

FEAR OF CRIME IN THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
A STUDY OF RESILIENCE

by

HOLLY M. HURBAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from The City University of
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Abstract

Fear of Crime in the New York City Public Schools: A Study of Resilience

by

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Although crime rates have continued to drop since the mid-1990s, fear of crime remains problematic nationwide. Public schools, particularly in urban areas, have clearly been affected by fear and crime resulting in a trend towards heightened security measures and zero-tolerance policies. Yet, the initiatives introduced to remedy crime and fear have not shown resolution, notwithstanding the high fiscal costs associated with the plans.

Learning in urban schools includes an ability to handle everyday threats of crime and disorder. Students who adjust to these circumstances could be called resilient. Two main aspects of resilience are adaptive coping and protective factors. This study draws on the resilience model hypothesizing that students with chronic or complex medical conditions experience less fear at school due to different coping styles and more protective factors.

A sample of 120 students was surveyed on fear of crime at school, coping strategies and protective factors. Results fail to support the original hypotheses, yet alternate analysis generated important findings. Fear of crime was found to be more problematic than anticipated. Over 50% of students reported fear in at least one school situation. Yet, students with more protective factors indicated significantly less fear at school, and protective factors were correlated to more frequent coping strategies overall. Results suggest that resilient students are less fearful, and efforts made to increase resilience at school could provide less-costly and more effective solutions for safety in urban schools.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Although crime in schools first became evident to law enforcement and school personnel in the early 1950s, it was not until the 1960s that state and local authorities viewed school safety as an important goal (Kenney & Watson, 1998). Initially, police mainly responded to specific incidents on school grounds, but by the late 1970s, in the face of growing crime rates in schools, preventive efforts became necessary (Kenney & Watson, 1998). Over thirty years later, preventive efforts are still essential, although reactive solutions have become more the norm in school safety.

By the 1980s, the heightened visibility of juvenile gun violence and youth gangs transformed the image of the school from that of a safe space to place of fear as urban schools increasingly began to resemble the declining neighborhoods surrounding them (Meinfield, Rose & Homa, 2001). Minority youth in particular were portrayed as ‘superpredators’¹ who lacked conscience and self-control. A decade later, multiple-victim, school shootings saturated the media and were portrayed as a growing epidemic rather than the statistically improbable incidents that they were. The school shootings also introduced middle-class, suburban teens into the ranks of the superpredator (Vossekuil et al., 2002). All of these images in the last decades of the twentieth century contributed to a lockdown mentality for those schools considered dangerous. Yet even in prisons with the most extreme security measures, safety is by no means pervasive (Kenney & Watson, 1998), suggesting that bars, metal detectors and officers alone simply do not ensure a safe and secure school environment.

¹ John Dilulio Jr., *The Coming of the Superpredators*, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, November 27, 1995, p.23 (predicted that tens of thousands of teenagers who were “naturally” without fear, conscious, and self-control would essentially take over the cities on criminal rampages by the millennium).

Further, adolescents are much more likely to be victims than victimizers (Hartless et al., 1995). Despite the fact that arrest rates have declined by almost 50% since 1994 (Snyder, 2005), teenagers are frequently portrayed as a dangerous group capable of outrageous violence against society and each other (Collins, 2002). Moreover, governing bodies seem to focus on the violent acts committed by adolescents that are perpetuated in the media. Nevertheless, policymakers have yet to provide evidence of stable, long-term change in student's feelings around personal safety that the increasingly harsh disciplinary measures and heavy police presence in the schools are designed to remedy.

In addition, personal safety at school is subjective, and major crimes like homicide are fairly uncommon. Vossekul et al. (2002) found that the chances a student will die a violent death at school are about one in a million. School related homicides that occur in urban settings primarily happen during school activities and are motivated by interpersonal conflict (Kachur et al., 1996). Yet even in a large metropolitan area like New York City, homicide is sometimes non-existent during the school year (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2003-2004). Despite the fact that schools essentially remain extremely safe places (Kari et al., 2001), urban schools are still perceived as crime hot-spots (Kennedy, Hodgson & Alston, 1997). Many students go to school afraid of what might happen to them during the day because of bullies, gangs, and active drug-cultures (National Crime Victim's Survey [NCVS], School Crime Supplement [SCS], 2001). This is important because adolescents require a reasonably safe environment to learn (Simmons & Blyth, 1987), and anxiety has detrimental effects on learning (Lavric, Rippon & Gary, 2003).

Certainly outside of school, in many urban communities, adolescents may be one of

our most vulnerable populations, since homicide remains the second leading cause of death among young people (Kann et al., 2000), and adolescent murders are typically perpetuated by adolescent murderers (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995). Furthermore, among minority youth, homicide remains the leading cause of death (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1998). African American young men are eight times more likely to die of homicide than their Caucasian counterparts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2003). Although 90% of juvenile murders happen at home (Sullivan, 1998), and 99% of all youth murders happen outside of school (Decker, 2000), the school is essentially the location where the largest number of adolescents interact on a daily basis (May, 2001b). Accordingly, the study of fear of crime at school is crucial to the overall understanding of adolescent fear, and the means by which teens cope with fear. In addition, existing research has found important differences between adults and adolescents with regard to fear, thus suggesting a critical need for further examination of fear in youthful populations. In fact, educational institutions could be prime locations to remedy interpersonal conflict if solutions are offered that teach alternative means to address conflict and problem-solving skills.

But alternate solutions that involve educational communities appear to be becoming obsolete. Across settings fear seems to guide national crime prevention efforts by replacing programs geared towards alleviating root causes of crime, such as those aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment, with the management of risk (Williams & Singh, 1994). This trend has clearly extended into school safety efforts as well. National school safety initiatives, and the resulting changes in school policy, are increasingly focused on security within buildings and risk management among students, particularly in urban

areas like New York City (Albanese-DePinto, 2004). Although risk management solutions appear to offer efficiency, these solutions are continually being expanded each year while their effectiveness remains highly questionable.

In a growing number of public secondary schools in New York City, safety interventions revolve around target-hardening measures such as metal detectors, a visible police presence, surveillance cameras, limited access to the school building, and creative scheduling (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). Additionally, zero-tolerance policies have replaced counseling interventions and peer outreach efforts as the primary means of dealing with students considered disruptive or who appear prone to criminal behavior (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). But zero-tolerance as a safety measure results in exclusion of many students through expulsion or segregation at suspension sites and has been found to disproportionately affect minority students (Portner, 2000).

Furthermore, zero-tolerance and security-based solutions have shown little, if any, effect in lessening fear among students (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Noaks & Noaks, 2001). Portner (2000) suggested that high tech security measures may even increase fear and distract attention away from the macro level changes needed to ensure that all urban youth receive an appropriate education. The New York City Department of Education has admitted that resources have been diverted in the budget for school safety initiatives (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). Still, adequate academic resources must be in place to ensure a reasonable education is available to all students as guaranteed by the New York State constitution (Eskenazi, Eddins & Beam, 2003). More importantly, despite whether or not visible security measures give the appearance of a safer and more secure school environment, no evidence exists to suggest this is actually true.

Of course, physical as well as emotional security is important for students while at school, yet the New York City public schools challenge both. New York City has one of the largest and most complex public school systems in the United States. Over one million students are part of the public school system (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2005). Large classroom sizes are common in middle and secondary schools, and New York City students entering high school have to apply to the hundreds available simply to get a seat.² Among high school students, at least 75% attend a public school that is over capacity (Ventura, 2004). In addition, two-thirds of the schools in New York State that are deemed ‘Schools In Need of Improvement’³ are located in New York City (Kamin, 2003). More specifically, an estimated 331 New York City public schools are considered ‘Schools In Need of Improvement’ (Kamin, 2003).

Because of these grim statistics, middle and upper class residents of New York City have followed a trend toward private schooling for their children, leaving poor and minority students disproportionately represented in the public school system (Schunk et al., 2004). The private school sector professes to provide a better education, as well as a safer environment in which to learn. Those students whose families cannot afford private school or do not have the academic achievement levels to garner a scholarship are frequently left to complete their education in the noticeably deficient and crowded public school setting.

Fear of crime is but one byproduct of the complex public school system of New York

² The New York City Department of Education (2005) requires that 8th graders apply to up to 12 different high schools all with different eligibility criteria and admissions guidelines. There are three rounds of the admissions process for students. All students are theoretically granted a seat in a high school that the department considers a ‘best match’ for each student. <http://www.nycboe.edu/>

³ The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) requires State Commissioners to set performance guidelines for public schools. Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI schools) have not met one or more of those performance guidelines for two consecutive years.

City. Yet, as with most educational systems, learning and academic success are the primary goals. In effect, decreasing fear of crime at school would likely have only positive effects on academic achievement. And, not only would students benefit, but a decline in fear would also satisfy the political agendas⁴ responsible for the citywide system. Indeed, if the mayor is accountable for New York City public schools, then all programs that could empirically promote less fear must be considered.

Research on fear of crime in urban education is therefore essential for several reasons. First, security and risk management techniques are cost-effective only if these approaches reduce fear or the threat of crime in urban schools. Increased police officers in the schools, metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and harsh disciplinary measures are very costly, and as previously mentioned, studies have shown that these measures fail to reduce fear (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Noaks & Noaks, 2001) and may even heighten fear (Portner, 2000). Regardless of these findings, a 6.25 million dollar grant was issued by the U.S. Department of Justice in September of 2004 to add new school safety officers (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). Proof of the effectiveness for expensive measures such as this is essential but lacking. This becomes particularly relevant when alternative and less costly solutions such as problem-solving approaches have shown a greater impact on reducing fear (Kenney, 1998). Finally, despite that schools are essentially places where the most crimogenic age-group congregates regularly (May, 2001b), when a school begins to look more like a correctional institution than an educational environment, the learning and socialization process are likely to be significantly undermined. As the person accountable for the New York City Department of Education,

⁴ In August 2005, Mike Bloomberg, New York City Mayor mailed city residents fliers for his campaign citing “Accountability in Our Schools” as one of his top four achievements during his current term.

Mayor Bloomberg (2003) acknowledges that “every student has the right to seek an education in an atmosphere free of fear or intimidation” (p.1). This study suggests that students should also be permitted to seek an education in settings that are not grounded in principles of crime and justice.

Because of these added daily considerations at urban schools such as crime, fear and heightened security, students in large metropolitan areas such as New York City must acquire the resilience necessary to function successfully at school, both in terms of academics and personal safety. Resilience is defined as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances” (Masten, Best, & Gramezy, 1990; Sue et al., 1999, pg. 307). Traditional models frequently attempt to identify at-risk adolescents then implement programs targeting those students individually. But by virtue of the problems discussed thus far with the New York City school system, most of the students who attend these public schools are essentially in one way or another at-risk.

As an alternative to traditional vulnerability paradigms, the fields of public health and psychology have utilized the concept of resilience to further enhance the study of individuals and environments defined as being more susceptible to various problems to better understand and develop viable solutions. This exploratory study uses a resilience model for the first time in fear of crime research. By using a resilience model, not only are different individual coping mechanisms and protective factors examined, but the model also provides promising directions for future research using a systems approach of determining whether schools themselves are resilient. Moreover, this study challenges old notions of objective vulnerability in fear of crime research and illuminates a

longstanding explanatory variable with regard to vulnerable populations.

Although resilience was originally thought of as an individual attribute, current resilience theory argues that systems such as the family and community can be resilient too (Ungar, 2004). This study provides new insight into fear of crime at school, and perhaps offers improved and less-costly solutions that could change the way urban schools address crime and fear by beginning a dialogue using the concept of resilience in criminal justice and linking a resilience model to fear of crime. The next chapter will discuss past research on fear of crime.

Chapter 2

Fear of Crime: An Overview of the Literature

Fear

Fear is a universal and essential emotion. The study of emotions, including fear, could arguably be traced back to the work of Darwin in the late eighteenth century (May, 2001b). Darwin (1872) suggested that all emotions either promote or hinder the survival of humans in their environmental context depending on the behaviors chosen, and the consequences of those behaviors. The Merriam Webster Dictionary (Mish, 1997) defines fear as, “an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by expectation or awareness of danger” (p. 278).

Fear always has physical, psychological and social consequences (May, 2001b). Fear influences how our body feels and looks, how our mind responds to stimuli, and how we react in society (May, 2001b.). May (2001b) argued that fear has a significant influence on behavior, typically in the direction of constraining behavioral options. Nevertheless, the biological fear response is shaped by culturally defined circumstances that ultimately establish whether fear is a rational response aiding our behavior or an exaggerated hindrance to ordinary functioning (Scruton, 1986). Through socialization, much of what we fear is learned (Cole, 1964; Marks, 1978; Scruton, 1986). Although fear originated as a survival instinct, the development of increased knowledge, technology and medicine advanced in the twentieth century may have displaced fears of disease and uncertain death with learned fears of secondary threats like crime and criminals. Certainly at school, students no longer primarily fear diseases spread by other students but may be more likely to fear violence from their peers.

Functionalists consider fear a protective mechanism that serves to guide individuals away from danger in daily life. In fact, fear has an adaptive and normative function of initiating a response to a threat (Marks, 1978; May, 2001b). Yet misplaced fear can potentially paralyze an otherwise functional person. Certainly, when appropriate, fear has its place even in a school setting when it is realistically protective. But frequently fear at school may be erroneous, especially when it is based on rumor or expectation.

For example, the metal detectors and pervasive police presence in schools may be creating an expectation of danger (National Crime Victims Survey [NCVS], School Crime Supplement [SCS], 1999; Portner, 2000). Furthermore, the stories of one or two violent incidents at a school, although statistically insignificant, are likely to reach 100% of the student population and could ultimately result in weighty psychological consequences such as fear. Fear then becomes dysfunctional when it is based on unsound reality testing, or when the behaviors used to cope with fear result in alternate harm or excessive discomfort. If fear allows an individual to avoid becoming a victim by way of protective behaviors, then fear serves a function, but when fear of crime interferes with personal liberty or daily functioning, the cost will ultimately outweigh the anticipated benefits.

Fear of Crime

Fear of crime has been recognized as an area of study since the 1960s (Hale, 1996), but was popularized in the 1970s when researchers began examining demographic correlates of fear (May, 2001b). Earlier studies on crime such as Shaw and McKay's (1931) theory of social disorganization also strongly influenced fear of crime research particularly with regard to perceptions of physical and social disorder and subsequent

perceptions of personal risk of victimization. When the study of fear of crime was underway, Clemente & Kleiman, (1976) found that fear of crime was even more problematic than crime itself among certain populations. This was one of the first studies that gave relevance to examination of fear of crime and strongly suggested a need for this research separate from studies on crime itself.

On a micro level, Moore and Trajanowicz (1988) argued that fear of crime results in massive amounts of time, effort and money among those who actively attempt to reduce feelings of vulnerability and anxiety in the hope of avoiding victimization. On a macro level, fear of crime has created greater social gaps between the rich, who can buy private security or target-hardening devices, and the poor, who cannot afford such protective measures even though they may need it the most (Hale, 1996). In the New York City schools, the gap is apparent: The rich and upper middle-class often go to private school, and the poor usually negotiate or avoid the crowded, disordered, public schools, potentially becoming less educated and more frustrated adults with fewer options.

Considerable debate and critical analysis has taken place regarding the meaning of fear of crime and how the concept has been measured. Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) argued that fear of crime is different than perception of risk. The judgment each individual makes about whether they are at risk of criminal victimization, the values concerning victimization, and the affective fear reaction regarding potential criminal victimization should be considered distinct concepts (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). Hale (1996) acknowledged that fear is a result of judgments and values, but believes this distinction is necessary for valid measurement. Rountree and Land (1996) argued that most fear of crime studies simply evaluate a logical but general concern about crime that

would better be defined as risk perception. Rountree (1998) and Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) recommended primarily utilizing the emotional reaction to crime or criminogenic symbols when measuring fear as an affective response. Although suggestions such as these certainly refine the concept, Rountree (1998) nor Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) did not discuss the benefits of utilizing multiple measures when studying fear to add further clarification in future studies.

Although the operational definition of fear of crime has varied across studies leaving a fairly large amount of ambiguity, Fattah and Sacco (1989) suggest grouping the concept into three categories: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive fears are grounded in an individual's belief about the plausibility of becoming a victim and the degree of seriousness if victimized (Fattah & Sacco, 1989). Cognitive fear can be measured by asking questions about perception, perceived risk, or generalized fear or worry about crime. Affective fear, on the other hand, is the emotional response or subjective anxiety surrounding the idea of being a possible victim and should be asked as such (Fattah & Sacco, 1989). Finally, Fattah and Sacco (1989) found that a behavioral response to fear can be measured by evaluating information about actions that individuals take to reduce the likelihood of victimization. Fattah and Sacco (1989) have provided an excellent means for operationally defining and distinguishing fear and the perception of risk.

Fear and the Perception of Risk

As just discussed, the study of fear of crime involves a distinction between the perception of risk and the actual risk of victimization, although perception of risk is a primary predictor of fear of crime (Arthur, 1992; Chiricos, Hogan & Gurtz, 1997; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; May & Dunaway, 2000; Parker & Ray, 1990; Thompson,

Bankston & Pierre, 1989). Increased perception of risk correlates to increased fear of crime, but risk perception is distinct from fear of crime (Ferraro, 1995). Appearance cues also allow people to socially construct the meaning of events and their relationship to subjective and objective reality (Ogle, Eckman & Leslie, 2003).

In a secondary analysis of a randomized study by Chiricos, Hogan & Gurtz (1997) on the news media and fear of crime, Lane and Meeker (2003) found that the more risk perceived, the more afraid of crime the person expressed. The differences found also represented the social context of crime that varies among individuals, groups, and situations. The study by Lane and Meeker (2003) provided an important element of cultural differences between different ethnic groups, and how group membership can influence perception of risk. Thus, within settings among different groups of people, if a specific location is perceived as unsafe, individuals avoid that place or take measures to protect themselves (Ferraro, 1995). The school setting is no different. When students see metal detectors, a pervasive police presence and a disorderly climate, the school may likely be perceived as unsafe, prompting a need for self-protection or avoidance.

Kenney (1987) also found that even when fear of crime is not a concern at any given moment, personal perceptions about the likelihood of future victimization were higher when individuals perceived a crime problem in a particular setting. Hence, even though a student may not fear crime today or see themselves in any kind of immediate danger at school, students may report a concern of future victimization if they perceive their school as unsafe. Moreover, in a study of over 8,000 high school students, those students who perceived their school or neighborhood as dangerous due to incivilities and disorder, were also the students most likely to carry a firearm to school (May, 1999).

In New York City the situation is further complicated by the fact that students can attend high school in a distant neighborhood. Even individual city blocks vary with regard to objective disorder and crime rates, so perception of safety at school will depend on where that student is coming from. For example, a student may live in a relatively safe public housing project, but must pass through an unsafe neighborhood to get to the subway, which will take them to their relatively safe school. These circumstances will then affect that particular student's perception of whether their school is safe or unsafe. For other kids, their community may be so volatile that even a chaotic and crime ridden school seems much safer than home. Thus, the level of disorder in the environment both in and out of the educational setting is a critical aspect to studies on fear of crime at school.

Fear of Crime and Disorder

Several studies have shown a link between fear of crime and perceived community disorder (Ackah, 2000; Fisher & Naser, 1996; Keane, 1998; Lee & Ulmer, 2000; Skogan, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Taylor & Hale, 1986; Walklate, 1998). Clearly, a disordered school environment can be debilitating if students are required to learn in a constant state of uneasiness or chaos. Skogan (1986b) suggested that fear of crime is related to the social and physical disorder that is readily apparent in less affluent communities, resulting in an increased perception of a heightened risk of victimization. These structural predictors of fear, such as abundant neighborhood incivilities, have shown to increase fear (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Covington & Taylor, 1991; May & Dunaway, 2000a; Taylor & Covington, 1993; Will & McGrath, 1995), via a heightened perception of being at risk of criminal victimization (Ferraro, 1995; LaGrange, Ferraro &

Supancie, 1992; Rountree & Land, 1996).

May (2001b) found that adolescents are similar to adults in this heightened fear response to disorder they perceive in their environment. This undoubtedly includes the school environment. But, Covington and Taylor (1991) critically argued that studies emphasizing individual perceptions can never fully measure the actual level of disorder which would support the macro level arguments associated with ecological decline and the relationship to fear of crime. Despite this limitation, and the difficulties associated with operationalizing and measuring disorder in the literature, providing some measure of disorder in fear of crime studies is vital to the overall understanding of fear. For this study, some indicators of disorder such as campus criminal infractions and status as 'Schools in Need of Improvement' were gathered regarding New York City schools in an attempt to find relevant links to fear in the school context.

Fear of Crime and Race

Demographics have also been related to fear of crime. One strong demographic link found was with regard to race. Social vulnerability and perceived risk (Ferraro, 1995) are associated to racial distinctions and fear of crime by consistently showing blacks more fearful than whites (Belyea & Zingraff, 1988, Box et al., 1988; Braungart et al., 1980; Clemente & Kleinman, 1977; Larson, 1982; LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989; Parker, 1988; Rohe & Burby, 1988). Despite these findings, May (2001b) found that race correlated differently between genders in adolescence whereas black adolescent males are more fearful than white adolescent males, but black adolescent females show similar fear levels to white adolescent females (May, 2001b).

But, these studies had not considered the context within which African-American's

have experienced crime and justice. Some researchers have theorized that heightened fear among African-American populations may be due to an overriding mistrust of police professionalism, resulting in a systemic type of social disorganization that may increase perceived risk and therefore fear of crime (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Scott, 2001). Scott (2001) found crime-specific differentials around systemic social disorganization in a study of 2,013 inner city residents. Scott (2001) controlled for relevant demographic variables as well as specific crimes, personal versus property crime, and found negative perceptions of police related to fear of property crime but not to personal crime.

In another study, objective neighborhood disorder such as graffiti, trash and abandoned buildings in primarily African-American communities seemed to have a weak relationship with fear (Covington & Taylor, 1991) and more to do with perceived disorder, yet always contingent on the specific crime considered (Scott, 2001). Scott (2001) failed to find the traditional poverty effect in her study, but the study used an over-representative sample of African-Americans. Despite this limitation, Scott (2001) found that lower socioeconomic African-Americans were not more fearful than African-Americans of higher socioeconomic status. Fear of crime in public schools is particularly relevant to racial considerations for purposes of this study since minority students are disproportionately represented in urban centers like New York City (Schunk, 2004).

Fear of Crime and Vulnerability

In addition to the predictive studies of fear of crime that focus on perceived risk, neighborhood incivilities and socio-demographic variables, many researchers have sought to understand why people fear crime in the first place. The majority of explanatory models of fear stress the notion of vulnerability, which in most studies is

thought of as an objectively lower capability of self-protection. Killias (1990) suggested that exposure to risk, loss of self-protective control, and grave foreseen consequences taken together create a sense of vulnerability and fear.

Hale (1996) critically analyzed the existing studies on fear of crime and found that the research tends to cluster vulnerability factors into one of three categories: elderly persons, women and the poor. Hale (1996) also critiques the concept of vulnerability by suggesting that perceptions of vulnerability result from socialization over the life course rather than innate, objective differences in strength or dexterity. But, these three categories likely have contributing circumstances other than an objective vulnerability. Furthermore all vulnerability-based fear of crime research clearly fails to take into account the age-related nature of fear (May, 2001b). Children and adolescents have different fear reactions than adults (Marks, 1978), and some childhood fears desist while others develop into adulthood (Marks, 1978; May, 2001b).

Fear of Crime and Age

Numerous studies have looked at the relationship between fear of crime and age. Many researchers believe that the older people get, the more fearful they become (Baldassare, 1986; Box, Hale & Andrews, 1988; Brillon, 1987; Braungart, Braungart & Hoyer, 1980; Clemente & Kleiman, 1976; Clarke & Lewis, 1982; Culter, 1980; Eve, 1985; Garofalo, 1982; Giles-Sims, 1984; Kennedy & Krahn, 1984; Lindquist & Duke, 1982; Miethe & Lee, 1984; Ortega & Myles, 1987; Warr, 1984). Many of the studies ask about lifestyle patterns. Yet, when considered more in depth, crime is not the primary reason elderly persons stay at home (Cook, Fremming & Tyler, 1981). In addition, the elderly, while more likely to exhibit less strength, also feel a sense of powerlessness in a

society that values youth, which may partly explain a heightened fear response (Kahana et al., 1977). In addition, fear of crime among elderly populations is inconsistent with their rate of victimization (Fattah & Sacco, 1989). A vulnerability argument would therefore seem inconsistent as well, since crime rates appear to indicate that they are not necessarily more at risk. Hale (1996) supported critics who argued that general measures of crime were predominantly used in fear of crime studies with elderly populations and therefore may be only determining a perception of risk or concern about crime. In fact, Fattah & Sacco (1989) found that higher levels of fear in the elderly were directly correlated to global measures of fear.

In other studies with elderly populations using specific crimes while controlling for seriousness of crime, older persons were not significantly more fearful (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; LaGrange, Ferraro & Supancie, 1992; Warr, 1984). In fact, LaGrange and Ferraro (1989) found little relationship between fear and age when using crime-specific questions. Moreover, Parker (1988) and Ferraro (1995) found an age/fear relationship in the opposite direction, with younger people more fearful than elderly people. This would make sense given an increased risk of violence in youthful populations. Finally, May (2001b) found that there is an inverse relationship within the age demographic within adolescent populations, showing younger adolescents being more fearful than older adolescents.

Age and fear typically show valid relationships only when other environmental factors are taken into account (Clemente & Klienman, 1976; Fattah & Sacco, 1989; Jamieson & Neustrom, 1987; Jaycox, 1978; Lebowitz, 1975). Ferraro (1995) and Parker (1988) said that young people are more frequently exposed to crime due to lifestyle differences such

as being out more, being out after dark, going to bars, and using public transportation. Ferraro (1995) goes on to state that a higher fear response in youth would be considered rational due to the actual increased exposure to risk during routine activities.

Ferraro (1995) found that the younger age group participates in crime more often too, and therefore may be around crime more frequently simply because their peer group contains the most frequent offenders. Similarly, the elderly may have more of a generalized worry about crime that drives them to alter their lifestyle to a point where they do not put themselves at significant risk since they more often stay at home (May, 2001b). Either way, objective individual vulnerability based on older age and weaker constitution no longer seems to be as powerful a variable in current research on fear of crime, and clearly needs further empirical study.

Fear of Crime and Gender

Gender has been another prominent variable associated with fear of crime and vulnerability. Gender studies have predicted higher levels of fear for females, who were assumed to be more vulnerable due to less strength (Baumer, 1985; Belyea & Zingraff, 1988; Box, Hale, & Andrews, 1988; Braungart, Braungart & Hoyer, 1980; Chiricos, Hogan & Gertz, 1997; Clemente & Kleinman, 1977; Ferraro, 1995, Garofalo, 1979; Kennedy & Krahn, 1984; Kennedy & Silverman, 1984; Krannich, Berry & Greider, 1989; LaGrange, Ferraro, & Supancic, 1992; Larson, 1982; Moeller, 1989; Parker et al., 1993; Rucker, 1990; Smith & Hill, 1991; Thompson & Norris, 1992; Warr, 1984; Warr, 1987; Warr, 1990; Will & McGrath, 1995). But, physical vulnerability may not be a sufficient explanation, since gender differences still saturate and stratify our society (Stanko, 1988) and may override simplistic notions of lower physical strength among

women.

Even with regard to school violence, research has historically ignored the gendered nature of the phenomenon and the masculinities that drive it (Danner & Carmody, 2001). For a long time, adolescence has been thought of as a time of identity formation through socialization (Erikson, 1968). Smith and Torstensson (1997) argued that just as women have been socialized to be more fearful, men have been socialized to hide their fear. Masculine socialization, particularly in urban areas, consists of being tough, many times in the presence of girls (Scott, 2001). Therefore studies which show an increase in fear among women could very well be due to socialization more than to vulnerability. As previously mentioned, this developmental variable is one that deterrence-based philosophers ignore when considering school crime and authoritarian solutions for this problem. Goodey (1994) believed that studies of fear among younger populations would help further illuminate a notion of gendered fear, since adolescence is a particularly active time of gendered socialization.

Sacco and Glackman (1987) point out that women feel a general lack of power in a primarily male-dominated society, and this outweighs the lesser physical power compared to economic powerlessness coupled with a social push to be passive and dependent. Likewise, social pressures are more likely to dominate peer groups at school, given that adolescents are traditionally not in the position of economic independence or the pressures associated in an employment context (May, 2001b).

Equally important, Warr (1985) and Goodey (1994) found that women's fear may be more related to a pervasive threat of rape, as well as the insidious sexual harassment that many women experience regularly on the street in the form of stares, shouts, random

sexualized comments and being followed by strangers. Sexual harassment often happens in school as well, suggested by recent educational policies prohibiting sexual harassment in the school setting (Kulich, 1998). Yet, Riger, Gordon and LeBailey (1978a) found that women who believed they could contest a sexual assault were more likely not to be fearful.

In an effort to remedy the weakness of past studies, Ferraro (1995) controlled for the fear of rape within the fear of crime context. Ferraro (1995) found that when sexual assault was taken out of the mix, gender was no longer predictive of fear. Furthermore, Ferraro (1995) found that heightened fear of crime for women appears specific to the crime of rape, but may not generalize to other crimes. Similarly, in a comprehensive and well-controlled study, May (2001a) discovered a nonexistent relationship between fear of crime and gender among adolescents, after removing the variable of fear of sexual victimization. Again, gendered fear appears crime-specific. Also, in an antecedent study, May and Dunaway (2000) found that gendered fear in adolescence depends on race, but contrary to adult gender differences, black and white females showed similar levels of fear, even when black males were more fearful than white males.

Although seemingly very dated, in addition to other criticisms, some researchers have argued that elderly and female fear reactions can be explained as irrationality (Baumer, 1978; Cook, Fremming & Tyler, 1981). Yet, Smith and Torstensson (1997) argued that if the intimate violence that pervades society and low incidence of reporting this crime were taken into account in fear of crime studies, fear among women and the elderly may actually be quite rational and should really be a lot higher given the risk (Smith & Torstensson, 1997).

Warr (1984) countered the irrationality argument by saying that fear was not irrational, but related to the idea that some people have a greater sensitivity to risk, or the gendered nature of admitting that sensitivity, coupled with the gendered definition of irrationalities among men and women. In fact, lower fear of crime among young men may be much more irrational than heightened fear among women given the risks young men face (Walklate, 1994). As mentioned, some findings indicated that men are more reluctant to show sensitivity due to the social push to appear strong and fearless (Smith & Torstensson, 1997). Even though these socialization considerations remain inconclusive, they may offer an important link to resilience in this context. If gendered socialization is considered, perhaps those who are resilient are less sensitive to risk and therefore less fearful.

Fear of Crime and Socioeconomic Status

Just as gender inequalities can influence life trajectories, so can socioeconomic statuses, making poverty another important type of vulnerability. Skogan and Maxfield (1981) referred to economic and social powerlessness as 'social vulnerability'. Many studies showed an inverse relationship between fear and socioeconomic status (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; Baumer, 1985; Belyea & Zingraff, 1988; Clemente & Kleiman, 1976; Ferraro, 1995; Garofalo, 1979; Kennedy & Krahn, 1984; LaGrange, Ferraro & Supancie, 1992; Larson, 1982; Moeller, 1989, Parker & Ray, 1990; Thompson & Norris, 1992; Will & McGrath, 1995). Although adult populations have exhibited different fear reactions according to economic status, May (2001b) found no differences among adolescent populations, who exhibit the same levels of fear regardless of socioeconomic status.

Although neighborhood quality could not be controlled for in May's (2001b) study,

since the research used incarcerated juveniles, May (2001b) speculated that adolescents rarely have money to buy protective measures, and social status during this time of life is more likely to be based on looks or athletic ability over actual finances. May (2001b) recognized that his sample of incarcerated males were all at equal risk of high victimization in an absolute sense given their current daily living conditions, but this incarcerated sample automatically controlled for the variable of socioeconomic status. In summary, vulnerability as an explanatory variable in the fear of crime literature clearly needs further research given that the continuing debates regarding how vulnerability is measured and defined have yet to be settled, and adolescent populations have had such little representation.

Fear of Crime and Prior Victimization

Another explanatory model of fear and crime concerns prior victimization and secondary victimization from vicarious exposure, which sometimes showed higher fear correlating with prior victimization. Research supporting this relationship is inconsistent and mixed (Hale, 1996; May, 2001b). Baker et al. (1983) and Wanner and Caputo (1987) found no relationship between fear and prior victimization. Similarly, Hartless et al. (1995) found that victimization was not significantly associated with worry about crime. Other studies found a significant relationship between individual victimization and fear (Balkin, 1979; Liska, Sanchirico & Reed, 1988; Skogan, 1987; Yin, 1980). But, each of the previously mentioned studies used a different time frame of recall, and Baker and Mednick (1990) further found that the farther in time a respondent was victimized the less fear of crime was correlated to prior victimization. In adolescent populations, however, Fishkin, Rohrbach and Johnson (1997) found that previous exposure to

violence was linked to higher levels of fear, yet this finding needs replication given the limited sample and control of variables.

Agnew (1985) argued that global measures might also be responsible for the inconsistency in the prior victimization/fear relationship, particularly since the relevance of one type of victimization may lack a logical connection to certain protective behaviors. Agnew (1985) found that prior victimization predominantly mediated a variety of other factors. Therefore, Agnew (1985) suggested that the fear/victimization relationship depends on how the individual coped with the victimization experience. Various techniques of neutralization, similar to those used by criminals to justify criminal behavior, can mentally reorganize the direct experience of crime in the mind of the victim, so that the victim thinks about the crime as a minor incident worthless of additional worry (Agnew, 1985). Box, Hale & Andrews (1987) found little support for Agnew's argument, but recognized the importance of further study regarding coping mechanisms and their link to fear of crime, suggesting another gap in the literature.

Some research has shown a positive relationship between prior victimization and fear, insofar as specific types of victimization have sometimes been associated with fear of specific crimes (Belyea & Zingraff, 1988; Box, Hale & Andrews, 1987; Hale, Pack & Salkeld, 1994; Miethe & Lee, 1984). Controlling for seriousness, Smith and Hill (1991) also found a relationship between fear and prior victimization based on seriousness of the previous victimization, and showed that property victimization was surprisingly more related to fear than personal victimization which remained unrelated. Finally, in a study that included consideration of other emotions, Ditton et al. (1999) found that anger was the predominant response to victimization more than fear.

Although mixed evidence exists with regard to direct victimization, vicarious victimization has shown to be consistently related to fear of crime (Arnold, 1991; Box, Hale & Andrews, 1988), due to a media emphasis (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981) that influences an increased perception of risk (Warr, 1987) in particular communities. Many studies have shown that the media sets a framework for increased levels of fear, but mainly in the local area where the crime took place (Heath, 1984; Liska & Baccaglini, 1990; Smith, 1986; Winkel & Vrij, 1990). The Cultivation Hypothesis (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) claimed that the media ultimately directs the public toward specific situations to fear and even how much individuals should fear those situations. Evidence has suggested that community location is the predictive mediating variable between news stories and actual fear of crime (Doob & MacDonald, 1979; Heath & Petraitis, 1987).

New York City news programs regularly cover violent incidents at the public schools. More importantly, no matter how infrequent, when a violent incident does occur at a school, the entire school community typically talks about it. Student reactions and subsequent coping styles may affect of how students incorporate the story into their image of their school and subsequent feelings of safety at school.

Fear of Crime at School

Although the study of fear of crime among adult populations has been popular for decades, fear of crime research utilizing adolescents is not nearly as extensive (Hale, 1996). Fear of crime at school has garnered even less attention. The School Survey on Crime and Safety (1999) clearly articulated the importance of accurately measuring crime and fear in the schools, but even now much of the existing data remains anecdotal or limited (Noaks & Noaks, 2000).

Although studies based on comprehensive national, state, and local data sources show that violence at school has been declining over the past decade (Kari et al., 2001), fear has fluctuated and remained problematic (May, 2001b). The School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victims Survey (1989; 2001) showed that fear of crime at school has fluctuated between 6% and 12% (National Crime Victims Survey, School Crime Supplement [NCVS, SCS], 1995). Similarly, Snyder and Sickmund (1999) found that 4% of high school students felt too fearful to attend school the previous month. Another national survey found that 28% of students in America say they ‘sometimes or never’ feel safe at school (Portner, 1996). Although national surveys such as these are able to give a good overall picture of the feelings throughout the entire country, they fail to isolate urban populations that could likely experience higher levels of fear.

Although the previous statistics seem somewhat low, other studies have found higher levels of fear at school. Noaks and Noaks (2000) discovered that about one-third of students have real concerns about being victimized at school, many of whom show increased feelings of insecurity and vulnerability at school. Yet, Noaks and Noaks (2000) surveyed kids within only one school in Wales, making generalization to U.S. schools, particularly in urban areas, difficult. In a randomized telephone survey, Pastore and Maguire (2000) found that 16% of students in this 1999 Gallup poll fear for their safety at school, and the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (1999) found 13% of students perceive their schools as unsafe. Although these studies had appropriate controls in place and took a generalizable cross-section of the population of interest, telephone surveys have some inherent bias with regard to differences in families with unlisted phone numbers as well as families without phones. Addington (2003)

added that student levels of fear are independent of highly publicized events such as Columbine.

Although most schools show fairly low victimization rates (Kari et al., 2001), another national survey indicated that 33% of students in junior high avoid particular locations inside their school (Bastian & Taylor, 1991). Among both junior high and high school students, 43% avoid restrooms, 20% avoid hallways, 45% avoid grounds around the school (Ansley, 1993). One positive aspect of the research conducted by Ansley (1993) was the very large sample size of 65,193 students. But it is important to keep in mind that although behavioral studies likely include a large element of fear and therefore provide a useful indication of fear of crime at school, studies asking about behavior fail to consider that self-reports only provide information on how students say they behave. In addition, these surveys lack any indicator of why students avoid certain areas. Crime may not be the only reason students avoid certain locations.

Kann et al. (1995) clarified the question of avoidant behavior in a finding estimating that over 4% of students skip at least a day of school each month specifically due to fear of victimization. This is important in the larger context of typical academic goals, namely learning. Indeed Ansley (1993) found that 63% of sixth to twelfth graders report that if they felt safer at their school, they believe they would learn more.

Furthermore, an estimated 25% of students view their school as seriously problematic with social tensions and violence (Leitman, Binns & Steinberg, 1996), and half of public high school students believe that drugs and violence are serious problems at their school (Johnson, Farkas & Bers, 1997). Unfortunately the previous two studies did not ask a question regarding whether social tension, violence, and drug availability increased

personal levels of fear or increased perception of risk. Nevertheless, not only are students concerned about crime at school, but 40% of parents worry about the safety of their kids during the school day, and 80% of communities perceive the threat of crime at school as getting worse (Leitman, Binns & Unni, 1994).

Weapon possession is at least partly influenced by concern of victimization (May, 1999). Kann et al. (1995) found that 9th to 12th graders carry weapons to school 12% of the time, and 7.3% were injured by a weapon at school over the past year. Yet, legislative initiatives like the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act (1994)⁵, allowing expulsion of students who carry a weapon to school, do not address macro-level problems in the urban schools like overcrowding, insufficient learning materials, and threats of violence or harassment in neighborhoods surrounding the schools and where the students reside. Many students feel a need to protect themselves on the way to and from school. In fact, studies suggest fear of crime manifests itself in communities where youth are simply trying to attend school (Arnette & Walsleben, 1998; Leitman, Binns & Steinberg, 1996; National Association of School Boards of Education [NASBE], 1994).

Therefore, legislation ordering gun-free school zones near schools fail to address the root causes contributing to decline in many communities. The majority of research on fear in schools has used national samples that include rural, suburban, and urban teens. Fear in urban schools alone has largely been ignored, despite that these students may have the most reason to be fearful, not only at school but on the way to and from school. Furthermore the presence of bullies and gangs in and around schools are also likely to be large contributing elements of fear. Bullying and gangs are discussed in the following

⁵ The Gun-Free Schools Act (1994) required states to enact laws that would oblige schools to expel students who bring a firearm to school for no less than one year.

two sections.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated and intentional aggression towards others (Griffin & Gross, 2004), although the operational definition of bullying remains vague given that the social context must always be taken into account to reduce the risk of over-classification (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Greene (2000) identified five facets of bullying that the majority of researchers agree on: bullying happens around social groups, bullies intend to inflict harm or fear, the aggression occurs repeatedly, the victim frequently does nothing to provoke the bullying, and the bully is objectively or subjectively more powerful than the victim. One weakness in the literature is that most studies on bullying focus on the behavior or intent of the bully rather than how the victim experiences the situation (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

Although research on bullying rarely focuses on the victim, prevalence rates of students being bullied on a weekly basis are between 5% and 15% (Glover et al., 2000; Rigby, 1997; Salmon, 1998). The rate climbs higher with 75% of students report being bullied at least once during a school year (Glover et al., 2000). Likewise, 73% of students report being bullied at least once during their entire school career (Eslea & Rees, 2001). Carney and Merrell (2001) found the prevalence of bullying was comparable across educational settings as well as across cultures.

In a self-report study of bullying behavior, Greene (2000) found that victims tend to be “good targets” according to bullies and generally have low self-esteem, few friends, poor social skills, and high degrees of anxiety or depression (Greene, 2000). According to Olweus (1994) bullying victims also tend to be quiet, sensitive, cautious, and

physically weak. Griffin & Gross (2004) emphatically point out that no empirical evidence exists that children who have a noticeably different appearance or quality, such as a medical condition or disability, are targeted more frequently than other young people. That belief is considered a “bullying myth” (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Also, no findings suggest race or socioeconomic status have a relationship to victimization from bullies (Griffin & Gross, 2004) although clearly more research on racial and physical differences is needed.

Bullying has likely been around for centuries. During the eighteenth century, teenage boys governed themselves within their own peer groups through tolerated bullying and inter-group pressure (Gills, 1974). Although research on bullying dates back to the 1970s in Norway, Sweden and Finland, only recently have American, British and Australian researchers taken interest in the subject (Griffin & Gross, 2004). After the 1999 shootings at Columbine, several states enacted legislation to address bullying in the schools (Dessoff, 2004) in spite of the lack of comprehensive research. Dessoff (2004) reports that seventeen states currently have laws designed to combat bullying, despite problems of enforcement, high costs associated with implementation and reporting, and the lack of any real evidence that these laws are effective. Few large scale studies have been done on the relationship between fear and bullying in the United States, but Griffin and Gross (2004) recommended this specifically as an area ripe for in-depth research, and one that could lead to more effective policy goals, such as the extensive research that has been done with youth gangs.

Gangs

Like bullies, youth gangs within schools are often a daily source of intimidation for

students. American youth gangs emerged throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 1997), and by 1995, gangs appeared in all fifty states with an estimated 660,000 members (National Youth Gang Center, 1997). Although scholars have yet to decide on one definition of the gang, the National Crime Victim's Survey, School Crime Supplement (2001) defines a gang as a group of youth who "use common names, signs, symbols or colors" (p.6) to indicate solidarity and membership. Because gangs within the school may not necessarily be involved in violent or illegal activity, the National Crime Victims Survey, School Crime Supplement (2001) is interested in all groups that define themselves as "gangs, crews, or something else" (p.6) at school.

Youth gangs present an identifiable and consistent climate of intimidation at school, which invariably impacts the learning environment. Arnette and Walsleben (1998) found that students express several disturbing attributes of gangs within their schools including disruption, anticipated violence, threats and harassment, peer pressure to join a gang, territorial claims via graffiti, being mistaken for a gang member during fights between rivals, perceived increase of weapons, and ethnic or racial tension.

Not every gang member is necessarily dangerous. Some may be afraid of violence and perceive themselves as weak individuals who lack alternative or effective coping mechanisms. Gang membership in these cases would be a means to protect oneself from a climate of violence, where protection is presumably necessary. In fact, gang membership may actually be a realistic protective mechanism at school for fearful students who cannot adequately defend themselves (Donohue, 1996; Huff, 1990).

Clearly, fear cannot negate the accountability of gang members for their criminal acts or harassing behavior, but certainly the dichotomy between victim and victimizer must be

explored if school safety is a primary objective for educational communities. If fearful teens expose themselves to an increased risk of crime and violence by becoming gang members, they also expose themselves to exclusionary policies in the school (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE] Citywide Disciplinary Standards, 2004) as well as early contact with New York City school safety agents. A policing response alone may thereby increase numbers of students, already choosing a criminal trajectory, who will have decreasing opportunities and insufficient education. Thus, the necessary policing response in schools simply shifts back into the community without resolve.

Policing in Schools

In the 1990s, The National Education Goals Panel called for all schools to be drug, violence and weapon free by the year 2000 (Weiler, Dorman & Pealer, 1999). Needless to say, this did not happen. But current protective measures derived from this policy initiative, have increasingly focused on visible security initiatives like uniformed officers and zero-tolerance policies for disruptive students (Devoe et al., 2003) thereby overshadowing academic and social education.

Although security quickly became a fundamental value in education (Cobb, 2003), the security measures used in many urban schools appeared ineffective and costly (Elliot et al., 1998; Skiba, 2000). While violence prevention programs are part of some schools who offer mentoring, conflict resolution, peer mediation, and social skills training (Lawrence, 1998; Leffler & Snow, 2001; Mather, 2001), most administrators enforce measures of formal social control as the primary means to ensure safety (Snell et al., 2002) without the data to support the effectiveness of these solutions.

Furthermore, Wayson (1985) argued that school personnel and districts are hesitant to

gather accurate data on fear or the threat of crime in schools since these figures are often linked with funding and reputation. Yet, Phillips (2000) found that resources have been diverted from academic programs to school security. Taken together, this suggests the need for outside researchers to explore fear levels at schools and attempt to illuminate alternate, cost-effective, and empirically-guided solutions for educational communities. More importantly, school policies that revolve around security ultimately overshadow the need for space, qualified teachers, effective curriculum, and sufficient time for school personnel to spend with the students.

School Safety Policy in New York

The Safe Schools against Violence Education Act (Project SAVE, 2000)⁶ is one example of the punitive bent and security focus of educational legislation in New York State. This legislation raised the offense category for assault in school from a misdemeanor to a Class D felony (New York State United Teachers [NYSUT], 2001). Although violence prevention and training is included in these legislative mandates, safety in this legislation revolves around codes of conduct, punishment for offenses, and whistleblower protection, which protects employees from civil liability if they report suspected violent acts to police. Teachers and students alike have a right to feel safe at school, however nowhere in the legislation is the subject of fear addressed, and more importantly, the legislation does not include mandates to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives stemming from the legislation.

Of additional significance is the wording in the legislation. For instance, section 3214

⁶ Project SAVE (2000) was a comprehensive state law designed to make schools safer and to promote learning. The components included violence intervention plans, emergency response plans, codes of conduct, teacher and principal authority, uniform violent incident reporting, instruction in civility, health curriculum, violence prevention education for students & staff, whistle blower protection, fingerprinting of staff, mandatory child abuse reporting, teacher discipline, and court notification of delinquency to schools.

of the Education Law “allows principals to suspend a student who is insubordinate or disorderly or violent or disruptive or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, morals, health, or welfare of others” (New York State United Teachers [NYSUT], 2001, p.12). Yet the law does not define what is disruptive or disorderly, thereby leaving this up to educators. For 6th-12th graders, suspensions can last from one day to one year depending on the level of infraction (Klein, Young & Tucker, 2003). Teachers can also remove students for up to four days without protections or due process that are afforded in suspensions. Again, even when options are clearly needed to ensure a safe environment, ambiguous policies run the risk of targeting students from particular backgrounds whose behaviors could easily be labeled insubordinate or disruptive, which would ultimately create divisions within the educational community. Concepts such as disorderly conduct, harassment, criminal mischief, and reckless endangerment seem like terms that would likely be highly ambiguous for educators who do not have training in the law.

In New York City, a leading goal for the public school system continues to be making public schools “safe, secure, and productive learning environments” (Levy, 2002), but this goal has yet to be met. Bloomberg and Klein (2003) indicate that one of the main safety tactics for public schools is to “receive targeted deployment of school safety agents and police officers to prevent criminal behavior” (p.1). This tactic is based on a New York Police Department [NYPD] strategy called ‘Operation Impact’, and simply renamed ‘Impact School’ for the school-based policing intervention (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). This year alone, the city was granted over six million dollars by the Department of Justice to add fifty additional school security officers to the Impact School program

(Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). This tactic is questionable, given that deterrence of this kind alone has not been proven sufficient or effective in educational settings.

Nevertheless, in an effort to counter perceptions of risk, Wilson and Kelling (1989) recommend that the best way police can help reduce fear is to make themselves visible and available. All of the New York City public schools have adopted this doctrine by employing school safety officers in an effort to encourage a climate of order and protection (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). But, the simple presence of these officers may not be sufficient, particularly if they are primarily stationed at the entrances of the buildings or are trained mostly in reactive policing. Furthermore, school safety officers may not deter crime by their presence at all with adolescents who may feel invulnerable or believe that challenging an officer would do more for their social reputation than following the rules. Still, police may be necessary given the level of violence in many schools, yet policing interventions prove more effective when police are involved in the life of the community (Pate et al., 1986; Williams & Pate, 1987; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Therefore, it seems reasonable that policing in educational communities would require specific training of officers on expanding ways to be part of that specific community.

Some school-based safety strategies outside the New York City Department of Education have been attempted with safety agents. The Vera Institute of Justice (2003) implemented Project Affirm which was designed to train school safety agents in proactive positive reinforcement during their daily interactions with students in the New York City public high schools. Although Vera (2003) did not find that positive reinforcement increased an atmosphere of safety at the school, the school safety agents

did adopt the techniques and recommended that training become protocol for administrators as well, in a continued effort to promote a safer school climate.

Vera (2003) suspected that if all school officials are trained in positive reinforcement, a significant positive outcome would emerge. Certainly, the whole community must buy into any strategy for it to work. Montsinger (2001) found that many school security officers believed that their supportive relationships with students are the catalysts that promote a more effective means for decreasing violence and crime at school. The philosophy of positive interaction among officers and students is reminiscent of community policing strategies, where the presence and interaction of citizens and officers have shown to reduce fear despite static crime rates (Balkin & Houlden, 1983; Pate et al., 1986; Williams & Pate, 1987; Winkel, 1986). In accord, resilience building interventions in the educational communities could also be an innovative and promising solution, since it would include adult supports and positive interaction among community members in the educational environment.

Regardless of a lack of reliable research on effective safety solutions, policy changes around school safety and discipline in New York City recently have had little to do with building educational communities, and more to do with removing ‘problem kids’ (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). Even in the lowest grades, zero-tolerance and criminal labels are apparent. For instance, an Educational Specialist at New Alternatives for Children reported that a Kindergarten student recently got suspended and removed from school for a “sex offense” because he touched another student inappropriately. Undoubtedly that behavior is wrong and unacceptable, but the ramifications for this 6-year-old “sex offender” seem inappropriate given his stage of cognitive development.

The Office of School Safety continues to operate on a ‘broken windows’⁷ philosophy by addressing even small infractions in order to impact an environment deemed disorderly (Eskenazi, Eddins & Beam, 2003). As a result, high numbers of suspensions, expulsions, and the zero-tolerance policies that drive them, have been widely implemented. The public message to New Yorkers clearly supports harsh disciplinary policies as a means of reducing fear and making schools safer. Yet, these policies neglect the fact that students who are expelled or segregated in suspension schools may be less likely to finish high school and therefore become productive members of society. Again, removing disorder in the schools essentially places it on the streets.

Additionally, another recent policy change in 2004 for security officers in New York public high schools was an elevation in status to the level of enforcement that all NYPD officers have on the street (Advocates for Children, 2004). School security officers can now use the same street-based interventions with students in school settings. Policing on the street is very different than school security, and may not be appropriate or effective with this population. Yet, the policy-makers of New York City seem to have a retributive agenda that almost overrides the student safety agenda. Furthermore, deterrence-based penalties are prone to retributive justifications when they fail to deter. And as it stands, current zero-tolerance policies do not appear to deter, as observed by the continuation of infractions in the student population, long lines in the suspension hearing offices, and additions of new suspension schools to accommodate more and more students. Taken together, protective measures of zero-tolerance and increased police presence may indirectly be creating a climate of fear and intimidation when these measures become

⁷ Broken Windows was first termed by Kelling & Coles (1996) in the influential study that found links between physical signs of disorder (ie: broken windows), social disorder in communities and crime.

primarily punitive (Peterson & Skiba, 2001).

Indirect Costs of Fear of Crime

Fear of crime has historically shown the indirect cost of increased punitiveness (Cullen, Clark & Wozniak, 1985; Hough, 1985; Langworthy & Whitehead, 1986). In the latter part of the twentieth century, retributive goals of punishment clearly replaced rehabilitation in American correctional institutions, and this trend has blended into our educational systems as well. Another cost lies in the avoidance of some of the root causes of student misbehavior in the schools themselves such as overcrowding and a lack of personal involvement of under-qualified teachers who have little time and resources to properly educate these young people. Finally, this punitive bent increases number of under-educated youth entering adulthood with fewer skills, less knowledge and limited options.

As previously mentioned, the New York City school system has demonstrated a retributive agenda with a reliance on zero-tolerance policies for students considered disruptive (Albanese-DePinto, 2004), as well as the disciplinary codes that are highly ambiguous and punitive. These ambiguous procedures for school security officers and disciplinary codes could create a power-based, non-cooperative educational community, potentially increasing fear despite originally intended safety purposes. In fact, zero-tolerance may be more likely to encourage rebellion than deter misbehavior, whereas community solutions like resilience-building would likely promote a more cooperative atmosphere.

Besides fortress-like security and punitive discipline policies at schools, Conklin (1975) found that fear has several other indirect costs that impact quality of life, most of which are more difficult to navigate in the school setting. For example, Morgan (1978)

and Wilson (1975) conducted studies, which indicate that communities break down when there are certain areas that are perceived as too dangerous. DeVoe et al. (2003) found that 5% of students avoid certain areas of the school because of fear. Louis Harris and Associates (1995) found that 46% of young people have made changes in their daily routine due to fear of crime. A paradox exists if students are mandated to go to an unsafe school, but have limited options for movement within that school. Coping by avoidance inside the school would therefore be difficult, and truancy may be a more realistic option. Portner (1996) found that 11% of students have chosen to stay home or cut classes due to fear. Again, when young people are required by law to attend school until the age of seventeen and the choice to avoid school due to fear is prohibited in itself, parent and student accountability becomes blurred. Students are frequently left to make a choice between two basic needs, education or personal safety.

Sherwood and Krishna (1994) found that adolescents most frequently choose to limit their mobility in order to ensure safety in urban neighborhoods, but since that option is insufficient at school, carrying a weapon is another alternative. But, when adolescents believe other students are carrying weapons, they will skip school more often (Martin et al., 1996). Gun ownership and carrying weapons is often a result of fear (Bankston et al., 1990; DeFronzo, 1979; Hassinger, 1985; Hill, Howell & Driver, 1985). Portner (1996) found that 38% of students in high-crime neighborhoods have carried a weapon to school for protection. Furthermore, fear is a leading cause of weapon possession at school (Arria, Borges & Anthony, 1997; May, 1999).

The previously mentioned figures support a Routine Activity Theory of fear which predicts that self-protective measures are primarily linked to neighborhood or

environmental characteristics and a high number of potential offenders (Durant et al., 1995; McGarrell, Giacomazzik & Thurman, 1997; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). While attending school is certainly a regular activity, urban schools and the neighborhoods surrounding them are often perceived as unsafe. Moreover, students may be becoming more innovative to bypass the metal detectors, as observed by one student at Martin Luther King High School who brought a snake to school for protection from other boys who were threatening to assault him. Moreover, the indirect costs of fear of crime are also likely to impact the psychology of the individual.

Fear of Crime and Psychology

The field of psychology has explored associations between fear and certain psychological variables. Neugarten (1964) found that fear in adult populations was linked to an individual's self-perception as a person capable of handling various unforeseen life situations, and an ability to actively attempt to change each situation. Neugarten's (1964) research was done using a projective test called the Thematic Apperception Test⁷, which requires interpretation on the part of the administrator and therefore runs the risk of administrator bias. Because of this limitation, findings must be utilized with extreme caution, even though Neugarten's (1964) results are consistent with previously mentioned links concerning perception of risk and studies of locus of control⁸ which are discussed next.

Patterson (1978) showed that an active attempt to change a perceived threat of crime

⁷ Murray's Thematic Appreciation Test (1936) is a projective measure consisting of a set of cards with drawings of ambiguous situations. The TAT asks respondents to tell a story about each card. The trained examiner then interprets the meaning of the response based on the theme of the response.

⁸ Locus of control is a term found in psychological literature that is used to describe where individuals attribute their behavior. External locus of control refers to when an individual attributes their behavior to situational forces outside themselves, and internal locus of control is when an individual attributes their behavior to forces inside themselves such as personality (Carlson, 1987).

results in less fear of crime for that individual. Patterson (1978) used multiple measures in his study, both direct observation as well as an attitudinal measure, thereby aiding the validity of his study. Furthermore, Palmore and Luikart (1974) found that internal locus of control relates to competence and inversely relates to powerlessness. In this longitudinal study, subjects spent a full day at the examination site completing interviews, physical exams, intelligence and personality tests, attitudinal scales, and indicators of psychiatric symptoms. Palmore and Luikart's (1974) study was very comprehensive, and results indicated that the more people felt in control of themselves, the more power they felt. This is important because it may be likely that the more powerful a student feels, the less fearful s/he will be. Further, power, according to Palmore and Luikart (1974) has more to do with an internal perception of control rather than an objective indicator such as stature or physical strength.

Additionally, Wolk (1976) and Levenson (1981) found internal locus of control also correlated with adaptive coping styles for fear. Both studies used self-report scales with adequate sample sizes to measure locus of control, yet samples were only taken from adult populations. Because childhood and young adulthood could essentially be considered times of continued development, it would be important to be mindful on how adaptive coping and locus of control could manifest differently in adolescent populations such as that used in this study. Nevertheless, the findings are consistent with fear as "a state of mind characterized by desperation and anxiousness stemming from incompetence in coping with events of everyday life" (Gubrium, 1973, p.112). In summary, the means by which an individual copes with fear can directly effect their level of fear in different settings, and a potentially influence adaptive functioning in those particular settings.

Perception seems to be a moderator of fear in many contexts. For example, the relationship of health to fear of crime has been examined. Foelker (1985) tested the concept of self-rated health and its impact on fear of crime on a sample of 387 adults aged 35-79 years old. Results indicated that age was not related to a perception of health, whereas both middle-aged adults and elderly adults were similar in their self-perceptions of health. Although a poorer perceptual image of health was associated with higher general fear of crime in a middle-aged sample, this was not true of the elderly sample, who are more likely to experience objective health problems (Foelker, 1985).

For specific crimes of robbery and burglary, the middle-aged sample was also more fearful when they had a poorer self-perception of health, but again this was not true of the elderly sample, and not true for other specific crimes (Foelker, 1985). The same study found results consistent to an external locus of control being associated to both general and specific fear of crime (Foelker, 1985).

It is important to understand that Foelker (1985) conducted her study in a county of Florida whose population may likely be generally older than urban centers such as New York, and failed to control for neighborhood and associated levels of disorder. But, despite these limitations, Foelker (1985) helped establish the link between psychology, health and fear, and illuminated the importance of differentiating specific crimes when studying the psychology of fear. In summary, Foelker (1985) showed general fear associated with perceived ill health only in the middle-aged group who would arguably have less objective health problems than the elderly group who reported no relationship in fear and poor health. Despite that Foelker (1985) attempted to link fear and health, the area has largely been ignored, and virtually no research has been done on youthful

populations who experience health problems.

While traditional notions of vulnerability in fear of crime research would likely predict that persons, young and old alike, with poor health or complex or chronic medical conditions would always perceive themselves at an increased risk of victimization, and therefore be more fearful at school, this assumption cannot be made without empirical evidence, particularly in light of Foelker's (1985) findings. Because health over the life course is subjective and personal definitions are constructed, different reactions to objective health could certainly vary by individual. So, a child or adolescent who has experienced health issues early may not perceive the same objective personal vulnerability as an adult who develops a significant health problem later in life. Objective personal vulnerability is distinct from subjective self-definitions of vulnerability, particularly in the context of resilience, defined as successful adaptation despite risk (Rutter, 1990). Studies on fear of crime have long researched and predicted which individuals and populations are likely to be fearful and why, but have yet to examine why some people in situations that predictably would result in fear ultimately remain fearless.

This study uses health as an objective indicator of vulnerability, but examines the concept of fear within a context of resilience in an attempt to fill the gap in the literature regarding what keeps certain individuals fearless despite threats of crime. Even without an obvious indicator such as a chronic or complex medical condition, few people would disagree that students attending public schools in New York City could easily perceive themselves as vulnerable in one way or another. Yet undoubtedly there are some students in the New York City public schools that are not intimidated by the threat of

crime or the atmosphere of pervasive scrutiny and surveillance. These students could arguably be called 'resilient'. By taking a different look at fear at school using the concept of resilience, program and policy changes around safety that promote a resilient climate could be initiated in urban education. In addition, using a resilience model in fear of crime research allows the literature around fear of crime to take the obvious next step. The following chapter discusses resilience theory and the relevance of resilience models for fear of crime and urban education.

Chapter 3

A Theoretical Model of Resilience

The History of Resilience

Over the past few decades, the field of psychology has expanded a deficit-based vulnerability paradigm to include an alternate emphasis using a strengths-based resilience model. Cohler (1995) indicated that the field of psychology had historically depended on epidemiology, the study of lifestyle factors and exposure to various environmental agents to disease. Epidemiology and subsequently psychology had relied on risk factors and incidence in an effort to predict the likelihood of disease or pathology (Cohler, 1995).

Resilience paradigms take another approach. Within a resilience model, individuals are not viewed as pathologic solely based on risk factors associated with their particular genetics or environmental conditions. Furthermore, even when high risk populations do show higher rates of dysfunction, the same populations also consistently show evidence of important individual differences in healthy functioning including sub-groups that thrive in traditionally high risk contexts (Cicchetti et al., 1993; Rutter, 1990). For example, child psychology has found that children who have been abused may exhibit lower competence than those who have not been abused, yet both groups show an equal proportion of exceptionally high competence (Cicchetti et al., 1993). This sub-group of highly competent abused children suggests that some risk factors may contribute to high competence among certain people rather than debilitate the functioning of those individuals (Cicchetti et al., 1993).

The field of public health has been a leader in the use of resilience models. Health programs have been developed internationally in accordance with specific factors that allow people to remain healthy and thrive in the most noxious environments (Grotberg,

2001; Insook et al., 2004). These resilient individuals have an ability to succeed or flourish despite what may be viewed as serious risk factors, such as national medical crises and milieus of disease.

Likewise, a link between psychology and health has been consistently demonstrated. A familiar example of that link can be found in what researchers call the placebo effect. The placebo effect is a reaction to a belief about what a pill or intervention should do, which thereby creates that reaction, even when no medicine or treatment actually occurred (Myers, 1987). The placebo effect effectively illustrates the power of perception, and how a subjective impression of improved health can sustain objective good health based on the belief alone.

In fact, health is a primary factor that shapes the perception of well-being (Larson, 1978). While objective health does not significantly affect subjective well-being, an individual's perception of health does show a relationship to subjective well-being (Zautra & Hempel, 1984). In other words, having a chronic or complex medical condition would not predictably lower a sense of subjective well-being. Each individual utilizes different coping strategies to contend with various medical conditions and integrates the situation and their perception about the situation into personal feelings of well-being. Furthermore, psychological resources such as protective factors, competence, and adaptive coping skills promote an ability to bounce back during medical crises (Cohen & Herbert, 1996; Curbow et al., 1993; Ickovics & Park, 1998, Ryff & Singer, 1998; Scheier & Carver, 1985; Shifren, 1996; Taylor et al., 2000; Tennen et al., 1992; Thompson, 1991). In addition, other characteristics unrelated to coping, like a sense of humor, hopefulness, self-reliance, sociability, and attractiveness, also influence

the ability to thrive in challenging circumstances (Anthony, 1987; Cohler, Stott & Musick, 1995).

The field of criminology has yet to fully incorporate models of resilience. Although protective factors and resilience concepts have been identified in non-offender populations, as well as delinquent populations (Bender & Losel, 1997; Born, Chevalier & Humblet, 1997), criminology has traditionally followed the same type of epidemiologic path by attempting to predict which individuals and environments are more likely to be criminogenic. However, criminology no longer views the world as static and one-dimensional, evidenced by the push towards more integrated theories that span aggregate levels and encompass the whole person in the environment over the life course. In addition, the life course perspective in criminology parallels current thought on resilience as a developmental model recognizing different needs, trends and circumstances of the various life stages.

Resilience

Rutter (1990) described resilience as “a process leading to enhanced protective or coping mechanisms transforming potential sources of threat to personal adjustment into opportunities for maintaining personal adjustment” (Cohler, 1995, p. 756). Resilience models attempt to demonstrate what makes a person succeed or even thrive in highly stressful circumstances when common sense may suggest the opposite. Resilience is not a static concept (Rutter, 1985). Resilience changes over the life course and over a variety of experiences (Rutter, 1985). What works in one situation or at one time, may not work in the future. The main grounding principle of the resilient person is an ability to be flexible and adaptable in varied circumstances, particularly when facing the challenges of

life (Rutter, 1985). Resilience is further enhanced by the ability to appraise situations accurately and then act appropriately (Rutter, 1985).

Rutter (1993) described the importance of protective mechanisms that enhance resilience. Protective mechanisms buffer the resilient person from adverse conditions or circumstances. Studies have pointed to three main clusters of factors that act as protective mechanisms: temperament or personality factors, family factors, and external support factors (Masten & Gramezy, 1985). According to Masten and Gramezy (1985) these factors included: autonomy, good self-esteem, cognitive and social intelligence, family warmth and cohesion, low family discord, and external supports to maintain and further an individual coping style.

More recent discourse on resilience acknowledges protective factors, but also surrounds the concept with individual differences in ‘motivational energy’ that allows growth out of adversity (Richardson, 2002). Cohler, Stott & Musick (1995) said “Resilience reflects a process leading to enhanced protective mechanisms transforming potential sources of threat to personal adjustment into opportunities for maintaining personal adjustment” (p.756). Still in question is whether protective factors create resilience in an individual or whether a resilient person is able to create important protective factors in their lives. The answer likely exists in the interactional nature of the person and the environment.

Resilience ultimately happens through the principle of disruption and reintegration (Flach, 1997). As change or disruption occurs during the life course, “resilient reintegration refers to the re-integrative or coping processes that result in growth, knowledge, self-understanding, and increased strength of resilient qualities” (Richardson,

2002, p. 310). Although resilient people have more adaptive coping styles (Garnezy, 1985; Watt et al., 1995), adaptation is different from one individual to the next as well as one circumstance to the next. In fact, a coping mechanism used in one situation to adapt, may not be generalizable to the next situation. Furthermore, resilience cannot necessarily generalize between populations. The key to resilient coping lies in the flexibility and use of different coping mechanisms in an effort to adapt to each new situation or challenge (Cohler, 1995).

Coping

Murphy & Moriarty (1976) described coping as the ability to face opportunities, challenges, frustrations and threatening aspects of the environment while maintaining an integrated sense of self. Similarly, Lazarus & Launier (1978) defined coping as intrapsychic initiatives that “manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them, which tax or exceed a person’s resources” (p.311). Individuals cope with opportunities and challenges, but must also cope with their own personal integration within the environment in order to sustain adequate functioning (Murphy & Moriarty, 1976). Part of adaptive coping includes individual action in the environment to control situations, balanced with an ability to request assistance when necessary (Moos & Schaefer, 1986).

Lazarus and Folkman (1985) supported a process approach to coping. A process approach to coping occurs when the individual continuously processes the evolving demands of an event in an effort to effectively adapt to the circumstance, while at the same time managing the emotional content associated with the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1988) described two types of coping, problem-

focused and emotion-focused. While problem-focused coping addresses the objective predicament, in this case the threat of crime and resulting fear, emotion-focused coping manages upsetting emotions. The process approach to coping views resilience as the constantly evolving management of a person in the environment. For resilient individuals, the objective stressful event does not produce stress, although the perception of adequate resources to effectively cope with the situation will influence the level of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Therefore, coping occurs in a context that is influenced by individual appraisal of the event and the personal resources to manage the situation (Lohman & Jarvis, 2000).

Coping styles have been studied among adolescent populations. Various coping strategies mediate stressful events in the lives of adolescents, which result in different functioning over the course of day to day life (Compas, 1987; Stern & Zevon, 1990). Lohman and Jarvis (2000) recognized the period of adolescence as a period of transition while the young person gradually passes into maturity. Erikson (1968) also described this time as that of identity formation. Stressors that adolescents cope with not only include major life events such as a move, disaster or illness, but are typically the ordinary daily hassles we all have experienced like peer and family relationships, schoolwork, peer pressure, grade transitions, and physical changes associated with sexual development (Compas, 1987; Stark et al., 1989). Fear of crime at school could potentially be either a minimal daily hassle, or a regular occurrence with a profound psychological toll.

The Development of Resilience Theory

Resilience theory falls within three competing models that share a general theme of healthy functioning in spite of adverse circumstances (Luthar & Zigler, 1991).

Compensatory models are additive. Additive models simply find the number of stressors and add them to the number of positive attributes for each individual, after which a decision on where that individual would fall on levels of competence and adjustment was determined (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Protective or vulnerability models recognize that the interaction of stressors and attributes can predict adjustment outcomes (Rutter, 1993). The challenge model takes the first two models into account but regards stress as something that could actually improve competence and adjustment (Luthar & Zigler, 1991).

Recent discourse on resilience has also evolved through a limited ecological view to a postmodern constructionist conception (Ungar, 2004). The ecological view stressed the interaction of protective and risk factors resulting in soundness of mind and functioning over a predictable adversity. In postmodernism, constructionists see resilience as a process of compromise between people and their environments, with subsequent personal definitions focused on strength and health, despite whether others may define the environment or person as noxious (Ungar, 2004). Furthermore, the constructionist resilience discourse argued that competence evolves into a self-defined concept of adeptness that is pervasive in any and all given environments or situations (Ungar, 2004). In summary, constructionists would likely agree that self-perception is vital to the individual in the ways they define or explain their personal circumstances that subsequently reflect their emotions such as fear, and their resulting behaviors. Thus, for purposes of this study, a challenge model of resilience is the guiding theory emphasizing student adaptation in their challenging school environment to determine which students are resilient and which students are more fearful.

Indeed, in the context of the school, students essentially define their own sense of safety in the environment. In postmodern resilience, individuals are ever-changing and in constant flux over the life course. Individuals adapt in robust ways to circumstances from moment to moment, day to day, and year to year (Ungar, 2004). Ungar (2004) believed that it would be incorrect to place a firm dichotomy between the resilient person and the non-resilient person. Ungar (2004) stated that an understanding of health is present in everyone, but each individual must negotiate their own experience within social constructions of health to determine the definitions they will ultimately integrate into their own well-being. Resilience then is more of an overriding quality of flexibility and self-definition of health in varied circumstances rather than a static trait. While it is clearly possible to utilize a strengths-based theory to guide the programs, policies and research in psychology and public health, it has also shown to be successful in education.

Education and Resilience

Resilience models are not only being recommended in psychology and health settings, but are being introduced in educational settings more frequently as well. Although, critics argue that implementation of resilience programs in education have been lacking in depth, comprehensiveness, and rigors to the supporting research (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Pianta & Walsh, 1998; Smokowski, 1998), success in the school setting is highly predictive of resilient adolescents (Jackson & Martin, 1998). Maintaining lower levels of fear should therefore be considered part of that definition of success in urban settings due to the frequent disorder apparent in many city schools. Resilience models are also important because they can help guide educational policymakers.

Resilience models intend to promote alternative, more cost-effective strategies for

fostering competence in inner city youth attending urban public schools (Wollin, 1991), and would allow students to maintain a respectful self-image with concurrent respect towards rules and education. Masten and Coatsworth (1998) argued that competence, or effective environmental adaptation, is one of the primary developmental tasks of every person, starting in early childhood and continuing through adolescence. Zunz, Turner & Norman (1993) believed that the school is the best place to foster resilience through adaptive enhancement programs and adult nurturing of basic psychological competency, particularly since competency plays a main role in positive outcomes for adolescents. Minnard (2001) and Connell, Spencer & Aber (1994) believed that the school setting is ideal for regular resilience-building opportunities for children and adolescents, particularly in urban settings, because school may be one of the more consistent experiences in their day-to-day lives.

Although resilience can be taught to individuals as an aid for daily functioning, a model of resilience must always consider macro, meso and micro levels of influence and intervention. Winfield (1994) and Ogbu (1992) argued that in order to promote resilience in urban schools, the challenge lies within the institutional cultures themselves. The cultural make-up of New York City schools frequently consists of students from very diverse backgrounds being taught and disciplined by adults who were raised in dissimilar circumstances that may result in a cultural gap at times. The deterministic view of the security-based, risk management focus in urban schools implies that the threats and the students who represent those threats in many inner city schools are simply hopeless and dangerous, and all that can be done is to try to manage that danger. In addition, an authoritarian demeanor that is at times imparted by administrators and school safety

officers may simply challenge the self-respect of each adolescent rather than encourage personal self-respect by modeling a balance between consistent discipline and empathetic reason.

Finally, Werner (1989) showed that young people utilize protective factors to overcome obstacles to their personal well-being. School is a fundamental and routine experience in the life course of American youth. A student's school career encompasses several important developmental phases, such as identity formation and sexuality (Erikson, 1968). Moreover, Doll and Lyon (1998) viewed schools as places specifically designed as caretaking environments, one where adults create the structure and rules in an effort to promote academic and social learning (Powers, 2002). For those reasons, Benard (1997) believed that school personnel have enormous power to promote resilience in students, particularly for those who come from inadequate family situations or declining communities. Because teachers and school personnel have daily contact with students they have the ability to embody protective factors, empower and support student achievement, and provide the opportunity structure in which students can strive towards personal goals resulting in competence (Powers, 2002). Kimmel and Mahler (2003) also recommended student resilience training to overcome or combat the noxious effects of bullying. Finally, Benard (1997) argued that resilience-based organizational models inside schools encourage students to find strengths and personal methods of adaptive behaviors.

These initial resilience interventions at school suggest that resilience models instead of, or in addition to, policing models can guide school policy around safety and fear, and at the very least make policing interventions more effective. In conclusion, although the

past research contains several socio-demographic and environmental predictors of fear and various means to explain fear, a gap remains in the literature with regard to explaining why some people are not fearful and actually thrive in environments such as the urban school, where the threat of crime is often very apparent. Furthermore, although resilience theory has guided research in psychology and public health, as well as aided in educational programming, few studies in criminology, and virtually no studies on fear of crime, have utilized this promising model that could likely change school safety policy and programming in urban areas for the better.

Resilience in Context

Originally this study on fear of crime in the urban school hypothesized that students with chronic or complex medical conditions would be more resilient. Because these individuals had been forced to redefine their sense of a fully functioning self based on alternative, flexible life skills, given that the basic necessity of optimal physical health had personally been compromised early in their life, the idea of acquired resiliency was a logical question in need of empirical validation. Furthermore, adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions were thought to have likely developed a different perception of health and safety than an adult who has developed an illness later in life. In turn, these adolescents were thought to have different coping styles and more protective factors.

Adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions have what a challenge model of resiliency would predict is a serious circumstance that has challenged them to improve their functioning to a degree at least sufficient enough to attend a New York City public school. Adolescents with a chronic or complex medical condition have the

unique experience of learning to negotiate many stressful environments without optimal health, and have therefore been compelled to re-negotiate, or re-construct, their personal definitions of good health at a young age, as well as develop different ways to cope with alternate physical realities. These unique circumstances throughout everyday life allowed for the prediction that this population could be in a position to cope with fear of crime differently than the average student at school, possibly resulting in less fear.

The adolescent with a complex or chronic medical condition had already learned alternative ways to cope with bodily discomfort and psychological uncertainty associated with illness, and had likely formed adaptive social relatedness in a personal context of physical challenges. The question remained as to whether this flexibility, a trait shown to be related to resilience (Charney, 2004), could be generalized to less fear responsiveness and thereby link fear of crime and resilience and close an explanatory gap in the fear of crime literature. The next chapter will discuss the hypotheses and further add to the rationale behind the research.

Chapter 4

Hypotheses and Rationale

The population under study consisted of adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions. This specific comparison group was chosen because of the obvious objective vulnerability of a being young person with a medical condition. This study originally was designed to answer the research question of whether adolescents with complex or chronic medical conditions are less fearful of crime at school compared to a normative sample who have not faced complex or chronic medical illness. The mediating factor also at question was whether the students with chronic or complex medical conditions were more resilient. Resilience was measured by looking at two primary attributes of the resilient person, protective factors and flexible coping strategies. The three working hypotheses for the study were as follows:

- Students with chronic or complex medical conditions are less fearful at school than the average student.
- Adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions have more protective factors than the average adolescent.
- Adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions utilize different coping styles than the average adolescent.

The resilience necessary for adolescents with a chronic or complex medical condition as they move through their daily lives was predicted to overcome the normative prediction of an overwhelming sense of personal vulnerability around crime at school and their own objective risk. Childhood and adolescence is a time of development where resilience can also be cultivated (Cohler, Stott & Musick, 1995).

Lerner & Busch-Rossnagel (1981) argued that children who are responsive and

engaging can create their own enhanced resilience and positive development. This suggests that teens with chronic and complex medical conditions may also behave in ways that would enhance personal resilience. In fact, Cohler (1991) found that when people face a long-term serious illness and are able to conquer that particular condition to some degree, the overcoming of that challenge fosters increased resilience. This idea is consistent with the challenge model of resilience discussed in the previous chapter.

Thus, adolescents with complex or chronic medical conditions in public schools were predicted to have developed resilience through increased protective factors and different coping mechanisms over their life course, thereby being more prepared to deal with the threat of crime at school. These students were essentially predicted to be producing their own personal safety (Kennedy & Krahn, 1984) through protective factors and adaptive coping, which could lead to less fear. The average adolescent would likely not have the same opportunity to develop the differential coping strategies or protective mechanisms necessary to reduce psychological stressors like fear of crime at school. The hypotheses were tested on a group of students in New York City public schools. Details on the methodology are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Summary

To test the hypotheses, three surveys were administered on a sample of 120 adolescents attending New York City public schools. Former studies on the impact of fear of crime in urban public schools, and the methods by which teens cope with fear in this setting, have been largely inconclusive. This pilot study utilized a resilience paradigm in the context of fear in an effort to isolate a youthful population who experience less fear of crime in school. Resilience was defined by two primary factors, protective mechanisms and coping styles. The surveys used were The School Fear Survey, specifically designed for this study, The Revised Ways of Coping Checklist [Re-WCCL-Mod.] modified for adolescents (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1993), and the Baruth Protective Factors Inventory [BPFI] (Baruth & Carroll, 2002).

Descriptive statistics were generated and bivariate analysis was used to compare groups of variables. Spearman's Rho found several important correlating variables. The Mann-Whitney *U*, a nonparametric test, was used to analyze the hypotheses. Finally, the open-ended question asking 'why' and the qualitative data gathered via the administrators log was considered in context.

Participants

Because randomization was not possible for this population, a sample of 58 adolescents with complex or chronic medical conditions attending a New York City public school were purposively selected as the group of interest. Students with complex or chronic medical conditions are not easily identifiable within the school system and are

likely not randomly distributed in that system. Thus, this sample was chosen using a quasi-experimental design with an identified group of students possessing complex or chronic medical conditions. The comparison group who did not have complex or chronic medical conditions consisted of 62 adolescents similarly identified. The comparison group closely matched the demographic composition of both the medically complex group and the population of the New York City public schools.

All participants were between 12-20 years old, attended a New York City public school, were able to cognitively understand and complete a survey, and expressed voluntary interest in participation. Students who attended a General Equivalency Diploma [GED] program were excluded due to the fact that most of these programs are neighborhood-based, take place outside traditional high school settings, do not require a full school day or regular school schedule, and include a much older age group. Students who attended private school or a school outside New York City were also excluded, as well as students who attended District 75 Schools. District 75 only serves students with serious cognitive limitations, and these students were excluded because they would not have the capability of understanding or completing a survey instrument.

In contrast, District 79 students were included in the study because these schools, although still classified as ‘alternative schools’, cater to a population that is seeking a traditional high school diploma by providing accelerated curriculum and pervasive academic supports. These District 79 programs were originally created several years ago as a remedy to help students succeed, and are similar to more recent regional programs developed for the same purpose, such as the New Century Schools. New Century Schools were designed to break up the larger high schools into much smaller

environments with closer academic supports. Around 25% of the schools in the sample consisted of what the Mayor's office calls 'small schools' which are under 525 students (Bloomberg, 2004). Some of these schools are considered 'New Century Schools' and continue to be housed in large buildings of larger schools. After visiting several of the alternative school settings and speaking to the 8 survey participants who indicated this type of school, it was clear that these schools represent an older method designed to assist public school students, strikingly similar to current structuring of the public high schools with comparable supports and smaller numbers. In fact, most District 79 schools are now also listed with the New Century High Schools because of these similarities. District 79 is therefore an older Department of Education creation to assist students in the same way the New Century High Schools do now. Therefore, students in District 79 schools were not excluded.

Participants in this study were drawn from two social service agencies in Manhattan: New Alternatives for Children [NAC] and The Door. New Alternatives works with New York City families who have a child or adolescent with a chronic or complex medical condition. The services at New Alternatives are provided at no cost and include case management, recreation, counseling, health clinics, psychiatric and psychological evaluations, tutoring, educational advocacy, college advisement, family preservation, family reintegration and adoption services. The population at New Alternatives consists primarily of lower socioeconomic families from minority backgrounds (New Alternatives for Children [NAC] Annual Report, 2004), further discussed later in the section.

The Door offers an adolescent population a variety of no cost services including recreation, career development, college advisement, legal services, educational services,

health centers, creative arts, and counseling. The population of The Door consists of New York City youth ages 12-21, from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds, whose families are primarily of lower socioeconomic status. Both agencies were chosen due to their ability and willingness to provide representative samples of typical adolescents attending New York City public schools.

Although originally the idea of accessing larger samples inside schools was considered, this proved to be an unrealistic undertaking, given the closed nature of the Department of Education in New York City to outside researchers. Furthermore, access granted by the Department of Education may very well be heavily biased due to the link with the political agendas of the current mayoral administration. The current Department of Education falls under mayoral control, as of 2002, unlike previous administrations. When politics are linked with educational programs, the people invested in that link may have reason to encourage favorable outcomes. For instance, if the Department of Education provided access only to students in the most orderly schools and orderly classrooms, this could not provide a generalizable notion of fear in New York City schools. Although we cannot definitively presume this would likely have happened using data gained via the Department of Education, the closed nature of the institution itself to outside research could be indicative of a probable bias (Rogers, 1969).

Of the over 300 public high schools and middle schools, 87 different schools throughout New York City were represented, of which 74 were high schools and 13 intermediate schools. The diversity of the schools represented in this sample with regard to size, location, building structure, and classroom size allow for generalization to the population of the New York City public schools. Furthermore, about 70% of the schools

represented in this sample were deemed ‘Schools in Need of Improvement’ [SINI] by the State Department of Education. This is important because of all the schools in New York State classified as ‘Schools in Need of Improvement’, New York City holds two-thirds of them statewide (Kamin, 2003). More information and the history of ‘Schools in Need of Improvement’ will be discussed later in the chapter.

This sample yielded a cross-section of the New York City public schools and provided this researcher access to a population of students with complex or chronic medical conditions, not otherwise accessible. Purposive sampling is often used when “a small subset of a larger population in which many members of the subset are easily identified but the enumeration of all of them would be impossible” (Maxfield & Babbie, 1998, p. 225).

Sample Selection and Characteristics

The purposive sample of 58 students aged 12-20, with a history of chronic or complex medical problems was obtained, primarily from a social services agency called New Alternatives for Children [NAC]. Statistical ethnic demographics at NAC, generated from monthly reports, annual reports and recent intakes in 2004 and 2005 are estimated as follows: 35% African American, 46% Latino, 2% White, 7-8% Middle Eastern, and under 2% Asian. About 56% of NAC clients are male and 44% female. The clients at NAC are distributed throughout four of the boroughs of New York City and estimated as follows: 35% Bronx, 20% Brooklyn, 28% Manhattan, 16% Queens, and 1% Staten Island. According to reports and discussions with program directors, the vast majority of families who utilize NAC services fall in a lower socioeconomic status, based on federal poverty levels.

The sample for the medically complex group was selected according to previously mentioned criteria: aged between 12-20 years, attending a public school, cognitive level capable of understanding and completing a survey, voluntary interest in participating, and possessing a chronic or complex medical condition. Also, as previously mentioned, teens that attend school on Long Island or in Westchester County, teens in a GED program only, and teens who attend a District 75 school were ineligible.

New Alternatives for Children serves over 365 children between 0-21 that have complex or chronic medical conditions, plus their families. About half of this number are younger than 12 years old. At least 50 of the teens within the age group are either in college, in a GED program, or are too severely disabled or sickly to participate in a survey or any cognitive activity. Of the 96 that remain, at least 10 attend private school, 9 others attend a school on Long Island or outside New York County, while 36 of them are siblings who do not have a medical condition.

Of the estimated 41 students that remained and were eligible, all were invited to participate in the study. Only 2 students who were invited to participate declined. One expressed that she was too shy and the parent of the other expressed that he had been previously victimized at school this year and she thinks he does not want to think about the incident. One additional student who wanted to participate was unable to do so because her parents declined to give consent, believing their child had to answer too many questions as of late to doctors, and they did not want her to answer any more.

The comparison group of 62 participants from The Door consisted of adolescents aged 12-20, without a history of medical problems. All participants were enrolled in a New York City public high school or middle school, were cognitively capable of

comprehending and completing a survey, and volunteered to participate. The comparison group at The Door, like New Alternatives, was selected according to willingness and desire to participate. Participants were recruited by advertising with fliers at The Door as well as actively speaking to Door members during recreational hours about the project and snowballing the comparison group. The 20 Door members of the sample who identified a chronic or complex medical condition on the survey were placed in the medically complex group for analysis. Door members with chronic or complex medical conditions were allowed to participate in the study because excluding these individuals would have potentially been emotionally harmful to them, since they may have been excluded in the past due to their condition, as well as the fact that increasing the sample size of the medically complex group could only benefit the predictive power of the results. Between respondents from both agencies, the medically complex group consisted of a total of 58 students.

The 2004 ethnic demographics at The Door (2005) are as follows: 44% African American, 34% Latino, 11% Asian, 5% Caucasian, and 6% Other. In 2004, 63% of Door members were female, and 37% were male. In 2004, the Door consisted of members from all 5 New York City boroughs, broken down as such: 38% Brooklyn, 29% Manhattan, 13% Queens, 15% Bronx, 1% Staten Island. The Door has 7,347 members, all of which have varied levels of involvement with the agency. Statistics regarding frequency of involvement at The Door were not available. Given that Door services are provided at no cost without exclusion, no estimate of socioeconomic status has been gathered at The Door. Yet, the Executive Director of Programs at The Door indicated that the vast majority of Door members come from low socioeconomic statuses, based on

conversations and intake interviews with the clients.

In New York City, students are legally allowed to attend public high school until age 21, hence justifying the upper age limit of 20 for both samples. The sample of respondents used in this study consisted of students aged 12-20 and were distributed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Distribution of Research Sample, by Age

Age 12	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20
5%	2.5%	5%	14.2%	19.2%	17.5%	18.3%	13.3%	2.5%

The research sample also had respondents representing grades 6-12 and were distributed as such in Table 2.

Table 2.
Distribution of Research Sample, by Grade

6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
4.2%	2.5%	3.3%	15%	19.2%	29.2%	26.7%

Among New York City public school students, an overrepresentation exists of students from minority backgrounds and students of lower socioeconomic status (Schunk, 2004). In this study, low socioeconomic status was measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. In fact, most students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, based on federal poverty guidelines (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2005). The overwhelming majority of the sample was of lower socioeconomic statuses at 85% reporting they get a free lunch. In this sample, another 5% were eligible for reduced-price lunches. The School Chancellor also reported that

most of the students in New York City public schools are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Klein, 2004). The Department of Education (2003-2004) claims that 53% of all students K-12 citywide are eligible for a free lunch. Statistics gathered from the high schools in this sample indicated that generally around 70% of high school students receive free lunch (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2003-2004).

Although it appears that students of lower socioeconomic status are slightly overrepresented in this sample, some considerations must be discussed. First, throughout New York City, students whose parents are immigrants sometimes feel uncomfortable reporting anything to governmental agencies (Klein, 2004). Second, some students who may be eligible in the schools system do not sign up for the program due to embarrassment. The same is true for some of the parents who are uncomfortable reporting financial information to the educational system due to a desire for personal privacy. So, it is likely that those students who receive a free lunch are significantly fewer than those who are eligible throughout New York City. This could explain the slight discrepancy in the sample, and if considered would make the sample more representative of the typical adolescent in New York City Schools than the 15% difference in the figures would suggest.

The racial composition of New York City public high schools is estimated as follows: 34.7% African American, 33.5% Hispanic, 17% White, and 14.5% Asian, and less than 1% Native American/Alaskan (Schunk, 2004). Gender breakdowns in the public schools are as such: 50.5% females and 49.5% males (Schunk, 2004). Gender breakdowns in the sample were representative of both the population and of the New York City public schools at 46.7% female and 50.8% male (2.5% missing data).

The populations at New Alternatives for Children and The Door are proportionally comparable to students in the New York City public schools with regard to race and socioeconomic status. It should be noted that slightly more Caucasians attend public schools than receive social services through agencies such as NAC and The Door (17% Public Schools vs. 5% The Door and 4% at NAC), although Caucasians may likely be overrepresented in the public high schools with more stringent admissions criteria, and are therefore attending the higher performing schools. This possible bias is discussed further in the limitations section of the discussion chapter.

In addition, the Asian community is more prominent in the public school system than at NAC (14.5% Public Schools vs. 1-2% NAC), although the Asian community is sufficiently represented at The Door (11%). In the sample, the Asian community was not represented in the medically complex group, although made up 6.7% of the comparison group. Finally, New Alternatives for Children has a small percentage of clients of Middle-Eastern decent (2-3%), a category unrepresented in figures from The Door. This sample consisted of 2.5% respondents of Middle-Eastern decent, represented in both groups, from both agencies. Surprisingly, Middle Eastern is not even a category represented in the New York City Department of Education figures at all, although the reason for this omission remains unknown. The samples consisted of 20% of students marking two or more racial groups. Finally, the sample consisted of 3.3% missing data with regard to race.

Zip code and borough were gathered in the data. Sixty-three zip codes were represented in the sample, as were students from all of the New York City boroughs. Table 3 shows the distribution of the sample across New York City boroughs, while

Table 4 indicates the population distribution in the boroughs of New York according to the last census.

Table 3.
Distribution of Sample in New York City, by Borough

Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island
20.8%	25.8%	39.2%	13.3%	0.8%

Table 4.
Population distribution in New York City boroughs. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001)

Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island
17.0%	19.0%	31.0%	28.0%	0.06%

Middle school students typically attend public school within their borough, although high school students are eligible for citywide schools. In this sample, 15.8% of respondents attended school outside of the borough in which they lived. All of these students were in high school.

New York City public middle schools generally have sizes ranging between 100-1300, while high schools have anywhere from 120-4000 students. High schools almost always have a higher amount of security measures, but all schools vary individually with regard to surveillance, classroom sizes, teacher demographics, rules, culture and environmental incivilities. Of the over 300 public schools available in the New York City public middle and high schools, 87 different schools were identified in this sample. Of these schools in the sample, 13 were middle schools and 74 were high schools. The schools represented in the sample consisted of 60 'Schools in Need of Improvement' as

classified by the New York State Department of Education (2004). Because two-thirds of statewide 'Schools in Need of Improvement' are located in New York City (Kamin, 2003) the 70% of SINI schools in this sample seems fairly representative of New York City Schools.

'Schools in Need of Improvement' [SINI] are classified under the Federal Law, No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] (2002). NCLB was designed with four goals: stronger accountability, more freedom for states and communities, encouraging proven education methods, and more choices for parents (Inside Schools, 2005). Basically, the State Commissioner sets a yearly standard of performance that schools within their state are expected to achieve with a goal of proficiency for all students, as indicated by exams in English, math, and science (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2003). New York State standards also take into consideration enrollment, attendance, graduation rate and demographic data (NYSED, 2003). If the school is not meeting the State standard for all or any demographic group within that school for two consecutive years, then the school is deemed a SINI school or 'School in Need of Improvement'.

Under No Child Left Behind (2002) parents are then theoretically provided options for transfer or free tutoring if their child attends a SINI school, neither of which is easy to obtain in New York City due to unavailability of services and overcrowding in other schools. Furthermore, determining whether a school is a SINI school can be a challenge. Some lists exist in the yearly High School Applications Booklet (2004-2005) and the New York City Department of Education website, but these lists are both incomplete and sometimes inaccurate. Although these lists were used initially to gather information about all the schools in this sample, they were crossed checked with individual 'School

Reports' from the end of 2003-2004, as to what the accountability status actually was for each school. These final statistics were used in the results.

Of the high schools in the sample, 46% utilized metal detectors, as observed directly by this researcher or reported by school operators. Although several attempts were made to gather further statistics regarding the full security measures used in each school represented in this sample, the New York City Department of School Safety including individual deans at each school were unwilling to depart that information. In addition, the Director of School Safety did not return telephone calls nor e-mail requests for the information. In lieu of this lack of cooperation, direct observation revealed the following: all persons coming into all New York City schools must sign in at a front location, all schools have security guards assigned to them although different schools are allocated a different amount of security which are then placed differently in each school, all schools have a written code of conduct including the Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures (Klein, 2004), and most schools require students to carry identification cards. Other security measures such as locker checks, surveillance cameras, and hallway monitors vary individually between schools but could not be obtained for purposes of this study.

Finally, participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. All participants gave informed assent, and the medically complex group was required to obtain signed parental consent as well. Only two of the teens that were invited to participate declined, whereas one teen was unable to get parental permission. All three of these teens would have been in the medically complex group. Door members who were not eighteen gave informed assent as well, and to further protect the full confidentiality of Door members, a

proxy was used to ensure no coercion and no harm came to participants, and granted informed consent for Door members. Participants over 18 years provided informed consent. Further protection of human subjects is detailed in the IRB approval at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and The Graduate Center of the City of New York.

Instruments

School Fear Survey

This study measured affective responses to fear at school as well as a general concern about crime and future victimization. For purposes of this study, affective fear was defined as an adverse, emotional anxiety reaction to perceived criminal threats to person or property. In order to measure fear of crime and test the hypotheses, the School Fear Survey was developed to include all of the relevant considerations from the literature on fear of crime. The School Fear Survey was based largely on the School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victim's Survey (2001), an adolescent fear survey developed by a leader in the field (May, 1999), and the Victimization Scale from the Kentucky Safe Schools Assessment Survey (May, 2004). Some questions on the crime-specific fear scale were modified to add relevance to the setting of New York City public schools. In addition, one question about fear of sexual assault was added as well as one question about fear of future victimization. As mentioned in the literature review, Kenney (1987) found that even if fear of crime is not present, fear of future victimization may exist if a person perceives a particular setting as criminogenic. Furthermore, two questions were added to the school culture section (NCVS, SCS, 2001) in order to measure degree of support within the respondents school culture. Results were obtained for the original scales and the revised scale, alphas were calculated to help validate the

changes, and the individual questions were analyzed separately.

The School Fear Survey consisted of 38 closed-ended questions on three scales: School Environment, Victimization, and Fear of Crime. Although the Fear of Crime scale specifically addresses affective, crime-specific fear, the School Environment and Victimization scales were necessary to fully examine the construct in this setting and control for previous victimization and the culture of the school. The survey ends with one open-ended question of a qualitative nature that asks why or why not the student is generally afraid of crime at school. This question measures what current research in fear of crime believe is a general worry about crime or perception of risk. The School Fear Survey is intended to improve and combine the strengths of previous surveys such as crime-specific questions. As is typical of most fear of crime surveys, basic demographic characteristics of the respondents were asked including: gender, age, race, grade, zip code, past victimization, past offending and socioeconomic status.

The question about free or reduced lunch is used here to determine the socioeconomic status of the student's family, similar to the way it is used in the School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victim's Survey (2001). May (1999) found that adolescents are poor estimators of their household income and frequently produce unreliable results if asked outright. Many young people simply lack information about their family income or tend to exaggerate this variable (May, 1999). As a remedy, the question about free/reduced lunch was included as the measure of socioeconomic status (Lippman, Burns & McArther, 1996).

Free or reduced lunch programs are federally subsidized and based on federal annual income eligibility guidelines that correspond with the national poverty index (New York

City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2004). Eligibility is based on household size and monthly gross income. “Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those between 130% and 185% are eligible for reduced price meals. Those households with incomes over 185% of poverty pay full price” (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2004).

The final demographic variable asked on the School Fear Survey is whether the respondent has a chronic or complex medical condition. This question determined whether the respondent was placed in the medically complex group or the comparison group. The question is phrased as such: ‘Do you have a chronic or complex medical condition?’ To further clarify the question examples were provided of what is and what is *not* considered a chronic or complex medical condition, and the administrator gave dictionary definitions and reiterated examples to respondents who asked what the question meant.

As mentioned, the School Fear Survey asks about security measures in the school such as metal detectors, student IDs, locked doors, cameras, hall monitors, and/or school security officers, as well as the general school culture (NCVS, SCS, 2001). Although the school culture section consists of questions about the school environment concerning school rules, discipline, and whether students are aware of rules and punishment (NCSV, SCS, 2001), the scale failed to address basic interaction in the school culture concerning social supports. Two questions were added to address teacher support and friends, both relevant to studies concerning fearfulness at school. Both scales constitute the Environmental Section of the School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victims Survey (2001). These Environmental scales were necessary also

due to the unique characteristics and complex nature of New York City public school system and the impact of environment of fear.

As discussed in the literature review, adolescents and adults are more fearful of crime when they perceive disorder in their environments (May, 2001b). However, measures of disorder are difficult to operationalize, according to Covington and Taylor (1991) because actual milieus of disorder are subjective and levels are never complete to an extent that would allow macro level arguments. Despite this limitation, Eskenazi, Eddins and Beam (2003) found that certain school resources in New York City can be linked to student behavior and would be appropriate indicators of disorder. Two of the behavioral links Eskenazi, Eddins and Beam (2003) used were attendance rates, which address truancy, and drop out rates.

In New York City drop out rates in the public schools are not good measures of disorder because they are frequently underreported. Schools typically encourage failing students who are frequently truant to sign themselves into a GED program, thereby surpassing the statistical count of that student as a dropout, resulting in a lower dropout rate for their school despite whether they ever even go to the GED program or get their GED. Also, all students are permitted by law to attend school until the age of 21, regardless of whether they are repeatedly truant or failing (Gotbaum, 2002). Therefore, graduation rates are a better indicator.

In this study, in addition to the Environmental Scale and School Culture Scale, attendance rates, graduation rates, observed graffiti, open drug availability, and criminal activity were all used as direct and indirect signs of a disorderly school climate. Further, The New York City Police Department has collected data regarding incidents that occur

in the New York City public schools since 1998, broken down as Major Crime, Other Crime, and Non-Criminal Incidents (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2005). Data from the 2003-2004 school year was collected for this study, given that 2004-2005 data is not yet available. Schools collaborate with the NYPD to report these numbers. Major Crime includes burglary, grand larceny, grand larceny auto, murder, rape, robbery and felony assault (NYCDOE, 2005). The category of Other Crimes includes arson, explosion, misdemeanor assault, criminal possession or sale of a controlled substance, sale of marijuana, criminal mischief, petit larceny, reckless endangerment, sex offenses other than rape, and weapons possession (NYCDOE, 2005). Non-Criminal Incidents are actions that are not crimes, but disrupt the school environment like disorderly conduct, harassment, loitering, possession of marijuana, dangerous instruments, and trespass. (NYCDOE, 2005).

Educators are left with the authority and discretion of determining the definitions of Non-Criminal Incidents in relation to specific incidents as well as some things considered Other Crime. Some educators take a loose stance on defining something as a crime or criminal incident, while others apply rigid definitions of these concepts. Schools vary with regard to whether they encourage or discourage students to press charges as well. Finally, underreporting by students is likely. In the pretest as well as the study, respondents indicated that kids are considered 'punks' or 'snitches' if they report crime at their schools, and are shunned or targeted.

In addition to environmental scales, previous victimization was another variable of interest in the study, particularly given the ambiguity in past research. The Victimization Scale from the Kentucky Safe Schools Assessment Survey (May, 2004) was used to

estimate the number of times specific crimes were committed against respondents at school during this school year. Just as prior victimization has shown a relationship to fear of crime despite mixed results (Hale, 1996), prior victimization is also clearly relevant to individual coping (Box, Hale & Andrews, 1987).

The School Fear Survey was scored using a 4-point Likert scale, although the Security Measures section was scored on a 3-point scale. Although May (2004) developed and utilized his victimization scale in six separate schools, according to May, the study has yet to be published. May (2004) calculated the reliability of the Kentucky Safe Schools Assessment Survey and found the following six scores: .647, .672, .719, .604, .762, .718. May (2005) has personally described this scale as “somewhat reliable” and encouraged use of it to further its development. A reliability estimate was conducted on the sample in this study revealing an alpha score of .764, slightly higher than those of May (2005).

As discussed in the literature review, some critics have suggested that global questions concerning fear of crime may not sufficiently address the concept of fear (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Fattah & Sacco, 1989; Garofalo, 1979) because they may only measure caution or judgments of the likelihood of victimization. An example of a global question is “Please rate how safe you feel at school”. Although some scholars have employed alternative scales, replacing ‘fear’ with ‘worry’ (Williams, McShane & Ackers, 2000), this study employed multiple measures, as recommended by Rountree (1998) and Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) by using one general open-ended question on fear and a validated specific fear of crime scale. The closed-ended crime-specific questions attempt to remedy weaknesses of past studies. Crime-specific questions include the following: ‘I am afraid of other kids taking my money or property’ (May, 1999).

Furthermore, crime-specific questions such as those mentioned refer to fear in the present, opposed to future oriented fear. As previously mentioned, Kenney (1987) found that actual fear must be distinguished from personal perceptions about the likelihood of future victimization in a particular setting. This is important because although a student may not necessarily be afraid at school, nor have experienced victimization at school over the past school year, they could potentially view themselves as a probable victim at some future date based on stories they hear from other students about criminal incidents at their school or general disorder within their school. Therefore, a question regarding fear of future victimization was added to the scale.

Most of the questions on the Specific Fear of Crime Scale of the School Fear Survey are directly from a previously validated survey on adolescent fear at school (May, 1999). David May has conducted numerous reliable studies on adolescent fear as well as fear of crime at school, and his scales have been validated for an adolescent population such as that used here. Some of the questions for May's (1999) scale were slightly modified and a few additional questions were added in an effort to promote relevance for students in the New York City schools. For example, May (1999) developed the nine item crime-specific scale to study fear of crime among an adolescent population at school, yet one question lacks relevance for purposes here, "I am afraid to go out at night with friends because of kids who like to make trouble". This question is excluded. Furthermore, May (1999) did not include a question about fear in hallways or stairwells at school, so this question was added, "I am afraid of being in the hallways or stairwells at school". In New York City, stairwells and hallways are an integral part of the building structures and are rarely closely monitored by school personnel, making this question necessary.

In addition, May (1999) did not include an item about forced sexual activity, yet again this crime happens in New York City schools and is clearly relevant. Excluding such an item would discount the problem of sex crime or harassment at schools, and these crimes are substantial in the study of fear particularly in explanatory studies that focus on gendered vulnerability. The questions that were added to this scale have been worded in the exact fashion of the original scale for purposes of clarity. May (1999) did an item analysis on his index as well as Cronbach's alpha to determine reliability, which was .708. Cronbach's alpha was calculated on the School Fear Survey to determine internal reliability and showed an alpha of .929. The revised scale showed an alpha of .924.

The open-ended general fear question was asked at the end of the survey in an attempt to provide a qualitative element to the study and a multiple measure of fear of crime. The question is phrased as such: 'In general, are you afraid of crime at school? Why or why not?' Not only can this question provide a qualitative element, it can help guide future research studies that could include a logical next step of qualitative interviews. As previously mentioned, researchers on fear of crime have argued that general questions alone only measure worry, concern of victimization, or perceived risk. But together with the crime-specific scale, the general fear question helps clarify this argument in the literature. In addition the written follow-up portion to the general questions provides direction for a future structured interview regarding fear at school, and shows patterns of responses discussed in the results.

As mentioned, the Environmental Scales are directly from the School Crime Supplement of the National Crime Victims Survey (2001). Although the NCVS has been collecting national data since 1973, the School Crime Supplement was first utilized in

1989. The NCVS and the SCS have been shown to be valid and reliable measures. The SCS reference period is “the past 6 months”, but the School Fear Survey will be asking about the “this school year”. The SCS (2001) acknowledges that retrospective surveys run the risk of “telescoping”. Telescoping is when a respondent indicates that an event happened within the survey’s reference period, when it actually happened at some other time (SCS, 2001). The School Crime Supplement remedied the problem by bounding or eliminating questions that were reported at a previous interview. Because the School Fear Survey had a one-time administration, bounding could not be used here as a remedy. In lieu of this method, the survey extended the reference period to ‘this school year’, which is a clear time-boundary that the respondents could understand.

As discussed, although the School Fear Survey was developed using two different instruments that have been previously validated, the survey expanded and modified these instruments. Item analysis on the specific fear index was necessary to ensure that the instrument remained valid for a study of fear of crime. Because most of the questions come from standard instruments, this researcher is confident that the School Fear Survey was valid and reliable, and particularly beneficial to the population of students in New York City, and other urban schools nationwide.

Baruth Protective Factors Inventory (Baruth & Carroll, 2002)

The Baruth Protective Factors Inventory [BPF] (Baruth & Carroll, 2002) was used as a formal assessment of resilience, measuring protective factors of respondents. Baruth and Carroll (2002) created the survey specifically to offer a formal measure of the concept of resilience. The BPF advanced the idea that protective factors developed in the resilient person after growing through life experience and are a defining

developmental task for each individual. The BPFII contains items that examine four major clusters of protective factors of the resilient person (Baruth & Carroll, 2002): adaptable personality, supportive environment, fewer stressors, and compensating experiences (Gramerzy, 1985, Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Luther, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Rutter & Quinton, 1984). The sixteen item scale contained questions that were high on content validity (Baruth & Carroll, 2002). The normative sample for the BPFII consisted of undergraduate students, 35.7% of which were under 19 years old, 38.1% white, and 20.4% lower or lower middle class (Baruth & Carroll, 2002). Although this normative sample is not ideally comparable to the sample used, the ample inclusion of persons under nineteen as well as racial and ethnic minorities, and persons of lower socioeconomic status, allows for the assumption that the inventory was appropriate with the population under study.

Baruth & Carroll (2002) found an overall, adjusted reliability score of .93.

Convergent and discriminant validity were tested against an establish inventory called the Multidimensional Health Profile: Psychological Functioning [MHP-PF], that included constructs on resiliency as part of a wider measurement (Ruehlman, Lanyon, & Karly, 1998). The MHP-P (1998) showed adequate validity based on comparisons with several other established instruments such as the SUNYA (Attanasio, et al., 1984), MHP-P (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989), NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1990), the Emotional, Activity, and Sociability Scale (Buss & Plomin, 1984); Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (Cohen, et al., 1985), the Test of Negative Social Exchange (Ruehlman & Karoly, 1991), SF-36 (Ware et al., 1994), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967), BDI (Beck et al., 1988), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), and

the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983). Based on these comparisons, the BDFI was concluded to be empirically valid.

As a self-report questionnaire, the BDFI is affected by the unique experience and perception of each respondent. This is ideal for a study on fear of crime, since perception of risk is a variable strongly associated with fear of crime. Therefore, responses on the BDFI were ultimately consistent with the explanatory variable at hand. Although the factors measured by the BDFI are not comprehensive with regard to the concept of resiliency, as a specific, valid and reliable indicator for purposes of this pilot study, the measure was clearly appropriate.

Two primary benefits of the BDFI in this study were the specificity of the measure as an indicator of resiliency appropriate to the population of interest and the succinct format, which is highly fitting for adolescent populations, whose attention may be limited for a longer questionnaire. The BDFI gives a total score that was compared to the 3 scales of the School Fear Survey and the 4 scales of the ReWCCL-Mod (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham., 1993). The BDFI also has four scales of the four primary resilience constructs regarding protective mechanisms: adaptable personality, supportive environment, fewer stressors, and compensating experiences (Baruth & Carroll, 2002) that were compared among coping variables and fear of crime.

Revised Ways of Coping Checklist - Modified [Re-WCCL-Mod.] (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1993)

The second survey that measured the concept of resilience was the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist, Modified (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1993). The original Ways of Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1988) addressed two types of coping mentioned in the literature review: problem-focused and emotion-focused. The

instrument asked the individual to list a stressful event and then indicate which of the 68 coping methods on the seven different scales that individual used to deal with the event. The checklist has produced reliable and valid measures of coping responses (Bowman, 1993; Folkman & Lazarus, 1986; Folkman et al., 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1985).

Although the original Ways of Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1988) exhibited respectable reliability and validity, Vitaliano et al. (1985) revised the original seven-scaled instrument to an even more reliable and valid, user-friendly version. Vitaliano et al. (1985) found that the revised instrument shows higher reliability coefficients and much less variance. In addition, the construct and criterion-related validity were better in the revised version (Vitaliano et al., 1985). Vitaliano et al. (1985) found only five factors associated with coping strategies: problem-focused, blamed self, seeks social support, wishful thinking, and avoidance. Therefore, the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist consists of 5 scales and 42 items. Finally, while developing of the revision, Vitaliano et al. (1985) recognized the overlap of the questions on the original instrument and the fact that respondents would complain about the length of the initial survey.

Because this study examined an adolescent population, a modification of the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist for adolescents (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1993) was utilized. Halstead, Johnson and Cunningham (1993) believed this revision was necessary, since Vitaliano et al. (1985) only had an adult population to validate the ReWCCL. Halstead, Johnson and Cunningham (1993) modified the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist to specifically suit adolescent populations. Thirteen questions on the scale were changed to better fit adolescent comprehension, and the instrument was

further scaled down to about half the questions of the original (35 items). Moreover, only four of the five factors from the ReWCCL (Vitaliano et al., 1985) were confirmed in the adolescent population: problem-focused, seeks social support, wishful thinking, and avoidance. Blamed-self was not confirmed with adolescents, and therefore was not used. The 35 items were answered using a four-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to write down a stressful event that has happened in their life in the past month. They then answered each question with the most relevant reaction regarding the way they coped with the event. Maximum likelihood parameter estimates for the scale are statistically significant ($t > 2.4$, $p < .01$). Three of the four scales (Seeks Social Support, Wishful Thinking, and Problem-Focused) showed adequate internal consistency (alphas range from .77 to .85). The Avoidance subscale alphas were between .47 to .60, and therefore somewhat less reliable, yet adequate for purposes of this pilot study. Finally, in the course of the development for the adolescent version, Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham (1993) found that adolescents used problem-focused coping strategies most often in school situations and less often with health-related situations. Since the proposed study combines the two (school and health), this correlation was appraised. The four scales generated separate scores that were compared to the other two surveys and demographic variables using bivariate correlation, specifically Spearman's Rho.

Procedure

Administration of the surveys took place at the agencies with individual students and in groups of up to six students. Although New Alternatives for Children is located in a central part of New York City, some participants in the medically complex group experienced travel constraints. Although every effort was made to arrange appropriate

travel accommodations to include these individuals in the administration of the survey at the agency, some participants completed the survey in their own home. The surveys that were administered outside the agency were done in precisely the same fashion as those completed at the agencies, such as requiring the survey be completed at a table in a room with minimal distraction.

Although some of the eligible participants faced mobility issues, excluding these individuals from the study would be counterproductive to the original hypotheses since young people with mobility impairments who attend a public school with appropriate accommodations could in theory be the most resilient students of all. Because the sample only consisted of 7 respondents (.05%) with limited mobility, statistical predictions about this small group could not be made, although qualitative data discussed in the results provides additional information about fear of crime in this group.

The surveys were pre-tested on 10 students during a one-time administration to a population ineligible for participation in the survey, siblings of NAC clients without chronic or complex medical conditions. The pretest allowed this researcher to refine the survey, ensure comprehension and scrutinize administration procedures. The time it took to complete the survey appeared to be ample during the pretest, although during the administration of the actual surveys, some students appeared to have difficulty staying focused during the final questionnaire, Revised Ways of Coping Checklist – Modified.

Item comprehension was an important dimension of the pre-test and a protocol of definitions was developed around clarification of items for respondents. The items identified during the pretest that most needed clarification for respondents were regarding what a chronic or complex medical condition was and what was meant by certain terms

from the BPI and ReWCCL-Mod. Dictionary definitions were provided using the Merriam Webster Dictionary (1997). 'Chronic' was defined as a medical condition that is "marked by long duration or frequent recurrence", and 'complex' was defined as a medical condition that is "complicated or multifaceted". The respondent was also given a few examples of what a chronic or complex medical condition is and what it is not on the survey. The words that needed clarification for some respondents are listed next. 'Bargaining' and 'compromising' were defined as "negotiating, arranging, and finding middle ground; give and take". 'Optimistic' was defined as "hopeful or positive". 'Competent' was defined as "capable or able", and 'resourceful' was defined as "inventive, imaginative, or creative". When a respondent asked a generalized question such as "What is meant by this question?" the researcher responded in the following manner: "Answer the question based on what it means to you", in an effort not to bias his or her answer. This protocol was developed out of the pretest to communicate the content of the question without projecting any type of desired answer.

Administration of the survey to the medically complex group at New Alternatives took place either individually or in small groups of up to three teens. New Alternatives has several office desks available in quiet areas, free from significant distraction. The Door was able to provide tables for students to complete surveys with minimal distraction. Door members completed the survey in groups of up to six participants. Both agencies have waiting rooms and recreational areas for students before beginning the survey. In addition, agency staff from The Door and New Alternatives for Children respect the privacy of all clients and activities which occur at the agency, therefore no participant was required to disclose to any staff member the nature of the survey in which

they were participating. Participation was completely voluntary and anonymous.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the sample with regard to fear, protective factors, and resilience. Bivariate analysis, specifically Spearman's Rho, was used to compare demographic variables as well as the fear and resilience scales to determine correlations. The Mann-Whitney U was used to analyze the hypotheses as well as further compare the scales to different variables. Assumptions of normality in this study could not be made, and random sampling was impossible with the group of interest. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U and Spearman's Rho were the most informative nonparametric measures for this ordinal data.

The data in this study used Likert scales consisting of 4-5 choices. Although regression models were considered, parametrics typically require that scales have at least 5-7 options (Sheskin, 2000). Although the Baruth Protective Factors Inventory has 5 options on the scales, the other measures used in this study do not exceed 4 options. The ReWCCL-Mod. (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1998) and the scales of the School Fear Survey (May 1999, May, 2004; NCVS, SCS, 2001), both using 4-option Likert scales, have shown to be a reliable and valid measures of the constructs under consideration. Adding a 5th option would have effected the reliability and validity of the scales, and was therefore deemed inappropriate. Furthermore, the 4-option Likert scales allowed the adolescent respondents to meaningfully discriminate among responses.

The Mann-Whitney U is the nonparametric correlate to the parametric t-test for two independent samples, and can even become the more powerful test when assumptions of normality cannot be met (Sheskin, 2000). The Mann-Whitney U determines whether two independent samples come from two underlying populations that have different medians

(Sheskin, 2000). Sheskin (2000) noted that even when the assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated, the Mann-Whitney U may still be the most powerful test. The Mann-Whitney U has an asymptotic relative efficiency of .955, which basically means that it has greater power compared to its analogous parametric test, the t-test (Sheskin, 2000). This is advantageous because it only takes a slightly larger sample to equal the power value of the parametric analog when evaluating the null hypothesis (Sheskin, 2000).

The ordinal data obtained in this study was rank-ordered. Although one disadvantage of nonparametric procedures is that it is somewhat less exact and some information is discarded, the Mann-Whitney U preserves the order of the values, even when actual values are shed (Dallal, 2000). Again, this made the Mann-Whitney U a better choice among other nonparametrics that may only observe the medians. Sheskin (2000) points out that one benefit of a test that uses ranked ordering is that it is able to eliminate the impact of outliers, two of which are discussed in the results section.

In this study, the population of interest was students with complex or chronic medical conditions, who were compared to a group of typical adolescents attending New York City public schools. Although this study was unable to make a prediction of linearity, the hypotheses were directional, predicting that students with chronic or complex medical conditions show more protective factors and different coping styles that would predict a resilient quality resulting in less fear of crime at school. The model is shown here:

Chronic/Complex Medical Condition -> Resilience -> Less Fear of Crime at School

Chapter 6

Results

In summary, the evidence based on the sample data is insufficient to support the hypothesis that medically complex students are less fearful in public schools. Furthermore, the hypotheses predicting different coping strategies and increased protective factors in the medically complex group are also unsupported by the evidence. These results are clarified further in a later section of this chapter entitled Inferential Data. Descriptive data as well as additional analysis found important results that are reported in this chapter.

Descriptive Data:

Specific Fear of Crime at School

In an effort to remedy past weaknesses of fear of crime studies, both a crime specific fear scale and an additional open-ended question about general fear or worry at school were included. The scale on the School Fear Survey measuring specific fear of crime at school (May, 1999) asked respondents whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with crime-specific questions about being afraid at school. Those who were the least fearful got a score of 9 by marking “strongly disagree” to all of the questions. Respondents could potentially get as high a score of 36 if they ‘strongly agreed’ they were afraid in all crime-specific questions that were asked. In addition, two questions deemed relevant to this population were added to the crime-specific fear scale, a question about unwanted sexual activity and another about fear of future victimization. The revised scale had a low score of 11, and potentially went to 38 as a high score. Cronbach’s alphas were calculated for both the original scale and the revised scale. May

(1999) originally found an alpha of .708 for the crime-specific fear scale, while the alphas in this study were calculated at .930 and .920 respectively.

Surprisingly, 36% of the students surveyed indicated vehemently that they were not afraid of crime at school, as shown by only marking Strongly Disagree on the specific fear scale. Moreover, 59% of respondents indicated a lack of fear at school by only marking Strongly Disagree or Disagree on the original crime-specific fear scale. When the questions on unwanted sexual activity and fear of future victimization are added on the revised scale, this figure goes down to 46% who were not fearful in any situation. In other words, 10% of respondents were only afraid of unwanted sexual activity at school and 4% were only afraid of a future crime at school. So, over 50% of the sample was afraid of at least one crime, location or situation at school. Despite this, only 11% of respondents indicated that they were sometimes afraid to come to school.

As mentioned, research has shown that differences in fear are frequently crime-specific (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; LaGrange et al., 1992; Warr, 1984), therefore each item was evaluated on the specific fear scale. Results showed that assault or fights were more often feared (27%) than property crime (16%) at school. Physical fights appear to be an undeniable reality of daily life for public school students. This year alone, over 77% of students had witnessed at least one fight, and over 52% had witnessed three or more fights at school. Almost a third of respondents (29%) have been participants or victims in those fights this year, while 13.3% have been involved in three or more fights this year. Despite past research suggesting that vicarious victimization is consistently related to fear of crime (Arnold, 1991; Box, Hale & Andrews, 1988), the results of this study suggest the opposite. Table 5 shows that many less respondents are afraid of fights

than have witnessed fights.

Table 5.
Percentage of Student Fear of Specific Crime at School and Previous Victimization

<u>Specific Crime</u>	<u>Affective Fear</u>	<u>Victimization</u>	<u>Witness</u>
Physical Assault or Fights	27%	29%	77%
Property Crime	16%	36%	-
Sex Crime	15%	10%	-

The school fear scale (May, 1999) not only included questions on specific crimes, but also questions regarding specific locations or situations at school. Respondents most often cited restrooms as a feared location. Table 6 shows the percent of students afraid of each situation or location.

Table 6.
Percentage of Student Fear at School, by Location and Situation

Fear in Restroom	13%
Fear in Lunchroom	8%
Fear in Stairwells or Hallways	9%
Fear in Classroom	8%
Fear to and from School	10%
Fear of School Events	8%

Friends at school were significantly correlated to specific fear of crime as well as each specific situation, location, specific assault ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho), and property crime ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho). Furthermore, 'Schools In Need of Improvement' [SINI] are significantly correlated to specific fear on the revised scale that included future fear and fear of unwanted sexual activity ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho, one-tailed).

Two outliers from the specific fear scale existed in this data, both indicating significantly high scores on specific fear of crime at school. Neither outlying respondent came from the medically complex group. The original assumption was that outliers for students with particularly debilitating medical conditions could exist with regard to fear that would potentially influence a single survey dramatically thereby affecting the results. However, this was not the case. None of the students, even those with very debilitating medical issues or visibly altered appearances, had outlying scores on the specific fear scale. Finally, the two respondents that rated very high on specific fear of crime surprisingly reported no general fear or worry about crime at school and mid-range resilience and coping scores.

General Fear of Crime at School

The specific fear scale was followed by an open-ended generalized question that read “In general, are you afraid of crime at school? Why or why not?” The open-ended, general fear question gave respondents the opportunity to report more about their school environment and personal experiences with crime and fear at school. Respondents were given space to write about why they were or were not generally fearful of crime at school.

As shown in Table 7, the two categories most cited as to why a respondent was generally not fearful at school are avoidance (“I mind my own business” or “I stay out of that stuff”) and no crime at the school. The other three most frequently mentioned reasons why students were generally not fearful were self-protection (“I can fight”), a positive school community (“we have good students”) and friends (“I know everyone” or “I have a lot of friends”). Other categories mentioned were high security (“Lots of cops

are at my school”), pervasiveness (“I’m used to seeing crime” or “I have seen people get stabbed right in front of me, school is nothing”) and toughness (“I’m not afraid of anyone”). A few students said they do not generally fear crime at school since weapons are available for protection or they believe fear is nonsensical because of helplessness (“Things will happen, you never really know, so why be afraid”).

Table 7.
Percentage of General Fear Responses, by “NO” General Fear

<u>Why NO General Fear</u>	<u>.</u>
Avoidance	14%
No Crime	14%
Self-Protection	11%
Good Students and School Community	10%
Friends	9%
Toughness	5%
School Security	5%
Pervasiveness	4%
Helplessness	2%
Available Weapons	2%
<u>Undisclosed</u>	<u>3%</u>

Interestingly, some reasons that students were generally fearful or worried about crime at school were sometimes the same as why other respondents were not concerned. For example helplessness, pervasiveness, and weapons were also reasons given by different respondents as to why they generally were fearful at school while others gave those reasons for why they were not fearful. The two primary reasons for general fear were physical fights and the potential for injury. Other reasons why students were fearful were gangs, weapons, previous victimization and sexual harassment. Finally, some students mentioned they were generally fearful at school because of drugs, media stories, low

security, disrespect of students to teachers and administrators, and fear of punishment.

Table 8 outlines why students say they are worried or generally fear crime at school.

Table 8.

Percentage of General Fear Responses, by “YES” General Fear

<u>Why Generally Fearful</u>	<u>.</u>
Potential for Injury	10%
Helplessness	8%
Fighting	7%
Punishment	4%
Gangs	3%
Weapons	3%
Low Security	2%
Pervasiveness	2%
Drug Availability	1%
Student Secrecy	1%
Social Isolation	1%
Media Reports	1%
Sexual Harassment	1%
Previous Victimization	1%
Student Disrespect	1%
<u>Undisclosed</u>	<u>2%</u>

It is important to reiterate that one of the main reasons from Table 7 as to why students were generally not fearful at school was the ability to fight. Taken together, reasons for and against general fearfulness point to a culture of violence discussed further

in the next chapter.

Fear of Crime and School Environment

Two scales from the School Environment section of the National Crime Victims Survey, School Crime Supplement [NCVS, SCS] (2001) were used in this study, that of Security Measures and School Culture. When scored similarly to the NCVS, SCS (2001) using a 3-point Likert scale, over 70% of students indicated that their schools used at least five different security measures to ensure student safety, and 25% used seven or more distinct security measures.

Moreover, when the Security Measures scale was scored using standard scores, whereas the answer 'don't know' was scored zero, a measure of Security Awareness was determined. Of the sample, 60% of respondents were fully aware of which security measures were used at their school, as indicated by no answers of 'don't know' to the questions, and 20% of the sample marked that they did not know only one question about security at their school, which most frequently was the question that states, "Does your school have security cameras?" Another 10% of the sample were unsure of only 2 of the security measures asked on the scale, while the final 10% either did not answer or were unsure of 3 or more security measures at their school. Security awareness was correlated to specific fear of crime ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho).

The other scale off the School Environment section from the NCVS, SCS (2001) asked about School Culture. Scores ranged between 7 and 28, with higher scores indicating a school with indiscriminant punishment, ambiguous rules, inconsistent enforcement of the rules, and unclear expectations. Two relevant questions regarding teacher support and friends were asked in the same section, yet analyzed separately. The

sample fit a normal distribution, whereas the majority of respondents scored between 13 and 15 on the scale. Furthermore, teacher support was correlated to school culture ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). Although school culture was not related to specific fear of crime at school or fear in general, school culture was correlated to fear of forced sexual activity ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). School culture was also correlated to higher victimization rates at school ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho), particularly being witness to fights.

Fear of Crime and Disorder

As discussed in the literature review, disorder has been shown to influence crime as well as fear (Kelling & Coles, 1996; May, 2001b; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). This study utilized graduation rates, attendance rates, observed graffiti, being offered illegal drugs, crime rates, and criminal incidents to measure levels of disorder. Results indicated that lower graduation rates are correlated to Other Crime and Non-Criminal Incidents ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). In addition, lower attendance rates are correlated to Major Crime ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho), Other Crime and Non-Criminal Incidents ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho).

Results show that as expected, the category of Major Crime is correlated to the size of the school and status as a 'School in Need of Improvement' [SINI] ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). However, SINI status did not show a relationship to the amount of security measures. Nonetheless, security awareness was significantly correlated to respondents attending a 'School in Need of Improvement' ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho, one-tailed) but in an unexpected direction. In fact, students who responded that they did not attend a SINI school were more aware of all security measures used at their school.

Both categories of Other Crimes and Non-Criminal Incidents are correlated to student

perceptions of school culture, teacher support, protective factors ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho) and school size ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). Results also indicated that specific fear of crime was correlated to being offered illegal drugs as well as observed graffiti ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho). In addition, attendance rates were correlated to offers of illegal drugs and observed gang membership ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho). Finally, results indicated that Non-Criminal Incidents were correlated to the coping strategies of wishful thinking and problem-focused coping ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho).

Fear of Crime and Race

In New York City, racial differences are pervasive and diversity is a part of every public institution. Students and parents frequently report that racial tension between African Americans and various Latino populations is at times intense. One student remarked, "Fighting at school is about colors, but not red and blue anymore, but black, brown, and white" (Male, Morris High School). Furthermore, within the New York City public schools, few white students are represented and those that do attend public schools are frequently enrolled in schools with more stringent admissions criteria. In many of the schools represented in this sample, it is rare to see a white student in attendance, as observed by 3% average enrollment in Bronx high schools.

Although no differences were found with regard to race in terms of fear of crime at school, an evaluation of correlations with the white population was mute, given the low percentage of white students in the sample. This is particularly unfortunate because white students could possibly be more fearful given their numerical minority status in the public schools. Neither blacks nor Latinos were more or less fearful of crime at school, even when controlling for gender. Again, because of an overrepresentation of students

with lower socioeconomic status in this sample, differences could not be evaluated controlling for SES and race. On the surface, the lack of distributed racial differences appropriate to the wider population appears to hinder the sample. Yet, the underrepresentation of Caucasians and persons from higher socioeconomic statuses is itself telling about the racial and economic bias inherent in the New York City public schools.

Fear of Crime and Previous Victimization

The medically complex group and the comparison group did not show differences with regard to previous victimization. Nonetheless, 23.3% of sample overall reported that they had been victims of a crime. Yet on the measure of specific victimization at school, 97.5% of sample respondents indicated that they had experienced crime directly or indirectly this school year. Also, 77.5% of respondents indicated that they had witnessed at least one fight this school year, while 52.5% had witnessed three or more fights this school year.

Moreover, 40.8% of respondents indicated that they had been threatened at least one time this school year, and 29.2% of respondents report that they had been involved in a physical attack this year. Although only 5.8% indicated that they had been raped at school, 7.5% of the sample reported someone had attempted to rape them at school and 23.3% said that they had been sexually harassed since the start of the school year. Gender differences were not found with regard to crime specific questions concerning sexual victimization.

In regard to property crime, 35.8% of respondents say they had something stolen from them this school year, while 14.2% say that something was taken from them by force. Finally, while 65% of respondents have seen graffiti on walls at their school, only 33.3%

had been offered, sold, or given illegal drugs at school.

In terms of fear of crime, results indicate that fear of crime was not correlated to previous victimization at school, both direct and vicarious, and also unrelated to the experience of victimization during their lifetime. In fact, only one student reported that they were generally fearful of crime because of a previous incident where they were victimized. Although fear was not related to prior victimization, prior victimization at school was correlated to perception of school culture ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho). The more likely a student suggested that the school culture consisted of unfair or unclear rules and unjust punishment, the more likely they were to indicate a higher amount of victimization at school.

Previous victimization at school is not only correlated to school culture but also the presence of teacher support at school ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). It appears that the students who reported the most school victimization or vicarious victimization were also the students who likely did not feel as if they could seek the support of a teacher if they were afraid at school.

Inferential Data:

Fear of Crime and Vulnerability

The evidence based on the sample data was not sufficient to establish the validity of the research hypothesis that students with chronic or complex medical conditions are less fearful than the average student in New York City public schools ($p > .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). Furthermore, the null hypotheses that the medically complex group and the comparison group exhibit no differences with regard to protective factors and coping styles could not be rejected based on the evidence from this sample.

Therefore, no strong evidence suggests that the medically complex group is either more resilient than the comparison group or less fearful.

The crime of assault was specifically analyzed comparing the medically complex group to the comparison group, due to how often this crime occurs in New York City schools and the potential for higher injury. Here too, no differences were found between the medically complex and comparison groups with regard to fear of fights even though serious injury could essentially be greater in the medically complex group. It is noteworthy that students in the medically complex group were slightly more likely to indicate a general fear of crime than the comparison group (52% vs. 34%), although this difference did not reach a level of statistical significance ($p < .059$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). Additional analysis, discussed later in the chapter found differences in the medically complex group that could help explain some of the reasons why results did not support the original hypotheses. Equally important and contrary to past literature on explanatory models of vulnerability, gender differences were not observed in this sample, even when controlling for fear of sexual victimization.

General Fear of Crime at School

As discussed in the descriptive data, the general fear question read “In general, are you afraid of crime at school? Why or why not?” As previously discussed, general questions on fear have been found to measure worry or concern about crime, or the perception of risk (Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996). The question also provided a multiple measure given that general questions of fear measure the perception of risk, and risk perception is strongly associated to affective fear of crime (Arthur, 1992; Chiricos, Hogan & Gurtz, 1997; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; Parker & Ray, 1990, May & Dunaway,

2000; Thompson, Bankston & St. Pierre, 1989). Indeed, general fear or perception of risk was significantly related to specific fear of crime ($p < .01$, Mann Whitney *U* test of differences).

Students from schools with higher Other Criminal Incidents were generally more fearful of crime ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney *U* test of differences). Yet, interestingly, general fear was not correlated to school culture, teacher support, friendships at school, overall school security measures, the presence of metal detectors, nor SINI status. Nevertheless, general fear or worry of crime at school was significantly related to security awareness ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney *U* test of differences), showing that the more aware a student was of security, the less generally fearful at school. However, general fear was only correlated to an *awareness* of security measures used at the school, yet showed no relationship to the actual amount or type of security at the school. In other words, simply knowing what security measures are or are not present promotes less fear, regardless of whether the school contains high or low security. Furthermore, as previously mentioned students from non-SINI schools were more aware of security measures.

Finally, one scale, Seeking Social Support, from the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist (Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham, 1993) showed group differences with regard to general fear of crime. Respondents who were generally less fearful more often utilized Seeking Social Support as a coping mechanism than those who did not ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney *U* test of differences).

Fear of Crime and Metal Detectors

Metal detectors were one element of school security available for study in this sample.

As mentioned in the previous section, the presence or absence of metal detectors did not influence fear of crime at school specifically or in general. Furthermore, no differences in school culture were shown between schools that used metal detectors and those that did not, although other variables were related. Schools that did not utilize metal detectors were significantly more likely to have higher attendance and graduation rates ($p < .01$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences), and students with more protective factors in their lives overall were less likely to attend a school that had metal detectors ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences).

Furthermore, gang membership in particular was more noticeable to students in schools with metal detectors ($p < .01$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences).

Additionally, students who attend a school with metal detectors more often feared sexual victimization and have more often experienced victimization by having property taken from them through threats, force or weapons ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). These results support the notion that the presence of metal detectors does not deter criminal activity, gang membership, eliminate fear, or ensure safety.

Fear of Crime and Previous Victimization

Fear of crime specifically or generally did not prove to be related to previous victimization in general or at school for the study sample, although victimization rates varied in the sample. Students who lived in Manhattan were more likely to report that they had been victimized during the course of their lives than students from other boroughs ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U). Also, previous victimization showed significant differences in age, as well as security awareness and victimization at school this year ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U). As expected, older adolescents were more likely to have been

victimized in the past, and students who had been more often victimized at school directly or vicariously were more likely to report previous victimization in their lifetime ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). Not only have older students had more time to potentially be victims, they are also in a cohort of peers that are increasingly prone to committing crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

It is noteworthy that students who had been previously victimized during the course of their lives were also students more likely to be aware of what security measures are used at their school ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U , test of differences). In addition, students who were most aware of what security measures were used at their school were also more likely to experience victimization, both direct and vicarious at school. These findings are puzzling in light of the previous finding that awareness of security was related to less fear of crime in general ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U test of differences).

Finally, respondents who indicated they were past offenders showed differences in previous school victimization, both vicarious and direct, than respondents who did not report criminal offending ($p < .01$, Mann Whitney U test of differences). Likewise, there were differences in previous lifetime victimization in the group of students who indicated that they were past offenders ($p < .01$, Mann Whitney U test of differences). In other words, students who indicate that they have committed a crime are more likely to report that they have also been the victims of a crime both at school and during their lifetime.

Additional Analyses:

Students with Chronic or Complex Medical Conditions

Despite that significant differences were not found between medically complex students and the comparison group regarding fear or resilience, some differences emerged

that might give some insight into adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions and potentially raise additional questions regarding school policy, school placement, and resilience. First, although May (2001b) found that younger adolescents are more fearful than older adolescents, this was not the case in this sample. Results show that the group of medically complex students were younger on the whole than the comparison group ($p < .01$, Mann Whitney U test of differences), but not more fearful. In addition, the medically complex students in this sample more often lived in larger households than respondents in the comparison group ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U test of differences).

Another difference that emerged between the medically complex group and the comparison group was with regard to school placement. As shown in Table 4, students in the medically complex group were significantly less likely to attend a ‘School in Need of Improvement’ ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney U test of differences).

Table 9.

Percentage of Medically Complex Students who attend SINI Schools

		<u>Medically Complex</u>	<u>Comparison</u>
SINI	Yes	47%	77%
	No	53%	33%

Results also showed that in the sample overall, differences in fear of crime were found between respondents who attend a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) and those that do not. Indeed, students at SINI schools are significantly more fearful of future victimization ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences), suggesting an increased perception of their schools as crimogenic environments. In fact, schools listed as SINI have significantly more Major Crime as well as more Non-Criminal Incidents ($p < .05$,

Mann-Whitney *U* test of differences).

Fear of Crime and Resilience

One of the most compelling result from this study was the relationship between fear of crime at school and resilience. Spearman's Rho was used to determine whether specific fear was correlated to protective factors or coping strategies. Results indicated that specific fear of crime at school was significantly correlated to protective factors as a whole, and to 3 of the 4 subscales: Compensating Experiences, Adaptable Personality, and Supportive Environment ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). The Fewer Stressors scale of the BPGI did not show significant correlations. Apparently both groups, those that indicated fear and those that did not have the same amount of stressors in their lives, as observed by the lack of differences between groups on the Fewer Stressors scale of the BPGI. In other words, the entire sample reported similar amounts of stressors, yet respondents who reported more protective factors in terms of compensation experiences, adaptive personality characteristics, and more social supports felt less fearful at school.

On the other hand, respondents indicating a general fear or worry about crime at school did not differ with regard to protective factors, yet showed one significant difference in coping style. Respondents who indicated a general fear of crime were different than those who did not as far as Seeking Social Support ($p < .05$, Mann Whitney *U* test of differences). In other words, students who expressed concern about crime or perceived their school as risky did not report more protective factors. Despite this, those who did not indicate a general fear of crime at school were more likely to seek support of others as a coping mechanism.

Furthermore, coping styles were correlated to protective factors in the following

ways. Overall protective factors were correlated to Problem-Focused coping ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho), and Seeking Social Support ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho). Problem-Focused coping was also correlated to having a Supportive Environment, an Adaptable Personality, and Compensating Experiences ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho). Not surprisingly, Seeking Social Support as a coping mechanism was also related to having Supportive Environment as a protective factor ($p < .01$, Spearman's Rho), as observed by the correlation between the two. Finally, the more coping mechanisms overall that students used, the higher overall amount of protective factors ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho), Adaptive Personality in particular ($p < .05$, Spearman's Rho).

Although the small numbers of whites in the sample precluded traditional racial comparisons of protective factors, differences were found between Latinos and African Americans with regard to protective factors. African American students (68%) were significantly more likely to consider Adaptable Personality a protective factor than were Latino students (41%) ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). In addition, similarly to African-American students, 62% of students who indicated a biracial background also indicated Adaptable Personality as a significant protective factor.

Equally important, students who attended a SINI school differed from those who did not attend a SINI school in terms of overall protective factors ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences), whereas students at SINI schools indicated less protective factors on the BPF. Specifically, non-SINI students indicated higher supportive environments and adaptable personalities ($p < .05$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). Coping mechanisms did not differ between the groups.

Differences in coping styles were also found between offenders and non-offenders.

Students who indicated that they have participated in a criminal act in the past, were also significantly less likely to employ problem-focused coping styles or seek social support as a coping mechanism ($p < .01$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences). Additionally, offenders were also significantly more likely to indicate that they had more stressors in their lives on the Baruth Protective Factors Inventory ($p < .01$, Mann-Whitney U test of differences).

Finally, over 24% of respondents did not list a problem at the start of the Ways of Coping Checklist. This is either due to not reading the instructions properly or not wanting to disclose the problem with which they were thinking of at the time. Although Halstead, Johnson & Cunningham (1993) found that adolescents most often used Problem-Focused coping strategies when dealing with school issues opposed to health related issues, no differences were found in this sample. Noteworthy is the fact that the number of respondents who stated a health problem was very low, so comparisons would not have provided useful information, particularly since school problems were the most frequently cited in this sample (16.7%). Interestingly, almost 10% of the respondents indicated that fights were the major problem they were dealing with recently. Other problems frequently reported include problems with family (13.3%) and social problems with friends or acquaintances (15.8%).

Clearly important results emerged from the data despite the fact that the original hypotheses were unsupported. The following chapter will discuss limitations of this exploratory study, as well as the compelling findings in contrast and in support of past literature. More importantly, the discussion will illuminate resilience as a theoretical model that is highly relevant to the study of fear of crime.

Chapter 7

Discussion

Limitations

As with most exploratory studies, limitations of the study must be considered before interpretation of the data or discussion of the results. A number of the limitations in this study concern the sample. First, less than 1% of the respondents in this study were Caucasian. Although this is problematic in the fact that racial differences between the white population and other populations in the New York City public schools could not be inferred from the data, some explanation is in order to help clarify the relevance to a study of New York City public schools. In New York City, obvious racial differences exist with regard to education. As mentioned in the introduction, a disproportionate number of minority students attend New York City Schools (Schunk, 2004). Caucasian students that do attend public schools are grossly over-represented in the few elitist settings in the system which require audition or stringent entrance exams. Thus, the few high schools for the exceptionally high-achieving or talented students are not representative of the full racial distribution in New York City public schools, and would present an underlying bias should those schools have been highlighted in the sample. Because the sample consisted of a wide variety of public schools, it was not surprising that the percentage of Caucasians in the sample was very low. Hence, in this context, the low percentage of White students is in fact extremely representative of the low percentages of Caucasians seen in the overwhelming majority of the New York City public schools.

For example, the Bronx has 83 different high schools. Caucasian students represent

only 3.8% of the public high school population in the Bronx (NYCDOE, 2004). But, almost a quarter of that 3.8% attends Bronx High School of Science, which is a specialized high school with an extremely stringent entrance exam. Furthermore, over half of the Caucasian population attending school in the Bronx attend 1 of 3 other Bronx high schools (NYCDOE, 2004), also having specific admissions criteria. Only one of those 3 other schools, Lehman High School, actually had a diverse population that included Caucasian students at average of 17.9% and do not have stringent admissions criteria or exams. The remaining 79 high schools in the Bronx have an estimated 1-2% average Caucasian enrollment, thereby accounting for the other half of the 3.8% of the Caucasian student population who attend high school in the Bronx.

The Department of Education reorganized two years ago into ten regional offices. The original neighborhood-based districts frequently excluded different groups from certain schools simply based on residence in the neighborhood zone alone. Yet, under the new Regions, students from the South Bronx are supposedly serviced in the same way that students are from the Upper East Side. In reality, this never happens, particularly in high school. Placement offices infrequently place students outside their own borough, and the placement officers are left to individual discretion, as are the schools. This results in many disadvantaged or underachieving students being pushed into the more disorderly schools. The bureaucratic circumstances may be impossible to control for in an exploratory study such as this, but despite the low number of Caucasians, the 87 schools in the sample certainly provided a very accurate picture of the diversity, or sometimes lack thereof, in the New York City public schools, and illuminates the problems inherent in the New York City public school system.

A second limitation of the sample is the possible lack of generalizability to adolescent populations nationally. As noted earlier when describing the demographics of the samples and the population, this study does provide a representative sample of the population of New York City public schools. Yet, results from this study cannot make assumptions about all adolescents nationally, due to the vast differences in the urban, suburban, and rural schools. Suburban school settings are traditionally more contained and orderly, and rural schools would almost always be extremely smaller than most New York City schools.

Nevertheless, most urban public schools similarly have disproportionate numbers of minority populations from lower socioeconomic classes such as that represented in this sample (United States [U.S.] Department of Education, 1996). The U.S. Department of Education (1996) reports that “poverty rates among children are higher in urban locations than in the surrounding suburban or rural areas, which translates in higher concentrations of poor students in urban public schools” (p. 5). Because of this disproportionate demographic circumstance, generalizing results from this study to urban populations may be reasonable, but should obviously be done with extreme caution, particularly since resilience is a variable concept in itself and the New York City school system is unique.

A third potential drawback of the sample was the sample size of 120 respondents. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, and the historically difficult nature of gaining access to the New York City Department of Education for outside research, the largest and most representative sample possible was gathered from agencies allowing access and closely matching the population of the New York City public schools. Bachman and Paternoster (1997) suggest that a sample size can be as small as fifty, if there is reason to

believe that the population is not very skewed. Such was the case in this study.

Although this sample was involved with a social services agency, possibly making the respondents more apt to consent to participate, this potential is irrelevant if a similar potential exists with volunteers in a school setting with larger samples. Providing an incentive like a free movie ticket made participation more likely, but also limited any differences between teens that are overly eager to participate and the average teen that simply wants a free movie ticket. Also, it was not possible to predict the frequency of involvement at the agency providing most of the comparison group, The Door.

Adolescents who actually go to The Door more often may be more apt to know about the study and volunteer to participate in the study. Yet, for this pilot project, no reason exists to assume that those who attend The Door on the days surveys were administered are in any way different than students who were not there those days.

Given that no data exists about students with chronic or complex conditions in the New York City public school system, it was difficult to determine the actual size of the population of adolescents with medical conditions in this setting, which made purposive sampling the best procedure. As previously mentioned, purposive sampling is often used in criminal justice research when “a small subset of a larger population in which many members of the subset are easily identified but the enumeration of all of them would be nearly impossible” (Maxfield & Babbie, 1998, p. 225).

Additionally, a final limitation of the sample was the inability to control for seriousness of medical condition. Although procedural protocol of the medically complex group was strictly defined using dictionary definitions as well as examples, the group varied somewhat with regard to seriousness of illness, appearance due to illness,

and degree of injury that could result from an assault. Yet, all of the students in this group had a medical condition that affected their daily life resulting in a regular physical awareness of their particular medical situation and regular monitoring of said illness. Although gathering a larger sample of medically complex students was unlikely, as previously mentioned, a control for seriousness of illness or degree of altered appearance may have impacted the results.

One procedural limitation was the inability to control for the strong neighborhood differences in New York City, sometimes existing from block to block. For example, in New York, it is possible that a public housing project or building that a student lives in has significant crime, yet the neighborhood that holds that building has minimal crime, and the school neighborhood has very few crimes, and vice versa. Because of the variety of combinations, some students may always feel safer at school than at home or in their community. In other cases, some students may have reason to feel very safe at home, yet have to approach a school in a high crime neighborhood. Although a variety of residence zip code and school combinations were gathered in this sample, this particular consideration should be recognized when evaluating results of the study.

The sample consisted of 63 different zip codes and 87 different schools. Fifteen of the 38 zip codes in Manhattan were represented, 13 of the 26 from the Bronx, 26 of the 52 from Brooklyn, with 7 from about 67 towns in Queens. So, about half the zip codes in each borough were represented in this sample, although Queens is noticeably underrepresented. Caution should always be used with exploratory studies, yet the sample was by and large representative of the students who make up the New York City public schools and the neighborhoods with which they reside.

According to Compstat (New York Police Department [NYPD], 2005), annual reported index crimes for 2004 were broken down as such: Bronx: 24,078; South Brooklyn: 23,629; South Manhattan: 22,958; North Brooklyn: 19,083, North Queens: 17,927; North Manhattan: 15,585; and South Queens: 13,268. These figures provide very limited information due to problems such as underreporting, block to block differences, and an abundance of crime “hot spots” like certain projects or corners. But, what the information does illuminate was the fact that the majority of students in the sample, particularly those in high school, must travel through urban areas with significant criminal activity in order to get to and from school. This likely influenced feelings and perceptions of fear of crime at school in very different ways than suburban or rural students who do not face such issues, and the differences will ultimately influence individual perception of risk. Fortunately, the sample consisted of a wide variety of students from different neighborhoods going to different schools, and there is no reason to believe that any type of neighborhood or school environment was overrepresented in the sample in a manner that would bias the results.

Another limitation concerned the adolescent population under study. As discussed in the literature review, masculine socialization sometimes discourages admittance of personal fear, particularly in urban young people (Scott, 2001). The anonymous nature of the survey helped dissuade false bravado among participants who may have been reluctant to admit to fear of crime. In addition, the anonymity also prevented any bias that the presence of this researcher would have posed to participants. Finally, one question on the Specific Fear of Crime Scale on the School Fear Survey was modified to address this possible bias. The item originally read “I am afraid of getting beaten up at

school” and was modified to “I am afraid of getting into a fight at school”. This modification was necessary given the fact that urban young people were not likely to admit to a fear of getting “beaten up”, even on a survey.

The proposed study used a cross-sectional survey. One drawback of this method is the variable nature of resilience over the life course (Barton, 2002), and the consistently changing climate in New York City educational policy. Causality would therefore be demonstrated best by longitudinal designs. Although the cross-sectional design is appropriate for the exploratory nature of this study, those who read the study must be cognizant not overestimate the predictive power of the independent variables.

Additionally, self-report measures are historically viewed as unreliable, due to the possibility of inaccurate responding or a respondent’s personal need to portray oneself in a certain manner. In an exploratory study such as this, the use of self-report was the best way to report affective fear and personal coping mechanisms, because when using other multiple measures, such as parent or teacher questionnaires or observational methods, trying to corroborate results and make interpretations of the data can result in data becoming blurred. Trying to separate personal characteristics and response styles of teachers, parents, and students when interpreting data potentially produces cluttered information that only jumbles interpretations of results without grounding or advancing research ideas. Future studies that use multiple populations of respondents may want to consider more controls as good research practice or consider using secondary data sources for certain information.

Fear of Crime and Vulnerability

Although differences were not found with regard to fear in the medically complex

group, traditional vulnerability paradigms in the literature on fear of crime would likely have predicted that a population with medical conditions would exhibit more fear, similar to that of the elderly population or female population (Hale, 1996). Indeed, because no differences were found between groups in this study, even with the palpably vulnerable population of medically complex students, results lend support to critics of those traditional models who suggest that the assumption that vulnerable groups are more fearful is inaccurate or incomplete. Therefore, this data supports the idea that vulnerability to crime and the associated fear is not a one-dimensional concept, and must always be viewed in light of the complexities of circumstances, groups and individuals.

Again, although no differences were found with medically complex students, the fact that this group was not more afraid of crime, specifically with regard to fighting given a potential for greater injury, could essentially lend support for an argument in favor of resilience in medically complex students. Whereas most of the protective factors and coping styles did not capture heightened resilience in the medically complex group, results demonstrated that these medically complex students have at the very least adapted to their environment in similar ways as other students, despite the challenges of their condition. This lends support to Cohler (1995) who found that resilient individuals succeed in difficult circumstances that could likely produce poor outcomes.

Results indicated a difference in the medically complex group with regard to general fear, yet fell just short of a level of significance. Because general fear is thought of in the literature as a perception of risk, the medically complex group may have correctly perceived the reality that they may be more at risk of injury. The fact that no differences in specific fear of crime at school emerged between groups indicated that medically

complex students remain affectively fearless even when their perception of risk is heightened. As discussed in the Chapter 3, part of having resilience is the ability to accurately assess a situation and act accordingly (Rutter, 1985). In fact, some students with limited mobility in the medically complex group verbalized that they are concerned that they would be unable to get out of the way quickly if a fight occurs yet believed they would not be targeted to fight because of their wheelchair. As one might expect, assaulting or challenging a person with an obvious disability is simply not acceptable, although some of the young people using wheelchairs firmly state that they are ready to fight should it ever become necessary.

Two demographic differences between groups emerged in the analysis of the data. The medically complex group had larger households and consisted of younger ages. As discussed in the literature review, May (2001b) found that younger teens were more fearful than older teens. In addition, larger households frequently have fewer resources, and socioeconomic status has shown an inverse relationship with fear of crime (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; Baumer, 1985; Belyea & Zingraff, 1988; Clemente & Kleiman, 1976; Ferraro, 1995; Garofalo, 1979; Will & McGrath, 1995). While these differences in the medically complex group may have impacted results, the fact that two factors that easily could have been considered additional vulnerabilities must be considered in light of the lack of differences in resilience. In other words, a clearly vulnerable group, adolescents with chronic or complex medical conditions, who also turned out to be younger and from larger households, were no more fearful than the average student. Should these variables had been run with controls, a difference may have emerged with regard to fear in the context of resilience.

Finally, the medically complex group was under-represented in SINI schools. A number of potential explanations exist for the under-representation. First, students with chronic or complex medical conditions sometimes require additional support during the school day with regard to their medical need, such as an onsite nurse or paraprofessional. These students may have been originally placed in schools that have better and more comprehensive resources, and could therefore have these supports in place, further

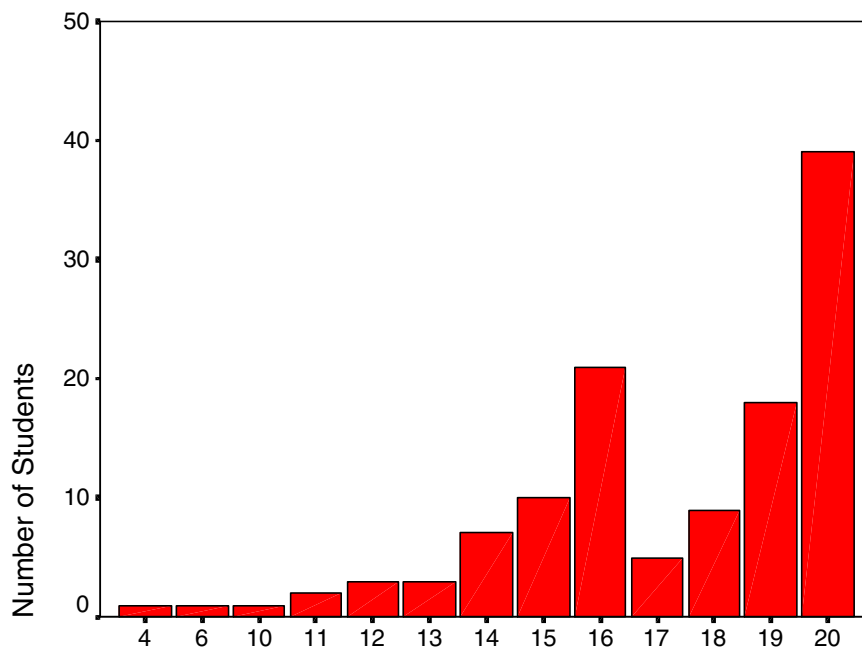


Figure 1. BPFII - Supportive Environment Scale

contributing to better academic performance in those schools.

This explanation is only plausible if we recognize that the population distribution is negatively skewed with regard to Supportive Environment in this sample, as shown on the next page in Figure 1. In general, the medically complex group did indicate a more supportive environment on the BPFII, although it did not reach a level of significance.

A second possible explanation lies in the fact that the parents of young people with chronic or complex medical conditions, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status,

must be strong advocates for their children in order to get them the medical care they need. These advocacy skills could easily have extended to the context of the educational system to their advantage, resulting in their children being accepted into high schools that meet state performance criteria. Future research must empirically explore these potential explanations in order to make further postulations.

A final explanation may indirectly have to do with a relationship between resilience and academic performance. Because New York City has a rigid application process to get into high school, the students in the medically complex group may have simply had the grades, attendance, and test scores required to make them more likely to be accepted into higher performing high schools.

Hence, these differences in school placement of the medically complex group may have further confounded the results of the original hypotheses predicting less fear of crime among these students, since in this sample, the medically complex students were less likely to attend SINI schools. But again, the higher amount of supports and higher resilience to begin with may have instead worked in their favor by ultimately ensuring they were able to attend a non-SINI school. Only empirical validation could determine the plausibility of either explanation.

Fear of Crime at School

As results showed, over 50% of students in the New York City public schools were fearful in at least one situation at school. This percentage is unexpected and much higher than figures from past studies. The literature review showed that fear of crime at school in national samples typically fell within percentages estimated as follows: 6% (National Crime Victims Survey, School Crime Supplement [NCVS, SCS], 1989,2001), 8% (Louis

Harris & Associates, 1999), 12% (NCVS, SCS, 1995), 13% (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse [NCASA], 1999), 28% (Portner, 1996), and 33% (Noaks & Noaks, 2000). The significantly higher figure from this study is likely due to the urban focus, which has been neglected from most of the previous school-based fear research.

In addition, contrasting evidence between respondents who reported a general fear of crime and those with specific fear provides further evidence in support of research showing that specific fear and general fear are two distinct concepts (Ferraro, 1995). One represents specific affective fear and the other appears to measure a perception of risk or worry about crime. These contrary results suggest that although respondents who experience less affective fear may be more resilient in the way of protective factors, those who simply worry or are concerned about crime or those that simply perceive a greater risk at school, only differ with regard to one type of coping style, Seeking Social Support. Therefore, although the resilience-based interventions discussed later may lessen affective or specific fear of crime in school, ability and invitation to seek social support may assuage worry of crime or perception of risk at school.

Fear of Crime and Perception of Risk

As shown in the results of the open-ended general fear question, respondents at times listed similar responses for both why they were or were not fearful at school. For example, one of the main reasons that respondents indicated that they were generally fearful of crime at school was helplessness (“You never know what could happen”). Yet, helplessness was also a reason students listed as to why they were not afraid (“The same thing can happen at school that happens in my neighborhood. So, it’s like [*sic*] why be scared”). Another similar example cited by respondents was pervasiveness (“I see it all

the time”), for both students who reported general fear and those who did not. The presence of available weapons was a final reason that was listed by both concerned and non-worried students with regard to crime. This qualitative data supports research that showed perception is fundamentally correlated to fear of crime (Arthur, 1992, Chiricos, Hogan & Gurtz., 1997, Foelker, 1985; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; May & Dunaway, 2000; Parker & Ray, 1990; Thompson, Bankston & St. Pierre, 1989). This also suggests that changing personal or environmental perceptions must be considered in any intervention as well.

Fear of Crime and School Environment

Although fear did not correlate to the school culture or the amount of security measures in the school environment, important differences were found among other variables and the school environment. Results from the School Culture scale fit a normal distribution, indicating that the majority of schools showed fairly balanced school cultures with both good areas and matters in need of improvement. Teacher support correlated to fairness by showing that students who perceived teachers as supportive more often viewed their school as fair with regard to discipline and punishment. Yet, students who reported the most victimization in school also expressed that teachers were not available if they were afraid at school. And, as noted, students who had been victimized the most at school were also those whom perceived their schools as unfair with regard to discipline.

These results suggest that students in schools with unfair disciplinary procedures and little staff support are the schools where the most victimization happens. Several reasons could potentially explain these results. Teachers in the more chaotic and violent schools

could likely become tired or apathetic, as their own perception changes around student achievement and feelings of helplessness. If teachers are unapproachable or emotionally unavailable, then offenders may likely feel less behavioral constraints, particularly if victims are probably not going to tell teachers about victimization. Finally, unfair or harsh punishment could essentially lead to an unpredictability that further leads to feelings of helplessness or rebellion.

As mentioned, specific fear of crime was significantly correlated to friends at school. Therefore, it was not surprising that having a supportive environment as a primary protective factor was also correlated to specific fear. Moreover, students who attended SINI schools were more likely to report that they had friends. It is possible that friendships are one way to feel safer at school, even when teacher support is lacking. In fact, students who spoke to me after the survey who indicated that they have many friends or 'know people' said they did not feel fearful. This corresponds to the result showing a primary reason as to why students were generally not afraid at school was friendships. Friendships and social skills therefore appear to be an important factor around feelings of safety at school, and should clearly be taken into account with regard to alternate safety interventions.

Finally, results indicated that most of the students sampled were very aware of the presence or absence of various security measures at their schools. Although the actual amount or type of security did not influence fear, awareness itself correlated to specific fear. Also differences in general fear were found, whereas the more aware students were of security, the less perceived risk. It would be remiss to guess from the data here whether fear was heightened or lowered by the presence of target hardened security

measures in the schools surveyed, yet several students suggested ways students get around various security measures. For example, a student at Park East High School said, “The basement is one way to get in with weapons, and people do all the time. We have security guards all over the place, but not in the basement”. Another student at Norman Thomas High School said “kids hide knives under their belt buckle, so when the metal detector goes off and the body scanner beeps at the buckle, the guards think it was the buckle, not a knife.” Respondents also indicated that students can simply hide weapons outside the school to pick up on the way to the train or walking to their neighborhood.

Fear and Previous Victimization

Links between fear and previous victimization were not found in this study, which supports past research indicating that previous victimization does not correspond to a heightened fear of crime (Baker et al., 1983; Hartless et al., 1995; Wanner & Caputo, 1987). The finding is in contrast to Fishkin, Rohrbach & Johnson (1997) who found that there is a link between fear and previous victimization in adolescent populations. Clearly, more research on this issue is warranted. It was interesting that both outliers mentioned in the result section were female respondents who reported a particularly high amount of victimization both direct and vicarious at school during this school year and exceptionally high specific fear at school. Yet, even these outliers did not influence results regarding victimization. In addition, specific previous victimization at school was not correlated to fear of specific crimes at school as other research may have predicted (Belyea & Zingreaff, 1988; Box, Hale & Andrews, 1987; Miethe & Lee, 1984). Nevertheless, students who had not experienced significant vicarious and direct victimization at school perceived their school culture as more supportive and fair.

Although research on direct previous victimization shows mixed results (Hale, 1996), most studies on vicarious victimization consistently show heightened fearfulness with exposure to violence. This was not the case in our sample. Vicarious victimization is rampant, specifically with regard to witnessing assault. As mentioned, over 77% of the sample saw at least one fight this year, yet only 27% report feelings of fear. This may be due to the culture of violence that appears to engulf the New York City public middle and high schools.

A Culture of Violence

The potential for injury and fighting were two of the top three reasons students listed as to why they were generally fearful or concerned about crime at school. Interestingly, the ability to fight or protect oneself was the corresponding reason why other respondents indicated a lack of general fear of crime at school. One senior from Manhattan adamantly told this researcher, “You have to know how to fight if you wanna [*sic*] make it in school.” As another 7th grader from Queens put it “Fights are normal at school”. These statements were but two of an ongoing theme found in discussions that students initiated after completing the surveys regarding the pervasiveness of violence at New York City public schools.

It is not surprising that fear is present in over 50% of students in this sample. A culture of violence in youthful urban populations has been demonstrated here as an indisputable daily reality that cannot be solved through elimination or segregation of so-called ‘problem students’. In New York City, social problem-solving solutions among young people frequently involve physical fighting or intimidation, often at school or before and after school. Several participants indicated that fights are simply a common

occurrence, and part of the day for city students. Fear of violence could therefore become all engulfing for some students, or consciously discarded by others, but always would be an issue that regularly arises for all students.

As one 16-year-old young woman put it, “I’m not afraid of fights because I can’t be. But, I don’t want to get into trouble again and put in a suspension school. I worry about my sister who doesn’t like to fight. I end up having to fight the girls that start trouble with her. Just the other day I fought a lady in my projects for something she said to my sister, and I do the same at school”. This student went on to discuss the fact that the girls at school think she is too pretty, so she has to be ready to fight all the time simply to maintain control of harassment from other girls. Apparently, students report that if they choose not to physically stand up and fight for themselves 100% of the time, threats and harassment would occur more often. Some kids express having to prove their “toughness” up front if they have certain characteristics such as being more attractive, having a smaller build, or being a racial minority at their particular school.

Although the medically complex group was not less fearful, the fact that these students were not more fearful than the control group despite an increased potential for injury and a younger sample is in some ways astonishing. The overriding culture of bravado and a normalcy of violence in the schools appears to transcend any physical differences or even realistic perceptions of risk. The lack of gender differences in this study is also evidence of this overriding group dynamic. Young women and young men are fearful all the same, even in the area of forced sexual incidents.

As mentioned, most of the students who had a conversation with me after the survey indicated that in order to successfully attend public school in New York, young people

must be able and willing to fight if necessary. Physical fights permeate daily life, yet in general these young people seem unfazed by it. Another example was a boy with mild Cerebral Palsy who told me that on his first day at Canarsie High School, a fight broke out, and he and his mother got pushed into some chairs. As he told this story his demeanor was laughing and smiling. When his mother came into the room as he was talking, she added that her attempts to get her son out of the way of the fighting boys were useless, and she also told the story in jest. This appeared to be a bonding moment for mother and son, and neither said it produced any fear. As they were laughing, I asked “So no one ever gets hurt in these fights?” to which the boy responded, “Yeah, people get hurt a lot, in fact these boys at my school are really big and ended up putting a security guard in the hospital last semester”. In fact, most of the students who completed the survey spoke about fighting in a very casual and lighthearted manner. Several young men who spoke to me after the survey indicated that fights are usually because of girls, clothes (when someone wants something you are wearing), or a disrespectful gesture. Young women indicated that fights are typically about boys, disrespectful attitude, defending a friend, and jealousy over attractiveness.

Problem-Solving Skills

The culture of violence in the schools could at least partly be redirected by teaching problem-solving skills to students and empowering them to find alternate solutions to social conflict. Kenney and Watson (1998) have shown that systematic, problem-solving approaches actively empower students to solve problems through their own initiative and creativity. Rutter (1984) also found that young people could be encouraged to develop social problem-solving skills for a range of issues. Edmonds (1982) urged that, “a school

can create a coherent environment, a climate, more potent than any single influence – teachers, class, family neighborhood – so potent that for at least six hours a day it can override almost everything else in the lives of children” (p. 15).

In fact, one of the most striking observations of this researcher during the study was the sheer interest shown by participants. Young people in New York City are patently concerned about their educational communities and their day to day experience within them. As these young people are in the midst of developing an adult identity, an ability to solve social problems like fear and violence must be taught, in addition to teaching the math and English skills necessary to pass state exams. These bright and articulate young people could easily be part of the solution if given the chance. Even the class president of Midwood High School, who volunteered to participate in the survey, told me that another student brought a gun to school this year, and the students handled the situation among themselves, without the involvement of administrators. Several peers spoke with the student with the gun and convinced him it was not worth it to pursue the student he had targeted. Undoubtedly, students can and will take responsibility for the violence in their schools if given the chance.

Resilience in New York City Public Schools

Likewise, in a culture of violence such as that in New York City public schools, what is equally important is the fact that many kids are simply not fearful at all. Even with such widespread violence and a significant amount of fear among students, what is also striking from this study are the more than 45% of students who report no fear in any situation at school despite consistently witnessing or participating in frequent acts of violence such as fights. Similarly, the perception of risk or worry is also lower, with only

29% of students report a general worry or fear of crime at school.

And above all, the link between fear of crime and resilience became conspicuously evident in our analysis of protective factors. Specific fear of crime at school and protective factors were significantly correlated. Unequivocally, students who report more protective factors in their lives experience less affective fear at school. This study found a link between fear of crime and resilience. This finding implores researchers who study fear of crime to follow the lead of public health scholars and psychologists in a paradigm shift from traditional vulnerability-based research to the study of resilience. This ability to remain fearless in the face of crime, violence and disorder may essentially be a quality that could be promoted in strength-based initiatives within various communities including the academic communities.

Whereas all of the urban students in this study had similar amounts of stressors in their lives, those who experienced less fear reported more compensating experiences, adaptable personalities and supportive environments. Furthermore coping strategies were related to increased protective factors, in particular, problem-focused coping and seeking social support. Therefore, it is likely that increasing problem-focused coping and the ability to seek social support could promote resilience in students. These outcomes also lead to the conclusion that schools that offer increased opportunities for students to build protective factors, problem-solving skills, and social support will be schools with less fear.

Not only could fear be influenced by resilience interventions, but student resilience could also potentially foster less disorder and crime without having to rely on segregation and policies of zero-tolerance. In fact, respondents who indicated that they have

committed a crime show lower levels of problem-focused coping and seeking social support, so increasing opportunities at schools to heighten these abilities could ultimately lead to lower crime rates. This study has shown that both criminal incidents and non-criminal incidents are strongly correlated to positive school culture as well as increased protective factors among students. Although the next chapter concludes with a discussion of policy issues and recommendations for schools, future directions of the research must be considered first.

Future Research Directions

Due to the exploratory nature of this study and the inability to gain access to a cross-section of the public schools through the New York City Department of Education, control was impossible for school-related factors such as size, presence or absence of a full spectrum of disorder, variable disciplinary environments, and variable cultures of support. Pre-controls such as these would clearly be beneficial, but can only be done with the support of the Department of Education. Public records of standard disciplinary procedures, security measures, graduation rates, crime rates, and attendance records only provide an idea of the various school climates. Although the Department of Education is notoriously closed to outside research, partnering with the Department and the individual schools must be in place for a truly comprehensive empirical study of crime and fear in New York City public schools. Future research must attempt to access to schools directly in an effort to control for some of the previously mentioned variables.

For purposes here, student experiences at school are paramount and the logical starting point for more in-depth consideration of resilience and fear of crime. Structured interviews could potentially be a logical next step. Furthermore, perception is always

important in studies on fear of crime since perception of risk is strongly linked with fear of crime, as was found to be the case in this study. So, self-report survey measures such as that done here, and structured interviews are particularly conducive for the study of fear of crime despite some of the limitations associated with these research methods. The use of longitudinal designs would also prove beneficial, particularly if a study included a freshman cohort that was followed throughout their high school career.

In addition, since this study focused on an aggregate of adolescent students with chronic or complex medical conditions, interpretations of results must avoid ecological fallacy, “making assertions about individuals based solely on the examination of groups” (Maxfield & Babbie, 1998, p.76). In this case, because the qualitative data appeared more illuminating about the culture of crime in the New York City public schools, it was even more important to remember that the discussions that the respondents had with this researcher were of their own initiative, non-directive, and unstructured. Therefore, control was absent, and conclusions about the qualitative data cannot be firmly drawn without further investigation that includes higher amounts of control.

Moreover, the quantitative component of this study resulted in the resilience model lacking some model specificity given that the concept of resilience was inferred from questions related to only two of the primary factors associated with the resilient individual, coping skills and protective mechanisms. Therefore, limited explanations for the error variance may exist (Barton, 2002). Because no differences were found between the group of interest and the comparison group with regard to fear and coping or protective measures, if a more specific model was used to test some of the other qualities of resilience, it is certainly possible that differences would emerge, particularly with

regard to the variable around social supports. Both the Seeks Social Support scale from the ReWCCL-Mod and the Supportive Environment scale from the BDFI appear to be the closest to yielding significant differences between the medically complex group and the comparison group (falling around the .10 level). In fact, the Supportive Environment Sale of the BDFI was negatively skewed, and produced a significant correlation using a one-tail analysis.

Finally, although the meaning of resilience is subjective (Barton, 2002), this flexible paradigm could potentially provide long-term solutions to problems like fear of crime in urban school settings. The movement towards integrating criminologies in the field of criminal justice could sustain a shift in paradigm using resilience models over risk models. Strengths-based programs that include input and involvement of the students themselves, and empirical evaluation of those programs in our schools, is strongly called for to ensure a basic education is available for all young people regardless of where they live or attend school.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Implications

Overview of New York City School Safety Policy

As the largest metropolitan area in the United States, New York City has generated the most massive and complex public school system nationwide. The high schools alone currently amount to over 300, and 55 new high schools were introduced this past school year (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2004). Whereas each high school has an enormously varied educational climate, crime and fear have leaked into the overwhelming majority of public schools, as is probably the case with most urban centers.

Since 1998, the Department of Education's Office of School Safety has been governed by the New York Police Department because of an overriding view that crime in the New York City schools was out of control (Eskenazi, Eddins & Beam, 2003). As a new mayoral administration took hold in 2002, the Department of Education restructured itself under the mayor's control in an effort to streamline accountability for academics as well as school safety (NYCDOE, 2004). One of the primary goals of the Department of Education under the new regime was to provide "every student the right to seek an education in an atmosphere free of fear or intimidation" (Bloomberg, 2003). To meet this goal, the School-Safe initiative was introduced in 2002 as a data driven plan to target those schools with the highest crime rates through identification, action plans, and engagement of other community organizations such as probation offices and police departments (Bloomberg & Klein, 2002).

School-Safe grew out of the Safe Schools against Violence in Education Act passed

by the New York legislature in 2000. By 2003, School-Safe transformed into a safety initiative called Impact School (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003), which provided for deployment of large numbers of school safety agents into the public schools with the most criminal incidents, who would then work closely with local precincts to control crime (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). Impact School also identified 'spotlight students', those who displayed chronic disruptive behavior, and immediately sought to remove these students from the school through the previously mentioned zero-tolerance and 'three strikes' policies (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003). Furthermore the suspension process was expedited in an effort to ensure swift and harsh discipline, doubling suspension penalties from five to ten days (Bloomberg & Klein, 2003).

Deterrence through Exclusion and Segregation Does Not Work

School-Safe and Impact School were purportedly built on the 'broken windows' philosophy of maintaining order by addressing minor quality of life issues. Yet the overwhelming focus of the initiatives were deterrence-based, tough, swift and certain disciplinary actions directed at the "few unruly students" (Bloomberg, 2003) who were assumed to commit the majority of the criminal offenses on school campuses. This was reminiscent of Wolfgang, Figlio and Sellin (1972) who argued that 6% of the population commit a vastly disproportionate amount of the crime. But the interventions in New York City educational policy lack the scientific evidence to support this type of claim, and harsh discipline is being utilized among many students, not just those unruly few. Yet this year, as the Department of Education and Mayor Bloomberg report a decrease in crime at the target schools, more alternative sites are still being opened to segregate 'problem students', and they readily admit that today's safe schools could easily become

tomorrow's Impact Schools (Bloomberg, 2004). In fact, six more schools joined the Impact School list in January 2005, even though five others were close to being taken off the list (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). Furthermore, what frequently fails to get reported is that some of the original Impact Schools actually showed increases in criminal incidents (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005).

This suggests that deterrence-based initiatives are not effective or sufficient to address the full range of crime and fear faced in the New York City public schools. Furthermore, a 'broken windows' model should in theory encompass a far wider range of disorder issues than simply targeting the disruptive students for segregation or expulsion while deploying more officers. Granted, Wilson and Kelling (1989) argue that the best way to control crime is to make the police visible and available. But even when this was done through Impact School, crime, disorder, and fear have clearly continued.

Results of this study plainly show that despite some reported decreases in crime rates in some of the New York City public schools, and years of increased punitive discipline in the form of zero-tolerance policies (Schiraldi & Ziedenberg, 2001), fear of crime remains pervasive. The finding that more than 50% of students in New York public schools reported fear in at least one crime-specific situation at school is evidence of failed policies and a need for alternate solutions.

Policy Implications

As reported, disorder plays a role in fear of crime at school (May, 2001b) just as it does in communities. Non-Criminal Incidents are what the Department of Education considers 'disorder'. But the concept of disorder at schools could also be associated with high amounts of other invested resources. Metal detectors, numerous police officers,

graffiti, rampant academic failure, and school cultures of indiscriminate discipline and low educator support could also constitute a milieu of 'disorder' in schools. Although in this study only graffiti and drug offers were related to specific fear, metal detectors, non-criminal and criminal incidents were clearly correlated to actual victimization at school. In other words, schools with metal detectors also had more students who reported being forced to surrender property, and schools with more non-criminal and criminal incidents expectedly had more victims of crime or witnesses to crime.

Nevertheless, a 'broken windows' approach to discipline through zero-tolerance policies that result in suspensions and removal for even small infractions has not produced overriding and consistently lower rates of criminal activity in the schools of New York City (Schiraldi & Ziendenberg, 2001). Therefore the resources going into this approach are wasted and the educational communities, including the students themselves, are being underutilized.

Furthermore, the strong standardized academic evaluation components inherent in the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and the New York State Commissioners criteria for academic achievement, should clearly take into account these indirect factors such as fear that could potentially affect urban students in their performance outcomes. As mentioned, the physical component associated with fear interferes with memory (Lavric, Rippon & Gray, 2003) and the ability to learn, clearly distract the individual from goals of academic achievement. So in the interest of students, educators, and policymakers alike, a reduction of fear through an induction of resilience-building strategies could prove fruitful on all levels.

Also, Eskenasi, Eddins and Beam (2003) found significant inequalities in resources

among New York City's urban schools, particularly those with higher concentrations of Latino and African-American students. More importantly, in schools with more resources that provided more qualified teachers, better library resources, current texts, and more extracurricular opportunities, students were found to be 'better behaved' (Eskenasi, Eddins & Beam, 2003). Indeed, Impact Schools fall well below similar schools in funding for the direct services guaranteed in the New York State constitution (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). At the start of last school year, New York City received \$6.25 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Justice to deploy 50 more police officers to the Impact Schools (Drum Major Institute [DMI], 2005). DMI (2005) says that the city maintains that all other funding for the safety program comes from a shift in the resources already within the budget.

This link between resources and behavior should also consider fear of crime and resilience, because redistributing resources into programs that effectively heighten student opportunities for protective factors would likely influence feelings, perceptions, and behavior like fear, resilience, or even criminal and disorderly conduct. For example, extracurricular opportunities provide a means of increasing social skills and supports. Adaptable personality and supportive environment were two protective factors of resilience that correlated with fear in this study. In addition, extracurricular opportunities coupled with resources that promote academic achievement like qualified teachers, tutoring, and books would inevitably increase compensating experiences among students, another protective factor significantly correlated to lower fear of crime.

Resilience and The Critical Role of Educational Communities

Within the public school system of New York City there are obvious examples of

schools that have a positive school culture, high achievement and low crime rates, yet policymakers fail to empirically study these settings to expand qualities to the more disordered settings. The development of smaller sized schools through the creation of New Century School project has been one aggressive strategy of the New York City Department of Education to restructure failing, crime-ridden schools (New Visions, 2004). Yet the size of the school may have less to do with positive outcomes than the resources that have gone into these new schools. Clearly some of the very large settings in New York City such as Edward R. Murrow High School, Midwood High School, Stuyvesent High School, and Bayside High School, all have populations of over 3000 students, yet lower crime rates and comparatively more positive school cultures. These anecdotal illustrations deserve empirical validation, yet the Department of Education has centered solutions around the simpler idea of smaller settings. Vast differences exist between school environments with regard to fear, crime and disorder, but the lessons that have emerged seem to go unlearned in the face of these differences.

What appears to have spread into our urban educational environments is a feeling of hopelessness for certain segments of our young people. Low performing students with fewer resources are segregated into highly disordered school settings and a growing number of suspension schools. Some students who fail in these settings can be placed in alternate settings such as New Beginnings schools, but even this intervention is done in retrospect, and further segregates these 'problem students'. Even if the new settings are more supportive and motivating educational communities, a student must repeatedly fail and show behavioral problems before getting into these settings. And, suspension schools and New Beginnings schools do clearly segregate students and may also have

even fewer opportunities for building social skills and compensating experiences through enrichment programs that are typically only available in mainstream academic settings with more resources. For example, one college-bound, high achieving student at Food and Finance High School in Manhattan was suspended for carrying a razor blade that she used for protection in her neighborhood, but mistakenly left in her wallet at school. This student took responsibility for her error in judgement and followed all the procedures granted as the consequence for her behavior, but her school did not do their part to ensure she remain on track. Administrators did not send her work to the suspension school site where she was placed, her teachers would not let her make up the work, and she therefore failed classes. This A/B student from the projects will now have an even more difficult time getting into college with a superintendent suspension on her record and some failing grades. Her options are now further limited.

Finally, Goodlad and Keating (1990) stress the fact that students who are labeled problematic frequently have cultures, communities, and family structures that differ from the dominant group in America. This leads policymakers and educators to mistakenly focus on changing or isolating the individual ‘problem’ students opposed to changing the school structures themselves to meet the needs of varied populations (Goodlad & Keating, 1990). Rutter (1994) emphasized taking into account the cultured meaning of different neighborhoods and groups in America, when developing programs by including the young people in the creation of the programs.

Resilience-based interventions that include students, teachers and the entire educational community would be able to consider the diverse population of the public school system. Additionally, interventions that address fear of crime within the

educational community would also potentially address the slew of other issues in New York City public education, while considering and appreciating the differences in urban youthful populations. Building resilience through protective factors and problem-solving curriculum is a logical and seemingly simplistic, cost-effective first step toward safer schools. Rutter (1979) has found that a major source of the development of external protective factors occurs at each young person's school. Gramezy and Rutter (1983) found that most young people even in the riskiest of environments become healthy and successful adults, and some of this may be due to experiences at school. Werner and Smith (1988) found that positive relationships had the most impact for young people by overshadowing risk factors. And finally, Werner and Smith (1988) demonstrated that changing a student's life trajectory can always happen with appropriate intervention.

Again, resources in the schools directed towards more qualified teachers, increased opportunities for acceptable socialization, more tutors, more counselors, and cleaner and operable facilities may do more for the overreaching goals of everyone. Adding security measures like metal detectors and cameras, increasing suspension schools, and pushing 'problem' students into segregated settings or to the streets seems almost absurd when resilience-based interventions could essentially turn 'problem' students into problem-solving students. A call for redirecting resources to support these basic types of opportunities seems simplistic on the outset, but the politics inherent in the complex educational system of New York City have blurred even the easiest solutions.

It is important to strongly stress that resources are necessary within schools to support resilience building or protective factors for students but may not require additional funding. The idea would be to redistribute funds in support of proactive solutions like

recreational opportunities and tutoring over the high-tech and costly security measures like metal detectors, cameras, police officers, and segregated disciplinary schools, and these alternative solutions could quickly be implemented. But a major paradigm shift must take place among policymakers who currently use reactive policing solutions and deterrence-based discipline to address the school safety problems of New York City.

In May of 2005, the New York City Counsel's Education Committee held a hearing allowing student testimony about the conditions in the public schools (Moskowitz, 2005). They found that student experiences were sharply contrasted from the reports of the Department of Education and the Mayor's Office. On top of the agenda were school safety, student fear, unsanitary and run-down school buildings, and insufficient academic resources like books and computers. The feelings among students was well articulated by a 9th Grader at Bronx Guild High School who said, "We are not prisoners, we're students" (Moskowitz, 2005, p. 5).

The following are a list of statements about the culture at school. Thinking about your school this past school year, would you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the following (*NCVS, SCS, 2001, Item 15):

10. *Everyone knows the school rules.
11. *The school rules are fair.
12. *The punishment for breaking school rules is the same no matter who you are.
13. *The school rules are strictly enforced.
14. *If a school rule is broken, students know what kind of punishment will follow.
15. Most of the teachers and staff at the school are supportive and would help me if I was afraid.
16. I have friends at my school.

Please circle the number of times that each of the following things happened to you THIS SCHOOL YEAR. (May, 2004).

17. Had something stolen from my locker, desk, or other place at school.
0 1 2 3 or more times
18. Had something taken from me by force, weapons, or threats at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
19. Had someone verbally threaten me at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
20. Had someone physically attack me at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
21. Had someone attempt to rape me at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
22. Had someone rape me at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
23. Had someone sexually harass me at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
24. Witnessed a fight at school
0 1 2 3 or more times
25. Saw graffiti on the walls or buildings at my school
0 1 2 3 or more times
26. Saw kids wearing gang colors at my school
0 1 2 3 or more times

27. Had someone offer, sell, or give me illegal drugs
0 1 2 3 or more times

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your school experience. Thinking about your experience at school over the current school year, please mark an "X" or fill in the circle that best corresponds to your feeling. (*May, 1999)

28. *I am afraid to come to school sometimes.
29. *I am afraid to go to the school restroom at school sometimes.
30. *I am afraid to go to the school lunchroom sometimes.
31. *I am afraid of getting into a fight at school (modified).
32. *I am afraid of other kids taking my money or property.
33. I am afraid of being in stairwells or hallways at school.
34. *I am afraid of being in class (modified).
35. *I am afraid on my way to and from school (modified).
36. *I am afraid of school events (like athletics) because of fights. (modified)
37. I am afraid of being forced into unwanted sexual activity at school.
38. I am afraid that I will be the victim of a crime in the future at school (This includes fights).

Now I want to ask you one more question about your experience at school. Please circle yes or no, then in your own words explain to me why you chose your answer.

39. In general, are you afraid of crime at school? Yes No Why or why not?

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Appendix B

Baruth Protective Factors Inventory

This is about the stressful events you have experience in your life and how you have handled them. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by marking Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree for each item.

1. There have been more problems than positive experiences with my health in the past 3 months.
2. There have been more problems than positive experiences with money in the past 3 months.
3. There have been more problems than positive experiences with my family or friends in the past 3 months.
4. There have been more problems than positive experiences with my school in the past 3 months.
5. I feel that I am optimistic and concentrate on the positives in most situations.
6. I feel that I am a creative, resourceful, and independent person.
7. Most people think I'm friendly and like to be around me.
8. I feel that I am competent and have high self-esteem.
9. I have a good relationship with at least one supportive person. (whether in your family or not)
10. I have at least one caring person in my life. (whether in your family or not)
11. I feel that I can trust at least one person in my life. (whether in your family or not)
12. I have at least 1 person who is interested in my life.(whether in your family or not)
13. I have been able to resolve many (but not all) of my problems by myself.
14. I feel that I have control over many (but not all) events in my life.
15. I feel that I have coped well with one or more major stressors in my life.
16. I have been able to make "the best out of a bad situation" a number of times.

Appendix C

Revised Ways of Coping Checklist (Modified)

Please list one major problem that you have experienced in the past few months.

The items below represent ways that you may have dealt with the major problem you listed above. We are interested in the degree to which you have used each of the following thoughts/behaviors in order to deal with this problem. Please check the appropriate column if the thought/behavior was "Never Used, Rarely Used, Sometimes Used, Regularly Used (at least 4-5 times per week).

1. Bargained or compromised to get something good or positive from the situation.
2. Talked to someone to find out more about the problem.
3. Concentrated on, or thought about something good that could come out of the whole thing.
4. Tried not to "burn your bridges behind you", tried to have different possibilities open.
5. Hoped a miracle would happen.
6. Went on as if nothing had happened.
7. Felt bad that you could not avoid the problem.
8. Kept your feelings to yourself.
9. Got mad at the people or things that caused the problem.
10. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.
11. Tried to forget the whole thing.
12. Changed or grew as a person in a good way.
13. Made a plan of action and followed it.
14. Accepted the next best thing to what you wanted.
15. Let your feelings out somehow.
16. Came out of the experience better than when you went in.
17. Talked to someone who could do something concrete or specific about the problem
18. Tried not to act too quickly or follow your first hunch.
19. Changed something so things would turn out all right.
20. Asked someone you respected for advice and followed it.
21. Kept others from knowing how bad things were.
22. Talked to someone about how you were feeling.
23. Stood up for what you wanted.
24. Just took things one step at a time.
25. You knew what had to be done, so you doubled your efforts and tried harder to make things work.
26. Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.
27. Wished you were a stronger person, more optimistic and forceful.
28. Accepted your strong feelings but didn't let them interfere with other things too much.

29. Wished that you could change what had happened.
30. Wished that you could change the way you felt.
31. Changed something about yourself so you could deal with the situation better.
32. Daydreamed or imagined a better place than the one you were in .
33. Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.
34. Thought about fantastic or unreal things (like the perfect revenge, or finding a million dollars) that made you feel better.
35. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow

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