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Fear of Crime' & Media Representation of Crime in Denver

Ryan M. Martinez
Regis University

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‘Fear of Crime’ & Media Representation of Crime in Denver

By

Ryan M Martinez

A Research Projected Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Criminology

REGIS UNIVERSITY

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[Signatures]

, Faculty Facilitator

, Thesis Advisor

, Faculty Chair
Abstract

This research project looks at the 'fear of crime' as a concept that is valuable to law enforcement agencies, politicians, and the public. By examining past research to conclude the 'fear of crime' is often studied through the use of victimization surveys despite methodology complications. 'Fear of crime' is studied quantitatively in this project in relation to media articles from The Denver Post from 2008-2010. By performing a longitudinal case study on these incidents, comparing past qualitative research on factors relating to 'fear of crime', and using content analysis of news articles, this study examined which factor if any influenced the 'fear of crime' in Downtown Denver during this time period. The results of this study indicated that there is an overrepresentation of violent crime and 'Crime Against Persons' in the media for this three year period. While it appears that media representation had no discernible among 'fear of crime' results over the three year period, it does appear that this can be explained by social disorganization and disorder theory.

Keywords: Social Disorganization, Criminology, Fear of Crime.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction
   Statement of Problem.................................................. 1
   Overview of Problem.................................................. 1
   Purpose of Project..................................................... 1
   Research Questions.................................................... 3
   Definitions..................................................................... 3
   Limitations.................................................................... 4

2. Review of Literature
   The Term ‘Fear of Crime’................................. 6
   'Fear of Crime' Paradox............................................ 7
   Gender differences in Fear of Crime............... 8
   Media Impact on Fear of Crime....................... 12
   Fear of Crime Surveys......................................... 15
   Criminological Theories....................................... 18
   Physical Environment Fear of Crime Factors...... 20

3. Proposed Methodology
   Content Analysis.................................................. 26
   Sample................................................................... 26
   Coding................................................................. 27
   Existing Statistics............................................... 28

4. Results
   Location of News Story......................................... 30
‘FEAR OF CRIME’ & MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CRIME IN DENVER

Crime by Location in Article........................................ 31
Article Offense Representation vs. Reported Crime Statistics 33
Crimes Against Persons........................................... 34
Crimes Against Property........................................... 38
Crimes Against Society............................................ 41

5. Discussion

RQ1................................................................. 43
RQ2................................................................. 45
RQ3................................................................. 46
RQ4................................................................. 47

6. Conclusion......................................................... 50

7. Appendices

Appendix A......................................................... 51

8. References...................................................... 57
Introduction

During 2009 downtown Denver experienced a string of twenty-six related assaults and robberies. The resulting four month investigation was a combination of a Denver Police Task Force, the Denver District Attorney's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Steffens, 2009). Typically, four or five African American males would taunt their target with racial slurs in an effort to coerce them into a confrontation. The suspects would then beat their victims and often rob them of personal belongings. When the thirty-five suspects were arrested, there was no ringleader for the assaults, but members were in communication with each other, according to then Denver Police Chief Gerald Whitman. All but one, of the alleged suspects had ties to the Rollin 60's or Black Disciples gang (Steffens, 2009). This case was highly publicized in the news media and presented a real challenge for city leaders. Was Downtown Denver experiencing an increase in crime or did public perception reflect the sensationalized media reports on the topic?

Statement of the Problem

Scholars argue that public fear is inextricably linked with public pressure for solutions to crime problems (Dowler, 2003). A chief reason is a number of studies focus on whether the media depiction of crime influences public attitudes towards criminal justice policy (Dowler, 2003). This study examined the media representation of crime, compared to reported crime and ‘fear of crime’ statistics and surveys available for the City of Denver from 2008-2010. Using data, the study aims to reveal an overrepresentation of violent crime in newspaper print media, in comparison to actual offenses reported and the ‘fear of crime’, and crime representation by media in Denver the year prior and following 2009.

Overview of the Problem
'Fear of crime' is a critical topic in the field of Criminology. It has received intense scrutiny for its methodology and often its link to political objectives. Although 'fear of crime' is a subjective feeling and may not reflect actual crime, it is still a quality of life determinant and important issue for those involved (Nasar et al, 1993). 'Fear of crime' is a chief concern among citizens and law enforcement agencies as a quality of life measurement. Data has ranged from victimization surveys gauging the levels of 'fear of crime' among the public, differences between demographic groups in response to their 'fear of crime', survey/victimization methodology itself, factors which contribute to 'fear of crime', and the paradox that suggests 'fear of crime' is in contrast with actual crime statistics available from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). This paradox creates a problem that though victimization rates may be low, 'fear of crime' remains high and thus a concern for law enforcement organizations and politicians alike.

It is clear combating the 'fear of crime' is as important as reducing actual crime, and it is important for law enforcement leaders to understand what factors contribute to the public's 'fear of crime', to successfully reduce it. Despite overestimation in the extent of 'fear of crime' in victimization studies, it is still a real problem that law enforcement and politicians are expected to solve. The string of assaults in Downtown Denver in 2009, provide a researchable example of well publicized crimes in which a discussion can be based around.

Media is a key component in helping to understand the paradox between likelihood of victimization and the fear of being victimized. The public’s perception and knowledge about crime, the criminal justice system, and law enforcement is largely derived from media (Dowler, 2003). Research on the effect media has on the public, often revolves around whether the coverage of violent crime creates fear among the general public (Dowler, 2003). Research to
this point has indicated mixed results on the ability of news media to create fear among the
general public (Surette, 1998). Presentation of large amounts of local crime news increases fear
in the public, while increased presentation of non-local crime news tends to make the public feel
safer by comparison (Dowler, 2003).

**Purpose of the Project**

From 2008-2010 in Denver, did the actual occurrence of crime increase in the downtown
area during the time period or rather just the 'fear of crime'? Additionally, how did media
representation of crime in change during this time period? Finally just as social disorder (broken
window) is used to describe the occurrence of crime, could it be capable of explaining 'fear of
crime' on a city level?

**Research Questions**

This study will investigate the following research questions:

RQ1: How did newspaper articles represent crime compared to *UCR/NIBRS* statistics from 2008-
2010?

RQ2: How do *UCR/NIBRS* data compare to *National Citizen Survey (NCS)* data for downtown
Denver and Denver as a whole?

RQ:3 How does media representation of crime compare to *NCS 'fear of crime' data in Denver
from 2008-2010?*

RQ4: Can social disorder and disorganization theory explain the differences in the data?

**Definitions**

Variables need to be clearly defined so readers understand the process used to reach
conclusions, and enable the study to be replicated elsewhere (Babbie, 2010). Conceptual
definitions illustrate a researcher’s viewpoint on a concept, but do not specify how the variable
will be measured (Babbie, 2010). Operational definitions narrow the description to indicate how to precisely measure and define variables that have been conceptualized (Babbie, 2010).

- ‘Fear of crime’ - 'Fear of crime' can be described using several properties; intensity, prevalence, and duration. Prevalence describes the percentage of the population that experiences the 'fear of crime' during a specific time period, and is most often how 'fear of crime' is measured on a survey (Warr, 2000).
- ‘Fear of crime’ will be measured operationally using existing data collected on the city of Denver from the annual NCS.
- Reported Crime- will be measured operationally using UCR/NIBRS data.
- Media- will consist of newspaper articles and news broadcasts.
- Printed Media- will consist of articles retrieved via LexisNexis search from the Denver Post using terms defined in the methodology.
- Social Disorder Theory- Disorder if left unchecked leads to crime by driving residents away, while at the same time sending an signal to offenders that a neighborhood is in disrepair (Carsten & Payne, 2008).
- Downtown Denver- will be represented by UCR/NIIBRS data for the central business district as defined by the Denver Police Department website.

Limitations and Delimitations

By examining only newspaper articles as the main source of crime news ignores the effects other media consumption may play in influencing 'fear of crime' and representation of crime (Dowler, 2003). Another limitation is the data collection method, this study used a random sample to generate 28 days of media articles designed to represent an entire year. This is an accepted technique in performing content analysis on news articles it also created limitation.
There were several articles that did meet the search term criteria, which focused on law changes or trials in relation to the criminal justice system, and not a recently committed offense, and thus were not included in the sample. This created limitations regarding accurate representations of the population on a larger scale, as this study was applicable only to Denver and its’ primary in-print newspaper (Babbie, 2010). Another limitation is due to the small sample size of articles, stories which featured offenses that occurred in Denver were smaller in number. Additionally most 'fear of crime' or perception of safety survey's or polls are often conducted on a national or aggregated level. The NCS results were no different and though while applicable to Denver as a whole, individual neighborhood results were not available.

NCS survey results did include information regarding citizens’ perception of safety and crime regarding the Downtown Denver area and their neighborhood. This allowed the study to focus on Downtown Denver in comparison to all other Denver metro area neighborhoods. What was considered local news in the study was also modified to include what the United States Office of Management and Budget classifies as the Denver Metro Area, allowing for greater classification of articles as local news.


Literature Review

The Term Fear of Crime

'Fear of crime' affects more individuals than crime itself, and thus there is value to treating both as separate problems (Warr, 2000). 'Fear of crime' as a criminological concept did not appear until the 1965 Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (Warr, 2000). Although 'fear of crime' is a subjective feeling and may not reflect actual crime, it is still a quality of life determinant and important issue for those involved (Nasar et al, 1993). Three decades after the Presidents Commission survey research illustrated the 'fear of crime' is more common than the actual chance for victimization (Warr, 1994). This 'fear of crime' has come to be a pervasive part of Western culture as it normalized precautionary behaviors (Warr, 1994). The term 'fear of crime' still receives heavy criticism as even the best researchers have yet to settle on a term that can be agreed on by most (Warr, 2000). Anxiety, perceived risk, emotional states, attitudes, and concern regarding declining neighborhoods have been used to describe the 'fear of crime' (Warr, 2000). A common source of confusion occurs when researchers translate 'fear of crime' into the perceived perception of victimization (Warr, 2000). Warr (2000) argues fear is not a perceived risk, but rather a consequence of it. People may experience fear in reaction to threats or environmental cues such as graffiti, litter, or darkness (Warr, 2000). Warr (2000), notes psychologists make a distinction between fear (immediate danger) and anxiety (future or past events). The 'fear of crime' as a measurement tool often is measuring the anxiety of victimization, a reasonable assumption considering the general public is likely to have experienced anxiety in relation to crime, rather then fear from a criminal encounter (Warr, 2000). 'Fear of crime’ can be described using several properties; intensity, prevalence, and duration (Warr, 2000). Prevalence describes the percentage of the
population that experiences the 'fear of crime' during a specific time period, and is most often how 'fear of crime' is measured on a survey. Warr (2000) makes an important distinction between the fear for one's own safety and the safety of others. In the context of this project 'fear of crime' represents the fear for one's own safety.

While the term 'fear of crime' may receive scrutiny and is subject to debate as to its various definitions, there is no denying that is a critical topic in the field of criminology and politics. ‘Fear of crime’ as a result of perceived risk rather than a perceived risk itself is an important distinction. This would suggest that ‘fear of crime’ might be the result of perceived risk generated through a variety of sources, including media.

**Fear of Crime Paradox**

'Fear of crime' is a dynamic that is influenced by contextual and demographic variables, with minorities and women often being more fearful than other groups (Cook & Lane, 2009). The public can gather information regarding crime from many sources, but most use the media as a point of reference (Cook et al, 2009). Crime has been a key topic in the political arena for decades with many politicians using the 'fear of crime' to appeal emotionally to the public (Cook & Lane, 2009). Research on the influence of media suggests its’ portrayal of crime can lead to a disproportionate ‘fear of crime' (Cook et al, 2009). Studies have also found much of what the public understands about crime is often incorrect or inaccurate (Cook & Lane, 2009). The extent which 'fear of crime' may be the result of misrepresented media, can result in unrealistic crime policy objectives if it is based on unrealistic or overstated perceptions of victimizations (Cook et al, 2009). This is one of the chief reasons 'fear of crime' or victimization surveys have detractors. Reports from the FBI suggest violent crime is declining, though American's 'fear of
crime' seems to be rising at the same time, contributing to the well-established paradoxes between actual criminal activity and the fear of such acts (Ferguson & Mindel, 2007).

This paradox might be explained in part by the accounts of crime the public gathers from the media. If women and the elderly are constantly reading reports of crime which feature victim’s similar to themselves, might that increase their perceived risk, and thus level of fear? This paradox between ‘fear of crime’ and official crime statistics exists elsewhere in this literature review.

**Gender Differences in Fear of Crime**

Young men have long been recognized as the least fearful of social groups despite the relative likelihood of being the group most at risk to assaults in public (Trickett, 2011). The lack of knowledge surrounding men's fear is surprising given the wide amount of media coverage that is often centered around it, both in the United States and Europe (Trickett, 2011). As discussed later the use of a crime or victimization survey has its critics, the fear of crime in Trickett’s (2011) study was measured by reconstructing narratives of their experiences through the use of open ended questions (Trickett, 2011). Young men tend to have a very high risk rate and lower fear (Young, 2003). Lower levels of fear for men could be attributed to a function of machismo culture which encourages fearlessness (Young, 2003). Worse still this culture may also contribute to men not admitting to the interviewer their fear of crime (Young, 2003). Men and women receive different messages about victimization and risk throughout the socialization process (Trickett, 2011). Men's fears need to be seen in context of their experiences in their public and private lives, as well as their use of public and private space (Trickett, 2011). This context is important because it was discovered in some public space, male on male assault was so common it became part of men's daily lives (Trickett, 2011). Gender must also be considered
in the aging process in relation to fear of crime. As men age their responsibilities and inclination to engage in violence may decrease along with victimization (Trickett, 2011). Qualitative research has done much to counter the argument that survey methodology has contributed to the gap between men's fear of crime and other groups (Trickett, 2011).

The young men in Trickett’s (2011) research all identified themselves as part of a gang and all except one respondent had a criminal record. The purpose of gang membership in that study was based on a honor code and peer group, not whether gang membership is criminal in nature. Allowing the research to focus on how involvement in a peer group enacting similar behaviors contributed to both violence and the fear of crime (Trickett, 2011). Fears have received inadequate attention as a factor which contribute to street violence among young men (Trickett, 2011). Respondents exemplified experiences in which acting 'hard' or tough within the context of their peer group was part of an episode of violence. All of the respondents lived in social housing with no form of employment at the time of research (Trickett, 2011). The expectation of 'hardness' within the group norms were linked to bravado, loyalty, reputation, retaliation, and fear. Fear seemed to be acting as the driving force behind the violence, experienced during particular incidents of violence, and a constant presence in their lives (Trickett, 2011). Fear and anxiety for these young men took form in both the fear immediately before and during violent events, and fear of future attacks linked to the process of violence in which they participated (Trickett, 2011). Respondents also discussed anxiety surrounding attacks or violence when out alone, which many of them tried to avoid. Threats to physical safety, damage to one's reputation as a man seemed to be two of the primary drivers of fear within the group (Trickett, 2011). The suggested driving force behind these men's violence was not blind rage, but rather the fear and anxiety to both their physical safety, and more importantly
reputation or masculinity as a man. By better understanding and acknowledging how these fears drive behavior, we can better inform and develop policy accordingly (Trickett, 2011).

The term fear itself also seems to have a gendered concept, with fear being the domain of women, and risk that of men (Lee, 2007). This gendered concept seems to problemize women’s fear while ignoring that of men (Lee, 2007). ‘Fear of crime’ through its relationship with the victim survey, helped people imagine victims who were blameless. The closer an individual was to being an average offender, the more likely they were to become a victim (Lee, 2007). In turn, these turned to strategies that sought to ensure individual citizens engaged in their own risk avoidance behaviors, by identifying those most at risk of different crime types, and plan prevention programs around those (Lee, 2007).

For longer than two decades it has been recognized women are more fearful than men in terms of both crimes against person and property (Gilchrist et al, 1998). As mentioned earlier an individual’s fear of crime is often not proportionate to the likelihood they will be victimized (Liska, Lawrence, & Sanchirico, 1982). Women tend to be more fearful of becoming victims than men, even though data suggests men are more likely to become victims (Ferraro, 1996). Though this may be a result of measuring fear in a way that lead to a under representation of men’s fears (Gilchrist et al, 1998). It is critical to acknowledge the difference and extent of women’s fear in comparison of men. One reason for this is women perceive a unique fear of a serious nature that is barely felt by men; sexual violence (Koskela, 1999). Further research supports this by indicating sexual assault may serve as a "master" offense for women, which increases their fear of being victims to other crimes as a whole (Ferraro, 1996). Studying women's fear of crime should also include the relationship between fear and being socially marginalized (Little, Panelli, Kraack, 2005). The study of fear and the rural environment led to
the realization that fear still existed among women in rural areas, and was not that much different from the urban settings (Little et al, 2005). Women's fears also seem to be generated from perceptions about the existence of threats in an area, rather than direct experience (Little et al, 2005).

Another aspect that may influence the fear of crime for women is self-defense training which may reduce women's fear of crime (McDaniel, 1993). In McDaniel’s study women took a self-defense class. After taking the class respondents reported lower levels of fear for certain crimes and an increased ability to defend themselves (McDaniels, 1993). This is consistent with findings that link women's perceived inability to defend themselves to fear of crime (Rigers & Gordon, 1981).

Though there seems to be a paradox which indicates women are more fearful about crime than men, even though they are less likely to be victimized some research suggests otherwise (Young, 2003). This study conducted in Islington, London revealed women were more likely to be victims of crime. The apparent reason shortfall in other studies lies in the nature of crimes often committed against women. Women are often reluctant to admit these crimes to a stranger conducting a social survey. By using carefully trained researchers a noticeably higher rate of female victimization was found (Young, 2003). This data occurred even in situations in which women took greater precautions against crime than men. Women in this study were five times more likely to never go out after dark, and three times more likely to always avoid certain types of people in the streets (Young, 2003). Domestic and sexual crimes are also less likely to enter statistics than property crimes. Women also do suffer incivilities and harassment which men do not experience. These incivilities are not crimes in their own right but should be taken into account when assessing women's fear of crime (Young, 2003). Crime has a greater impact on
women due to their higher sensitivity to violence, compared to the machismo insensitivity to violence men experience (Young, 2003).

Research often suggests men have a lower reported 'fear of crime' than women. However Trickett (2011) study seems to suggest this may be result of how these questions are asked on a traditional victimization study, such as the National Citizen Survey, Gallup Poll, or even the British Crime Survey as examples. Men may have a lower level of 'fear of crime' due to viewing fear as a result of perceived risk, rather than a risk itself as Warr (2000) suggested. Warr (2000) concept could also explain why women tend to have a higher 'fear of crime' levels than men. Women's 'fear of crime' may be higher as a result of their perceived risk being higher. Crimes reported against women may be lower as well due to the unique and private of some of these offenses, thus the disparity between being fearful and being victimized may not be as great. Incivilities and harassment, though not crimes could also serve to increase women's perceived risk and thus 'fear of crime' as a result. It is the small incivilities that may play a larger role in the explaining 'fear of crime' through social disorganization and disorder theory.

Media Impact on Fear of Crime

Local news, with its' close proximity to viewers or readers has stronger fear related meanings and thus a stronger relationship on the 'fear of crime' (Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000). Crime receives a significant amount of attention in the media and therefore what is already an interesting event, is amplified (Warr, 2000). Media and fear research can vary substantially based on content and audience characteristics. Most research has been inconsistent or only supportive for certain measurements of fear and type of crime (Chiricos et al, 2000). Research into the relationship between 'fear of crime' and TV news consumption has been limited. Chiricos et al, 2000, attempted to answer the question of whether the frequency of
watching TV news has a relationship to the 'fear of crime' and whether it is experienced or shaped by indirect experience such as media. The study was careful to ask respondents about their 'fear of crime' in terms that were direct and specific (Chiricos et al, 2000). One limitation to the study was that it did not account for the combined consumption of news through both the television and the newspaper. Studies have examined only newspaper reading and its effect on the 'fear of crime' have been supportive of this relationship (Chiricos et al, 2000). Another limitation to this study was it only tested the frequency of watching the news, and did not account for content watched. Of particular interest in this study is the relationship between local news and 'fear of crime' is more significant if the individual had recent victimization (Chiricos et al, 2000). Another takeaway from the study is that reality based and TV news consumption are not competing factors in the formation of the 'fear of crime', but rather complementary factors (Chiricos et al, 2000). Real levels of violence in an area may have a stronger effect on the 'fear of crime' than the media, as people who live in high crime areas are often more afraid (Chiricos et al, 2000). The reality crime in an individual's life may play a greater role in their formation of 'fear of crime', which is why confirmation of media fear links have been hard to find (Chiricos et al, 2000).

For many individuals media reports are irrelevant to their everyday lives and therefore have no bearing on their 'fear of crime'. The media over-represent serious crime and often take place in which most of the viewing audience does not reside (Chiricos et al, 2000). Research has also shown those least likely to encounter victimization experience the strongest effect from crime stories (Chiricos et al, 2000). Despite an overemphasis on violent crime, newspapers often fail to inform readers how to adequately protect themselves, and increase their fear further (Marsh, 1991). The selection of crime stories can make the levels of crime seem higher, the
level of community safety seem lower, and also enhance the fear of certain segments of society (Marsh, 1991). Newspapers in the United States and elsewhere frequently provide little information regarding the cause of the crime presented or how to avoid it (Marsh, 1991).

Warr (2000) cites Combs and Slovic (1979) showing public perceptions of cause of death closely match the frequency with which those causes are reported in newspapers. Specifically, homicides were the most heavily reported category in relation to actual frequency, and articles reporting homicides tended to be twice as long as those reporting disease or accidental deaths (Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1982). Warr (2000) notes these researchers did not insist on a causal connection between media reporting and public perceptions, but did suggest the pattern between the two was too similar to be coincidental. The link between media reporting and perceptions is important because it suggests the public is likely to overestimate the frequency of rare serious crimes, while underestimating the less serious and more likely crimes (Warr, 2000). Studies have frequently demonstrated media reporting of crime is a distortion of reality, with the unusual being favored over the routine (Chermak & Chapman, 2007). Chermak & Chapman (2007) found little indication city size had a relationship with the amount of crime news being reported when comparing cities of different sizes. The media cannot be expected to report on every crime, thus offense serious matters when determining what is newsworthy (Chermak & Chapman, 2007).

Media's impact on the 'fear of crime' whether through news broadcast or print media cannot be understated. The similarities between what criminal offenses are reported and the public's perception are too obvious to ignore. While it should be expected the media would sensationalize crime stories and offense seriousness matters in what makes it to print, there still appears to be a disproportionate representation of crime. Further these studies made sure to build
a sample of the news and prevent the results from being skewed by an event like Columbine or the Dark Knight Shootings.

**Fear of Crime of Surveys**

The amount of data related to the term 'fear of crime', is staggering and suggest the "fear of crime" is wide-spread amongst many contemporary westernized societies (Farrall, 2002). In England the *British Crime Survey (BCS)* reported from the period of 1984 to 2000, approximately twenty percent of the population were "very worried" about burglary and other street crimes (Farrall, 2002). In some countries the feeling of being unsafe outside of one's home rose to nearly forty percent. Fear of crime has not been contained to strictly urban areas with surveys of rural areas yielding similar results (Farrall, 2002). In the United States dating back to the *1965 Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice* (Ennis, 1967) data continually suggests a significant portion of the population experiences crime-related fears on a regular basis (Farrall, 2002). The victim survey has been an instrument in the measurement of fear of crime since the inception of the measurement of such data (Lee, 2010). These surveys asked a range of 'scenario' type questions in order to take a measurement of 'fear of crime'. Generally the respondents had a choice from one to five on a Likert scale. The survey results were quantified with the resulting data representative of the 'fear of crime' (Lee, 2010). The 'fear of crime' is widely recognized in Europe as one of prime concerns affecting citizen's quality of life (Farrall, 2002).

This data has been criticized for being politically biased, inaccurate, or too vague in what it is supposed to measure. The 'fear of crime' is naturally a subjective set of experiences and a conceptually poor construct (Lee, 2010). There have often been concerns in the measuring of 'fear of crime' through the use of survey's (Farrall, 2002). Methodology is a common problem
frequently identified and generates criticism the occurrence of the 'fear of crime' has been substantially misrepresented (Farrall, 2002). The key to this criticism is often the survey research questions used, that seem to enhance the degree to which fear of crime is occurring. The 'fear of crime' does exist as an organizing principle that seeks to measure and classify a range of perceptions, responses, and vulnerabilities (Jackson, 2004). Though the 'fear of crime' existed before the 1960's studies, it was not used as organizing principle for criminal justice and social policy (Lee, 2010). Another way in which fear can be measured is in a physiological capacity, due the number of 'fear' cues in an environment. Collecting data on 'fear of crime' in this manner has limited experimental value (Warr, 2000). While most government officials and researchers have been careful about how much could be gained from data collected under this loose term, it does provide an excellent depth of time series data for researchers to draw from (Hough, 2004). It would seem despite this depth of data 'fear of crime' is a very poor organizing principal or concept for quantifying concern about crime (Lee, 2010). Though there are often a variety of survey questions on the 'fear of crime' a constant is "Is there anywhere near where you live-that is, within a mile-where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" (Warr, 2000). The reason for the continued use of this question is that it frequently is used by the *Gallup Organization* and *National Opinion Research Center*, to collect data on fear since the 1960's (Warr, 2000). Unfortunately, the data collected by these two organizations is often subject to the criticisms discussed earlier. Despite the criticism the ability to offer a time series of data is useful. Warr (2000) asserts that despite these criticisms the data obtained from these organizations is similar to other national surveys and the routine use of the items permits relative longitudinal comparisons of fear.
This has prompted study of new questions, that are less vaguely worded and more accurately measure a respondent’s fear of crime. A key feature in the development of these questions is asking respondents to think about specific instances during the past year in which they were fearful (Farrall, 2002). This is important because it forces the respondent to focus on a specific time period, rather than how they felt at that instant. This also allows the questions to better measure changes in fear of crime over periods of time with greater accuracy (Farrall, 2007). The very act of being surveyed raises the possibility the survey may be exaggerating the 'fear of crime', as past research has indicated that people tend to report the most serious extent of their fears rather than the most common (Farrall, 2002).

Improved survey questions seek a way around this in order to accurately portray people's fears. This is important as the crime survey appears to remain the de facto tool for measuring fear of crime and post intervention success (Farrall, 2002). Through piloting and question refinement, questions were developed produced data which suggested fear of crime was lower than previous survey questions, such as those on the BCS had produced (Farrall, 2002). By using questions which asked about feeling fearful in the past year and the extent of the fear felt on the last occasion, the new questions produced data contrasting with existing survey research. The new questions significantly reduced the proportion of respondents reporting the experience of the 'fear of crime' (Farrall, 2002). More importantly, the new questions reveal the relative infrequency of intensely fearful experiences (Farrall, 2002). The data does make the assumption the most recent fearful episodes are representative in aggregate of all fearful experiences which may not be accurate (Farrall, 2002). These expanded questions seek to break the mold and collect new data which may make the previous three decades of data collection secondary for comparative purposes (Farrall, 2002).
'Fear of crime' is often measured through the use self-reporting or victimization surveys. While there has been valid criticisms to how these survey questions have been constructed, they still remain in use. The NCS used questions very similar to those mentioned, but they still retain value because as Hough (2004) assets they offer a rich time series data set in which to draw on. The implications of using 'fear of crime' surveys as a measurement tool will be discussed further in the analysis and discussion sections.

**Criminological Theories**

The victimization model contributes to 'fear of crime' by suggesting that those that have been victims are likely to be the most fearful (Crank, Giacomazzi, & Heck, 2003). Further research again suggests that though the least likely to become victims (the elderly and women) are among the most fearful, while the least fearful are (young males) (Crank et al, 2003). This suggests the victimization model has much to do with the 'fear of crime' and indirect experience (Crank et al, 2003). This indirect victimization model is a result of heightened social vulnerability which contributes to 'fear of crime' through media portrayals (Crank et al, 2003). This supports the theory the 'fear of crime' is a product of the presentation of crime by media (Crank et al, 2003).

Social disorganization theory predicts neighborhood disorganization leads to weaker social cohesions, resulting in a diminished ability for neighborhoods to exert formal and informal control over its residents, thereby increasing crime (Allen & Cancino, 2012). Often in these neighborhoods cultural norms permit the use of violent retaliation as a manner in which to settle disputes (Allen & Cancino, 2012). Shaw and McKay (1942) suggested crime rates are tied to the degree in which communities remain in a constant state of change. These communities in flux, have weaker ties to social norms and values due to resident mobility. This mobility allows few
social networks to develop between businesses and neighbors (Casten & Payne, 2008). Common aspects to most neighborhoods are the networks between business and community. Businesses act as a gathering place for residents in the community, serving as a reflection of crime and disorder (Casten & Payne, 2008). Gates, iron bars in windows, and graffiti on walls all evoke emotion on the amount of social disorganization or disorder in a neighborhood (Casten & Payne, 2008). High crime rates are a result of poor economic conditions, population turnover, compared to more affluent neighborhoods with homogenous and stable populations (Allen & Cancino, 2012). These factors work to hinder the ability for residents to use informal social control and create neighborhoods that are more vulnerable to crime (Allen et al, 2012). As a result these neighborhoods become associated with crime for a long period of time regardless of population composition (Allen & Cancino, 2012).

Closely related to social disorganization theory is ‘broken window’ theory. Wilson and Kelling (1982) argued broken windows left unrepaired are a sign of an uncaring neighborhoods and communities in decline, believing that disorder and crime are linked to one another. Disorder if left unchecked leads to crime by driving residents away, while at the same time sending a signal to offenders that a neighborhood is in disrepair (Casten & Payne, 2008). Though the phrase broken window theory is used, it is meant to represent the deterioration of a neighborhood from one broken window to many. The notion that this deterioration or disorder leads to crime has been established (O’Shea, 2006), and can be seen as one of the reasons for the introduction of community orientated policing. Disorder can also have a direct impact on increasing fear in the neighborhoods in which it is occurring (Xu, Fielder, & Flamment, 2005). As part of their study, Carsten and Payne (2008) examined the relationship between perceptions of disorganization and perceptions of a crime problem. When respondents indicated that a
particular offense was a problem in their neighborhood they were more likely to associate its cause with signs of vandalism, broken/boarded windows, shoddy repairs, unsupervised youth, and noise levels (Casten & Payne, 2008). Drug crimes were the most likely to be associated with perceptions of social disorganization, followed by vandalism. Robbery and sexual assault were perceived to be less of a problem, but for those that did, signs of disorganization appeared to be higher as well (Casten & Payne, 2008). One of the conclusions to the study was perceptions of a crime problem are influenced with the presence of disorder and disorganization (Casten & Payne, 2008). Another implication to arise from the study is the need to address disorder from a social disorganization point of view when conducting police work, by not only focusing on the serious offenses and instead using a community centered strategy (Casten & Payne, 2008).

The disorder model or broken windows theory model suggests a positive relationship between the social/physical environment and fear (Crank et al, 2003). This model could be perceived as reality based, as it has much to do with physical occurrence of crime. 'Fear of crime' can be a variable that causes neighborhood avoidance, which is a chief reason that it is just as important as crime itself to politicians, law enforcement, and the public (Crank et al, 2003). Findings were consistent that perceived personal safety greatly influenced the amount that individuals leave their houses for recreational reasons (Crank et al, 2003).

**Physical Environment Fear of Crime Factors**

'Fear of crime' may be driven less by crime itself, but rather factors such as the physical environment or interpersonal relationships (Lorenc, Clayton, Neary, Whitehead, Petticrew, Thomson, Cummins, Sowdin, & Renton, 2012). A range of features of the built environment have been hypothesized to have an impact on crime rates (Lorenc et al, 2012). The most influential theory has been Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED
has been widely influential among policy makers, though it has been accused of merely displacing crime to other areas (Lorenc et al., 2012). The built environment may have an impact on the fear of crime indirectly, by providing information about crime which individuals use to construct their perceptions on crime (Lorenc et al., 2012). ‘Fear of crime’ can also express broader dissatisfaction with the environment. Therefore environment may also influence the fear of crime directly, independent of its effect on crime, but through the feelings that are expressed as fear by residents (Lorenc et al., 2012). Interventions in the physical environment may have some beneficial impact in reducing the fear of crime. Jackson (2009) also suggests the public concerns of neighborhood disorder may have a strong link to ‘fear of crime’ as well.

The four basic dimensions of CPTED are natural surveillance, access control, territoriality, and maintenance. Been conducted in the field, and what future research implications it might have. Natural surveillance involves the physical location as well as the use of physical features, mechanical, and electronic devices to maximize visibility (Marbali et al., 2012). If offenders perceive a higher risk to being observed and detected they are less likely to commit a criminal act. The concept of access control centers around limiting access to potential targets and creating a higher perception of risk to possible offenders (Marbali et al., 2012). Access control uses both real and symbolic barriers as criminal deterrents. This is a reason that target hardening is a popular principle in CPTED as it uses access control and surveillance to make targets or locations more difficult to commit crime. Territoriality is a human behavior that involves the personalization of a space and the communicated message of ownership to others (Marbali et al., 2012). These indicators often play a role in a burglar’s judgment when selecting a target, and have a negative effect on victimization rates (Marbali et al., 2012). The last CPTED factor is maintenance, which involves the physical upkeep of a location. Unkempt areas are a predictor of crime on an individual and block level (Marbali et al., 2012). A study conducted in Penang Malaysia sought to test four hypotheses: CPTED is negatively
related to victimization, victimization is positively related to 'fear of crime'. CPTED is negatively related to 'fear of crime', and CPTED is indirectly related to 'fear of crime' through victimization (Marbali et al, 2012). The study selected 300 households from the population, conducted over a minimum of a year’s time, with every third household being randomly selected. An observation checklist was developed on the four factors of CPTED through the use of an on-site observation and a self-administered questionnaire developed to examine residents’ ‘fear of crime’ and victimization experiences (Marbali et al, 2012). Each dimension of CPTED was assessed by one of the researchers and rated using a scale from low to high. Three indicators were used to measure the 'fear of crime' construct: worry of victimization, perceived disorder, and perceived risk (when walking alone), these items were adapted from the 2010 British Crime Survey (Marbali et al, 2012). Three factors were used to measure victimization; being a victim, car theft, and home theft. The 'fear of crime' was measured through a five item questionnaire that asked participants to rate how much they worry about becoming victims of particular crime scenarios (Marbali et al, 2012).

The 'fear of crime' can often develop around certain areas or locations called hotspots. Areas and situations which have a concentration of fear or crime, whether crime occurs there or not, are referred to hotspots (Maltz, 1990). Hotspots can also arise at a variety or levels, national, local, neighborhood, and situational based (Maltz, 1990). By studying hotspots the link between situational fear and victimization can be better understood. These hotspots are often defined by two reference levels; macro (neighborhood) and micro (proximate) (Nasar & Fisher, 1993). The study of macro related characteristics often reveals a broad picture for 'fear of crime' in an area (Nasar et al, 1993). In areas that have a macro level of fear such as downtown Denver, micro level cues can help to explain more site specific 'fear of crime' hotspots. The four principles of CPTED are excellent representations of micro level features which can impact the 'fear of crime' in a hotspot. Hotspot analysis is important because it allows for law enforcement
to uncover strategies for deployment and uncover characteristics that may promote the probability of crime (Maltz, 1990). Proximate physical features such as those discussed in CPTED can heighten 'fear of crime' (Nasar et al, 1993).

Hotspots for 'fear of crime' develop by the ongoing mental map each individual is capable of creating (Nasar et al, 1993). These mental maps are developed through ongoing direct experience with the environment, and indirect experience such as media reports on the area. Through these experiences individuals construct a mental hotspot that has map like qualities, movement, and spatial data (Nasar et al, 1993). This mental map can be influenced by the possibility of over-reacting to potential threats. By over-reacting in situations where no real danger may exist, individuals are limiting the possibility they may become actual victims (Nasar et al, 1993). For large areas such as a city or neighborhood individuals develop their mental map based around indirect experiences. At this scale individuals can vary in what they fear, but often they share similar fears (Nasar et al, 1993).

Mental maps for fear have been found to relate to both the physical and social characteristics of an environment. Social incivilities in particular seem to promote a higher level of 'fear of crime' through their association with victimization (Nasar et al, 1993). Social incivilities often affect individuals more than actual crime, and research has shown they contribute to 'fear of crime', but not necessarily victimization (Nasar et al, 1993). Research has focused on incivilities effect on 'fear of crime' at the macro level, which often results in the routine activity theory being suggested for the occurrence of crime (Nasar et al, 1993). Motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of guardianship all in a single point of time create the opportunity for crime to occur. Areas with these three characteristics often become hotspots for crime (Nasar et al, 1993). The same characteristics can lead to incivilities, creating a feeling
of being unsafe, and increasing the 'fear of crime' in those areas. Perceived and observed incivilities independently predict 'fear of crime' (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2004). Characteristics of the physical environment, such as a lack of natural surveillance and social conditions (public drunkenness) also contribute to the feeling of an area being unsafe (Nasar et al, 1993). The pattern of behavior can vary with time in hotspots, individuals may feel unsafe only during certain hours or situations. Neighborhood incivilities are consistently linked to higher levels of 'fear of crime' in those areas (Ferguson & Mindel, 2007).

Areas that limit the ability to predict a potential attack can make the perspective victim more fearful (Nasar et al, 1993). If the proximate physical environment infer the ability for an attack to occur without the assailant being seen, it can cause 'fear of crime', regardless of its occurrence (Nasar et al, 1993). For offenders, this same area may be highly desirable due to it's ability to offer concealment. The ability to hide only reduces the level of guardianship, logically suggesting routine activity theory, for crime's occurrence.

Specific types of land use are associated with higher crime and victimization use because they draw in a larger number of victims, offenders, or both (Kurtz, Koons, & Taylor, 1998). Blocks with bars experience a higher victimization rate, because it is more likely an offender will meet a potential victim due to increased foot traffic (Kurtz et al, 1998). Routine activity theory can be used again to explain the occurrence of crime in these areas.

This literature review has attempted to explain the term 'fear of crime', the various differences between the genders, how 'fear of crime' is measured, environmental factors that may contribute to 'fear of crime', and last the media's impact on 'fear of crime'. While this project is focused primarily on the media's relationship to representing crime compared to reported crime statistics and 'fear of crime' survey results, it is important to understand other factors besides
media that can influence 'fear of crime'. Social disorganization and disorder theory seek to
provide the criminological theory framework in which to explain 'fear of crime', since they are
often used to describe crime itself. The media representation of crime in Denver and how it may
be related to 'fear of crime' will be presented in the discussion section of this project.
Methodology

The project was of a quantitative explorative nature. By conducting a longitudinal case study, 'fear of crime' in Downtown Denver will be examined in comparison to reported crime statistics and newspaper presentation of crime. A case study methodology was selected because of its ability to illustrate discrepancies or failures in a system (Babbie, 2010). The primary method of research for this study was the use of historical statistics available through the Denver Police Department, integration of past research on the topic of 'fear of crime', and a content analysis of news articles this period of time. Case studies can also focus on specific time periods (Babbie, 2010). The extended case study model seeks to rebuild or improve, rather than to approve or reject a concept (Babbie, 2010).

Content Analysis

Beginning in the 19th century sociologists began to use content analysis to determine trends in newspaper coverage (Woodrum, 1984). Content analysis was selected to be unobtrusive, as the event has past. Unobtrusive research techniques consist of content analysis, analysis of existing statistics, and comparative and historical research (Babbie, 2010). Content analysis has the advantage of allowing for the correction of errors during the process (Babbie, 2010). Content analysis also allows for the study of a process occurring over a long period of time (Babbie, 2010). Analyzing existing statistics should help to supplement content analysis because it allows for crime statistics to complement written communication (Babbie, 2010).

Sample

A random sample was selected to eliminate or reduce the selection bias of the researcher as well as limit the effects of any major criminal story skewing the results (Babbie, 2010). Randomly generated construction eliminates the possibility of a celebrated case affecting the
results (Chermak & Chapman, 2007). Babbie (2010) notes this sampling method for each element having an equal chance of selection regardless of any other event in the selection process. Selection of articles consisted of archived newspaper articles from *The Denver Post*, retrieved via “LexisNexis” using search terms. The sampling units for articles were selected using the search terms of the twenty-six offense categories used in *NIBRS*. Sampling for newspaper content analysis in relation to crime news has wide variation among researchers (Marsh, 1991). Construction of random weeks or months is done by selecting random days during the period of one month or time period (Marsh, 1991). These results were queried on a randomly generated set of 28 days representing a random construction of one month. This was done for the time periods 2008-2010.

**Coding**

Modifying the coding scheme developed by (Chermak & Chapman, 2007), the crime that was the focus of the story was coded and placed in a category by offense type. This resulted in three categories aligned in the same manner as *NIBRS* (Appendix A), the only difference being the combination of ‘Crimes Against Society’ and ‘all other offenses’ into a single ‘Crimes Against Society’ category. Victims and offenders were coded by gender (male & female), age (0-18 years, 19-40 years, 41-99 years). This coding scale was also adopted from (Chermak & Chapman, 2007) and serves to represent articles that focus on young, middle aged, and older victims and offenders. It is likely that crimes that are committed by or against younger/older individuals are more likely to be newsworthy (Chermak & Chapman, 2007). Location of crime in the article was coded as local (occurring in Denver Metro Area), regional (Colorado), national (United States), and global (outside the United States). All articles selected were then loaded into DeDoose, a program used for qualitative/mixed methods data analysis and research. This
data was compared to UCR, NIBRS, and NCS data for the same time period. Content categories were coded this way as it allowed for direct comparison to UCR and NIBRS statistics. Coding the text base accordingly to the researcher's questions the is key to content analysis (Woodrum, 1984).

**Existing Statistics**

Existing statistics are significant because they can be considered a good source of supplemental data (Babbie, 2010). Existing statistics can provide a historical or conceptual context in which research can be located (Babbie, 2010). This study used UCR, NIBRS, and NCS data to provide information on the 'fear of crime' and differences between Downtown Denver and the city as a whole. A reason, existing crime statistics are going to be used as a secondary source of data is the unit of analysis is not the individual. By their nature most crime statistics are aggregated in nature, and at best the city of Denver could be studied as a whole (Babbie, 2010). UCR and NIBRS from the Denver Police Department were analyzed in order to create a more accurate depiction of the crime rate in the downtown area. Though there can be issues in drawing conclusions from group patterns of behavior and applying them at the individual level, the grounded theory method should allow for a theoretical deduction to have an impact on conclusions (Babbie, 2010).

The Uniformed Crime Reporting system was conceived in 1929 and in 1930 the FBI was given the task to collect, publish, and archive those statistics (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2009). In an effort to depict total crime, data is collected on known offenses and those arrested, not the findings of a court. The UCR collects data on eight crime classifications that are the most likely to occur and be reported, in part I offenses (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2009). Part I offenses are considered serious crimes by nature or volume. The eight classifications are: murder and non-
negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2009). There are serious crimes that are not reported or do not occur frequently such as embezzlement or kidnapping that are not collected under the UCR. The UCR also collects arrest data on twenty one other offenses such as driving under the influence, these are part II offenses (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2009). One of the criticisms of the UCR reporting system is the hierarchy rule, in which if multiple offenses are committed only the most serious offense is reported in the UCR. This can lead to a systematic under-representation of offenses being reported. This is a reason the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), was developed.

NIBRS collects information on each single crime occurrence, developing as law enforcement’s ability to collect and supply arrest information expanded with technology (National Incident, 2009). NIBRS collects data on twenty-two offense categories and forty-six specific crimes called group A offenses, and eleven other offenses called group B offenses. (See Appendix A) The other advantage to NIBRS is it includes 'crimes against society' as a category in addition to the 'crime against persons/property' categories (National Incident, 2009).

The National Citizen Survey (NCS) was developed by the National Research Center (NRC) to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community issues and services provided by the local government (National Citizen, 2011). Results are statistically weighted to reflect proper demographic composition of the community. The NCS was also customized for Denver through a collaboration between local jurisdiction and Denver staff (National Citizen, 2011). The NCS data that will be primarily used is residents' perception of community safety regarding their neighborhood and downtown Denver.
Results

The purpose of this study was to compare media representation of crime in relation to reported crime statistics and 'fear of crime' survey results, in the City of Denver from 2008-2010. Content analysis was used to identify and quantify news articles based upon the crime(s) that was featured as the main focus of the article. Additional data was collected in relation to the source of the articles, basic offender and victim demographics, not for the purpose of determining what makes a crime story newsworthy as other researchers have done (Chermak et al, 2007), but for use in comparison to UCR/NIBRS data and NCS summary results.

Location of News Story

![Graph](image)

Figure 1 Number of News Story Articles (All Locations)

Articles with offenses occurring at the local or regional level were more frequent by a significant amount then those at a national or international level. The year 2009 seemed to have the most balanced representation of articles covering offenses occurring in different locations. 87% of articles focusing on offenses at a local level covered a story that was in the greater Denver metro area, with the remaining 13% focused on crimes occurring in the Downtown
Denver area. 72% of offenses at the local level mentioned in articles were of a violent nature, with the remaining 28% non-violent. Article offenses that were violent accounted for 74% of the all other Denver Metro and 62 % of the Downtown Denver subcategories.

![Article Crime Type by Local Location 2008-2010](image)

Figure 2 Article Crime Type in Local Articles 2008-2010

50% of the articles in the Downtown Denver category were represented by articles published in 2008, with 38% published in 2009, and the remaining 12% in 2010. Articles occurring in the all other Denver Metro area, were much more evenly represented by year. 30% of these articles were published in 2008, 39% in 2009, and 31% in 2010. 62 out of 102 articles represented Denver via the Downtown Denver and All other Denver Metro Categories, accounting for 61% of the total sample.

**Crime by Location in Article**
Figure 3 Violent & Non Violent Crime by Article Location

A significant percentage, 72% of news articles in which the crime occurred locally focused on covering crimes of a violent nature, with the remaining 28% covering non-violent offenses. The percentage of articles were less pronounced when the crime occurred regionally, with 67% and 33% focusing on violent and non-violent crimes respectfully. Percentages for national articles were 40% violent and 60% non-violent. Percentages for national article location is based on a very small number of articles that fit the criteria (five) in the sample selection. Only one article was included in the sample that focused on a crime occurring internationally with it being a crime of violent nature. Out of 102 articles from 2008-2010, 69% focused on violent offenses, with the remaining 31% focusing on non-violent offenses.

When separated by the subcategories 'Crimes Against Persons', 'Crimes Against Property', and 'Crimes Against Society', the most heavily reported category is 'Crimes Against Persons', with 59% of local and 36% of regional articles focusing on offenses in this category. The 'Crimes Against Property' resulted in a similar ratio with 55% of local and 39% of regional
articles in the category. The final subcategory 'Crimes Against Society' reflected a similar ratio as well, with 60% and 33.3% of articles in this category being local and regional respectively.

Figure 4 Crime Type by Article Location

**Article Offense Representation vs. Reported Crime Statistics**

Figure 5 Crime Categories for All Article Locations 2008-2010

From 2008-2010 articles (occurring in all location categories), were separated into three categories; 'Crimes Against Persons', 'Crimes Against Property', and 'Crimes Against Society' seen in (Fig.5). Articles in the 'Crimes Against Persons' category represented 57% of the total
articles published in the *Denver Post* during this time period. 'Crimes Against Property' represented next the most reported category with 32% of the total articles. 'Crimes Against Society' filled out the remaining 11% of the articles reporting on crime during this period.

![Crime Article Type 2008-2010](image)

Figure 6 Crime Categories for all Denver Metro Articles 2008-2010

Reported offenses were summarized into the three categories used for article classification to better enable direct comparison from *UCR/NIBRS* statistics for the City of Denver (Appendix A). Between 2008-2010 there were 88,362 offenses in the ‘Crimes Against Property’ category for the city of Denver, representing 73% of total reported offenses for the time period. ‘Crimes Against Persons’ represented 16% of total offenses for the time period with 19,300 offenses. From 2008-2010 there were 14,611 ‘Crimes Against Society’ offenses equaling 11% of the offense total.

**Crimes Against Persons**

The most heavily reported category is 'Crimes Against Persons', with 59% of local and 36% of regional articles focusing on offenses in this category.
Figure 7 Reported Offenses City of Denver 2008-2010

Articles in the 'Crimes Against Persons' category represented 57% of the total articles published in the *Denver Post* during this time period. Within the 'Crimes Against Persons' category 73% of articles in the 'assault' category occurred locally, 20% regionally, and the remaining 7% nationally. Two other subcategories; 'murder' and 'sex offenses' in the 'Crimes Against Persons' were also of interest. 60% and 33% of sex offense articles were local and regional respectfully, with the remaining articles at a national level. Murder was more evenly represented on a local and regional level at 50% and 45% respectively.
Within the 'Crimes Against Persons' subcategories stories involving murder/homicide made up the largest percentage of articles at 45%. Articles involving assault made up the next
largest subcategory at 24%, followed by sex offenses at 20%. Existing NIBRS statistics
(Appendix A) for the city of Denver were modified slightly to match the newspaper articles
content analysis categories (Figure 9). This resulted in aggravated and simple assault categories
being combined into a single category under the label assault, and forcible and non-forcible sex
offenses being combined into a single category: sex offenses. The assault sub-category made up
a whopping 77% of the ‘Crimes Against Persons’ category. The sex offense category
represented 13% of the total ‘Crimes Against Persons’ offenses. From 2008-2010 these two
categories accounted for 17,314 offenses in the city of Denver. The sub-category results within
the ‘Crimes Against Persons’ varied significantly from the newspaper sample counterparts.

Perhaps the most glaring difference in representation between the news article sample
and reported crime statistics for the city is the category of Murder/Homicide. From 2008-2010
murder made up less than 1% of all reported offenses for Denver, with 118 out of 122,273
reported offenses (Appendix A). Yet in the random sample of 102 articles those covering a local
'Crime Against Person' offense represented Murder/Homicide 21 out 46 times (Figure 8). The
results are just as skewed when murder/homicide is represented as a standalone offense in
comparison to all offenses reported and all locally reported offenses. Murder was represented
27% of the time out of 79 locally occurring offenses.

Assault appears to a paradox under represented as it was featured 24% of the time out of
46 local offenses in the ‘Crimes Against Persons’ category. The combined assault category from
Denver's reported crime statistics depict assault as 77% of the total 'Crimes Against Person'
Category with 14,833 of 19,300 offenses. The combined assault category represented 12% of
total offenses for Denver from 2008-2010. Assault thus appears to be over represented locally as
it occurred as an offense 19% of articles.
Sex offenses also appear to slightly over represented in the sample in relation to other local 'Crimes Against Persons' offenses, consisting of 20% of the sample. Sex offenses is over represented in relation to its occurrence as a crime on a whole however. Of the 79 offenses in the local articles it has a frequency of 11 equaling 14% of the sample. 14% is seven times higher the rate of actual reported sex offenses for Denver from 2008-2010. Sex offenses for this time consisted of 2,481 out of 122,273 offenses or just over 2% of all crimes reported.

**Crimes Against Property**

'Crimes Against Property' represented next the most reported category with 32% of the total articles from the *Denver Post* from 2008-2010. 'Crimes Against Property' represented 30% of articles published at the local level between 2008-2010. 'Crimes Against Property' contained three subcategories of interest: fraud, robbery, and arson. Articles involving fraud occurred locally 40% of the time, 45% regionally, and the remaining 15% nationally. Interestingly articles involving arson were regional 83% of the time, with the remaining 17% being local. All seven of the articles involving robbery occurred at the local level.
Figure 10 Crimes Against Property in Local Articles 2008-2010

Within the 'Crimes Against Property' subcategories; fraud at 34%, robbery at 29%, and motor vehicle theft at 13% made up the largest number of local articles involving these offenses. Arson, burglary, counterfeiting/forgery, criminal mischief/damaged property, and stolen property each made up 4% of the total local articles. Bribery, embezzlement, extortion, and larceny were not represented in the sample of local articles. Sub-Categories in ‘Crimes Against Property’ consisted of the same thirteen subcategories used for news articles. Theft from motor vehicles, criminal mischief/damaged property, larceny, and burglary represented 80% of the offenses within the ‘Crimes Against Property’ category. This is in stark contrast to the sub-categories represented in newspaper articles from the sample.

The over representation of fraud and lack of larceny is perhaps the most puzzling result of the entire analysis. Fraud appears to be significantly over represented locally within the 'Crimes Against Property' at 34% compared to 3% of reported 'Crimes Against Property' for the same time period. Fraud was represented 8 times, totaling 10% of the seventy local offenses,
also showing an over representation of this offense compared to reported statistics. Reported instances of fraud equaled 2% of total offenses with 2,900 out of 122,273 offenses.

Robbery also appeared to be over represented among locally occurring offenses in news articles, consisting of 29% of the offenses within the 'Crimes Against Property' category. Reported robbery offenses made up 4% of 'Crimes Against Property' category for the same time period. Robbery also appeared to be over represented in comparison to total local offense articles in relation to their reported occurrence. Robbery was featured in local articles 10% of the time, while it made up 2% of total reported offenses for the City of Denver during that same time period. Motor vehicle theft appeared to be correctly represented within the category, consisting of 13% of the local articles and 12% of the offenses in the 'Crimes Against Property' category for the same time period. Interestingly thefts from motor vehicles were heavily underrepresented in news articles, despite making up the largest portion of reported 'Crimes Against Property' offenses for the city between 2008-2010.

![Figure 11 Crimes Against Property as Reported Offenses in Denver 2008-2010](image)
Crimes Against Society

Figure 12 Crimes Against Society in Local Articles 2008-2010

'Crimes Against Society' filled out the remaining 11% of the total and local news articles published between 2008-2010. 'Crimes Against Society' contained two subcategories warranting elaboration. Disorderly conduct/disturbing the peace had 1 out of 4 articles occurring at a local and national level, with the remaining 2 articles taking place regionally. Articles involving drug/narcotic violations appeared at the local and regional level 2 out of 4 times each. The Disorderly Conduct/Disturbing the Peace and Drug/Narcotic articles accounted for 53% of the articles within 'Crimes Against Society'. 'Crimes Against Society' appeared to have the most balanced representation of subcategories, most likely do the small number of articles in the category. Drug/Narcotic Violations and Other Offenses each represented 24% of the category at the local level. Child pornography, disorderly conduct/disturbing the peace, prostitution, and public disorder/drunkenness each made up 13% of the category. Curfew and gambling offenses were not represented in the sample. ‘Crimes Against Society’ offense categories consisted largely of two categories, drug/narcotic violations and other offenses. These two categories
represented 97% of offenses in the 'Crimes Against Society' category for Denver from 2008-2010. Media representation of crimes in this category was very similar and may have been even more accurately represented with a larger sample.

Figure 13 Crimes Against Society as Reported Offenses in Denver 2008-2010

'Crimes Against Society' local article offenses appear to be more closely related to their reported offenses, compared to 'Crimes Against Persons' and 'Crimes Against Property'. The bulk of reported offenses appear in either the Drug/Narcotic violation or other offenses category. News articles show a similar result, with less of a majority though. This again is most likely attributed to the small number of articles focusing on 'Crimes Against Society' within the sample.
Discussion

‘Fear of Crime’ is as central to Criminology as crime itself, and despite several decades of study still remains a relevant topic in the field. One of the reasons it remains so relevant is the way in which information is shared in modern society. With advances in technology and the ability of the public to share information with each other at a rapid pace via the smartphone or social media, traditional media sources are increasingly competing for attention of their audience. As past research has shown (Chermak et al., 2007; Chiricos et al., 2000), offense seriousness does matter in what traditional media considers worthy of print. Crime itself is fascinating and makes for interesting stories and thus inherently newsworthy (Warr, 2000). The results of this study suggest what previous studies on media and crime have, that proportion or ratio of offenses reported on are not reflective of reported crime statistics.

Why do some areas garner a higher percentage of perceived risk or fear from the population than others? This is a critical question to answer for city planners, politicians, law enforcement, and criminologists alike. Though there are a multitude of factors that influence this fear, this project examined the media representation factor. Safety from crime is a pillar to a successful community and communities in which residents feel protected are more likely to display economic and population growth (NCS, 2010). The downtown area of Denver was constantly rated as less safe than it’s other Denver neighborhood counterparts (NCS, 2010).

Research Questions

RQ1: How did newspaper articles represent crime compared to UCR/NIBRS statistics from 2008-2010?

The results from the content analysis revealed a number of discrepancies in the representation of offenses in comparison to their reported occurrence. ‘Crimes Against Property’
offenses represented 77% of all offenses reported in Denver from 2008-2010. The newspaper sample revealed that offenses of this type only made up 30% of local articles focused on criminal offenses. Perhaps this can be attributed to what makes a story worthy of the news. As discussed several times offense serious matters (Chermak et al, 2007) in what makes it to print for a story, perhaps most ‘Crimes Against Property’ are simply uninteresting. This certainly could explain the small number of articles focused on theft from a motor vehicle in the sample, despite it representing 24% of the offenses committed in the category, and 17% of all offenses reported in Denver from 2008-2010. Inversely offense seriousness could also explain the representation of robbery over 10% of the time despite robbery offenses representing less than 3% of total offenses in Denver from 2008-2010. The higher than expected representation of fraud, particularly at the total lack of larceny offenses could be explained two ways. First the attention grabbing crimes of Ponzi schemes such as those conducted by Bernie Madoff are still fresh in the collective memory of the audience, thus a story around fraud is likely to gather more attention. The second reason could be attributed to coder error, which will be discussed in the conclusion.

Offense serious certainly explains the representation of murder, assault, and sex offenses in news articles. Murder was represented 36% of the time in local newspaper articles a number far exceeding it’s less than 1% reported rate. This could also be explained by the media’s attempt to sensationalize news. Several of the articles in the sample tied stories relating to uncovered bodies to the possibility of murder or homicide immediately, often within the same sentence. The combined assault category also appeared over represented as it was featured as an offense in an article 19% of the time despite being a reported offense only 12% of the time in Denver from 2008-2010. The combined sex assault category represented 14% of offenses that
were reported on locally, despite making up only 2% of all offenses reported in Denver from 2008-2010.

The representation of ‘Crimes Against Society’ appears to have the most accurate representation of offense occurrences within the category. However as a whole the category is frequently un-reported on consisting of 11% of the article offenses. This is accurate with reported offenses occurrences for Denver from 2008-2010, as this category also made up 11% of all reported offenses. Most of the offenses that fall into this category happen with such infrequency or are have such a mundane nature i.e. public drunkenness that is unlikely they would make it to print.

**RQ2: How do UCR/NIBRS data compare to NCS data for downtown Denver and Denver as a whole?**

One of the key limitations to this project was access only to the results summary of the *National Citizen Survey* for Denver from 2008-2010, and not the whole data set. Despite these limitations there are still useful comparisons that can be made for Downtown and Denver as a whole. 83% of residents felt “very” or “somewhat” safe in Denver’s downtown area during the day over the 3 year period from 2008-2010 (NCS, 2010). This number was lower than resident’s perceived safety within their own neighborhoods during the day, which was rated the same way at 91% (NCS, 2010). Perceived safety was significantly lower after dark for both areas with residents rating their local neighborhoods at 62% and downtown at 39% from 2008-2010 (NCS, 2010). Perceived safety from violent crime averaged a 60%, while perceived safety from property crime averaged a 48% from 2008-2010 (NCS, 2010).

Despite these differences in perceived safety both at night and during the day between resident’s neighborhoods and Downtown Denver, reported crime statistics reflect little difference
between the two. In three main offense category types there is almost no statistical difference between reported crimes. In Downtown Denver; ‘Crimes Against Property’ account for 71%, ‘Crimes Against Persons’ account for 17%, and ‘Crimes Against Society’ account for 12% of the total reported offenses. In fact when broken down at the individual level using NIBRS crime classifications rather than the modified NCS definition the combined assault category represented 6% of all Downtown Crime, which is less than half the citywide average of 12%. Using the NCS definition of violent crime, assault still represented 6% of all downtown crime. Murder represented even less of total downtown crime with 2 reported out of 3,127 possible offenses.

From the survey results on perceived safety and reported offenses it is clear that something besides the reported offenses is creating the ‘fear of crime’. While property crimes do appear to occur marginally more downtown then the rest of Denver, violent and ‘Crimes Against Persons’ actually occur less. This is the exact reason that content analysis included two sub-codes in the local location category.

**RQ3: How does media representation of crime compare to NCS 'fear of crime' data in Denver from 2008-2010?**

Media representation of crime in Denver was understandably more focused on offenses occurring at a local and regional level. *As The Denver Post* is the primary in-print news source for the city of Denver logically it makes sense that a higher percentage of stories would focus on local and regional offenses. When broken down at the local level however, 72% of the articles focused on a crime that was violent in nature with the remaining 28% on non-violent crimes. Representation of Downtown Denver consisted of 13% of the total news articles focused on the local level. Of these articles offenses that were violent accounted for 62% of the Downtown
Denver subcategory. This too is actually less than the 74% of article offenses that were violent in nature for all other Denver Metro area neighborhoods.

Though the data is limited only to survey results media representation of crime in Denver appears to be in-conclusive in impact on residents ‘fear of crime’ or perceived safety. Though a large percentage of articles focused on offenses of a violent nature for both Downtown and other Denver area neighborhoods, the percentage was actually higher for non-downtown neighborhoods. If media representation of crime location has an impact on ‘fear of crime’ (Chircos et al, 2000), then perceived safety numbers should actually be higher for the downtown neighborhood area of Denver, then the others. The perceived safety results don't seem to reflect this. Perceived safety in downtown had an average of under 40% after the dark for the 3 year period, while resident's own neighborhoods averaged 62%, nearly 20% higher. The difference was less noticeable during the day, but again suggests that despite having a higher representation of violent offenses in articles, appear to have no impact on perceived safety or 'fear of crime'.

**RQ 4: Can social disorder and disorganization theory explain the differences in the data?**

Social disorganization and disorder theory can be applied in an attempt to explain differences in the data. Social disorganization theory attempts to explain crime through a lack of or weakened state of social control. This same concept can be applied to describe the differences in the 'fear of crime' and media representation in comparison to reported crime statistics. This can be explained in two ways; an element of social disorganization is inherently present in the downtown community, and newspaper articles may function much like graffiti or a broken window as signs of disorder to the outside observer.

A key element to social disorganization theory is that areas with populations in constant flux retain less of an ability to exert both informal and external social control (Casten et al,
2008). This extension from Shaw and McKay’s (1942) theory, that the degree in which neighborhoods are in a constant change affect crime rates. It is this constant change that might explain the ‘fear of crime’ downtown, though not in the traditional sense. Downtown Denver, like many of its counterparts in other cities has a wide degree of residential, business, and entertainment land use. The result is a large ambient population that represents the true number of citizens interacting within an area at any particular part of the day. The perceived lack of social control and cohesion may be a result of the large ambient population who interacts in this space. Though they are not residents of Downtown Denver, their constant interaction with other citizens with whom they most likely have loose social ties to may be the reason for lower perceived safety scores in Downtown as opposed to their own neighborhoods, where presumably there is less of an ambient population turnover. This vulnerability to perceived crime through lack of social control due to ambient population may explain why Downtown Denver is perceived as a hot spot of crime. Neighborhoods with weak social controls and population turnover are often associated with crime long after the neighborhood as changed (Allen et al, 2012).

Another component of social disorder theory, specifically the broken window theory which postulates that deterioration or disorder leads to crime by driving legitimate users away and signaling to would be offenders that a neighborhood is vulnerable (O’Shea, 2006). The presence of graffiti, vandalism, and perceived incivilities all increase the perception of disorder in a neighborhood and thus the ‘fear of crime’ (Xu et al, 2005). Casten and Payne (2008) demonstrated that a primary driver of the perception of disorder is vandalism; this may explain the increased perception of disorder and ‘fear of crime’ downtown. Larceny accounted for 29-
35% of all crime downtown from 2008-2010, well above the range of 12-19% for the city as a whole (Appendix A).
Conclusion

Though this project did identify misrepresentation of crime in comparison to reported offenses in printed news media, many questions remain un answered. Further research is needed to uncover a more direct correlation between media representation of violent crime and its influence on ‘fear of crime’ at the neighborhood level. One of the primary limitations of this study was reliance on aggregated survey results in relation to citizen’s perceived safety. Even if the full data set for the National Citizen Survey for Denver had been available, the information would not have been enough to make substantial conclusions at the neighborhood level. Future research should focus on individual neighborhoods ‘fear of crime’ levels in comparison to media representation residents receive in these neighborhoods. It is for this reason that ‘fear of crime’ survey methodology is so important as was included in the literature review.

Though victim and offender age and gender were coded for content analysis as suggested by (Chermak et al, 2007), these results were not included in this project for two reasons. The first being that this study was not concerned with crime story replication or salience, as much as it was crime type. The second being without the appropriate data set to compare male and female responses to ‘fear of crime’ questions, the results would have been descriptive at best. This again highlights the need to collect ‘fear of crime’ data down to the individual neighborhood level, in order to make more accurate comparisons. Time of reported incidents also might be another variable worth including on future research as it aligns well with questions of perceived safety during the day and night.

The findings clearly demonstrate a misrepresentation of crime in comparison to reported offense occurrence for Downtown and Denver as a whole. While this is hardly surprising given past studies (Chermak et al, 2007; Warr, 2000; Chiricos et al, 2000) what is surprising given the
relatively small sample size is how disproportionate some offenses are. While this study was conceived due to the recollection of a string of assaults in the Downtown Denver area of 2009 and was randomly sampled to prevent well publicized events from skewing the sample, violent and ‘Crimes Against Persons’ make up a vast majority of the offenses covered in local news.

Perceptions, mental maps, and hot-spots of crime are often formed in an individual’s mind through indirect experience. Media is a chief provider of information through indirect experience for a majority of the population (Dowler, 2003). While this study did not set out to prove correlation and wished to merely compare data, it is impossible not to think that a heavily slanted violence media presentation is not influencing the indirect experience of the population, their perception, and ‘fear of crime’. The indirect experience provided by the media in relation to local news representation, combined with loose social controls as a result of a large ambient population, and the more frequent occurrence of larceny all serve as a perfect cocktail for influencing ‘fear of crime’ in Downtown Denver.
## Appendix A

### REPORTED OFFENSES USING NIBRS DEFINITIONS IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF OFFENSE</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2009</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2010</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>2,269</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Sex Offenses</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Forcible Sex Offenses</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping/Abduction</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
<td>2,820</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>2,837</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,604</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,513</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>4,928</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeiting/Forgery</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief/Damaged Property</td>
<td>6,294</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>5,847</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>5,338</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>5,734</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>7,581</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>7,451</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>3,286</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Property</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,371</strong></td>
<td><strong>71.9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29,125</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug/Narcotics Violations</td>
<td>2,124</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>1,853</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Pornography</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Law Violations</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,513</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,283</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud - NSF - Closed Account</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curfew</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly Conduct / Disturbing the Peace</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Offenses / Nonviolent</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor Law/Drunkeness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sex Offenses</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viol of a Restraining/Court Order</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Trespassing</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Offenses</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,766</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,208</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,254</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,129</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All files utilized in the creation of this report are dynamic. Dynamic files allow additions, deletions and/or modifications at any time, resulting in more complete and accurate records in the databases. Due to continuous data entry after reports are compiled, numbers may vary in previous or subsequent reports. Data downloaded 1/10/2011.

PREPARED TO DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY PUBLIC
INFORMATION STANDARDS Excludes runaways, traffic offenses, unfounded reports and non-criminal activity.
REPORTED OFFENSES USING NIBRS DEFINITIONS IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF OFFENSE</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2008</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2009</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Murder                                       | 47   | 0.1% | 38   | 0.1% | -9    | -19.1%
| Aggravated Assault                           | 2,244 | 5.6% | 2,276 | 5.4% | 32    | 1.4%
| Forcible Sex Offenses                        | 823   | 2.1% | 743   | 1.8% | -80   | -9.7%
| Non Forcible Sex Offenses                    | 32    | 0.1% | 28    | 0.1% | -4    | -12.5%
| Kidnapping/Abduction                          | 155   | 0.4% | 155   | 0.4% | 0     | 0.0%
| Simple Assault                               | 2,464 | 6.2% | 2,812 | 6.7% | 348   | 14.3%
| Intimidation                                 | 418   | 1.0% | 470   | 1.1% | 52    | 12.4%
| **SUBTOTAL**                                 | 6,183 | 15.5%| 6,522 | 15.6%| 339   | 5.5%
| Arson                                        | 139   | 0.3% | 146   | 0.3% | 7     | 5.0%
| Bribery                                      | 4     | 0.0% | 0     | 0.0% | -4    | -100.0%
| Burglary                                     | 5,318 | 13.3%| 4,917 | 11.8%| -401  | -7.5%
| Counterfeiting/Forgergy                      | 189   | 0.5% | 195   | 0.5% | 7     | 3.7%
| Criminal Mischief/Damaged Property           | 5,994 | 15.0%| 6,280 | 15.0%| 286   | 4.8%
| Embezzlement                                | 55    | 0.1% | 29    | 0.1% | -26   | -47.3%
| Extortion                                    | 10    | 0.0% | 8     | 0.0% | -2    | -20.0%
| Fraud                                        | 1,124 | 2.8% | 897   | 2.1% | -227  | -20.2%
| Larceny                                      | 5,056 | 12.7%| 5,256 | 12.8%| 200   | 4.0%
| Theft from Motor Vehicle                    | 5,942 | 14.9%| 7,565 | 18.1%| 1,623 | 27.3%
| Motor Vehicle Theft                          | 3,805 | 9.5% | 3,607 | 8.6% | -198  | -5.3%
| Robbery                                      | 1,107 | 2.8% | 1,064 | 2.5% | -43   | -3.9%
| Stolen Property                              | 123   | 0.3% | 142   | 0.3% | 19    | 15.4%
| **SUBTOTAL**                                 | 28,866| 72.4%| 30,107| 72.0%| 1,241 | 4.3%
| Drug/Narcotics Violations                    | 2,272 | 5.7% | 2,118 | 5.1% | -154  | -6.6%
| Gambling                                     | 3     | 0.0% | 0     | 0.0% | -3    | -100.0%
| Child Pornography                            | 21    | 0.1% | 23    | 0.1% | 2     | 9.5%
| Prostitution                                 | 18    | 0.0% | 9     | 0.0% | -9    | -50.0%
| Weapon Law Violations                        | 364   | 0.9% | 350   | 0.8% | -14   | -3.8%
| **SUBTOTAL**                                 | 2,678 | 6.7% | 2,500 | 6.0% | -178  | -6.6%
| Fraud - NSF - Closed Account                 | 26    | 0.1% | 29    | 0.1% | 3     | 11.5%
| Curfew                                       | 0     | 0.0% | 34    | 0.1% | 34    | 100.0%
| Disorderly Conduct / Disturbing the Peace    | 65    | 0.2% | 105   | 0.3% | 40    | 61.5%
| Family Offenses / Nonviolent                 | 443   | 1.1% | 384   | 0.9% | -59   | -13.3%
| Liquor Law/Drunkenness                       | 1     | 0.0% | 12    | 0.0% | 11    | 1100.0%
| Other Sex Offenses                           | 347   | 0.9% | 283   | 0.7% | -64   | -18.4%
| Viol of a Restraining/Court Order            | 413   | 1.0% | 426   | 1.0% | 13    | 3.1%
| Harassment                                   | 287   | 0.7% | 315   | 0.8% | 28    | 9.2%
| Criminal Trespassing                         | 271   | 0.7% | 319   | 0.8% | 48    | 17.7%
| All Other Offenses                           | 310   | 0.8% | 789   | 1.9% | -479  | -55.9%
| **SUBTOTAL**                                 | 2,763 | 6.4% | 2,695 | 6.4% | 532   | 24.6%
| **GRAND TOTAL**                              | 39,890| 100.0%| 41,824| 100.0%| 1,934 | 4.8%

All files utilized in the creation of this report are dynamic. Dynamic files allow additions, deletions and/or modifications at any time, resulting in more complete and accurate records in the databases. Due to continuous data entry after reports are compiled, numbers may vary in previous or subsequent reports. Data downloaded 01/13/2009.

PREPARED TO DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY PUBLIC

INFORMATION STANDARDS Excludes runaways, traffic offenses, unfounded reports and non-criminal activity.
### CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REPORTED OFFENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF OFFENSE</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2009</th>
<th>JAN-DEC, 2010</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Sex Offenses</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Forcible Sex Offenses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping/Abduction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>162</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeiting/Forgery</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief/Damaged Property</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theft from Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>76</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>48</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>892</td>
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<td>CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug/Narcotics Violations</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weapon Law Violations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Fraud - NSF - Closed Account</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Curfew</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Disorderly Conduct / Disturbing the Peace</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Liquor Law/Drunkeness</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Viol of a Restraining/Court Order</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Other Offenses</td>
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<td>1.7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

All files utilized in the creation of this report are dynamic. Dynamic files allow additions, deletions and/or modifications at any time, resulting in more complete and accurate records in the databases. Due to continuous data entry after reports are compiled, numbers may vary in previous or subsequent reports. Data downloaded 1/10/2011.

PREPARED TO DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY PUBLIC

INFORMATION STANDARDS Excludes runaways, traffic offenses, unfounded reports and non-criminal activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF CRIME</th>
<th>Jan-Dec, 2008 #</th>
<th>Jan-Dec, 2009 %</th>
<th>CHANGE %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART 1 PERSONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PART 1 PROPERTY</strong></td>
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<td>Burglary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larceny (Except Theft from MV)</td>
<td>244</td>
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<td>Theft from Motor Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto Theft</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>555</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PART 1 TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>664</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>152</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offenses Against Family/Children</td>
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<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC DISORDER CRIMES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prostitution/Commercialized Vice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disorderly Conduct</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curfew and Loitering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DRUG/ALCOHOL OFFENSES</strong></td>
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<td>-2</td>
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<td>Liquor Law Violations</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>WHITE COLLAR CRIMES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgery/Counterfeiting</td>
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<td>Fraud</td>
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<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ALL OTHER CRIMES</strong></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Other Offenses</td>
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<td><strong>PART 2 TOTAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>922</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>190</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excludes traffic accidents, traffic moving violations and other traffic offenses.
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References

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doi: 10.1016/S0272-4944(05)80173-2

‘FEAR OF CRIME’ & MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CRIME IN DENVER


doi: 10.1177/0022427804266544