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Stand Your Ground Law: How Can a UCF Student's Fear of Crime Affect Their Opinion of the Law and What Variables Affect the Student's Level of Fear of Crime?

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University of Central Florida



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STAND YOUR GROUND LAW:
HOW CAN A UCF STUDENT'S FEAR OF CRIME AFFECT THEIR OPINION
OF THE LAW AND WHAT VARIABLES AFFECT
THE STUDENT'S LEVEL OF FEAR OF CRIME?

by

KELLY A. DUCKWORTH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Sociology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. John Lynxwiler

Abstract

Stand Your Ground Law:

How Can a UCF Student's Fear of Crime Affect Their Opinions of This Law and What Variables Affect the Student's Level of Fear of Crime?

A person's level of fear of crime or even their perceived fear of crime can affect how they view the Stand Your Ground Law and whether it is seen as beneficial or harmful to the general public. I begin with a discussion of the Stand Your Ground Law. Next, I report on research that examines the fear of crime and how it may shape opinions on the law as well as an individual's level of fear. My research explores the relationship of these variables using survey data. I examine the attitudes of college students regarding their fear of crime to explore variables that impact their levels of fear and their opinions regarding the Stand Your Ground Law.

Dedication

To my Dad, Dennis Alan Duckworth, who passed away July of 2013. Thank you for always encouraging me and standing by me through any decisions I made. You were an amazing man and great father and I'm so glad that I got to call you my Dad. And to my husband Alexander P St.Cyr who supported me through all the crazy days and long nights.

Acknowledgments

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I'd also like to thank my family for being my support during the process of my thesis. First, to my husband, Alex for standing by me and pushing and sometimes pulling me through the tough times during the last few semesters. Thank you to my mom and sister who always had encouraging words for me when I wasn't feeling so confident. I love you all!

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Introduction

Since 2005, in Florida alone, there have been more than 200 Stand Your Ground cases (Cameron & Higgins). There are many factors that should be considered when measuring opinions on the Stand Your Ground Law. In this study the dependent variable is the individual's opinion of the Stand Your Ground Law. The independent variables begin with the individual's level of fear of crime, which can be affected by many different factors. A person's fear of crime can affect how they view the Stand Your Ground Law and whether it is seen as beneficial or harmful to the general public. Variables that may influence an individual's fear of crime include age, gender, race, religious beliefs, type of neighborhood they reside in, and type of transportation they use. The media also has the ability to reach many individuals giving it a broader opportunity to influence individuals and their opinions. Another variable that may impact an individual's fear of crime is prior experience with crime, whether being the victim, the perpetrator, or even a witness. My research examines factors that may shape an individual's fear of crime and one's fear of crime affects opinions regarding the Stand Your Ground Law.

Stand Your Ground Law

Protection of Persons Bill, or The Stand Your Ground Law was enacted in Florida on October 1, 2005. This law essentially modified sections 776.012 and 776.031 and created new sections 776.013 and 776.032 of the Florida Statutes (Weaver, 2008, p.399). These sections are found in the 2005 Florida Statutes in Chapter 776. Sections 776.012, 776.031, 776.013, and 776.032 are located in Appendix A.

Sections 776.012 and 776.031 previously required a person to use any means to retreat before exercising any type of deadly force but the 2005 amendment to these sections eliminated the need to retreat (Weaver, 2008, p.400). The duty to retreat is not necessary as stated in section 776.012 subsection 1, when the individual "reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony" (The 2005 Florida Statute, 2005). This change brought about section 776.013 where an individual has the right to use deadly force if there is a perceived threat to their dwelling, residence, or occupied vehicle.

Home protection and the use of deadly force are defined in section 776.013 of the Florida Statute. In this section 776.013(1) the use of deadly force is acceptable to protect oneself, others, or their dwelling, residence, or vehicle the defensive person is occupying it at the time. The defensive person must perceive the threat will result in great bodily harm or death in order to be able to use deadly force or that someone is being removed against their will.

After stating when it is acceptable to use deadly force, section 776.013(2) gives the provisions that make it unacceptable. First, is when the person whom defensive force is being used against has legal right to be in the dwelling, residence, or vehicle or the person being

removed against their will is a dependent minor in that person's legal custody. If the dwelling, residence, or vehicle is being used for illegal activities, defensive force cannot be used on the person using it for those illegal purposes or the person is a law enforcement officer.

That being said, in section 776.013, subsection 3 states that as long as the individual "standing their ground" is not participating in unlawful or illegal activities they will be protected by this law if they resort to having to meet force with force.

Section 776.013(4) states that anyone entering a dwelling, residence, or vehicle without the owner's or resident's permission is assumed to have malicious intent and can be met with force, deadly if necessary.

Lastly section 776.013(5) gives the legal definitions for dwelling, residence, and vehicle. A dwelling includes anything with a roof and can be either permanent or mobile. A residence is a dwelling where someone resides, either permanent or temporary. A vehicle is defined as any type of transportation, mobile or not.

Section 776.032 of the Florida Statutes was created in 2005 along with section 776.013. Section 776.032 basically says that if the criteria are met for acceptable use of deadly force in sections 776.012, 776.013, and 776.031 the individual taking defensive force will have immunity from criminal prosecution or civil action.

The stipulations state in 776.032(1) that the person that defensive force is being taken upon cannot be an officer of the law, performing his duties as an officer. This subsection also gives the definition for the term criminal prosecution as anything involving arresting, detaining, charging, and prosecuting the individual whom used defensive force.

Subsection 2 of section 776.032 states that law enforcement has the right to investigate the case without arresting the individual whom used defensive force unless they have probable cause.

While the last section, 776.032(3) awards the individual the costs of any accrued fees or lost expenses if they are found to be protected under 776.032(1).

Stand Your Ground Law was based off the "Castle Doctrine" where an individual is protected under the law to use lethal force in his own home, his "castle" (McClellan & Tekin, 2012). The difference is it now is extend to apply to places outside the home such as a vehicle, workplace, or anywhere else they have the legal right to be (McClellan & Tekin, 2012). Since the passing of the Stand Your Ground Law in Florida in 2005 the rate of justifiable homicides has tripled (Sullivan, 2013).

Fear of Crime

The Stand Your Ground Law brings about both pro and con opinions within the general public. Is it possible that an individual's fear of crime impacts their attitudes toward the law? Fear of crime is defined as the emotional response to criminal stimuli creating feelings of dread or anxiety (Matthews, Johnson, & Jenks, 2011). Fear of crime is measured differently from individual to individual and can be based on one's perceived risk of crime. Though an individual perceives a high level of crime that does not necessarily mean they have a high fear of crime. That said, the individual may not equate the high level of crime with an increased chance of becoming a victim of crime (Matthews et al., 2011). There is no wrong answer or assessment to what an individual's fear of crime is, whether it is warranted or not. What may frighten one individual may seem trivial to another but also vice versa. Several variables may affect how an individual perceives the safety of their surroundings, and how they react to it. In many cases, it is just as important to ask how afraid a person is as to what caused the fear.

Factors that may initiate an individual's fear can be attributed to a variety of factors; however, there are a few general cues upon which researchers agree. They are referred to as fear provoking cues. Researchers have found that specific cues are related to fear of crime; these cues activate the brain's amygdale, the brain's emotional center (Fisher & May, 2009, p.303). The cues are stimuli that trigger a feeling of fear within an individual.

Lighting is the first of the fear provoking cues to be evaluated when entering an area. Low lighting or decreased visibility inhibits the individual from seeing what is ahead or around them (Fisher & May, 2009, p.303). Eyesight is the most depended on sense to prevent one from

becoming a victim. Poor lighting can strongly affect the ability to properly assess the situation and can increase one's fear of the likelihood of being attacked.

Foliage may not be as obvious a cue as lighting but it is the next cue to trigger fear in an individual. Types, shapes, and amounts of foliage can affect how a person perceives their surroundings. Thick foliage can provide a hiding place or block visibility possibly causing a false sense of safety (Fisher & May, 2009, p.304). Being unable to have time to react or prepare oneself for an attack can affect the individual's fear of crime.

Next cue is group loitering which provides signals to individuals of a possible dangerous situation (Fisher & May, 2009, p.305). Low lighting or thick foliage provides these types of groups more opportunity to prey on others they might not if in a well-lit open areas. It may not matter whether the group is made up of rowdy teenagers or tough-looking bikers both groups can provoke fear within an individual. It may also be that a fear of being out-numbered can make the individual feel like an easy target to victimize and will increase their fear around types of large groups. In areas where there are a lot of groups loitering on the streets a higher number of police are found patrolling the area.

Visibility of police may in some cases decrease a feeling of fear of crime while in other cases it may actually increase fear. One study where police in uniform and police not in uniform administered a survey door to door, they found that fear was less present in the ones surveyed by the uniformed police, suggesting police visibility does reduce fear of crime. The visibility of police can also affect individuals negatively by causing a perceived increase in crime where police patrols have increased (Fisher & May, 2009).

The perceived effectiveness of police can misrepresent the results of whether the visibility of police can affect an individual's fear of crime (Fisher & May, 2009). If an individual does not believe the police are effective in keeping the people safe then visibility of police is not going to positively influence their levels of fear of crime, though it may not affect it negatively either. Another factor that could influence results is whether the individual believes there are "crooked" cops on the force, one's that can be bought or bribed into illegal activities or into looking the other way.

These few fear provoking cues mentioned when experienced by them are likely to increase the individual's fear of crime. Finding a situation where two or more fear provoking cues are present a drastic increase in the individual's level of fear of crime may be seen. This kind of level of fear can cause an individual to make rash and possibly dangerous decisions for themselves and those around them.

The consequences of being too fearful of crime or the possibility of becoming a victim can not only affect social interactions with others but it can also affect mental health as well. The individual could become paranoid, and begin avoiding people/strangers, having irrational thoughts, or experience an inability to trust others (Liska et al., 1982). All of these types of behavior can negatively influence relationships with others. Psychological effects can include "feelings of anxiety, mistrust, alienation, and dissatisfaction with life" which can lead to efforts to reduce these feelings, like taking drugs (Liska et al, 1982, p.761).

Individuals experience their surrounds differently, which can affect their level of fear of crime. Men and women, old and young, Black American and White American, all perceive life

differently which alters their view of crime and their fear of it. Measuring an individual's level of fear of crime may help explain why they hold a certain opinion on the Stand Your Ground Law.

Neighborhood - Fear of Crime

Fear of crime can also be looked at from a social fact standpoint where physical locations vary levels of fear of crime (Liska, Lawrence, & Sanchirico, 1982). Individuals who live in cities will have different things to fear than those who live in suburban areas.

A common finding among research on crime is that people who live in urban areas are more likely to be victimized than those who do not. In addition, higher crime rates are associated with greater population density.

Researchers disagree on what affects neighborhood crime levels but many agree that higher poverty areas tend to have higher crime rates (Barkan & Bryjak, 2011). Ironically, the criminals are not attacking the nice upper class neighborhoods; they are stealing from and victimizing people from their own neighborhoods, or ones similar to their own. Factors that could explain this include the following: security systems are less likely to be found in lower class neighborhoods; police response times are slower in lower class neighborhoods; the actual number of reported crimes may be lower; and, criminals may lack a means of transportation to the upper class neighborhoods. Simply put, less affluent neighborhoods are easier targets for criminals than more affluent neighborhoods. In addition, crime rates are higher in urban neighborhoods than in rural neighborhoods. Not only may the amount of people that are living in urban neighborhoods cause an increase in crime rates, but also the type of living conditions could affect crime rates as well (Barkan & Bryjak, 2011).

Studies show that crime rates within a primarily low income Black American neighborhood do not differ enough from crime rates within a primarily low income White American neighborhood to say that Black American neighborhoods have more crime than White American (Barkan & Bryjak, 2011). However, individuals may still feel fear of crime when in contact with person(s) of a different race.

Race - Fear of Crime

Stereotyping can be called the root of many individual's racial fear. Stereotyping is a cognitive process where social categories are used to attribute certain characteristics or beliefs to all members of a certain group (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). Race is shown to be one of the most prominent social categories used in stereotyping. For example, if one were to state "all" Black Americans are criminals because Black Americans make up the highest percentage out of all races within the prison system, you are stereotyping. Though research shows that within the prison population Black American males make up about 6.5 times the amount of White American males and about 2.5 times the amount of Hispanic males (Project America, 2008). This does not mean that all Black Americans commit crimes; rather, it suggests that more Black American males are convicted of crimes than White American or Hispanic males. This also does not mean that fear of Black Americans is not a rational fear but assuming all "fit" into the category is an example of stereotyping. The typical stereotype that White Americans have for Black Americans is associating them with crime and violence (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996).

Studies have been done that show a correlation between certain races reactions to each other when they meet in a public setting. For example, research by St. John & Heald-Moore (1996) has found that White Americans are fearful of encounters with Black Americans more so

than other White Americans, and even more so White Americans are fearful of encounters with “young” Black American males. Young Black American males tend to be associated with crime, and are avoided if at all possible to avoid possible victimization. Again this is an example of stereotyping but if the statistics mentioned before are correct then the possibility of encountering a young Black American male who is a criminal is likely.

Elderly White Americans are more fearful of encounters with strangers, regardless of race color, or gender, compared with younger White Americans (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996), while elderly Black Americans are found to not be more fearful of encounters with strangers than younger Black Americans (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). One theory states that elderly White Americans' fear of Black Americans stems from the historical location of slavery and its cultural meanings within older generations (St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). While White Americans fear encounters other races more so than Black Americans, minorities are more fearful of encounters with the police.

Studies show that minorities, specifically Black Americans, have very little trust in the justice system, especially the police (Callanan, 2012). Stereotyping is just as prevalent within the criminal justice system, resulting in unwarranted traffic stops, vehicle and residence searches, harassment, wrongful convictions, and preferential treatment shown to White Americans (Callanan, 2012).

Gender - Fear of Crime

Does gender affect individual's fear of crime? Studies show a positive correlation between gender and levels of fear of crime. Most past research focuses strictly on women's fear

of crime and what causes it. Women are more often the victims of crime because they are more vulnerable than men, both emotionally and physically.

As mentioned earlier there are cues that trigger an individual's fear of crime. Do these cues affect men and women differently? Males judge their surroundings in accordance with their ability to flee while keeping factors in mind such as their youth, physical strength and speed to make this possible (Fisher & May, 2009). This is not so for the majority of women, leading to the assumption that there is differences in fear of crime for men and women. Breaking it down by each cue the differences of fear of crime for men and women can be analyzed.

The first fear provoking cue is poor lighting or limited visibility which makes it hard for both men and women to see what is ahead of them. Though women are more vulnerable to attack than men, without the ability to see properly to escape an attack both men and women are affected similarly resulting in no difference of influence this cue has on both sexes' fear of crime (Fisher & May, 2009).

As stated previously the amounts or thickness of foliage also prevents an individual from properly seeing what is around them. A false sense of safety is created by thick foliage and can affect both men and women but slightly different. Creating a false sense of safety for women may result in them not paying as close attention as needed making them more vulnerable to attack. Similarly men may be lulled into a false sense of safety but by their own sureness of being able to protect themselves. The ease of someone being able to approach a man without prior warning and having to confront the unknown may serve to increase the man's fear of crime. This results in no difference of fear of crime between men and women.

The next fear provoking cue is group loitering which has been analyzed and found that it increases fear of crime because it is seen as a breakdown of social control. Studies show that group loitering causes fear in both men and women causing difficulties in analyzing the differences of fear of crime by gender (Fisher & May, 2009).

The last cue of fear of crime is police visibility. As seen earlier there are complications with measuring fear of crime based on police visibility which can cause problems with getting accurate results. Women may feel safer when police are visible because women are more vulnerable to attack than men are (Fisher & May, 2009). In contrast, police visibility may not affect men's fear of crime without possessing similar vulnerabilities as women (Fisher & May, 2009).

There are several issues with measuring the difference between the levels of fear of crime between men and women. First, women tend to be more emotional than men and are more likely to share their feelings and emotions. Men are more likely to hide, mask, minimize, or outright deny any feelings of fear making it hard to get an accurate reading on their level of fear of crime. Historically men in the family are thought to be the protectors and providers of the family and many hold to this ideal still today. How can a man admit he is afraid and uphold the same image as being the protector of his family? Another issue is how to measure men and women's fear equally when they experience things differently. Studies have shown that men and women process the information they receive differently and that they take in different things from their surroundings (Fisher & May, 2009). The differences in these cause men and women to process fear and spatial knowledge differently and make it hard to measure their levels of fear accurately.

Age- Fear of Crime

Many research studies have supported a correlation between the elderly and fear of crime. The older an individual gets they less physically able they are to protect themselves which increases their fear of crime. In this study, college students will be the primary target of discussion.

Not much research has been done on college student's fear of crime, however victimization and crime on campus has been researched. The media is always covering when crime happens on university campuses causing the public to believe university campuses are unsafe. Because of the crime that has been covered in the media precautions have been taken at most universities by adding emergency phones and alarms around campus and education for students on how to use them and where they are. (Bedenbaugh, 2003) Increasing police patrols on campus and instituting programs to pick up students and drive them back to their vehicles or dorm rooms are other ways universities attempt to lessen student's fear of crime while on campus. Whether or not these help to reduce a student's fear of crime is hard to say but they do help to prevent potential victimization on campus.

Religion - Fear of Crime

Religious involvement/attendance is another factor that can influence an individual's fear of crime. Not much research has been done on the correlation between religion and fear of crime. "Religiosity is an important factor of public perceptions of criminal behavior in that the strength of religious belief is positively related to punitive and morally indignant response to crime" (Matthews et al., 2011, p.487). It is known that religious individuals tend to have a different approach to handling crime but how much fear does crime cause them?

Typically, most religions affirm the existence of an afterlife that is dependent on how one lives their current life. Whether it be a heaven or hell, or something along the lines of reincarnation, how you live this life effects what comes after death. Most religions also seek out to help others, including criminals, become saved or part of whatever religion they are representing. Generalized trust is found within most religious groups which help create a feeling of community or oneness among members, giving the individual somewhere to turn in tough situations (Matthews et al., 2011). Increased generalized trust can help minimize distrust among others within society causing a decrease in fear of crime. Having a community or group can help give fearful individuals somewhere to turn.

Type of religion can also affect an individual's level of fear of crime. Muslims, especially in America, are more victimized than most other religions found in the United States. Though we are a nation built on religious freedom, radical Muslims like the Al-Qaeda have created a stereotype that most Muslims do not fit. Because of this stereotype, individual Muslims are often profiled and treated as dangerous. As a result, many Muslims, or those who appear to be Muslim, may have an increased fear of crime because they feel that they may become targets of hate crimes.

Transportation – Fear of Crime

There is not much prior research done on types of transportation and a correlation with fear of crime. The idea is fear of crime can increase depending on what type of primary transportation is used. If an individual's primary mode of transportation is a personal vehicle then their level of fear of crime may be low because once they are inside their vehicle they have a safe way to travel to their destination. In contrast, if one's primary transportation is walking they may

have a higher level of fear of crime. Walking leaves an individual vulnerable to attack, especially if the location the individual has to walk is factored in. Other types of transportation include biking, public transit (bus), scooter, or even carpooling.

Media - Fear of Crime

Media is one of the most influential forms of communication. It can be the easiest and best way to get information out to many people nationwide or worldwide as fast as possible. Media's influence on the public's fear of crime has been studied for many decades. One piece of information that is agreed upon is the fact that media circuits influence the public's view of reality and define social conditions (Callanan, 2012).

The term media encompasses information released in television, radio, and on the many different online circuits. Online media can be shared in many different ways and can reach individuals around the world faster than other types of media release. With all the different types of social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) stories are more easily shared among those who use social media sites. In modern society, radio is the least effective way to reach the public. The lack of video feed or photos to back the story makes less of an impact.

The media only shows what is "newsworthy" which mean what stories will attract the most viewers/readers. Consequently, what are considered newsworthy are stories that increase the public's fear of crime. Stories that are dramatic, that show vulnerability, that show extraordinariness, or stories filled with violence or things that will shock the general public are what are considered newsworthy (Callanan, 2012). Crime stories are easy to obtain, in most cases, and fit all the criteria that the general public looks for in a news story (Callanan, 2012).

Moreover, news stories are geared for the general public which targets primarily the White

American middle-class (Callanan, 2012). As a result of this audience bias, “non-White Americans are more likely to be portrayed in a negative light than White Americans” (Callanan, 2012, p.94).

In sum, fear of crime is affected by many different variables and can vary from person to person. An individual’s level of fear of crime can affect how they view crime levels and opinions on the Stand Your Ground Law

Methods

Data/Participants

In this study, data were collected through a voluntary online survey hosted by Qualtrics. The survey URL is distributed via randomly selected faculty in the Sociology Department of the University of Central Florida. The faculty members then distribute the survey amongst their students for voluntary participation. The URL of this survey was also posted on UCF related pages on the social networking site Facebook. A copy of the survey is in Appendix B.

Variables/Procedures

The data collected in this study were analyzed using SPSS. The survey questions completed by the participants focused on different measures to obtain college student's opinions on the Stand Your Ground Law and what affects their opinions. The dependent variable in this study is the opinions on the Stand Your Ground Law and fear of crime. The independent variables in this study include gender, race, neighborhood, transportation, and media influence. Then, the survey continued asked the participants about their lived experiences that could affect their fear of crime. These questions included prior experience with crime and what scenarios affect the individual's level of fear. After obtaining over 300 survey responses in Qualtrics, the data were imported into SPSS for analysis. Demographic questions were asked to obtain basic information, like the individual's gender, race, age, marital status, employment status, and living arrangements. Education, family, friends, transportation, prior victimization, and prior criminal participation were also asked to gain a background on each individual to assist in understanding the results. These demographics would be used to compare and analyze the data obtained in later survey questions.

Questions were also asked about the Stand Your Ground Law to gauge the individual's familiarity with the law using "yes, very", "yes, somewhat", and "no" as the response choices. Asking who the respondent thinks the Stand Your Ground Law protects can assess their opinion on this law. The response choices include: "citizens", "vigilantes", "criminals", and "other", show whether the individual is for the law (citizens) or against the law (criminals). Whether or not the respondent feels safer because of the law also gauges their opinion on this law. The responses given for the question of whether the individual feels safe or not, are "yes very", "yes, somewhat", "neither more nor less safe", "no" and "no, it makes me feel less safe". These responses were then recoded into the choices "more safe" and "less safe".

The individual's gender and race were compared to Stand Your Ground Law related questions using a crosstab analysis, and a Chi-squared test was run to see if there was a significant relationship between the two variables.

Several questions were asked about general feels of fear in every day circumstances. Respondents were told to choose the best response for each question, between zero and five where zero represented "no fear" and five represented "high fear". These general fear questions were then combined and recoded into two response choices, "low fear" and "high fear" levels. The same was done for the ten fear questions about encounters with people of different types of races and age groups, the nine questions about fear of different types of people loitering in groups, and the ten fear questions about traveling.

Each of these groups is coded into their responses and a crosstab analysis was run using a Chi-squared test. Gender and race were compared using these tests to see if there is a significant relationship between those variables and each of the fear groupings.

Results

Using the data collected by running a crosstab analysis with a Chi-squared test to examine the variables together and to see if there are any significant relationships between any of the variables.

Stand Your Ground Law

Table 1: Gender and Familiarity of the SYGL: Does gender affect the individual's familiarity of the SYGL?

Gender/Familiarity	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	No Familiarity
Male	39.1%	48.3%	11.5%
Female	30.1%	48.6%	19.9%
	Value	Significance	
Chi-Squared	23.389	.001	

Using a crosstab analysis and the Chi-squared test, gender, race, and age (rows) were compared with individual's familiarity with the Stand Your Ground Law (columns). First looking at gender, with gender listed as male and female and familiarity ranked as yes, very, yes, somewhat, and no. 39.1 percent of males stated they were very familiar with the Stand Your Ground Law, while 48.3 percent stated they were somewhat familiar with the law, and 11.5 percent were not familiar with it at all. Females on the other hand 30.1 percent were very familiar, 48.6 percent were somewhat familiar, and 19.9 percent were not familiar with the law at all. Both genders highest percentage answered with a somewhat familiarity of the Stand Your Ground Law. This finding may be linked to the high profile trial of George Zimmerman who was involved in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin. The Stand Your Ground Law was brought up several times during this trial by the media although it was not used by the defense lawyers

representing George Zimmerman. Due to the media coverage, some respondents may have heard of the law during these trials which would result in a somewhat familiarity with the law.

Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 23.389 and a significance of .001 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and familiarity with the Stand Your Ground Law.

Table 2: Race and familiarity of the SYGL: Does gender affect the individual’s familiarity of the SYGL?

Race/Familiarity	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	No Familiarity
White	35.2%	49%	14.8%
Black	31.4%	60.8%	5.9%
Hispanic	32.4%	29.7%	35.1%
Other	14.3%	47.6%	38.1%
	Value	Significance	
Chi-squared	84.757	.000	

Familiarity of the Stand Your Ground Law and race was compared, using White American, Black American, Hispanic and other races with familiarity being ranked at yes, very, yes, somewhat, and no. White Americans had a 35.2 percent of very familiar, 49 percent had a somewhat level of familiarity, and 14.8 percent had no familiarity with the law. Black Americans then had a 31.4 percent of very familiar, 60.8 percent of somewhat familiar and 5.9 percent of no familiarity. 32.4 percent of Hispanics are very familiar, 29.7 percent are somewhat familiar, and 35.1 percent are not familiar with the Stand Your Ground Law. Looking at the “other” category of race, 14.3 percent were very familiar, 47.6 percent were somewhat familiar, and 38.1 percent were not familiar with this law. For all races a somewhat familiarity was found to have the highest percentage. Because the Trayvon Martin shooting attracted so much media attention as a racial incident, it may be an important reason that Black Americans percentage of “no familiarity” was lower than the other race categories (5.9% vs. 14% or higher). Pearson’s Chi-

square test gave a value of 84.757 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between race and familiarity of the Stand Your Ground Law.

Table 3: Age and Familiarity with SYGL: Does age affect the individual's familiarity of the SYGL?

Age/Familiarity	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	No Familiarity
18-30 years old	31.1%	47.8%	20.3%
31-45 years old	47.1%	50%	2.9%
46-65 years old	37.5%	50%	6.2%
Chi-squared	Value 190.791	Significance .000	

Next age was compared to the individual's familiarity with the Stand Your Ground Law. Ages were grouped together in categories of 18-30, 31-45, and 46-65. In the age group 18-30 years old, out of 251 responses, 31.1 percent stated they were very familiar with the Stand Your Ground Law, while 47.8 percent were somewhat familiar, and 20.3 percent had no familiarity with this law. Within the 31-45 age groups out of 34 responses, 47.1 percent were very familiar, 50 percent were somewhat familiar, and 2.9 percent were not familiar with this law. Lastly the smallest of the three age groups 46-65 with 16 responses, 37.5 percent were very familiar with this law, 50 percent was somewhat familiar, and 6.2 percent was not familiar. Being that the age group of 18-30 covers most students in college this was the biggest group with 251 responses. With every age group it was found that around 50 percent stated that they were somewhat familiar with the Stand Your Ground Law. This is consistent across the board when comparing to gender, race, and age. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 190.791 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between age and familiarity with the Stand Your Ground Law.

When a crosstab analysis with a Chi-squared test was run in SPSS, gender and race (rows) were analyzed to see if there was a relationship with the survey questions regarding who is protected by the Stand Your Ground Law and do you the individual feel safer because of the Stand Your Ground Law (columns).

Table 4: Gender and who is protected by the SYGL: Does gender affect who the individuals think is protected by the SYGL?

Gender/Protected	Citizens	Vigilantes	Criminals	Other
Male	70.1%	14.9%	11.5%	2.3%
Female	66.7%	14.4%	11.6%	6.9%
Chi-squared	Value 36.129	Significance .000		

A Chi-square test was also run at this time. The data shows that 70.1 percent of males surveyed stated that citizens are protected by the Stand Your Ground Law, while 14.9 percent stated that vigilantes are protected, and 11.5 percent stated that criminals are protected and the last 2.3 percent stated “others” were protected. Similarly 66.7 percent of women surveyed stated that citizens were protected, while 14.4 percent stated vigilantes, 11.6 percent stated criminals, and 6.9 percent stated “others” were protected. Gender did not seem to affect the opinion on who was protected by this law. The highest percent of both men and women answered that citizens are the ones who are most protected by this law. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 36.129 with a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and who individuals think is protected by the Stand Your Ground Law.

Table 5: Race and who is protected by the SYGL: Does gender affect who the individuals think is protected by the SYGL?

Race/Protected	Citizens	Vigilantes	Criminals	Other
White	76%	8.7%	10.2%	4.1%
Black	43.1%	35.3%	13.7%	7.8%
Hispanic	67.6%	16.2%	8.1%	8.1%

Other	52.4%	14.3%	23.8%	9.5%
	Value	Significance		
Chi-squared	135.334	.000		

Race was also compared to both of these questions and came up with the following results for which the individuals thought is protected by the Stand Your Ground Law. Race was broken down into White American, Black American, Hispanic and other. Looking at the question of who is protected by the Stand Your Ground Law 76.0 percent of White Americans stated that citizens were most protected, 8.7 percent stated vigilantes, 10.2 percent stated criminals, and 4.1 percent stated “others”. Black Americans answered 43.1 percent for citizens, 35.3 percent for vigilantes, 13.7 percent for criminals, and 7.8 percent for “others”. Then, 67.6 percent of Hispanics answered citizens, 16.2 percent answered vigilantes, 8.1 percent answered criminals, and 8.1 percent answered for “others”. The last category of race includes all others who do not identify with the previous races listed. This “other” group answered 52.4 percent for citizens, 14.3 percent for vigilantes, 23.8 percent for criminals, and 9.5 percent for “others”. White Americans, Hispanics, and all the other races answered pretty similarly but Black Americans had a different look on this question. The highest percentage for White Americans, Hispanics, and “others” answered that citizens were most protected, while the percentage for Black Americans was very close between citizens being the most protected and vigilantes being the most protected. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 135.334 with a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between race and who individuals thought was protected by the Stand Your Ground Law.

Table 6: Gender and level of feeling of safety: Does gender affect an individual’s feeling of safety because of the SYGL?

Gender/Safety	More Safe	Neither	Less Safe
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Male	72.4%	13.8%	26.4%
Female	65.2%	20.8%	28.7%
	Value	Significance	
Chi-squared	32.081	.000	

Gender was then compared with how safe the person feels because of the Stand Your Ground Law and that they are able to protect themselves when threatened with deadly force. 72.4 percent of males answered that yes they felt safer because of the Stand Your Ground Law, while 13.8 percent stated they felt neither more or less safe, and 26.4 percent answered they did not feel safer because of this law. While 65.2 percent of women answered yes they felt safer because of Stand Your Ground Law, 20.8 percent felt neither more nor less safe, and 28.7 percent did not feel safer. Gender again did not seem to affect whether the individual felt safer or less safe because of the Stand Your Ground Law. Both genders had the highest percentage of feeling safer because of Stand Your Ground Law. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 32.081 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and how safe individuals felt because of the Stand Your Ground Law.

Table 7: Race and Level of Safety: Does race affect how safe an individual feels because of the SYGL?

Race/Safety	More Safe	Neither	Less Safe
White	71%	17.3%	10.7%
Black	62.8%	25.5%	11.7%
Hispanic	59.4%	10.8%	27%
Other	61.9%	28.6%	9.6%
	Value	Significance	
Chi-squared	93.344	.000	

Comparing race to the question of whether the individuals felt safer, neither more nor less safe, or less safe because of the Stand Your Ground Law resulted in the following for each race.

71 percent of White Americans felt safer because of this law, while 17.3 percent felt neither

more nor less safe, and 10.7 percent stated they felt less safe. Black Americans similarly answered 62.8 percent for more safe, 25.5 percent felt neither more nor less safe, and 11.7 percent felt less safe because of this law. Then Hispanics answered 59.4 percent felt more safe, 10.8 percent felt neither, and 27 percent felt less safe. Lastly “other” races were calculated and 61.9 percent answered safer, 28.6 percent answered neither, and 9.6 percent answered less safe. Looking at these results Hispanics seemed to have the lowest percentage feeling more safe and the highest percentage feeling less safe compared to White Americans and Black Americans who had the highest percentages in feeling more safe and the lowest feeling less safe. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 93.344 and significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between race and whether the individuals felt safer or not because of the Stand Your Ground Law.

Respondents were asked to answer a question about prior victimization and this was compared with gender and race using a crosstab analysis and a Chi-squared test performed in SPSS.

Table 8: Gender and history of prior victimization: Does gender affect whether an individual has been a victim of a crime?

Gender/Victimization	Yes	No
Male	42.5%	55.2%
Female	38.1%	59.6%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	52.455	.000

42.5 percent of males answered yes while 55.2 percent answered no to prior victimization. Females answered 38.1 percent for yes prior victimization and 59.6 percent for no. The percentages not accounted for were resulted in the “prefer not to answer” choice. Both genders

answered around 40 percent who had been a victim of a crime and around 60 percent stating they had not been a victim of a crime. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 52.455 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and prior victimization.

Table 9: Race and Prior Victimization: Does race affect whether an individual has been a victim of crime?

Race/Victimization	Yes	No
White	42.9%	54.1%
Black	38.5%	61.5%
Hispanic	28.9%	68.4%
Other	28.6%	71.4%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	159.940	.000

Race and prior victimization was compared next. White Americans answered 42.9 percent for yes and 54.1 percent for no, while Black Americans answered 38.5 percent for yes and 61.5 percent for no prior victimization. Hispanics similarly answered with 28.9 percent for yes and 68.4 percent for no. Other race group answered 28.6 percent for yes and 71.4 percent for no prior victimization. The percentages not accounted for were resulted in the “prefer not to answer” choice. All race groups answered lower for having been previously victimized. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 159.940 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between race and prior victimization.

For those respondents who answered yes to being a victim of crime, they were then asked if that experience has affected how they perceive the current crime rates. These respondents were not broken down into different demographics just surveyed to see if they answered yes or no. Results showed that 50.4 percent responded that yes their experience did affect how they

perceive the crime rates while 49.6 percent stated no it did not affect their perception of crime rates.

Respondents were asked about any prior history of criminal activity and then a crosstab test was done using SPSS with Pearson’s Chi-square test also run. Prior criminal activity was compared with gender and race.

Table 10: Gender and history of criminal activity: Does gender affect whether an individual has ever participated in a crime/criminal activity?

Gender/Crime	Yes	No
Male	28.7%	64.4%
Female	22.5%	73.9%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	54.404	.000

For gender, males answered with 28.7 percent stating yes to prior criminal activity, and 64.4 percent stating no prior criminal activity. Females similarly answered with 22.5 percent for yes and 73.9 percent for no. The percentages not accounted for were resulted in the “prefer not to answer” choice. Both males and females resulted with a low percentage who answered yes to prior criminal activity. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 54.404 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and history of criminal activity.

Table 11: Race and History of Criminal Activity: Does race affect whether an individual has participated in crime/criminal activity?

Race/Crime	Yes	No
White	30.1%	64.8%
Black	13.5%	80.8%
Hispanic	21.1%	76.3%
Other	0%	100%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	159.940	.000

The question about prior participation in criminal activities is compared and analyzed with race. White Americans responded 30.1 percent with yes and 64.8 percent with no. 13.5 percent of Black Americans responded yes to prior participation in criminal activities and 80.8 percent responded with no. Hispanics answered yes with 21.1 percent and 76.3 percent answered to no prior criminal activity. The other race category responded with 100 percent to no prior participation in criminal activities. The percentages not accounted for were resulted in the “prefer not to answer” choice. White Americans, Black Americans and Hispanics all responded with low percentages who have participated in criminal activities while the other race category responded 100 percent to no prior criminal activity. Pearson’s Chi-squared test gave a value of 170.256 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between race and prior participation in criminal activity.

Respondents who answered yes to prior participation with criminal activities were then prompted to answer whether or not that experience has affected how they perceive the current levels of crime. 38.4 percent answered yes and 61.6 percent answered no that their perception of the current levels of crime was not affected by their prior experience with criminal activities. Surprisingly individuals did not find that their perceptions were altered by their participation in criminal activities.

Fear

A crosstab test with a Chi-squared test was performed in SPSS to compare gender and race with the individual’s general level of fear. Thirteen questions about level of fear were combined to create two categories of fear to compare with other demographics of the individuals. The questions includes situations that the individual may deal with in everyday life, like being

alone or not, being in the dark, in low lighting or poor visibility, in the presence of police, or being with or without a weapon. The responses are ranked as high level of fear and low levels of fear.

Table 12: Gender and Fear: Does gender affect how fearful an individual is in everyday life?

Gender/Fear	Low Fear	High Fear
Male	70.2%	29.8%
Female	42.7%	57.3%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	20.313	.000

Males answered 70.2 percent for low fear and 29.8 percent for high fear level. Females answered 42.7 percent with a low level of far and 57.3 percent with a high level of fear. Men reported to a lower level of fear of crime while females report to a larger number responding with a high level of fear when responding to the question in the survey (Appendix B). Pearson's Chi-square test gave a value of 20.313 and a significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and levels of fear.

Table 13: Race and Fear: Does race affect how fearful an individual is in everyday life?

Race/Fear	Low Fear	High Fear
White	54.2%	45.8%
Black	46%	54%
Hispanic	43.2%	56.8%
Other	35%	65%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	4.140	.247

Race then was compared to the individual's level of fear. White Americans reported 54.2 percent with low fear and 45.8 percent with high fear levels. Black Americans answered with 46 percent with low levels of fear and 54 percent for high levels of fear. 43.2 percent of Hispanics reported a low level of fear and 56.8 percent with a high level of fear. All other respondents who

did not fit into those race categories answered 35 percent for low fear and 65 percent for high fear. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 4.140 and a significance of .247 which shows there is not a significant relationship between race and levels of fear.

Ten questions were asked to the respondents about their level of fear of crime when the face encounters with different type of people, varying by race and age groups. Responses were then combined to obtain a low level of fear category and a high level of fear category. These two responses were then compared to gender and race using a cross tabs test in SPSS and computing Pearson's Chi-squared test. Gender responses included males with 60.2 percent of a low level of fear of encounters and 39.8 percent with a high level of fear. Females had 48.1 percent with a low level of fear and 51.9 percent with a high level of fear of encounters with other types of people. Males reported with a lower level of fear of encounters while females reported almost even levels of fear of encounters 51.9 percent going towards higher levels of fear. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 3.515 and a significance of .172 which shows there is not a significant relationship between gender and fear of encounters with different types of people.

Race when compared to fear of encounters looked at which groups had high levels of fear and which did not when encountering different types of people. White Americans responded 51.6 percent with a low level of fear of encounters and 48.4 percent reported a high level of fear. 60 percent of Black Americans responded with a low level of fear and 40 answered with a high level of fear. Hispanics answered to a low level of fear with 48.6 percent and 51.4 percent with a high level of fear. Others answered 35 percent with a low level of fear and 65 percent with a high level of fear of encounters. Pearson's Chi-square test gave a value of 3.747 and a significance of

.290 which shows there is not a significant relationship between race and fear of encounters with the different types of people.

Gender and race were compared with level of fear of different types of people involved is loitering in a group using a cross tab analysis and a Chi-squared test in SPSS. Gender is broken down into male and female and race is broken down into White American, Black American, Hispanic, and other. The fear of group loitering result is made up of 9 questions each representing a different race or age group of people loitering. The responses of these questions were then combined into two categories of answers, low fear and high fear.

Table 14: Gender and Fear of Groups Loitering: Does gender affect how fearful an individual is when encountering a group loitering?

Gender/Group Loitering	Low Fear	High Fear
Male	63.9%	36.1%
Female	46.4%	53.6%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	7.247	.027

Males responded to the fear of group loitering questions with 63.9 percent having low fear levels and 36.1 percent having high level of fear. Females responded with 46.4 percent having low fear levels and 53.6 percent having high fear levels when encountering a loitering group. As seen in many other studies women are more fearful than men and encounters with groups loitering is no different. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 7.247 and significance of .027 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and fear of groups loitering.

Race was then compared to the individual's level fear of different types of people loitering in groups. White Americans responded with 53.8 percent having low fear levels and 46.2 percent having high fear levels. Black Americans were divided 50/50 between low and high

fear. Hispanics resulted in 51.4 percent low fear and 48.6 percent high fear. All other races answered 31.6 percent low fear and 68.4 percent high fear. Three out of the four race groups answered close to 50/50 on having low or high levels of fear when encountering different types of groups loitering. When the individuals who identified with the other race category had a wider separation between the ones who had high fear levels and the ones who had low levels of fear of groups loitering but not much with a 31.6 percent/68.4 percent split, Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 3.443 of a significance of .328 which shows there is no significant relationship between race and fear of groups loitering.

Table 15: Gender and Traveling: Does gender affect how fearful an individual is while traveling?

Gender/Traveling	Low Fear	High Fear
Male	74.4%	25.6%
Female	41.5%	58.5%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	27.402	.000

Several questions were asked of respondents to assess the individual's level of fear while traveling. The questions including type of travel; bike, walking, car, or bus, types of areas traveling to and through; high/low crime or upper/lower income and whether or not the individual is traveling alone. These questions were then combined to obtain a score for responses with a high level of fear when traveling and responses with a low level of fear when traveling. These responses were then analyzed using a crosstab study with a Chi-squared in SPSS. Males answered 74.4 percent with a low level of fear and 25.6 percent with a high level of fear, while females answered 41.5 percent with a low level and 58.5 percent with a low level. Males were much less fearful when it came to traveling than females. Females almost had an equally number for low and high levels of fear. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 27.402 and a

significance of .000 which shows there is a significant relationship between gender and fear while traveling.

Fear while traveling is then compared to race; White American, Black American Hispanic, and other are the race groups and low and high fear while traveling. White Americans' responses resulted 50.3 percent for low fear and 49.7 percent for high fear. Black Americans responded with 54 percent for low fear while traveling and 46 percent for high fear. 56.8 percent answered low fear for Hispanics, and 43.2 percent for high fear while traveling. Others answered 31.6 percent for low fear and 68.4 percent for high fear. Only the other category scored slightly more than 50/50. Pearson's Chi-squared test gave a value of 3.549 and a significance of .314 which shows there is not a significant relationship between race and fear while traveling.

Fear Total

I combined all the fear questions into groups; general fear, fear of encounters with different types of people, and fear when traveling, to obtain a total of level of fear for the respondents. The fear total were combined and then broken into two levels; low fear and high fear. The fear total was then compared to other questions asked in the survey to see if there are any significant relationships between the variables. Data were analyzed using SPSS. A crosstab test along with a Chi-square test to see what relationships can be found.

Demographics

Table 16: Gender and Fear Total: Does gender affect an individual's level of fear?

Gender	Low Fear	High Fear
Male	74.4%	25.6%
Female	42%	58%
	Value	Significance
Chi-squared	26.695	.000

The difference between the fear of males and females is apparent when looking at this chart. A much higher portion of males answered to a low level of fear when combining the fear totals for general fear, fear of encounters with others, and fear while traveling, while the greater amount of women's responses showed a higher level of fear. A significant relationship between the two variables can be seen with a significance level of .000.

Table 17: Race and Fear Total: Does race affect the individual's level of fear?

Race	Low Fear	High Fear
White	52.4%	47.6%
Black	56%	44%
Hispanic	48.6%	51.4%
Other	26.3%	73.7%
Chi-squared	5.364	.147

A significance result of .147 shows that there is no significant relationship between race and level of fear, fear total. White American, Black American, and Hispanic all answered around half for low fear and half for high fear. The other group had a more dramatic difference for percentages but that may also be due to the smaller sample size of respondents.

No significant relationship was found between age and fear total which resulted with a value of 45.836 and a significance level of .210.

Employment status and the fear total were compared and found to have no significant relationship. The response choices, "full-time", "part-time", and "no", all had almost half and half results for low and high fear. This test resulted in a value of 4.39 and a significance level of .803. Full-time resulted with 53.3 percent for low fear and 46.7 percent for high fear, part-time had 51 percent for low and 49 percent for high, and 47.8 percent low and 52.2 percent for high fear of

the ones who answered no. There was almost a 50/50 split for all response choices, which supports the no significant relationship result obtained by the Chi-squared test.

Again no significant relationship was found between academic standing, whether you are a full-time student, part-time student or not a student, and fear total. Because my survey was a survey of convenience my reach was to mostly UCF students. It is not surprising that only 4 out of the 290 who answered this question are not students. A value of 1.981 and a significance level of .576 support a no significant relationship between these variables. Full-time answered 50.8 percent for low fear and 49.2 percent for high fear, part-time answered 50/50, and not in college answered 75 percent for low fear and 25 percent for high fear. These results support the claim to no significant relationship.

Can an individual's life on campus affect a person's level of fear? A value of 2.897 and a significance level of .235 were found which represents no significant relationship between campus housing and fear total. Respondents who answered living on campus resulted in 40 percent for low fear and 60 percent for high fear while not living on campus got 51.3 percent for low fear and 48.7 percent for high fear levels.

Only 23 respondents answered to living alone out of 287 responses to the question. Still not much difference was seen in the levels of fear for each individual whether they lived alone or not. A slight raise of high fear levels to a 69.6 percent for those who live alone suggest that if there were more respondents who lived alone, high fear levels may be much higher percentage than these results show. Those who live alone answered with 30.4 percent with low fear levels and 69.6 percent with high fear levels, Respondents who responded to not living alone stated that 52.3 percent had low fear and 47.7 percent had high fear levels. Results support the lack of

significant relationship between fear total and whether the individual lives alone with a value of 4.983 and a significance level of .083.

Table 18: Primary Transportation and Fear Total: Does the type of transportation affect an individual's fear?

Primary Transportation	Low Fear	High Fear
Personal vehicle	50.4%	49.6%
Bicycle	50%	50%
Bus/public transport	50%	50%
Walking	66.7%	33.3%
Carpooling	53.8%	46.2%
	Value	Significance
Chi-Square	1.340	.931

Public transportation surveyed at about half having low fear and the other half having high fear no matter what type was used. With a significance of .931 there is no significant relationship between transportation and fear.

Prior victimization and fear total were compared and results were analyzed to find out if there is a significant relationship between these variables. For those who responded yes to having been a victim of a crime answered 50 percent for both high and low fear levels and those who responded no 50.6 percent claimed low fear levels and 49.4 percent claimed high fear levels. Both answers resulted in an almost even separation of individuals who answered to high or low levels of fear. The test resulted in a value of 1.605 and a significance level of .658 which show that there is no significant relationship between prior victimization and the fear total.

Similarly to the prior victimization results, prior criminal activity resulted in a 57.4 percent for low fear and 42.6 percent for high fear, and no prior criminal activity resulted 49 percent for low fear and 51 percent for high fear levels. Supporting the almost even results, a value of 2.795 and a significance level of .424.

Stand Your Ground Law

Table 19: Protect and Fear Total: Who does the Stand Your Ground Law protect and does that affect the individual's fear total?

Protect	Low Fear	High Fear
Citizens	50.5%	49.5%
Vigilantes	63.4%	36.6%
Criminals	35.5%	64.5%
Other	47.1%	52.9%
	Value	Significance
Chi-square	7.559	.109

No significant relationship was found between who the individual thinks is protect by the law and their fear total. The significance level in the table shows us that there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 20: Safe because of Stand Your Ground Law and Fear Total: Does the ability to protect oneself affect the individual's fear of crime?

Safer	Low Fear	High Fear
Yes, very	49%	51%
Yes, somewhat	50%	50%
Neither safer or less safe	64.7%	35.3%
No	34.8%	65.2%
No, I feel more unsafe	42.9%	57.1%
	Value	Significance
Chi-square	7.119	.212

A significance of .212 shows the lack of significant relationship between these variables. In both the choice of "neither safe nor less safe" and "no" a wider variance in the percentages is seen, while the other choices are all close to being a 50/50 result.

Media

Table 21: Media increases fear levels and fear total: Do the media reports increase fear of crime and how does that affect the individual's level of fear?

Media	Low Fear	High Fear
Disagree	66.7%	33.3%
Neither	40.7%	59.3%
Agree	51.2%	48.8%
	Value	Significance
Chi-square	4.298	.507

Respondents were asked if they agreed, disagreed, or neither with this statement, "media reports increase fear of crime for the general public". The survey question had five level choices to choose but those choices were recoded down into 3 choices. These results were then compared to the fear total to see if there was a significant relationship between the two. A value score of 4.298 and a significance level of .507 shows that there is no significant relationship between fear total and whether the individuals though media reports increased fear of crime.

Table 22: Media portrayal of crime rates and Fear Total: Do media reports portray crime rates as worse that they really are and does that affect the individual's level of fear

Media Portrayal of Crime	Low Fear	High Fear
Disagree	42.9%	57.1%
Neither	46.2%	53.8%
Agree	54.7%	45.3%
	Value	Significance
Chi-square	4.621	.464

A value of 4.621 and a significance level of .464 were found after running a Chi-squared test on these two variables. Seeing an almost 50/50 break between fear levels supports the result of no significant relationship found from the Chi-square results.

Discussion

During the course of this project I learned many things I did not know about the Stand Your Ground Law. At the same time things I thought were true were proved to be incorrect about the law and about opinions on this law. To better understand how individual UCF students felt about this law I surveyed over 300 students and analyzed the data to obtain these conclusions.

Respondents were asked several questions related to the Stand Your Ground Law to obtain their opinions on this law to judge whether they were for or against the law. First they were asked about their familiarity with the Stand Your Ground Law and how they ranked it using "yes, very", "yes, somewhat" and "no" as the rankings. This question was then analyzed and found to have a significant relationship with the variables gender and race. "Yes, somewhat" was the most popular answers amongst both variables. As noted earlier, this finding may reflect the widespread media coverage of the George Zimmerman trial which was "front-page" news for many months. The Stand Your Ground Law was brought up several times during this case though in the end it was not used as the defense for George Zimmerman. Many first heard of this law during these trials which would result in a somewhat familiarity with the law.

The next question asked who they thought was protected by the Stand Your Ground Law, "citizens", "vigilantes", "criminals", or "others". Both gender and race had a significant relationship with this question. All the race groups answered with citizens being the highest rated as did both gender groups, male and female. Black American's response to this question was almost even for choices "citizens" and "vigilantes" with citizens only being slightly higher. While it cannot be validated, it is highly possible that the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, a young Black American man, and the subsequent media coverage of the State of Florida vs.

George Zimmerman may have influenced the responses of Black Americans who answered this question because many media reports and editorials portrayed Zimmerman as a vigilante. Black Americans' responses "citizens" and "vigilantes" show that they are not as likely to support the Stand Your Ground Law as the other races. White American, Hispanics, and "others" all show that they are in support of the Stand Your Ground Law by responding with high percentages stating that they though "citizens" were the ones protected by this law.

The level of safety each individual feels because of the Stand Your Ground Law was also asked and analyzed using gender and race to see if there were significant relationships between the variables. Interestingly enough when looking at race; Hispanics were the group who answered lowest for "more safe" and highest for "less safe" while all the other groups scored the highest for feeling "more safe" because of the Stand Your Ground Law. I would have thought that Black Americans respondents would have felt the least safe because of the media's coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting, especially since the respondents lived in the Central Florida area where the shooting and trial occurred. However, Black Americans did not fall far behind the Hispanic respondents who responded to feeling "more safe" -- a 62.8 percent rate for Black Americans and a 59.4 percent response rate for Hispanics. I understand these results to mean that for each category within the race and gender groups responded with more than 50 percent stating "more safe" which could be said that these individuals are in support of the Stand Your Ground Law.

Questions were asked about individual's past experiences with criminal activity and previous victimization and whether or not that has affected how they perceive the crime levels. The responses rates that were calculated and I was very surprised with the results. For those who

responded with previous victimization experience 49.6 percent reported that their experiences did not affect how they viewed the crime levels. Similarly, those who reported to have participated in criminal activity answered with 61.6 percent who stated that their experience did not affect how they viewed the crime levels. I would have thought that these previous experiences would have affected how they viewed crime and would affect how fearful they were because of their experience. Having already been a victim or criminal increases the individual's likelihood to be involved in some sort of criminal activity but that did not sway these individual's opinions on the crime levels.

Fear questions were asked and group into categories: general fear, fear of encounters with others, fear of groups loitering, and fear while traveling. Each category was combined together to obtain a fear total. As expected, women were found to be more fearful than men overall. Men reported with a high response rate for a low level of fear while women reported only slightly higher for a high level of fear. Men are expected to be less fearful because they are seen as the protectors. Women are seen as those ones who need to be protected. As seen in these results though, not all women feel the need to be protected when they have a low level of fear.

There was no significant relationship between race and the fear total. White Americans, Black Americans, and Hispanics report around 50/50 for low and high fear while the other outlier was the "other" category. Being that this category includes all races that do not include White American, Black American, or Hispanic. "Others" reported a 73.7 percent response rate for high fear.

Stand Your Ground Law questions about who the law protects and how safe the individual both resulted in no significant relationship when compared with fear total. This means the Stand Your Ground Law has no effect on the level of fear for the individual.

The same goes for media reports and whether or not they affect an individual's level of fear of crime. No significant relationship was found when comparing media reports and fear total. Therefore the media may report on mostly negative criminal stories but the respondents felt that this did not affect how fearful they were.

Conclusion

After all the research and gathering the data on the Stand Your Ground Law and fear of crime I have come to a conclusion. The Stand Your Ground Law is only somewhat understood by the general public but they understand that the intention of the law is to protect the citizens, not the criminals/vigilantes. Their fear of crime did not affect how they felt about the law and whether they were for or against it.

Race definitely plays a part in how the respondents feel about the Stand Your Ground Law. Race does not, however, play a role in the level of fear of the individual. The only outliers within the race analysis were for the "other" race category that was found to be slightly more fearful because of the situation.

Age was a hard factor to get a proper result on because most of the respondents fell into one age category 18-33. It was hard to get an accurate reading on how the other individuals felt over all about the Stand Your Ground Law, TM vs. GZ case, and fear of crime. After comparing age to how familiar the individual was with the Stand Your Ground Law I realized that the data collected by the age question would not give accurate results to form valid conclusions.

Though the State of Florida vs. George Zimmerman trials was centered around the Stand Your Ground Law it seems that this did not affect the opinions on this law. Race played the biggest part in forming individual's opinions on this trial and in turn the law itself. Because this was brought into the media as a racial hate crime and backed by others within the Black American community race influenced individual's opinions.

Limitations

During the course of this project I came across several limitations to my study. The first and most prevalent limitations would have to be my sample size and the restricted time I had to obtain respondents. Obtaining just over 300 respondents limited my ability to accurately assess the UCF population. The fact that I had more female respondents than males and very few within the "other" race category affected those results as well. When I asked the respondents age and I broke them down into age groups most of my respondents fell within the 18-33 year old group which limited my analysis using age as an explanatory variable. I decided to remove all age comparisons except for one variable, which I included to show the limited range that I received in my survey.

Another limitation that can be found with most research projects like this one is once you get the results you can see what types of questions you should have asked and ones you could have left out. I would have left out the question about age because those results did not help or hurt my study. In addition, I would have asked questions about religious preferences, political affiliations, opinions on gun laws and gun ownership. These questions could have aided in understanding how fearful individuals are and why they are more or less fearful. Asking more questions about how influential the media is in forming individual's opinions about crime rates could have given more understanding of how much the media plays apart in how fearful individuals are.

As with all research studies, once it is done it is easier to see what should have been done and what should have been left out.

Appendix A

776.012

Use of force in defense of person.

A person is justified in using force, except deadly force, against another when and to the extent that the person reasonably believes that such conduct is necessary to defend himself or herself or another against the other's imminent use of unlawful force. However, a person is justified in the use of deadly force and does not have a duty to retreat if:

- (1) He or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony; or
- (2) Under those circumstances permitted pursuant to s. 776.013.

776.031

Use of force in defense of others.

A person is justified in the use of force, except deadly force, against another when and to the extent that the person reasonably believes that such conduct is necessary to prevent or terminate the other's trespass on, or other tortious or criminal interference with, either real property other than a dwelling or personal property, lawfully in his or her possession or in the possession of another who is a member of his or her immediate family or household or of a person whose property he or she has a legal duty to protect. However, the person is justified in the use of deadly force only if he or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony. A person does not have a duty to retreat if the person is in a place where he or she has a right to be. (The 2005 Florida Statute, 2005)

776.013

Home protection; use of deadly force; presumption of fear of death or great bodily harm.

(1) A person is presumed to have held a reasonable fear of imminent peril of death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another when using defensive force that is intended or likely to cause death or great bodily harm to another if:

(a) The person against whom the defensive force was used was in the process of unlawfully and forcefully entering, or had unlawfully and forcibly entered, a dwelling, residence, or occupied vehicle, or if that person had removed or was attempting to remove another against that person's will from the dwelling, residence, or occupied vehicle; and

(b) The person who uses defensive force knew or had reason to believe that an unlawful and forcible entry or unlawful and forcible act was occurring or had occurred.

(2) The presumption set forth in subsection (1) does not apply if:

(a) The person against whom the defensive force is used has the right to be in or is a lawful resident of the dwelling, residence, or vehicle, such as an owner, lessee, or titleholder, and there is not an injunction for protection from domestic violence or a written pretrial supervision order of no contact against that person; or

(b) The person or persons sought to be removed is a child or grandchild, or is otherwise in the lawful custody or under the lawful guardianship of, the person against whom the defensive force is used; or

(c) The person who uses defensive force is engaged in an unlawful activity or is using the dwelling, residence, or occupied vehicle to further an unlawful activity; or

(d) The person against whom the defensive force is used is a law enforcement officer, as defined in s. [943.10](#)(14), who enters or attempts to enter a dwelling, residence, or vehicle in the performance of his or her official duties and the officer identified himself or herself in accordance with any applicable law or the person using force knew or reasonably should have known that the person entering or attempting to enter was a law enforcement officer.

(3) A person who is not engaged in an unlawful activity and who is attacked in any other place where he or she has a right to be has no duty to retreat and has the right to stand his or her ground and meet force with force, including deadly force if he or she reasonably believes it is necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony.

(4) A person who unlawfully and by force enters or attempts to enter a person's dwelling, residence, or occupied vehicle is presumed to be doing so with the intent to commit an unlawful act involving force or violence.

(5) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Dwelling" means a building or conveyance of any kind, including any attached porch, whether the building or conveyance is temporary or permanent, mobile or immobile, which has a roof over it, including a tent, and is designed to be occupied by people lodging therein at night.

(b) "Residence" means a dwelling in which a person resides either temporarily or permanently or is visiting as an invited guest.

(c) "Vehicle" means a conveyance of any kind, whether or not motorized, which is designed to transport people or property. (The 2005 Florida Statutes, 2005)

776.032

Immunity from criminal prosecution and civil action for justifiable use of force.

(1) A person who uses force as permitted in s. [776.012](#), s. [776.013](#), or s. [776.031](#) is justified in using such force and is immune from criminal prosecution and civil action for the use of such force, unless the person against whom force was used is a law enforcement officer, as defined in s. [943.10](#)(14), who was acting in the performance of his or her official duties and the officer identified himself or herself in accordance with any applicable law or the person using force knew or reasonably should have known that the person was a law enforcement officer. As used in this subsection, the term "criminal prosecution" includes arresting, detaining in custody, and charging or prosecuting the defendant.

(2) A law enforcement agency may use standard procedures for investigating the use of force as described in subsection (1), but the agency may not arrest the person for using force unless it determines that there is probable cause that the force that was used was unlawful.

(3) The court shall award reasonable attorney's fees, court costs, compensation for loss of income, and all expenses incurred by the defendant in defense of any civil action brought by a plaintiff if the court finds that the defendant is immune from prosecution as provided in subsection (1). (The 2005 Florida Statutes, 2005)

Appendix B

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your race?

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Other

What is your age?

Are you employed?

- Yes, full-time
- Yes, part-time
- No

Are you a student?

- Yes, full-time
- Yes, part-time
- No

What school do you attend?

Are you a transfer student? (Did you transfer from another institution; community college, state college, or other university?)

- Yes
- No

Which campus do you primarily attend classes?

- Orlando (Main campus)
- Daytona
- South Lake
- Leesburg
- Cocoa
- Ocala
- Palm Bay
- Lake Mary/Sanford
- Valencia West
- Valencia Osceola
- Other

Do you live on campus?

- Yes
- No

If no, do you live within 10 miles of the campus you attend?

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

Do you live alone?

- Yes
- No

If no, who do you live with?

- Spouse/Significant other
- Friends
- Family
- Parents
- Roommates
- Does not apply

How long have you been a resident of Central Florida

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years
- Born and raised

Are you married?

- Yes
- No

How many "close" friends do you have?

- 0
- 1
- 2-4
- 5 or more

How often do you spend time with your friends?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

How often do you spend time with your family?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Daily

What is your primary mode of transportation?

- Personal Vehicle
- Bicycle
- Bus/public transportation
- Walking
- Carpooling/getting a ride from others

Have you ever been a victim of a crime?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

If yes, would you say this has affected how you perceive the current levels of crime?

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

Have you ever participated in any illegal/criminal activities?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

If yes, would you say this has affected how you perceive the current levels of crime?

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

Are you familiar with the Stand Your Ground Law?

- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- No

The Stand Your Ground Law is a law that gives individuals the right to use deadly force against another individual in order to defend themselves or others without the initial requirement to attempt to evade or retreat from the dangerous situation.

Who do you think is most protected by the Stand Your Ground Law?

- Citizens
- Vigilantes
- Criminals/Murders
- Other

Does it make you feel safer knowing you are able to protect yourself when threatened with deadly force?

- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- Neither more safe nor more unsafe
- No
- No, it makes me feel even more unsafe

How often do you watch the local news channels or read the local papers?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Do you think the media affects the public's perceived levels of fear of crime?

- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- No

Do you think crime levels in Florida are on the rise?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Do you go out after dark?

- Yes
- No

How often do you go out after dark?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Are you afraid to go out after dark?

- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- No

These next few questions will be asked on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Please provide the most accurate response to each question.

Media reports increase fear of crime for the general public.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Media reports portray crime rates as worse than they really are.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

For the next few questions: Choose the best option that represents your level of fear for each of the following scenarios.

0 representing no fear

1 representing a low level of fear

5 representing a high level of fear

Being alone

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does Not Apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being with a significant other/spouse

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being with family

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being with friends

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being at home

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being out after dark

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being out alone after dark.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Being in possession of a weapon (gun, knife, taser, pepper spray, etc.)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear for each of the following scenarios.

Being without the possession of a weapon

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

In the presence of police

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

In the presence of security

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Areas with low/poor lighting

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Areas with low/poor visibility

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

These next few questions are measuring your level of fear when there are encounters with the following types of people.

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

0 representing no fear

1 representing a low level of fear

5 representing a high level of fear

Encounters with:

Males

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Females

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Hispanics

- 0-1
- 2-3
- 4-5

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Black/African American

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

White Americans

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Other races (Asian, Middle Eastern, Indian, etc.)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Children age <12

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Teenagers, ages 13-17

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Young adults, ages 18-35

- 0.
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Encounters with:

Adults, ages 35+

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

These next few questions are measuring your level of fear when there are encounters with groups that are loitering containing the following types of people.

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

0 representing no fear

1 representing a low level of fear

5 representing a high level of fear

Group Loitering with:

Males

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Females

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

African American

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

White Americans

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Hispanics

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Other races (Asian, Middle Eastern, Indian, etc.)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Teenagers, ages 13-17

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Young adults, ages 18-35

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Group Loitering with:

Adults, ages 36+

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

These next few questions are measuring your level of fear when traveling in the following scenarios.

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

0 representing no fear

1 representing a low level of fear

5 representing a high level of fear

Traveling:

Alone

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Not alone/with others

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Through low income neighborhoods

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Through upper income neighborhoods

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Through high crime areas

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Through low crime areas

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

By personal vehicle

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

By bus/public transportation

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

By bicycle

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

Choose the best option that represents your level of fear.

Traveling:

Walking

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Does not apply

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