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FEMALE STUDENT SERVICES STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY ON A STATE COLLEGE CAMPUS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Child, Family and Community Sciences
in the College of Education and Human Performance
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2016

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the perceptions of female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus. Through the lens of social construction theory, six staff members were interviewed about their views of safety both on and off campus. The goal of this study was to better understand how female staff members formed their perceptions of safety on campus, through social, political and cultural processes.

The results of this study were that although the informants all were aware of the same threats and dangers on campus, they each had differing views on how safe they were while on campus. Of the six interviewed, two expressed daily concern for their safety, two were aware of dangers, but not overly fearful, and two did not feel fearful for their safety at all. Although each informant knew about their campus safety amenities, only two had used their services, one that expressed concern daily, and one that was not overly fearful. Social influences such as televised news programs and Internet articles played a factor in how the employees viewed their safety.

Overall, seven major themes were discovered including campus concern, concern over student behavior, self-protection, off campus concerns, social influences, lack of concern, and lack of information. The study concluded with the researcher's recommendations that female student services staff members become knowledgeable about crimes happening on their campuses and about utilizing services they have available to them, as well as emphasizing the importance of office location, especially the proximity to coworkers working similar schedules.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Tim.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Chair – Dr. J. Thomas Owens, Dr. Rosa Cintrón, Dr. Erhan Haciomeroglu and Dr. Michael Preston. I am extremely thankful for having Dr. Owens and Dr. Cintrón guide me throughout my doctoral journey. Their knowledge, guidance and support, both inside and outside of the classroom, have been tremendously helpful and I will be forever grateful. In addition I had many wonderful classmates who helped me through various phases of the process; it was a joy to get to know each one of them. Specifically Ben Lopez and Dr. Geoffrey Fortunato, who both began this journey with me and supported me over the years. Thank you, your support is greatly appreciated. A special thank you goes out to Dr. Mary Ann Lynn who served as my editor. Her thoroughness and quick work was invaluable to me in this process.

A profound appreciation goes to my husband, Tim Shand, who supported me from day one, allowing me to focus on my studies while he took care of everything else. I am also extremely blessed to have had a wonderful support system through my family and friends – thank you all for your love and support over these last few years.

A huge thank you goes out to my informants, who volunteered to be part of my study and share their stories with me. Their stories will impact the field of higher education, at a time when safety on campus has become a topic of great concern.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Violence on educational campuses within the United States is a topic that has been getting more attention in today's seemingly increasingly violent world (Baker & Boland, 2011; Carr, 2005; Keller, Hughes & Hertz, 2011; Pollard, Nolan & Deisinger, 2012). Campus shootings over the past 15 years in all sectors of education have caused widespread concern throughout the country due to extensive media coverage of the K-12 school shootings at Columbine High School in 2000, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in 2012, as well as collegiate shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, and most recently, Umpqua Community College in 2015 (Fox, Nobles & Piquero, 2009; Gunderson, 2015). Even though violent crime on campus is low, Americans are concerned with safety on the college campus more than ever before (Ball, 2012; Strauss, 2010; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2011).

Several legislative acts have been passed since 1990 in efforts to improve safety and security on college campuses. The Clery Act, passed in 1991, requires all colleges and universities to publish their crime statistics on an annual basis (Harshman, Puro & Wolff, 2001; Janosik & Plummer, 2005; Sulkowski & Lazarus, 2011; USDOE, 2011). One of the main purposes of this law was to make faculty, staff, and students aware of the dangers on their specific campus in an effort to keep them safe (Janosik, 2004). However, researchers have shown that most students and parents are not familiar with the Clery Act, and even fewer actually read the annual reports (Janosik, 2004; Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

Due to the passing of the Clery Act, and the widespread concern for safety, many colleges and universities across the country have attempted to improve their safety and security policies and procedures, costing the schools hundreds of thousands of dollars (Lee, 2015). Some colleges have gone from a security department to a sworn police force, and others have installed campus wide speaker systems, or purchased new technological systems that are able to send mass texts to the campus community in the event of an emergency (Marklein, 2011; Randazzo & Cameron, 2012; Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008; Violino, 2010).

The 21st century literature reflects the increase in safety measures on campuses across the country, as many researchers have attempted to measure the current levels of safety on campus (Baker & Boland, 2011; Gover, Tomsich, Jennings & Higgins, 2011; Harvey, 2011; Hughes, White & Hertz, 2008; Kaminski, Koons-Witt, Stewart Thompson & Weiss, 2010; Krauss, 2013; Patton, 2010). Most of these studies were quantitative, assessed students, and were conducted at traditional four-year residential colleges and universities. The researchers considered variables such as gender, ethnicity, and race as they related to safety on campus.

Along with the multitude of research studies that measure students' perceptions of safety, a few studies exist in which the perceptions of safety of faculty and staff have been considered. Researchers have reported that a large portion of faculty and staff do worry about their personal safety while on campus, and that they, too, are victims of crimes, just like students. With the national dialogue concentrating on safety on campuses, along with the passing of the Clery Act, one could deduce that students, faculty, and staff should feel safer on campus than ever before, yet this does not seem to be the case. A full review of the current literature is reported in the next chapter.

Statement of the Problem

In an effort to increase safety on campus, many colleges or universities spend over $200,000 per year in an effort to meet all of the requirements of the Clery Act (Carlson, 2014). Countless hours of training and reporting must occur for a college to ensure it is complying with the over 300 regulations of the act (Lee, 2015). With such a large sum of money being allocated to safety annually, it is important to understand how those on campus come to view their personal safety.

How and why members of the campus community arrive at their perceptions of safety are areas that still need to be explored. For the most part, reports of safety in the literature have been presented in quantitative terms, using percentages to show how safe people believe themselves to be on campus and situations that can alter this perception of safety. These findings also typically show a low understanding and use of the reports generated from the Clery Act legislation. Understanding the extent to which new campus safety measures are impacting communities' perceptions can be of assistance to colleges as they determine methods that are working and those that need to be improved.

Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the ways in which female student services staff members construct their perception of safety on a state college campus. Females on campus are more likely to be fearful of becoming a victim of crime, yet their statistical percentages of becoming a victim are not significantly greater than those of their male counterparts (Carr, 2005; Tomsich, Gover, & Jennings, 2011). This finding lends itself to further research in an effort to

understand how females shape their perceptions of safety with the heightened awareness in the 21st century of crime on college campuses.

Another gap in the literature about safety on campus is the absence of studies conducted at community college campuses that practice open admissions policies. Although in the past, community colleges experienced lower enrollments than did four-year colleges, in 2016, 65% of Florida high school graduates reportedly began their postsecondary studies at a community college (Florida Department of Education [FDOE], 2016). In 2012, there were 12.8 million students enrolled at over 1,100 community colleges across the country. With community colleges having open admissions policies guaranteeing admission to all who apply (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2016), they could be an easy target for would-be criminals.

The make-up of a campus community on any given day is comprised of faculty, staff, students, and visitors. Students, visitors and faculty come and go as their schedules permit, and many are not typically on campus for a full 40 hours per week. Traditional full-time students take 12 credit hours per semester, and are only required to be on campus 12 hours per week, but the average full-time student services employee works 40 hours per week on campus. Considering the large amount of time that staff spend on campus, their perceptions of safety is an area that needs to be explored.

In addition, females make up the majority of staff on community college campuses. In 2016, the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) website showed that 56% of leaders on campus were female, and that number increased to 65% when looking at those specifically working in student academic affairs and other educational services. Upon reviewing

the literature, there were no qualitative studies on female student services staff members found, as most studies focused on students or were quantitative in nature.

Due to the increasing enrollment at community colleges, their open and welcoming nature, and the large percentage of female staff employed, it is vital that administrators understand how female staff members construct their perceptions of safety. Colleges spend an exorbitant amount of money each year in an effort to help their employees feel safe but have little evidence to use in assessing if the money is being well spent. The results of this study may help colleges understand which efforts are effective and if money and resources are being spent wisely, thereby improving perceptions of safety on campus. Finally, multiple new laws have been passed by the federal government in recent years, all in an effort to keep campus populations safe, but there has been little qualitative evidence used in assessing the effectiveness of these efforts. This study helped to fill in the gaps in each of these areas, through the eyes of female student services staff members.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was social construction theory (SCT). Social construction theory, an idea coined in the mid-20th century, has roots in science, biology, psychology, and philosophy (Fosnot, 2005). Piaget has often been seen as the father of SCT, and his work was advanced by additions from Vygotsky, Bruner, Gardner and Goodman (Fosnot, 2005). The notion of SCT is not one specific theory. Rather, it is a broad range of theories with several major tenets. It is a nonpositivist belief that individuals create their own knowledge, and

this knowledge is shaped by historical, political, and cultural influences (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hall, Griffiths, & McKenna, 2013).

Social construction theory suggests that knowledge can change based on what is happening in the world around an individual. It can help to explain what a person believes and how that person came to that belief (Fosnot, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In other words, a person's reality is based on his or her own experiences with external situations. Consequently, it would be impossible to say that two people have the same reality, because no two people have experienced exactly the same things in exactly the same way throughout their lives (Fosnot, 2005). Based on this theory, individuals would have individual beliefs about campus safety that would be influenced by (a) their personal experiences with others both on and off campus, (b) by exposure to the media, news outlets and social discussions, and (c) their personal experiences with crime.

Lock and Strong (2010) cited four main tenets: (a) meaning and understanding are central to all human activity, (b) meaning has its significance in social interaction, (c) meaning is specific to time and place, and (d) people are self-defining. The first tenet focuses on how people create meaning and understanding through language and experiences. What a word, phrase, or action means to one person differ for another individual. Individuals create their own meaning throughout their lives, and this alters their perceptions of things that are thought to be truths. An example of this is the concept of being safe. One person may feel safe in a situation, but another person may feel unsafe in the exact same situation. According to SCT, both of these beliefs can be the truth, as individuals create their own truth and reality.

The second tenet is that meaning has its significance in social interaction (Lock & Strong, 2010). Knowledge is created and can be altered by interacting with others, as people tend to push their perceptions onto others in an attempt to justify that their perceptions are the truth. This can be seen easily in politics. Interacting with a political party often shapes a person's way of thinking about a given subject, as those in power attempt to push their perceptions onto others.

The third tenet focuses on the impact of time and place on a person's lived experience. Cultural differences are seen across continents, from country to country, state to state, and even village to village. Examples of this are seen daily. Through print and televised media, people can see the often drastic differences in the lives of those who live in other parts of the world from their own experiences.

For the purposes of this research study, I viewed the first three tenets as sub-sections of the last tenet as depicted in Figure 1. Meaning and understanding, social interaction, and time and place all contribute to the definitions people create of themselves, causing the first three tenets to come together to create the fourth tenet. The perceptions of staff were explored through three research questions, each focusing on one of the three first tenets (meaning and understanding, social interaction, and time and place), as they each play a role in how individuals construct their perceptions of safety.

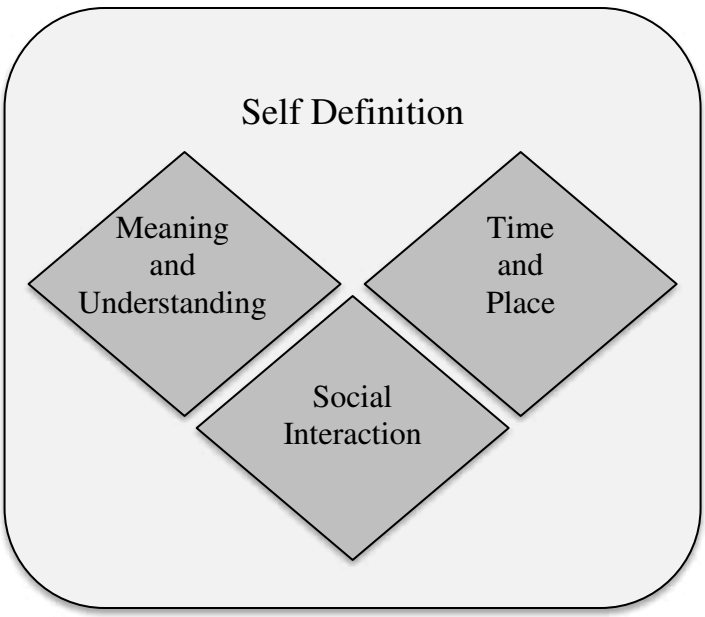

Figure 1. Lock and Strong Social Construction Theory.

Research Questions

1. How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
2. How has the national discourse about violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
3. How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined as:

Crime: “An illegal act for which someone can be punished by the government” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary, n.d.a).

Emergency Response Plan: A plan that a college has in place to help prepare it to respond in an emergency situation, either from a natural event, a man-made event, mechanical failures and other unforeseen emergencies (Rike, 2003).

Perception: The ability to become aware of something through the five senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing (Goldstein, 2013).

Safe: “Not able or likely to be hurt or harmed in any way, not in danger” (Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, n.d.b).

State College: A college that primarily offers career and technical degrees as well as the first two years of a bachelor’s degree and utilizes a guaranteed admission process, accepting all who apply. In the state of Florida, the 28 community colleges have been reclassified as state colleges. However, they continue to be part of the community college system, and are primarily two-year colleges that offer select bachelor’s degrees (FLDOE, 2016).

Violence: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002, p. 4).

Limitations

This study focused on perceptions of safety on a state college campus. There are also general limitations for all qualitative research. The data gathered in this research was viewed through the lens of those being interviewed, and individuals may have interpreted questions differently. The interviewees may also have given biased answers based on the interviewer's presence. The last limitation is that individuals differ in levels of articulacy and perceptiveness, causing answers to vary (Creswell, 2014).

Delimitations

Some delimitations of the study include the geographic region and the type of college. I conducted this research at a large, public, multi-campus, suburban, state college, within the state of Florida. Results may have been different if the study was conducted in a different geographic region of the country or in a rural or urban setting. I also chose to interview female staff, causing the voices of male staff to go unheard.

Positionality

My reasoning for deciding to research safety on state college campuses began during my undergraduate college years. I enrolled at Niagara University, in Niagara Falls, New York, as a psychology major but quickly changed to criminal justice with plans to go on to law school. While I was pursuing my degree, I served as a resident advisor for one of the residence halls on campus. I served as a resource for the students on my floor, planning educational and social programs, and working to monitor residence hall rules to ensure the health and safety of all students. At some point during my junior year, I realized that law school might not be the path I

was meant to pursue. I was unsure of my career goals until approximately one year after I graduated from college when I had a talk with my mother and cousin about the possibility of pursuing work in higher education. My cousin was currently working in higher education and opened my eyes to a future in this field. Shortly after this meeting I enrolled in a master of education degree program with a focus on student affairs administration at the State University of New York at Buffalo. During my graduate program I served as an Assistant Hall Director, supervising 12 Resident Advisors in three residence halls, again ensuring a safe and healthy living environment for the students residing in my buildings.

Upon graduating with my master's degree, I began my first full-time professional job as a Residence Life Coordinator at The Pennsylvania State University, in State College, Pennsylvania. I coordinated two residence halls consisting of over 500 freshmen, and supervised 11 Resident Advisors. I also served as the main campus disciplinary officer for the students in my buildings. Even though I had abandoned criminal justice in my bachelor's degree, I found myself dealing with policy violations on a daily basis.

My last position within residence life was as an Assistant Director of Residence Life. In this position, I supervised six hall directors, and was in charge of maintaining the safety and security of over 2,000 students. Again, I served as a judicial officer, meeting with students who violated policy, and deciding on appropriate punishments and education regarding their choices. My mantra during the 10 years I worked within the residence halls was "I keep students safe and happy, in that order."

When I transitioned from working in residence life to student services, I never stopped having a passion for ensuring the safety of those on campus. I voluntarily served on a campus

safety committee at a previous state college, working with others at the college to help identify problems on campus and make the campus a safer place for all who visit. When it came time to select a dissertation topic, I knew it would center around safety on campus.

During the last six years I have worked in student services at different state colleges in positions within admissions, recruitment, general student services and academic advising. I have worked with many female front-line student services staff, and I feel that I am more concerned about safety than my colleagues, and I would like to see that change. I see conversations about campus safety peak right after highly publicized incidents like Virginia Tech and Umpqua Community College, yet within a few weeks, safety seems to become a non-issue again. I believe this conversation should continue, and be an ongoing conversation as personal safety is an ongoing concern for everybody.

As a female who has lived and worked on college campuses for the past 15 years, I am amply aware of the dangers that can occur on campus, and believe that I may be more likely to be targeted due to my gender, even though research has shown this not to be the case. I have had numerous conversations with other female staff members about safety on campus, and the Clery Act, and it is astounding how many employees do not even know what the Clery Act is! Yet, these same people often comment about how they are not comfortable walking to their car alone at night. This made me wonder, are their fears justified? Have they taken the time to look at the crime statistics or the safety programs the college offers to help keep them safe? I wish to understand how these women perceive campus safety from their own unique lens of their life experiences. I hope to gain that understanding through this research.

Summary

In conclusion, safety on our nation's college campuses has experienced a renewed presence in our local media due to highly publicized events like the Virginia Tech shootings in 2007. As a result, myriad research has been conducted in order to help our colleges' campus safety offices assess their current safety policies and procedures. Even with an increase in attention to safety on college campuses, the Clery Act, a central force hoping to help keep the college community safe, is not being read and utilized by those it was intended for, including faculty, staff, parents and students. To help understand how female staff members come to perceive their safety on campus, six informants were interviewed.

Social Construction Theory was used as the framework for the study, arguing that all people create their own reality through three concepts. The first concept focuses on meaning and understanding; the second is based on cultural themes using time and place, and the last concept takes into account social interaction. Through these concepts female student services staff described their perceptions of personal safety on a state college campus.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the past decade, statistically isolated incidents of active shooters have received national media attention, causing Americans to rethink what it means to be safe (Lederman, 2008; Reed & Brennan, 2015; Rivera, 2015). These events have happened across all areas of society including parking lots, movie theatres, malls, nightclubs, and even elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. Events such as the Virginia Tech shootings in 2007 and the Umpqua Community College shootings in 2015, occurring on educational campuses, have led to increased scrutiny of the nation's safety and security policies at educational institutions, specifically colleges and universities. Although active shooter incidents like these are rare, they typically make the front page of the newspaper, are the top story on the evening news, and elevate the public's fear, whether warranted or not (Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008; Pollard et al., 2012).

In 1990, legislation was passed that mandated all colleges and universities to publish their crime statistics annually in an effort to make safety issues transparent (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012). This law has been commonly referred to as the Clery Act. Although the Clery Act has been in place for over 25 years, there is much debate over its effectiveness, as many studies have shown that students, faculty, and staff do not read the reports or use the information to keep themselves safe (Gregory & Janosik, 2006; Janosik, 2004; Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

In order to fully understand the idea of safety as it relates to the state college campus, this chapter has been organized to explore relevant areas. First, general threats to safety, including

environmental and criminal threats are discussed. Next, the history of crime on campus and the definitions of types of crime are explored. Following is a discussion of legislation and policies surrounding safety (i.e., the Clery Act and campus discipline systems).

In addition, institutional response to federal policy and the increased awareness of the public on safety procedures are considered. Current research on safety measures on college campuses are highlighted followed by a discussion of social construction theory, the theoretical framework that guided this study. Lastly, the role of the media and its influence on perceptions are considered. These sections provide a comprehensive overview of safety as it relates to female student services staff members on state college campuses.

Environmental Threats to Campus Safety

One common threat to college campuses and safety are natural disasters. Tornados, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires are rare, and less likely to occur than non-violent crimes such as burglary and theft, yet most people are more prepared for the former than the latter. There have been ample discussions regarding each of these natural disasters. Much research has been focused on global weather patterns by organizations such as The Weather Channel, National Geographic, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in an effort to find ways to predict these events in the hopes of avoiding mass casualties and damage.

The best-known example is Hurricane Katrina, a category five hurricane, which passed through New Orleans on August 29, 2005, causing catastrophic damage to eight colleges located in Louisiana (Mangan, 2010). Over 18,000 students had to be relocated to over 1,000 colleges in Louisiana, as well as other states throughout the country (“Many Hurricane-Displaced,” 2005).

By 2010 many of the buildings destroyed by Katrina had not been repaired, but all eight colleges had reopened, with many of them offering new courses and majors in areas such as public service, construction, and urban and regional planning (Mangan, 2010). The storm heightened public awareness of the impact of natural disasters, causing a spike in enrollment of students in the previously mentioned fields that were connected with helping the victims and the city devastated by the hurricane.

Another natural disaster that greatly affected an institution of higher education was a series of tornados that occurred on Christmas Day of 2006. On that date, four tornados sprouted in Daytona Beach, Florida, causing major damage to the campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), a world-renowned flight school (The Associated Press, 2006). The storm that hit ERAU consisted of a category F2 tornado, with winds up to 157 miles per hour. This tornado caused over $60 million in damages (The Associated Press, 2006; "Embry-Riddle," 2007). It damaged over 40 Cessna airplanes, and even hurled a plane into the building, leaving an imprint of the wing on an exterior wall. Since the storm occurred over the school's winter break and no students were on campus at the time, there were no injuries. However, the spring semester had to be postponed by six days in order to restore the campus to a condition suitable for classes ("Embry-Riddle," 2007).

Even though disasters like these are more common than violent crimes such as active shooters, they tend to instill very little fear into the typical staff member. For this reason, the focus of this study was placed on crime on campus, commonly seen as preventable, unlike the wrath of Mother Nature.

History of Campus Crime

The idea of personal safety on the college campus is something that began as early as the 14th century. Oxford University, located in Oxford, England, had 66 suspicious deaths, 37 of which were deemed homicides, on record from 1342 to 1348 (Hammer, 1978). The homicide rate at that time was approximately 110 of every 100,000 individuals. This was extremely high, and made for a very dangerous time to be enrolled in higher education. In comparison, the 2013 homicide rate was at a 50-year low of 4.7 of every 100,000 individuals (Cooper & Smith, 2013). Even though the 21st century homicide rate has been much lower than that of the early days in Oxford, crime still occurs on campuses, and measures are put in place to help keep students safe. One of the most common measures on campus to help keep students safe is police presence on campus.

Police on College Campuses

Although Harvard University, the first institution of higher education within the United States, opened in 1636, the first documented police presence on a college campus was in 1894 when two police officers were hired to protect the Yale University campus (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Sloan, Lanier, & Beer, 2000). Though Yale had two officers before 1900, it was not until the 1960s that having law enforcement in the form of police or campus security became commonplace at higher educational institutions within the United States. In the early 1900s, most colleges and universities were able to take care of all criminal matters in-house, as the university was seen as being "in loco parentis," meaning that the university served as surrogate parents for students (Fisher, 1995; Willoughby, Carroll, Marshall, & Clark, 2009). Accordingly, there is not

much literature on police presence on college campuses until the turmoil of the civil rights movement during the 1960s. It was at this time that the idea of police officers on campus became commonplace.

Prior to the 1960s the colleges that had security officers working on college campuses utilized them mostly to issue parking tickets. However, during the unrest of the 1960s, many colleges decided to replace their security officers with actual police forces, allowing them to run similar to a small town (Sloan et al., 2000). In recent years, as crime has been rising on college campuses, many colleges and universities have been adding more police and security officers in addition to improving training for their current officers (Hughes et al., 2008).

The United States Bureau of Justice Statistics (2014) found that 75% of four-year universities had a sworn police force on campus in 2004-2005. This number reflects four-year universities with over 2,500 students in attendance. It does not take into account any of the nation's two-year colleges.

There has been a trend across the country of two-year community colleges beginning to offer select four-year bachelor's degrees (Smith, 2015). This has been especially true in Florida where most of the state's community colleges offer a small number of bachelor's degrees in technical subjects in addition to providing students with career and technical education and the first two years of a bachelor's degree. By 2014, over 100 bachelor's degrees were offered in Florida's 28 community colleges. To reflect the new mission of offering bachelor's degrees, the Florida Community College System was renamed the Florida College System in 2009, and the name community college was replaced by state college (FDOE, 2016).

Although Florida's state colleges are reflective of four-year universities academically, they do not reflect the same safety policies and procedures in their safety departments. A check of the Florida College System's website revealed that only four of the 28 state colleges utilize a sworn police force on campus, yet 26 of the 28 colleges enroll over 2,500 students (FDOE, 2016). In comparison, the 14% of Florida state colleges utilizing sworn police officers seems inconsequential when compared with the 75% of four-year universities with sworn police forces according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. The discussion of police on college campuses was helpful in this study as police presence on campus, or lack thereof, can affect staff members' risk perception, and ultimately their perceived level of safety.

Crimes on Campus

Police departments work to prevent a multitude of crimes each and every day. The specific crimes that are tracked on campus, their definition and frequency on college campuses, are discussed in this section. There have been numerous reports and statistics regarding general crime on college campuses such as the National Center for Educational Statistics and The Bureau of Justice Statistics. To further understand statistics of crime on college campuses, it is important to understand the types of crimes that occur and their frequency. Table 1 shows the numbers of crimes reported by college campuses from 2007 through 2009.

Table 1

Crimes Reported on College Campuses 2007 – 2009

Crime	2007	2008	2009
Arson	785	708	647
Burglary	30,265	29,594	24,069
Aggravated assault	2,772	2,689	2,675
Robbery	1,932	1,939	1,865
Nonforcible sex offenses	42	36	72
Forcible sex offenses	2,736	2,670	2,590
Negligent manslaughter	3	3	0
Murder	45	13	17

Note. Adapted from "The Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool" by the U.S. Department of Education, 2012b, Office of Postsecondary Education.

Burglary

The most common crime on campus was burglary, often used interchangeably with larceny. Though burglary and larceny are very similar, they have different definitions. Larceny is defined as,

> The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another. Constructive possession is the condition in which a person does not have physical custody or possession, but is in a position to exercise dominion or control over a thing (USDOE, 2012a).

Burglary is defined as "The unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft." (USDOE, 2012a). The main difference between burglary and larceny is that for a crime to be classified as a burglary there must be forced entry (Seward, 2006). In addition, the numbers of burglaries are even more skewed. Sloan, Fisher, and Cullen (1997) found that only 25% of all burglaries that occurred on campus were reported to campus safety officials.

The Clery Act, at its inception, required that only burglaries, not larcenies, which are very common on college campuses, be reported. In fact, in 2004, the FBI found that larcenies occurred three to four times more than burglaries (Seward, 2006). For example, a student's laptop that is stolen while left unattended in the library would be classified as a larceny, thus causing it not to appear in the school's annual Clery report. However, if that same student had a laptop stolen from a locked vehicle, it would be considered a burglary and would be included in the annual report.

In 2008, additions were made to the Clery report to combat this discrepancy, adding thefts to the list of crimes that must be reported by colleges. This addition allowed prospective and current students to have a much more accurate picture of the prevalence of crime on a specific college campus.

Sexual Assault

Another frequent crime on college campuses is sexual assault. In 2009, more than 2,500 forcible sex offenses were reported by institutions of higher education (USDOE, 2012b). This type of crime is traditionally underreported, and it is estimated that only 46% of rape victims or sexual assault victims report the crime to proper authorities (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 2009). Sloan et al. (1997) found that only 22% of college rape victims file a police report, leaving the statistics published greatly understated. The Clery report requires that colleges and universities report all incidents, not just those where the victim decides to officially press charges with local law enforcement (Seward, 2006).

Aggravated Assaults

Aggravated assaults are the most frequently occurring violent crime on college campuses (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012). There were 2,675 reported aggravated assaults in 2009 on U.S. college campuses (USDOE, 2012b). While this number is the third largest of all the crimes reported, Sloan et al. (1997) found that only 50% of victims of assaults on campus report the crime to their campus safety officials, leaving the real numbers unknown.

One example of this type of crime was on November 5, 2013, at Rollins College in Orlando, Florida, where two students broke into another student's residence hall room and assaulted him. The outcome, through the campus disciplinary system, was that the two attackers were suspended from the school (Jacobson, 2013). Stories like this happen at colleges all across the country, even in dormitories that have safeguards, such as locked doors that require card access and security cameras, in place to protect students from unauthorized visitors,

Robbery

Although robbery is not as common as the previously mentioned crimes, there were still close to 2,000 annual reports of robberies in 2009 according to the U. S. Department of Education (2012b). Robbery has been defined as, "the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear." (FBI, 2010).

Robberies are somewhat common on college campuses in the United States. In 2011, two women, a student and guest, were robbed at the Nittany Lion Shrine at Penn State's University Park campus in central Pennsylvania. The assailant brandished a gun, and took jewelry, camera,

and cell phones from the victim. Neither woman was injured in the attack ("Penn State," 2011). Not far away, at York College in Pennsylvania, two students were robbed outside of a dormitory on campus in 2013. The assailant escaped with $200 and a cell phone (Snyder, 2013). These are just two of the many robberies that occur on college campuses every year.

Murder/Attempted Murder

Each of the previously named crimes is more prevalent than murder, yet murder and attempted murder receive the majority of the attention, especially in the mass media (Pollard et al., 2012). Even though a person is more likely to be struck by lightning than to be shot on a college campus, campus shootings are discussed at length in this chapter due to their highly publicized nature, and their influence on perceptions of safety (Fox, 2007; National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012).

Though murder is extremely rare on college campuses, the Virginia Tech tragedy in 2007 reminded the country that it can happen, and can be catastrophic when it does. The Department of Education, the FBI and the U.S. Secret Service collaborated on a study in 2008, finding an increase in campus-based attacks, 54% of which were shootings. Each decade saw more attacks than the one before with 25 attacks in the 1970s, 40 during the 1980s, 79 in the 1990s, and 83 between 2000 and the time of the study in 2008. The authors were careful to note that the increase in incidents could be due to increasing enrollment of colleges during the latter half of the 20th century. The media has also increased its coverage of campus active shooters, potentially causing attackers to act out in the hope of gaining notoriety and front page newspaper coverage of the incident (Katel, 2011).

One of the earliest and most notorious campus shootings was the clock tower shooting at the University of Texas in 1966. A 25-year-old former student first killed his wife and mother at his home, then drove to the campus, walked up to the 28th story observation deck in the clock tower, and shot and killed 16 people on the ground, wounding 32. Campus police ultimately took the assailant's life to end the standoff (The Associated Press, 2010). Though the 1970s and 1980s college crime scene remained mostly quiet, the violence began again in the 1990s.

The 1990s saw a rise in violent crimes on campus involving firearms. In 1991, a graduate student at the University of Iowa fired shots in two buildings, killing four, injuring two, and ultimately taking his own life (Myers, 1991). Just one year later, in 1992, a music student at Simon's Rock College of Bard in Massachusetts killed two and wounded four before he was apprehended (DePalma, 1992). Just a few years later in 1996, a graduate student killed three professors who served on his master's thesis committee at San Diego State University. He had received a poor evaluation on his thesis and responded by shooting the three men who served on his committee. The suspect was apprehended by police and charged with three counts of murder (Perry & Malnic, 1996). He pleaded guilty to murder and received three consecutive life sentences (Perry, 1997).

The beginning of the 21st century witnessed a host of large-scale school shootings at higher educational institutions. The most deadly school shooting, as of this writing, was the Virginia Tech incident. In April 2007, a Virginia Tech student killed 32 people and wounded 17 before committing suicide. Less than a year later, in February 2008, a former Northern Illinois University graduate student killed five and injured 21 before also taking his own life (Kaminski et al., 2010). In 2009, a graduate student at the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville, who had

just been dismissed from his program, walked into his advisor's office and fatally shot him, then turned the gun on himself. In the same year, a nursing student who was in danger of failing out of The University of Arizona's Nursing College opened fire killing three of his professors before turning the gun on himself (Holguin, 2009).

In 2010, Amy Bishop, a neuroscience professor who was denied tenure at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, shot six biology colleagues at a meeting, killing three of them. When interviewed, her colleagues stated that she had shown signs of a violent temper prior to the shooting. Bishop, who claimed she was mentally ill at the time of the shootings, was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty (Katel, 2011).

The most recent highly publicized school shooting as of this writing was the October 1, 2015 shootings at Umpqua Community College, in Roseburg, Oregon. A gunman opened fire, targeting Christians, killing nine and injuring seven (Ford & Payne, 2015). Mental illness such as depression and anger issues were stated as playing a role in the shooter's actions (Gunderson, 2015).

As a direct result of the Umpqua Community College shootings, community colleges have begun to allocate more resources for safety and security than ever before. Community colleges, unlike their four-year counterparts, practice a guaranteed admissions policy, and therefore, are seen as more easily accessible for criminals (Whissemore, 2015).

The media also plays a role in the public's perception of crime on campus, causing unfounded worry among many people over crimes that are extremely rare, has been previously noted. Though these crimes are rare, they seem to always catch the attention of society, and

therefore, can directly impact how staff members perceive their safety at a particular college or university, altering how they assess their risk of becoming victims.

The expectation is that each school has its own security department or police force on campus to help prevent crime, and they address crimes as they occur. The campus safety office at each school is tasked with using both proactive and reactive methods to reach their students and keep them safe while on campus. These active shooter events have caused colleges from all over the country to implement new procedures to help keep the members of their communities safe. Next, the crime rates at two-year and four-year colleges are discussed.

Crime by Institutional Type

Unfortunately, the ivory towers of colleges and universities cannot always protect their occupants from external, or even internal, threats. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, keeps track of all crimes on collegiate campuses, from assault and burglary, to murder (USDOE, 2011). A search of the Institute of Education Statistics revealed the numbers for crimes on campus for 2011, 2012 and 2013. The statistics for two-year and four-year colleges are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Crimes by College Type 2011 – 2013

Crimes	Four-year Colleges			Two-year Colleges		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Murder/Non-negligent manslaughter	14	9	17	3	3	7
Negligent manslaughter	1	2	0	0	0	0
Sex offenses-forcible	3,153	3,796	4,691	271	291	338
Sex offenses-non-forcible	31	30	31	18	17	14
Robbery	1,146	1,204	1,164	342	353	310
Aggravated assault	1,843	1,994	1,826	584	622	397
Burglary	17,376	16,417	14,005	2,592	2,249	1,835
Motor vehicle theft	2,450	2,297	2,369	1,079	894	740
Arson	577	664	592	67	50	46

Note. Table created from "The Campus Safety and Security Data Cutting Tool" from The Office for Postsecondary Education via http://ope.ed.gov/security/GetAggregatedData.aspx.

Table 2 shows the numbers of criminal offenses by college type for the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. During these years, the number of students at two-year colleges fluctuated between 7.1 million and 7.5 million. Four-year colleges enrolled between 17.6 and 18 million students at that time, serving over twice as many students as the two-year schools. However, the majority of the crimes at the four-year schools occurred at rates more than three times greater than the two-year schools. Though these numbers show that individuals are statistically more likely to be a victim of a crime at a four-year school, both school types have very low victimization rates. When the number of crimes is considered based on the number of students enrolled, the odds of becoming a victim of any crime are less than .001% for both types of colleges.

When these numbers are compared to crime rates in society in general, the chance of becoming a victim is less while on campus for all nine crimes listed. According to the FBI website, the percentage of becoming a victim of each crime in the general population is less than .001% for murder/non-negligent manslaughter, .02% for forcible rape, .11% for robbery, .24%

for aggravated assault, .67% for burglary, and less than .001% for motor vehicle theft (FBI, 2015). On average, traditional-aged college students (aged 18-24) are safer than their counterparts of the same age not enrolled in college (Katel, 2011). Of every 1,000 traditional-aged college students, 61 will become a victim of a violent crime. Non-students of the same age are victimized at a rate of 75 of every 1,000. Rape and sexual assault occur at a rate of 3.8 of 1,000 for college students, compared to 4.1 of 1,000 for those not attending college.

Though the chance of becoming a victim of crime may be less for college students, that fact has not stopped those at the local, state and federal government from focusing their attention on new policies to make U. S. college campuses safer. These policies at both the federal level and the campus level are discussed in the following section.

Federal Legislation

The Clery Act

Background

In 1987, Howard and Connie Clery established Security on Campus, a 501 (c)(3) corporation, to raise awareness of crime and increase safety on the nation's college campuses (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012). Their daughter, Jeanne Clery, was a student at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania who was murdered in her residence hall room in 1986. Her family sued the university, claiming that the university knew it had a high crime rate, but did not report this to prospective students. The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, better known as the Clery Act, was a direct result of the Clery's fight to raise crime awareness on

college campuses and their lawsuit against Lehigh University, (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012; Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

Legislation

Legislation is not new to higher education. In 1974, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, was introduced by Senator James Buckley, allowing students the right to access their educational records, the right to challenge any discrepancies, and the right to keep their records private to those outside of the school (Silverman, 2008). This law prohibits an educational institution from releasing any information about a student without his or her written consent. The exception to this law is information that is classified as directory information, such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth, honors, awards, and dates of attendance ("FERPA," n.d.). This legislation went untouched for years until it was amended to allow for crime statistics due to the Clery's efforts (Harshman et al., 2001).

In 1990, Howard and Connie Clery's work to establish safety protocols for colleges nationwide finally paid off when the law entitled the Student Right to Know, Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990, was passed. The law mandated that higher education institutions receiving Title IV funding must disclose their crime statistics to current and prospective students. Title IV funding consists of federal aid (i.e., grants, student loans, and work-study). The law also allowed for victims of violence to be made aware of the outcomes of campus disciplinary hearings of their alleged attacker (Harshman et al., 2001; Janosik & Plummer, 2005; "Lifting Burdens," 2015; Sulkowski & Lazarus, 2011; USDOE, 2011).

The Clery Act has been the impetus for improving the safety of higher education institutions in the U.S. This has been seen in increasing programming and discourse on sexual assault, the evolution of text message emergency notification systems, and increasing public awareness about crimes ("Lifting Burdens," 2015). The three main goals of the Clery Act were (a) to provide timely crime statistics to student and parents, (b) to educate students and employees on crime to assist them in remaining safe on campus, and (c) to reduce crime overall (Janosik, 2004). The numbers seem to corroborate this, as the U.S. Justice Department found a 9% drop in violent crime on campus, a 30% drop in campus property crime, and a 5% increase in base pay rate for campus police between 1994 and 2004, the years following the implementation of this law (Carter, Sloan, & Fisher, 2011).

To date, the Clery Act has had six amendments, allowing the law to change with the times, and fix any loopholes found in the original legislation. The first amendment to the law came in 1991 with the Higher Education Technical Amendment. This amendment changed the date of the initial collection of data from September 1 to August 1and changed the reporting period from the academic year to the calendar year (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012). A second amendment in 1992 outlined the specific policies and procedures that colleges needed to have in place when dealing with alleged acts of sexual assault.

Due to several loopholes in the law, amendments were needed again in 1998. With these amendments, both crimes reported to local law enforcement and those reported to the campus security office were included in annual reports. Previously, the law mandated that only crimes reported to law enforcement be included in the annual report. This amendment also renamed the

law to the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy & Campus Crime Statistics Act (Harshman et al., 2001).

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, also known as the Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act, was signed into law on October 28, 2000. This amendment added public notice about sexual offenders and where this information could be obtained on campuses (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012).

In 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act was passed. This amendment required each college to list its emergency response and evacuation procedures in the annual report, as well as have them posted around campus, including every classroom. Hate crime statistics were also expanded, and protections for whistleblowers were established (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2012). In addition, specific policies were added detailing how on-campus police units must report to local law enforcement agencies, and theft and vandalism were added to the crimes that must be reported (Ward & Mann, 2011).

The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), part of the larger Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, was signed into law on March 7, 2013. This amendment was also known as the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination, or the VAWA Amendments to the Clery Act. This amendment requires all colleges to establish sexual assault prevention programs and provide more rights to victims. It also adds stalking offenses and domestic violence incidents to the items that must be included on annual crime reports (Campus Safety, 2014; "Lifting Burdens," 2015). Prior to this amendment, the Clery Act only required colleges to report crimes that occurred on campus, on non-campus buildings owned by the college, and public property

within or adjacent to the campus. This amendment also included locations where stalking first occurred that might not have fallen within those three areas (Campus Safety, 2014).

Reporting Requirements

Prior to the Clery Act's inception in 1990, less than 400 of the over 6,000 higher educational institutions in the United States were actively reporting their crime statistics (Carter et al., 2011). Although some colleges had created reports on crime, federal law had kept these reports private. The Clery Act required the remaining colleges to begin reporting their statistics and ensured that all made their reports accessible to the public.

The Clery Act had over 300 guidelines that colleges must follow. One guideline states that all crimes must be reported with four specific pieces of information, including the type of crime, the location of the crime, to whom the crime occurred, and the date (USDOE, 2011). In order to help college administrators understand the complex law and reporting requirements, in 2002 the USDOE received a grant of $750,000 from Congress to create a handbook for Clery Act compliance. The national advocacy group, Security on Campus, helped the government in the handbook's creation ("Grant Funds," 2005). The handbook cited multiple procedures that must be in place for each college including the following:

- Emergency notifications and evacuation procedures must be documented and communicated with the campus.
- Timely warnings must be issued any time there is a threat.
- A police log of all activity must be kept, with all incidents logged within two days. This log must be accessible to the public during regular business hours.

- Each college must request a report of all crime from their local law enforcement agency every year.
- Annual crime statistics must be submitted to the Department of Education by the fall date set each year.
- A standard missing student notification protocol for any student missing for over 24 hours must be in place.
- Annual security reports must be published by October 1 of each year ("Review Clery," 2011).

Although some of these procedures are easy to understand, others could involve different interpretations. One example where the handbook attempts to clarify the requirements is to quantify what "a timely warning" exactly means. The Department of Education handbook defines timely with "as soon as the pertinent information is available, even if you don't have all the facts" (Lee, 2015, p. xx).

In addition, Security on Campus secured a $334,000 grant from the U.S. Justice Department to hold nine seminars across the country in 2006 to help increase the understanding of the requirements ("Grant Funds," 2005). Some believe that because the Department of Education enforces the Clery reporting measures, it should fund a nationwide reporting database to decrease personnel time required to keep up with the changing and numerous requirements, as colleges have a hard time keeping up with the ever-changing requirements. However, this has not happened ("Lifting Burdens," 2015).

Though the Department of Education has not created a nationwide database for reporting, it has created an enforcement team. In 2010, the Department of Education created a team whose

sole purpose was to oversee the Clery Act and enforce its requirements. The team originally began with six members. As of 2015, the staff has grown to 14 in order to keep up with the growing violations due to the law's complexities (Lee, 2015).

Violations

In order to avoid violations, colleges have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in personnel, training, and reporting time to comply with the over 300 Clery Act regulations (Lee, 2015). These regulations are cumbersome and often vague, leaving a college to interpret the exact meaning on its own.

Delores A. Stafford, former police chief at George Washington University, runs a consulting firm specializing in Clery Act compliance and claims that most colleges get some part of the requirements wrong. One example of an area where a college has to decipher the law is related to its receipt of its town or city's annual local law enforcement report. If local law enforcement reports a crime that occurred near the college campus, the college must decide if it should be included in its annual crime report, based on the location and incident type, among other things. There are no clear-cut guidelines, causing the college to decide for itself. However, crimes occurring in foreign countries where students studying abroad have spent a few nights must be reported, causing the numbers to reflect crimes that have not occurred on the campus (Lee, 2015).

Ms. Stafford's approximation is that colleges must spend approximately $200,000 per year and devote one or two full time staff members in order to meet all the regulations (Carlson, 2014). One example is the University of Connecticut, which spends more than $400,000 per year

in staff, training, and other expenses to comply with the law. That amount is in addition to the one-time expenditure of $233,000 that the college spent in obtaining an emergency messaging system and training staff on its use (Lee, 2015).

In 2002, a survey revealed that less than 37% of colleges were reporting what the law required (Katel, 2011). There are no concrete numbers as to how many schools report accurately on an annual basis. Jim Moore, an official from the USDOE observed, however, that many of the annual reports were incorrect (Binkley, Riepenhoff, Wagner, & Gregory, 2014). He claimed that the reasons for this were twofold: some schools want to make their campuses look safer to current and prospective students, and some schools genuinely make mistakes while trying to interpret the act's many regulations. Either way, when a school has been found to have reported inaccurately, large fines have been sanctioned. The fine for every violation was originally set at $25,000, but has risen to $35,000. This may increase in the near future as Senator Claire McCaskill (MO) introduced a bill in 2014 that would increase each violation $150,000 (Harshman et al., 2001; Carlson, 2014).

Miami University of Ohio was the first college or university to be found in violation of the Clery Act twice. In 1997, and again in 2004, Miami was fined for not notifying sexual assault victims of their accused attackers' disciplinary hearing results. In response, in 2004, the University hired a new assistant director for discipline, purchased a new software system, and reviewed its code of student conduct in an effort to comply with the law ("On-Campus," 2005).

In what is often cited as the most well known Clery Act violation, Virginia Tech was originally fined $55,000 for the 2007 shootings ("Lifting Burdens," 2015). The fine was ultimately reduced to $32,500. Virginia Tech was charged with failing to issue a timely warning

to the campus community after the first shooting, causing a $27,500 fine. The additional $5,000 was for misstating the timely warning on the college's annual security report ("Virginia Tech," 2014).

Also in 2007, Eastern Michigan University was penalized with a fine of $357,000, the largest fine to date, for failing to notify the campus when a student was raped and murdered. After student Laura Dickinson was raped and murdered in her residence hall room in December of 2006, the college claimed that no foul play was involved (Carlson, 2014). The college held this stance even after a fellow classmate, Orange Amir Taylor III, was arrested, charged with the crime in February 2007, and consequently sentenced to life in prison (Katel, 2011).

The fines imposed upon Eastern Michigan University were for multiple violations including: failing to warn students in a timely manner, lack of a timely warning policy, failing to maintain an accurate crime log, and lack of administrative capability. The Clery Act fines were not the only cost to the college. The total out-of-pocket cost was $3.8 million which includes $2.5 million given to the Dickinson family, Clery Act fines, and other legal fees (Carlson, 2014; Hermann, 2008). In addition to the monetary penalties the college suffered, the president was fired, and the Campus Safety Director and Vice President for Student Affairs were both forced to resign (Katel, 2011).

Other colleges suffering monetary losses from safety violations include The University of Connecticut and Yale University. In 2013, a group of students from the University of Connecticut filed a Title IX complaint claiming that the school did not adequately respond to sexual assault cases. The university ended up settling the lawsuit for more than $1.2 million (Lee, 2015). Yale University was also fined $165,000 in 2013 for violations due to the failure of

reporting four forcible sex offenses that occurred during the 2001-2002 academic year (Mills-Senn, 2013).

Criticism

Although everyone can agree that safety on college campuses is important, the Clery Act has not been embraced by all and has some very opinionated critics. The most outspoken critic has been Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill from Missouri. McCaskill has been vocal about the need to remove the law or, at minimum, to simplify it. At a national conference in June 2015 hosted by *Campus Safety*, the Senator stated that the law "doesn't accomplish squat," and that it is "a waste of time pushing paper" (Goral, 2015; "Lifting Burdens," 2015). Supporters have focused on McCaskill's willingness to strike down a law that has not accomplished what it was intended to do, an unusual stance for a politician.

Senator McCaskill introduced Senate Bill S. 590 in February of 2015 called the Campus Safety and Accountability Act. The proposed bill would do away with colleges compiling statistics and would rely on results of anonymous surveys of college students about their experience of sexual violence on campus (Goral, 2015). As of this writing, September 2016, the bill is still awaiting action in the U. S. Senate. In response to Senator McCaskill's comments criticizing the law, the Clery Center for Security on Campus wrote an open letter to Senator McCaskill explaining that the law is more than just paperwork, and it is meant to create policies and generate action in efforts to keep students safe which is of utmost importance ("Lifting Burdens," 2015).

Senator McCaskill is not the only critic of the act. Many law enforcement officers have agreed with her and claim that though the law increases reporting, it does nothing to actually reduce crime, and the reports required by the law have been read by virtually no one (Janosik, 2004; Lee, 2015). Delores Stafford's consulting firm has repeatedly asked college administrators if they think more than 10 people outside of those who create the reports read them, and the resounding answer has been "no" (Carlson, 2014). In addition, Mr. Lemay, a higher educational finance instructor and lawyer at Sam Houston State University in Texas, stated that colleges' costs are so high because in the present day world each school needs a director of compliance, a director of risk management, a general counsel, and a director of internal audits, all because of the complexity of the Clery Act.

Another criticism of the Clery Act is that it "…undermines essential elements in our educational system by going too far toward consumer protection to the detriment of education" (Harshman et al., 2001, p. 18). Higher education institutions have long been tasked with educating the whole student. This is accomplished in cooperation with many units including the campus discipline system. This system has a delicate balance of punishment and education. However, the new reporting requirements can mandate that a college notify the parents of a student who violates an alcohol policy and apply harsh sanctions. Previously when students violated an alcohol policy, a college would put them through an alcohol educational component with the hopes of educating the student about making good choices. Now, instead of education, the schools must punish, making their systems punitive rather than educational, forcing colleges to put following the law above student learning. In addition, there is some concern that colleges

may be more hesitant to report a crime through the campus discipline system if they know it will be reported and perhaps alter the school's crime rates (Harshman et al., 2001).

The law also has implications for faculty as well. Sociology professor, Ann Leffler, from the University of Maine, has criticized the law, claiming it has inhibited her classroom discussions. To comply with the law, the University of Maine has required all faculty to report a student who mentions any experience of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence. Professor Leffler has expressed her concern that the power is being taken from students and given to faculty when it comes to deciding if an episode is reported. Leffler has also questioned why she has only been asked to report on gender discrimination, citing the likelihood of discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disability. As students will be apprehensive speaking freely in class for fear of having their experiences possibly reported, Leffler has expressed the belief that this policy will impede student learning (Leffler, 2015).

Throughout the years, multiple concerns with the law have been noted and addressed through the multiple amendments that have been passed. One example is that although the original law was created with the best of intentions, it only mandated that schools report violent crimes, not all crimes. One study showed that the most common crimes (vandalism, threats, theft, and harassment) did not need to be reported until the 2008 amendments (Sloan et al., 1997). Therefore, even if prospective students and parents viewed a report, they would not have been able to obtain an accurate portrayal of all crimes at that college or university prior to the amendments.

There is also confusion as to how to quantify if this law is actually achieving what it was intended to do. Critics have wondered how the word, safe, is defined. If there were no crime statistics before the law went into effect, there is some question as to how it can be reported that the crime rates declined. They have also questioned if less reporting of crimes actually means they are not occurring, or if they are just being underreported, as is often the case with rape and sexual assault. These are all questions that have been asked, yet remain unanswered in relation to the Clery Act (Carter, Sloan, & Fisher, 2011).

The Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act and The Clery Act are not the only legislation that has been aimed at increasing safety on college and university campuses. The Title IX Act has undergone modifications reflecting society's changing values and will be discussed in the following section.

Title IX

In addition to the Clery Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed how higher educational institutions responded to crimes such as sexual assault and sexual harassment. Title IX was passed on June 23, 1972 and stated that colleges that were federally funded could not exclude any person from participation or deny benefits due to their sex (USDOE, 2015). Included in Title IX are schools in the K-12 system as well as institutions of higher education (Cheslock & Eckes, 2008). Colleges excluded from this law are historically single-sex colleges, military academies, and private colleges (Rose, 2015).

Although Title IX was created to assist female students in obtaining admission to the nation's colleges and universities during a time when higher educational institutions were male

dominated, it has become best known for its impact on gender equality in intercollegiate athletics (Cheslock & Eckes, 2008; Rose, 2012). However, even though athletics has stolen the spotlight with Title IX legislation, part of the law concerns the crimes of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Title IX specifically protects people from discrimination based on their gender at educational institutions that receive federal funding (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

According to the American Civil Liberties Union's [ACLU] (2016) website, victims of sexual assault have brought successful lawsuits against colleges and universities in recent years. One example is in 2007 when the University of Georgia (UGA) lost a lawsuit when the courts found that UGA knowingly admitted a student who had harassed students at other schools, and he subsequently sexually assaulted a UGA student. Also, in 2007, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was cited when it was found that an athletic coach harassed two female athletes.

In order to comply with Title IX regulations, colleges and universities can ensure that they have policies in place to prevent sexual assault on their campus, and protocols in place for when a sexual assault does occur (ACLU, 2016). Included in these policies should be education for current students and input from students and others in the collegiate community. Crisis services must also be provided for all students in order to avoid non-compliance with Title IX.

Overall, Title IX has accomplished what it originally intended, to stop discrimination of female students when applying for admission to institutions of higher education. By 1981, nine years after the implementation of the original legislation, more women than men were graduating annually with bachelor's degrees (Rose, 2015).

Together legislative acts such as FERPA, Title IX, and the Clery Act have changed the way college's function with regard to safety and discrimination. In the next section, collegiate responses to these laws (i.e., emergency response plans, emergency notification systems, and threat assessment teams) are discussed.

College Policies and Protocols

Campus Judicial Affairs

Most colleges and universities have their own offices of judicial affairs to handle student misconduct. Policy violations brought before the judicial teams assess if the student is responsible instead of guilty, with the focus being on education, not punishment (Grasgreen, 2014). There has been contention as to which cases should be dealt with at the college level and which cases should be sent to the criminal courts. At the time of the present study, sexual assault cases were receiving a lot of press with many articles being written about rapists who go through the college judicial system emerge with just a slap on the wrist. At the college level, the burden of proof is the preponderance of evidence, not beyond a reasonable doubt, as in the criminal courts. What this means, is that a case without sufficient evidence to be tried successfully in the criminal courts may be adjudicated at the college level where less evidence is needed to find the defendant guilty. Some argue that this does not give accused students the fair due process to which they are entitled.

Although campus judicial systems have been in existence for many years, the recent attention devoted to crime and punishment on college campuses has provided the impetus for change. The idea of colleges acting "in loco parentis" and dealing with problems internally is a

thing of the past, as every situation has the possibility of becoming a major news story in the increasingly connected world of the 21st century.

Criticism and Change

Virginia Tech came under immense scrutiny after its mass-shooting incident in 2007. The Virginia Tech Review Panel found that the college did not alert the campus community in a timely manner, nor did they have proper safety procedures in place (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). This incident has been seen as the tipping point that forced other colleges and universities across the country to respond. Due to this 2007 incident, as well as the ever-changing requirements of the Clery Act, most colleges adopted new policies which often included greater police presence on campus, threat assessment teams, and emergency response plans (Marklein, 2011; Randazzo & Cameron, 2012; Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008; Violino, 2010).

A challenge that most college security or police departments face is securing their campuses due to the inherent open and welcoming nature of their campuses (Hughes et al., 2008; Keller et al., 2011; Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008). Though some schools throughout the country are gated and allow only those who are documented members of the community to enter, this is not a common practice for colleges and universities. The majority of schools, both two- and four-year, are open daily to visitors including prospective students and families, and the typical community college is often more open than the average college or university. Selective colleges and universities can accept or deny a student who applies to become part of their student communities. Community colleges, however, with very few exceptions, remain open to anyone who completes an application (AACC, 2016). Serving as open admissions institutions,

community colleges may have more difficulty in keeping would-be criminals out of their community. Even with this differentiation, both open-enrollment community colleges and selective universities experience crimes on their campuses daily. In an effort to be proactive, many colleges have created threat assessment teams in order to monitor activity on campus and remain alert to any member of the campus community who may pose a threat.

Threat Assessment Teams

Between 2004 and 2014, at least 14 states created task forces charged with preventing crime and violence on their colleges' and universities' campuses (Hampton, 2012; Randazzo & Cameron, 2012; Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008). These states include California, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin (Pollard et al., 2012; Randazzo & Cameron, 2012). Some of the tasks of these groups include establishing threat assessment teams on individual campuses, creating working relationships with local law enforcement agencies, and increasing communication between all constituencies (Hampton, 2012).

The idea of threat assessment teams originated in the late 1990's when the United States Secret Service conducted a study entitled the Exceptional Case Study Project (Reid Meloy, 1998). The purpose of this project was to try and understand those who have killed or attempted to kill public figures such as members of Congress, state political figures, and others. Included in the study were people who killed or attempted to take a life of a public figure since 1949. Data were collected through archives, in the cases where the subject in question was not living, and interviews, with those subjects who were still alive. Although prior studies focused only on the

characteristics and clinical status of these individuals, this study focused on their thoughts and behaviors (Reid Meloy, 1998).

After studying 83 subjects, the results were that there was no one profile of a would-be assassin. However, there were certain behaviors and activities shown by the individuals that constitute what were called "common denominators" (Reid Meloy, 1998, p. xx). These common denominators included being uncomfortable with close relationships with others, having a history of angry and impulsive outbursts, and having thoughts or attempts of suicide (Reid Meloy, 1998). This study paved the way for threat assessment teams for organizations other than the government such as colleges and universities.

Even though acts of violence on college campuses are not new phenomena, it was not until after the Virginia Tech campus shootings that campus threat-assessment teams became common within institutions of higher education in the U.S. (Keller et al., 2011; Lipka, 2009; Peterkin, 2012; Pollard et al., 2012; Randazzo & Cameron, 2012; Violino, 2010). Threat assessment teams on campus seek to identify potentially dangerous people before they have a chance to commit an act of violence. Some schools were proactive and already had similar teams in existence prior to the late 2000s. Cornell's Alert Team is one such example and has been used as a model for other schools to follow; another is Christopher Newport University, which has had a team in place since 2003 (Fischman, 2007).

Since the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings, over 1,600 teams have been created in schools and workplaces; and as of 2012, more than 80% of colleges and universities reported having a threat assessment team (Cousineau, 2012; Lipka, 2009; Marklein, 2011; Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008). These teams have become so commonplace that a national association, The National

Behavioral Intervention Team Association, (NaBITA) was created to help oversee these groups (Lipka, 2009). NaBITA's main goal has been to provide support to colleges and universities as well as workplaces throughout the United States (Lipka, 2009).

The majority of these threat assessment teams meet weekly or bi-weekly to discuss problem students who have been identified through faculty, staff and/or other students (Peterkin, 2012). There are four main areas on which these teams focus, identifying individuals who may pose a threat, gathering information on those persons, deciding if those in question actually pose a threat to the community, and developing a plan to prevent those persons from acting out (Randazzo & Cameron, 2012). These teams are different from prior violence prevention methods in that they do not profile people by using personal characteristics to make generalizations about a person, nor do they rely on written or verbal threats (Keller et al., 2011). Instead, in the hope of identifying students who may become a threat, they try to recognize actions and behaviors exhibited by particular students before they act out.

Ideally, threat assessment teams are meant to prevent a major event such as a campus shooting, but they often have areas where they fall short. For example, it is important to have members from every pertinent office on campus when assessing student safety. The Virginia Tech's threat assessment team, the care team, did not have a police officer on the team prior to 2007. Knowing that the police officers had a plethora of information on the shooter prior to the shooting, some claim the tragedy may have been prevented had an officer been part of the team (Hoover, 2008b). Other shortcomings of these teams can include inadequate member training, misunderstandings of privacy laws (e.g., FERPA), and leaving students out of the conversation,

as traditionally these teams are made up of only faculty and staff (Peterkin, 2012; Hoover, 2008a).

As previously discussed, FERPA was designed to protect the privacy of educational records. Being knowledgeable about FERPA is essential for committee members, so they can be helpful to their campus community on threat assessment teams. Many people misinterpret this law, believing that it prohibits a college from sharing any information about students. However, the law has stipulations that allow for the sharing of pertinent information when the health and safety of a student or the public is at risk (Hoover, 2008b).

Another issue is that members of threat assessment teams have other priorities on campus that compete for their attention. For example, it has been shown that faculty members typically serve on committees as part of their job descriptions, but they often put their teaching and research duties first, leaving committee work a distant second priority (Keller et al., 2011). In addition, researchers have shown that it is almost impossible to prevent these types of incidents from occurring; therefore, the extra time and energy a threat assessment team takes may not be worth the time spent (Fox, 2008).

Although the idea of threat assessment teams may be controversial as a good use of time and resources, most agree that having an updated emergency notification procedure is necessary. Instead of being proactive, these emergency notification systems help alert the community to crimes as they are occurring, in an effort to minimize the risk to the community.

Emergency Notification Systems

Creating an emergency notification system for all members of the college community can help alert those on campus to an incident that is occurring in real time. These systems can alert the community through emails, phone calls, text messages and even a campus siren or loudspeaker. When the University of Illinois shooting occurred in 2008, only 10% of the student population received an alert via text message, because only 10% of the students had gone through the process of opting-in to the service (Hampton, 2012). Due to this, as well as other incidents, the idea of opting-in has lost momentum, and the idea of making the campus community opt-out has become more popular. The idea is that by having a student, faculty and staff opt-out of an emergency notification system, the notifications will reach many more people. Opting-out involves putting all student, faculty and staff cell phone numbers in an emergency system automatically, causing all individuals to make the added effort to opt-out if they do not wish to be part of the alert system (Hampton, 2012).

Rasmussen and Johnson (2008) found that before the Virginia Tech incident only 5% of colleges had incorporated cell phone numbers into their emergency notification procedures. Within one year after the incident, 75% of colleges and universities either had a cell phone notification procedure in place or were in the process of implementing one.

Lockdowns

Another common procedure being researched due to past events is the idea of a lockdown, whether it is for one building, or an entire campus (Pigee, 2012). This notion is most likely a fruitless effort, as most campus shootings do not last more than a few minutes (Fox,

2008). By the time a lockdown can be implemented, the threat would almost always be over, thus making the lockdown unnecessary. After the Virginia Tech incident, upwards of 66% of schools had discussions about creating a system whereby they could lock down the campus by building, but only 33% had actually purchased such a system (Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008). In addition to lockdowns, other strategies for increased security measures have been on the rise within institutions of higher education. These include utilizing technology to install high-tech cameras, locking doors, and distributing key cards to authorized people (Pigee, 2012; Cousineau, 2012).

Emergency Response Plans

Threat assessment teams, lockdowns, and emergency notification systems are all smaller parts of what many campuses aim to create: a holistic emergency response plan. These plans are created by each college and cater to the unique characteristics of each campus community. This type of plan falls under the umbrella of "crisis management," a term that emerged in the 1980s.

The event often credited as the birth of crisis management was the 1982 Tylenol incident in Chicago, Illinois, where multiple Tylenol capsules were found to contain cyanide, causing widespread illness and grave public concern, as well as six deaths (Babwin, 2007; Mitroff, Diamond, & Alpaslan, 2006). The makers of Tylenol pulled all boxes from shelves across the country in the first documented crisis response. This event created a new standard for safety, mandating tamper-proof seals on health care items from that point forward (Babwin, 2007). Although the country may have been tuned in to the need for crisis management, 20th century college administrators believed they were safe from the troubles of modern society. Twenty-first

century colleges and universities across the country have recognized the importance of having a crisis management team and having an emergency plan in place. Rasmussen and Johnson (2008) conducted a study of college safety measures by surveying 331 college administrators and found that 90% of those surveyed have implemented emergency response protocols at their colleges since the Virginia Tech shootings.

The importance of crisis management is not necessarily so the campus community will have exact measures in place for each situation that could occur, but it allows those on the emergency response team to have pre-determined steps, that can be altered for specific situations, to take in a disaster. It is not possible to outline every scenario that could happen, nor is it possible to anticipate exactly how each situation could unfold. Rather, the importance of these plans is for the team to have developed crisis management skills and be able to alter them to fit the situation instead of attempting to alleviate campus stress without ever having practiced possible scenarios (Mitroff et al, 2006).

Creating an emergency plan involves five steps. The first step is obtaining top management support, including that of the president and other top administrators. The next two steps are establishing a planning committee and completing a risk assessment. Establishing priorities, data collection, and writing the plan are the final steps. After the plan is created, it is necessary to test the plan to ensure it can be carried out in a real emergency situation. Once the plan has been tested and corrected for any possible problems, it is necessary to revisit and reevaluate the plan annually (Rike, 2003).

In the fall of 2004, Mitroff et al. (2006) conducted a research study that explored 350 major research universities from around the country. The schools were surveyed to gauge their

level of emergency preparedness. The response rate was 33%, with 117 universities responding to the survey. It was found that the overwhelming majority of respondents had emergency plans in place, but only for events they had already experienced. For example, a school that had a wildfire threatening its campus had a well-documented plan for wildfires but not for other emergencies. It was also found that the schools were generally over-prepared for environmental disasters but underprepared for terrorism and crime. Very few colleges had broad based campus emergency plans in place to help with a variety of scenarios, such as the three main areas stated by Rike (2003): natural disasters, mechanical disasters, and human threats.

Overreactions to Incidents

Some researchers have posited that discussing safety on college campuses and focusing on preventing crime may actually do more harm than good. As mentioned previously, the statistical likelihood of a shooting occurring on a campus is very small, yet it is one of the most common issues discussed by campus safety teams (Fox, 2008; Sulkowski & Lazarus, 2011). When compared with the violence in 14th century Oxford University, today's American universities are actually much safer. Even so, many schools try to appease all segments of their community by involving students and parents as well as faculty and staff in the conversations about safety on campus.

Before conducting a new study of safety, it is imperative to review the prior research in the area to determine what has already been asked and answered. The next section of this review highlights the results of some of the most important studies related to safety on campuses and specifically safety for higher education staff.

Prior Research

Research in the postsecondary arena on campus safety, especially concerning staff, was found to be limited, most likely due to the fact that for many years, campuses were seen to be safe sanctuaries for students, faculty, and staff (Schafer, Heiple, Giblin, & Burruss, 2010; Sloan et al., 2000; Sulkowski, & Lazarus, 2011). Since the Virginia Tech shootings, myriad studies have been completed, focusing on the safety of colleges and universities, but researchers have not delved into how female staff members make sense of crime on campus, utilizing the many resources available (Harvey, 2011; Patton, 2010). Following is a summary of the prior research reviewed focused on reporting accuracy, colleges, parents, students, and administrators.

Reporting Accuracy

In a research study using data from 2003 through 2007, Nobles, Fox, Khey, and Lizotte (2012) found that annual crime reports mandated by the Clery Act did not paint an accurate picture of crime patterns and victimization. The authors used spatial analysis to investigate the Act's reporting. They found that by excluding crimes that happen close to but not technically on campus, the overall safety levels of the college were misleading. Although the college in question only had 1,718 crimes over the four-year period, when the surrounding community was taken into account, the crimes jumped to 37,275 (Nobles et al., 2012).

The Clery Act does not provide information on spillover from crimes in the immediate area of colleges and does not take into account that students, faculty and staff may enter into the nearby community for lunch or shopping. This can be problematic as excluding those off-campus

but close-by crimes may paint a picture of a low-crime area, causing the campus community to find a false sense of safety when entering the adjacent community (Nobles et al., 2012).

In 2000, Callaway, Gehring, and Douthett found that only 22% of two-year schools reported their crime data. Although this may seem alarming, they believed that an increase in the percentage of colleges reporting might not actually reduce crime at all. Janosik and Plummer (2005) suggested that in order to help protect students, greater time and resources should be placed towards policies and procedures on the campus to increase security, instead of reporting measures.

Colleges

Insite Security, a private consulting firm, found Dartmouth College had the highest sexual assault rate among all eight Ivy League colleges. The firm reported a rate of 7.69 sexual assaults for every 1,000 students in 2008. In responding to what may have been a disturbing statistic, Acting Dean Sylvia Spears claimed that Dartmouth did not have any more instances of sexual assault than the other schools, but that they have created safe culture where more students are comfortable reporting these types of crimes (Katel, 2011).

In 2012 almost 1,000 colleges were surveyed and they identified five main safety concepts that most colleges and universities are concerned with (Dalton-Noblitt, 2012). The first concept was the need for control over who enters their facilities with an emphasis on keeping unauthorized visitors out. The second concept was to confirm that current students could easily follow the safety measures that are put in place. Third was the importance of ensuring there is a way for current students, faculty, and staff members to be notified in a timely manner in the

event of an emergency. Next, was the importance of the university being able to safely and quickly secure, or lock down, the campus if a crisis were to arise. The last concept that was deemed important was the ability to find the members of the university community who were occupying a specific building at any given time.

Although individual colleges, universities, community colleges and state colleges may have their own unique set of concerns, these five were found to be the overarching concerns relevant to campus safety. These five concepts can be problematic, as less than 20% of administrators believe that they can accurately block entry to those individuals who should not be on campus and allow entry to legitimate individuals (Dalton-Noblitt, 2012).

Parents

There are myriad research studies that have been conducted to investigate the extent of how the Clery act is used by those other than college and university campus safety officials. To understand if the Clery Act is reaching its goal, it is important to obtain feedback from faculty, staff, students, and parents. In a study of over 400 parents of first-year college students at a large research university, knowledge about and use of Clery Act statistics were low (Janosik, 2004). Only about 20% of parents knew what the Clery Act was, though 40% remembered receiving something about crime statistics in their orientation packet. Over 75% of parents discussed safety on campus with their children prior to the child leaving for college, but only between 3% and 11% of parents said they used this information to help make the decision as to where their child would attend college. Parents who were victims of crime themselves were more likely to base their decisions on this information. When parents were asked questions related to their child's

safety on a large research university's campus, 99.8% believed their child would be safe while on campus, and 98.4% believed their child would be safe in areas directly adjacent to campus.

Students

The vast majority of research conducted regarding safety perceptions and safety statistics on campus concerns students. This section highlights some of the studies regarding safety and the Clery Act as they relate to students.

Although the Clery Act was created to provide important information to current and prospective students regarding crimes on campus, Janosik and Plummer (2005) found that most students did not know of, or had not read, the crime statistics reported by the college they attended.

In "Campus Safety: What Every College Student Needs to Know," Hunter (2005) discussed students' low ranking of safety on their priority lists, indicating that most traditional-aged students were more concerned with their classes, friends, and enjoying their college years rather than the safety statistics of their school. Students were generally not concerned about safety. Hunter also stated the importance of having the phone number for campus safety programmed into students' cell phones and alerting students to the capability of alcohol and drugs to impair their ability to judge a situation, thus increasing their likelihood of becoming a victim of a crime.

In a 2001 survey of 3,866 students, 10 years after the Clery Act was signed into law, only 27% of students knew what the Clery Act was, and only 22% had read it. Even less, 8%, of

prospective students used this information to make an informed decision about where to attend college (Janosik & Gehring, 2003).

Turner (1998) studied perception of campus crime as it relates to student involvement. Though age was only one of many student characteristics surveyed in this study, it was found that age was not a significant predictor of students' perception of crime. As with many other studies, this study focused on the four-year university and only students in their freshman and sophomore years, the majority of them being of traditional student age, were included in the study.

People generally perceive that urban areas are more crime-ridden than rural areas. This perception has merit based on studies such as that of Duhart (2000) who found that urban areas have crime rates 37% higher than suburb an areas and 74% higher than rural areas. Studies such as this can negatively affect urban institutions of higher education, as students may perceive that crime will "spill over" on the campus from the surrounding community (Fox & Hellman, 1985). Tomsich et al. (2011) found that students at an urban university had a low-to-moderate fear of becoming victims of a crime on campus, with their fear at night slightly higher than their fear during the daytime. They also found that students did not alter their behavior due to fear of victimization.

In addition to Clery reports and the location of the college affecting perceptions of safety, student demographics, especially gender, also factor in when assessing safety. Fisher, Sloan, Cullen and Lu (1997) found male students were more likely than female and older students to be victims of crimes against their property. In another study, Fisher and Sloan (2003) found that male students were more likely to be victims of any type of crime except for sexual assaults. In

contrast, Tomsich et al. (2011 found no difference in victimization between male and females. Fox et al. (2009) found the opposite--that female students tended to be at a higher risk of victimization than males. As far as fear of crime, males were found to be less fearful of becoming victims of a crime on campus (Fox et al., 2009; McCormick, Nadeau, Provost, Gaeddert, & Sabo, 1996; Tomsich et al., 2011).

In 2004, a random sample of 1,010 female students from a state university in the Southeastern United States completed a telephone survey. The survey questions focused on experiences of stalking, physical assault, and sexual assault. The results were that women perceived the campus to be safer than the data indicated. Although 85% of respondents found the campus to be safe, over 35% reported being victim to harassment, physical assault, and/or sexual assault (Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007).

Gardella et al. (2015) researched victimization at a mid-sized private college in the Eastern United States in 2011. A total of 481 students (354 females and 127 males) participated. They were given a voluntary and anonymous survey to assess sexual, physical, and harassment victimization. The results were that females were four times more likely than men to report sexual victimization, and seniors reported more victimization than the other three years combined. Students with lower grade point averages (GPA) reported sexual victimization at a rate four times higher than those with higher GPAs. They also found a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and sexual victimization.

When it came to physical victimization, males were found more likely to be victims than women. Involvement in student organizations decreased the likelihood of being a victim of harassment, and students who drank more had a higher chance of victimization. In comparing the

survey results with the Clery report for the school in question, students reported 66 sexual victimizations, compared to just 10 forcible sex offenses on the report and 50 physical assaults, compared to four aggravated assaults on the report. At the time of this study in 2011, stalking and harassment were not required to be reported by law; however, respondents to the survey reported 150 incidents of stalking and 309 incidents of harassment. This changed as the 2015 VAWA amendment to the Clery Act added these two reporting categories. Gardella et al. found that self-reported data was substantially higher than that reported in the Clery report (2015).

There have been several studies published that ask about prior victimization as well. Fisher, Sloan and Wilkins (1995) found that prior victimization within the past year led to higher levels of perceived fear, but victimization over one year ago had a smaller effect on perception of safety. However, prior victimization in total did factor in to current safety perceptions of all students. This perceived fear was only elevated by personal crime, not property crime.

Faculty and Staff

Although the researcher did not find research on faculty and staff to be lacking, the majority of studies that discussed safety on campus were quantitative in nature. When surveyed on Clery Act knowledge, many faculty and staff were found to not know much about it. Gehring and Galloway (1997) found that college administrators were unsure of the Act's reporting requirements, causing the wrong information to be placed into students' admissions packets.

In 2006, a questionnaire that was sent to 832 senior residence life officers at colleges across the country through the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) resulted in 335 respondents, a 40% response rate. A total of 98% of

respondents reported having knowledge of the Clery Act; however, 75% said they did not know if their college's report factored in their students' decision to attend that school. When asked if the Clery Act helped change students' behavior to keep them safer, 49% indicated it did not; 16% said yes; and 30% did not know (Gregory & Janosik, 2006). A total of 97% claimed their campus was safe, but only 5% claimed that the Clery Act had helped reduce crime on their campus. Overall, the study showed that although almost all senior residence life officials knew of the Clery Act, very few of them were educated about its impact on their campus community (Gregory & Janosik, 2006).

In addition to research regarding Clery Act knowledge, there have been several studies conducted to assess the safety of faculty and staff within institutions of higher education. Wooldridge, Cullen, and Latessa (1995) found that faculty members were at an increased risk of crime if they were on campus more during non-business hours and spent more time with students. Woolridge et al. (1995) suggested future research on the demographics that could influence these activities such as gender, race, and age.

In 2011, Gover et al. studied perception of safety differences with regard to gender of faculty and staff. They found that nearly one-third of the surveyed faculty and staff had experienced some form of criminal victimization since they began working at the university. The majority of these victimizations were property crime, with less than 3% being personal crime. They found that, overall, females and males were equally as likely to be victims of crime, but that females perceived crime to be greater, and were more likely to show constrained behaviors.

In another study, Baker and Boland (2011) surveyed students, faculty and staff at a small women's liberal arts college in Pennsylvania about their perceptions of safety on campus. They

found that the majority of students perceived their campus to be safe, with little difference in the perception of safety between faculty and staff. On the other hand, Hummer and Preston (2006) found that students were significantly more concerned about their personal safety while on campus than faculty and staff.

In 2006, Hummer and Preston conducted a study that looked at the perceived level of safety of students, staff and faculty. They received data from 410 returned questionnaires and found that nearly 65% of respondents were not concerned about their personal safety while on campus. Only 2% of respondents cited safety as a frequent concern, with parking lots being the main area of concern for safety.

Chekwa, Thomas and Jones (2013) surveyed 20 college students and found that 45% felt unsafe on campus, while only 20% felt safe on campus. The most important items for campus safety were found to be campus safety officers, cameras, call boxes, and adequate lighting. They also found a slight correlation between students who had taken self-defense courses, and avoidance of certain areas of campus.

Parking garages and parking lots are often a source of perceived risk of victimization for students, causing Tseng, Hadipriono, and Duane (2004) to interview students and staff specifically about their fears and perceptions while using campus parking garages. They found that 80% of those using the garage felt safe, although it was mainly faculty and staff using the garage. Although the overwhelming majority felt safe in the garage, just over one-third mentioned that it would be easy for someone to hide in the garage and victimize people as they were walking to or from their vehicles.

Fletcher and Bryden (2009) researched female faculty and staff by examining their concerns about safety, the precautions they take to remain safe, and personal victimization. The study was conducted at a University in Canada, and 229 informants answered a questionnaire consisting of 160 items. Most of the questions were closed, with a few open-ended questions. The results showed that female faculty were more concerned about safety then female staff. They were also more dissatisfied with safety features of the campus, the primary concern being lighting on campus, or lack thereof. Over 80% of faculty locked their car doors when alone, planned their routes with safety in mind, and held their car keys in a defensive manner. Between 50% and 60% of faculty avoided specific areas at night, walked with someone else, or changed their daily activities.

Female staff members had lower percentages than female faculty numbers with only 62% holding their car keys in a defensive manner and 72% planning their routes with safety in mind. Only 30% avoided specific areas at night, and only 28% changed their everyday routines. Both faculty and staff reported events such as stalking and theft from public places on campus, with more faculty reporting instances than staff. Fletcher and Bryden (2009) reported some of the open-ended responses from both faculty and staff as follows:

"…feel most insecure/unsafe after dark when unlocking my bicycle. Would like to be able to bring it into my office esp. if I'm going to be at work after dark" –Faculty

"Students can become quite aggressive during conversations about marks or assignments. I have had to seek a witness for my safety when a male student has made me feel threatened." – Faculty

"Often in this job, we have to relay 'bad news' to hear (meaning not the answers they want to hear). This often can cause students/parents to become irate and sometimes verbally abusive" – Staff

"The security staff seems to be quite good. If an incident occurs a notice is always posted on the doors of my building. This is quite an improvement over (other university named)" – Staff (p. xx).

The overall results of the study were that the overall awareness of the college's campus safety services was high, but the utilization was low. Though walking at night was a large concern for both faculty and staff, very few reported using the foot patrol service, where officers accompany faculty and staff as they navigate campus at night (Fletcher & Bryden, 2009).

The National Crime Victimization Survey also revealed more differences than similarities when it came to gender and workplace violence (Fisher & Gunnison, 2001). Specifically, they found that women working at a university were more at risk for violent crime such as robbery than men.

Although the literature that has been reviewed helped to shape this research, the main principle guiding this study was the theoretical framework, social construction theory. Its historical foundations, theoretical underpinnings, and relation to the study are discussed in the following section.

Social Construction Theory

Social construction theory (SCT), an idea coined in the mid-20th century, has roots in science, biology, psychology and philosophy. It is based on the belief that individuals create their

own knowledge through their personal experiences (Fosnot, 2005). Social construction theory differs greatly from the idea of essentialism, often associated with psychology, which states that the purpose of psychology is to discover the essential characteristics of all people, and that there is one universal truth. Social construction theory places an emphasis on how reality is shaped through social interaction by each person. Facts do not exist, waiting to be discovered by scientists; rather they are constructed through activities and formed into ideologies by those who experience them.

According to SCT, there are no essential characteristics of people, as no two people are exactly alike due to their uniquely different life experiences (Lock & Strong, 2010). These beliefs lend themselves to the notion that facts as they are known are not the overarching truth but are facts that are constructed and influenced by time, place, and environment. This can be empowering towards some and discriminatory towards others. Historically, western culture has imposed its belief systems and values on others, and Western culture is seen as the one true reality. The foundational knowledge base of the social sciences is flawed, because it was created by Western culture and has not taken into account the differences of each individual person, especially women and minorities. This belief is a contributing factor and part of the rationale for my research being focused on females, as historically female voices have been either unheard or overshadowed by male voices.

It is important to note that social construction theory is not the same concept as social constructionism. Social constructionism is the thought that each person shapes his or her reality mostly through cognitive processes and not social interaction. In contrast, social construction theory posits that social interaction is the main impetus that shapes a person's reality. Through

this research study I will apply Lock and Strong's theory, which concentrates on social interaction, time and place, and meaning and understanding. I will not take into account the informants' cognitive processes.

Historical Foundations

Many theorists who have laid the groundwork for social construction theory influenced the work of Lock and Strong. These include Piaget, Vico, and Vygotsky.

Piaget (1936) believed that human beings were always growing and cognitively developing throughout their lives. He developed six stages through which humans progress as they form their rational world. Adults continue to use these skills, such as understanding cause and effect and problem solving, to interact with the world around them (Piaget, 1954).

Battista wrote *The New Science* in 1725 and made claims that the human mind was "continually reconstructed into new forms over time" (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 13). This can be seen when a person compares advancements in technology and medicine that have occurred during the last few centuries. It can also help in understanding why someone born in the 1950s would have a different mindset from a person born in the 2000s. Vico coined the term *per causas*, meaning that persons have knowledge of themselves that is unlike any knowledge they can have of an object or of any other person. Per causas is the reason that one cannot understand what any other life is like, except one's own. Vico went so far as to say that the mind itself was created out of language and not the other way around (Lock & Strong, 2010).

Vygotsky believed that the development of humans as they age from infant to adult was not about learning to do new things. Rather, it was about learning how others perceive what one

does and how it affects them. Thus, children develop from social interactions, not biologically. The example used is a child who grows up alone, with no other humans around. This child would not have language, meaning, and skills that one would have if raised with social interaction (Lock & Strong, 2010).

The three aforementioned theorists all have a unifying theme; that human beings are continuously developing throughout their lives. They each believed that understanding was formed from interactions with others, and that meaning is subjective. These are the main themes from which social construction theory stems.

Lock and Strong

Lock and Strong (2010) cited social construction theory as having the following five main tenets: (a) including meaning and understanding are central to all human activity, (b) meaning has significance in social interaction, (c) meaning is specific to time and place, (d) people are self-defining, and lastly (e) adopting a critical perspective is essential to understanding perceptions of different people. I have chosen to adopt the first four tenets into my theoretical framework, as I will be the one adopting a critical perspective to help understand the perceptions of the informants. I will focus my research questions on three of the tenets: (a) meaning and understanding are central to all human activity, (b) meaning has significance in social interaction, and (c) meaning is specific to time and place; believing that the fourth tenet is comprised of the combination of the first three. A representation of my theoretical framework is shown in Figure 2.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY

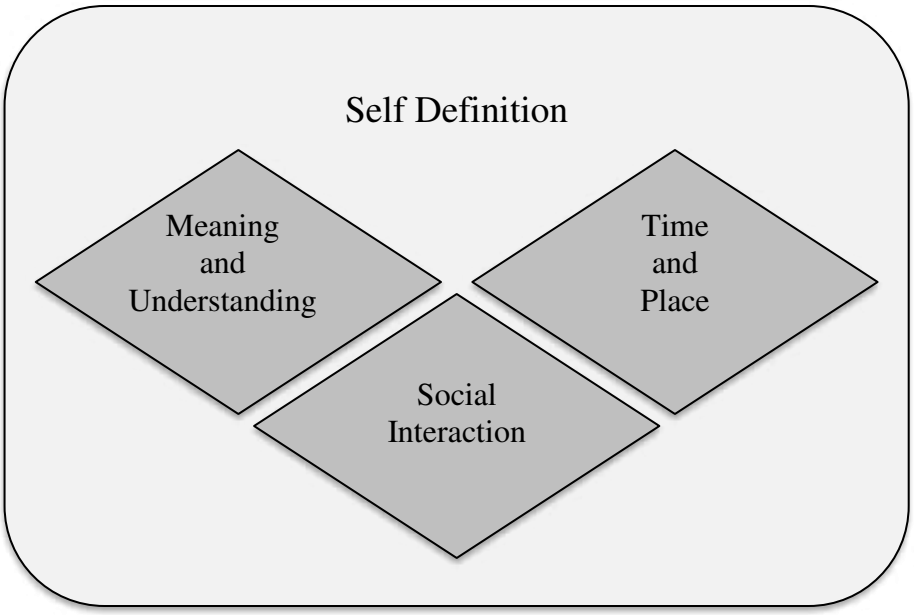

Figure 2. Repeated Lock and Strong Social Construction Theory

The first tenet states that meaning and understanding are central to all human understanding (Lock & Strong, 2010). Theorists are concerned with how symbols and words create meaning and how that meaning shapes our reality. This can be seen when learning a new language or reading instructions on how to accomplish a task. People may create different realities based on their understanding of different words, phrases or symbols, as seen when a word or phrase means something different to people in different parts of the world. Language itself is never the ultimate understanding, but it helps people relate to their perceived reality, as communication requires agreement of meanings of words, which may change across cultures.

In their 1978 study, Kessler and McKenna attempted to construct gender, challenging the notion that the two genders, male and female, were decided through biology. They argued that

the ways in which people were classified into either male or female was socially constructed through language, and that the new emerging population of transgendered people demonstrated how the socially constructed categories of male and female were being challenged, and changed.

The second tenet promotes that individuals and groups of individuals, through social and cultural interactions, create reality. Knowledge and action are linked together through information, not causation. One does not cause the other, but they both inform each other (Lock & Strong, 2010). Burr (2003) stated that individuals form their own sense of reality, and then push their perceptions onto others, thereby making their reality the true, correct reality. According to this premise, those with the most power and persuasion will have their versions of reality believed and alter the perceptions of others as previously shown in the dominance of the Western culture.

Guadagno, Sundie, Muscanell, Hardison, and Cialdini (2013) studied perceptions of football recruits by novice and experts using different technologies. They found that when subjects were given information via highly sophisticated technology, both novices and experts alike were more likely to remember the information in a positive way, compared to the same information with less sophisticated technology. According to their findings, how information is relayed to others can make a difference in having facts believed and understood.

The third tenet is rooted in historical concepts, and posits that meaning is specific to time and place (Lock & Strong, 2010). This tenet allows for different understanding of the same event at different times and in different places. One example is the idea of being fashionably dressed. This terminology means different things to different people, and it has changed dramatically over time from the flapper girls of the 1920s, to the poodle skirts of the 1950s, and the bell-bottom

pants of the 1970s, and so on. Due to this change aspect, one can see that the idea of fashion is socially constructed and has its roots in time and place. Another example given is the hearing of voices. In ancient Greece, the Delphic Oracle claimed to hear voices and was admired because of it. In contrast, those hearing voices in 2016 are labeled as mentally ill, showing how time and place can make all the difference for meaning and understanding.

The fourth tenet claims that individuals are integral in shaping who they are, as they socially construct themselves over time (Lock & Strong, 2010). Each individual's understanding is dependent on meaning and understanding, social interaction, and time and place, which together shape and create individuals' perceptions, becoming their reality. Because no two people have had exactly the same experiences for every moment of their lives, social construction can say that no two people share the same reality (Fosnot, 2005).

The construct of social science has undergone a transformation in recent years, as many in the field are rethinking and questioning knowledge that was previously thought to be the absolute truth (Lock & Strong, 2010). Although one can explain something with absolute certainty in the natural sciences, there is debate if the concept of understanding, within the human sciences, can be absolute.

The idea of Methodenstreit began in Germany in the mid 1800s and has maintained its relevance with the argument of essentialism in the social sciences. Methodenstreit translates into strife over methods and questions if understanding something is the same as explaining it (Lock & Strong, 2010). Unlike the natural sciences that can prove or disprove a concept definitively, social sciences cannot have one true meaning. This is based on the fact that human beings have conscious experience and that individual lives are based on individual experiences in a shared

world. This lends itself to the notion that a people's perceptions will change over time, and that their perceptions are caused by socio-cultural processes, instead of biological processes.

With no two people living the exact same experience, quantitative research based on questionnaires would not be able to get at the heart of how people construct their perceptions. When one quantifies behavior, the idea of a conscious experience is removed. Lock and Strong (2010) stated that this needs to stop, and that people do have their own meaningful experiences that shape their perceptions and pass these meanings down from generation to generation. They stated that because of this, qualitative research methods are becoming more widely used and accepted within the social sciences and have seen a dramatic increase beginning in the 1980s. Qualitative research based on interviews is needed to delve into the minds of those interviewed to better understand how they view the world. For this reason, I elected to use qualitative research methods for this study, specifically interviews, to allow me to better understand how the informants' viewed their world.

Perceptions are social constructed by their meaning and understanding through social interaction and time and place. Social construction theory is a multi-disciplined approach that strives to help understand how people come to understand the world around them. This methodology highlights meaning and understanding, time and place, and social interaction, and how each of these elements shapes a person's unique individual experience. Lock and Strong (2010) stated, "What makes things socially real is our ability to articulate and enact them in the language and social practices we share with others" (p. 347).

Based on this theory, individuals would have personal beliefs about campus safety that would likely be influenced and possibly change from interactions occurring on their own

campus, media coverage and social discussions of crimes on campus and within the community, and finally by their own personal experiences. According to this theory, a large part of someone's reality is based on the social and political happenings during their life, allowing for people born in different decades to have a vastly different view of the world based on their age and correlated to when life-altering events happened.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the history of crimes on campus, as well as recent statistics for each of the eight major crimes reported, arson, burglary, aggravated assault, robbery, non-forcible sex offenses, forcible sex offenses, negligent manslaughter, and murder. Title IX, FERPA, and the Clery Act were discussed along with the implications for safety on college campuses of each of the laws. Prior research on colleges, students, parents, faculty, and staff was reviewed, revealing a lack of qualitative research in the area of safety. Finally social construction theory, the theoretical framework that will guide this research study, was discussed.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study, I explored how female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety. A phenomenological approach was used to examine how staff members create understanding through their lived experiences. This chapter contains a discussion of the methodology I used for my research study including how I selected my informants. The research questions are stated, and my research design is discussed along with data collection and analysis methods. Confidentiality is addressed, along with ethical considerations, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) submissions, and finally the originality of this document.

Informants

Creswell (2014) states that for phenomenological research studies are usually comprised of three to ten informants. For this study six staff members that I contacted responded within the first few days willing to participate, therefore I interviewed six staff members for this study. The six informants were picked because they were the first six that responded to my request for participation email only. In order to have a true representation of how these staff members constructed their reality about safety I chose to use all six that initially volunteered, and did not recruit more informants, nor did I remove anyone from the study. The six each had very different stories, and very different ideas about their safety on campus, and after interviewing them all I felt they were a representative sample of staff, as they represented the spectrum of very afraid for their safety, to not afraid at all for their safety. In addition these six women were diversified by

age and race, with the ages ranging from 29 to 57. The informants identified as white, African-American, Hispanic American and Asian. It is for these reasons that I stopped at six informants for this study.

The informants were student services staff members who worked on a state college campus. All informants were employed full time in non-supervisory positions and had worked at their college for at least one year. I chose to interview only non-supervisory staff, as the nature of their positions tends to be drastically different than those in supervisory roles. While supervisors are often working an office away from the hustle and bustle of the students, non-supervisory staff members are often on the front lines and interact with multiple students daily. Supervisors might not interact with any students on a specific day, focusing more on big picture campus concerns, or sitting in meetings. In addition supervisors might feel more of a connection to the college, which may not allow them to speak freely about their concerns. For these reasons only non-supervisory staff were selected for this study.

In addition, the informants were recruited from academic advising and student services units on a state college campus. I used snowball sampling by contacting staff members I knew personally and encouraging them to forward the request for participation to others who fit the criteria and might be interested in participation in the research. I sent the recruitment email to staff members that I knew, as well as staff members that I felt met my criteria as identified through the state college's employee directory.

Research Questions

1. How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
2. How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
3. How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

Research Design

Phenomenology

The research design for this study was qualitative using a phenomenological approach, and social construction theory was used as the guiding theoretical framework. Qualitative research helps us, "...in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Phenomenology is one of the leading research models for qualitative research in the social sciences and stems from psychological and philosophical inquiry (Creswell, 2014). It focuses on the appearance of things and uses perception as the main way to gain knowledge, because what someone perceives cannot be doubted (Moustakas, 1994). This aligns with social construction theory, as both Creswell and Moustakas believe that a person's perception is their reality. Through this research, I explored how female employees came to perceive their personal safety while at work on a state college campus.

The science of phenomenology uses a subject's lived experiences through senses, perceptions, and awareness of experience as the truth (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Using this type of approach means considering all angles of a subject and coming to a unified understanding of a topic through the informant's own words and constructed from their experiences. It focuses on the whole experience and searches for meanings rather than measurements. Description of experiences is sought, not explanations. Rich description is used, accurately portraying the experiences of those being studied, to accentuate underlying meanings. In phenomenology, the reality of phenomena is dependent upon the subjects, in this case, female staff members.

A phenomenological research design typically involves conducting interviews to help the researcher describe the lived experiences of individuals surrounding a central topic (Creswell, 2014). Traditionally, several informants are used; creating a narrative that weaves through their stories. Questions used are open-ended, and the structure of the interview is loose and informal, allowing the researcher to ask follow up questions based on the subject's response (Moustakas, 1994). I also practiced epoché, a Greek word meaning refraining from judgment. I set aside all of my prejudgments on the topic of safety, so I could understand the informant's experiences with as little bias as possible.

In this study, perception of safety on state college campuses was the phenomenon studied. Through the use of social construction theory as the theoretical framework, I conducted semi-structured interviews and gained a deeper, richer understanding of how female student services staff experience and perceive safety on their campus.

Data Collection

An email was sent to my known professional colleagues who fit the criteria, asking for voluntary participation in this study. The criteria were female, full-time, non-supervisory, student services staff, who had worked at their colleges for at least one year. The initial email asked those who received it to forward it if they knew anyone who fit the criteria and might be interested in participating. The first people who responded and fit the criteria were selected. Those who expressed interest after the six were selected were thanked for their interest, and told that they might be contacted if someone dropped out during the study, which ultimately did not happen. The informants were sent a letter through email explaining the study (Appendix A), highlighting important details such as their time commitment and anonymity.

Each informant participated in an interview for approximately one-half hour. All interviews were held in a conference room on the informants' campus, or a location of the informant's choosing. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed shortly after the interview. To triangulate the data field notes were taken during the interview to document non-verbal communications. Member checking was conducted after each interview, and my transcripts and summaries were sent to my dissertation chair to provide a formal review, by checking the transcripts and summaries to ensure plausibility of my data analysis.

After their interviews, informants were emailed a letter (Appendix A) thanking them for their time and emphasizing the confidentiality of their participation. An audit trail was kept by outlining each step of the data collection as well as the data analysis, all field notes, and documents.

Interviews

The heart of phenomenology is to understand how a specific population experiences a certain phenomenon. In this study I conducted semi-structured interviews with the informants in an effort to understand how female student services staff members arrived at the construction of their perceptions of personal safety. After the informants were selected, a mutual time and date was agreed upon to conduct the interviews. All interviews were conducted in a private space, either a conference room on campus or at the informant's home.

The interviews lasted approximately one half hour, with an interview protocol of 29 questions (Appendix B). To begin the interview, I asked eight demographic questions, in order to build rapport with the interviewees. The following 20 questions posed to the informants aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework. The final question was a wrap-up question to ensure interviewees were able to discuss everything they believed was pertinent to the subject matter. Table 3 shows the relationship of the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the interview protocol.

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing follow-up or additional questions to be added if a different subject was brought up that was not listed on the protocol, with the focus always being safety on campus. Interviews were audio recorded with minimal notes taken of the informants' specific answers. Field notes were taken which focused on the informant's tone, body language, demeanor, and any other behaviors the informant exhibited. I also documented my thoughts and reactions throughout the interview as part of the field notes to help me recall my reactions when I analyzed the data. The interviews took place between July and August of

2016. The interview protocol was created using a review of the literature, the research questions, and the theoretical framework.

Table 3

Relationships of Research Questions, Theoretical Framework and Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Theoretical Framework	Interview Protocol
1. How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Time and Place	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 25a
2. How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Meaning and Understanding	9, 10, 11, 12, 26, 27, 28
3. How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Social Interaction	13, 13a, 13b, 14, 14a, 14b, 15, 15a, 15b, 16, 17, 17a, 18, 18a, 19, 19a, 19b

Member Checking

To increase validity, each informant was sent a document outlining the main themes created from their interview. This included their answers to interview questions as well as any pertinent field notes. The informant had a chance to review my understanding of their stories so as to ensure that I had accurately documented their intended message.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were conducted, I began the data analysis. For this type of study, Creswell (2014) outlined six steps for data analysis. The first step was transcribing the interviews. I typed word-for-word accounts of the interviews in addition to typing my field notes for each interview.

Second, I read all of the data to gain initial familiarity with the data. I read all interview notes and all field notes once to obtain a full picture of each interview. I then reviewed the information a second time, writing notes on any potential themes, meanings, and ideas that were revealed.

The third step was coding the data. In this step, I uploaded the transcripts to NVivo, and coded each line of the transcripts to create nodes. For the purposes of this study codes and nodes mean the same thing and will be used interchangeably. Creswell (2014) suggested separating the categories into three themes: (a) themes that one would expect to find given the subject, (b) themes that are surprising and not anticipated, and (c) themes that are unusual. However, I waited until the nodes were created to form the emerging themes.

Step four involved using the nodes to begin creating large-scale categories, or themes, that emerged from the data. I developed significant statements and grouped these statements into meaningful themes. Typically, five to seven themes are found in qualitative data and are used to guide the results of the study (Creswell, 2014). In this step I generated descriptions of the people and the climate of the interviews through field notes.

Step five requires the researcher to decide how to represent the themes from the informants. I created a narrative of the informants' voices, using rich description, citing themes and subthemes, and used direct quotes to obtain the essence of the informants' experiences.

The sixth and final step in Creswell's (2014) data analysis is to interpret the data to obtain findings. Textural descriptions from the interviews showed what the informants experienced, and structural descriptions showed how the phenomenon was experienced. It was through these two descriptions that I developed the essence of the phenomenon, cross-referencing experiences across all informants.

In the following chapters I outline the findings and how and they were viewed through the lens of social construction theory. I also outline the lessons I have learned from finding meaning in the data. Additionally, I make some recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Confidentiality

Due to the possibly sensitive nature of the discussions, all interviews were confidential and the informants were anonymous in the study. The informants were given pseudonyms, which were used in the transcripts as well as the final document. In order to maintain anonymity, a password-protected document was kept on my computer that indicated the relationship between the pseudonyms and the names of the informant. After the successful defense of the dissertation, I will erase the audio-recorded interviews, and will delete the document identifying the informants from my computer.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Because this research used human subjects, permission was granted from the Institutional Review Board at my university, as well as the state college where the research took place. To ensure the ethical considerations of human subjects, I completed a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course. Documentation related to permission to conduct the research is contained in Appendix C.

An informed consent (Appendix D) form was given to informants prior to the interviews, and the interviews did not begin until informants understood the nature of the study. The informed consent included my name, my institution, and the purpose of the study. The document also detailed the informants' involvement, which consisted of one 30-minute interview, as well as any risks to the informants, and how confidentiality was ensured.

Originality

This document was submitted to iThenticate to ensure the originality of the work. My dissertation chair presented the scores to the committee on the date of the defense.

Summary

A phenomenological study was conducted in order to understand how female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus. Three research questions were answered through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with six informants. Ethical considerations were considered by obtaining IRB approval, and confidentiality was ensured for all informants. The data were coded in NVivo software and analyzed to identify emergent themes.

CHAPTER 4

INFORMANTS' VOICES

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to describe the perceptions of safety among female, non-supervisory, student services staff at the state college level. Both on campus and off campus perceptions of safety were explored through the social, political, and cultural contexts of social construction theory. This chapter contains a review of how the research was conducted and highlights each informant's story.

Interviews

Six semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data for this research project. The interviews were composed of eight demographic questions and 21 subject matter questions, for a total of 29 questions. Most of the subject matter questions were open-ended, with questions added for clarification and follow up as needed. Toward the end of the interview, the informants were shown their school's most recent Clery report, which highlighted the crimes that were committed on campus in 2011, 2012 and 2013. They were then asked a few questions about their reactions after viewing the report.

The interviews were conducted at locations convenient for the informant. One interview was conducted at an informant's home, and the remaining five interviews were conducted at the place of employment of each informant in a reserved conference room on campus. The average interview time was 22 minutes, with the longest being 26 minutes and the shortest being 18

minutes. The informants were open and willing to share stories of their life experiences that shaped their perceptions of safety. As a whole, they were genuinely interested in the topic and expressed that safety was a primary concern of the nation, given the current climate of violence in the United States, even if it was not a major concern for them.

College Setting

The college where the research took place was part of the State College System of Florida, which is comprised of 28 primarily two-year colleges, formerly called the Florida Community College System. In 2009, the name was changed to the State College System to reflect that many of the colleges were offering four-year bachelor degrees in select subjects. This specific state college has multiple campuses and utilizes non-sworn, unarmed campus safety officers. Table 4 shows the on-campus crime data for all campuses that were listed on the Clery report that the informants were shown near the end of the interviews.

Table 4

Clery Crime Data for State College

Crime Categories	2011	2012	2013
Murder/non-negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Robbery	2	0	1
Aggravated assault	0	1	0
Motor vehicle theft	2	2	0
Arson	0	0	0
Forcible burglary	0	1	1
Non-forcible burglary	0	1	1
Attempted burglary	0	0	0
Sex offenses, forcible	0	0	0
Sex offenses, non-forcible	0	0	0
Domestic violence	0	0	3
Relationship violence	0	0	1
Stalking	0	0	0
Liquor law violations	1	0	1
Liquor law violations referred for disciplinary action	3	4	3
Drug law violations	0	2	5
Drug law violations referred for disciplinary action	11	8	0
Illegal weapons possession	0	0	0
Illegal weapons possession referred for disciplinary action	1	0	0
Hate crimes-race	0	0	1
Hate crimes-gender	0	0	0
Hate crimes-religion	0	0	0
Hate crimes-sexual orientation	0	1	0
Hate crimes-ethnicity	0	0	0
Hate crimes-disability	0	0	0
Hate crimes-gender identity	0	0	0

Informant Profiles

All informants had to meet the following criteria: identify as female, be employed full time at the State College, have worked in their position for over one year, and be in a non-supervisory position. The informants ranged in age from 29 to 57 and had worked in their

positions from as little as 1.5 years to as much as 10 years. Table 5 summarizes the profiles of the informants.

Table 5

Informant Demographic Data

Informants	Age	Race	Ethnicity	Highest Degree	Years in Position
Lauren	57	African-American	Non-Hispanic	Masters	10
Rachel	43	Asian	Non-Hispanic	Graduate certificate	1.5
Isabella	51	White	Non-Hispanic	Bachelors	2
Olivia	37	Hispanic-American	Hispanic	Masters	1.5
Emma	47	African-American	Non-Hispanic	Masters	2
Jade	29	White	Non-Hispanic	Bachelors	2

Note. Race was documented based on the informants' self-report and may not fall into traditional race categories.

Lauren

> …I want to go to the movies, but I'm like well… maybe I just need to go to the Redbox and just, you know, rent it or whatever, as opposed to sitting up in a movie theatre house- well I just don't feel- the world is just too unpredictable now. (Lauren, lines 166-169, p. 4)

Lauren is a 57-year-old African-American woman, who was born and raised just north of New York City. We met at her house on one of her days off from work. She welcomed me in to her second floor unit; happy to show off the place she considers her safe sanctuary. She was dressed casually, wearing a black and white sundress, and motioned for me to sit down at her dining room table for the interview. One of her friends was there as well, as they had lunch plans immediately following. Her friend sat in the next room watching the television as we talked. She was very comfortable and seemed pleased to help me in my research.

Lauren is a former U.S. Marine, and has her master's degree in mental health counseling. When asked to define what safety meant to her she explained, "Safety means free from fear, and intimidation, coercion. Okay, safety is like freedom as an American" (Lauren, lines 28-29, p. 1). She explained that early in her career she worked as a juvenile probation officer, having to venture into different neighborhoods on a daily basis to check that her clients were at home. When she began that work she did not have much concern for her safety, but she indicated that as time went by, her feelings changed. Eventually, over the years, she grew more concerned for her personal safety as she encountered instances of child abuse and babies born addicted to crack in the neighborhoods she visited. It was then that she decided to make a career change from social work to academia, "because at that time academia was the safest place to be as far as occupation, coming from my profession" (Lauren, lines 222-223, p. 5).

Lauren has worked in her current position as an academic advisor for over 10 years, working as an identified academic advisor for veteran students. She is familiar with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from which many veterans suffer, and it is one of her primary concerns when it comes to her personal safety at work. She mentioned that around the Fourth of July her concern is heightened as the loud noise of a sudden firework can trigger a reaction for veteran students, which many people do not realize can be a problem:

> I had to tell one of the persons in charge because of the veterans having, you know, reaction to sudden noises that they need to monitor and ban that from the campus. Don't allow students to be shooting off firecrackers on July 4." (Lauren, lines 285-288, p. 7)

Although Lauren is concerned that a veteran could have a PTSD episode at any time while on campus, she is comforted knowing that there are licensed mental health counselors who work on campus within her office that are there to assist if needed.

When Lauren was asked how she would rate her campus for safety on a scale of 1 to 10, a 1 being extremely unsafe, and a 10 being extremely safe, she gave it a 5:

> Employee safety? Um, I would say a 5, to be quite honest, because when you're an open campus, and there have been instances that I've observed, where say like for instance a guy broke up with his girlfriend and so he's freaking out at the bus stop and so they had to call counseling and run out there to see what's going on. (Lauren, lines 189-193, p. 5)

One of the main reasons for this score was the fact that as a state college her campus is an open campus where anyone can come and go as they please. She stated that homeless individuals sometimes enter the campus vicinity and currently enrolled students bring their personal issues to campus, such as relationship issues. Situations like the one previously mentioned make her worried about her safety while on campus. Adding to her fear, she mentioned a concern over the recently proposed bill to the Florida state legislature to allow guns on campus, through a new concealed weapon law:

> there was recently, it was shot down last year, they were talking about allowing, you know, guns on campus as long as you had a permit, and I mean you know there are a lot of these students that are not emotionally mature to handle some of life's challenges or whatever disappointments come their way. You know they're walking around with a gun, I mean we're, we're completely vulnerable. (Lauren, lines 226-231, pp. 5-6)

Lauren discussed her personal safety with colleagues on a daily basis in the office, often revolving around the veteran students. She expressed concern over how her office was arranged, stating that her back is often to the door when working on her computer, so she has to turn around to see who is entering her office. Although she has never been the victim of a crime herself, she recently had a situation where a student and his mother had cyber-bullied her; making threats toward her through email following a meeting she had with them the day prior. Lauren was shocked at the behavior, "…it was very egregious, it was very disrespectful, and I've never experienced that. Particularly with the mother encouraging her son to speak to me in that type of manner" (Lauren, lines 125-127, p. 3). Although she did not report it to the local police, Lauren filed an incident report, and the student was referred to the campus conduct process. Lauren expressed gratitude toward her supervisor and the administration, as she felt they treated her concern with support, and took the threat as seriously as she did. She was glad to see that there were specific protocols in place for these types of situations where a staff member may feel uncomfortable in a certain situation. She explained why she believed she had to take action in this situation:

> But I did that because I didn't want to hold on to that fear, or hold on to that uncertainty, you know. So if you let it out, you know from my training, you know, if you're frightened about something you write it down like that. So I immediately just wrote up a report, you know, for a, for student disciplinary action. (Lauren, lines 131-135)

Lauren also teaches on campus, and has altered her teaching schedule so she does not teach at night anymore. She stated that though her school stated they have cameras in the parking lots, in reality they were not functional:

> I no longer will work in the evenings. I used to work you know 6, while 6:30 till like 8:45 and like say fall term or whenever and I used to be very, very concerned about my safety walking … from the classroom to the parking lot area because in the parking lot area they say those lights and they have cameras, but in reality they don't. And one of my students actually had his car vandalized, a really brand new vehicle…and they swore up and down they had video but they didn't. (Lauren, lines 175-182, p. 4)

She takes the initiative to speak to her students about safety and encourages the males to walk the females to their cars after late classes to ensure their safety.

Lauren discussed safety on a daily basis outside of work as well. Her discussions about safety with her family and friends focus on the racially biased news reports of crimes happening around the county, including the shooting of Trayvon Martin. "…we're very concerned it's, it's a racial bias I believe. And we talk about crime and whatnot and safety of black folks here in this city and town" (Lauren, lines 73-75, p. 2).

While off-campus with family and friends, Lauren avoids gas stations, movie theaters, and banks; anywhere there may be a large number of people. She prefers to stay by herself or with one or two close friends. She is concerned about the veterans off campus as well as on campus, "…I know with the veterans here and they're trained killers, you don't know where any of them will be out there, having a… post-traumatic stress disorder moment and the next thing you know they're targeting different people" (Lauren, lines 169-172, p. 4).

Lauren was not familiar with the Clery Act and when asked, indicated she had never heard of her school's Clery Report. She was very interested in seeing her school's report and stated that she was unaware of the statistics. After viewing the report Lauren stated, "…the

college environment is not safe. …it's a reflection of the community" (Lauren, lines 271-272, p. 6).

Overall, while on-campus and off-campus, Lauren stated she is hyper-vigilant, partly due to her training as a Marine, and that she is frightened when she hears about crime on campus. She knows her school has some safety measures in effect but is not always aware of what they are. She wishes she knew more of the measures her school is taking to keep employees safe. Her main source of comfort comes from her colleagues, both in the fact that some of them are trained mental health counselors ready to assist in any type of scenario and the fact that her supervisor and the administration are available and supportive of staff concerns.

At the conclusion of our interview, she brought me out onto her patio to look at the pond across the street where two small children were feeding the ducks. She explained that this was her little piece of paradise, and that after work she comes home and enjoys a glass of wine while watching the ducks and enjoying the scenery. She feels safe there, and appreciates the comfort her home brings her.

Rachel

> Where I'm from there is no guns, by law. Nobody has it. Nobody, not allowed. So that's something, like a background that I have. The policeman and mafia are the only ones who have a gun. So there's no reason to have it and policeman even never shoot in their life. Usually, no. You know, so it's a very big difference. (Rachel, lines 161-165, p. 4)

I met Rachel in a conference room at the college where she works. She was very nervous as English is her second language, and she was afraid she would not understand the questions I would ask her. I assured her that most of the questions were basic and that I would not be asking anything complicated. She had on a beautiful necklace made up of many different colored leaves, and when asked, I learned her friend brought it back for her from Thailand. She was very nervous throughout the interview and had a nervous laugh that accompanied most of her answers.

Rachel is a 43-year-old woman who grew up in Japan, and has lived in the United States for the past 17 years. Unlike the United States, guns are illegal in Japan, and gun violence generally does not exist. Because of this drastic difference, Rachel's fear for her safety in America revolves around guns and gun violence. She is also the mother of two young children, and our conversation about safety often reverted back to her concern for her two children over her concern for herself:

> But again, I told you my priority is right now, my children, so wherever they go--let's say they go out friend's house, or stay sleepover whatever, I first thing I want to ask their background and I like to see if they have guns in the house, then that's immediately no. (Rachel, lines 168-172, p. 4)

Rachel works at a smaller campus, where most of the employees know each other. She discussed safety often with her colleagues, as she works on a different floor than most of them and often is the only one on the floor if she has to work a later shift. She has an agreement with the security officer at her campus, that on the nights she works late, the officer comes around to say hello to her and makes his presence known, especially if she is meeting with a student. "If I

have a student, I ask them to say 'Hi. Are you doing okay?' so that my students know I'm not alone" (Rachel, lines 77-78, p. 2). She has shared this practice with her other colleagues who also work isolated from others in the later hours of the workday in the hopes they utilize their safety officers in a similar way.

Rachel stated that the reason for her perception of not being safe stems from the fact that she often works in her office alone, after everybody else in her office suite has left for the day. While there is a camera in the hallway outside her office, if something were to happen, she knows that she would have to protect herself, as a camera cannot protect her in that moment, "…we have a camera, but once something happens who's going to protect me, that's myself. Just shut the door and hide" (Rachel, lines 181-182, p. 4). She is familiar with the emergency exits and her school's emergency protocol if an active shooter scenario were to unfold. One of her personal friends is a trainer and trains people on how to survive active shooter scenarios, so she feels knowledgeable about how to protect herself if she needs to. However, though she knows how to protect herself, she would like increased security on her campus, which is an open campus, allowing anyone to enter. "I hate to say it about the metal protector, I want it on campus. I mean it's open, and how could you, but that's something that I wish…" (Rachel, lines 185-187, p. 5).

Years ago while working on another campus Rachel witnessed an incident where a student had a gun in a vehicle, and the staff had to call 911. A separate incident occurred where another student robbed a student, and the perpetrator ended up being one of the students with whom Rachel regularly met. In light of both of these events happening, Rachel still does not really believe that something bad will happen to her, "…even I had that experience of being in

that situation I still feel that nothing is going to happen to me still" (Rachel, lines 106-107, p. 3). Even though she feels somewhat immune to crime on campus, she explained how she uses the safety amenities at her school:

> Yeah, in the wintertime when it's so dark, and if I know I park not under the light so I usually ask…. the security guard always alerted, they walking around the parking lot outside-inside, when I walk out he asks, offers, would you like me to come with you? Sure" (Rachel, lines 127-131, p. 3).

When asked to rate her campus on safety, Rachel said it was definitely not highly rated, and ended up giving her campus a 5 on a 1 to 10 scale. Her reasoning was:

> well we have a security guard, we have a camera, and I do have a support by the security guard for my own safety. (laughs) It's very--definitely not high rated. Um, do I have to give them a half of the points? That's still doubt, because I don't feel it's perfect, not- not at all, um, (sighs)(laughs) I don't know. Um, yea, I would say maybe 5 at the most, you know the campus is a pretty open and everybody can see everything, there's not many woods, or you know my office has glass window so as far as that portion I think we're very secure. However, equipment and again like manpower and that and all that is not high at my campus. (Rachel, lines 190-198, p. 5)

While she commented on how having a window to see into her office usually makes her feel safer, she realizes that in the case of an active shooter the glass window is the main thing that would make her vulnerable. She stated, "Safer because everybody can see what I'm doing. But now if active shooter is coming definitely not, but I know where I should go" (Rachel, lines 204-205, p. 5).

While off-campus, her discussion about safety revolves around her kids. She indicated she discusses safety with her husband and family often, especially after a high-profile crime that makes national headlines. She watches the evening news, and while she doesn't believe everything they say, she knows that what she sees is really happening, and it is scary to her. She worries about her children a lot and is nervous when they go to public places like movie theatres with their schools or summer camps. "When I send my children to the movie theatre I am very, very nervous. I don't want them to go, but fieldtrip, and summer camp, they have to go. I almost want to go with them" (Rachel, lines 155-157, p. 4). In the last 10 years, she has grown more afraid for the safety of her family, as gun violence has increased throughout the United States.

Rachel had never heard of the Clery Act or seen her school's Clery report prior to our meeting. After viewing the report Rachel stated that the crimes felt real now, because she could see that they were actually happening. At the same time though, she saw that the numbers seemed to be decreasing over the years, which she believed was positive, "…but it was so long ago, 2011, and then it's decreasing, that's a good thing. Is how I read. I mean I guess we are learning from the past and how we can prevent it" (Rachel, lines 263-265, p. 6). However, she noted that the most recent statistics were from 2013, and wondered what the numbers looked like today.

At the conclusion of the interview, Rachel was relieved that she made it through understanding everything that I asked. Overall, seeing the Clery report did not make Rachel feel any less safe, as the numbers were low overall. Her on-campus concerns were centered around the fact that she sometimes must work a later shift, causing her to work alone on her floor. Her

primary off-campus concerns were for her children's safety, and mostly revolved around gun violence.

Isabella

> "I feel very safe when I'm here. Yea, I have never, well I don't think I've ever really felt unsafe. I just- I don't know. I just have confidence that – that everybody here is here – to learn, so they're not going to do anything wrong. And- and if something were to be amiss there would be somebody else around to help or something like that. (Isabella, lines 168-172, p. 4)

Isabella entered the conference room with a drink in hand from the school's food vendor and had many questions about my research. She was eager to get started and seemed very comfortable with discussing the topic of safety as well as opening up about her family and her experiences. We sat across the table from one another and engaged in small talk for a few moments as I set up the recorder and gathered my papers. During the interview she was calm and very relaxed, speaking as if she had known me for years.

Isabella is a 51-year-old woman who lived in many cities in the United States growing up, but primarily grew up in Mobile, Alabama. She was not overly concerned about her safety, as she believes crime happens everywhere, one cannot escape it, and it should not control one's life. She explained:

> To be honest, I don't think about it happening here at all. I don't feel like, I know it probably does, I definitely live, have a naïve view of the world, so I don't think it

happens, but I know it does, but I'm not aware of it and, and I would like to believe it doesn't happen here I guess. (Isabella, lines 33-37, p. 1)

When Isabella hears the phrase crime on campus she immediately thought of theft or other non-violent crimes. She had a very positive and optimistic outlook, and was not constrained by fear of crime or violence. She did watch the evening news and believed it was credible, but hyped:

> The news is credible, but even though it's credible…it's still hyped I think. I just, I don't know… I feel like the news is controlling our future more so than anything else because of the way they, they choose to share information and make- stress the importance of certain events over other events." (Isabella, lines 41-45, p. 1)

When it comes to crime off campus Isabella was equally non-concerned. At the time of the interview, her daughter was getting ready to go on a trip to Europe and expressed concern over the violence that she had seen on the news after the attack in Nice, France on July 14, 2016. Isabella recalled a conversation where she attempted to put it into perspective for her daughter:

> …we just had a violent situation not far from our home. Do you feel scared to live {here} now? … Things are going to happen everywhere and the likelihood of your being in that half-mile radius of where it actually happens is very slim. (Isabella, lines 54-58, p. 2)

Though Isabella was not concerned for her safety, she did use an app called Nextdoor, a forum where neighbors can alert each other to crimes happening in their neighborhood. Isabella was unsure who sponsors the app but noted that she does get alerts on it from her local police station, so she believes it is legitimate. She stated, "That's all we really get in our neighborhood

is petty theft, and it's nice that we have that, we have this link and people can share that information so that we can be aware of it" (Isabella, lines 145-148, p. 4).

When asked about discussions about safety with colleagues, Isabella could not recall having any specific conversations about safety. She mentioned that if she had spoken to her colleagues about safety it most likely would have been after they had been mandated to attend a seminar or watch a video on safety precautions. She rated her campus a 10 for safety, with a 10 being extremely safe and the highest rating option. Her reason for the high rating was that she could not think of a reason to feel unsafe, so therefore had no reason not to give her school a 10. "Yeah, I think 10. I don't, I can't think of any reason why not, so…" (Isabella, line 175, p. 4). When asked if her perceptions of safety have changed in the past 10 years she stated:

> I don't think it has. I don't know. I guess I feel, I think I feel the same way about safety. I mean I know a lot of different things have happened, but it doesn't make me feel less safe, so we'll see what happens after this presidential election…. I mean it's scary to think of what our future might be, and what war we may be in… (Isabella, lines 177-180,182-183, p. 4)

Isabella thought she may have heard of the Clery Act and the Clery report, but she could not be sure. After looking at her school's report, her perceptions of safety did not change. After seeing the largest numbers of crimes listed having to do with alcohol and drug use, she noted that "…teenagers are just teenagers anyway. They just make poor decisions at times, so that doesn't surprise me" (Isabella, lines 212-213, p. 5). She mentioned that alcohol and drug violations are a crime against oneself, not against others. This further substantiated her perception of her campus being safe.

Olivia

…this is when I feel unsafe. When I'm the only one in the office, to be honest with you. And that's it. (Olivia, lines 204-205, p. 5)

Olivia was very cheerful and eager to participate in the interview process. We met on her lunch break, in a conference room on her campus close to her office. She was wearing a sweater, even though it was summer, as her office is typically chilly from the air conditioning. She sat across from me and asked for a copy of the interview questions to reference during the interview. I provided her with a copy of the questions, and we began discussing the topic at hand.

Olivia is a 38-year-old woman who has lived in Florida her whole life. When Olivia hears the phrase "crime on campus" she is concerned, and focuses on being aware of her surroundings. "To me, safe means protection, no fear, walking-you know being aware of my surroundings and not having any doubt that I'm in a good area and secure. So safe and secure to me go together. And it's a very positive feeling, to feel safe" (Olivia, lines 26-29, p. 1). She knows that crime happens and emphasizes prevention when it comes to her personal safety and the safety of her two children, "…now that I think of it, it's not just when things happen because you want to prevent things from happening. So we talk about, I talk to them about prevention and precaution but maybe more preventative than you know taking more caution" (Olivia, lines 107-110, p. 3).

When hearing about crime, Olivia always checks her resources to make sure the alert is legitimate, but she relies on the major news networks for the latest updates on what is happening. "…with the way things are going, just can never be too careful. So the news is what I use to prepare myself and my family, to ensure that they're safe. Prevent as much as possible you

know" (Olivia, lines 55-57, p. 2). Olivia gets CNN breaking news alerts on her phone and uses them to keep her up to date on events throughout the day.

While on campus, she talks with her colleagues about safety, typically after a big event like the Pulse Nightclub shooting that occurred in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016. Her conversations often revolve around how easily an event like that could affect anyone. She stated:

> So when it comes to something that I believe is relatable, we all talk about it and you know, kind of lean on each other's shoulders for whatever reason. We talked about that and we got a little, we got a little emotional, "man that could have been my cousin," you know, you kind of relate to it in the event it was a family member or a friend and you kind of count your blessings. (Olivia, lines 82-87, p. 2).

She talked about safety at home with her children, too, mostly after a highly publicized event has unfolded. She hasn't made it a frequent conversation though, as she believes that type of conversation can be depressing. "So we talk about those types of things. Not very often because it's kind of like a downer conversation, so, but it is important so we talk about safety, security, and being aware of your surroundings" (Olivia, lines 101-104, p. 3).

When asked to rate her campus on safety, Olivia did not specify a number between 1 and 10, but stated that her school was extremely safe:

> I would say extremely safe. We have resource officers, um, walking around, there's two patrol cars right in our parking lot. I feel like that would be a really good, um, you know, keep the bad guys away alert to any potential bad guys make that U-turn real fast and get out of here. (Olivia, lines 199-202, p. 5)

Her office was located in close proximity to her school's safety office, so she interacts with the safety officers on a daily basis. "It's right next door to my office, so, and they're really pretty cool people. Sometimes they bake cookies and they have candy in the office for us to come by and grab some cookies and candy, so I'm over there in a jiffy" (Olivia, lines 148-149, 157-158, p. 4). Though she has never used any of their services for faculty and staff, she indicated that if she needed assistance they would be there to help. The only time she expressed any concern for her safety was when she was working a later shift and was the only one in her office suite. She also expressed concern over what would happen if the campus carry law passed and guns were allowed on campus. "…let's see what happens with gun laws. That's going to change. I don't think I'll feel safe if guns on campuses are allowed" (Olivia, lines 190-192, p. 5).

Olivia could only recall one student who made her feel uncomfortable. She discussed her concerns over this student with her manager and believed she received appropriate support from her manager in that situation. Ultimately her meeting with that student was uneventful, but she was comforted and supported in case something would happen. "There was one student that I came to my manager about, and I was concerned, I expressed concern, and she was kind enough to, you know, open her door to me and her phone extension in the event the student came in" (Olivia, 168-171, p. 4).

When asked about her perception of safety while off-campus, Olivia mentioned that she feels generally safe as she uses two alarm systems, one in her house and one in her car. She mentioned that she feels unsafe on a dark street where the light fixtures are not working and when driving home late at night on the highway, "Or if I'm driving home at night, you know, on

the highway and it's late, which, you know, I don't normally do, but if I do that's when I would feel a little bit, make sure no one is driving drunk behind me" (Olivia, lines 181-181, pp. 4-5).

Olivia and her family were the victims of a crime about a year ago when she took her teenaged son and young daughter to a neighboring city to sell two pairs of her son's sneakers. Her son had posted his shoes for sale online, and an interested person claimed to want to buy the shoes. She arranged to meet the young man who wanted to buy the shoes in person, but when they met, instead of his paying for the shoes, he ran off with them, got in a car, and drove away. She was shaken and was incredibly thankful that no one was hurt in the ordeal. Olivia pressed charges and, as of this writing, the case was still pending in court:

> And this has been going on for such a long time, and it's been really, it's, it's like a monkey on our backs, because there's still no solution. They're pleading to drop charges when I'm not going to, you know, not going to give way on, in that. I'm not gonna give up… (Olivia, lines 117-121, p. 3)

She expressed the belief that the situation taught her and her family a very important lesson, that one could never be too careful. She has vowed never to sell items online again.

When asked about the Clery Act and her college's Clery report, Olivia was aware of the basic idea that schools had to report crimes and that it was because of a student who was the victim of a crime, although she could not recall the specific details. "I believe she was the victim of a crime, on a college campus. And as a result of her loss of life, um, there came about this act" (Olivia, lines 220-222, p. 5). After viewing the report, she noted that her campus seemed to be doing a good job of preventing crime because the numbers were very low. She believed that the report confirmed her assumption that her campus was very safe. "These are good numbers. It's

good to see low, low, low, low, low, low single digit numbers in all these years, so, it just validates that the reason why I feel safe is because there is not a lot of activity happening around" (Olivia, lines 260-262, p. 6).

When I posed my final question and asked Olivia if there was any additional information that she wished to share, she turned the tables and asked me a question.

> How does the college- you know, plan on improving, you know, um, there's always room for improvement, right, so I guess, what would you think, I guess what would you think would be a good preventative measures the campus could take to prevent what might happen as an open gun law rule? How would the campus approach their safety measures, if that legislation passed? (Olivia, lines 267-272, p. 6)

Of course I did not have a definitive answer, and explained that her question was the question that everyone was asking. I also explained that I hoped to shed some light on how female employees feel about safety issues, and that I, too, was interested in determining how colleges might possibly respond to an open carry law in Florida.

Emma

> …I talk about this with my girlfriends how things have changed since we were growing up. And I just had this conversation probably last week or so, how just things have changed so much...When I was a little girl, I could walk down the street, or go to the store by myself. I wouldn't dare let my kids go to the store by themselves. I don't care how old they are. (Emma, lines 230-234, p. 6)

My interview with Emma occurred during her lunch hour at the campus at which she was employed. We met in a conference room that had a row of large windows along the back wall, with six or seven plants lining the windowsills. As this was an open conference room for anyone to reserve, she was surprised to see plants and wondered who was responsible for watering them. The plants made the room seem alive and cozy, unlike a typical college conference room.

Emma wore a large brown shawl that she keeps in her office, as the air conditioning makes her chilly on a daily basis. She sat next to me and pulled her chair out slightly to turn towards me for the interview. She seemed open and comfortable with just a hint of reservation about the topic at hand. When I asked her about her educational background she could not remember the name of the school from which she received her MBA. For about 60 seconds she tried to recall the name, while laughing at the ridiculousness of the situation. Though she was very connected to her undergraduate time at Florida's A & M University, she had only visited the campus of the school from which she earned her master's degree once, for graduation. I was able to offer assistance and named the school, Florida Institute of Technology. She was very happy to complete her responses to the demographic questions and move on to the subject matter questions that were not focused on her specific background.

Emma is a 47-year-old woman who grew up in Florida. She gets uneasy when she hears the phrase, crime on campus, and is worried about safety often. "…when I hear the term crime on campus I do get uneasy. Especially with all the crime that has taken place throughout the communities everywhere" (Emma, lines 64-66, p. 2). The idea of allowing guns on college campuses has her concerned, especially as an advisor, as she sometimes has to tell students what they do not want to hear. "…in just thinking about students being able to carry guns, or being

able to, basically um, exhibit their citizen rights, I do get uneasy with that" (Emma, lines 68-70, p. 2).

Emma's discussions about safety with colleagues were infrequent and typically happen after major crime has happened in the world or when a student is upset. When a student is disgruntled in the office, the conversation typically turns to advice of "Watch your back, because you never know what can happen." Her thoughts immediately go to how she will protect herself.

> You know, I've, I've had a few in, and usually is around time when something is happening in the world. Something, something some shooting has happened in or has occurred and I've had conversations in- and honestly I'm always trying to figure out how I'm going to protect myself. I'm always looking around my office and seeing okay, if I, if someone comes in through the door shooting do I go up under the desk, or do I get behind the door because I can't get out. So I'm always trying to figure out where I can put my body to try and protect myself just in case something outside is going on. (Emma, lines 93-100, p. 3)

Even though Emma often thinks about what she would do in an emergency situation, she ultimately believed she was generally safe on campus. She sees security guards walking around often, and believes that if she needs them it would not take them long to respond. "I see security walking around all the time. Um, I think if I- I have a big mouth, so if I was to encounter something that you know, I wasn't comfortable in a situation, I think if I scream loud they'd probably hear me" (Emma, lines 201-203, p. 5). She did mention that her reason for feeling safe might be due to the fact that she works primarily during the day and works in an office with other staff, never alone in the office. She rated her campus as an 8 for safety, on a scale of 1 to

10. The reason she gave her school an 8 and not a 10 was due to the conversations she has had with other staff who sometimes work late alone in their offices. She stated, "…two of my colleagues felt, you know, not safe when they were working until like maybe 6:30 or 7:00 cause they just were, on a floor by themselves when no one was there, so they didn't really feel comfortable" (Emma, lines 215-217, p. 5).

Emma also talked about safety at home with her husband and two children. Prior to her children going to school, she had a talk with them about stranger danger, but her current concern was related to her children finding a safe place in the schools if something were to happen. "…we've had these talks with my kids, my kids before they went to school. About stranger danger, you know that kind of safety. But now it's more of trying to find a safe place in the schools if something is happening in the school" (Emma, lines 124-127, p. 3). She indicated that she takes precautions while she is out with her children and always stands outside of the restroom door while her daughter is in it, explaining to her that you cannot trust anyone, not a man or a woman. Emma reflected on the fact that crime might not be increasing, but perhaps knowledge of it is. "I don't know if it's because we have social media and…we can see things more online now, where back in the day, it wasn't known. Things probably [were] happening but we just didn't know about it. And it's, it's scary" (Emma, lines 237-240, p. 6).

Years ago Emma was herself a victim of a crime, as her wallet was stolen from her purse as she was shopping at Babies-R-Us. She was browsing the racks of clothing, when suddenly four to five young ladies crowded her. This caused her alarm and she asked them to get back. That was a diversion so they could steal the wallet, Emma was unaware of that fact until about 10 minutes later when the store paged her, alerting her to having found her wallet. The thieves

had only taken the money and left everything else. This experience changed the way Emma shops, "…it made me more aware that when I go to stores now, my purse is always zipped, and I always have my hand on my purse. So, it just made me more conscious of my surroundings" (Emma, lines 157-159, p. 4). Although becoming a victim may have altered her actions, her fear of becoming a victim was not elevated, as she knows crime happens everywhere.

When asked if she was familiar with the Clery Act, Emma stated she had heard of it, but could not exactly recall what it was. After I explained the details of the Clery Act and showed Emma her school's report, she was surprised to see the number of crimes that had occurred. It changed her perception of safety only slightly. She believed that she was not as safe as she had originally thought she was, but overall was not scared. Though she knew that crime happens everywhere, she was still surprised to see the numbers and explained that seeing the numbers made it more real:

> No. I wasn't aware that they [the crimes on the Clery report] happened. I'm not surprised. I mean crime happens everywhere. So I'm not surprised that there's domestic violence, I'm not surprised that there was a robbery or a car theft. Um, or even hate crimes that are going on. So I'm not surprised, but it's just being able to actually see the stats, makes you more aware that things are happening, although it's been three years, probably I mean hopefully it's gotten better, but and I wasn't even here during that time, but it just, it doesn't make you feel good to know that you actually know that it's that some things are going on, on the campus. (Emma, lines 283-290, p. 7)

Emma did point out that the most recent stats were from three years ago, in 2013, so she wondered if they were accurate for the climate of the campus today. The last thing Emma wanted to share was:

> I am happy to see that we have deputy sheriffs on campus. Um, that really, I think that makes me feel a little more secure, is that we have deputies who are actually carrying, um, you know, concealed weapons, because I know security there just a p- to me they're just a body. You know. That's my comfort, just having a body there to do whatever, to escort me to my car or what have you. But having a deputy there and in, they're friendly and approachable; I feel a little more- a little more secure that they're here on campus all the time. (Emma, lines 306-312, p. 7)

Jade

> …when I was 11 to 13, somewhere in there, whenever Columbine happened, in 99, so I guess I was 12, I actually lived not that far away from it, maybe 10, 15 minutes from that area of Colorado…I think that kind of shattered any misconceptions you would have had about, you know, school always being a safe spot. (Jade, lines 190-195, p. 5)

Jade is a 29-year-old woman who grew up in many different locations including Germany, Colorado, and New York, and she currently calls Florida home. We met in a conference room at the campus where she works during her lunch. She commented on how she had never been in that specific conference room, looked out the window, and noticed the close proximity of the nearby building that she had thought was further away. Being in that conference

room seemed to make her realize that she did not get out of her office much to experience the rest of the campus.

When asked to describe what the word safe means, Jade stated, "Just kinda going about your life and proceeding as normal" (Jade, line 26-27, p. 1). She did not think about her safety on a daily basis. When she heard the phrase, crime on campus, her first thoughts were stolen laptops and underage drinking. "So when I think of crime on campus I don't automatically think like the worst thing possible, I just kinda think someone doing something stupid, sometime tried to feed the alligators again" (Jade, lines 39-41, p. 1). Jade formerly worked in the residence halls at her undergraduate institution and has had experience dealing with students who misbehave. It is because of this prior experience that crime on campus did not overly concern her, as most of the crime she has seen on campus has not been violent crime towards another person.

Although Jade does not think about safety often, she did share that she makes notes of where her exits are in case she needs to exit quickly. The only conversations she typically has with colleagues about safety are after angry students leave the office. The conversation is always the same type, reflecting, often in a somewhat joking manner, on the hope that the student does not come back to retaliate, "…if it happens I'm running that way, see you guys later" (Jade, lines 79-80, p. 2). She also commented on the only other conversations she recalls having with her colleagues related to complaints regarding a mandated viewing of a video on safety.

Jade mentioned that her school offers a free app called Life Alert for emergency situations, but she has yet to download it, as she does not feel it is necessary. She works in an office with multiple other advisors, and is never there alone. However, when she does leave work

later in the evening, or by herself, she does walk with her keys in her hand, ready to be used as a weapon, just in case. She commented:

> If I was regularly here at like maybe 9 or 10 o'clock at night then yeah, I would definitely have that app on my, my phone. Usually when I'm walking out in the parking lot and it's late and dark and there's not many people around I've got my finger on my like car button, the key flips open. (Jade, lines 127-130, p. 3)

When asked to rate her campus for its overall safety, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being extremely unsafe and 10 being extremely safe, she commented:

> I guess maybe like a six. I mean I don't think we're in a bad neighborhood. Um, I think that also helps knowing that, but the amount of students that I see, and the types of students that I see, I don't really ever feel threatened by any of them. But I'm not sure. There are some students, places that are a lot more secure. They have, you know, swipe cards to get in to certain buildings, which I don't, we don't have, um, or like metal detectors, which we don't have. I don't think we need, but I'm sure there could be more things you could do to be safer, but I don't feel inherently unsafe here. (Jade, lines 180-187, pp. 4-5)

When off campus with her family and friends, Jade was just as indifferent about safety as she was when she was on campus. She was unable to recall a conversation she has had with her family regarding safety. However, she did reflect on how she was at a club-like environment just weeks after the Pulse shooting in Orlando and thought about how easily that type of situation could happen anywhere. Though this thought crossed her mind while she was at the club, she explained to me that she did not verbalize it until our interview:

> …the week after that happened we ended up going to see a play downtown, so we went to kinda like a club like atmosphere. We were like on the roof of a club with everyone just walking around like it's just so weird to think like everyone just came back to do whatever they were doing. It's like, this is a night like that. It's just yeah, kinda compromised instantly, you can't do much about it. (Jade, lines 88-93, pp. 2-3)

Although Jade had heard of the Clery Act and knew that her school was mandated to post an annual report, she had actually never viewed the report until our interview. She was surprised at how it looked, just a bunch of numbers, with no details about any of the crimes. "So it doesn't actually describe anything that happened, it's just like, this happened" (Jade, lines 222-223, p. 5). She was shocked that there were not more robberies and mentioned how students always leave laptops out unattended:

> Surprising there's a lot less robberies than I think I would have expected, unless there's more on the back qualified as something else. Not that I expect people's cars or something else to be broken into all the time, but just to see somebody leave something somewhere, I mean people don't always care about their laptops, get up and walk away, oh I went to the bathroom, then it's gone. (Jade, lines 226-231, pp. 5-6)

We then discussed the differences between robberies and theft. Robberies refer to forcefully taking something away from someone, but stealing an unattended laptop would be considered theft. This brought up the conversation that those reading the report might not have a correct picture of crime on campus if they did not know the exact definitions of each of the crimes listed.

We also discussed the difference between drug law violations, and drug law violations referred for disciplinary action. These numbers are usually quite different, as many colleges catch students violating drug and alcohol laws but do not always call the police each time, utilizing the campus judicial system as a way to educate students and correct their behavior rather than referring them to the criminal justice system.

Overall Jade was pleased with the report, as the majority of the crimes were drug and alcohol violations. They were not crimes against other people. Though the report did show a few crimes, like domestic violence and hate crimes, against other people, the report did not change her feelings of being safe on campus.

> "I mean I know no place is perfect, completely safe and utopia, so I always knew something was obviously happening at some point or another. So, it doesn't make me feel any better, it doesn't make me feel any worse. It's a normal place like anything else." (Jade, lines 293-297, p. 7)

As we were wrapping up the interview, I asked her if there was anything else she wanted to discuss about safety. She then asked me if I would be proposing changes to campus safety in my research. I explained that I was just listening to how female employees perceived their safety, and would have some recommendations for future research and some possible suggestions for schools to consider regarding their campus safety policies and procedures. Her final comment summed up her interview perfectly, explaining why she did not think about her safety often and how events would occur over which individuals had no control.

> I'm just like, okay, for the most part I feel pretty confident that nothing will happen to me here; and you know, if it was something big, like a school shooting I think you know, it's

> pretty hard to stop that, even if you had metal detectors, that's not going to prevent someone who really wanted to get through from just shooting the person standing there and walking right past it, so yea. Life is always kind of inherently dangerous. (Jade, lines 327-333, p. 8)

Summary

In the prior pages I was able to share each informants' story and highlight their uniquenesses in regard to their perceptions about safety. There were vast differences in perceptions, as some informants thought and worried about safety each and every day, though to some it was only a fleeting thought, discussed after a highly publicized event. Though each told a different story, all of the informants had thoughts about their school's current safety measures as well as some suggestions for ways to increase safety. In the next chapter I will discuss the emerging themes from the data.

CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I revisit the purpose of this research, the research design and research questions, as well as provide a description of the process of using the qualitative research software NVivo 10 for Mac, for data analysis. Also discussed are the procedures used to review and reduce the data to create the essence of the research and to determine the primary themes that emerged from the nodes.

Purpose of the Study

By definition, community colleges are open campuses welcoming to anyone in their community (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). According to the American Association of Community Colleges, 65% of student affairs employees in 2016 were female. In addition, females have been found to be more likely to be fearful of becoming a victim of crime on college campuses, yet crime statistics show they have been at no greater risk than their male counterparts (Carr, 2005; Tomsich et al., 2011). This study was conducted to explore how female student affairs staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus. This study was conducted at one of Florida's state colleges, as Florida's community colleges were renamed state colleges to reflect their new mission of offering select bachelor's degrees.

Research Design

A phenomenological approach was used to examine how these staff members create understanding through their lived experiences and their social interactions both on campus and

off campus. Semi-structured interviews, using social construction theory as a theoretical framework, were conducted with six female student services staff members employed within the State College System of Florida. Each interview was audio-recorded using the iTalk app for Apple, transcribed, and then coded using the qualitative software NVivo 10 for Mac (NVivo).

Research Questions

1. How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
2. How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?
3. How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

Data Analysis

The data used for this study included the audio-recorded interviews, interview transcriptions, written field notes, and observations. Once the interviews were transcribed, I uploaded the transcripts into NVivo and coded each line of the interview transcripts. NVivo is a computer software system that supports qualitative data by aiding in the organizing and analyzing process of data. Creswell's (2014) first step in analyzing qualitative data is to code the data, by assigning descriptions of the data representing different categories. In NVivo codes assigned to lines are referred to as nodes, so for the purposes of this study, codes and nodes have been used interchangeably. After the transcripts were uploaded into NVivo, I began the coding

process by reading each transcript, line by line, and assigned a node to each response by the informants. I did not have pre-generated themes; rather I coded each response of the six informants, which ultimately resulted in 44 different nodes. I began to think about the main themes and started grouping similar nodes together. As helpful as NVivo was to easily recall coded items from the transcripts, I needed to see the nodes in a tangible way. I wrote each of the nodes on cut up index cards and placed them on a table and began to sort them into groups of similar themes. It was much easier to move nodes around to different themes, or create completely new themes this way.

To help with the process, I used NVivo to sort the nodes based on how many times each node was referenced in the data and which nodes corresponded with the various informants. NVivo indicates how many sources, or transcripts in which a node is referenced and how many references were made to that node overall. It is typical practice within qualitative research to remove nodes that have very few sources or references, as that indicates they are not a prevailing idea or thought allowing saturation in the research. For this study I defined low sources as a node being mentioned in two or fewer informants interviews. A few of my nodes (i.e., veterans, presidential election, racial bias, and war) were only referenced by one of the informants. I decided not to remove these nodes due to low source numbers. Even though only one informant mentioned them, and saturation was not achieved, they were extremely important to understanding the informants' individual stories. For example, Lauren was the only informant to reference veteran students and racial bias; however, those nodes were so important to Lauren, that I felt removing them would not only be true to Lauren's experience, but would also cause a large part of her interview data to disappear. Isabella was the only informant to mention the

upcoming presidential election and war, but those were the only two things mentioned by her that she showed any apprehension to, therefore I felt they were very important to leave in in order to show the concern that Isabella had over her safety. In addition, the nodes that were only referenced by one of the informants were only part of the overarching themes, not the theme itself. Therefore, if I had removed the nodes that did not achieve saturation, war, racial bias, veteran students and the presidential election, the themes would have remained the same.

I organized the nodes that were similar into themes, and then collapsed the similar themes together, to create the final themes. I ran queries to easily recall all of the nodes that mentioned specific words that I felt were prevalent throughout the interviews such as gun, weapon, children, and colleagues, to name a few. These themes transformed throughout the process, and I ultimately ended up with seven themes. Creswell (2014) states that it is acceptable in qualitative research to have between five and seven themes. Once I had the seven themes, I felt that they each conveyed a different aspect of the research that was integral to telling the informants' stories. Further collapsing the seven themes would have caused a fundamental part of the voices to be lost. It is for these reasons that I kept the seven themes, without further attempting to collapse them. Once I had decided on the seven primary themes and corresponding nodes, I created parent nodes in NVivo based on the seven themes, so the nodes were grouped together. Parent nodes act as a group title in NVivo, listing all nodes within the group. A screenshot from NVivo showing the parent nodes, or themes, and the corresponding nodes are displayed in Figures 3 and 4.

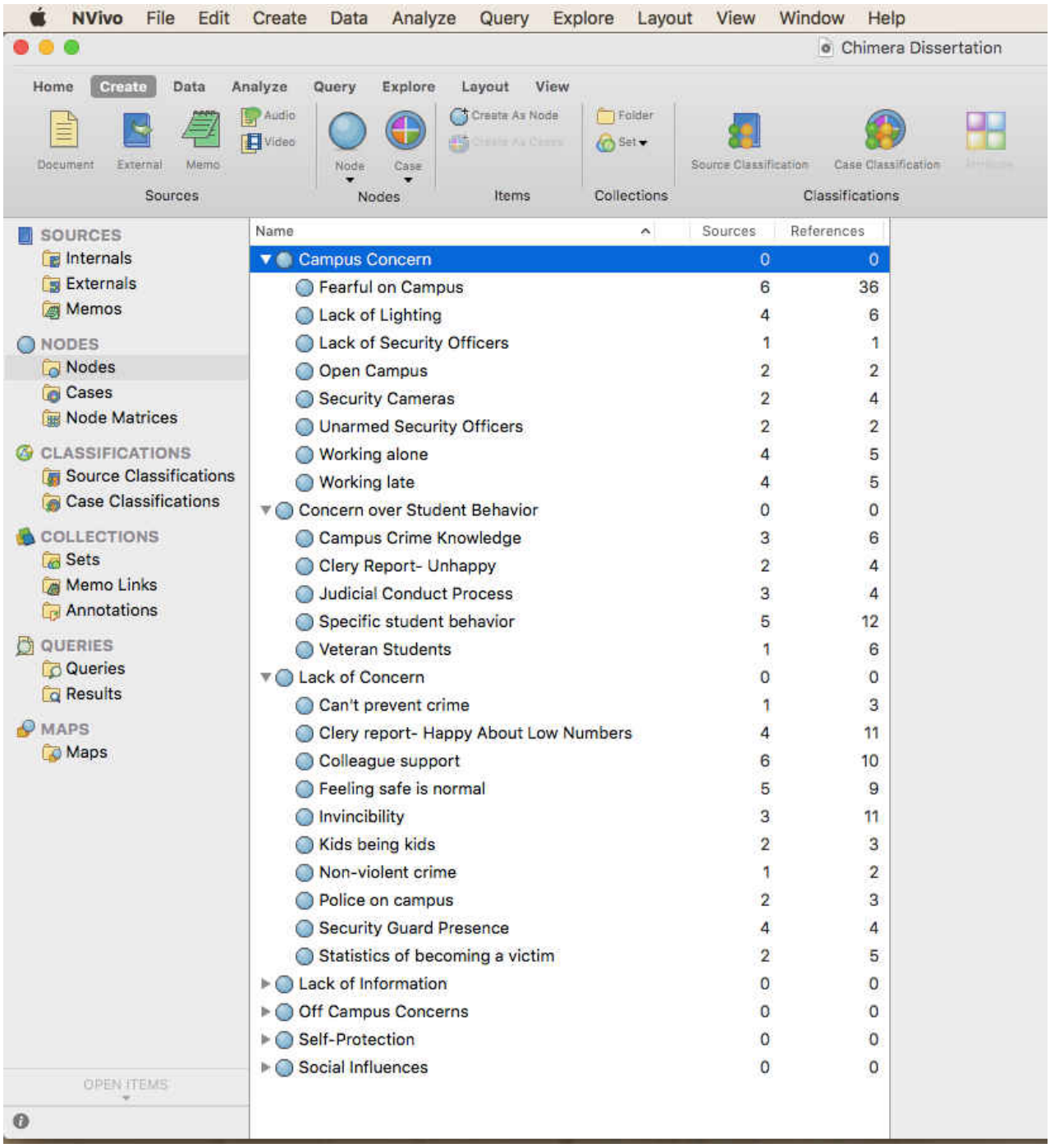

Figure 3. Screenshot of NVivo nodes, Themes 1-3.

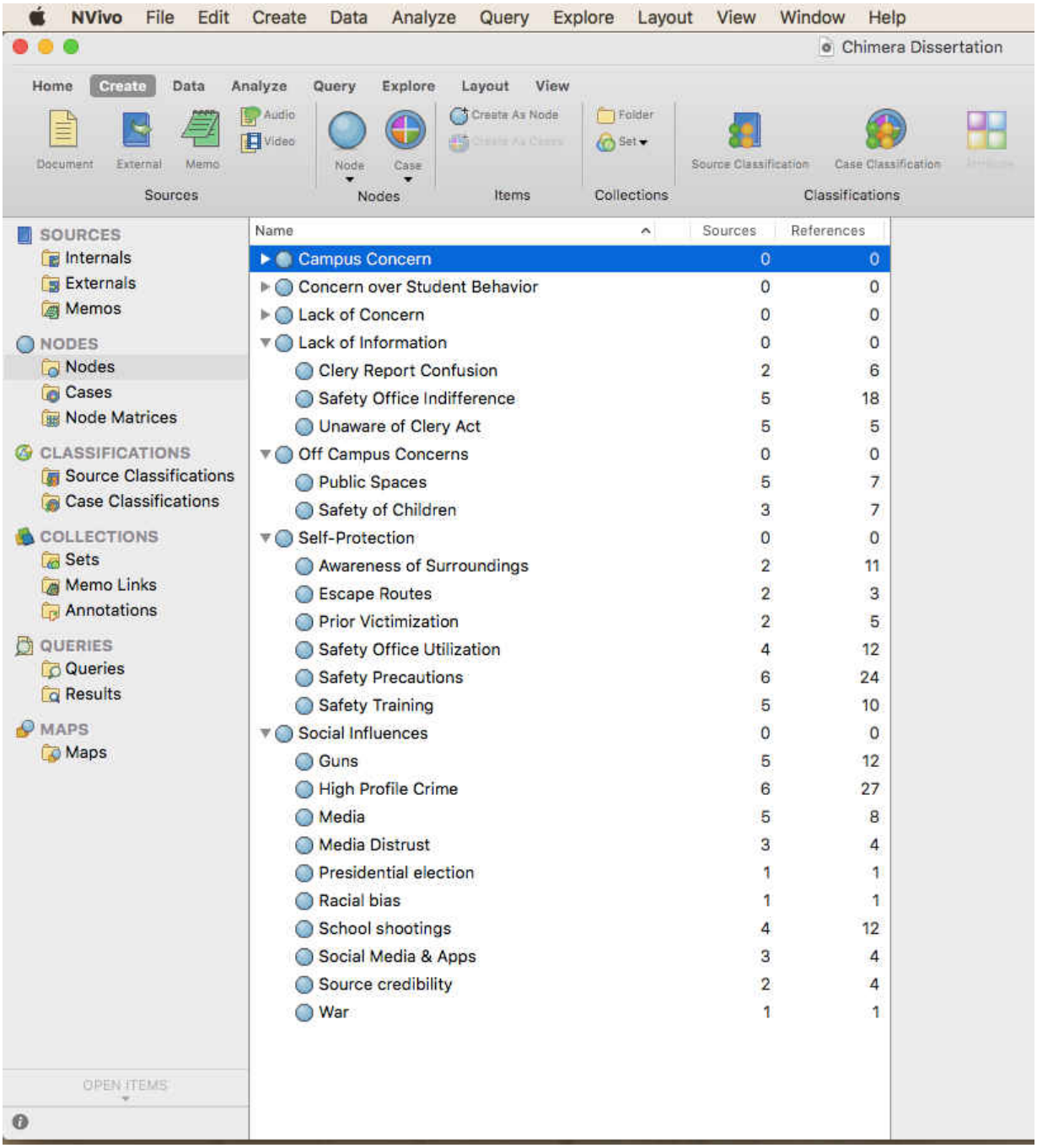

Figure 4. Screenshot of NVivo nodes, Themes 4-7.

After I created the seven themes, I reread the data to ensure every line was coded, and coded correctly. I then checked the themes to ensure that all nodes were found within one of the themes. The seven themes that emerged, along with some of the topics that were found within the themes were:

- Campus concerns – Concerns over campus facilities, manpower, safety amenities, and location of employees' offices
- Concern over student behavior – Concern over crimes witnessed on campus, the judicial conduct process, specific student behavior, and veterans
- Self-protection – Awareness of surroundings, safety trainings, knowledge of escape routes, and prior victimization
- Off campus concerns – Concerns over public spaces and safety of children
- Social influences – Media, high profile crime, guns, racial bias, and social media
- Lack of concern – Colleague support, police on campus, statistics of victimization, security guard presence, and feeling safe is normal
- Lack of information – Unawareness of Clery Act, Clery report confusion, and safety office indifference

After the seven themes emerged I realized that the themes were contradictory, and each informant stated some concerns for their safety, followed by a lack of concern. I did not realize the saturation of this contradiction until I reviewed all of the data holistically. At this time the member checking had been completed, therefore I did not ask the informants about their contradictory statements and they did not have a chance to explain themselves. However, they

did review their interview summaries, which highlighted their concern as well as their lack of concern, and not one of the informants noticed or mentioned seeing the contradiction.

Following is a discussion of the seven emergent themes. Content matrices have been created for each theme (Tables 6-12), and the corresponding nodes are listed in order from nodes that were found in the most sources to the least sources.

Theme 1: Campus Concerns

Table 6

Campus Concerns: Content Matrix with Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Fearful on campus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lack of lighting	X	X		X	X	
Working alone		X		X	X	X
Working late	X	X			X	X
Open campus	X	X				
Security cameras	X	X				
Unarmed security guards					X	X
Lack of security officers		X				

Most of the informants did not perceive themselves to be unsafe on campus except in instances where they were working late, often alone in the office. This led to the theme of campus concerns. In addition to working alone, there were some other concerns that the informants expressed relating to the set up and nature of the campus. Lauren was concerned about the setup of her office and location of her desk, “The way my office is I have to turn around to have to see somebody come to the door, I don’t like that” (Lauren, lines 208-209, p. 5).

Rachel's office was located on a separate floor than where most of her colleagues work. In addition to her being uncomfortable being by herself on the floor, she indicated her colleagues had expressed concern for her as well:

> Safety, um, as a female, working on campus and sometimes myself in the office so we often talk about it and my campus is very small where I work and everybody communicate pretty much all the time and they are worry about me at night so um, with the colleagues we always talk, and uh, if I have some situation we share with the coworker, what did you do, and it's been working and some experience from another colleagues that will help me. (Rachel, lines 60-66, p. 2)

When asked to rate her campus for safety, Emma gave it an 8 of 10. Although Emma reported that she never really feels unsafe in her office as she works surrounded by other people all the time, some of her colleagues had a different experience. She described how they felt:

> Well I think that- and I'm just taking not my experience, but experience of other colleagues where, who work on other campus, didn't feel as safe, because security wasn't as um…visible on the (campus name) campus, as it is here. So I know that a lot of my colleagues were, two of my colleagues felt, you know, not safe when they were working until like maybe 6:30 or 7:00 cause they just were, on a floor by themselves when no one was there, so they didn't really feel comfortable. And also even talking to some of the (employees) who are out in other departments, when everybody leaves and they're there by themselves and it's after a certain time, they don't feel that safe because they're the only ones there with um, students, and I would say an 8 because of that. (Emma, lines 212-222, p. 5)

Jade had the same reaction, stating that she did feel safe because she never works alone:

> Yea I mean I said overall I don't think about it too much. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. I mean I guess good that I don't have to constantly feel fear and worry about it, but I suppose um, I just feel like I'm not the only one usually in the office by myself. (Jade, lines 318-321, p. 7)

Jade also mentioned that if she was working late at night or by herself she would take advantage of a safety app for her phone that her campus provides free of charge. However, because she does not work alone or late, she has not made the effort to download the app.

In addition to just working late, lack of lighting and cameras were a concern among the informants. Lauren, Rachel, Olivia and Emma all commented about having more fear when it was dark outside, with Rachel commenting on how she parked her car under the lights in the wintertime, and Lauren commented on how even though cameras exist, they did not work:

> I used to work like, you know 6, well 6:30 till like 8:45 and like say fall term or whenever and I used to be very, very concerned about my safety walking from, you know, from the classroom to the parking lot area because in the parking lot area they say that those lights and they have cameras, but in reality they don't. (Lauren, lines 175-180, p. 4)

Theme 2: Concern Over Student Behavior

Table 7

Concern Over Student Behavior: Content Matrix with Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Specific student behavior	X	X	X		X	X
Campus crime knowledge	X	X	X			
Judicial conduct process	X	X	X			
Clery report-unhappy	X				X	
Veteran students	X					

The second theme was concern over student behavior. Working on the front lines in student services, each of the informants was expected to interact face-to-face with multiple students on a daily basis, often having to tell them what they do not want to hear. The most extreme situation I learned of was Lauren's cyber-bullying situation.

> About two weeks ago I was involved with a cyber-bully, whereas um, the mother, was extremely, how would you say it, disruptive within the, you know, the counseling area, and, um, and then the following day when I came into work there were some cyber, emails, from the mother as well as, you know, the student making threats towards me, calling me out of my name…it was very disrespectful, and I've never experienced that. Uh, particularly with the mother encouraging her son to speak to me in that type of manner. (Lauren, lines 118-123, 125-127, p. 3)

Ultimately the student was referred to the campus judicial system, with Lauren feeling very supported. She stated that her supervisor and those in the upper levels of the administration treated the situation with as much concern and importance as she did.

Although the other informants did not have such an extreme account of a situation they were involved with personally, they each perceived that they were not as safe as they would like to be. A large part of that is the fact that front line student services staff members are usually the ones relaying policies and procedures that may not coincide with what the students want to hear. Emma stated, "I do worry a lot about some students who may not be satisfied with what an- an advisor has to inform them that they may try to come back and retaliate. So I am a little uneasy with that" (Emma, lines 71-73, p. 2). Jade mentions, "I've seen a few instances where a student has gotten loud and upset. Not like physically violent, but just yelling at someone and you know someone else called security and they're like, just in case, let's make sure someone's there" (Jade, lines 164-167, p. 4).

One comment shared by both Lauren and Rachel was that they felt less safe because their campuses were open campuses, meaning anyone can walk in at any time. Lauren commented on how homeless individuals end up on campus sometimes, and Rachel wished her campus would go so far as to put in metal protectors. "I hate to say it about the metal protector, I want it on campus. I mean it's so open, and how could you, but that's something that I wish we have one" (Rachel, lines 185-187, p. 5).

Lauren, who of all the informants, seemed the most concerned about her safety, was very concerned about veteran students on campus, "And I know with the veterans here and they're trained killers, you don't know where any of them will be out there, you know, having a post-traumatic stress disorder moment and the next thing you know they're targeting different people" (Lauren, lines 169-172, p. 4).

When shown the Clery Report for their school, Lauren and Emma felt surprised by the numbers. Lauren commented, "That um, the college, the college environment is not safe. That um, we're- it's a reflection of the community" (Lauren, 271-272, p. 6).

Even Isabella, who was the least concerned for her safety of all of the informants, had one student who stood out regarding a possibly safety concern:

> Of all the times I've been here, there's only one time where, you know, just because you think of it, there was one person that got really upset. And I'm like you know he's gonna- he- he would be the one to come back in here with a gun and be really mad about the situation cause he was very upset. But other than that I've never really thought that about anyone that's been upset here. (Isabella, lines 77-81, p. 2)

Theme 3: Self-Protection

Table 8

Self-protection: Content Matrix With Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Safety precautions	X	X	X	X	X	X
Safety training	X	X	X		X	X
Safety office utilization	X	X		X	X	
Awareness of surroundings				X	X	
Escape routes		X				X
Prior victimization				X	X	

The third theme that emerged was that all six of the informants either altered their behavior or made it a point to act in a different way to ensure their personal safety. Four of the

six informants had not been victims of previous crimes, but the two who had been victims indicated that they had changed their behavior because of it.

Emma had her wallet stolen from her purse that was sitting in a shopping cart as she was browsing at a local store. Since the incident, when Emma goes shopping, she still brings her purse but keeps it zipped and places her hand on it the entire time. Her husband was so upset he called the store about the situation. Emma believed that her husband's response was unnecessary, "I'm like what are they going to do? I mean they have thieves everywhere you know; they can't protect your wife because she's in the store" (Emma, lines 161-162, p. 4).

Olivia's son had attempted to sell his shoes through an online website. The shoes were stolen during a meeting with potential buyers. "It wasn't too long ago and it's still under investigation, it's still being under review and I'm still having court dates pending as a result of that incident. Thank God no one got hurt- but it was scary" (Olivia, lines 134-137, pp. 3-4). That incident caused her to reevaluate the safety of online sites, and she claimed she will never sell anything again online.

Both Olivia and Emma commented about the importance of being aware of their surroundings both at work and when at home or out in the community. The other four who had not been victims did not specifically mention awareness of surroundings. However, Jade did mention that she makes a note of where the exits are when she is in a room, in the event that she needs to evacuate for a security threat (e.g., active shooter) or an environmental threat (e.g., fire). "It's always good to know like where your exits are. Not just in maybe a school shooting type thing, but just to say if there's a fire, or whatever happening, to know where you can go" (Jade, lines 161-163, p. 4).

Lauren reported carrying pepper spray with her, as she does charity work collecting money at local stores for veterans, but she noted that if faced with a gun she would not be able to protect herself well:

> You know, cause I got, this little thing of money, and someone could easily come, and I've had, locals tell me you'd better watch your money and you know, I have pepper spray, but if someone comes with a gun, and the unfamiliar environment, I'm very, very concerned about safety. (Lauren, lines 82-86, p. 2)

None of the other informants interviewed mentioned having weapons of any sort on their person for protection, but Jade shared that she carries her keys in a protective manner to use as a weapon if need be. She stated, "Usually when I'm walking out in the parking lot, it is late and dark and there's not many people around. I've got my finger on my, like, car button, the key flips open" (Jade, lines 128-130, p. 3).

Olivia volunteered that she has an alarm on her car and in her home to help protect her family. She was very much focused on prevention to keep her family safe:

> Well I have home security at home, I have my car turn over alarm installed, so I feel that I'm making, I'm making and taking every preventative measure to ensure that, you know, my kids and I are safe through those means." (Olivia, lines 174-177, p. 4)

Lauren and Rachel both commented on how they do not go to movie theatres anymore. Lauren figures renting a movie at Redbox is basically the same, and Rachel gets nervous when her kids go to the movies with their summer camps. Rachel stated:

> Ever since the shooting in movie theatre happens, I don't have any interest in going to the theatre. When I send, my children to the movie theatre I am very, very nervous. I don't

want them to go, but fieldtrip, and summer camp, they have to go. I almost want to go with them. (Rachel, lines 153-157, p. 4)

Isabella and Olivia both mentioned apps on their phone that they use to stay aware of what is happening around them in an effort to stay safe. Olivia uses the CNN app and gets breaking news alerts on her phone. Isabella uses an app called Nextdoor, where neighbors can post any happenings in their community. Isabelle likes the app because her local county sheriff's office posts on it too, so she feels she is receiving quality information from a reliable source. "…it was appreciated when, when, somebody was having robbery, their car robberies or seeing cars lurking around the neighborhood, or something, that they could post it" (Isabella, lines 143-145, p. 4).

When it comes to being safe inside the workplace, Emma, Rachel, and Lauren discussed their increasing awareness of their space and potential issues that may arise. Emma and Rachel both said that they often look around their offices and wonder where they would hide if an active shooter scenario were happening. Emma stated:

> And honestly I'm always trying to figure out how I'm going to protect myself. I'm always looking around my office and seeing okay if I- If I if someone comes in through the door shooting do I go up under the desk? Or do I get behind the door because I can't get out. So I'm always trying to figure out where can I put my body to try to protect myself just in case something outside is going on. (Emma, lines 95-100, p. 3)

Lauren's concern was related to her desk placement. Because her back is to the door, she must turn around to see who is entering her office. This made her feel a little more vulnerable.

You know, and, so that's how, that's how it's changed over the decades, you know, before I always thought the powers gone and I could handle anything, and now I feel like I'm a sitting duck, or I could quite possibly be a sitting duck, unless I, you know, maintain my hyper vigilance, you know, and be aware of what's going on around me. (Lauren, lines 231-235, p. 6)

Theme 4: Off Campus Concerns

Table 9

Off Campus Concerns: Content Matrix With Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Public spaces	X	X		X	X	X
Safety of children		X		X	X	

The fourth theme centers on the informants' off campus concerns, which revolved around public spaces and their children. Rachel, Olivia, Emma, and Isabella all mentioned having children, and three of the four admitted to worrying about their children's safety on a daily basis, to the point where it affected their everyday lives. Lauren and Jade did not mention having children during their interviews. Though Isabella mentioned a daughter, she did not have unnecessary worry over her safety.

Emma voiced concern for her children on a daily basis, and explained how she communicates being safe to her children:

I have these conversations with my daughters all the time when I'm with them in the stores. They go to the rest room, I stand outside the door, I – don't talk to anyone in the

> restroom. Cause you can't trust a woman, you can't trust a man, you can't trust anyone you don't know. (Emma, lines 128-131, p. 3)

Emma also mentioned having a conversation with her friends just a few weeks prior to our interview about how times have changed and society is not as safe as it was when she was growing up:

> And I just had this conversation probably last week or so, how just things have changed so much- when I was – when I was a little um girl, I could walk down the street, or go to the store by myself. I wouldn't dare let my kids go to the store by themselves. I don't care how old they are. (Emma, lines 230-234, p. 6)

My interview with Rachel gravitated towards her children as soon as I began asking about how safe she feels off campus. She made it clear that though her safety may be a concern while at work, it is her children about whom she is the most concerned:

> Yea, um, but again I told you my priority is um right now, my children, so wherever they go – let's say they go out, um, friends house, or stay sleepover whatever, I first things I wanted to ask their background and I like to see if they have guns in the house, then that's immediately no. (Rachel, lines 168-172, p. 4)

Rachel even stated that she is fearful when her children go on fieldtrips with their school or summer camp, to places like the movies, indicating that though she wished they did not have to go, she knew they needed to participate in these organized events.

Olivia had two children, a young daughter and a teenaged son. Even though her son was older, she still worried, but was relieved that her son had a good friend group, "I have a 16-year-

old who, you know, likes hanging out, has good friends, made a really good with friend selection, thank goodness, but even still, you can never be too safe" (Olivia, lines 104-106, p. 3).

Olivia and her children were the victims of a crime when they drove to meet some people who were interested in purchasing something her son had posted online for sale. The potential buyers took the items and ran to a getaway car. Olivia was startled and scared, as her daughter was waiting in the car while she and her son were making the sale. She described her feelings and how the crime happened:

> On foot they ran and they had like an escape, you know, like a buddy that was their escape driver. And it was all pre-planned, because the buddy was- you know, I saw the cars in the way, and them on foot and I had my 5 – at the time she was 5-year old daughter in the car. … so you know that was me, my son, and my daughter, we experienced that. …. Thank God no one got hurt- but it was scary. (Olivia, lines 130-134, 136-137, pp. 3-4)

Many of the informants commented on their fear of public spaces to a certain extent. Both Lauren and Rachel shared that they no longer go to movie theatres. Rachel said, "I'm definitely scared of movie theatres. Ever since the shooting in movie theatre happens I don't have any interest in going to the theatre" (Rachel, lines 153-155, p. 4). Lauren stated:

> You know, I mean I want to go to the movies, but I'm like well, you know, maybe I just need to go to the Redbox and just, you know, rent it or whatever, as opposed to sitting up in a movie theatre house- well I just don't feel, the world is too unpredictable right now. (Lauren, lines 166-169, p. 4).

Lauren mentioned being hesitant when walking into a gas station or a bank, or anywhere that a large group of people is gathered, "…anyplace that there's like a large crowd I'm, I'm a bit apprehensive" (Lauren, lines 163-164, p. 4). Olivia commented on her fears in neighborhoods where there is not good lighting at night, and shared that she gets nervous driving on the highway alone at night, "I guess if their isn't light fixture working you know down one of the streets or there's a – and it's dark and it's late and there an isolated place, that's where I would feel unsafe" (Olivia, lines 179-181, p. 4).

Isabella passed over a beautiful house while she was house hunting because it was in a neighborhood close to a Salvation Army in a neighborhood with a large vagrant population that made her feel uncomfortable:

> So we were thinking of buying a house and um, well we looked at a house in, in the country club of [city name] but it's right around where the Salvation Army is, and a lot of the vagrants are there and things like that. And I'm like I can't do it. (Isabella, lines 159-162, p. 4)

Theme 5: Social Influences

Table 10

Social Influences: Content Matrix With Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
High profile crime	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guns	X	X	X	X	X	
Media	X	X		X	X	X
School shootings	X	X	X			X
Media distrust		X	X			X
Social media and apps			X	X		X
Source credibility				X	X	
Presidential election		X				
Racial bias	X					
War		X				

The next theme that emerged was how swayed the informants were by social influences, especially the media coverage of events around the world including mass shootings. The tragedy at Columbine High School, the Pulse Nightclub shootings, and the shooting of Trayvon Martin were all mentioned by name, and the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School and the movie-theatre in Aurora, Colorado were referenced. Ironically, no one brought up the two most well known collegiate shootings, the tragedy at Virginia Tech in 2007 and the Umpqua Community College shooting in 2015.

However, even though the informants did not cite the two most deadly attacks within higher education, they all mentioned active shooters in their interviews. Lauren, Rachel, and Emma focused more on how to protect themselves and actively worried about a potential occurrence. Lauren stated:

> You know, and so that's how, that's how it's changed over the decades, you know, before I always thought the powers gone and I could handle anything, and now I feel like I'm a sitting duck, or I could possibly be a sitting duck…" (Lauren, lines 231-234, p. 6).

Jade and Isabella took a more laissez-faire approach, as they did throughout their interviews. They both claimed that an active shooter scenario would be almost impossible to prevent and the likelihood of it happening was very slim; so neither worried about it. Jade remarked, "I'm just like okay, for the most part I feel pretty confident that nothing will happen to me here and you know, if it was something big, like a school shooting I think you know, it's pretty hard to stop that…" (Jade, lines 327-330, p. 8).

The informants were very much in tune with the news and used that as their main source of being informed of crime happening on college campuses. The only specific news channel, brought up, by both Olivia and Emma, was CNN. Both use CNN as their main source of news, and Olivia reported that she has alerts sent to her phone through an app, so that she can be up to date on the latest world happenings, "…the cool thing about my phone is I do have breaking news alerts, so usually there is a CNN breaking news alert it takes you to the website…" (Olivia, lines 65-67, p. 2).

While Lauren watches the news for the latest events, she believes the news has a bias:

> Well… I would say it's more racially biased um, specifically, my professional friends have a different, um, take or re- reaction from what's happening behind the news and even here in Orlando, you know, um, you know, we're very, very concerned it's, it's a racial bias, I believe. And we talk about crime and whatnot and safety of black folks here in this city and town. (Lauren, lines 70-75, p. 2)

Rachel said she was fearful because of what she has seen on the news, "Definitely, I feel scary when I hear about the crime. Um, as we have a lot of things going on in the news and everything I'm a highly aware of things going on with the hospitals, and public spaces, and campuses" (Rachel, lines 38-40, p. 1). When Olivia was asked if her perception of safety had changed she replied, "Definitely it has changed because of what's recently occurring in the news. With the terrorist attacks and you know, um workplace, um, suicide you know disgruntled employees or ex-employees" (Olivia, lines 212-214, p. 5).

Even though the informants were using the news to inform them about their safety, they were not all completely convinced that the news tells the real, or the whole, story. Rachel stated, "Watching the news? What I don't trust everything they said in the news, but it's real" (Rachel, lines 51-52, p. 2). Isabella expressed the view that the news is hyped, "The news is credible, but even though it's credible it's, it's, it's still hyped I think" (Isabella, lines 41-42, p. 1). Jade commented, "I would think usually when I'm watching the news they often [are] editorializing, saying certain things, I'm always like, oh look they're kind of sensationalizing it a bit more than maybe reading a news article" (Jade, lines 52-55, p. 2).

In addition to mentioning mass shootings and using the media for information, political issues like the impending presidential election and proposed legislation in Florida to allow guns on campus were brought up by Lauren, Olivia and Emma. Lauren put into perspective how emotionally immature traditional-aged college students can be:

> And now there- there was a recently, it was shot down last year, they were talking about allowing, you know, guns on the campus as long as you had a permit, and I mean you know a lot of these students they are not emotionally mature to handle some of life's

challenges or whatever disappointments comes their way. (Lauren, lines 225-230, pp. 5-6)

When Olivia was talking about how she generally feels safe on campus, she mentioned that guns on campus would change her perception of safety, "Let's see what happens with gun laws. That's going to change. I don't think I'll feel that safe if guns on campuses are allowed. You know, open carry laws, that's going to be a different interview" (Olivia, lines 190-193, p. 5). Isabella did not bring up the idea of guns on campus but indicated she was anxiously awaiting the outcome of the presidential election in November. Her thought was that depending on who wins, the U.S. might be in a war in the future, and this could possibly threaten her safety.

Theme 6: Lack of Concern

Table 11

Lack of Concern: Content Matrix With Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Colleague support	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feeling safe is normal		X	X	X	X	X
Clery report-happy about low numbers		X	X	X		X
Security guard presence		X		X	X	X
Invincibility		X	X			X
Kids being kids		X				X
Statistics of becoming a victim			X		X	
Police on campus					X	X
Can't prevent crime						X
Non-violent crime						X

This theme was unexpected, as it is contradictory to the first four themes. Although each of the six informants expressed concern as to their safety, and most exhibited some sort of

constrained behavior, another theme emerged, where five of the six informants believed that crime was normal and not something they were overly concerned about. Emma stated, "I'm not surprised. I mean crime happens everywhere" (Emma, 283-284, p. 7).

Even though the informants had concerns for their safety, they seemed to believe that it was impossible to prevent all crime, so their concern was lessened.

> …for the most part I feel pretty confident that nothing will happen to me here and you know, if it was something big, like a school shooting I think you know, it's pretty hard to stop that, even if you had metal detectors, that's not going to prevent someone who really wanted to get through from just shooting the person standing there and walking right past it, so yea. Life is always kind of inherently dangerous. (Jade, lines 328-333, p. 8)

Jade, Isabella, and Rachel all commented about how they knew crime happened, but they did not believe that it would happen to them. After discussing witnessing a gun being found on campus, Rachel remarked, "…I still feel that is nothing is going to happen to me still" (Rachel, line 107, p. 3). Isabella mentioned twice how statistically crime was going to happen, and the likelihood of it happening to her specifically was very small. When Emma saw the Clery report for her campus showing actual numbers of crime she responded, "I'm not surprised. I mean crime happens everywhere. So I'm not surprised that there's domestic violence, I'm not surprised that there was a robbery, or a car theft. Um, or even hate crimes that are going on. So I'm not surprised." (Emma, lines 283-285).

Isabella did not express much concern about her safety on campus. She admitted that she is naïve, but believes that she is safe with her colleagues around her:

> …to be honest, I don't think about it happening here at all. I don't feel like, I know it probably does, I definitely live, have a naive view of the world, so I don't think it happens, but I know it does, but I'm not aware of it and, and I would like to believe it doesn't happen I guess. (Isabella, lines 33-37, p. 1)

Isabella also said that she feels the same way off campus. At the time of the interview, her daughter was soon going to be travelling to Europe. She expressed concern over travelling to other countries due to terrorist attacks covered by the nightly news. Isabella recapped the conversation she had with her daughter about crime in the world:

> I said things are going to happen everywhere and the likelihood of your being in that half a mile radius of where it actually happens is very slim. So you just have to, you have to keep living that way. So, so you see the news and you're shocked about the things that happen, but you have to put it in the perspective that, that it didn't happen to you. And the likelihood of it happening to you is very slim. There, there may have been a school incident but there are thousands of schools in the United States and so it probably isn't going to happen where you are. (Isabella, lines 56-63, p. 2)

Even Lauren, who was the most concerned about her safety of all the informants, experienced comfort on campus due to her colleagues. She named a few of them multiple times and said that working with them and knowing they are there for her if she needed something was the reason that she feels "well protected" (Lauren, line 238, p. 6). Emma also made an observation, "If I scream loud they'd probably hear me" (Emma, line 203, p. 5). Jade didn't worry about her safety because, "…I don't usually stay here that late to like not be around when

there's everyone still here" (Jade, lines123-124, p. 3). Isabella, who generally did not worry about her safety, commented on why she felt safe at work:

> I feel very safe when I'm here. Yea I have never, well I don't think I've ever really felt unsafe. I just- I don't know. I just have confidence that – that everybody here is here to be – to learn so they're not going to do anything wrong. And- and if something were to be amiss there would be somebody else around to help or something like that. (Isabella, lines 169-172, p. 4)

In addition to the contradiction of the informants stating they were concerned about their safety, but also felt safe on campus generally, the campus safety amenities and information at their school have been underutilized. When asked if they had visited their campus safety office, Rachel and Olivia admitted to visiting the office regularly. Olivia stated that it was right next door to her office, and Rachel shared that her campus was so small that she had interactions with her safety officers on a daily basis. "I feel safe and secure especially since their office is right next door" (Olivia, lines 149-150, p. 4). The rest of the informants had not visited their campus safety offices aside from obtaining their parking permit. Furthermore, not one of the informants had ever visited their school's campus safety website. Rachel seemed embarrassed to admit that she had never visited the website and said, "Not related to the crime, I probably visit it for the student, like a parking violation fee and all that (laughs) I have, and I know where to look for, but I don't, luckily again, no reason to visit- I mean I should have" (Rachel, lines 135-137, p. 2).

Theme 7: Lack of Information

Table 12

Lack of Information: Content Matrix With Final NVivo Nodes

Nodes	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Safety office indifference	X		X	X	X	X
Unaware of Clery Act	X	X	X		X	X
Clery report confusion		X				X

Only two of the informants, Olivia and Jade, were slightly familiar with the Clery Act and their school's requirement to disclose annual crime numbers. The other four informants had never heard of the Clery Act and corresponding Clery report. "I may have heard of it, but I don't remember what it is," remarked Isabella (Isabella, line 188, p. 5). Though Olivia and Jade had heard about the Clery report, neither had ever viewed their school's report. "I think I tried to look for it once, and I don't think I was able to find it" (Jade, lines 208-209, p. 5). None of the informants had ever visited their campuses safety office's website, and they all seemed relatively unfamiliar with the safety features offered on their campus, aside from security escorts to their cars at night. When asked about using campus safety amenities, Isabella stated, "No I guess not. I've not called anybody for assistance or anything like that, so probably not" (Isabella, lines 109-110, p. 3).

In addition to most of the informants not knowing what the Clery Act was, they all had questions after viewing the Clery report for their school. Isabella asks, "I guess the only one that's surprises me is the forcible burglary, so you know, what does that mean? Does the person have a gun, or did- or what did they do? But there's only been two so…." (Isabella, lines 208-210, p. 5). Jade after seeing the report, was unimpressed. She stated, "So it doesn't actually

describe anything that happened, it's just like, this happened?" (Jade, lines 222-223, p. 5). She then wondered whether a crime was counted twice if the same person repeated a crime, "Domestic violence, three of them, in that one year, interesting. I know, if it was a repeat thing would those count as separate instances on here?" (Jade, lines 249-250, p. 6). I explained that each report would be counted as a separate instance even if it were the same perpetrator.

The large gap from the last year reported to the date of the interview was also something commented on by the informants. The interviews took place in July and August of 2016, and the most recent Clery report listed crimes from 2011, 2012 and 2013. Emma, who was not working at the school during those years, felt somewhat removed from the report because of that. She stated:

> So I'm not surprised um, but it's just being able to actually see the stats, makes you more aware that things are happening although it's been three years- probably I mean hopefully it's gotten better, but and I wasn't even here during that time. (Emma, lines 285-290, p. 7)

Rachel also commented on how old the numbers were, "… it was so long ago, 2011, and then it's decreasing, that's a good thing" (Rachel, lines 263-264, p. 6).

Summary

Throughout the six interviews, seven themes emerged, encapsulating the informants' thoughts and perceptions about safety. The first four themes reflect the informants' concerns about their safety on campus and that they did not feel completely safe on campus. Campus concerns, concern over student behavior and self-protection were all related and help explain the

experience of these informants on their respective campuses. The fourth theme was prominent for three of the informants and centered on off campus concerns regarding their children and public places. The fifth theme was social influences and showed how the informants gathered information about crimes to create their perceptions. The sixth theme, lack of concern, was somewhat contradictory to the first four themes. If nothing else, it put their fear into perspective, revealing that even though they were concerned and aware of their safety, they were not consumed by it. The last theme was lack of information. The general consensus was that the Clery Act and report were unknown. Even when shown the report, the informants did not seem impressed as the report gave no details, and the numbers were not from recent years. Thus, they felt somewhat removed from the data. Understanding these seven themes led to an understanding of how these informants experienced fear around crime both on campus and off campus.

CHAPTER 6
THEMATIC CONNECTION TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 illustrated the informants' stories in their own voices and the seven main themes that emerged from the data. I this chapter, I explore my three original research questions in light of those themes as well as the theoretical framework of social construction theory.

Thematic Connection to Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

Each of my three research questions aligned with one of the three tenets of social construction theory. The first research question, "How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?" corresponds to Lock and Strong's tenet of time and place. The second research question, "How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?" corresponds to the tenet of meaning and understanding. The third research question, "How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?" corresponds to the social interaction tenet.

The seven themes have been listed as they relate to each research question and the corresponding tenet of the theoretical framework. This relationship can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13

Research Questions and Theoretical Framework Relationship to Themes

Research Question	Theoretical Framework	Primary Theme
1. How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Time & place *(Where and when one lives influences perceptions)*	Campus concerns Concern over student behavior Social influences Lack of concern Lack of information
2. How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Meaning & understanding *(How one obtains and understands words, pictures, and phrases influences perceptions)*	Social influences
3. How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?	Social interaction *(Frequency and types of interactions with others influences perceptions)*	Campus concerns Concern over student behavior Lack of concern

Research Question 1

How do female student services staff members construct their perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

Research Question 1 was addressed through four of the themes: campus concerns, concern over student behavior, social influences, and lack of information. Each of the informants was heavily influenced by social influences such as media and politics, even if their campus' crimes did not match the trends throughout the country. When asked about their safety, informants mentioned specific student situations that concerned them as well as issues with the

campus as a whole. Lastly, the informants for the most part, did not take the time to educate themselves on anything having to do with crime on their campuses.

Campus Concerns

The first theme that addressed Research Question 1 was campus concerns. The most often cited concern about the informants' campuses was working alone. This theme ties in with the theme of concern over student behavior, as the informants' fear for their own safety because of student behavior is amplified when they work alone. All six commented that they felt safer with their colleagues around them, and that they would feel unsafe being in their office alone with a student. Rachel explained how she ensured her feeling of safety when alone with a student by utilizing her campus safety officers:

> I ask them, my late shift twice a week, um, two nights a week ask him to come upstairs at 5:00 and then walk around. If I have a student, I ask them to say "Hi. Are you doing okay?", so that my student knows I'm not alone. So I've been doing that, and often, unfortunately there is a couple student who always come at night to me, it's purposely because I don't have anybody afterwards. So, I don't appreciate, walk-in 5:00, 5:30 right before 6:00 class they come. So when I'm there after 5:00 I- it's certain nights and then my security guard downstairs already knows so he always comes upstairs. (Rachel, lines 76-83, p. 2)

In Jade's office the staff were mandated to stay after closing time if someone was still meeting with a student. Although she was not a fan of having to work late, she realized the policy is an important one. "I do like the fact that, although it kinda stinks sometimes, that we

have to stay for one person- I like that we wouldn't leave someone alone. Cause I mean, no matter who it is, you just never know what could happen" (Jade, lines 321-324, pp. 7-8).

Concern Over Student Behavior

The second theme that addresses how informants constructed their perceptions of safety was concern over student behavior. Each of the interviewees had a story of a time they felt threatened or in possible danger that was linked to a specific student or situation. Even Isabella remembered one incident where she was a bit scared:

> There's only one time where, you know, just because you think of it, there was one person that got really upset. And I'm like, you know he's gonna- he- he would be the one to come back in here with a gun and be really mad about the situation cause he was very upset. (Isabella, lines 77-80, p. 2)

Lauren was the only one to be involved in a situation where the student was referred for disciplinary action through the judicial conduct process; and though she felt supported by her colleagues, she had an increased concern for her safety. She explained why she brought the situation forward to her supervisor:

> But I did that because I didn't want to hold on to that fear, or hold on to that uncertainty, you know. So if you let it out, you know from my training, you know, if you're frightened about something you write it down like that. So I immediately just wrote up a report, you know, for a- for student disciplinary action. (Lauren, lines 131-135, p. 3).

One common concern was having to tell students things they did not want to hear and the fear of a student being so upset they could possibly retaliate. Emma stated, "…disgruntled

student and you're like oh my gosh you gotta watch, you know, watch out, because you just never know what can happen" (Emma, lines 109-110, p. 3). Even Jade and Isabella commented about having fleeting thoughts about students possibly coming back to retaliate after hearing something that they were unhappy about. Jade commented on how it often occurs in a joking manner, "…occasionally if someone sees a student and they're like 'Oh man, I'm a little worried about that person', but I think anything, it's usually more not joking about that part of it, but just like 'I guess we'd be screwed'" (Jade, lines 76-79, p. 2). Although no major crimes had occurred on the informants' campuses, they were each acutely aware that it could happen, and certain students reminded them of this fact after their interactions.

Social Influences

Instead of using resources available on their campuses to construct their perceptions of safety, these informants all seemed to gravitate towards social influences to create their ideas of how safe they should feel. They had not educated themselves about the crime history of their campuses, the places where they spent the majority of their week. Emma seemed to realize that her fears may have been exaggerated by her exposure to television, "I watch too much TV, but um, human trafficking, I see that a lot. And that's scary. That's scary to me" (Emma, lines 241-242, p. 6).

The informants easily connected the highly publicized, but statistically rare, mass shootings like Columbine, Sandy Hook, and the Pulse Nightclub tragedy to their current roles as student services staff members. Lauren, Rachel, and Emma expressed that they were concerned daily for their safety, even going so far as to plan escape strategies and avoid working alone or at

night. Emma commented that her views were probably jaded based on the media, implying that her views might not be justified:

> And I think it's because of the culture. It's- it's just where we're in today, and the fact that people are kidnapping kids more, it just seems like that, they're kid- kidnapping kids more. I don't know if it's because we have social media and we have- we have- we can see things more online now, where back in the day, it wasn't known. Things probably was happening but we just didn't know about it. And it's- it's scary. (Emma, lines 235-231, p. 6)

Olivia seemed the most comfortable and confident in regard to her school's safety department. She felt that she would be well protected and, thus, did not worry as much about her personal safety. She did, however, share that she read news stories online about crime and made sure to check the authenticity of these stories, only trusting certain websites, like CNN, to inform her of what crimes were happening in the world, and what she should be fearful about:

> Definitely it has changed because of what's recently occurring in the news. With the terrorist attacks and you know, um, workplace, um, suicide you know disgruntle employees or ex-employees. That's happened a lot in the last 10 years. I feel like I watch the news, I 'm very aware of current events, so that has changed. It has definitely skewed my perceptions of um, safety overall in general. (Olivia, lines 212-217, p. 5)

Isabella and Jade believed that statistically the likelihood of an event like Columbine would be rare and did not worry about it at all; however, Jade did mention that the news often sensationalizes events, and Isabella stated that the news is hyped. Isabella observed how the media is shaping her future, "I feel like the news is controlling our future more so than anything

else because of the way they, they chose to share information and make- stress the importance of certain events over other events" (Isabella, lines 43-45, p. 1). Even though the informants did not all have the same perceptions of their safety while on campus, they all looked to the media, both television and online, and popular culture to help shape their decisions even when the events happened far away and were unlikely to apply to them specifically.

A main concern was guns, specifically guns on campus, and the proposed legislation to allow concealed weapons on campus. At no point in the interview did I mention the proposed bill, nor did I use the word gun in any of the interview questions. However, it was brought up by all of the informants. Lauren stated that if guns were allowed on campus, the culture would change and "we'd be completely vulnerable" (Lauren, line 230-231, p. 6). Each of the informants expressed a general fear of guns and were concerned over the possibility of the students being able to bring guns on campus. Lauren, Emma and Olivia mentioned that if the bill passes and guns were allowed on campus, they each would feel a greater sense of danger, causing them to perceive that they may be in immediate danger at any given time. "Let's see what happens with gun laws. That's going to change. I don't think I'll feel safe if guns on campuses are allowed" (Olivia, lines 190-192, p. 5).

Lack of Information

The last theme that addressed this research question was lack of information. When asked if they felt unsafe, Lauren, Rachel and Emma expressed a general concern for their safety on a daily basis, but Olivia expressed only a moderate concern for her safety, and Jade and Isabella did not really think about their safety at all. "To be honest, I don't think about it happening here

at all" (Isabella, lines 33-34, p. 1). Even though Lauren, Rachel, and Emma were very concerned about safety on campus, only Rachel visited her campus safety office, and none of them ever visited their school's safety website. "I visit quite often, when I was on a different campus, yea, I visit them quite often, no matter what the issue" (Rachel, lines 117-119, p. 3). They had almost no knowledge of anything that the school was doing to keep them safe except for the fact that there were trainings they had to complete regarding active shooter scenarios, and the safety officers participated in their own trainings. Most of them had never used any services offered, and none had completed any research to find out what crimes had actually occurred on their campuses. The informants' safety awareness and utilization is outlined in Table 14.

Table 14

Campus Safety Awareness and Utilization

Safety Indicators	Lauren	Rachel	Isabella	Olivia	Emma	Jade
Visited the safety office	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Visited the safety website	No	No	No	No	No	No
Used safety services	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Aware of Clery Act/report	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Viewed Clery report	No	No	No	No	No	No

Note. *A visit to the safety office was counted as any encounter other than one to obtain a parking pass or ID card. A visit to the safety website was counted as viewing for any purpose other than to check the names of security guards.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

Research Question 1 was viewed through the lens of the first tenet of Lock and Strong's social construction theory, meaning is specific to time and place. This was seen through the informants' large concern over their safety, even though they were completely uninformed about what was actually occurring on their campuses. They became informed through social influences

(e.g., news media) highlighting the most tragic events, even though these events were very unlikely to happen. The informants themselves confessed that they were not overly concerned about safety on their own campuses when asked directly about their level of safety.

However, at the beginnings of our conversations, most of the interviewees expressed concern over safety due to the mass shootings that have been occurring throughout the country and the world. It is almost as if they were highly concerned over their safety because they have been 'told' by the media that they should be, but when asked if they felt unsafe in an everyday situation such as meeting with students in their offices, they reverted back to feeling safe. Two of the informants, Lauren and Rachel, were extremely concerned for their safety even though there did not seem to be a concrete reason for the fear. However, to both of them, active shooters were something to be concerned about, so much so that they changed their daily routines and avoided places like the movie theatre out of concern for their safety.

In addition, we know that fear of active shooters in higher education has been specific to this time and place. Lauren pointed out that years ago "academia was the safest place to be as far as occupation" (Lauren, lines 222-223, p. 5). Times have changed, and so have the perceptions of safety on campus for many.

The fact that most of the informants perceived themselves to be unsafe when working alone and in the dark aligned once again with the idea of time and place. Working in an office with others provided a comfortable setting, but working late was a time when they were uncomfortable. Thus, the time and place the informants are mandated to work influences their perceptions of safety.

Research Question 2

How has the national discourse of violent crimes on college campuses across the country influenced female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

The theme that addressed Research Question 2 was social influences. In discussing this theme, I will highlight the nodes of media, high profile crimes, school shootings, and guns and the ways in which they respond to this question.

Social Influences

Social influences such as the media's portrayal of high profile crimes and the proposed bill to allow guns on campus were the two main items shared when informants were asked how they felt about safety on campus. The majority of the fear and constrained behavior seemed to stem from what the informants viewed on the evening news, instead of the actual crimes that were happening in their neighborhoods and on their campus.

Media

When asked how they became informed about crimes happening on and off campus, the informants focused primarily on the nightly news and secondarily on social media and news apps. They were concerned with the legitimacy of their sources. The two who specified sources mentioned CNN. Olivia mentioned how seeing pictures, videos, and aerial shots of crime scenes made it real and made her more aware of what could happen. "I find the evening news more credible because they do show images, they try to show images and aerial view of the scene or what's unfolding" (Olivia, lines 61-63, p. 2).

Even though some comments were made about the news being jaded and sensationalized, by-and-large the informants believed everything they heard and used those stories to create their own perception of safety. “I don’t trust everything they said in the news, but it’s real” (Rachel, lines 51-52, p. 2). Given this perception, it is clear that the media has an enormous amount of power over the perceptions of others as decisions are made on those national events to cover and those to gloss over. The informants expressed fear over incidents that happened in other states and at other places outside of higher education, but they were uninformed about the crimes actually happening on their campuses.

High Profile Crimes

Typically, the conversation focused on the highly publicized crimes that were discussed on the evening news for days on end (e.g., the Columbine school shooting and the Pulse Nightclub tragedy). Although some of the informants stated they discussed safety daily with their colleagues, others claimed to have those types of discussions only after a large event occurred. Lauren had concern over the Trayvon Martin shooting and felt strongly that racial biases existed and that the media depicted these biases. “Highly concerned, particularly with the climate now, you know, and that Trayvon Martin scenario” (Lauren, lines 79-80, p. 2).

Lauren was very much in tune with the latest new stories, and it affected her behavior. She shared that she no longer went to movie theatres and was uncomfortable walking into a bank or gas station:

> Off campus, going into like a 7/11, um going to the bank, um, you know, now with shooting up, you know going into the different areas you hear about, like a nightclub you

can't go out dancing anymore, you know, anyplace there's a large crowd. (Lauren, lines 160-163, p. 4)

On campus she was equally as concerned about her safety, but her concern focused on veteran students. "We have a lot of veterans coming in and they share with us some um, their post-traumatic stress issues that are brought up within the classroom as well as just walking around campus and things like that" (Lauren, lines 60-62, p. 2). With the large amount of veterans suffering from PTSD, the corresponding new stories of crimes around the country, and her being a veteran herself, her perception of safety on campus was vastly different from the other five informants.

In 1999, when the Columbine school shooting occurred, Jade lived just 10 to 15 minutes away in a small town in Colorado. Although she was just a young girl at that time, she stated that the incident changed her perception of schools as being safe spaces. "I think that was one of the biggest school shootings at the time, and I think that kind of shattered any misconceptions you would have had about, you know, school always being a safe spot" (Jade, lines 193-195, p. 5).

School Shootings

Surprisingly, none of the informants brought up the two most closely related school shootings within higher education, Virginia Tech in 2007, and Umpqua Community College in 2015. Umpqua Community College is an open enrollment, low tuition institution, very similar to the informants' state colleges. It would be the most similar college of all of the highly publicizes school shootings. Though Virginia Tech is a private, four-year school with selective admissions, it is still the site of the largest school shooting to date. Neither of these colleges however, was

referenced by any of the informants. Even though these two specific incidents were not specifically referenced, the idea that gun violence is on the rise, especially in the way of school shootings, seemed to be a common theme. Both Emma and Rachel specifically discussed active shooters and how often they have thought about how they would escape their offices in that type of situation. Rachel discussed her feeling safer for the most part due to having a window where others can see into her office, but also addressed how the window would become a problem in an active shooter scenario:

> Safer, because everybody can see what I'm doing. But now if active shooter is coming definitely not, but I know where I should go, … yea, cause I can lock the door and hide, then we have that, I don't know you know, the paper with the green and yellow and red, like you can put it on the, so I can do that and hide, or I'm very close to the door, to the emergency, the back door, so that's my, of course, first place to go, but if I'm too late (laughs) I don't want to think about it, make me so nervous. (Rachel, lines 204-205, 207-211, p. 5)

Guns

In addition to the media coverage and high profile crimes including school shootings, guns on campus was a concern for most of the informants. Through online media as well as television, the informants had become aware of the proposed bill to allow concealed weapons on campus and they felt that if passed it would greatly alter their perception of being safe on campus. Olivia commented on that her perception of safety would change greatly if guns are allowed, "…let's see what happens with gun laws. That's going to change. I don't think I'll feel

that safe if guns on campuses are allowed" (Olivia, lines 190-192, p. 5). Lauren echoed the same feelings, "I hope we don't have the guns law, the gun law, get permissions for the guns to come on campus because that'll- that'll put everybody at risk, everyone" (Lauren, lines 290-291, p. 7). Lastly, Emma made a comment on the proposed gun law, "Um, in, in just thinking about students being able to carry guns, or being able to, basically exhibit their, their um, citizen rights, I do get uneasy" (Emma, lines 68-70, p. 2).

Overall social influences seem to greatly affect the perceptions of safety for these six informants. They often brought up different crimes they learned about from the news and how they influenced their perceptions. The highly profiled crimes occurring across the country and around the world had a much greater effect on their perceptions than the actual crimes occurring on their campus, as none of the informants had any knowledge of their campuses' actual crime statistics.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

This research question was viewed through the tenet of meaning and understanding being central to how individuals create their reality. It is understood that there are two sides to every story, and people are able to view the same event in completely different ways. The six informants each had different levels of concern for their safety and different views of how safe their campus was; however, they all saw the same Clery report, and all knew about the same highly publicized crimes through the media. There was concern over guns and active shooters, even though an active shooter situation was extremely unlikely to happen. This is an example of how words create meaning. The phrase, active shooter, was not in existence a few years ago, yet

at present it instills fear in most who hear it. The media has taken this phrase and created its meaning over the years, stressing an event that is extremely unlikely to occur. When people hear this phrase they put it in context in their own lives. It takes on a meaning specific for each individual person, and it caused some of the informants in this study to have great fear for their safety and some to not have concern. This aligns with the premise of social construction theory: people create their own realities.

Through the six informants I viewed both ends of the spectrum, with Lauren and Rachel refusing to go to movie theatres because there was a shooting at a theatre thousands of miles away a few years ago, and, at the other end of the continuum, Isabella encouraging her daughter to travel to Europe despite numerous high profile incidents in the last few months. This is an example of how people find meaning and understanding in different ways when given the same information. Lauren and Rachel have heightened concern for their safety due to their understanding of the gun culture in America in the 21st century, but Isabella and Jade believed that the odds of something happening were low and fear should not serve as a deterrent to living a normal life.

Research Question 3

How do everyday interactions with others on campus affect female student services staff members' perceptions of safety on a state college campus?

The themes that addressed Research Question 3 were campus concerns, concern over student behavior, and lack of concern. Overall, the informants felt comforted by their colleagues

and felt unsafe when they were alone on campus. The greatest threat to their safety was student behavior which was brought up by all six multiple times during the interviews.

Campus Concerns

The first theme that addressed this research question was campus concerns. This theme included lack of lighting on campus, cameras that did not work, as well as office structures that allowed for employees working alone. Though all of the informants had concerns about interacting with others, namely students, on campus, they were even more concerned about not having interactions with others on campus. As the saying goes, there is safety in numbers; the informants overwhelmingly stated that their fear was heightened when they were working alone. The informants' comments regarding working alone are presented in Table 15. Olivia and Rachel stated that they worked in an office by themselves sometimes, and that was when they felt unsafe and had heightened concern for their own safety. Lauren, Isabella, Emma, and Jade all commented that they felt safe because they did not work alone but were surrounded by their colleagues during the workday.

Table 15

Informants' Comments: Concerns About Working Alone

Informants	Concerns About Working Alone
Lauren	"And then also have people that have your back. I know that (colleague name) is there, I know that (colleague name) is there, I know that (colleague name) is there, you know so if anything happens I feel like, you know, well protected."
Rachel	"Safety, um, as a female, working on campus and sometimes myself in the office so we often talk about it."
Isabella	"And- and if something were to be amiss there would be somebody else around to help or something like that."
Olivia	"I would feel, this is when I feel unsafe. When I'm the only one in the office. To be honest with you. And that's it."
Emma	"But I haven't had any, I haven't felt uncomfortable or in danger at all. I mean I'm not here a lot late, so I'm not by myself a lot, so I can't say that I feel uncomfortable at all."
Jade	"I mean I guess good that I don't have to constantly feel fear and worry about it, but I suppose um, I just feel like I'm not the only one usually in the office by myself."

Concern over Student Behavior

For front line student services staff members working in higher education, their days at work consist of assisting students individually with their educational needs. The majority of their interactions are with students, and as stated previously, they are often the individuals who must relay the college's policies and may not be what the students want to hear. Due to this, many of the informants mentioned that their main fear on campus was of student behavior and possible retaliation from students who are unhappy. Table 16 highlights comments relating to concerns over student behavior.

Table 16

Informants' Comments: Concerns Over Student Behavior

Informants	Concerns Over Student Behavior
Lauren	"When uh students act out in the um, my office, you know I have to escort them out because I feel like, you know, I don't want to get penned up in the office like that."
Rachel	"Unfortunately there is a couple student who always come at night to me, it's purposely because I don't have anybody afterwards."
Isabella	"…he would be the one to come back in here with a gun and be really mad about the situation cause he was very upset."
Olivia	"There was a student that I came to my manager about um, and I was concerned- you know expressed concern …"
Emma	"I do worry a lot about some students who may not be satisfied with what an- an advisor has to inform them that they may try to come back and retaliate."
Jade	"…occasionally if someone sees a student and they're like 'oh man, I'm a little worried about that person'."

Though the majority of students with whom the informants interacted did not pose a threat, it only takes one upset student to cause a serious situation. All six were very aware of this fact and took minimal safety precautions to keep themselves safe and without the fear of an attack consuming their daily activities. Emma indicated that overall she felt fairly safe on campus, but that did not stop her from having a plan in case something bad happened, "I'm always looking around my office and seeing okay if I, if someone comes in through the door shooting do I go up under the desk, or do I get behind the door because I can't get out" (Emma, lines 96-98, p. 3).

Lack of Concern

The last theme that addressed this question was closely related to the first theme. Though informants had concerns about the safety of their overall campus, they also felt protected on campus due to the presence of other staff members and the security guards. Overall they seemed to perceive themselves to be relatively safe and generally did not worry about their safety on campus. A few expressed concern that they were unsure what the security guards could actually do in a situation because they did not carry weapons, but overall they were happy with knowing that the security guards were present and visible. "[security guards] came really quickly and so, it's good to know that they were there, but at the same time it's like, will I know they don't have a gun or anything so I don't know what they could possibly do if something did happen" (Jade, lines 167-170, p. 4).

Even more assuring was seeing sworn police officers from the local police unit on campus and visible. Both Emma and Jade commented that the presence of actual sworn police on campus was very comforting. Emma discussed the difference between the security guards and police on campus:

> I think that makes me feel a little more um secure, is that we have deputies who actually are carrying, um, you know, concealed weapons, because I know security there just a p- to me there just a body. You know. That's my comfort, just having a body there to do whatever, to escort me to my car or what have you. But having a deputy there and in, they're friendly and approachable I feel a little more- a little more secure that they're here on campus all the time. (Emma, lines 307-312, p. 7)

In addition to feeling generally safe on campus due to support from colleagues and security guards, Isabella and Jade both felt that most of the crime was non-violent and was normal and almost expected for a campus full of traditional-aged college students. “But I think overall it’s definitely, the most obviously for drugs, and alcohol, and it’s usually not a crime against someone, just more against yourself, so I guess that’s nice to see” (Jade, lines 286-288, p. 7). When asked if seeing the actual crime statistic from her school’s Clery report changed her perception of safety, Isabella replied, “No. It really doesn’t. No, cause to me the higher numbers are just kids being kids and being stupid and, and it’s- they’re doing it to themselves, not to somebody else” (Isabella, lines 223-224, p. 5).

Even Rachel, who expressed a serious fear of guns throughout her interview, believed nothing would ever happen to her. She described an incident when a gun was found in a student’s car on campus, and 911 was called:

> But still, we have a few, um, incidents, when I was at another campus the gun on campus or gun was on- in the car with a student on campus and we had to call 911 and the situation so- even I had that experience of being in that situation I still feel that is nothing is going to happen to me still. (Rachel, lines 103-107, p. 3)

Overall, the informants were aware of safety concerns, but their everyday interactions with others on campus were, for the most part, positive, thus heightening their feelings of safety on campus. The greatest fear for safety for most of the informants was when they were off campus, and the fear often revolved around concern for their children. “…but again I told you my priority is right now my children” (Rachel, lines 168-169, p. 4). The only exception to this

was Lauren who had just as many concerns for her safety on campus as she did for her safety off campus.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

This research question was informed by the social construction theory tenet of social interaction. People tend to adapt to the culture around them, and culture helps individuals create their reality. The informants all experienced some fear working alone and were comforted being around their coworkers. All of them mentioned having concerns about behavior exhibited by students. This aligned with the current culture in America that students can be dangerous and retaliate against staff members and students at their schools.

Burr (2003) stated that individuals form their own sense of reality, and then push their perceptions onto others, thereby making their reality the true, correct reality. This seemed to be the case with Rachel, who, based on her interview, was extremely fearful of guns and public places. However, she stated that she believed that nothing would happen to her on her campus, possibly due to the safe culture her campus displays. This may have influenced her perceptions.

The six informants each had different levels of concern for their safety and different views of how safe their campus was. This aligned with their frequency of discussions of campus safety with coworkers. Lauren and Rachel mentioned speaking to coworkers often about safety, Lauren on a daily basis, with Lauren exhibiting the most fear and constrained behavior. Olivia and Emma both agreed that they talked about safety sometimes. They showed medium levels of constrained behavior without having it consume their lives. Isabella and Jade admitted to almost never discussing safety with anyone, and both had no fear on campus, feeling that crime cannot

be prevented and that individuals must live their lives. For these six informants, their frequency of safety discussions on campus aligned with their overall fear for their safety.

Summary

The three research questions were addressed by five of the seven themes that emerged from my research. Concern over student behavior, campus concerns, social influences, lack of information, and lack of concern all had implications for how female student services staff members perceived their safety while on campus. The themes of off campus concerns and self-protection did not specifically address any of the research questions but were integral in understanding the lived experience of the informants, both on and off campus.

Social construction theory proved to be an appropriate theoretical framework, as the informants showed examples of how they were influenced by time and place and social interaction. Even though all six of the informants worked at the same school and saw the same Clery report, some of them believed the numbers were high, and some believed the numbers were low, showing how people can have vastly different meanings and understandings of the same information.

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter I will review the background and purpose of this study as well as the study's limitations. The chapter also contains a summary and discussion of the findings, recommendations for administrators and for student services staff members, and recommendations for future research followed by a final reflection of my journey.

Purpose of the Study

The world of the 21st century can seem increasingly dangerous, especially when watching or reading the latest new stories. Campus shootings over the past 15 years in all sectors of education have caused widespread concern throughout the country (Fox et al., 2009; Gunderson, 2015). Even though violent crime on college campuses is low, Americans are concerned with safety on campus more than ever before (Ball, 2012; Strauss, 2010; USDOE, 2011).

The Clery Act, passed in 1991, required all colleges and universities to publish their crime statistics on an annual basis (Harshman et al., 2001; Janosik & Plummer, 2005; Sulkowski & Lazarus, 2011; USDOE, 2011). One of the main purposes of this law was to make faculty, staff, and students aware of the dangers on their specific campuses in an effort to keep them safe (Janosik, 2004). However, researchers have shown that most students and parents do not know what the Clery Act is, and very few have actually read the annual reports (Janosik, 2004; Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

Numerous research studies have been conducted in the past decade regarding safety on campus, but most were conducted at four-year colleges and universities and were focused on students. Only a handful of studies have been conducted to consider the perceptions of safety of faculty and staff. In addition, females on campus have been shown to be more likely to be fearful of becoming a victim of crime, yet their statistical percentages of becoming victims have not been significantly greater than their male counterparts (Carr, 2005; Tomsich et al., 2011). At the time of the present study, there were no qualitative studies that focused on female student services staff members perceptions of safety. Through this research I examined how females constructed their perceptions of safety on campus at a college within the Florida State College System including exploring their knowledge of the Clery Act and their school's Clery report.

Limitations

I did not enter into this research topic without my own biases and perceptions. Although I practiced epoché by suspending my own judgments on the subject, my biases possibly shaped the study and the informants' responses.

Summary of the Study

After conducting six interviews with female student services staff members who worked at a state college campus, my results were varied. As expected, each of the six informants had a unique story, and no two informants highlighted all the same issues or concerns. However, there were seven themes that emerged as the most important topics to the informants when discussing their perceptions of safety. Four of the themes focused on their fear of crime both on and off campus, campus concerns, concern over student behavior, self-protection, and off campus

concerns. The fifth theme centered on the informants not having fear, a lack of concern. The remaining two themes centered on obtaining information about crimes, social influences, and lack of information.

The six informants can be put on a continuum from the most fearful to the least fearful. Lauren would fall on one end, being the most fearful, followed by Rachel, then Emma, Olivia, Jade and finally Isabella, the least fearful. Lauren and Rachel expressed major fear for their safety throughout their interviews, showing extreme constrained behavior, to the point of not going to the movie theatre anymore and avoiding stores and other areas for fear of violence. Emma expressed moderate fear, claiming to think about how to protect herself on a daily basis, and showing strong concern for her children while in public. Olivia expressed some fear, mostly when working alone and at the thought of guns being allowed on campus. Jade and Isabella expressed virtually no fear for their safety and indicated they had not altered their actions whatsoever due to the violence happening around the country at the time of the study.

Even though the informants expressed differing thoughts on their levels of safety while on campus, they were all concerned about the pending legislation to allow guns on campus, expressing that they would feel less safe if the legislation was passed. Another item they all had in common was that each of them expressed feeling safer when they were in the company of their colleagues. They also all had positive views of their campus safety officers, stating how they were visible and present around campus.

Another commonality that was identified for all informants was the effect that the media had on their safety. When they mentioned feeling unsafe, it was always due to a highly publicized crime of which they were aware, not crimes that were actually happening on their

campus. In addition, none of the informants had viewed the Clery report for their school, nor had they visited their school's website for information about how to remain safe on campus. This led me to believe that they did not have high levels of concern for their safety on campus.

Research Questions

The first research question addressed how the informants constructed their perceptions of safety through Lock and Strong's social construction theory tenet of time and place. The time and place that we live in has a great affect on how people construct their reality. In today's society there is a nationwide fear of active shooter scenarios, especially at educational institutions, including colleges. Although statistically the odds of being a victim of a violent crime on a college campus are extremely low, the prevailing thought around the country is that we are living in a society where gun violence is normal and active shooter scenarios are becoming commonplace (Fox et al., 2009; Gunderson, 2015).

The informants expressed concerns over campus lighting, cameras, and parking lots, all issues for some of the informants. Parking lots were the area of most concern, especially late at night. Although this study was focused on student services staff members, Lauren revealed that she also taught a class on campus. This classified her as faculty as well as staff. Fletcher and Bryden (2009) found that female faculty were more concerned over their safety than female staff, often concerned about lighting on campus. As the only informant who taught, Lauren expressed more concern for her safety than the others, specifically mentioning lighting and reinforcing Fletcher and Bryden's earlier findings.

Research Question 2 addressed how the informants used Lock and Strong's tenet of meaning as understanding to shape their perceptions of safety based on the national discourse about violent crimes. The informants created meaning and understanding about their safety largely from what they saw and heard in the media. When an active shooter situation occurs, it is typically heavily covered by the media, and the informants mentioned obtaining their information from the media and believing what they saw. The Clery report from their campus was not viewed by any informants, even though it listed the actual crimes that were occurring on campus, and would have shown them the crimes about which they should have been most concerned.

Research Question 3 addressed how the informants constructed their perceptions of safety through Lock and Strong's tenet of social interaction. The informants constructed their reality through social interaction, some fearing their interactions with students, though all felt safer with the interactions of their colleagues. The idea of working alone was one of the themes that dominated informants' responses, with all six mentioning their concern about working alone. This supports the 1995 findings of Wooldridge et al. that staff members were at increased risk of crime if they were on campus after-hours, showing a justification for their increased fear at night.

Connection to Prior Research

The results of this research study support some of the prior research discussed in Chapter 2. Fisher et al. (1995) found that prior victimization led to higher levels of fear, but for personal crime only, not property crime. None of the informants revealed any history of personal crime, but Emma and Olivia were both victims of theft, which was classified as property crime.

Although they both expressed anger over the incidents, neither one claimed the situation caused them to fear for their safety more than before the incident. This supported Fisher et al.'s findings.

In addition, Fletcher and Bryden (2009) also found that though overall awareness of the college's campus safety services was high, utilization was low. In this study, I found the overall awareness to be average. Though informants were able to identify some services that the safety office offered for the campus, they were not overly knowledgeable. Similar to Fletcher and Bryden's experience however, utilization of safety services was extremely low, even when informants expressed fear on campus.

Conclusions

Though informants expressed concern for safety, their actions did not always match their statements. Though Lauren and Rachel expressed great concern for their safety, they were unaware of the crimes that were happening on their campuses, and only Rachel utilized her campus' safety amenities. Emma expressed that she checked her office often for ways to hide in the case of an active shooter but said overall she felt safe on campus. Overall, the biggest problem for these informants was the idea of working late and alone in the office, and the possibility of guns on campus.

Through my research, I found that female staff members tended to fear the crimes that were least likely to occur but were unaware of the crimes that had occurred on their campus. Of the informants who discussed moderate to major concern for their safety while on campus, the major concern was an active shooter situation, with no mention of theft, or assault, events that were more likely to happen on campus. The informants seemed to have little interest in knowing

what actually happened on their campus, as shown by not checking their college's website for safety information and not reading their school's Clery report.

The major finding in this study was related to the contradictions mentioned by the informants. There was not one of the six who maintained the same stance on personal safety throughout the interview. These results seem to indicate that female staff members were (a) uninformed about crimes with which they should actually be concerned, and (b) their concerns about safety on campus were often dependent upon how a question was posed to them.

The informants were asked one quantitative question during the interview, "How would you rate your campus for safety, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being extremely unsafe, and 10 being extremely safe?" Rachel's response was 4 to 5, Lauren's was 5, Jade's was 6, Emma's was 8, Isabella's was 10; and although Olivia did not give an exact number, she said, "I would say extremely safe," which seemed to indicate a 10 also. These numbers alone would indicate that Olivia and Isabella felt the safest, with Emma not far behind. However, their interviews showed Jade and Isabella feeling the safest, with Olivia feeling the next safest. This contradiction shows how important it is to ask qualitative questions to fully understand how individuals feel about their safety, as quantitative measures do not always tell the whole story. This concept did not surface until my research was concluded; thus, I did not have an opportunity to ask the informants to explain their contradictory feelings and the differences in their quantitative responses. Overall, the informants gave contradictory information based on the question asked, stating that they were frightened for their safety in one breath, but claiming they felt safe in the next.

Recommendations for Administrators

As revealed in the literature review in Chapter 2, schools have been spending a sizeable amount of money to make their campuses safer by installing safety features such as emergency notification systems and creating threat assessment teams. Schools may want to rethink how their offices are configured for their employees, and where employees are placed around the campus based on their job description. Placing an employee who often works late around other employees who typically have nine to five schedules could result in employees feeling unsafe on campus when working alone into the evenings. Having windows allowing others to see into offices may help employees feel safe on a daily basis but could become a danger in an active shooter scenario. Something as simple as having windows into offices with blinds would permit the staff member to have a clear view of others while working but allow them to close the blinds in case of a threat.

With the proposed gun legislation possibly being passed at any time, it may be a good idea for campus safety offices to begin thinking about how they would change their current policies or create new policies to deal with potential issues. School administrators should watch the Florida legislature closely and be prepared to adjust to a new culture of guns on campus. The many colleges across the country that utilize unarmed security guards may want to rethink that policy and hire sworn police officers to enhance safety.

In addition, Florida's state colleges, as well as other primarily two-year colleges across the country, utilize open-admission policies, not only allowing, but encouraging everyone in the community to apply and further their education. This makes these colleges more susceptible to threats than colleges that practice selective admissions. Building a fence around these schools

and hiring security guards to monitor every individual who enters is not realistic. Schools should explore what additional steps could and should be taken to ensure that individuals on campus have a legitimate purpose for being there.

Recommendations for Student Services Staff Members

The best way to understand safety is through knowledge. Student services staff members should become familiar with their college's safety office, their website, and the amenities they offer for staff. Many colleges offer free cell phone apps, emergency text messaging services, and other ways to keep their employees up to date on safety issues. It is recommended that all staff maximize their safety by utilizing as many of these means as possible. In addition, being knowledgeable about what crimes are listed on a school's annual Clery report can help a staff member see crime patterns. This could help them realize what crimes are common on their campus, allowing them to take the proper safety precautions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Similar research studies could be conducted at other Florida state colleges in both urban and rural areas to obtain a more complete picture of female perceptions of safety. In addition, speaking to more staff members would give greater depth in determining if these results are representative of female staff members. Furthermore, conducting a study that utilizes a mixed-methods approach would allow for additional information to obtain a more accurate picture of how much emphasis female employees place on different aspects of safety. A survey to gauge safety perceptions followed by individual interviews should allow the researcher to present a more comprehensive picture of safety on a college campus.

Another area worthy of research is the effect of colleague support within student services. Lock and Strong's social construction theory tenet of social interaction seemed to play the biggest role with these women, as the most prevalent idea mentioned throughout all six interview was feeling safe when with their colleagues. The idea of colleague support within non-supervisory female student services staff members is a topic that seems to warrant further investigation.

Reflection

When I embarked on the dissertation, I knew it would be an arduous and lengthy process, but I had no idea of the challenges I would have to overcome just to begin my research. In my original research proposal, I had planned to create a survey that assessed students' perceptions of safety on a state college campus. I identified the right people to obtain permission to have a survey sent to all current students through the school's email system, because students emails are not directory information and thus not accessible to the public, due to FERPA laws. I spent the next two years conducting my literature review, creating a survey, and drafting a proposal. By the time I successfully defended my proposal, and received IRB permission from my institution and the state college where I was planning to conduct my research, two things happened that I could not have predicted.

First, some of the senior student affairs staff members who had originally given me permission to send my survey out to their student population had retired or moved on to different positions. This proved to be problematic, as the new administrators were not supportive of my study and did not approve of my survey being released to the student population. The reasons

that these new administrators were not comfortable with my survey being administered to the student population was due to the second issue I faced: active shooters had become the top headline on the nightly news. The shooting at Umpqua Community College in the fall of 2015 took place just days before I asked for my final permission to send out my survey, gauging students' perceptions of safety while on campus.

I was at an impasse. All my research over the past two years was coming to a halt, through no fault of my own. I attempted to adjust my survey to make it more acceptable to the new administrators, but they still denied my request to administer the survey. In an effort to avoid having to change my topic and rewrite my proposal, I reached out to two other state colleges where I had contacts, in the hopes of finding a school to conduct my research. Unfortunately, I received the same general response from both state colleges; they did not want to bring up the topic of safety with their students due to the current national climate on active shooters and safety on college campuses.

The tragedy at Umpqua Community College was heartbreaking and only made me more committed to my research. In fact, the Virginia Tech tragedy in 2007 was what sparked my interested in campus safety as a dissertation topic. However, the topic was too real, too recent, and too raw for administrators to allow me to discuss safety with students. I believe that had I asked a few months earlier the response would have been different. Of course, there was no way for me to know what would be happening in the country just days before I was to begin conducting my research. These are all real problems that can affect any student attempting to conduct research, so having a backup plan is always a good idea. These are things one cannot plan for but must overcome in the pursuit of obtaining a doctoral degree.

At that point I had no other choice but to change my study drastically. Knowing that I would not be able to obtain access to student emails, I decided to change my study to focus on staff rather than students. Obtaining access to student services staff members would not have the same obstacles as obtaining student information. Employee directories at colleges were available and accessible to the public. This allowed me access to identify and contact those who made up my population. Upon realizing this, I decided to change my methodology from a quantitative to a qualitative study requiring staff interviews. Though the methodology and population changed, the topic of my research stayed the same, perceptions of safety on the state college campus.

Once I committed to the change, my qualitative study began to fall into place, and now that I am finished, I cannot imagine having conducting my research any other way. I am amazed at how much I learned, and looking back, I can already see how I could have improved my study. Writing interview questions is an art, and it takes practice to create the perfect interview. When I was reading and rereading my interview transcripts I noticed areas that were lacking, where I wished I had more information or had asked different questions. I also asked some questions that did not result in much useful information. This is something one can only learn by doing, and I learned a great deal from conducting my interviews.

I knew my research would generate themes, but I was not prepared for the contradictory themes of concerns versus lack of concern. I did not expect to hear an informant tell me how she looks around her office for places to hide in case of an active shooter, but almost in the next breath tells me she feels safe on campus. This just shows that human beings are complex and cannot be reduced to a statistic. Individuals have their own stories, and those stories influence how they view the world. This is the essence of my theoretical framework, social construction

theory. I hope this research allows college administrators to see the complexities of studying a concept such as safety and allows them to take the time to get to know their employees to provide an environment that fosters a feeling of safety.

APPENDIX A
CORRESPONDENCE WITH PARTICIPANTS

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Subject: Safety and security research study

Body of email:

Good afternoon. My name is Catherine Shand (formerly Chimera), a doctoral student at The University of Central Florida working on my dissertation in Educational Leadership EdD program. I am conducting a study regarding safety on two-year college campuses and am looking for informants to participate in this research.

To collect data I will be conducting interviews with the informants. The interview will last no more than one hour, and will be held in a mutually convenient location. I will be asking the informants a few straightforward questions about your experience at your institution with safety and security. The interviews are scheduled to be held in July and August of 2016. All informants must meet the following criteria: identify as female, are currently working in a non-supervisory student services position, and have worked at their specific institution for at least one year.

In order to ensure confidentiality, informants' names will never be used, and anything you share will not be linked back to you. Each informant will be given a pseudonym for the written study results. If you are interested in participating please contact me at cchimera@knights.ucf.edu or call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Your participation will help advance the knowledge of safety and security at two-year colleges!

Catherine R. Shand
UCF Doctoral Candidate
cchimera@knights.ucf.edu

Subject: Thank you for your participation

Email body:

Dear Informant,

Thank you very much for participating in my research study. Your time and energy are very much appreciated and will help advance the safety and security discussion on two-year college campuses. Your thoughts and comments will be held in confidence and you will not be identified at any point. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks again,

Catherine R. Chimera
UCF Doctoral Candidate
cchimera@knights.ucf.edu

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Part 1 Demographic Questions

1. What is your position on campus?
2. How long have you worked in this position?
3. How long have you lived in this area?
4. Where did you primarily grow up? (Urban, suburban, rural)
5. How old are you?
6. What race do you identify as?
7. Do you identify as Hispanic?
8. What is your educational background?

Part 2 Subject-Matter Questions

Meaning and Understanding

9. What does the word safe mean to you?
10. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'crime on campus' and how does that make you feel?
11. How do you react to news of campus violence from an online article versus the evening news, versus word of mouth?
12. Which method of learning about crime and safety would you give the most credence to, online articles, evening news shows, word of mouth from colleagues or word of mouth from family and friends?

Social Interaction

13. Tell me about your discussions about safety with your co-workers?
    a. What types of things do you discuss with your colleagues?
    b. How often and where do these discussions occur?
14. Tell me about your discussions regarding safety with your family and friends?
    a. What types of things are discussed?
    b. How often and where do these discussions occur?
15. Have you ever been the victim of a crime on or off campus?
    a. If yes, tell me about the crime?
    b. How has that experience shaped your views of safety?
16. Have you ever visited your campus safety office?
17. Have you ever visited your campus safety's website?
    a. If yes, how often and why?
18. Have you ever had to use any campus safety amenities?

a. If yes, when and why?

19. Have you ever had any interactions with the campus disciplinary process?
    a. If yes, when why, and what was the result?
    b. How did that experience influence your perceptions of safety?

Time and Place

20. How do you perceive your personal safety while off campus?
21. What types of places do you feel unsafe off campus? Why?
22. How do you perceive your personal safety while on campus?
23. What types of places do you feel unsafe on campus? Why?
24. How would you rate your campus for employee safety?
25. Have your perceptions of safety changed in the last 10 years?
    a. If so how and why?

Meaning and Understanding

26. Explain to me your understanding of the Clery Act and your college's annual Clery report?

    The interviewee will be given their college's 2014 Clery Report

27. What does this report mean to you?
28. How does this change your perceptions of safety on campus?

Wrap-up

29. Is there anything that you feel is pertinent to this conversation that we haven't talked about that you would like to share?

APPENDIX C
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Catherine Chimera**

Date: **June 27, 2016**

Dear Researcher:

On 06/27/2016, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	FEMALE STUDENT SERVICES STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY ON A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY
Investigator:	Catherine Chimera
IRB Number:	SBE-16-12352
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 06/27/2016 08:15:22 AM EDT

IRB Manager

APPENDIX D
INFORMANT INFORMED CONSENT

FEMALE STUDENT SERVICES STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY ON A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: Catherine R. Chimera, Doctoral Candidate

Faculty Advisor: J. Thomas Owens, PhD

Investigational Site(s): Community colleges

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study, which will include perceptions about safety and security from female student services staff members. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you identify as a female student services staff member working at a two-year college. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

The person doing this research is a student within the UCF College of Education. Because the researcher is a graduate student, she is being guided by J. Thomas Owens, a UCF faculty advisor in the Educational Leadership doctoral program.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.

- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to learn about the perceptions of safety from female student services staff members. Information regarding how perceptions are formed including interactions with others on campus. This will add to the literature on the nature of safety and security on college campuses.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Informants will be asked to participate in a one-hour long interview. During the interview demographic questions will be asked, followed by the research questions.

- Each informant will spend approximately one hour in the interview
- The informant and the researcher will be the only ones in the interview
- The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient confidential location

Location: Informants will be able to meet for the interview at a location that is convenient for them. The researcher will be available during evenings and weekends to accommodate the informants' schedules.

Time required: We expect that you will be in this research study for approximately one hour. This will be done outside of working hours.

Audiotaping: You will be audiotaped during this study. If you do not want to be audiotaped, you will not be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. The audio recording will be kept on a password protected cell phone. The audiotapes will be erased or destroyed when the researcher successfully defends the final dissertation.

Risks: Some of the questions in the interview ask about prior victimization as it relates to safety on campus. If at any point you feel uncomfortable you may skip a question in the interview, or end the interview, subsequently ending your participation in the research study, at no detriment to you. If any of the topics discussed bring up painful memories, you are encouraged to seek assistance from UCF's Community Counseling Center.

UCF's Community Counseling and Research Center
College of Education and Human Performance, 192
Dept. of Child, Family and Community Sciences
Orlando, FL 32816-1250
407-823-1250

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study to people who have a need to review this information. The only person who will see your name will be the researcher.

In the interview transcripts, notes, and the final document you will only be referred to by your pseudonym. All written notes, documents and audiotapes will be kept in a locked drawer. All audiotapes, written notes, and documents will be destroyed after the researcher successfully defends the dissertation.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to: Dr. J. Thomas Owens, Faculty Supervisor, College of Education and Human Performance at (407) 823-0385 or by email at james.owens@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human informants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

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