to emphasise that I am very aware that solutions for these problems are not simple or obvious. My intent in asking you to respond is not to find fault in any way, but rather, to find constructive and diplomatic ways to address these issues. You are invited to respond through e-mail, letter mail, or we could arrange to discuss the matters via telephone or in person.

Thank you very much for considering this request and taking time to address these concerns. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, and I look forward to your responses and reflections.

My contact information is the following:

E-mail: debbi.chomiak@unb.ca

Address: xxxxxxxx, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Telephone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Sincerely,

Debbi Chomiak
PhD Candidate in Clinical Psychology
University of New Brunswick
New Brunswick, CANADA

Women's Experiences in Public Spaces in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Rationale for the study:

Canadian statistics on police-reported violent crimes reveal gender differences in victimisation patterns. For example, the majority of men's victimisation occurs in public spaces by strangers or acquaintances, while most forms of victimisation for women occur in their private lives by those known to them. Despite these facts, women consistently report higher levels of fear in the public realm. Moreover, women are more likely than men to use avoidance strategies, restrict themselves in public, or use other methods of coping in the public sphere. These issues have consequences on women's free and full use of public space and in their daily lives.

These paradoxes indicate that factors beyond direct (police-reported) victimisation are contributing to women's experiences, perceptions, and overall use of space; thus, this research was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that shape women's day-to-day realities in the public domain. The study's findings are organised into four broad "contexts" in which difficulties occurred: (1) Street Harassment, (2) Urban Public Spaces, (3) Public Transportation, and (4) Danger Messages.

FINDINGS:

1. **Street Harassment:** Most women described street harassment as common experiences in their daily lives (e.g., whistles, leers, sexual comments, touching, being followed). Street harassment complicated women's daily lives and well-being, and affected their use of public space in the following ways:
 - a. Street harassment required women to be vigilant in their surroundings, particularly due to its commonly-occurring, unpredictable, and at times

threatening nature. Women also described how harassment forced them to become more conscious of themselves, and gave them a sense that they could not “blend in” to their surroundings. When women were harassed in public space while engaging in specific activities, their level of satisfaction of such activities was reduced. For example, women who were harassed while exercising outdoors indicated that their enjoyment of that activity was significantly diminished. Some women indicated that they substantially altered their daily routines because of harassment, and some indicated that they stopped using public space for specific activities (e.g. exercise). Some attempted to avoid certain areas that they associated with an increased likelihood of being harassed (e.g., the downtown area, public parks)—all to a greater degree at night.

- b. Women described several challenges in their efforts to cope with being catcalled, propositioned, followed, or threatened. They felt that it was virtually impossible to know the intentions of the harasser, and indicated that they were forced to make rapid and vital decisions with regard to how to address (or ignore) the violations. Specifically, they worried that speaking out against the harassment might lead to an escalation of the harassers' behaviour. As a result, several women reluctantly chose to remain silent through these experiences. However, they also worried that remaining silent might be perceived as tacit permission for the harassment to continue. Remaining silent also had an added negative impact on women's psychological well-being due because they were unable to denounce this form of conduct toward women. Street harassment also left women with pervasive feelings of vulnerability and fear in public space, which led to a significant amount of safety planning (e.g., opting for private modes of travel to minimise risk) and behavioural strategies (e.g., moving to and from places hurriedly, or altering personal appearance and demeanour).
- c. Women expressed a belief that underlying causes of street harassment are associated with negative attitudes toward women in society, including the view that such behaviours are an acceptable form of treatment toward women. As a result of this understanding, most women believed that it would be exceedingly difficult for protecting agencies (e.g., police) and law makers to prevent or reduce these problems. Instead, they indicated that a multi-faceted public education approach is necessary to address this common problem.

Please reflect on these issues from the perspective of your organisation. How does your organisation understand/address women's concerns in these areas? If these issues are not presently being addressed, please comment as to whether your organisation has a potential role in shaping women's experiences in relation to these issues. Please share any other comments/insights that you feel may be important to these findings.

2. **Urban Public Spaces:** Participants described numerous ways that their spatial freedoms were impeded in the urban landscape. Specifically, women indicated that they simply cannot wander around the streets, parks, and urban spaces at their own liberty. These issues were reflected in the following ways:

- a. *Urban Core:* Women described the urban core as “male-oriented spaces” comprised of sports arenas, bars, offices, and parking lots. In their view, the downtown area is generally devoid of women, and in particular of mothers and families. Some suggested that families who live in the urban core are stigmatised as “struggling,” while those residing in suburbia are seen as “up-and-comers.” Several women construed the urban core as a space that is both dangerous and off limits, but which also has the potential to alter its image through design, function, and promotion of its use. As one participant stated: *“Honestly, the more women that are around in any given place at any given time, the more comfortable other women are going to feel in it. The revitalisation process that’s trying to go on in the core of [the city] is obviously going to help—stores being open later, lights being on later, people being around later—that’s going to make women feel more comfortable in that environment.”*
- b. *Infrastructure:* Physical aspects of the urban environment posed challenges for women’s full use of space in numerous ways. Several women highlighted how inadequate lighting, poor esthetics, and obstructed views contributed to their discomfort in public spaces. For example, some described avoiding poorly illuminated parking facilities and densely treed public parks due to reduced visible angles and potential for assailants to conceal themselves. In addition, many participants raised concerns with back lanes or alleys that cut through much of the urban landscape. These urban design features, which often contain high fences and large garbage bins, were identified as particularly problematic areas. In fact, several women avoided taking up residence or seeking employment in places that were in close proximity to back lanes or alleys.

Please reflect on these issues from the perspective of your organisation. How does your organisation understand/address women’s concerns in these areas? If these issues are not presently being addressed, please comment as to whether your organisation has a potential role in shaping women’s experiences related to these issues. Please share any other comments that you feel may be important to these findings.

3. **Public Transportation:** Public transportation is a fundamental system that facilitates access to essential urban amenities and activities, and increases opportunities to engage in substantive citizenship. Women identified a range of barriers that inhibited their use of public transportation:
 - a. Several women identified prohibitive costs, inadequate geographical coverage, and insufficient frequency of transport vehicles at various stops. These problems were especially pronounced when women’s daily lives required complex travel patterns (e.g., work, school, childcare, domestic responsibilities, and extended care roles).
 - b. Safety concerns were repeatedly raised as issues in women’s use of public transit. For example, women described harassing and intimidating experiences while

waiting at transit stops, while on transit vehicles, and after disembarking. Several described distressing encounters with intoxicated individuals, and called for more stringent protocols for this problem. While women appreciated the safety features that have been implemented at transit stops (e.g., clear walls on bus shelters), they felt that more security/monitoring was needed in these locations. Although some women were aware of specific safety protocols on transit vehicles (e.g., request stop program), they indicated that these measures were not well-known or endorsed. Some also indicated that the request stop program raised additional safety problems, i.e., they felt that requesting to stop the vehicle only drew attention to lone females disembarking in isolated areas. They also commented that limited effort was directed toward curtailing harassers' behaviours.

- c. Participants highlighted the need for women's input into their transportation challenges and travel needs that would result in direct policy and operational changes to the public transportation system.

Please reflect on these issues from the perspective of your organisation. How does your organisation understand/address women's concerns in these areas? If these issues are not presently being addressed, please comment as to whether your organisation has a potential role in shaping women's experiences related to these issues. Please share any other comments that you feel may be important to these findings.

4. **Danger Messages:** Women described receiving information from various sources (e.g., media, crime and public safety authorities, and partners/family) regarding threats to their safety in public places. Mostly such information had a unifying theme—stranger danger. In other words, women described encountering pervasive messages in society that warned about the threat of attack from unknown men in isolated places, and equally prominent were offerings of advice on how to negotiate such dangers. The complications that women described are as follows:

- a. Several women described media sources as having significant influence in shaping their “fear images,” including perpetrator images (e.g., unknown male assailants) and the spatial and temporal aspects of fear (e.g., isolated and unregulated public spaces at night). Participants described media as having a deterring effect on their spatial patterns, especially when reporting focussed on random attacks of sexual violence. Some women felt that this type of media coverage tended to reinforce images of women as vulnerable/helpless victims, and generated the perception that such violations are highly likely to occur in the public domain. Several women indicated that repeated exposure to media-reported crime conveys the impression that urban crime, especially violent crime, is getting worse.
- b. Information provided by crime and public safety authorities (e.g., police) influenced women's perceptions and use of public space. Some women described how police-issued public warnings are beneficial because they narrowed the focus of danger to specific individuals (rather than “unknown” assailants). However, for

some women, these messages meant that the responsibility for personal safety was left to the individual (which, as interpreted by some women, meant restricting their use of public space). Women whose employment included night-time shifts, or women who relied on public transportation or walking as their primary means of transportation, felt particularly challenged by these public notices. Some women also described how crime data that informed the public of specific “high crime” areas (e.g., geographical maps of crime found on police websites) kept women away from certain localities.

- c. Some women felt that widely-available representations of the dangerous male stranger tended to overshadow the fact that the majority of violence happens by known men in private contexts. Messages that focussed on the dangerous aspects of public space left women struggling to reconcile conflicting information. For example, several women indicated that they reduced their use of public space as a result of public warnings despite “knowing the facts” about where women’s violence is most likely to occur. In addition, participants felt that because there was much more attention given to dangers within the public realm, such emphasis implied that stranger violence is considered to be a more serious and urgent issue than private violence. Several women articulated that “official” counter-messages—messages that inform women that public space is safe, and which encourage women to take part in urban life—are absent.
- d. Women continuously received advice with regard to safety strategies and self-protection in the public domain. These messages came from many sources, including crime and public safety officials, partners, family, friends, and co-workers. Such safety advice created difficulties in the following areas:
 - i. *Restricted spatial freedoms* – women described how most advice offered to them involved restricting their spatial and personal freedoms in some way, e.g., changing travel routes, securing chaperones, avoiding certain areas of the city at night.
 - ii. *Victim-blaming* – women felt that there was an element of victim-blaming inherent in safety advice, e.g., women are told that they bear the burden of reducing personal risk by controlling their own behaviour, and should they not follow such advice, then they are at least partially to blame for their own victimisation.
 - iii. *Psychological complications* – women described a loss of personal enjoyment involved with the restrictions and sacrifices involved in keeping safe. They also struggled to reject views of themselves as weak, dependent individuals who need the protection of others.
 - iv. *Interpersonal difficulties* – participants indicated that interpersonal conflicts arose when they attempted to exert independence, e.g., partners became upset when women refused to be chaperoned.
 - v. *Financial costs* – women identified financial costs associated with following the rules of safety, e.g., using transit or taking cabs instead of walking.

- vi. *Conflicts of personal philosophies* - women experienced difficulty living their lives according to their personal philosophies, e.g., they refrained from volunteering in “unsafe” neighbourhoods, or they limited their use of public transit despite wanting to do so for environmental reasons.

Please reflect on these issues from the perspective of your organisation. How does your organisation understand/address women's concerns in these areas? If these issues are not presently being addressed, please comment as to whether your organisation has a potential role in shaping women's experiences in relation to these issues. Please share any other comments/insights that you feel may be important to these findings.

Appendix G: General Summary of “Women and Public Space” Study

What was this study about?

- We looked at how women understand, feel about, and use common public spaces (e.g., parks, streets, public transit, etc.). We wanted to know what obstacles (both social and material) prevent women from fully accessing public spaces, as well as how and why such obstacles exist and persist.
- We also wanted to understand how women psychologically make sense of, and practically cope with, any difficulties they encounter in such spaces.
- With respect to women and public space, past research has found several mismatches in women's experiences of fear, labelled the gender-fear paradox.^{4 5} This paradox consists of the following:
 - Women report higher levels of fear in public space although men experience higher rates of public victimisation.^{6 7}
 - Women report greater fear associated with stranger assault in public spaces although they are more likely to be victimised in private spaces by known others.^{8 9}
 - Even when fear levels are accounted for, women modify their use of public space more than men.^{10 11}
- In order to better understand this paradox, we looked at factors beyond the typical data (crime statistics and general survey data on reported fear levels) that make up these apparent contradictions. By doing this we were able to look at aspects that are not generally taken into account because of their complex nature, but yet play an important role in women's use of space (e.g., societal messages of public dangers, unreported violations).

⁴ Ferraro, K. F. (1996). Women's fear of victimization: Shadow of sexual assault? *Social Forces*, 75, 667-690.

⁵ Smith, W., & Torstensson, M. (1997). Gender differences in risk perception and neutralizing fear of crime: Toward resolving the paradoxes. *British Journal of Criminology*, 37, 608-634.

⁶ Fox, K., Nobles, M., & Piquero, A. (2009). Gender, crime victimization and fear of crime. *Security Journal*, 22, 24-39.

⁷ Vaillancourt, R. (2010). Gender differences in police-reported violent crime in Canada, 2008. (Catalogue no. 85F0033M).

⁸ Hilinski, C. (2009). Fear of crime among college students: A test of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 84-102.

⁹ Scott, H. (2003). Stranger danger: Explaining women's fear of crime. *Western Criminology Review*, 4, 203-214.

¹⁰ Rader, N. (2008). Gendered fear strategies: Intersections of doing gender and fear management strategies in married and divorced women's lives. *Sociological Focus*, 41, 34-52.

¹¹ Woolnough, A. (2009). Fear of crime on campus: Gender differences in use of self-protective behaviours at an urban university. *Security Journal*, 22, 40-55.

Who took part in the study and how was it done?

- 40 women in the community, between the ages of 19 and 35, volunteered to take part in the study. The majority were White, middle-class, and heterosexual.
- Through one-on-one interviews, women were asked to provide details about when, how, and for what purposes they used public space. They were also asked to discuss times when their use of space was somehow challenged or they experienced discomfort or fear while in a public place. Women were also asked to describe how they dealt with problems they encountered in public space, and also asked to share their thoughts and opinions more broadly on topics such as women's roles and statuses in society.

What did we find?

- We found four main ways that women's experiences of public space are affected:
- *Street Harassment* was a common finding and was linked to fear and discomfort, especially if it had a threatening or sexual tone. Because harassment was unpredictable—women were never sure where or when it would occur, or what the outcome might be—the experience or even the threat of it created distress and cautiousness. Women had specific ways of understanding and dealing with street harassment, including that it represents a basic inequality between women and men, and that it is best managed through personal means. This meant that street harassment was rarely reported to authorities. Street harassment changed the way that women used public space. For example, some women stopped using public space for specific activities (e.g. exercise) after being harassed, and some avoided certain areas that they associated with higher likelihood of being harassed (e.g., the downtown area).
- *Urban Public Spaces*, through design and function, limited the use of certain parts of the city. Women were more likely to avoid areas with poor lighting and design problems that created concealed areas (e.g., back lanes). Some also felt that the downtown core was not a place where they could feel at ease or freely socialise. Fewer women in general using such city spaces made the spaces feel less safe. Women saw design flaws as resulting from spaces being designed without a gender perspective. They also associated the city core with greater opportunities for men. Common strategies for dealing with these problems were to hold social activities (e.g., girls' nights) in more private settings, and to use space for specific purposes rather than simply for leisure or relaxing.
- *Public Transportation* held several problems for women, from inefficient bus routes, to problematic encounters with passengers, to poor safety protocols. This made public transportation unusable for many women. Some also found waiting at transit stops to be difficult as being approached by unknown others was common. Women referred to passenger-related problems as sometimes having to

do with other issues (e.g., public intoxication). Again, they saw the lack of effective solutions as arising from decisions made by those who have minimal first-hand experience in using the system, and therefore would not understand its problems or how to fix them. When women used public transportation, they took steps to minimise problems. For example, they scanned the vehicle for seating away from potentially bothersome interactions, or they disembarked at less isolated areas.

- *Danger Messages* that spread notions of risks to women's safety in public spaces (e.g., random attack by dangerous strangers), as well as how to deal with such risks, reinforced the idea that public space was unsafe for women. Sensationalised media reporting, cautions and risk avoidance advice from authorities, significant others, families, co-workers, and friends shaped where, when, and with whom women accessed public space. Women felt pressured to conform to such cautions although they were aware of their inaccuracies (e.g., risks are greater in private contexts). When using space in "risky" ways (e.g., being out alone at night), women felt that they may be blamed if anything bad were to happen. Strategies employed were to ignore or challenge the messages, or use space in ways seen to be non-risky (e.g., being chaperoned), often to satisfy others' concerns.

Why is this study important?

- This study shows that women's fear levels and restricted use of space are not paradoxical, but have a rational, real-world basis. This is important as it refutes notions that women's fears and actions are unfounded or an overreaction.
- This study demonstrates specific ways that women's uses of space are reduced through both social and material factors, which are often unrecognised in studies that examine the gender-fear paradox. This is important because problems can only be remedied if they are identified, correctly labelled, and well understood.
- This study brings attention to a basic lack of spatial equality that links to other inequalities. Without full access to public space, women's life choices and opportunities are limited.
- This study illustrates how society continues to hold women responsible for their personal security, and holds strong views about which actions women should take to protect themselves. This maintains a victim-blaming environment and directs responsibility away from society to deal with the problem.
- This study advances the argument that in order to understand how and why women use (and do not use) public spaces, women's spatial patterns must be understood in terms of limitations placed upon them by gender inequalities in society, not simply resulting from fear of crime.

What can be done?

- Women must be given greater say in the development and renewal of city spaces. This can be achieved by having more women in decision-making positions, and by providing opportunities for all women to add input regarding aspects of city spaces that affect them the most.
- Women's right to full and unviolated access to public space must be widely promoted. Public awareness campaigns on issues of harassment in public spaces, and that communicate that it is a woman's basic right to move about freely without restrictions can change public outlooks. At the same time, such campaigns may also help to increase women's own sense of confidence and entitlement to use city spaces for their personal needs.
- More research needs to be done to better understand and bring added attention to these issues. Future research could look at factors that interfere with women's ability to act against inequalities (e.g., pressure from loved ones to use safety precautions). Future research could also look at other factors that are likely to further impact women's use of space and limit their life choices (e.g., poverty, racism)

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- O'Brien, D. L., & Poulin, C. M.** (June, 2009). Negotiating services for intimate partner abuse: Experiences of new mothers. Poster presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Psychological Association, Montreal, Quebec.
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