

## VULNERABILITY, LOCUS OF CONTROL, AND WORRY ABOUT CRIME

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of vulnerability has been widely used to explain the empirical relationship between certain sociodemographic characteristics and anxieties about criminal victimization. Building upon this conceptual base, the present study proposes a psychological operationalization of vulnerability. Specifically, the relationship between locus of control and worry about crime is explored through an analysis of data generated from a survey of urban residents. Attention is focused upon two particular issues. The first concerns the extent to which locus of control scores mediate the relationships involving sociodemographic indicators of vulnerability and worry about crime. The second issue relates to an investigation of the mechanisms that provide the theoretical and empirical linkage between locus of control and worry.

### INTRODUCTION

An analytic theme that pervades much of the theoretical and empirical literature on public perceptions of crime relates to the attempt to understand public anxiety about criminal victimization as an expression of vulnerability to the experience of victimization. As with most concepts in this literature, however, vulnerability has rarely enjoyed consistent usage and there is, among researchers, nothing like a consensus regarding the way in which the term should be most appropriately defined or operationalized.

In general, the concept of vulnerability is meant to emphasize the feelings of susceptibility and openness to attack that influence the processes by which definitions of criminal danger are constructed and regarded as salient bases for action. In particular, the concept of vulnerability has served as a useful heuristic device for explaining the reasons why some social groups, such as women and the elderly, are more anxious about the prospects of victimization than the objective rates

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This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

of such behavior would seem to suggest is necessary.

To date, most of the empirical research that bears upon the vulnerability theme has emphasized the physical and social dimensions of this concept. Thus, it is argued that attitudinal and behavioural manifestations of concern with crime are most pronounced among certain social and demographic groups, because the members of such groups feel they possess physical, social, and economic characteristics that sensitize them to the potential risks and consequences of victimization episodes. A lack of physical or social resources may increase in an anticipatory way, it is argued, the perceived costs of potential criminal victimization and thereby promote worry and fear.

In contrast to this body of research, the present paper focuses attention upon some psychological dimensions of vulnerability. Specifically, interest is directed toward an examination of perceptions of personal powerlessness and the theoretical and empirical relationships that might link such perceptions to anxieties about crime.

The paper begins with a general discussion of the concept of vulnerability and a review of some of the major uses to which the concept has been put in the empirical literature.

This discussion is followed by an attempt to construct an argument that addresses the issue of powerlessness as a form of vulnerability and its theoretical relationship to perceptions of the threat and risk of crime and anxieties about crime. In this regard, some specific hypotheses are suggested.

Following that, data generated by a survey of urban residents are utilized for the purpose of empirically investigating these hypothesized relationships.

The paper concludes with a consideration of the substantive meaning of these findings and some of their implications for future research.

### ON THE CONCEPT OF VULNERABILITY

A recent review of much of the empirical literature relating to the concept of vulnerability to stressful life events has been provided by Perloff (1983) who defines vulnerability as "a belief that one is susceptible to future negative outcomes and unprotected from danger or misfortune" (p. 43). As used by Perloff (and many other contemporary writers), the term denotes a type of expectation or awareness of the extent to which one may be particularly open to the risks or consequences of injurious life experiences. As such, the term suggests a distinctive posture toward the social and physical world which has important implications for the ways in which those worlds are understood as objects of thought and action. As a sensitizing concept, vulnerability forces a consideration of the ways in which individuals differentially anticipate criminal victimization rather than the ways in which they may be said to "react to crime."

The concept of vulnerability has been particularly useful in attempts to explain the manner in which crime-related anxieties are distributed across categories of sociodemographic membership. It has been demonstrated empirically by several researchers that, in particular, women, older persons, and those of lower socioeconomic status tend to be more likely than their comparison groups to express fear and worry about the possibilities of becoming crime victims (Baumer, 1978; Garofalo, 1981; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). It should be pointed out in this regard that with respect to age and socioeconomic status these relationships tend

to be weaker and to be reported with less consistency than in the case of sex (Baumer, 1978; Dubow, McCabe, & Kaplan, 1979).

Nonetheless, with the exception of socioeconomic status, the significance of the empirical relationships involving sociodemographic membership and crime anxieties appeared paradoxical to early researchers. Although women and the elderly seemed to be most worried about crime, they were also least likely to be victimized (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). To the extent that such worries are conceptualized as, in some way, a response to crime, there appeared to be an irrational quality (Jaycox, 1978) to the fears women and older persons express.

To some extent, the concept of vulnerability provides a resolution of this paradox by emphasizing the anticipatory rather than the reactive nature of fear and worry. To the degree that people believe they are vulnerable, they may define the threat and risk of crime with a level of trepidation that does not (and would not be expected to) correspond in any precise way to the objective realities of threat and risk. Thus, the concept of vulnerability encourages a view of the fearing-crime process that places an analytic emphasis upon an understanding of the ways in which some people (and not others) acquire a sense of susceptibility. The sources of fear of crime must be sought therefore in the biographies, characteristics, and social circumstances of the fearful rather than in some external world of criminal risk.

The antecedents of perceived vulnerability have been discussed by a number of researchers (Baumer, 1978; Braungart, Braungart, & Hoyer, 1980; Garofalo, 1981; Hindelang et al., 1978; Stinchcombe et al., 1980). Most attention has focused upon the interplay of physical and social characteristics and their relationship to a belief in the susceptibility to victimization.

In this respect, Skogan and Maxfield (1981) have argued that heightened fear of crime among women and older persons is attributable, in large part, to a subjective sense of physical inefficacy. For many women and elderly, they suggest, confidence in the ability to resist personal crime is undermined by a perception of diminished strength, agility, and aggression *vis a vis* the young males who pose the modal threat with respect to such crimes. In a similar way Riger and Gordon (1981) concluded, "women's physiques rather than their psyches account for a substantial proportion of the differences between women's fear and that of men" (p. 81). Their research revealed most women in their sample were likely to judge themselves as less physically competent than the "average" woman or man and that these judgements were significantly related to fear scores. In a related study Cohn, Kidder, and Harvey (1978) found self-defense training had the effect of increasing women's sense of personal physical efficacy and thus of reducing their fear of victimization.

Skogan and Maxfield (1981) distinguished physical vulnerability from social vulnerability. While the former dimension is particularly relevant to women and the elderly, the latter is, they argued, more pertinent to an understanding of heightened fear of crime among racial and socioeconomic minorities. Their finding that blacks and the poor are more fearful than whites and the non-poor was explicable, they maintained, in terms of a lack of access to resources which would mitigate against the risk and the seriousness of the consequences of criminal victimization. According to Skogan and Maxfield:



In part this is a direct function of income for people with little money simply cannot easily afford to replace stolen items or repair damage to their property. They may also find that time lost from work as a result of efforts to restore the equilibrium in the aftermath of victimization directly affects their pocket books. Private insurance does not help them much for they are among the least likely to be insured. Finally, survey measures of perception of the efficiency and efficacy of public services, including the police, indicate that blacks and the poor are less satisfied than their counterparts with those services (p. 74).

In general terms, then, researchers have argued that physical and social factors predispose individuals to anticipate the risks and consequences of criminal victimization in quite distinct ways. However, the emphasis in the empirical literature upon the physical and social character of vulnerability has not been balanced by equal attention to the psychological dimensions of this concept. To date, relatively little effort has been directed toward the analysis of the ways in which particular generalized world views or cognitive styles may be more specifically manifested in terms of a heightened concern about crime. In the next section, an attempt is made to provide a theoretical exploration of the relationships involving perceptions of crime and one such psychological construct. It will be argued that measures of powerlessness may be understood as indicators of an expression of psychological vulnerability which, like the forms of physical and social vulnerability discussed above, contribute to crime-related anxieties.

### POWERLESSNESS AND VULNERABILITY TO CRIME

The concept of powerlessness has a very long and rich history in the social sciences. In sociological usage, the concept is generally understood as a variant of social alienation. The body of relevant psychological research has been more specifically focused upon locus of control. In each case, the accumulated literature is vast. The intention in the present section is not to review those more general literatures, since comprehensive reviews are readily available (Lefcourt, 1976; Lystand, 1972; Phares, 1976; Seeman, 1975), but to restrict discussion to a consideration of the extent to which generalized feelings of personal inefficacy may be related to anxieties about criminal victimization. It will be suggested that subjective powerlessness, like physical and social vulnerability, is indicative of a particular type of predisposition toward the risks, threats, and worries that individuals associate with crime.

It may be argued that, in a very real sense, criminal victimization represents a type of experience that brings the sense of personal power of those who anticipate such experiences into very sharp focus. Stripped to their barest essentials, personal victimizations represent situations in which a human agent pursues some course of action that is physically or materially threatening to the interests of another. It is, according to Stinchcombe et al. (1980), precisely from the unique situational and environmental characteristics of criminal victimization that a fear of crime derives, even though equally or more injurious encounters such as automobile or household accidents (which possess different characteristics) are not routinely viewed with fear.

However, as has been detailed above, individuals do not anticipate either the occurrence or the ability to manage the outcomes of such events with equal

trepidation. Thus, to the extent that people perceive themselves to be physically or socially resourceful, their fears are to a considerable extent ameliorated. To this might be added the hypothesis that to the degree that individuals are committed to a view that they are masters of their own fates, they are less likely to define their personal safety as problematic. Conversely, it may be argued that if individuals believe the course of their lives is determined by fate, chance, or the actions of others and that personal mastery is low, a sense of susceptibility to victimization is likely to be exacerbated. Thus, while vulnerability may relate to physical and social characteristics, it may be maintained that, at another analytic level, the general view that one is lacking in personal power may express, in part, the psychological bases of vulnerability.

In general, therefore, it is expected that measures of generalized powerlessness would be related in significant fashion to indicators of crime-related anxieties. However, the need to specify with somewhat greater precision the form and meaning of these relationships suggests two additional issues that require elaboration. The first relates to the possible interrelationships which join powerlessness as a psychological source of vulnerability to the previously discussed sociodemographic indicators of physical and social vulnerability. The second concerns the nature of the intervening variables that might link measures of powerlessness to indicators of crime-related anxiety.

With respect to the former issue, it should be noted there is some evidence to suggest that those sociodemographic group members who are most concerned about crime are also those who express the most acute feelings of powerlessness. Thus the lack of personal power like the fear of victimization is related to being of lower socioeconomic status, older, and female (Lystad, 1972; Mirowsky & Ross, 1983; Seeman, 1975). The social distribution of powerlessness appears, however, to be more strongly related to socioeconomic variables than to either age or gender.

This distributional correspondence involving personal powerlessness and the concern about personal victimization raises the empirical possibility that measures of a generalized sense of personal influence may mediate the relationships between sex, age, and socioeconomic status on the one hand and fear of crime on the other. Put more succinctly, is psychological vulnerability the medium through which the effects of physical and social vulnerability are manifested? Alternatively, it is necessary to determine whether the effects of powerlessness upon fear are independent of the effects of sociodemographic vulnerability.

A second set of questions relates to the perceptual mechanisms which link perceptions of personal powerlessness to anxiety about crime. Two such mechanisms may be distinguished. The first which may be termed *threat* refers to the definition of the environment in which one lives and moves as more or less dangerous (Merry, 1981). The process of appraisal (Lawton, Nahemow, Yaffe, & Feldman, 1976) by which individuals attempt to assess environmental situations with respect to the threats they present reflects an understanding of the environment in terms of the meanings which environmental cues have for individuals. Thus, environments do not objectively threaten but are subjectively defined as doing so. Given this, it is not unreasonable to suggest those who feel a generalized sense of personal powerlessness may be more aware of, and sensitive to, learned cues denoting danger in the environment. If this is the case, it would be expected

that a measure of threat would mediate the effect of powerlessness upon fear.

A second possible explanatory mechanism may be termed *risk*. Whereas threat is addressed to a view of the external environment, risk refers to the individual's view of him- or herself in the context of that environment. Risk, therefore, expresses the individual's subjective probability of victimization (Block & Long, 1973). It may be argued that, given equal levels of threat, a differential in risk may explain a relationship between powerlessness and fear. To the extent that individuals perceive a lack of mastery over the experiences which affect them, they may overestimate the probability that they will become objects of criminal harm.

The present analysis uses data from a survey of a sample of residents in a western Canadian urban area for the purpose of investigating these issues. A discussion of the sample, measures, and analytic procedures used in this study follows.

### THE RESEARCH

The data are drawn from the Vancouver Urban Survey conducted in Vancouver, British Columbia, from October to December, 1983. Respondents were selected using a two-stage cluster sampling procedure. The first stage involved the selection of sets of five households. In the second stage, a household member was selected through the use of a randomly assigned selection grid. The relevant universe for this study consisted of all Vancouver households in the 1981 census of Canada. The sampling procedures yielded 489 completed interviews.

Risk was operationalized in terms of the respondent's subjective probability of victimization relevant to several specific crimes.<sup>1</sup> A danger scale was constructed by factor analyzing four items which asked about the criminal threats they perceived in their local neighbourhoods.<sup>2</sup> Crime anxiety was defined for research purposes in terms of cumulative scores from items that asked respondents how much they "worry about the possibility" they could become victims of several specific crimes.<sup>3</sup> All measures were scored in a positive direction such that higher scores indicate greater values of the dimension in question.

Sex was treated as a dichotomous dummy variable (0 = Male, 1 = Female) while age was expressed as an interval level measure in yearly increments. An index of socioeconomic status was constructed by summing three traditional socioeconomic indicators. The first two indicators, education and income, had associated with them 12 and 48 categories respectively. The third item, occupational prestige, was operationalized in terms of the occupational prestige of the principle contributor to household income. This was accomplished through the assignment of scores derived from the Blighen scale of occupational prestige (Blighen & McRoberts, 1976). For each of the three measures combined to produce the socioeconomic index, higher scores reflected higher status rankings.

Feelings of personal powerlessness were assessed through the utilization of Levenson's (1974; 1981) locus of control scales which represent a significant modification of the locus of control measure previously introduced by Rotter (1966). The earlier measure was intended to assess the extent to which people believe they exercise control over their lives or the degree to which they feel their destinies are beyond their own control and are determined by fate, chance, or powerful others.



TABLE 1  
Correlation Matrix

	Sex	Age	Socio-economic Status	Internal	Powerful Others	Chance	Threat	Risk	Worry
Sex	1.00								
Age	.039	1.00							
Socio-economic Status	-.103*	-.111**	1.00						
Internal	-.054	.024	.049	1.00					
Powerful Others	-.003	.061	-.150***	-.009	1.00				
Chance	.008	.101*	-.301***	-.094*	.599***	1.00			
Threat	-.094*	-.123**	-.106*	-.017	.136**	.135**	1.00		
Risk	.136**	.020	-.219***	-.067	.305***	.348***	.351***	1.00	
Worry	.217***	-.128**	-.122**	-.096*	.257***	.285***	.289***	.670***	1.00
X	.573	41.560	2.007	37.447	24.594	23.779	1.779	13.481	16.090
S.D.	.495	18.078	1.000	5.296	7.001	7.155	.831	10.601	11.517

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*  $p < .01$ \*\*\*  $p < .001$ 

In a critique of the Rotter scale, Levenson (1974) argued that the construct employed too broad a definition of external control and that it was necessary to empirically distinguish belief in chance expectancies from a powerful others orientation. Levenson's modification involved the construction of three new scales (Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance). These I, P, and C scales comprise three eight-item subscales with Likert formats which are presented to subjects as a unified scale of 24 items. A detailed discussion of scale reliability, scoring procedures, and empirical correlates may be found elsewhere (Levenson, 1981).

Because the measures employed in this analysis may be treated either as dichotomous dummy variables or internal level measures, correlation and regression procedures were employed for the purpose of investigating the issues discussed above.

## FINDINGS

Univariate and bivariate data relating to the variables used in this analysis may be found in Table 1. An examination of the univariate distributions of the I, P, and C scales indicates that, consistent with earlier research, the mean value of the former scale is significantly higher than the means of either of the latter two. As Levenson notes:

Such a finding is expected for two reasons: 1) For most Western societies belief in personal control is given cultural perception, and b) a certain degree of personal means-end connection is basic to survival and coping in the world (1981, p. 22).

More germane to the central concerns of this research, however, the data in

the body of Table 1 indicate moderate associations involving both external control orientations and worry about crime. The relationship involving the Internal Control scale is considerably weaker.

It should also be noted that sex is not significantly related to any of the subscales, age is significantly related (in a positive direction) to only the C scale, and socioeconomic status is negatively related to both the P and C scales. The presence of significant relationships involving external control measures and age and socioeconomic status and the absence of significant relationships involving internal control and these same variables may seem paradoxical. However, as Levenson (1981) points out, high scores on each subscale should only be interpreted as indicating high expectations of control by the source indicated. Similarly, low scores should only be interpreted as reflecting a tendency not to believe in that locus of control. Thus, it is not possible to interpret, for example, a low I score as indicating a subject believes in chance; it is only appropriate to suggest the subject does not perceive him- or herself as determining outcomes. Thus, any interpretation of bivariate relationships involving these scales must be informed by an awareness of the distinctiveness of these control dimensions.

Another notable and unexpected finding is the relationship between age and worry. Contrary to expectations, in this sample worry about crime decreases rather than increases with age. As indicated above, however, the empirical relationships between age and measures of crime anxiety have been less consistently reported in the research literature than those involving sex or socioeconomic status.

Table 2 permits an assessment of the extent to which the zero-order relationships involving the sociodemographic variables and worry about crime are mediated by the locus of control measures. The entry of those control variables has no effect on the zero-order association between sex and worry; and in the case of age, there is some suggestion that the zero-order relationship is being suppressed by the external locus of control measures. With respect to the socioeconomic measure, it does appear, however, that the P and C scales mediate the effect of this variable upon worry. The third-order partial reduces the original relationship to well below statistical significance.

Table 3 contains the structural equation coefficients used to estimate the path effects diagrammed in Figure 1. At the bottom of the table are the  $R^2$  values associated with the addition of subsequent sets of variables. The difference in the  $R^2$  values for the equation containing only the sociodemographic variables and the equations containing those variables and I, P, and C scores is significant ( $R^2_1 - R^2_2 = .093$ ,  $F(3,485) = 18.235$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, the measure of psychological vulnerability adds significantly to the variation in worry that is accounted for by physical and social vulnerability. A test for first-order interaction between each of the control scales and each sociodemographic variable proved to be non-significant ( $F(9,480) = 2.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It can be concluded, therefore, that the effects of powerlessness are additive with respect to the sociodemographic measure.

The model of path effects provided in Figure 1 is intended to convey an hypothesized set of casual relationships among the variables. Effect coefficients were derived according to the procedures described by Alwin and Hauser (1975).

As Figure 1 illustrates, the fully recursive model distinguishes four types of variables which were entered into regression equations in sequential fashion. The



TABLE 2

Correlations Involving Sex, Age, Socioeconomic Status, and  
Worry about Crime, Controlling for Locus of Control Measures: r

Worry about Crime Controlling for					
	Zero-Order	Internal	Powerful Others	Chance	Third-Order Controls
Sex	.217***	.213***	.225***	.224***	.223***
Age	-.128**	-.127**	-.149***	-.165***	-.164***
Socioeconomic Status	-.122**	-.118**	-.087*	-.039	-.042

\*  $p < .05$   
\*\*  $p < .01$   
\*\*\*  $p < .001$

TABLE 3

Structural Equation Coefficients for Predictor Variables  
and Worry about Crime: Beta and  $R^2$

Sex	.211***	.216***	.196***	.138***
Age	-.150***	-.168***	-.137**	-.120***
Socioeconomic Status	-.117**	-.034	-.018	.043
Internal		-.059	-.060	-.041
Powerful Others		.146**	.127*	.044
Chance		.198***	.183***	.062
Threat			.209***	.039
Risk				.607***
$R^2 =$	.079	.172	.213	.491

\*  $p < .05$   
\*\*  $p < .001$   
\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

FIGURE 1

Worry about Crime: Model of Path Effects

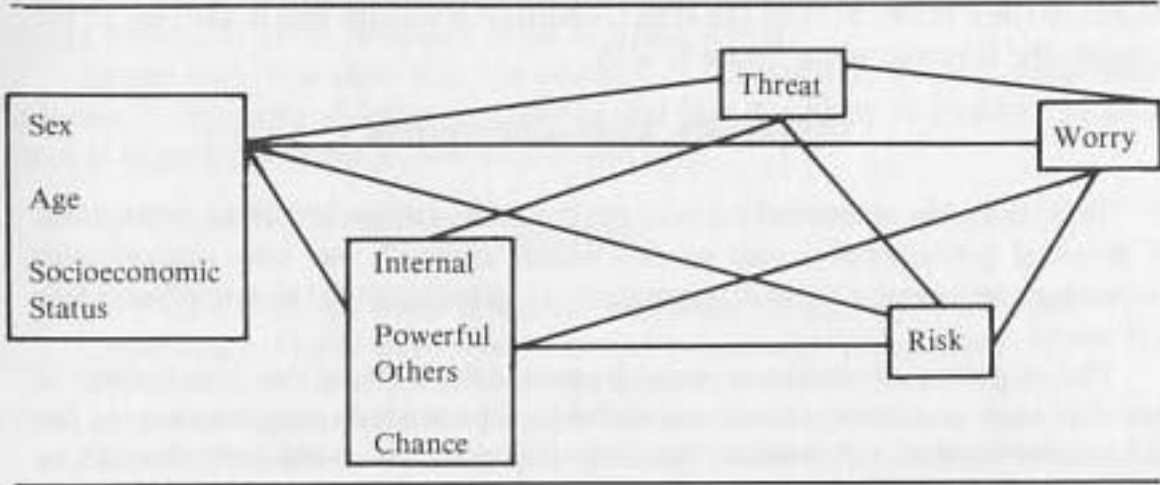


TABLE 4

Worry about Crime: Decomposition of Path Effects

Predetermined Variable	Total Effect	Locus of Control	Indirect Effect Via Threat	Risk	Direct Effect
Sex	.211	-.005	.020	.058	.138
Age	-.150	.018	-.031	-.017	-.120
Socioeconomic Status	-.117	-.083	-.016	-.061	.043
Internal	-.059		.001	-.019	-.041
Powerful Others	.146		.019	.083	.044
Chance	.198		.015	.121	.062
Threat	.209			.170	.039
Risk	.607				.607

sociodemographic indicators of physical and social vulnerability were entered first, followed by the I, P, and C scales. In both cases, the variables were entered in blocks. In the final two stages, threat and risk were entered individually. The regression coefficients for the model are contained in Table 3 while the effect coefficients themselves may be found in Table 4.

An examination of the effects coefficients reaffirms the results of the correlational analysis. It will be noted that with respect to sex and age most of the effect is direct (65% and 80% respectively) and thus not mediated by other variables in the model. With respect to socioeconomic status, however, a considerable proportion of the effect (71%) is mediated by locus of control scores.

The effect coefficients in Table 4 also permit an empirical examination of a second set of issues raised earlier. Specifically, these issues relate to the mechanisms which intervene in the locus of control-worry relationship. It was suggested the effects of locus of control might be mediated either by the perception of threat (environmental appraisal) or by the perception of the risk (the extent to which one views oneself as a potential object of criminal harm). It is apparent from Table 4 that while both external control measures have moderate total effects, their direct effects upon worry are considerably smaller. In both cases, the indirect effect is attributable primarily to the influence of risk. With respect to the P scale, 57% of the effect is conveyed via risk and in the case of the C scale, the corresponding figure is 61%.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study has attempted to examine the relationships involving perceptions of personal powerlessness and anxiety about crime. It has been argued such perceptions represent a form of psychological vulnerability that exacerbates fear and worry.

The empirical investigation revealed some of the linkages that join feelings of powerlessness to other forms of vulnerability. The analysis suggests that sex (an indicator of physical vulnerability) does not influence worry indirectly through an

effect upon external control. There was evidence, however, that the effect of socioeconomic status (an indicator of social vulnerability) upon worry largely results from the fact that socioeconomic status affects external control and external control affects worry. This suggests that a lack of social resources adequate to protect oneself from the occurrence or consequences of criminal victimization may reflect the more generalized condition of life in the lower socioeconomic strata; and that these conditions find expression in a perception of diminished control over life experiences. The finding that age was not related to worry in the predicted direction calls into question the assumption that age, like sex, may be an indicator of physical vulnerability. The analysis also revealed belief in external control has an effect upon worry over and above the effects attributable to the sociodemographic indicators of vulnerability; and the effects of the external control are additive with respect to the indicators of physical and social vulnerability.

This examination also suggests quite strongly that belief in external control affects worry largely through an effect upon risk. Thus, a sense that what happens to one is dependent upon chance or the actions of powerful others increases the subjective probability of victimization, and it is out of this view of oneself as a likely object of criminal harm that worry emanates.

Most generally, these findings point to the complexity and the multidimensional nature of vulnerability to victimization. While there is value to be derived from approaches which emphasize the physical and social character of this concept, it would appear there are distinct and equally salient psychological dimensions as well.

The results of this research suggest two important directions which might be taken by future investigators. The first relates to the conceptual and operational meaning of vulnerability. There is a need to refine and make explicit the empirical character of this concept and to clarify and distinguish among its various manifestations. With respect to vulnerability as a psychological construct, some research energy could be directed toward the development of a set of locus of control measures that relate directly and specifically to criminal victimization. Such specialized scales have proven fruitful in the investigation of other specific activity domains such as health care and alcohol use (Lefcourt, 1981).

A second set of research implications concerns the need to focus attention upon the social psychological processes by which individuals acquire a sense of their own vulnerability. While the claim is frequently made in the literature that an understanding of differentials in socialization is essential to comprehensive theory of public anxiety about crime, there has to date been little systematic attempt to explore these processes (Burt & Estep, 1981).

In any case, it is clear that the concept of vulnerability holds considerable promise in the study of crime perceptions and that it is likely to continue to be a central organizing theme of research in this area.

## RESUME

On a largement utilisé le concept de vulnérabilité pour expliquer le lien empirique qui existe entre certaines caractéristiques sociodémographiques et les anxiétés concernant la victimisation criminelle. A partir de ce fondement conceptuel, la présente étude propose une formulation des étapes psychologiques de la vulnérabilité. On explore spécifiquement la relation entre le lieu de



contrôle et le souci concernant le crime à partir d'une analyse de données recueillies dans un sondage auprès de résidents urbains. On porte une attention particulière à deux aspects. D'abord la relation entre les indicateurs sociodémographiques de vulnérabilité et la préoccupation par rapport au crime se fait à partir de l'étendue des scores du lieu de contrôle. On examine ensuite les mécanismes qui fournissent un lien théorique et empirique entre le lieu de contrôle et la préoccupation par rapport au crime.

## NOTES

1. For each of five offences, respondents were asked to indicate "how likely you think it is that these crimes will actually happen to you in the next year." Items were accompanied by a ten-point scale ranging from "not at all likely" to "extremely likely." The crimes about which respondents were asked were: (a) break and enter while away, (b) break and enter while home, (c) use of a weapon to take something by force, (d) cheat or con out of a large amount of money, and (e) sexual assault. Responses were combined into an additive index (Cronbach's Alpha = .83).
2. The danger scale included the following items: (a) "In your neighbourhood, how likely is it that a house or apartment other than yours would be broken into?"; (b) "In your neighbourhood, how likely is it that a car parked on the street at night would be broken into?"; (c) "In your neighbourhood, how likely is it that a woman would be threatened if she were walking alone on the street at night?"; (d) "Placing the rate of crime five years ago at the centre of the scale, can you show me with the help of this card where, in your opinion, the rate of crime is today in this neighbourhood?". The first three items employed 11-point scales ranging from "not at all likely" (0) to "extremely likely" (10). The remaining item was accompanied by an 11-point scale ranging from -5 (much lower) to +5 (much higher). The factor analysis yielded a strong single factor solution with an associated Cronbach's Alpha value of .78.
3. The crimes about which respondents were asked were identical to those used in the risk index. Also, a similar set of response categories was employed. In this case the 10-point scale ranged from 0 = worry - "not at all" to 10 = worry - "a great deal." The index constructed by summing responses to the worry items had an associated alpha value of .80.

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