Villain, Victim, Hero or Creep:

The fear of violence amongst middle class men in urban India

Amalie Meling Vikse

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Summary

This thesis concerns Indian middle class men's fear of violence in public spaces. It attempts to broaden the perspective of the implications of fear of violence. Both the public and academic discourses on violence in public spaces in India are centred on the notion of the female victim. In this thesis I argue that we need to open up a strict binary understanding of only women as vulnerable and affected by the fear of crime in public spaces. I discuss the gendered implications of different types of violence, and how different identity categories, beyond and across gender, have an impact on middle class men's fear. In addition to this I assess how the fear for others' safety and the masculine ideal of being a protector has an impact on men's personal fear of violence. Because there is no research on men's fear of crime in an Indian context I have supported my analyses with three theoretical frameworks, all relevant in different ways. This is the research on masculinity in India, the research on men and fear from the West, and the research on middle class women and fear of crime in India. My own research consists of data collected through a survey where 98 men and women participated, and interviews with men who are involved in initiatives for safer cities. To understand how fear of violence in public spaces is affecting lives in India, it is necessary to not restrict ourselves to only women's narratives. This thesis is an attempt at putting men's fear of violence on the agenda, and hopefully it contributes to a widening of the understanding of fear of violence in public spaces.

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Words of gratitude

First of all I would like to express gratitude towards the nine men who took time to meet me and be interviewed when I was in Delhi in March 2015, and the men and women who participated in my survey. I would also like to thank Jasmeen Patheja who is the facilitator of Blank Noise for taking me under her wing when I was in Bangalore in 2014. I have learned so much from you and I am forever grateful.

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VIII

Prologue

The journey towards writing about men and the fear of crime

In December 2012 a young student was brutally gang-raped on a bus in New Delhi. Though I was in India at that time, I first heard the news from my mother, who called from Norway. The young woman had been to the cinema with her male friend when a bus picked them up. Inside the bus, the male friend was severely beaten and the girl raped and abused. They were both left unconscious on the side of the street, the man survived and the woman died a week later. This incident became a turning point in the discourse on violence in public spaces in India, but it is only the young woman's story that has become the focus. Nevertheless there were *two* young people who experienced horrific violence on that bus. Even so, the public and academic discourses on safety in public spaces are about a city and a country that is dangerous for women.

In the fall of 2014 I spent 4 months doing an internship through the international project term with the University of Oslo. Because I wanted to understand the public discourse on safety in the aftermath of the Delhi rape case, my internship was with the feminist art collective Blank Noise in Bangalore. Blank Noise has since 2009 focused on violence and harassment towards women in public spaces. Their approach to the discourse on safety is that women should be able to claim the right to access in public spaces, without having to be blamed for provoking the violence they might experience.

What made me want to research men's fear of violence was a story I was told by one of my colleagues while working with Blank Noise. I was told about a conversation with my colleague's 18 year old male cousin during a family visit. My colleague had told him about her work and how she found it problematic that women restricted their access to public spaces because they were afraid. His response to this was that he did not think that only women were affected by the fear of experiencing violence. The stories of violence made him scared too, and it affected the way he felt about public spaces.

Although this young man's narrative might not be surprising, it still raised an important question. Why are we not talking about men's fear of violence? While asking this question, I realised that there is a serious lacuna in the academic discourse of safety in public spaces in India. Given the strong attention to sexual violence against women, there is no room to talk about men as victims or potential victims. An example is the way the media talked about the New Delhi Rape case. In this case there were two victims, a man and a woman. The girl was raped and killed, and I do not wish to neglect the implications of this compared to non-sexual violence. This is important and something I will return to. At the same time, the young man also experienced extreme violence, but he is rarely mentioned as a victim. It seems we have forgotten about the young man whose life was changed on that bus.

This thesis is an attempt at opening up strict gendered binaries in the discourse on violence in public spaces in India. The focus on only women as victims is problematic both for women and for men. It gives women very little agency if they are seen as particularly vulnerable for violence because of their gender. Engaging with the city is difficult if you are told from childhood that you are more at risk than others. It is also problematic for men because it creates a stigma if they should experience violence, particularly sexual violence. In this thesis I am attempting to put men's fear of violence in public spaces on the research agenda, and thus hopefully contribute to a widening of the discourse on violence and fear in India.

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1. Introduction

In this thesis I am looking at men's fear of violence in public spaces in India. Though men's fear of violence has become an area of interest in academia, there are no studies that I have come across in an Indian setting. At the same time Indian women's fear of violence has been put on the agenda in the last decade. I believe that to understand the gendered relationship of fear of violence it is necessary to also study the implications of fear for men. Are different identities, human relationships and masculinity ideals affecting men's understanding of their own vulnerability towards violent crimes?[1]

I have chosen to write about middle class men's fear of violence in public spaces in this thesis. The academic discourse on women's fear so far has mainly been about middle class women. As there are already theories to compare with, I therefore chose to write about middle class men. The arguments I develop in this thesis are based on two methods of gathering information. The first is six interviews with nine young men, all working with organisations or projects focusing on safety in public spaces. The second is a survey where 52 men and 46 women, living in Indian cities, answered questions on fear and safety in public spaces.

Because there is no theoretical framework on men's fear of crime in an Indian setting as yet, I have chosen to rely on three forms of theoretical contributions in this thesis. The first is studies on masculinity in India. Though this is still a young field, there are some important contributions. Secondly I draw on the theoretical frameworks on men's fear of crime from a non-Indian context. These theories are mainly developed in the West, and therefore they are not directly applicable. At the same time they create a good basis for asking some of the same questions when researching Indian middle class men's fear of crime. The third theoretical framework I am using is the research done on women's fear

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[1] I am using the expressions 'violence' and 'violent crime' interchangeably regarding the same phenomenon in this thesis.

of violence in India. This research is in some ways closest to mine, because it concerns the same regional discourse on violence in public spaces.

One of the main arguments in the research on middle class women's fear of crime has been that the increased focus on sexual violence against women in the media is making women more afraid of violence, and hence restricting their access to public spaces. This is posed by several Indian scholars, amongst them Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade.[2] There are aspects one could criticise with this argument, one of them being that there are other reasons for the restriction of Indian middle class women in public spaces. Ideas about women's honour and sexual virtue need to be taken into consideration. Because this thesis is about men's fear of violence I have chosen to not discuss this any further. The reason why I am engaging with the argument of fear of crime limiting women's access is rather to be able to ask another critical question; are men also being limited by the fear of crime?

This thesis has two analytical chapters. The first discusses men's fear of experiencing violence and the second revolves around men's fear that others will experience violence. In the first analytical chapter: "4. Men, fear and safety" I argue that men also fear violence in public spaces. This fear makes them take precautions in their personal mobility in the cities. At the same time there is a difference in what kind of violence women and men in India fear the most. Women generally fear sexual violence in public spaces, while the violence men fear is more heterogeneous. In addition to gender categories there are other identities that might affect the experience of being vulnerable. As I will discuss, sexuality, caste and ethnicity are identities that play a role in the experience of fear of violence.

In the first chapter I will also assess different strategies used to deal with fear of violence. Avoiding spaces and times that are perceived as more dangerous is common for both the men and the women who took my survey. Avoidance as a means of dealing with fear is

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[2] Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade, *Why Loiter?: Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011).

not only discussed in this part of the thesis, but as an underlying theme throughout. Being prepared to meet violence with violence is another strategy of dealing with fear. Both women and men in the middle class fear violence in public spaces. It then becomes necessary to ask: what are they afraid of? In the discourse on violence in public spaces there are clear stereotypes as to who is dangerous and who is vulnerable. It is the lower class man that is seen as a threat to the middle class woman in these spaces.

The second analytical chapter is about men's fear for other's safety in public spaces. The men who took the survey were generally more concerned that others, particularly women they knew, might be harmed, than the female respondents to the survey. This fear is connected to the expectations towards men of being protectors. Both in my interviews and in the survey men narrated experiences of protecting women. Family situations are important for the expectations of being a protector. Several of the men expressed a particular responsibility toward female family members.

Further in the second chapter I draw a connection between the fear for others, and the fear of personally experiencing violence. Though men generally understood their own presence as providing safety for women, the opposite was not the case. Being with a woman was rather understood by some as making them more unsafe. This has to do with the possibility of needing to physically protect a woman, but there are also other reasons. In India there have been several attacks from conservative groups towards young men and women in public spaces. In these situations men (and women) become vulnerable solely because they are spending time with a member of the opposite sex.

The last part of the second analytical chapter deals with different ideals in the discourse on safety in public spaces. As I have mentioned the ideal of being a protector was expressed by several of my respondents. At the same time many for the men felt a need to distance themselves from 'bad men'. When spending time with women in public spaces they risked being understood as dangerous. This shows that the understanding of the gendered relations in public spaces is more complex than the current debates would lead us to believe. This does not only have to do with violence, but also the conservative

notions of what a proper woman is supposed to do in public spaces. At the same time, because this thesis is about men's fear of violence, it is this discussion I will deal with.

2. Theoretical framework

Men's fear of violence in public spaces is so far an undiscovered academic field in the Indian context. In this thesis I am using contributions from three different theoretical fields, all relevant to the topic in different ways. The first is the previous research done on masculinities in India. The second theoretical framework is the research done on men and fear in a non-Indian context. The third is the research done on women and fear in India.

2.1. Previous research on masculinity in India

Masculinity studies have become an important part of gender studies in the last decades. There have been some important and progressive theories within the field, but they have mainly been developed from research done in the West. In an Indian context masculinity studies is still a developing area within academia. This is pointed out by Caroline Osella, Filippo Osella and Radhika Chopra in their book *South Asian Masculinities.*[3] The lack of non-western contributions must not be understood as a complete lack of research on masculinity, in some areas there are solid contributions. The research on masculinity in the Hindu nationalist movement is an example. Thomas Blom Hansen and Prem Vijayan have both done research on this.[4]

Though there is no research on men and fear of crime in public spaces in an Indian context, the subject of masculinity and space has been focused on. Craig Jeffrey writes about how young, unemployed men create positive narratives of passing time by

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[3] Radhika Chopra, Caroline Osella, and Filippo Osella, "Introduction: Towards a More Nuanced Approach to Masculinity, towards a Richer Understanding of South Asian Men," in *South Asian Masculinities: Context of Change, Sites of Continuity*, ed. Radhika Chopra, Osella Caroline, and Filippo Osella (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2004).1-33

[4] Thomas Blom Hansen, "Recuperating Masculinity Hindu Nationalism, Violence and the Exorcism of the Muslim 'Other,'" *Critique of Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 137–72, doi:10.1177/0308275X9601600203; Prem Vijayan, "Nationalism, Masculinity and the Developmental State: Exploring Hindutva Masculinities," in *Masculinities Matter!: Men, Gender and Development*, ed. Frances Cleaver (London, New York: Zed Books, 2002), 28–50.

socializing in public spaces.[5] Harjant S. Gill writes about how mobility between different spaces is a masculine ideal in Punjabi movies.[6]

2.1.1. New territories

Caroline Osella, Filippo Osella and Radhika Chopra are three scholars that have been central to the field of masculinity studies in India. In the introduction to their book *South Asian Masculinities* they claim that although masculinity has become an important part of gender studies, the theoretical base in this field has been developed through empirical material found in the West. The ethnographic work on women in India has contributed with important insights on masculinity, but mostly on how men's dominance over women is affecting their lives. They also mention the importance of research on the Indian *hijras* (transsexual women), but that this has become side-tracked to masculinity studies because of the underlying assumption of the existence of a third gender.[7]

The Osellas and Chopra have made an important argument about the need to theorise the male and the masculine in South Asia. At the same time, this should not be understood as a lack of focus on masculinity within social research in India. The role of the masculine in the research on religion, particularly in the research on Hinduism and the Hindu-nationalist movement, has made a solid mark, also before 2004 when the book on South Asian masculinities was published. Danish anthropologist Thomas Blom Hansen wrote about masculinities and Hindu nationalism in 1996. He claims that recuperating masculinity is deeply embedded in the Hindu nationalist discourse.[8] Another scholar who writes about masculinities and the Hindu nationalist movement is Prem Vijayan. He draws a connection between hegemonic masculinity and the Hindu-nationalist

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[5] Craig Jeffrey, "Timepass: Youth, Class, and Time among Unemployed Young Men in India," *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 3 (August 1, 2010): 465–81, doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01266.x.

[6] Harjant S. Gill, "Masculinity, Mobility and Transformation in Punjabi Cinema: From Putt Jattan De (Sons of Jat Farmers) to Munde UK De (Boys of UK)," *South Asian Popular Culture* 10, no. 2 (July 2012): 109–22, doi:10.1080/14746689.2012.682858.

[7] Chopra, Osella, and Osella, "Introduction: Towards a More Nuanced Approach to Masculinity, towards a Richer Understanding of South Asian Men." 1-2

[8] Hansen, "Recuperating Masculinity Hindu Nationalism, Violence and the Exorcism of the Muslim 'Other.'" 137-138

movement.[9] In research on Hinduism and masculinities Sikata Banerjee has made an important contribution with her book *Make Me a Man.* In this book she writes about what she terms as masculine Hinduism from the late 1990s to 2011.[10]

Masculinity studies have also started to make a broader mark in studies on development, both in India and elsewhere. Looking at women and development has been popular for a long time, but it is only recently that research on masculinity has claimed space in development studies. Michael Kimmel is an American sociologist specializing in masculinity studies. He claims that masculinity is an invisible category when we speak about gender. In the same way that being white gives you the privilege of an invisible race, being male gives you the privilege of an invisible gender. When gender is being written and spoken about, it is still about women. This needs to change because masculinity is part of the issues related to broader structural issues.[11]

2.1.2. Men and space in India

Though there is a lack of research on men's fear of violence in public spaces in an Indian setting, the focus on men, masculinities and space has received some attention. One of the arguments made in research on women and the fear of access is that adult men have full access to public spaces. I problematize this argument later in the thesis, but first I want to look closer at two academic contributions on masculinity, mobility and access in public spaces in India.

Craig Jeffrey, who writes about youth, politics, and education in India, has done research on how young, unemployed men spend a lot of their time in public spaces in Meerut. In his article "Timepass" from 2010, he investigates how men from the lower middle class are passing their time while waiting for employment. Many of them were enrolled at a

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[9] Vijayan, "Nationalism, Masculinity and the Developmental State: Exploring Hindutva Masculinities."

[10] Sikata Banerjee, "Warriors in Politics: Religious Nationalism, Masculine Hinduism and the Shiv Sena in Bombay," *Women & Politics* 20, no. 3 (September 17, 1999): 1–26, doi:10.1300/J014v20n03_01; Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India* (SUNY Press, 2012).

[11] Michael Kimmel, "Foreword," in *Masculinities Matter!: Men, Gender and Development*, ed. Frances Cleaver (London, New York: Zed Books, 2002). xii

university, and had attained several degrees. Being a student had more to do with legitimizing their time while they were waiting, as they already held the formal requirement for work. The men he spoke with were gathering in tea stalls on the roads outside a university. Through socialization in public spaces these men managed to create a narrative of successful waiting. The tea stalls were visited by men from different class and caste backgrounds, and there were clear exclusionary ideas amongst the lower middle class men. The students defined their time passing at the tea-stalls in contrast to the uneducated lower class men. Several of the young men he spoke with saw passing their time in urban spaces as a way of gathering knowledge of urban life, while the lower class men were understood as engaging in useless loitering. According to Jeffrey, the young middle-class men in Meerut constructed the success of their masculinity around successful time passing in public spaces. He is drawing a link between masculinity and the presence in the urban sphere.[12]

The informants in Jeffrey's research are staying in one point and waiting for their lives to move forward. Another researcher who writes about the subject of masculinity and space is Harjant S. Gill, who looks at the masculinity ideals of mobility between different spaces. Gill is an anthropologist and mainly known for his documentaries on masculinities in India.[13] In his article on masculinity and mobility in Punjabi cinema, he explores how caste and class hierarchies operate as a mechanism in a hegemonic masculinity presented in Punjabi Cinema. Men from the land owning Jat caste are often the heroes in these films. Their performance of masculinity is characterised by the ability to navigate between different spaces successfully. Though this masculinity ideal is presented in a made up reality on the big screen, it could have consequences on how gender is reproduced in society. Gill claims that young men in Punjab often fashion their gender identity around what they see at the cinema and in other forms of popular culture.[14]

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[12] Jeffrey, "Timepass." 473- 477
[13] The latest documentary he has made is called Mardistan/Macholand (2014)
[14] Gill, "Masculinity, Mobility and Transformation in Punjabi Cinema."

Though masculinity and space is not an unexplored area in an Indian setting there is still a lack of focus on the men and fear of violence in public spaces. To position my work in the previous scholarship it has therefore been necessary to look towards the research conducted in a western setting.

2.2. Previous research on men and fear of violence

In the research on gender and fear of crime, the main theoretical contributions have been developed on the basis of empirical data from the West. The last decade this has started to change in the field of women and fear, as I will show when I return to this research. At the same time the research on men's fear of crime is still absent in an Indian setting. This reflects Copra and the Osellas' argument on the general empirical and theoretical domination of the West in masculinity studies in general.

2.2.1. Hegemonic masculinity

In research done in the late 1990s in Britain, Robbie Sutton and Stephen Farrall argue that men do not report their fear sincerely. Social expectations around masculinity keep many men from answering frankly to questions on fear. In their study on gender and fear of crime, they use something they call a lie scale. This is a way of measuring how respondents might answer with the socially desirable (but untrue) answer. An example of such a question might be asking if someone have ever taken anything that belonged to someone else. This way you get an idea of how people manipulate their answers for the outcome to be socially desirable. What they concluded with in their research was that, after applying the lie scale, men have a slightly higher fear of crime than women.[15]

The question of who is more scared aside, Sutton and Farrall made an important discovery in the course of their research. They found that being fearless is a clear masculine ideal, but being afraid is neither desirable nor undesirable feminine

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[15] Robbie M. Sutton and Stephen Farrall, "Gender, Socially Desirable Responding and the Fear of Crime Are Women Really More Anxious about Crime?," *British Journal of Criminology* 45, no. 2 (March 1, 2005): 212–24, doi:10.1093/bjc/azh084.

behaviour.[16] In other words the masculine ideal of fearlessness might mean that some men are claiming to be less fearful than they are.

Being fearless has been understood as a hegemonic masculine ideal in several studies on masculinity and fear in the West.[17] Before looking at research on men and fear of crime it is necessary to address the concept of hegemonic masculinity. The term hegemonic masculinity was popularised by the Australian professor R. W. Connell. She used the term as a method of understanding the power relations of different masculine ideals. Examples of hegemonic masculinity ideals can be: being white, middle class, active, tall, strong, high caste, a boss, young etc.

Though there are many different masculinity ideals, hegemonic masculinity is directly linked to power. The term hegemony can also be traced back to Antonio Gramsci, who used it as a model of understanding social control. This must not be understood as a global all-encompassing masculinity ideal, but something that changes over regions and cultures. In the article "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept", which Connell wrote together with Swedish criminology professor James W. Messerschmidt, they claim that hegemonic masculinity ideals are reinforced through cultural practices:

> Hegemonic masculinity at the regional level is symbolically represented through the interplay of specific local masculine practices that have regional significance, such as those constructed by feature film actors, professional athletes, and politicians.[18]

Seeing fearlessness as a hegemonic masculinity ideal must not be understood as something universal and all-encompassing. Hegemonic masculinity is affected by regional, cultural and political practices. Prem Vijayan, who writes about masculinities in the Hindutva movement, claims that we should not understand hegemonic masculinity as essential and universal. Rather we should be talking about different forms of hegemonic

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[16] Ibid. 212-222

[17] Nicole E. Rader and Stacy H. Haynes, "Gendered Fear of Crime Socialization: An Extension of Akers's Social Learning Theory," n.d.; Jo Goodey, "Boys Don't Cry: Masculinities, Fear of Crime and Fearlessness," *British Journal of Criminology* 37, no. 3 (June 20, 1997): 401–18.

[18] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (December 1, 2005): 829–59, doi:10.1177/0891243205278639. 849

masculinities. These masculinities can differ from society to society, but also within the same traditions.[19] Though Vijayan makes an important point, it might also be beneficial to see similarities between different masculinity ideals. There are for example great similarities between the male heroes in action movies in Bollywood and in Hollywood. Fearless men who save women and children are central in both forms of popular culture.

At the same time, the Bollywood industry does not have a monopoly on the movies that are released in India, and they are more popular in some places than others. Gill claims that Bollywood movies are often regarded as not being representative for any particular Indian region. Regional movie makers often distance themselves from the Bollywood films by claiming that they are depicting the authentic regional culture.[20] In other words, regional hegemonic masculinities might not be the same as the national, and although there are similarities between the western hegemonic masculinity and the Indian, there might also be great differences.

2.2.2. Men and fear

The research done on men and fear of crime is so far dominated by studies done on men in the US and Europe. Though these studies might be relevant when looking at Indian men's fear in public spaces, it is important to understand how the masculinity ideals may vary from different cultures. It is also important to recognise that these ideals can vary within the same geographical location.

There is also a difference in how much men report fear within different age groups. In research done on young boys from age 11 to 16, in a homogenously white working class community in the north of England, Jo Goodey found that the younger boys reported a much higher level of fear of crime. The youngest boys who participated in the study were more afraid of crime than the girls in the same age group.[21] I will return to the subject of fear and age in an Indian context in the next chapter.

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[19] Vijayan, "Nationalism, Masculinity and the Developmental State: Exploring Hindutva Masculinities." 35
[20] Gill, "Masculinity, Mobility and Transformation in Punjabi Cinema."
[21] Goodey, "Boys Don't Cry: Masculinities, Fear of Crime and Fearlessness." 407

As the age of the respondents might affect the level of fear they claim to have, other categories also need to be taken into consideration. In his research on the tribal migrant community in Delhi, Duncan McDuie-Ra notes that migrant tribal men tend to avoid public spaces more than migrant tribal women. The reason for this is, amongst other, that tribal men are exposed to racism and violent behaviour from other Indian men. This creates a contrast to the ideas of men as always understanding themselves as less vulnerable than women in public spaces. Men being exposed to violence and racism make them more reluctant to move out in public spaces than their female peers.[22] In other words, it is not ethnicity or gender that makes these men feel vulnerable, but the combination of the two.

2.3. Fear and access: the discourse of violence in public space in India

To understand men's fear of violence, it is necessary to start by looking at the discourse around violence in public spaces in India. Both in public discourse and in academic discourse on violence in public spaces there has been a high focus on the middle class woman. Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade are some of the scholars that have done research on middle class women and the fear of violence. They claim that the high focus on violence, particularly sexual violence, against women is creating more fear of public spaces which limits women's access to these spaces.[23]

The movement for safer cities has grown extensively after the Delhi rape case in December 2012. This movement is mainly focusing on the safety for women in public spaces. It is a politically heterogeneous movement, dominated by NGOs. Though the movement's focus on women's safety is important, it is necessary to not forget that there are also men and other genders that are vulnerable in public spaces.

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[22] Duncan McDuie-Ra, "Being a Tribal Man from the North-East: Migration, Morality, and Masculinity," in *Gender and Masculinities : Histories, Texts and Practices in India and Sri Lanka*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: Routledge, 2013), 126–48, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2013.768867. 135 and 139
[23] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*. 57-59

The discourse on violence in public spaces is centred on sexual violence, and sexual violence is understood as something women are victimised by. The Indian laws on rape are not gender neutral. Rape is defined as something a man does to a woman. There was incentive to change this after the rape case in 2012, but several of the NGO's in the movement for safer cities strongly opposed it.[24]

2.3.1. Research on women's fear: The argument of restriction on access

Though there is little research on fear in urban space in an Indian setting, a focus on middle class women's fear has become more present in the last ten years. In this field there are some important contributions. Kalpana Viswanath and Sur Manpreeti Tandon Mehrotra wrote about women's safety in Delhi in 2007. They claim that women's feeling of unsafety is limiting their access. They do, on the other hand, not think that it is the right to engage risk that should be demanded. They claim that New Delhi is one of the most unsafe cities in the world and that one third of the rapes in the major cities in India happen there. The problem is violence, and fear is a consequence of this. That is the reason why women restrict their own movement in public spaces. The solution to the lack of women in the city spaces is to provide more safety, and this has to be provided by community and the state.[25]

Viswanath and Mehrotra do not differentiate between crime in public and private spaces when assuming that crime is the reason why women's access are restricted. The majority of India's rapes might be happening in Delhi, but this does not necessarily mean that the majority of rapes happen in public spaces in Delhi. According to the latest official crime report in India, the offender was known to the victim in 94.4% of the rape cases in India.[26] In the crime report from 2005 that Viswanath and Tandon refer to the number was 86.4%.[27] It is difficult to make a clear statement on the factual numbers of rapes.

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[24] "JAGORI » Gender Neutral Rape Laws Make the Woman More Vulnerable," March 9, 2013, http://jagoriwp.jagori.org/gender-neutral-rape-laws-make-the-woman-more-vulnerable/.

[25] Kalpana Viswanath and Surabhi Tandon Mehrotra, "'Shall We Go out?' Women's Safety in Public Spaces in Delhi," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 17 (April 28, 2007): 1542–48.

[26] National Crime Records Bureau, "Chapter 5: Crime against Women 2013" *Crime in India 2013* (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2014).

[27] National Crime Records Bureau, "Chapter 5: Crime against Women 2005" *Crime in India 2005* (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2006).

Many rapes are never reported, and hence never reach the statistical basis for the official crime reports.[28] If we only relate to the numbers Viswanath and Mehrotra refer to, it can still be argued that the rapes that women statistically are most vulnerable to are not done by a stranger molesting them when venturing out in public spaces. At the same time, it seems to be this sexual violence that women fear the most.

One of the most discussed contributions on women's fear of violence in public spaces in India so far has been the book *Why Loiter?* by Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade. The trio worked together on the Gender & Space Project conducted by the research centre PUKAR in 2005- 2006 and wrote the book in 2011. In addition, they have written an extensive amount of articles with different themes around fear and access in public space. One of the main arguments of Phadke, Khan and Ranade is that women should demand the right to engage risk in urban space, before demanding safety. The focus on safety is limiting women's access to the urban sphere. The three argue that with the demand for safety in public space, one can only achieve conditional protection, and not the right to access. It is not the right to protection that should be demanded, it is the right to engage risks. By demanding this, the very notion of what is appropriate behavior for women in public spaces is challenged.[29]

Several scholars have picked up the subject of women's fear recently. One of them is Tanusree Paul, who wrote her PhD on gender and space. Her research is mainly based on the middle class in Kolkata. In the article "Space, Gender, and Fear of Crime" she claims that the fear of crime is a significant factor in women`s approach towards public space in India. When it comes to physical violence in public space, women are less likely to be victims than men, but at the same time they tend to be more afraid of crime, according to Paul.[30] In the chapter "Public Spaces and Everyday lives" of the book *Doing gender,*

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[28] Tia Palermo, Jennifer Bleck, and Amber Peterman, "Tip of the Iceberg: Reporting and Gender-Based Violence in Developing Countries," *American Journal of Epidemiology*, December 12, 2013, kwt295, doi:10.1093/aje/kwt295.

[29] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*. 60

[30] Tanusree Paul, "Space, Gender, and Fear of Crime: Some Explorations from Kolkata," *Gender, Technology and Development* 15, no. 3 (November 1, 2011): 411–35, doi:10.1177/097185241101500305.

Doing Geography she takes this argument further. She claims that women and men relate to public space in different ways because they have been raised with different understandings on how to behave. Women avoid what they see as unrespectable or unsafe places while moving through urban areas. They generally avoid bars, lottery shops, dark lanes etc. This is not only because of the fear of crime, but also the fear of being dishonored. The very presence of a woman in public space might create assumptions around her sexual virtue.[31]

Paul makes an important point when it comes to the respectability of women when venturing out in public spaces. It is important to keep in mind that it is not only the fear of violence that limits women's access in public spaces. It is also a notion of what is considered appropriate behaviour for a middle class woman. I will not go further into this because the scope of this thesis first and foremost is men's fear of violence. It is not which factors that are restricting women's access that concerns me at this time. The argument of the fear of crime limiting women's access is important to this thesis, because of the underlying suggestion that it does not limit men.

2.3.2. Private space and public space

Though the division between violence in private and public spaces has its advantages, there are also some aspects that make the distinction problematic. First of all, not all spaces can be classified as public or private. For example malls, hotels and resorts might not fit into either of these categories. They are not private, but still they are not open to everyone. In India these types of spaces are mainly inhabited by the middle class citizens with disposable income. Secondly, violent behaviour can cross boundaries of space. This is argued by Rituparna Bhattacharyya in her article on specialities of sexual assaults. She claims that there is a connection between domestic violence and sexual violence towards women in public spaces. Women's persistent victimisation to domestic violence testifies

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[31] Tanusree Paul, "Public Spaces and Everyday Lives: Gendered Encounters in the Metro City of Kolkata," in *Doing Gender, Doing Geography: Emerging Research in India*, ed. Saraswati Raju and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Reissue edition (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2011), 248–67. 251

to an attitude of women having a lower status in the private space. This attitude does not know any boundaries and are reflected in the way men treat women in public spaces.[32]

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to dwell on the problematic aspects of understanding private and public spaces as a binary distinction. The reason is that this thesis is about the understanding of violence, not actual violence. There is an understanding of public spaces as more dangerous than private spaces. It is the fear that follows this that concerns me in this thesis. This does not mean that I am not generally critical to a static and binary understanding of space.

2.3.3. The movement for safer cities

The Delhi rape case in 2012 represents a change in the discourse on women's rights in India. It was the starting point of massive demonstrations in India's major cities. It was also the starting point of what over the next three years would be a massive growth of the movement for safer cities. Soma Chaudhuri and Sarah Fitzgerald, who write about the new repertoire in social movements after the Delhi- rape protests, claim that there are two points where the demonstrations differed from any previous protest against violence towards women. First of all, the demonstrations started within a day after the incident. In other words it was relatively spontaneous. Because the rape was reported in the media shortly after it had happened, the mobilisation also started very early. Secondly the protesters were not only people connected to India's various women's rights groups. In addition to the spontaneous nature of the protests and the great volume of demonstrators attending, the protests also got an enormous attention from the media. This made it difficult for the government to keep employing forceful tactics to stop the protests.[33] The media attention was not only from the Indian media. The incident also received a great media interest internationally.

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[32] Rituparna Bhattacharyya, "Understanding the Spatialities of Sexual Assault against Indian Women in India," *Gender, Place & Culture* 0, no. 0 (October 17, 2014): 1–17, doi:10.1080/0966369X.2014.969684.

[33] Soma Chaudhuri and Sarah Fitzgerald, "Rape Protests in India and the Birth of a New Repertoire," *Social Movement Studies*, May 2015, 1–7, doi:10.1080/14742837.2015.1037261. 2 (Baba Ramdev later changed his political standpoint to supporting the right-wing Narendra Modi in the election for prime minister in 2014)

A vast number of people attended the demonstrations, without being part of any groups or organisations. In addition, there was representation from the whole political spectrum attending the demonstrations.[34] The political heterogeneity of the demonstrations after the Delhi rape case is also something that has identified the movement for safer cities. Sociologist Srila Roy claims that feminist activism is increasingly being associated with practices of professionalisation, managerialism and bureaucratisation. Like the rest of the women's rights movement in India, the movement for safer cities has been dominated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Roy terms this development as 'NGOizastion' of the women's movement. She claims that it is the founders of these NGOs that take decisions for the entire women's movement, while the grassroot formations do not have the same power and resources and therefore become less visual.

An example of such an NGO that has been dominating the movement for safer cities is the feminist NGO "Jagori". Their project "Safe City Free of Violence Against Women and Girls Initiative" started in 2009 in collaboration with UN Women. On their website they describe the goal for the initiative to be: "Cities where women and girls are able to move around freely without the fear of harassment and violence at all times and enjoy what the city has to offer".[35] Behind Jagori's goal there seems to be an underlying assumption that women are more vulnerable than men in public spaces. This assumption needs to be problematised because there is little research on who is actually more vulnerable in public spaces. As mentioned the National Crime Bureau gives out material on crime specifically against women. The majority of this crime is not happening in public spaces. At the same time there is a lack of material on crime against men. Crime against men tends to be treated as just crime, without any gender specifications.[36]

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[34] Sneha Krishnan, "Responding to Rape: Feminism and Young Middle-Class Women in India," in *Women, Political Struggles and Gender Equality in South Asia*, ed. Margaret Alston (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[35] Jagori, "The Safer Cities Free from Violence against Women and Girls Initiative," NGO, *Jagori.org*, (2010), http://www.jagori.org/safer-cities-free-violence-against-women-and-girls-initiative.

[36] I do not wish to in any way insinuate that women are less vulnerable than men in public spaces either. In addition to the potential of experiencing violence, women are vulnerable for being sexually harassed and threatened. Though this might not be understood as physical violence, it is still highly problematic.

2.3.4. Victims and villains in public spaces

Phadke, Khan and Ranade claim that in the media's representation of violence, there is a hierarchy with sexual violence towards middle class women at the top. This violence, especially when it happens in public spaces, is sensationalised in the media to a much greater extent than is the case with violence towards men or other genders. They use the examples of two violent incidents in Mumbai on New Year's Eve of 2008. One was an incident of drunken driving where the victims were young middle class men. The other was an assault on a young middle class woman. While the first was mentioned briefly in the media, the latter got 12 days of media coverage. The focus was mainly on how the city was unsafe for women. There was no focus on how the city might be unsafe for young men in the media coverage of the drunken driving incident.[37]

In an article written by Shilpa Phadke some years before *Why Loiter?* was published, she claimed that the discourse on safety in public space is highly gendered because it is mainly a discourse on sexual safety. Because sexual violence is understood as a type of crime where men are perpetrators while women are victims, 'violence in public space' often becomes 'violence towards women'.[38] Talking about men as potential victims of violence (especially sexual violence) is controversial. In their research Phadke Khan and Ranade do criticise the assumption that women are the only victims, but they do not turn around the argument and criticise the assumption that only men can only be violators. Their standpoint in the discourse on safety and violence in public spaces is, as mentioned, that women are restricted by the fear of violence. Though this is an important point it also carries with it an assumption that men are not restricted or even affected by the fear of experiencing violence.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines sexual violence as a sexual act against someone's will: "…by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim".[39] In

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[37] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*. 50-51

[38] Shilpa Phadke, "Dangerous Liaisons: Women and Men: Risk and Reputation in Mumbai," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 17 (April 28, 2007): 1510–18. 1512

[39] WHO, "Chapter 6: Sexual Violence," World Report on Violence and Health, 6, accessed November 22, 2014, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/.

contrast to the gender-neutral definition of sexual violence done by the WHO, Indian law defines it as a crime where the victims are always female and the violators always men.[40] After the Delhi Rape case there were some incentives to change the gender definitions in Indian laws on sexual violence. The victims and perpetrators in cases of sexual violence were gender neutral in an ordinance passed shortly after the Delhi rape case.[41] This was received as highly controversial and was met with resistance from women's organisations, like the previously mentioned NGO Jagori.[42] In the new criminal amendment act passed by the Indian parliament in 2013, rape is defined as something a man does to a woman.[43]

This chapter has consisted of a presentation of three analytical frameworks, all relevant to my thesis questions in different ways. The research on men's fear of crime has mainly been developed in a western context. Because there is a lack of research in an Indian context I have chosen to support my analyses with the research on women and fear in India, and on men and fear from the West. I will also refer to previous research on masculinities in India, though to a lesser extent. Together these three fields of research constitute the theoretical base supporting my analyses.

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[40] *The Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 2013* Passed by Lok Sabha on March 19.2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on March 21.2013, 2013.

[41] Press Information Bureau Government of India, "Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013," accessed May 30, 2015, http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=91979.

[42] "JAGORI » Gender Neutral Rape Laws Make the Woman More Vulnerable."

[43] *The Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 2013* Passed by Lok Sabha on March 19.2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on March 21.2013.

3. Method

In this chapter I explain how I carried out my research on men's fear of crime. The chapter consists of five parts, where I discuss my approach and the ethical considerations in the process towards writing this thesis. First I describe how and why I decided to conduct interviews and a survey. Secondly I discuss the implications of using English in an Indian setting. This choice created restrictions on which men I would be able to talk to. I also assess the implications of the way I use English. It has been important to me to try to use words and expressions without too many emotional connotations.

The sections on the interviews and the survey describe how I found my informants and how I conducted the two. The empirical data presented in this thesis is based on an internet survey from 20.2.2015 to 13.4.2015 and interviews done over a period of two weeks in March 2015. My respondents, both in the survey and in the interviews were middle class Indians. The section on class, age and education presents more information about the men I interviewed and the people who took the survey. All of my interviews were conducted with men under 30 years old. They either held, or were in the process of getting, a university degree. In the survey the majority were also highly educated and under the age of 35.

3.1. Background

In 2014 I did an internship with the feminist art collective Blank Noise in Bangalore. The collective is working mainly with political art targeting violence against women in public spaces, and the blame that some women experience after being victimised. The associates in the collective are mainly young, educated, urban women, but there are also a few men who are actively participating. While participating in meetings and activities with Blank Noise, I was introduced to a few of these men. It was through conversations with them that I got the idea of doing interviews with men who are active in the movement for safer cities.

When I was working with Blank Noise I learned a lot about the movement for safer cities. This was not only through my work with the collective, but also through meetings with other organisations. Amongst the other organisations and projects I participated in meeting with was Alternative Law Forum, an organisation working both with providing legal advice and engaging in political questions around Indian Law. They are working on the rights of marginalised groups in public spaces. Another project I engaged with was Hyderabad for Feminism, a group of urban feminists located in the city of Hyderabad. I participated in two of their meetings about a women's safety report, produced by the Telangana state government. I also followed the media presentation of violence in public spaces closely in this period. Together this created an understanding of the discourse on violence in public spaces.

The reason for conducting both interviews and a survey was that it gave me the option of getting deeper into concrete narratives of fear and safety, and at the same time have a larger base of opinions from other middle class men. The decision on how to do research on men and fear of violence in public spaces in India was difficult. This was mainly because there are no similar studies to relate my research to. Because there are no previous studies on men and fear of violence in India, I chose to relate to the research on women. These studies are mainly based on the fear experienced by middle class women in urban areas, which is why I saw it as relevant to do research on middle class men in Indian cities.

The academic discourse on the fear of violence in India is mainly focused around sexual violence towards women. I believe that to understand the implications of the fear of violence it is necessary to broaden the scope, both when it comes to gender and types of violence happening in public spaces. It has been important for me to try to understand the implications of violence in public spaces for men, thus I never mentioned the terms gendered violence or sexual violence in either the survey or the interviews. I wanted men to be able to associate freely around what they understood as potential threats in public spaces.

3.2. Language

Both my interviews and my survey were conducted in English. Using English, as well as choosing the internet as a space of recruiting informants, creates a clear class bias in my response. To speak with middle class men has been a conscious choice. At the same time it should not stand un-problematised. The choice of conducting the interviews and the survey in English was also a consequence of limitations in time. Though I am not proficient enough in Hindi to conduct interviews or create a Hindi survey, it would have been possible to hire a translator. This could have given me the option of having a much broader spectrum of middle class informants, both in age and in education.

As mentioned it has been important for me to be careful with which terms and expressions I was using, both when I was conducting the interviews and when I created the survey. In a chapter providing an overview over the theoretical contributions in fear of crime, criminologist Jodi Lane claims that in studies (mainly from Europe and the US) women are generally more afraid of experiencing crime than men. This is the case in research done on different racial and ethnic groups as well as different social classes. Lane suggests that one of the reasons for the gendered distinction on fear of crime might be the language used in previous research. Expressing fear of crime might be more difficult for men, because it is a sign of weakness. Even fearful men might be reluctant to express this, because it does not fit with masculinity ideals. It might be easier for a man to admit to wanting to be in a group because together men are stronger and more prepared for confrontation, than to admit to being afraid of going out alone. Lane points out that future studies on men and the fear of crime need to take this into consideration, and try to develop a less gender emotive language.[44]

Though Lane is referring to previous research done in the West, I believe it is important to keep this in mind also in an Indian setting. It has therefore been important for me to try to keep as neutral a tone as possible. I have tried to talk in general terms about safety and

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[44] Jodi Lane, "Theoretical Explanations for Gender Differences in Fear of Crime," in *Routledge International Handbook of Crime and Gender Studies*, ed. Claire M. Renzetti, Susan L. Miller, and Angela R. Gover (Routledge, 2013). 60

threats in public spaces. The goal has been to avoid very emotional words like 'scared' and 'fear'. Instead I have tried to use words like 'unsafe' and 'threatened'. Which words might have gendered or emotional connotations is still difficult to know. Though English is a widely used language in India, it has been developed and shaped through the years. Words and expressions might have other connotations in different geographical locations and also between different people.

3.3. Interviews

I chose to interview men who are active in organisations and projects for safer cities. The main reason why was the assumption that they were particularly up to date on the safety situation in India. Through the meetings of Blank Noise I had already met several men who are involved in grassroot initiatives for safety. My experience was that they had reflected on their own role in the movement, and on how they understand gender and safety. Because the movement for safety generally has been about the safety of women, it is relevant to ask the men in the movement how they see their own role when working for safer public spaces. These men's understanding of safety might provide a view from someone who is already familiar with a highly gendered discourse.

Three of the men I interviewed were introduced to me when I was in Bangalore in 2014. The other six were contacted either through first getting in touch with their organisations/projects, or by contacting our mutual acquaintances. The length of the interviewed varied from an hour to three and a half hours. Five interviews were conducted one on one, and one interview was conducted with four men together. The latter was the longest interview. All of the interviews had an informal tone, where I let the men talk freely. There was no clear script in the interviews. Instead I asked some general questions on safety and threat in public spaces. I did not record the interviews because I knew there was a chance sensitive topics might be brought up. I did not want to jeopardize my informants in any way. Instead I took down notes and wrote down the conversations as soon as I got the time.

3.4. Survey

The survey was what I will term as semi-quantitative. By semi-quantitative I mean that the survey both had multiple choice questions, and options to write down longer answers. There are four themes of questions in the survey. The first is general information like age, gender etc. The second is an overview of how often the participants are using different spaces and modes of public transport in the city. The third is about how the participants deem their own safety situation in the city. The fourth and last asks questions on how the participants see safety for others in close relation to him/her. Though I am focusing on men, the survey was open to both women and men. This created the option to compare and differentiate the results. Because this thesis is looking at men's fear of crime, I am not giving any detailed review of the female participants' answers, unless it is to underline a contrast to the answers from the male participants.

The survey was created through Google Forms, a type of application that allows you to create surveys for free without any intrusive or disturbing elements like commercials or messages from a third party. Google is a well-known company, also in India. This is important when distributing a survey as a stranger on the internet. I believe that knowing the legitimacy of the webpage made people more likely to accept a request to be part of the survey. At the same time Google, as well as other software companies do not provide the best grounds for privacy. Some questions are difficult or even dangerous to ask in this setting. For example asking about sexuality could have created a difficult situation as being gay is technically illegal in India.[45] I do not control the software I was using. I did not want it to contain any information that might harm my respondents, which is why I did not ask sensitive questions.

I chose to distribute the survey through different internet sites like Facebook, Twitter and Couchsurfing. All of these three social networking sites have groups dedicated to different cities, some of them with thousands of members. Posting a link to the survey on these sites was the most effective way to get respondents. While distributing the survey I

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[45] Because of the reinstatement of section 377 in Indian law in 2013 (which criminalize gay sex).

was conscious about avoiding specifically political spaces or groups.[46] In addition to asking random people on social networking sides, I also asked my Indian acquaintances to send emails to people in their universities and office networks. These emails had a link to the survey as well as a little text I had formulated, describing the project.

I have limited the scope of the survey to people living in Indian cities. I chose to talk about the 'outdoors in the city' instead of 'public space'. This was because I wanted the survey to be based on a simple and understandable language. I started the survey with questions on how they use public transport and different city spaces. There were two reasons for this. First of all I wanted to get an image of how men and women use these spaces, to get an idea if there was a gendered difference. Secondly I wanted to establish what I mean by 'the city' before asking the questions on safety. The meaning of city spaces was also explained in the introduction text.

There are several benefits of doing a survey in research on men's fear of violence. First of all it is easier to be consistent in language. Because of the strong social norms around fear and fearlessness it is necessary to be conscious of how questions are formulated. As I have mentioned, Jodi Lane claims that men are more likely to admit to feeling safer in a group than admitting to being scared of moving out alone. Though the two might mean the same thing, the implication of the questions are different.[47] Finding questions that allow men to express their fear of crime and still act according to masculine ideals has been a goal when creating the survey.

A second benefit is that it gives me, as a young woman, the potential of being invisible. Day et al. reflect around this in their research on the fear of violence amongst college men. A young women doing research on young men might affect the results in research on masculinity. Because a young woman is a potential dating partner, young men might be more reluctant to discuss fear, they claim.[48] This is something I cannot get away from

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[46] This does not mean that none the respondents to the survey were part of a political group. As mentioned the survey was open to any Indian living in an Indian city.
[47] Lane, "Theoretical Explanations for Gender Differences in Fear of Crime."
[48] Kristen Day, Cheryl Stump, and Daisy Carreon, "Confrontation and Loss of Control: Masculinity and

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in the interviews, but in the survey I could avoid this. In addition to giving me the option of being anonymous, a third benefit is that the survey makes the participants anonymous too. In the safety of sitting alone behind their computers without anyone watching it might be easier to write about what is experienced as threats in public spaces.

3.5. Class, age and education of my respondents

As I have discussed previously, the discourse on safety in urban spaces in India is centred on urban middle class women. The argument of this thesis is that not only women are affected by the fear of violence. There were many possible ways to research men's fear of violence, but it was necessary to make a decision on where to start. I chose to speak with middle class men, living in cities in India, mainly because there is already existing research to compare it with.

All men who were interviewed were between 20 and 30 years, except for one young man who was 19. Also, in the survey the majority of the respondents were young. Out of 98 participants, 82 (80%), were under 35 years old. This was not unexpected, even though the survey was open to people of any age. I believe the reason why the age of the participants is relatively low is because of the ways I recruited people through using mail, Facebook and other social networks. In many of the groups where I posted the survey the majority of the people active were quite young. As mentioned I also used my Indian network actively to get others to help me spread the survey. Many of my Indian acquaintances are under 35, and so it would be reasonable to assume that they also recruited people their own age (see Figure 1.).
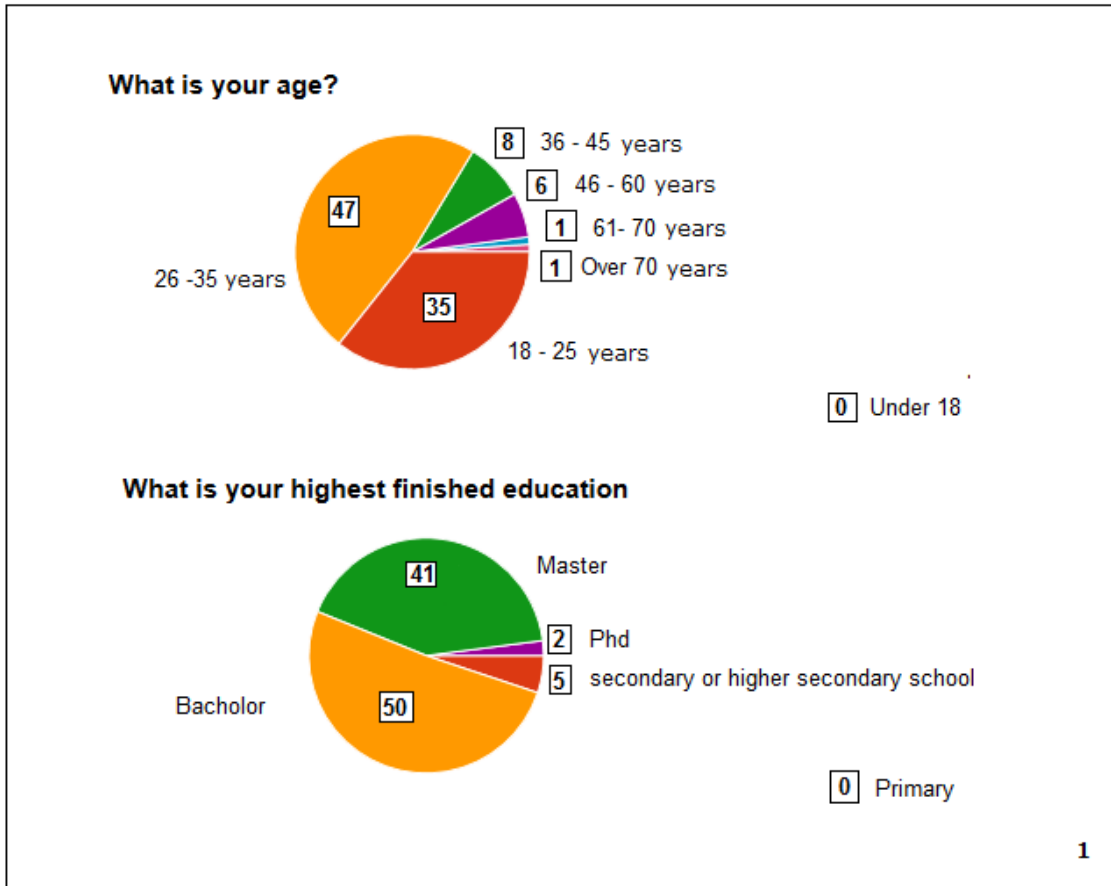
Figure 1: Age and education of the participants in my survey

As shown on the model above the education level of my respondents was also high. Out of the 98 people who responded as many as 91 (93 %) held a master's degree or a bachelor's degree, two people held a PhD. The men whom I interviewed were also educated. Out of nine, five held either a bachelor's or a master's and four were students on bachelor level. In other words both the answers in my interviews and in my survey are mainly by young educated men and women. It has been necessary to keep this in mind when writing this thesis. The empirical data used can in no way be claimed to be representative for the general Indian population.

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4. Men, fear and safety

This is the first of the two analytical chapters in this thesis. In these two chapters I will discuss my findings from my survey and my interviews. First I will be differentiating between different types of violence. The fear of sexual violence is often understood as a particularly feminine fear. In India this understanding of sexual violence is reflected in the law. The rape laws in India are highly gendered, only women can be victims and only men can be the offender.[49] The women who took the survey were clearly most fearful about experiencing sexual violence in public spaces. The violence that men feared was more heterogeneous. In addition to opening up the categories of violence in public spaces I also discuss how different identity categories might affect men's experience of fear. Identity categories that cut across gender, like sexuality, ethnicity and caste, also play a role when discussing fear of violence. I have chosen to focus particularly on sexuality and caste in this chapter.

Researchers like Shilpa Ranade claim that the fear of violence is restricting women's access to public spaces.[50] Further in this chapter I will discuss the argument of restriction. I will argue that men are also restricted by the fear of violence, though not always in the same way as women are. In addition to restriction I will also discuss aggression as a method of dealing with the fear of violence. In previous research from the West, particularly on young men, aggression has been reported as a common way of responding to threats in public spaces, but is this the case with middle class men in India?

The stereotype of the dangerous man in public spaces is that he is low class and low caste or Muslim. This dangerous lower class man is first and foremost understood as a threat to the middle class woman. In the last part of this chapter I will draw a connection from stereotypes in the discourse on safety, to previous research on the middle class'

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[49] *The Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 2013* Passed by Lok Sabha on March 19.2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on March 21.2013.

[50] Shilpa Ranade, "The Way She Moves: Mapping the Everyday Production of Gender-Space," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 17 (April 28, 2007): 1519–26.

discomfort with the lower classes. Safety has been used as an argument to justify several incentives to either remove, or change, the presence of lower class, 'dangerous' men in public spaces.

4.1. Different types of violence in public spaces

There are some important gendered differences in the fear of violent crime in public space. As I have mentioned, the different social expectations towards women and men is one of these differences. Another is what kind of violence women and men fear. Before addressing men's fear and men's sense of safety it is necessary to attend to this point.

4.1.1. Sexual violence

The fear of rape or other types of sexual violence has traditionally been understood as a particular feminine fear. The fear of rape has been one of the main explanations for women reporting a higher level of fear of violent crime. The possibility for other types of crime, like robbery leading to sexual violence makes women more scared of violence in general. This has been termed as the "shadow hypothesis" in the research on gender and fear.[51] Though sexual violence towards men has received slightly more attention in the last couple of years, it is still highly unreported and not often discussed in India.[52]

Rape is defined as something a man does to a woman by the criminal amendment act, passed by the Indian parliament in 2013.[53] If an adult man is raped in India, it is difficult to get the perpetrator convicted if it is a man. It is impossible if the perpetrator is a woman, because there are no laws that acknowledge female sexual offenders. Cases where the perpetrators and the victim are both male there can be a conviction by the

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[51] Lane, "Theoretical Explanations for Gender Differences in Fear of Crime." 58-59
[52] Souradet Y. Shaw et al., "Factors Associated with Sexual Violence against Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgendered Individuals in Karnataka, India," *PLoS ONE* 7, no. 3 (March 20, 2012): e31705, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0031705. 1
[53] *The Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 2013* Passed by Lok Sabha on March 19.2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on March 21.2013.

newly reinstated section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that criminalises gay sex.[54] If the victim does press charges by this law, he risks being criminalised as well. The consequences for a man who claims to have been sexually abused by another man can be life in prison.[55]

Understanding the fear of sexual violence as a specifically feminine fear is problematic, because men can also be victims of sexual violence. Though the heteronormative middle class man in India might not fear this, there are categories of men who are particularly vulnerable to it, and where the fear of sexual violence might be high. Men who have sex with men and transgendered individuals are examples of men who might be more vulnerable to sexual violence.[56] Different spaces might also be a factor that makes men more vulnerable to sexual violence; prisons might be one such space.[57]

The high focus on sexual violence as something only women are vulnerable to was something one of my informants saw as problematic. This was Manpreet, a young gay man from Punjab that I met in a nice restaurant in Hauz Khas Village, a very trendy part of Delhi. In addition to being gay he also identifies as gender queer, which for him means that he sometimes dresses in a feminine manner and also occasionally wears makeup. Manpreet had been active in the movement for safer cities for seven years. He claimed that the high focus on women as victims had become stronger in the movement after the Delhi rape case:

> There has been a change in the activism that is claiming space and safety in India after the Delhi bus rape. The entire intellectual and politically active movement became so driven by the idea of rape and femininity and masculinity. Activism around urban space became all about rape of heterosexual women by men on the streets. As a queer individual and an activist I feel it is necessary to ask about the individuals who are equally as much in danger as the cis-woman.

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[54] John Stokes, "India's Law Should Recognise That Men Can Be Raped Too," *Quartz*, September 12, 2014, http://qz.com/264512/indias-law-should-recognise-that-men-can-be-raped-too/.

[55] Authors meeting with Alternative Law Forum in 2014.

[56] Shaw et al., "Factors Associated with Sexual Violence against Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgendered Individuals in Karnataka, India."

[57] I have not yet come across any research on sexual violence towards men in Indian prisons, but while doing a media audit in the fall of 2014 I saw several media reports about sexual violence towards male prisoners. This is often termed as sodomising, not rape, in Indian media.

Manpreet claims that there are other individuals that are as vulnerable for violence in public spaces as women, but the high focus on sexual violence towards women obscures the focus on violence toward other genders. It is not only that the focus is on women that Manpreet sees as problematic. It is also that violence in public space has "become driven by the idea of rape". Other types of violence that queer individuals might be vulnerable to are not in the focus of the public discourse. It is first and foremost the notion of rape that is on the agenda when talking about violence in public spaces.

When asking the participants in the survey what their first thoughts are when hearing the words 'violent crime in the city', both genders often answered rape and sexual assault. Here it is important to underline that I never once in my questions mentioned any forms of sexual assault, but consciously used words like violent crime and safety in the city. This was to give people room to freely associate freely with the terms.

Both the women and men who participated in the survey associated sexual violence with the words violent crime in the city. At the same time none of the male respondents claimed to have felt threatened by sexual crimes. When asked to describe a situation where they had felt threatened, almost all of the female survey respondents described a situation where they felt a risk to be subjected to rape or other types of sexual violence. This was one of the questions that gave the clearest gendered difference in answers. The situations where men felt threatened, and their understanding of what was the biggest threats to them, was much more heterogeneous than what was the case for the women. In other words, while women in general feared sexual violence, men feared a number of different types of violence.

4.1.2. Categories of men's fear
The survey had two qualitative questions on what the respondents understood as threats to them in public spaces. With qualitative I mean that there were no suggestive alternatives to choose from, but a box where it was possible to write a longer answer. The first question was "Can you describe a situation where you felt threatened?" and the second was "What is the biggest threat to your safety in the city?". Most of the answers

were related to potential violence, though a few mentioned pollution and traffic as the biggest threat to them.

There were four reoccurring themes in the violence men feared. The first was road rage (aggression in traffic) or other unprovoked traffic related violence. The second was violence from extremist groups, for example terrorist attacks. The third was robbery and the fourth was violent behaviour from police. Being subjected to violence in a traffic related situation was the most common; five respondents described this type of situation. A teacher from Bangalore around 30 years old wrote that he felt threatened by: "Drunk men on motor bikes trying to pick a fight in the middle of the road at night". Areas with busy traffic made this man feel vulnerable to violence, mainly because of the exposure to men who wanted to fight.

Terrorism was, as mentioned, another reoccurring theme in the violence men feared. A student from Mumbai in his early 20's describes situations where he feels threatened by terrorism:

> I was traveling in a local train. Found an unattained baggage and it was making noise. It grabbed attention of other passengers too...and we called a helpline to come and help. It took 10 min for them to tackle it. Also felt threatened in one of three communal riot type situation or an agitated situation in city lately. Muslim protest and burning vehicles and all at CST station and Churchgate station in 2013-14.

Though these types of violence might have a very personal outcome, terrorism and men picking fights on the roads are not motivated by desire to hurt one person in particular, but anyone who happens to be at that place at that time. Abhinav, a young man whom I interviewed, expressed this when talking about what safety is. He claimed that the randomness of violence in public space made it difficult to say how he would feel safe:

> Safety is about securing what people understand as safe. Incidents happen to random people at random times, especially in public space. It's almost like a lottery, one that you absolutely don't want to win. So safety is about a mental sense of safety.

Many of the men I talked to understood violence in public space as something that happened to whoever was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Hence it could happen to

anyone else as well, not just to them. At the same time women tend to see violence in public space as something that is targeting them specifically because they are women. In this way the violence that men fear when encountering public spaces is not only non-sexual, it can also to some extent be understood as un-personal. The people they describe as threatening are not looking for them specifically, they are looking to cause harm or "pick a fight".

Nicole E. Rader and Stacy H. Haynes claim that both gender and fear of crime is learned from childhood. Men and women are socialised into fearing in different ways. This socialisation happens every time a story about victimisation or safety practices is heard. This might be from family, friends or from the media. For example parents' safety advice on who and what to fear might affect perception of danger. Women fear sexual violence because they are exposed to the message that they are vulnerable for it. They are exposed to this message in a different way than men precisely because they are women.[58]

4.2. Different identity categories and safety

To understand the gendered relationship of fear of crime it is necessary to also look at how identities that goes across gender, like ethnicity, caste and sexuality, might impact a person's feeling of being vulnerable to violence. As mentioned I did not ask personal questions on sexuality in my survey. This was to protect my informants when information was collected through the internet. In the interviews on the other hand, I had the possibility to ask about sexuality. Information on religion and caste was also given, though I never asked about this directly.

Two of the men I interviewed identifies as gay. This was Manpreet, who I introduced in the section on sexual violence and Victor. Victor is a young man from North-East India living in Delhi. He identifies as gay, but has a more masculine style than Manpreet,

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[58] Rader and Haynes, "Gendered Fear of Crime Socialization: An Extension of Akers's Social Learning Theory."

which allows him to pass in a different way.[59] Though Victor might not be recognizable as a homosexual man through his appearance, his sexuality still made him feel more at risk in public spaces:

> I work for safety for personal reasons; it is not only about helping someone else. My sexuality makes me feel more unsafe. I mean, truly being threatened is occasional, but the feeling of not fitting in, and hence the idea of being unsafe, is there all the time. People who conform to the norm will feel included, and this is safety. I feel very conscious in public spaces. I am afraid that if I yell people won't help me. Even I myself might not step in if there is a man who needs help. So instead of asking for help I might have to make myself stronger.

Victor saw conforming and fitting in as a form of safety precaution. In other words, being able to go through public spaces without exposing his sexuality was a way of avoiding potential violence. He also assumed that the fact that he was a man made it less likely for others to help him if something were to happen. Like Victor, Manpreet also saw passing as a heterosexual man as a safety precaution. His previous experiences as a cross-dresser made him more aware of this:

> Safety is all about passing when you move out in urban space. Like for example the way you dress and the way you walk might 'out' you [expose you] to others. I am quite gender fluid. There was a point in my life where I was sure that I was born in the wrong body. In this period I was cross-dressing a lot, and wearing eye makeup. I didn't pass as a straight man, and this gave me a lot of attention when moving outside. Now I have come to a point in my life where I chose to dress more masculine, and my facial hair also makes me into a seemingly more heteronormative man. But the way I act might not always be as masculine, and this might out me.

Both these two men claimed that having a non-heteronormative sexuality make people more vulnerable. At the same time both Manpreet and Victor understood heterosexual women as being more vulnerable than heterosexual men. When reflecting on his own access to public spaces, Manpreet compared the restrictions he experienced with restrictions on women:

> I have this pressure on me to walk and talk in a certain way [to be perceived as a heterosexual man]. In the same way women are told to dress, talk and walk in a certain way to avoid attention.

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[59] In queer-studies, the term 'passing' is used when someone who appear to be within the heteronormative standards of a gender. It is often used about trans-people who look like they are born with their chosen gender, but also on other queer individuals when their appearance does not expose their sexuality.

Though both homosexual men and heterosexual women are understood as vulnerable, the threats that gay men might experience are placed in a different category than those women might experience. It was not first and foremost the sexual violence these two men feared. When I asked Victor if he thought he was safer than women in public spaces, he replied:

> That's very contextual. In some spaces a woman is more vulnerable, in others I might be. My sexuality makes me at risk. A heteronormative woman would still conform to certain expectations and so there are some people whom she will not be at risk for. The same people might be out to get people like me.

In other words, as long as Victor manages to pass as a heterosexual man, he understands himself to be safer than a heterosexual woman. At the same time the violence a woman is vulnerable for is not connected to her non-normative sexuality. This is why Victor claims that women's safety is within a different context. The context of women's safety seems to be connected to the understanding of violence towards women in public space as sexual violence, while the violence towards gay men is understood as hate violence. It is important to note here that a further study on lesbian women's fear of violence might discover that they also feel at risk of hate violence. According to Bina Fernandez and Gomathy N.B, who have done research on violence against Indian lesbian women, transgressing socially ascribed roles of gender and sexuality makes you vulnerable to violence, regardless of original gender.[60] Due to my focusing on men's experiences of fear and understanding of safety, I will not have space to assess this any further.

Both Manpreet and Victor understood their sexuality as something that made them more vulnerable to violence in public space, and restricted their access. On the other hand, other identity categories might make some men feel safer than others. In my interview with Abhinav, who is from Mumbai, he brought up his experiences with the privilege of caste and class. Abhinav is active in a feminist organisation that works against street

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[60] Bina Fernandez and N. B. Gomathy, *The Nature of Violence Faced by Lesbian Women in India* (Research Centre on Violence Against Women, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2003), http://download.tiss.edu/fap/RCI-VAW/RCI-VAW_Publications/The_Nature_of_violence_faced_by_Lesbian_women_in_India.pdf.

harassment and violence against women in public space. When asked about his own safety he replied:

> Throughout my life I have never felt unsafe in public space. This is not based on reality, but on my ego. I am high caste, I am male, my family has money, and my father is in the army. All of that gives me privilege to feel safe.

Though Abhinav lists a number of different categories that makes him feel safer, the fact that he is male seems to be the triggering factor for his safety. He previously mentioned having a sister, so I ask about her. Apart from being male she has the same privileges, does this make her safer?

> No I don't think so. It can even work to her disadvantage sometimes. There are different social expectations to her because she is a woman. Like if she wears a tank top, she will be shaming her caste.

In other words Abhinav understands his high caste and high class as providing him with safety because he is a man. He does not see these privileges as protecting women in the same way. This is interesting because it reflects an attitude of women as always being vulnerable, no matter what class or caste. What Abhinav says about a women's privilege working to her disadvantage might also reflect the high representation in the media of sexual violence towards upper class/caste women done by lower caste/class men.[61] At the same time this does not necessarily reflect the reality of sexual violence in urban space in India. In the majority of sexual violence cases in India the victim is a non-privileged woman.[62]

4.3. Access to public spaces

As I have mentioned, one of the main arguments in the research on women and fear of violence in public space is that fear leads to restriction which again leads to lack of access for women. There are several problematic aspects with this argument, many beyond the

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[61] I will return to this point in the last section of this chapter "4.4. Getting rid of the others: Creating safer cities"

[62] The author's meeting with lawyers in Alternative Law Forum in 2014, as part research for the international project term Report, "Fear of Blame in Urban Space: Analysing the role of justification in the discourse on sexual violence"

scope of this thesis.[63] The aspect I am concerned with is the underlying assumption that men are not restricted by fear. In this part of the thesis I will look at whether, and how, men might also be restricted by fear.

In her paper on gendered public spaces in Mumbai, Shilpa Ranade discusses three studies that are mapping gendered use of public space. She was part of conducting these studies while working in the research centre Pukar together with Shilpa Phadke and Sameera Khan. The studies show how middle class men and women move through and navigate in public spaces. A part of one of these mapping studies consisted of getting people to draw men and women in different ages on a map of a fictive Mumbai neighbourhood. Ranade notices that after doing this with over 400 participants, not one found the exercise meaningless. No one said 'anyone can go anywhere'. At the same time the participants had more trouble positioning the fictive men than the women. While the women were placed according to what they can and cannot do, the men could be located everywhere.[64]

According to Ranade, age matters in the views of who has the greatest access to public spaces. Though men between 18 and 55 are well represented in public spaces at all times of day, the men and women over 55 seemed to have an equal lack of access.[65] Similar observations were made by Kathinka Frøystad in her studies of middle and upper class communities in Kanpur. Women were withdrawing from public spaces more than men, but at the same time her middle-aged male informants also limited their own access to these spaces.[66]

There are two problematic aspects with Ranade's assumption of all men between 18 and 55 having full access to public spaces. The first is that there were a lot more women than men participating in the studies. Ranade mentions this, but she does not problematize the

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[63] The question of women's restriction in public might have other angles than only the fear of experiencing violence.
[64] Ranade, "The Way She Moves."1523
[65] Ibid. 1522
[66] Kathinka Frøystad, "Anonymous Encounters: Class Categorisation and Social Distancing in Public Places," in *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India*, ed. Geert de Neve and Henrike Donner (CRC Press, 2007), 159–81. 172

implications of it any further.[67] The second is that there are no reflections around different identities of the people who conducted the study, besides age groups. The point of the mapping studies is to compare women and men from the same class and community. This might create an interesting and fruitful base of assessment, but it becomes problematic when it is used as the base for a conclusion on the gendered nature of public spaces in general.

Like in the mapping studies conducted by the trio in Pukar, the respondents in both my interviews and my survey were mainly middle-class. The main difference in the participation is that I have more male respondents than female, and that the respondents to my survey never were aware of the gendered comparative angle to my research. My results when asking about use of public spaces also differed quite a lot from the results Pukar got. In my ten survey questions about the use of public transportation and public spaces, men and women answered very similarly. There were two questions where men claimed to use types of public spaces more than women. The first was that men used public toilets a lot more often than women. The second was that men claimed to be hanging out in city squares and on the streets more often than women. I am not going to spend more time on the gendered space of public bathrooms, though this is an important point when talking about access to public spaces, especially for women.[68]

Spending time in public spaces without any other apparent reason than socialisation or "hanging out" as I termed it, could also be referred to as loitering.[69] In Phadke, Khan and Ranade's book *Why Loiter*? from 2011 they claim that the main difference between men and women's use of public spaces is that men loiter, while women do not. The fear of experiencing violence in public spaces makes women restrict their movement.[70] I am not

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[67] Ranade, "The Way She Moves." 1524
[68] There are a lot more public toilets for men than there are for women. The public toilets for women also tend to close at night, while men's toilets stay open 24 hours a day. For further reading on this and other aspects of gender and public toilets I would recommend visiting Hyderabad Urban Labs website and see their research on public toilets in Hyderabad. Phadke, Ranade and Khan have also done research on women's access to public bathrooms in Mumbai, see for example "Invisible Women" (2013)
[69] Though the expression can be understood as a harmless pastime, it can also have negative connotations. In some areas it is illegal, and signs saying "no loitering" can be found both in India and elsewhere.
[70] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*. vii

contesting their argument of women not loitering in the same way as men in this thesis. Anyone who has spent time in an Indian city, especially at night, might have noticed that there are a lot more men than women hanging out. What I do want to contest, however, is the assumption that fear does not restrict men's movement in public spaces at all.

4.3.1. Restriction

In both my interviews and in my survey, there were men who restricted their own interaction with the city because of safety. Under the header "Your safety in the city" in the survey, the participants were asked to tick off boxes if any of the following statements applied to them.
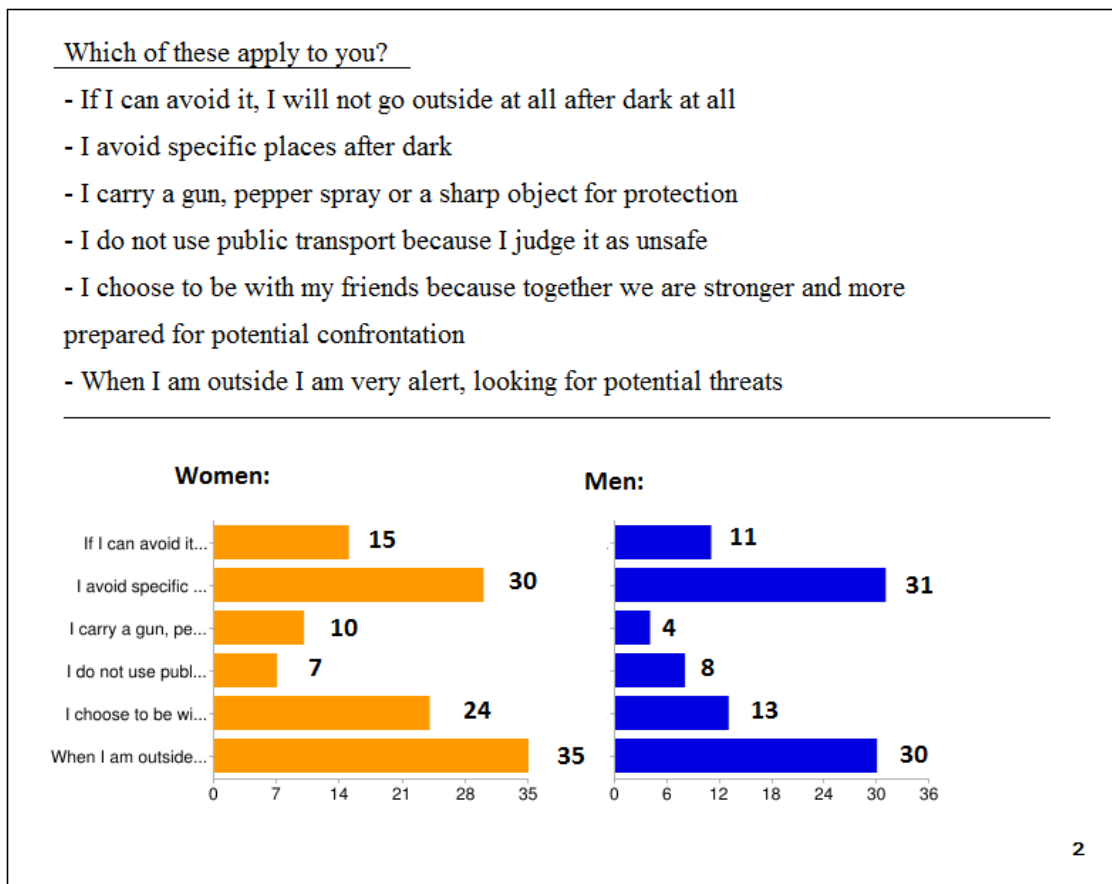

Figure 2: Safety measures used in public spaces (men and women)

The model above shows that both men and women restrict their interaction with public spaces after dark. They do this either by avoiding going out after dark at all, or by

avoiding specific places after dark. Out of 46 women, 30 (65 %) avoided specific spaces after dark. 31 (59 %) out of 52 men did the same. Avoiding specific areas after dark is in other words the most common safety measure for both the women and men who took the survey.

In a study on male fear in public spaces amongst college students in California, researchers Day, Stump and Carreon located three strategies of avoidance. The first is avoiding spaces and situations. The second is avoiding behaviour that might provoke confrontation. The third is avoiding being alone in certain spaces.[71] Their model is helpful when looking at the numbers in the model above. Avoiding spaces is, as shown, relatively common amongst both men and women. Avoiding being alone in public spaces is on the other hand a lot more common amongst women than men. 24 (52 %) out of 46 women claimed that they choose to be with friends because together they are stronger and more prepared for potential confrontation. In contrast only 13 (25 %) of 52 men answered the same. This might have to do with the general social expectations of respectability amongst women. I will not go further into that here. It might also have to do with the sense of personal physical strength. Being physically able to fight off a potential attacker can be understood as a masculinity ideal. Admitting to feeling stronger when together with others might therefore be more difficult for men than for women.

Day, Stump and Carreon's second point on avoiding behaviour that might provoke confrontation, could be read in different ways. One of them could be to avoid being aggressive when meeting potential threatening situations. In the next section I will assess the implications of aggression as a way of dealing with fear of violence. Are middle class Indian men using aggression as a means of handling the fear of violence?

4.3.2. Aggression as a way of dealing with fear

Aggression is mentioned as a way men deal with potential threats in public spaces in Alec Brownlow's research on the fear of crime in a marginalised young African-

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[71] Day, Stump, and Carreon, "Confrontation and Loss of Control." 317

American community in the US. Being prepared to meet potential crime with aggression is a response that also returns in other studies, particularly studies on young men.[72] It is necessary to mention that there might be a class perspective in these two methods of dealing with fear in research from the West. Brownlow and Jo Goodey, whose research is on working class boys in Britain, both found aggression to be a common way of dealing with fear of violence. They did their research in lower income, working class communities. Day, Stump and Carreon on the other hand, conducted their study with college students at the University of California. The latter found avoidance to be more common than aggression.

Though my survey and interviews have been conducted in a very different geographical location, there are some similarities between my research and the research done by Day, Stump and Carreon. First of all the respondents were all highly educated and middle class.[73] Secondly my results were somewhat similar to theirs; aggression was not a common way of dealing with fear amongst men. Out of 52 men, only one answers anything that could be understood as aggression. A young man from Mumbai writes that he learned martial arts as an answer to the question "How do you deal with potential threats in the city?". Besides this calling the police was a common answer, but mostly men answered they would want to get away from the situation.

An interesting, and slightly unexpected, outcome of the survey was that though men did not use aggression as a way of dealing with potential violence, many of the women did. As shown in the model in the previous section, ten (21 %) out of 46 women said they carry a gun, pepper spray or a sharp object for protection when being out in public spaces. This is more than double the number of men who answered the same. Four (7 %) out of 52 men said they would carry an object of protection. This alone might not tell us anything about the level of aggression. It might be an expression of how men and women

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[72] Alec Brownlow, "A Geography of Men's Fear," *Geoforum* 36, no. 5 (September 2005): 581–92, doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.11.005; Goodey, "Boys Don't Cry: Masculinities, Fear of Crime and Fearlessness."

[73] As shown in Figure 1: Out of the 98 who took the survey 50 held a bachelor's degree, 41 a master's degree and 2 a PhD.

trust their physical ability to fight off a potential attacker. When looking at it together with the answers women gave to the question "How do you deal with potential threats in the city?" it becomes more evident that there is a gendered difference. In contrast to the men, where only one answered anything that might be read as aggression, several women were ready to meet a potential attacker with violence. A lawyer in her early 30s from Bangalore said that she would "be alert stern and aggressive" in a threatening situation. A female account manager who was also from Bangalore said she would: "Give it upfront. On their face". Several similar answers were given by the women who took the survey.[74]

In 2014 Piyali Sur conducted a study on how Indian women handle fear in public space in Kolkata. Her respondents were 50 women from different educational and class backgrounds all living in Kolkata. Sur shows that both of the methods (avoidance and aggression) pointed out in studies of men are used by women as well. She found that though avoidance was the most common way to handle potential violence in public space, there were some women who were prepared to meet violence with violence. Particularly the women in her study who participated in more acceptable masculine activities, like going to bars or nightclubs, had a more violent approach to potential threats. Two of the women she interviewed had previously fought off threatening men, while several other women reported carrying safety pins or stones to be armed for confrontation.[75] The gendered difference in my survey results deserves more attention, but because this thesis focuses on men's experiences with the fear of violence in public spaces, it is beyond its scope to discuss the matter further here.

4.4. Getting rid of the other: Creating safer cities

The numbers from the survey suggest that men and women both worry about their own safety when moving out in public spaces. Women reported a higher frequency of being fearful when asked about personal safety in public space. In other words, women fear for

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[74] 37 women wrote an answer to this question. 9 of them gave responses that could be understood as aggressive.
[75] Piyali Sur, "Safety in the Urban Outdoors: Women Negotiating Fear of Crime in the City of Kolkata," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 15, no. 2 (n.d.): 212–26. 223-224

their safety more often than men. The men who took the survey did not claim to be fearless, but were generally not as often fearing for their own safety. The differences were not big, the majority of both genders claimed to fear violent crimes in public spaces around once a month or less. In other words, both middle-class men and middle-class women do fear violence in public spaces. Following this it becomes necessary to ask what and who the middle class citizens are scared of.

Shilpa Phadke claims that in the discourse on violence in public spaces, the lower-class male has become the threat. The stereotype of this lower-class man is that he is unemployed, lower caste or Muslim. Because of this stereotype, safety in public spaces has become increasingly about emptying the streets of these men.[76] This is also reflected in parts of the Indian legal system. Several Indian states have passed what is termed as *goonda* acts.[77] This makes it possible to arrest possible offenders before they have committed the crime. Kerala is one of these states, where arresting someone before they commit a crime is possible:

> …(W)ith regard to the activities of any known goonda or known rowdy, that, with a view to prevent such person from committing any anti-social activity within the state of Kerala in any manner, it is necessary so to do, make an order directing that such person be detained.[78]

The *goonda* laws are generally quite vague, and create a legal system where certain people can be detained without actually having committed a crime. This is meant to be a preventative measure and there are examples of men being held in detention for months without trial.[79] The discourse on safety in public spaces is not an inclusive one, according to Phadke. It tends to divide people in to 'us' and 'them'. The violence against 'the other' is tacitly sanctioned in order to protect 'us'.[80]

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[76] Shilpa Phadke, "Unfriendly Bodies, Hostile Cities: Reflections on Loitering and Gendered Public Space," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 39 (September 18, 2013): 50–59.

[77] 'Goonda' is defined differently in different legal systems. It is associated with men who has a threatening criminal behaviour, or lower class men who are getting paid to commit crimes.

[78] Kerala Police, "THE KERALA ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT," 2007, http://www.keralapolice.org/newsite/pdfs/kaapa/kaapa.pdf.

[79] From the author's meeting with Alternative Law Forum (ALF) the Autumn 2014

[80] Phadke, "Unfriendly Bodies, Hostile Cities: Reflections on Loitering and Gendered Public Space." 50

Sneha Krishnan, who writes about the middle class response to the Delhi rape case, claims that there is a clear stereotyping of rapists amongst the Indian middle class population. It is the working class, non-urban (migrant) man who rapes. In contrast to the urban, middle-class men, these are the men who are understood as the biggest threat to women in urban spaces. The response to this narrative has been to restrict these men's access to the public spaces where the middle class women reside. Krishnan draws a line from this to a greater fear of the lower classes amongst middle class Indians.[81]

The fear of the lower classes and lower castes has also been discussed in previous research on the middle classes in India. Kathinka Frøystad, who did her research amongst the middle class in Kanpur, claims that one of the reasons why public spaces appear threatening to middle-class citizens is the presence of lower class and assembly lower caste strangers. The higher density of lower-class strangers, the more discomfort was experienced by her respondents. It is important to note here that Frøystad does not write about the fear of violence committed by the lower classes. It is the caste distinctions between the good, clean upper casts and the lower castes who are understood as bad and unclean, that she views as the main reason behind the discomfort experienced in public spaces.[82]

The anthropologist Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria has done in his research on middle class 'citizens groups' in Mumbai in the late 2000s. He writes about these groups' incentives to remove the lower classes from middle-class neighbourhoods. He did his fieldwork with an activist group against street hawkers, in Mumbai. Hawkers are people who sell food or merchandise in public spaces. One of the arguments they used when mobilizing against these hawkers was that they facilitated sexual harassment.[83] This is interesting because safety is used as an argument for removing a group of people from public spaces.

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[81] Krishnan, "Responding to Rape: Feminism and Young Middle-Class Women in India." 26

[82] Frøystad, "Anonymous Encounters: Class Categorisation and Social Distancing in Public Places." 172

[83] Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, "Guardians of the Bourgeois City: Citizenship, Public Space, and Middle-Class Activism in Mumbai1," *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (2009): 391–406, doi:10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01299.x.

The aversion towards the lower-classes has also been described by Partha Chatterjee. Chatterjee is one of the important contributors to the academic field of subaltern studies. In his book *The Politics of the Governed: Popular Politics in Most of the World* he asks the question; Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois? He claims that the incentive to get rid of street hawkers and other lower classes, and thus reclaim the city-space for the 'proper' citizens, has become stronger in the last decade or so. Different types of civic groups have emerged in India's big cities, demanding laws and regulation that will ensure proper use of land and public spaces. Though these groups might have different themes, the dominant cry is to get rid of the poorer parts of the population from the urban landscape. According to Chatterjee the politics of the last decades has become both more accompanying towards the middle class demands, and also more reluctant to help poorer citizens to subsist within the cities. This is a consequence of an enhanced pressure by the global economy to attract foreign investors to Indian cities, he claims.[84]

Simone Tulumello writes about fear and urban planning. He uses the Portuguese city Chelas as an example of a city where urban planning has contributed to increased fear and segregation. He claims that the feeling of fear is shaped around the presence of difference and otherness in public spaces. Fear is a powerful tool; it is able to manipulate social and political discourse. Categories like us/them and safe/dangerous can be strengthened by fear of violence. This can again create a political justification of exclusion in public spaces. Because of this it is necessary to put urban fear in a central position in the agenda of urban planning. [85]

Focusing on the power of the fear is also important when it comes to an Indian context. The discourse on violence in public spaces is increasingly becoming that women are vulnerable towards sexual violence from a specific category of men. The consequence is

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[84] Partha Chatterjee, "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 131–48.

[85] Simone Tulumello, "Fear and Urban Planning in Ordinary Cities: From Theory to Practice," *Planning Practice & Research*, April 7, 2015, 1–20, doi:10.1080/02697459.2015.1025677.

that removing or changing the presence of lower class men from public spaces can be justified as a political measure to create safety for women. The nine men I interviewed were all connected to projects and organisations working for safer cities. They were in four different projects/ organisations. Two of these had what was termed as 'gender sensitization' as a goal. This term refers to the idea that information about gender issues will have the power to modify sexist behaviour. It is not as much the gender sensitization that needs to be mentioned here, but *who* this sensitization was aimed at. The men that the projects wanted to sensitise were predominantly the lower class, loitering man. This says something about who is seen as threats in public spaces.

After one of the interviews I talked for a while with the facilitator of one of the organisations the men were connected to. She told me about one particular project they had conducted that she saw as a great success. The activist from the organisation had painted slogans on the walls next to a street they saw as dangerous for women. This street had been filled with chai stalls and other types of street hawkers. After painting their slogans on the walls and speaking to the street hawkers over a period of time, they had managed to 'sensitise' the men who were previously occupying this street. A few weeks in to the project, the street was emptied for hawkers, and hence safe for women. She did not mention where the chai stalls and other street hawkers went after this.

The high focus on women as more at risk than men in public spaces is connected to their vulnerability towards sexual violence. It is the middle class woman's perceived vulnerability to violence from lower class men that has become the main subject in the public discourse on safety. This does not only affect the middle class woman, it also affects her male friends and male family members. In the next chapter I will discuss how the pressure of being a protector is affecting middle class men, and how it might also impact their personal experience of fear of violence.

5. Men's fear for the safety of others

The fear for the safety of others has in previous research been referred to as "altruistic" or "vicarious" fear. It describes the fear that others might be harmed. In this thesis I have chosen to use the term "fear for the safety of others". I will argue that this fear can be connected to the personal fear of experiencing violence. This is exemplified through narratives of men experiencing more fear when they are together with a female family member or friends in public spaces than when they are alone. In different research conducted in America in the 1990s and early 2000 by researcher like Nichole E Rader, Mark Warr et al., the gendered perspective in the fear of others' experiencing violence is being explored. This research mainly came to the same conclusions; though women report a higher level of fear for their own safety in public space, men have a tendency to fear more for others' safety.[86] In this chapter I ask a similar question in an Indian setting. Is the gendered difference as clear amongst my middle class Indian respondents?

This chapter consists of three parts. In the first part I look at men's personal experiences of the expectation of being a protector. Though both the women and men who participated in the survey claimed to take actions to protect others, the actions women and men took were different. This part also has a section where I discuss the implications of family for the fear for others. In the second part I look at the relationship between the expectation of being a protector and personal fear of violence. This is often connected to the thought of having to go between a woman and a potential attacker. Men view their own presence as a security measure for women, at the same time they do not understand women's presence as a security measure for themselves. In the third part I discuss different masculinity ideals and their implications for middle class men's fear of violence.

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[86] Mark Warr and Christopher G. Ellison, "Rethinking Social Reactions to Crime: Personal and Altruistic Fear in Family Households," *American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 3 (November 1, 2000): 551–78, doi:10.1086/318964; Nicole E. Rader, "Until Death Do Us Part? Husband Perceptions and Responses to Fear of Crime," *Deviant Behavior* 31, no. 1 (December 18, 2009): 33–59, doi:10.1080/01639620902854704.

5.1 Protecting others

When it came to fearing that others might experience violent crimes, there were some gendered differences. The men who took my survey were generally more fearful on behalf of others than women. In the five questions asked about fearing for family and friends men reported a higher level of fear and a higher frequency of being fearful. The majority of both men and women claimed that they took actions to protect friends or family members in the city. As shown in Figure 3, fewer women answered yes to the question than men. 26 (56.5 %) of 46 women who took the survey answered yes, while 41 (78.8%) of 52 men answered the same.
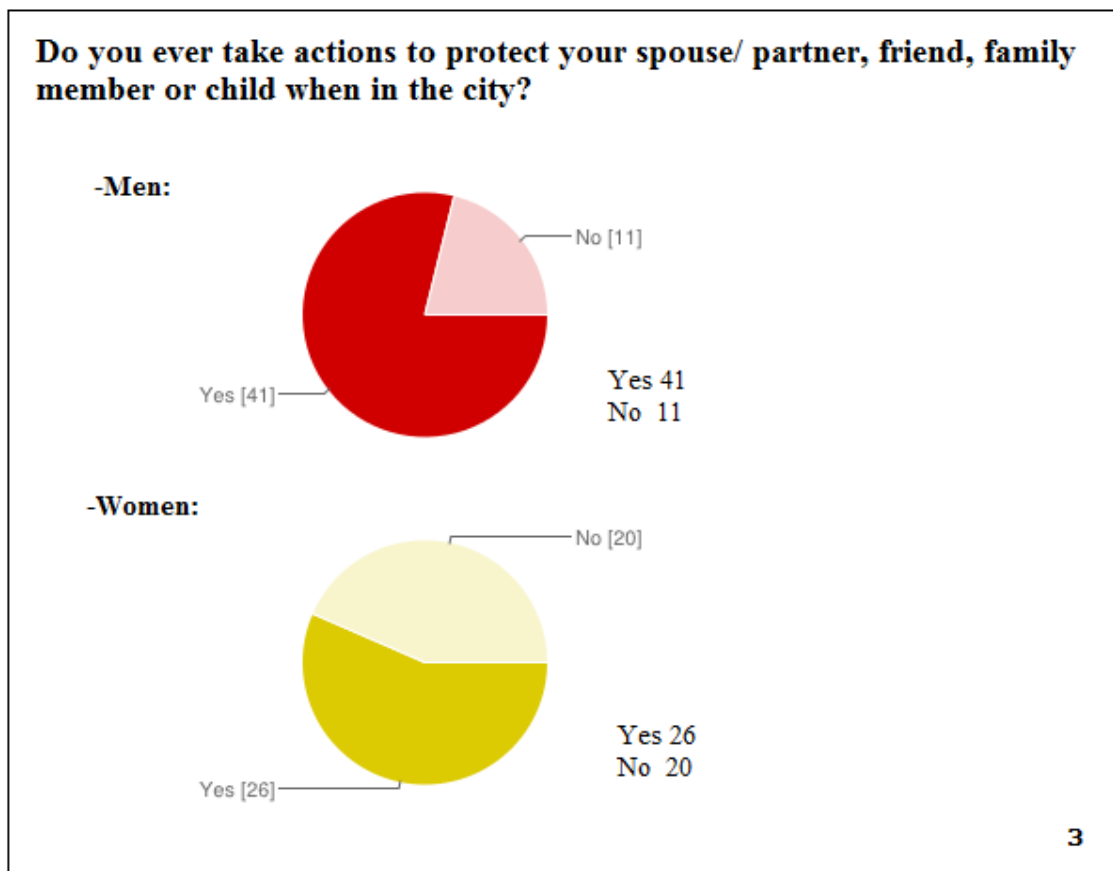
Figure 3: Actions to protect others, yes and no (men and women)

As shown in Figure 3 both genders claimed to take actions to protect others. At the same time there was a noticeable difference in what sort of actions men and women took. If

answering yes to the question in Figure 3, the participants had the option to elaborate on what sorts of actions they took to protect others. The most common action to protect others for women was to give advice, and keep in touch with family and friends by calling or sending messages when they were in public spaces. Several men also wrote that staying in touch was a safety measure they used, but they had a more active stand, where they arranged transportation and accompanied their friends and family.

It is an important question whether or not a person is more or less safe when they keep in touch while being in public spaces. If a violent situation would arise, it might not make a difference that someone knows where you are. At the same time there has been a great focus on contact with family and friends as a safety measure for women. There are for example a number of safety apps where your family or friends can keep track of your whereabouts at any time.[87] In other words, though staying in touch might or might not actually keep you safe, there is an assumption that it will in the public discourse on safety. This assumption was also expressed in the survey.

There is a clear class perspective to the focus on staying in touch. First of all it requires a cell phone, and to be able to use the safety apps it has to be a smart phone. Elisabeth Stanco writes about the fear of violence in a British context in the 1990s. She points out a commercial side to the fear of violence. Both gun and alarm companies in Britain use the fear of violence when selling their products. Many of these companies specifically target women, because they are more afraid of violence.[88] This is also increasingly the case in an Indian context. There are companies making money on fear. In addition to the various safety apps mentioned, other products to provide safety are reaching the middle class Indians. An example is the pink safety phone promoted by the famous actress Kareena Kapoor Khan. The commercial uses the catch phrase "Now every girl will feel safe", to promote a phone with a panic button for 8000 rupees.

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[87] Times of India, "15 Personal Safety Apps for Women," *The Times of India*, December 9, 2014, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tech/15-personal-safety-apps-for-women/itslideshowviewall/45431568.cms.

[88] Elizabeth A. Stanko, "Warnings to Women Police Advice and Women's Safety in Britain," *Violence Against Women* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 5–24, doi:10.1177/1077801296002001002.

Picture 1: Safety phone

The picture above was taken by me when I was in Bangalore in 2014. It is a picture of an advertisement in a free paper published by the coffee shop chain 'Cafe Coffee Day'. In this advertisement women's fear of violence is used as a method of selling a product. What is important to note here, is that the fears that some companies are capitalising are the fears of women with disposable income. The commercial side of the fear of the middle classes deserves more attention, but because of the limited space in this thesis, I will not assess it any further.

In both my interviews and in my survey the men showed a great tendency to both fear for women's safety and a great wish to protect women. This might indicate that women are seen as more vulnerable than men in public space. At the same time it is necessary to mention that the men who took the survey also feared more for the older men in their family, than the women who took the survey. Out of the 52 men who answered the question "How often do you fear that your father, father-in-law or grandfather might

experience violence in public space" 10 answered every day or several times a week while 32 answered they did fear for their safety, but less than once a week. In other words, age might also play a role in who is understood as more vulnerable to violence. The fear of older men experiencing violence reflects the thoughts that men have on their own vulnerability and age, as discussed in the previous chapter.

5.1.1. Men's presence as a safety measure

The men who participated in the survey showed a tendency to take a more active role in their safety precautions for others. 13 of the men wrote that they would personally escort family members to keep them safe when outside the home. There were far fewer of the women who escorted friends and family members. Two of the women said they would personally drive a friend of family member to keep them safe. Another two women said they would personally escort someone by foot.

What could be read from this is that men understand their own presence as a safety measure to a greater extent than women do. Researchers Nicole E. Rader and Stacy H. Haynes write about the fear of crime in an American setting. They argue that the fear of crime is a learning experience. In their article "Gendered Fear of Crime Socialization", they claim that women learn that they are physically vulnerable through the repeated focus on crime against women in public spaces. This message is reinforced through media, law enforcement officials and advice from parents. The same type of rhetoric teach men both that fear demonstrates weakness, and also that they should be physically able to fight of potential attackers.[89]

Though Rader and Haynes write and do their research in America, I believe their argument on the focus on women's vulnerability can be transferred to an Indian setting. As I have mentioned previously, Phadke, Khan and Ranade claim that the sexual violence towards women in public spaces gets the most attention in the presentation of violence in the media. This kind of violence is sensationalised in the media to a much greater extent

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[89] Rader and Haynes, "Gendered Fear of Crime Socialization: An Extension of Akers's Social Learning Theory." 4

than is the case with violence towards men or other genders.[90] In other words there is a great focus on violence towards women in India, and women are constantly presented as more vulnerable. The assumption that men are physically stronger than women seems to be the main reasoning behind men understanding their own presence as something that provides safety.

This assumption was also present in my interviews with men who worked in the movement for safer streets. Umair is a young man working for an organization in Delhi with a project that specifically targets young men's attitudes towards women in public spaces. He saw his presence as a man to be a safety measure, at the same time he questioned that he even as a young boy had been expected to act as a protector:

> If you are with a girl it's your responsibility to protect her. From I was very little I was sent out with my sister, even though she is 6 years older than me. When I was 11 years old, my sister was learning how to drive. I was sent with her and her driving instructor, since he was a man and taking her to some deserted area. It does not make much sense, since she was both bigger and stronger than me at that time. This is what has been fed into your head since you were a child, that you are the protector.

There are two points in the experiences of Umair that needs to be addressed. First of all, he sees it as his responsibility to protect women. This responsibility might be connected not only to the assumption that men are stronger than women, as I have discussed previously, but also to family obligations. I will return to this point in the next section of this chapter. The second point is that Umair, even though he was younger and weaker, had to accompany his sister in public spaces. This might tell us something about the type of protection men are expected to provide. It might be physical protection, but it might also be about protecting women's reputations. In her article on women working the night shifts in call centres, Reena Patel suggests that it is not only woman's physical safety families are worried about, it is more about how the presence of a female family member in public spaces alone at night, might affect the family's reputation.[91]

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[90] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*. 50

[91] Reena Patel, "Working the Night Shift: Gender and the Global Economy," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 5, no. 1 (2006): 9–27. 19

5.1.2. Family

One out of the nine men I interviewed in person expressed a direct doubt that his presence would provide more safety. This was Manpreet, the young Punjabi I introduced previously in the section on sexual violence. As mentioned he identifies as gay and gender queer, which had a strong effect on his personal experience of safety in public space:

> Sometimes I am expected to go with my female friends because then they will be safer. But I don't think I am better at fighting than these girls. There is still so much expectations around being a protector, it creates a lot of pressure….There are also expectations of me being a protector towards my sister. I am very protective towards her, but not because I am a man and she is a woman. It is because I am older, and so it is natural for me to take care of her.

Manpreet claims that his protection of his sister has to do with age and not gender. Though this is his personal motivation of being a protector, he also says that because he is the older brother there is a pressure towards being in this role. Though Manpreet and Umair have different thoughts on whether or not their presence does provide safety, they both talk about this pressure towards being protectors to their sisters. The expectation that men should protect their family and especially their female family members is important in understanding men's fear for others.

In a study conducted by Nicole Rader, she looks at how a changed family situation might also change men's fear of crime. In her study of heterosexual American married couples she found that the women reported a higher fear of experiencing crime, while the men had a higher degree of fear for their spouses experiencing violence. Her male respondents claimed that the best way to relate to this fear was to provide safety for their spouse. According to Rader, assuming the role of the protector is part of the hegemonic masculinity ideal. Therefore it might be more accepted for a man to express fear for others' safety than to express fear for his own safety.[92]

Because Rader's research differs from mine both in geographical and cultural location, it is not directly relevant. At the same time it creates a good basis for asking the same

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[92] Rader, "Until Death Do Us Part?" 49

questions in an Indian setting. The men in my survey who had partners also claimed to take safety measures more often than the single men. 75% of the single men answered yes to the question of whether they take actions to protect others, while 82% of the men who were either married or in a relationship answered yes to the same question. There is in other words a slight difference also in my quantitative research:
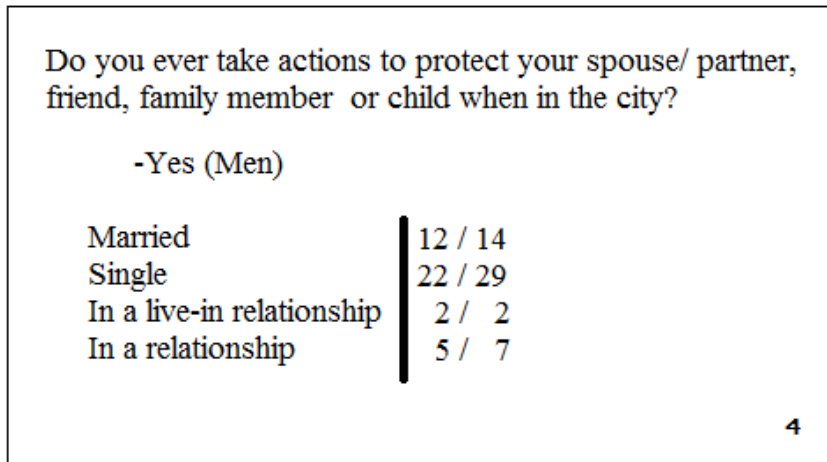

Figure 4: Actions to protect others, yes (men)

Figure 4 shows the men who answered yes to the question of whether they take actions to protect friends or family members in the city, divided in to relationship categories. The first number is the amount of men answering yes to the question, and the second is the total number of men in this category. For example, 12 out of 14 married men answered yes.

It is difficult to say if there is a direct link between feeling responsible for others and relationship status from my findings alone, this is an area that needs additional research in an Indian context.[93] At the same time the differences in the survey answers might suggest that having a spouse could affect men's fear for others. Other changes in family situations might also play a role. Becoming a father is an example of changes that might have an effect both on men's personal fear and men's fear for others. The previously

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[93] One of the limitations to my survey was that I did not ask about sexual orientation. A future study looking at Indian men's fear for their partners in light of their sexuality might give a new angle to the subject of men's fear.

mentioned researcher Jo Goodey, who does his research in a working class community in England, writes about how becoming a father might have an effect on fear of violence. He does not separate between the fear for others and the personal fear, but claims that the social construction of the man as a protector might make fathers more conscious of both his child and his own vulnerability.[94]

Indian sociologist Radhika Chopra has done research on the presentation of the loving father in the gendered discourse of childcare. She claims that in studies on child care in North-India, the nurturing father is not recognised. This is a consequence of an understanding of male and female worlds as separate, where the female world is the domestic world. This is problematic because it does not distinguish between different tasks and roles that women and men have in the family. She claims that there are some practices influencing a fathers relationship with his child, in some societies protection might be one of these.[95]

Jodi Lane, who was introduced in the "Language" part of chapter two in this thesis, has written an overview of previous research on the gendered perspectives of the fear of crime. She suggests that the social view of the man as the protector and the women as caretaker might affect the gendered differences in fear for others.[96] In a family situation then, it might be relevant to distinguish roles as caretaker and protector as different feminine and masculine roles. In my interview with Umair he claimed that there is a connection between the expectations of him, as a man, to protect and to earn money:

> The masculine responsibility is providing. You are providing safety and you are providing money. It is also connected to the concept of blame. If you do not live up to being this provider you are blamed. Your masculinity is questioned. This is what we see with suicides with the farmers. It is a very common thing, and it is directly connected to not being able to provide for your family. Whatever happens, it becomes your fault. There is so much pressure earning for everyone. And you have to understand, in India we have joint families, so it's not only earning for yourself and your wife. There is a grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, maybe some sisters and your wife and children.

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[94] Goodey, "Boys Don't Cry: Masculinities, Fear of Crime and Fearlessness." 403
[95] Radhika Chopra, "Retrieving the Father: Gender Studies, 'father Love' and the Discourse of Mothering," in *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 24 (Elsevier, 2001), 445–55, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277539501001686. 448-449
[96] Lane, "Theoretical Explanations for Gender Differences in Fear of Crime." 61

Umair mentions the suicides of farmers in India, which is a much discussed issue that I cannot go further into here. The main theme is that farmers who are deeply in debt, and cannot provide for their families, commit suicide.[97] The connection Umair makes between the pressure on him to provide both safety and money for his family is interesting. Middle class men's traditional role as bread-winners might also be part of the reason why public spaces are understood as masculine. It has been the masculine role to be the financial provider for his family. As these roles are changing, might also men's role as safety providers change? The connection between being a safety provider and being a breadwinner could be an area of further assessment, but because of the scope of this thesis, I will leave it for now.

5.2. Fear of violence and the role as the protector

The fear for women's safety might be related to their personal feeling of safety. As I have argued previously, the discourse on violence in public space in India is dominated by the notion of women being particularly vulnerable to violence in public spaces. Interaction with women, as expected protectors, might therefore also affect men's feeling of personal safety.

The connection between men's personal fear and the fear for others has received very little focus in research on fear of crime. Rader is one of the few scholars who have made this connection. In her study on married couples in America, also mentioned above, she suggests that both men's fear for others and personal fear changes as men get married. Marriage creates a feeling of responsibility of keeping both themselves and their wives safe. This is connected to the traditional household division of labour, where one of the responsibilities of men is to be providing safety. Getting married makes men more aware of the possible crimes they are supposed to protect the family from. It is not only the fear for their spouse that becomes greater, but the responsibility of keeping themselves safe as

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[97] There was a documentary made on this in 2011called Bitter Seeds. This documentary mainly blames genetically modified seeds for the agricultural crisis and the debt of farmers.

well. The husband status might therefore heighten the feeling of personal vulnerability.[98] Though Rader's research is specifically on American married couples, I find the connection between personal fear of violence and the role as a protector relevant in my study. Several of my informants made comments about how being with women made them feel more vulnerable personally.

As I have mentioned, both the men who took the survey and the men I interviewed, generally saw their own presence as a safety measure for a woman. At the same time they did not necessarily see the presence of a woman as providing more safety for themselves. In fact the opposite seemed to be the case for many of my respondents; being with a woman in public spaces might make them feel less safe. In both the survey and in my interviews there were men who said they were more afraid when they were in public space with a woman than with a man. The pressure of providing safety to women can therefore also be connected to personal fear. Umair expressed this fear in the interview:

> I feel more unsafe when I am with a woman. Having a girl with you restricts you. There are places I would never go if I was with a female friend. The same places I would have no problems taking a male friend. In this way safety for women is safety for men. If you go out in Delhi in daylight you will see one world, it is quite safe and people are everywhere. But at night, the situation changes, there are only men and boys around. They will all turn around and be interested if you are with a girl. The same people might not show any interest at daytime. This makes me feel discomfort when I am with a girl. Not only when I am with a friend or girlfriend, but also my sister or mother.

In other words, the men who might be a threat to him if he is with a woman are not understood as a threat if he were to be alone or with another man. One of the respondents to the survey, a software engineer from Hyderabad mentioned a similar worry when answering the question -What is the biggest threat to your safety in the city?

> No threats, I feel safe. But sometimes when I am with a girl, it can get bit tricky if she's wearing a short dress and we go to pub or crowded place as large groups of men can stare or comment although they would not be as bold as I am accompanying her, especially at nights.

This man describes how he generally feels safe, but mentions how being with a woman can change the situation. At the same time he makes it clear that his presence makes the

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[98] Rader, "Until Death Do Us Part?"53

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situation safer for the woman. The same man described a situation where he was with a woman, when asked to describe a situation where he felt threatened:

> I was walking with a girl and this group of 10 men started following us. But they quickly disappeared when I stared back at them in an intimidating manner. They would step back usually if we appear bold and confident. Also they think a single girl is up for grabs but since she is with me they would think she's my girlfriend/wife/sister and hence leave us alone. If she was walking alone they could become more rowdy.

Neither Umair nor the software engineer from Hyderabad questions the assumption that their presence would make the women they accompany safer. At the same time it is clear that the presence of a woman is perceived as creating a less safe situation for the men who are with them. This seems to first and foremost be connected to the possibility of having to physically protect the women. At the same time there might be more direct threats towards the men if they are accompanying a woman.

5.2.1. Vulnerable men protecting women

The fear that men report when being with a woman in public space might be connected to having to physically protect her, and therefore being at risk. In this scenario men are risking being victimised because they are expected to go between a woman and another man. In addition to this, men are also at risk of being personally targeted for being with a woman in public spaces. Especially if the woman is not their wife or relative this might be a problem. A single man from Bangalore in his early 20s who participated in the survey writes that he:

> Feel unsafe in most situations in public when hanging out with a woman - due to instances of people being targeted by radical groups.

In India there have been several instances of conservative groups, mainly from Hindu nationalist organisations, who have targeted young couples in public spaces. This is often referred to as moral policing. There have been some serious violent episodes where these groups target what they claim is immoral behaviour. One of them is the Mangalore pub attack in 2009, where a group of activists from a right wing Hindu group called Sri Ram

Sena beat up men and women in a nightclub in Mangalore.[99] These groups are not always physically violent in their approach. In the time before I went to New Delhi to conduct the interviews for this thesis in April 2015, one of the headlines in the national media was a Hindu conservative group promising to forcefully marry off couples who were out together on Valentine's Day, the 14th of February.[100]

Interestingly there seems to be a clash between different masculine initiatives to protect women. On one side there are men who spend leisure time with women in public spaces and sometimes also drink and party with women. As shown in this chapter, these men feel a responsibility to protect women from potential violence. On the other side there are men who actively try to keep them away from drinking and partying, such as the conservative Hindu groups. These conservative groups claim to protect women's honour by keeping them away from public spaces, which are understood by them as masculine domains.[101]

Another instance where personal safety and the role as a protector becomes conflicted, is when men are more vulnerable than women in public spaces. The feeling of being vulnerable and the expectations of men to be protectors might be contradicting. This is something Manpreet mentioned when talking about how being queer made him feel vulnerable in public spaces. At the same time, others were expecting him to be protective towards his female friends. The age of Umair when he had to accompany his older sister also created this type of contradiction. His young age made him physically vulnerable, but he was still expected to act as a protector.[102]

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[99] Times of India, "Mangalore Pub Attack: 17 Held, Ram Sena Unapologetic," January 26, 2009, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2009-01-26/news/28391806_1_sri-ram-sena-mangalore-pub-attack-activists. 2

[100] Ishita Mishra and Ishita Bhatia, "Couples out on V-Day Will Be Married off: Hindu MahasManpreeta," news, *The Times of India*, (February 3, 2015), http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/Couples-out-on-V-Day-will-be-married-off-Hindu-MahasManpreeta/articleshow/46112390.cms.

[101] Assa Doron and Alex Broom, "Introduction. Gender and Masculinities: History, Ideologies and Daily Life," in *Gender and Masculinities : Histories, Texts and Practices in India and Sri Lanka*, ed. Assa Doron and Alex Broom (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:308364. 2

[102] Umair told the story about being sent out whit his older sister when we were speaking about protection. For him there was a clear connection between being male and being a protector towards his sister. At the same time his presence as an 11-year old needs to be understood in the context of women's honour.

Duncan McDuie-Ra has done his research on tribal migrant communities in Delhi. He is also mentioned in the section "2.2.2. Men and fear" in this thesis. The male tribal migrants from North-East India are experiencing more harassment and violence than the tribal women. At the same time there is a strong feeling of responsibility to protect the tribal women from the dangers of the city. This becomes problematic when women want to go out, while the men are staying in. Accompanying women with the goal of protecting them might lead to being victimised themselves. The tribal men are experiencing a conflict between the responsibility to protect the women of their community and the reality that many of these women do not want their protection.[103]

An important question here is what is there to protect? Protecting women does not only have to do with who is physically stronger. As I have pointed out in this part of the thesis, even men who are more vulnerable to violence are affected by the social responsibility to protect women.

Phadke, Khan and Ranade claim that middle class women restrict their own access outside the domestic sphere because of the fear of violence. This fear does not only have to do with the risk of experiencing violence, but also the risk of being dishonored. The conception of "proper" women not moving around alone in public, adds another risk beyond being subjected to violence. Because she should not have been there, she also has some of the blame for the assault. Men are also at risk when being present in public spaces, but in contrast to women they are not risking their social status.[104]

5.3. Not being a creep

In this last part I want to raise the perspective and discuss the views on masculinities in the discourse on violence in public spaces. As I have shown in the previous sections in

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Not being alone with her male driving instructor could be understood as ensuring her sexual virtue and reputation as much as for the sake of safety.
[103] McDuie-Ra, "Being a Tribal Man from the North-East." 138-141
[104] Phadke, Khan, and Ranade, *Why Loiter?*.59

this chapter there are expectations that men should be protectors. In this section I ask how this affects the men I have talked to, and more precisely how it affect their view of themselves, and which kind of masculinities they want to disassociate from.

The division between 'us' and 'them' is something that several of my respondents emphasised during my interviews. Abhinav, who as mentioned is high caste, repeatedly referred to the other 'bad' men, and how he felt a need to prove that he was not one of these men. He uses the term 'creeps' to describe the type of men he thinks are up to no good:

> I constantly have to prove to women that I am not a creep. Many men are like that, they are creeps. I am generalizing, but stereotypes are often based in reality I think. It's not a general thing, not all men are creeps, but many are. So this is a valid concern that women have.

As mentioned previously Abhinav claimed that he was visibly protected by his high class and caste status. In the middle class discourse there are, as I have discussed, clear stereotypes of which men are dangerous. It is the lower class, lower caste, loitering man who is understood as the threat to women. This makes it necessary to ask why Abhinav has such a strong wish to disassociate from 'bad' men. His narrative does not seem to reflect the general idea of dangerous men being lower class and lower caste, as argued by the scholars writing on the fear of the middle class. If the creep were the lower-class man, why would Abhinav have to actively prove to others that he is not in this category?

I see two reasons why Abhinav might still feel a need to prove that he is not a 'creep'. First of all, like many highly educated, rich young men, Abhinav is affected by a global stereotyping of Indian men. In the global stereotype the division between class or caste affiliation might not be relevant. It is not certain that this would affect his interaction with Indians, but in this situation he was in a conversation with a European woman. Disassociating with the 'bad' Indian men needs to be understood within the context of the conversation. Abhinav was well aware of how Indian men have been portrayed in the West, and this made him worried:

> There is a very colonial way in which men in India are being portrayed. For example I read about an 11-year-old girl being gang-raped in UK or US recently. It was a horrible incident. When these things happen in the West, it seems to be about mental illness. But when it has happened in India, it is about culture.

Abhinav is aware of how the combination of his gender and his nationality might subject him to discrimination abroad. This concern is not only rooted in how Indian men are being presented in the media abroad, but also in concrete examples of discrimination. An example of this kind of discrimination occurred around a month before I talked to Abhinav. At this time a young Indian man was refused an internship at a German university because of the alleged attitudes towards rape amongst all Indian men.[105]

The second reason why Abhinav might feel a need to prove that he was not a creep, has to do with the general segregation between boys and girls in India. Women's safety is in some cases used as an argument to restrict both general freedom of Indian girls, and boys' possibility of spending time with girls who are not in their family.[106] When the argument of safety is used to justify segregation, it is not only one class or caste of men who are understood as villains, it is all men.

This is something that frustrated the four young students I spoke to in my last interview. They told me that they were part of a close group of friends with both girls and boys, but they could not spend time with their female friends in the same way as with their male friends. Neeraj, one of the students, told me that visiting the girls at the university dorms would be impossible:

> They have a curfew at 6 pm, after that they have to be in the dorms. There is a list of people who can come and visit them, but that is very strict. We are not even allowed to be around the gate to the girls' dorms, being on that list is impossible. It is only for close family and close female friends.

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[105] Jamie Campbell, "German Professor Rejects Indian Student due to the Country's 'Rape Problem,'" *The Independent*, March 9, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/german-professor-rejects-indian-student-due-to-the-countrys-rape-problem-10095607.html.

[106] In Indian colleges and schools, restriction of female students has been a popular response to the alleged increase in sexual violence. These restrictions are often on what the young women should wear and what times they are allowed outside.

The curfew had previously been 8 pm, the young men told me, but after a case of sexual violence on campus, it was changed to 6 pm. To visit the girls they would have to get on a list, which was described as impossible. The fact that they were not even allowed to walk outside the gates of the girls' dorms, was to the young men evidence that they were seen as a threat. Like Abhinav, the students had a need to emphasize that they were different from the other 'bad' men. Sahil, one of the more vocal in the group of students said that being seen as a threat limited his interactions with new girls:

> I am literally terrified talking to new girls in case someone will think I have bad intentions. I mean, I know a lot of bad things are happening to women, but some of us are good, nah? Still this is not how they look at us. If I drop one of the girls [from his group of friends] home in my car late at night and someone sees us, I might be in trouble.

Sahil's experience of being villainised is interesting. When he is dropping one of his female friends home at night, he is in many ways acting according to the masculine ideal of being a safety provider. At the same time this is the action that might get him in trouble for being a threat to the girl. Balancing the different ideals in a world that is both modern and conservative at the same time becomes a complex task.

In this chapter I have focused on men's fear for the safety of others. I have attempted to show some of the different, and sometimes contradicting, ideals of masculinity in the discourse on safety in public spaces. The middle class men who responded to my survey and the men I interviewed generally saw their own presence as providing safety to their female friends or family members. At the same time they did not always understand a woman's presence as making them safer. Factors like sexuality or age might make men more vulnerable to violence than the women they are to protect. At the same time they still experience a pressure to provide protection to women. In the case of the young students I interviewed, they also experienced the risk of being perceived as 'bad' men, when they acted upon the masculine ideal of being a protector.

When the discourse on violence in public spaces is centred on women as victims, it is also women who are understood as needing protection. This is something that has become very visual in the movement for safer cities. This thesis is an attempt at opening

up the categories of who is allowed to be fearful and vulnerable in public spaces. As the focus on masculinity is growing, so is our understanding of how gender binaries affect men. Strict gender roles have for a long time been understood as something that is mainly problematic for women. I believe it is important to open up the categories and look at how other aspects that cut across gender, also plays a role in who fears violence. It is not by closing categories, but by opening them, that we can truly understand how the fear of violence is affecting peoples' lives.

6. Conclusion

Though the research on fear of crime in India has increased in the last decade, there is yet to be a focus on men's fear of crime. To understand the gendered relationship of fear in public space it is necessary to not only look at the female perspective, but also to investigate male narratives of fear of violence. In the research on fear of violence in India an important argument has been that women's access to the cities becomes increasingly restricted by the fear of violence. In this thesis I have tried to show a more complex image of the fear of violence, and argued that it is not only affecting women's access to public spaces.

In the two analytical chapters of this thesis I have looked at middle class men's fear both for their own safety in public spaces, and for others' safety in public spaces. In the first chapter I have argued that to understand fear of violence in public spaces we need to broaden the perspectives, both when it comes to identity categories within and beyond gender, and when it comes to types of violent crimes happening in public spaces. The discourse on violence in public spaces has been largely centred on sexual violence against women. This is not necessarily the type of violence the heterosexual middle class men fear. In my survey there was a great heterogeneity in the types of violence men claimed to feel threatened by in public spaces. To understand the categories of violence we also need to open up the category of middle class men. Different identities like sexuality, ethnicity and caste are bases for different experiences of risk.

While writing this thesis the documentary "India's daughter" was released. The film is directed by Leslee Udwin and is about the Delhi rape case. Like much of the discourse on violence in public spaces in India, the film presents a reality where women are victims. Men on the other hand, can only be either protectors or violators in this discourse. The male victim in the bus rape was barely mentioned during the documentary. He is yet to tell his story.

To understand the implications of the fear of violence, and how it makes people relate to space in different ways, we cannot only restrict ourselves to women's narratives. So far there has been no space for male victims in the discourses on violence in public spaces in India, whether public, political or academic. However, this does not mean that men are not aware of the violence to which they may be vulnerable. Understanding men's fear of violence is important, not only because it broadens our understanding of the implications of fear, but also because it opens up strict gender categories of who is allowed to be fearful. In this thesis I have tried to highlight a missing area of focus. If my thesis can help put the subject of men's fear on the agenda, then perhaps my Indian colleague's young male cousin might voice his fear of violence, without the stigma that follows male vulnerability.

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Appendix

This is the questions from the survey as it appeared for anyone participating. I also had the logo of the University of Oslo at the top of the page. This is removed in the version bellow. I have also made some of the text-boxes smaller.

Safety and danger in the city

This survey is part of research done on risk in the urban areas in India. It will make the basis of a master's thesis written at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo. The thesis looks at which risks people are aware of when using urban space and what consequences they have for different people. Your answers will remain anonymous at all times. You will get the option to leave your contact information in the end. This will not be linked to your answers, and never shared with a potential third party.

Thank you for being part of this survey.

About you
We would be very grateful to get some information about you.

What city do you live in? *

What is your profession?

What is your highest finished education *

What is your age? *

What is your relationship status? *

☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ In a relationship
☐ In a live-in relationship
☐ Divorced

What is your gender? *

-How do you use the city?

-How often do you use these modes of transport in the city?

	Every day or several times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Less than once a year	Never
Bus	○	○	○	○	○	○
Taxi	○	○	○	○	○	○
Train	○	○	○	○	○	○
Shared taxi	○	○	○	○	○	○
Metro	○	○	○	○	○	○
Auto/ Rickshaw	○	○	○	○	○	○

- How often do you use these public places?

	Every day or several times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Less that once a year, but it has happened	Never
Outdoor marked places	○	○	○	○	○	○
Malls	○	○	○	○	○	○
Public toilets	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chai shops or other street types dhaabas	○	○	○	○	○	○
Parks	○	○	○	○	○	○
Metro stations and railway stations	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hanging out in city squares or on the street	○	○	○	○	○	○

- Your safety

Please answer the questions based on how you personally judge situations that you see as unsafe for yourself.

- What is the biggest threat to your safety in the city? *

- Which spaces in your city do you consider unsafe, and why? *

- Which of these apply to you?

☐ If I can avoid it, I will not go outside at all after dark at all

☐ I avoid specific places after dark

☐ I carry a gun, pepperspray or a sharp object for protection

☐ I do not use public transport because I judge it as unsafe

☐ I choose to be with my friends because together we are stronger and more prepared for potential confrontation

☐ When I am outside I am very alert, looking for potential threats

- How do you deal with potential threats in the city?

- Can you describe a situation where you felt threatened ? *

- Violent crime in the city

-What is your first thought when you hear the words violent crime? *

[   ]

- What situation makes you worry about violent crimes and why?

[   ]

- How often do you *

	Once a month or less	Several times a month	Several times a week	Every day	Not applicable
Fear that I might experience violent crimes in the city	○	○	○	○	○
Fear that my spouse/ partner might experience violent crimes in the city	○	○	○	○	○
Fear that my friends might experience violent crimes in the city	○	○	○	○	○
Fear that my child might experience violent crimes in the city	○	○	○	○	○
Fear that my mother, mother in law or grandmother might experience violent crimes	○	○	○	○	○
Fear that my father, father-in-law or grandfather might experience violent crimes	○	○	○	○	○

- Do you ever take actions to protect your spouse/ partner, friend, family member or child when in the city? *

○ Yes

○ No

- If yes, which actions do you take?

[   ]