Fear of violence and gendered power relations
Responses to threat in public space in Sweden

Linda Sandberg
Kulturgeografiska Institutionen
Umeå Universitet
901 87 Umeå
Sverige

Department of Social and Economic Geography
Umeå University
901 87 Umeå
Sweden

Tel: + 46 90 – 786 54 69
Fax: + 46 90 – 786 63 59
http://www.geo.umu.se
E-mail: Linda.Sandberg@geography.umu.se

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Introduction

We’ve grown up with [constant reminders that] you must watch out for the Haga Man, keep yourself safe and think about where you go and what you do (Woman, 24 years old, white, working-class background, interviewed in 2006).

Women’s fear of violence is often centered on fear of assault and sexualized violence by unknown and dangerous strangers, reflecting wide perceptions of general threats of violence against girls and women in public spaces. Despite the fact that most assaults take place in homes, it is the perception of the unknown perpetrator that is prevailing and scary. A number of studies (e.g. May 2001; Smith, 1987; Brå 2008; SCB 2010; Tiby 1991) have shown that women are more afraid than men are, and that this is not a question of a few women stating a fear of being subjected to violence but rather a large number who more or less restrict their mobility as a consequence of fear. It has become commonly accepted that women are fearful (Koskela, 1999) and express themselves as potential victims.

Accordingly, as my friends, other girls of my generation (born in the 1970s) and I grew up in or around Umeå, Sweden, we were told to watch out generally for ‘dirty old men’. However, between 1998 and 2006 a more particular situation emerged in Umeå when a single repeat offender (the ‘Haga Man’) caused fear and kept inhabitants in what was termed in the media a kind of ‘hostage situation’ by repeatedly and violently assaulting women until he was caught in the spring of 2006. The woman quoted above, one of the respondents I interviewed in this study, is describing how young women living in Umeå were influenced by the actions of this repeat offender. She illustrates how girls of her age grew up with constant, much more specific calls than the warnings my generation received: to “Beware of the Haga Man”. This was a situation in which one individual affected a larger group of people at a specific time and place, and strongly influenced the general pattern of gendered fear of violence.
The assaults by the Haga Man were present during my entire study period. I started my university studies in autumn 1997, before the first attacks, and therefore experienced how my friends and I myself were affected by the changed crime discourses. From time to time the assaults were the major topic of conversation, and we were encouraged to think about our use of the city; by each other and by our families, but also through warnings in media and through information meetings organized by the police. Many, many times I breathlessly rushed home trying to tell myself that I’m not, or at least that I shouldn’t be, afraid. I don’t want to be afraid and I think today I’ve convinced myself that I don’t need to be afraid. In those years, I saw several times how my surroundings affected my behaviour and my perception of how safe it was – or rather how unsafe it was – to use the city. It’s especially one night, in spring 2000, that I particularly remember. I was on my way home, alone, from a nightclub in central Umeå. I had only a few hundred meters to walk from the bus stop where I’d left my friends. I wasn’t scared at all! But then I noticed that a police car was driving, very slowly, almost next to me. The police car stayed close by until I was inside the gate and the door closed behind me. Then it quickly drove away. I think the police officers in the car wanted to make sure I got home safely. It felt like I needed to be protected, and that really made me scared. When my eight years younger sister then moved to Umeå and started studying at the university, she restructured these patterns for me. When we’d been out together, or if I’d visited her an evening, she wanted me to call her as soon as I got home so she would know I’d arrived home safely. I tried to dismiss the whole thing and tried to explain that I didn’t feel afraid. But she said, firmly, “That’s what my friends and I do, we always check on each other!” She and her friends had moved to Umeå after the Haga Man had been arrested but she described how they, despite this, were aware of the attacks and how this had influenced them as a sort of collective memory of the attacks. Another such occasion is when I was out running one evening. It wasn’t very late and it was surprisingly easy to run, so I took a longer run than I usually did and hence came home a bit later than usual. When I got home my husband was getting himself and our son dressed, ready to go out and look for me. He was quite angry at me, since he had had time to start worrying. Since then I bring my phone if I’m out running, just in case. It’s those ordinary things, in which people close to me, out of kindness, indicate that I should have a sort of safety awareness in mind, and that I should think about my own safety. At the same time, this consideration indicates that I should adapt my use of space. I also find it hard to know how I should approach other people’s, particularly my female friends’, fears. I wouldn’t in any way want to depreciate their feelings, while I don’t really want to get into a pattern of asking them to call me when they get home and thus be an active part of the normalization of female safety thinking. But at the same time, I really want them to know of my concern for them.
Both my respondents’ and my own experiences are examples of similar phenomena: concerns shared by girls, women and their parents, relatives and friends, about their safety and vulnerability to sexual violence or abuse in public spaces. This thesis explores some of the ways not only women but also men in Umeå responded to this specific situation, and how fear of crime and changing public crime discourses influenced gendered power relations in a city labeled as one of the most gender-equal cities in one of the most gender-equal countries in the world.

Aim and research questions

In this thesis I examine different aspects of fear and safety in public space, such as the views of those who are fearful; of those who are feared; perceptions of both women’s and men’s bodies; their emotions and experiences in relation to fear of violence in public spaces; and the significance of space and place for our understanding of fear. The overall aim is to study meanings of fear of violence in public space, in the city of Umeå, Sweden, during the 1998-2006 period. To do so, I will address the following research questions:

- In what ways did men and women respond to threats from the repeat offender?
- How were men and women positioned in public narratives about fear of violence in public space and how did they position themselves in their individual narratives?
- What constructions of femininity and masculinity were produced in the narratives?
- How did increased threats in public space influence constructions of male and female bodies in space?

The thesis is based on analyses of empirical data collected through in-depth interviews with women and men living in Umeå. The research was designed to gain an understanding of people’s individual experiences and perceptions, and to examine the dynamic and shifting meanings of fear. Stories about fear are examined in the thesis, and I have been interested in both what the respondents tell me and how they do it, to be able to analyze their narratives from an understanding of fear of violence in public space in relation to gendered power relations. Like Holloway and Jefferson (2004), I am interested in stories about specific events that are narrowly framed to focus on my research questions (Holloway and Jefferson 2001). The focus is on people’s stories about fear and safety during and after the time of the assaults. Throughout the research process I have reflected on methodological
issues associated with studying meanings of fear of crime in public space. Various kinds of narrative analyses have also been used to address different aspects of the material.

Emotions of fear or insecurity have received increasing attention in social science research, and the fear of violence as a phenomenon has become a research topic in its own right (i.e., among many: Valentine 1989, Koskela 1999, 2001; Listerborn 2002). Quantitative fear of crime surveys dominated the research field in the 1980s and 1990s, and a number of studies have clearly documented differences related to gender, ethnicity and age in people’s fear of crime in public space. More recent research has examined how fear is related to power relations in space and how meanings of fear may differ depending on circumstances. However, fewer studies have focused on the consequences of a single repeat offender on fear of crime in public space, how the kind of ‘hostage situation’ mentioned above develops, or its effects on gendered power relations in space. In Sweden, several cases of single repeat offenders in public space have raised public concern (examples in addition to the Haga Man are the Laser Man, the Örebro Man, the Malmö Shooter), but the gendered and racialized consequences of such crimes have not been extensively researched. My access to my respondents provided an opportunity to study how people responded to such threats and how fear became part of everyday life for many people in Umeå during the time of the Haga Man’s assaults. This thesis explores how people in Umeå came to relate to the specific situation with the very specific threat posed by the single repeat offender. In the following text I show how fear of the single repeat offender came to shape both individual and public narratives and how fear of crime in public space impacted on people’s lives in various ways and in different situations.

The thesis examines consequences of threats from a single repeat offender, but it is not particularly concerned with the Haga Man, his victims or any speculation on why this man perpetrated violent assaults on women in Umeå. Rather, it addresses fear of violence and gendered power relations in public space during the period of threats from the Haga Man. Thus, the focus is not on the offender as a person, but rather on the situation of threats that inhabitants had to deal with as a new, unwelcome element in the context of life in the city.

**Outline**

This thesis is based on four papers that through different approaches study various aspects of meanings of fear of violence in public space, in the city of
Umeå, Sweden. Together, these four papers examine how women and men responded and reacted to the threats from the repeat offender. This first chapter has already introduced the research questions of the thesis. The next chapter presents a short description of the official image of the city of Umeå as well as a chronology of the events during the 1998-2006 period, including how media and respondents perceived the course of events. The following chapter presents the main concepts and theoretical perspectives that have been important for the thesis, and I discuss the core concepts of space, place and gender as well as the interconnections between them. In the methodological chapter I describe the research material and my different analytical strategies as well as reflect on my own role in the research process. After that I summarize the four papers and major findings. In the concluding discussion I gather my findings. Finally, there is a Swedish summary of the thesis. The articles are then presented in the appendix.
Setting the scene

Since the empirical basis for this study was undertaken in the wake of the assaults by the ‘Haga Man’, I will present a short description of the public image conveyed by the city. In this manner this chapter sets out the spatial context of Umeå with a special focus on the public image of the Haga Man, and is structured in chronological order, describing how the threat posed by the Haga Man was discussed over a longer period. It includes considerations of the collective fear that followed the attacks and the collective relief that followed the perpetrator’s arrest. This chapter is to be regarded as part of my analysis and thus part of the narrative I created with my respondents. The chapter is based on my own contextual understanding, the respondents’ stories, the media’s description and previous research conducted on the production of the Haga Man as a media event.

The city of Umeå

Umeå - open and tolerant; In Umeå there is a clear tolerance and a curiosity about the new (Umeå Kommun, webpage).

In this part I will discuss the image the city of Umeå conveys through its website and public documents; i.e., the image of Umeå that is communicated by official presentations. On its website the city presents itself as “Norrland’s nodal point, the growing city, the Knowledge city, the Outdoor city, the Cultural city.” In this statement, Umeå is presented as the largest city in northern Sweden and as a growing and youthful town (the average age of its 114,000 residents is 38 years). This low average age is largely due to the presence of Umeå University, a regionally important university with more than 30,000 students, which was founded in 1965 and has shaped the city.
In many ways. Since the establishment of the university, Umeå has been one of Sweden’s fastest growing cities (Umeå Kommun, webpage).

Figure 2: Centre of Umeå, a Friday afternoon in May 2011

In official presentations Umeå is promoted as a gender-equal city, in a gender-equal country\(^1\). The image of the gender-equal city is manifested in several ways, *inter alia*: theme days about violence against women have been organized; efforts have been made to improve the safety of public spaces; gender issues have been explicitly considered in the physical urban planning; and fathers’ use of parental leave in Västerbotten (the county of which Umeå is the capital) is the highest in Sweden\(^2\). In addition, gender equality was also put forward as an important dimension in Umeå’s application to be the European Capital of Culture. The aspects of inclusion and citizen participation have also been arguments raised by both municipality representatives (Umeå 2014, webpage) and local media to explain why in 2009 Umeå, along with Riga in Latvia, was appointed to be the European Capital of Culture in 2014.

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1 Sweden and its Nordic neighbours are world leaders in gender equality according to the 2010 Global Gender Gap Report, which is published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and provides annual rankings of gender equality for all countries of the world.

2 Parental leave is arguably more generous in Sweden than anywhere else. Parents are entitled to a total of 480 days paid leave per child. Both mothers and fathers are entitled to (and encouraged to share) it, with costs shared by the employer and the state. Every year the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation, TCO) presents a ‘daddy index’ — an aggregate measure of fathers’ share of all selected parent days and parental leave. If a father and mother equally share the parental leave the index value is 100. In 2010 in Umeå the value of the index was 50.2, which can be compared to the national average of 40.9 (Orpana 2010).
Since the 1970s Umeå has had an image of a “leftist town”. Kellgren et al. (2010) describe Umeå during this time as a small town, and the university attracted young students from communities that had previously not seen their children as academics, mainly in northern Sweden but also the rest of the country; students with a vision to change the world. Student demonstrations and a strong left movement contributed to the creation of the image of red Umeå which in a sense came to live on through the strong alternative movement among young people that evolved during the 1990s with a focus on both environmental and feminist issues. Of course the left movement during the 1960s and 1970s also had an impact on other cities in Sweden, as well as in the rest of the Western world, but it seems that the label has stuck longer to Umeå compared to other medium-sized Swedish cities.

Thus, the description of Umeå as the tolerant city should be seen in relation to how the city is often linked with “radical ideas” connected to the feminist movement, a political music scene and veganism. In contemporary Umeå there is also a wide range of new and alternative cultural, political and social movements. The feminist movement is regarded as strong (SOU 2004), there is a vast range of social commitment to equity issues such as gay rights, gender equality and animal rights, manifested (for instance) in: an annual feminist festival; skateboard organizations for girls; the presence of Club Xena, where all women and transgender people over 18 are welcome; and She’s Got the Beat (SGTB), a non-profit organization devoted to improving opportunities for female musicians. Umeå has also been nominated Sweden’s most gay-friendly city for two consecutive years.

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3 The gay Internet sites Sylvester and Sylvia have named Umeå Sweden’s most gay-friendly city.
The Capital of Culture event is also related to the city’s profile regarding cultural issues during recent years. In the marketing of today’s Umeå cultural activities are highlighted, and in the bid to become the Capital of Culture the municipality emphasized that Umeå had:

Two thousand bands and a symphonic orchestra. Five independent theatre companies and an opera house (...), 80 choirs, international festivals, Sami roots and cultural heritage, a theatre association giving national theatre premiers, a library internationally renowned. (Umeå 2014, Webpage)

Being the Capital of Culture has been highlighted and discussed by municipal leaders as something that will strengthen and develop Umeå’s cultural profile. Eriksson (2010) argues that in order for Umeå to become the 2014 European Cultural Capital, the city was represented as northern, ‘alternative’, unusual and exotic, at the same time as it was promoted as a young, growing, cultural city with successful businesses.

Figure 4: The symbol of Umeå as the European Cultural Capital is located in the city centre. Photo taken in May 2011.

The image of Umeå that is promoted is hence an image of a dynamic city, with a rich organizational and cultural life, while in other respects it has small-town characteristics. According to a comparison of security and safety at the municipal level in Sweden conducted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL 2010), Umeå has a relatively low crime rate and is actively working to prevent drug and alcohol abuse. This is especially significant, as small cities and towns generally receive higher ratings than larger municipalities in these kinds of measures. Hence, from a
municipal perspective Umeå presents itself as a safe but dynamic, growing city that strives to maintain small-town security. As part of these efforts, the perceived safety of public space is prioritized and discussed. However, the image of a safe Umeå was challenged for many years during the Haga Man’s assaults, which came to influence policy and the socio-spatial construction of the city.

Umeå is a safe city to live in, with a low crime rate. We’ve known this for a long time. There was, however, a disturbance for a short time in connection to the Haga Man and his brutal assaults, during which the media conveyed an unsafe image.

(Lennart Holmlund, Local Government Commissioner in Umeå, Homepage)

Indeed, for many years politicians and representatives of the municipality had to confront, and try to reduce, the strong associations between Umeå and the Haga Man.

**Umeå and the Haga Man**

Something has happened to the atmosphere in Umeå. These days, many people live in fear of a rapist. When darkness settles over city at three o’clock in the afternoon [in mid-winter] you would rather not go anywhere alone, if you’re a woman. For years, the dreaded Haga Man raped and abused women in Umeå. *(DN 18 January, 2006, news article)*

This quote from 2006 from the daily national newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* *(DN)* gives a picture of a besieged city, a city in fear, providing a sense of the connection between Umeå and the Haga Man, and illustrating the image presented in both local and national newspapers of the city when it was overshadowed by the threat he posed. At the time, Umeå’s self-image was that of a small-town, low-crime, ‘calm’ space and the assaults perturbed the discourse of security and fear in Umeå, challenged its self-image as a safe city, and also affected people’s experiences and use of space. Livholts (2007) has analyzed media reports about the Haga Man, and has described how a changing pattern of norms and perceptions of masculinity and femininity, normality and deviation, Swedishness and class, developed in the media coverage in connection to the Haga Man and his assaults. She also emphasizes how media were actively involved in shaping the discourses on security and assaults in Umeå through images and texts regarding the
perpetrator in the national and local news, which contributed to a normalization of women’s fear of violence in public space.

The serial rapist assaulted nine women in Umeå between the years 1998 and 2006 (see Table 1). All attacks (which were combined with physical violence) took place on weekend nights in quite central parts of the city, but seemed to take place in a haphazard manner. The victims of the Haga Man were all walking home alone, from the city’s nightlife. After a while the police began to see patterns in the attacks: all were committed outdoors in public spaces by a man who was not known to the attacked women. The first assaults were all in the same central part of the city, and the offender was named the Haga Man after the area, Haga, where the first attacks occurred.

![Figure 5: The way to Haga. A sign on which someone has scribbled (in Swedish) ‘the Man’, so that it says ‘the Haga Man’. The photo was taken in May 2011, more than five years after his arrest. Although time has passed, the link to the residential area of Haga is still strong.](image)

The area of Haga is generally considered a quiet, safe residential area. As the offender was connected to this area the threat was connected to a specific space, challenging the image of Haga as a calm, safe environment.

Yesterday, I went through the neighborhoods where he began his career as an assailant, the beautiful residential area of Haga with its low wooden apartment blocks, painted yellow, pink, blue and green. It’s a quiet area; one of Umeå’s most attractive, as it’s so close to the centre. (Aftonbladet 18 January 2006, news article)
The first eight assaults took place in 1999-2001, and the police identified associations between the description of the perpetrator and his behavior. After 2001 there was a five-year period in which no assaults were linked to the Haga Man, a period of ‘silence’. However, at the end of 2005 the Haga Man raped a woman once again, and in March 2006 he was arrested. He was charged with four counts of assault, four of rape and two of attempted murder. He confessed to six of them.

Table 1. Assaults, rapes and attempted murders the Haga Man has been convicted of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 May 1999</td>
<td>A 26-year-old woman is assaulted and raped in Haga park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Nov 1999</td>
<td>Late at night (2:30 a.m.) a 50-year-old woman is attacked from behind in the district of Haga, a strap is placed around her neck and she is dragged away a while before being beaten and raped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Nov 1999</td>
<td>About 20 minutes later, a few hundred yards away, a 23-year-old woman is attacked and forced to the ground. She manages to escape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 March 2000</td>
<td>A 22-year-old woman is assaulted and raped in the university area. The woman almost dies due to her injuries and hypothermia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Dec 2000</td>
<td>A 15-year-old girl is subjected to an attempted rape but manages to escape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dec 2005</td>
<td>A 51-year-old woman is brutally assaulted, raped and badly injured. After the assault the offender tries to drown her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the assaults the Haga Man been convicted of, he has also been connected to an assault on a 14-year-old girl in August 1998, a further assault on an 18-year-old woman on November 6 1999, and an assault on a 22-year-old woman on 19 March 2000, shortly before the 22-year-old woman was brutally attacked on the university campus.

The following sections will focus on how the phenomenon of the Haga Man was presented in media and how these public narratives addressed issues of fear, security and normality.

*The image of the Haga Man and the provocative ‘normality’*

The responses of fear depend on particular narratives of what and who is fearsome that are already in place. (Ahmed 2004; 69)

The notion of the ‘dangerous other’ can be seen in the geographical and social distancing of threat that many people employ in order to feel safer, the
belief that violence happens to people unlike us, in places we would not use (Pain, 1997). It is also reinforced by the instance of many fear discourses on danger in the form of unpredictable strangers (Pain 2000). Since women cannot identify attackers from their external appearance, they feel threatened by all strange men (Valentine 1989). Fear tends to focus on the stranger on the street, encouraged by crime prevention literature and the local media (Pain, 2000). Livholts (2007) argues that in presenting and image of the perpetrator, local and national media were actively involved in shaping the discourses on security and assaults in Umeå, as the image of the perpetrator was shaped and reported in the media. At an early stage, based on information from the police, the Haga Man was described in the media as a man aged 20-30 with a “normal Swedish appearance”, a short haircut and no distinctive accent.

Light-skinned man, 20-30 years old, approximately 170-175 cm tall, normal frame, short dark hair, receding hairline. He was wearing a dark jacket, possibly a hoodie, and dark trousers. The man spoke Swedish but with no noticeable accent. (VK4, 17 January, 2006, news article)

During the investigation the police recovered shoe prints smaller than size 40. In the process that aimed to distinguish the Haga Man from other men he was described as unusually short, and his small feet were emphasized as a particular trait (Livholts 2007: 69). This description of the male perpetrator, with the emphasis on his body and appearance, brought descriptions of men’s bodies and their positioning in Umeå’s public spaces into the centre of attention. On numerous occasions, descriptions of the perpetrator were given by the police and published in both local and national media. The description of the Haga Man as a man of normal Swedish appearance and as light-skinned provided an ethnic dimension, separating the perpetrator from other men. This was done in a way that differed from the ‘normal’ separation of ‘normal man/offender’, as the offender did not fit the stereotype of the ‘dangerous other’. In the description of the Haga Man, his “normal Swedish appearance” was in some ways especially threatening. The media repeatedly reported on the ‘normality’ of the offender, except for some bodily details; at the same time the police profile described a loner – a man with few friends and no steady relationship, who was probably perceived as odd, probably a man working in a male-dominated workplace, working alone or unemployed. However, after his arrest even this image was challenged, since the Haga Man proved to be a married father of two children.

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4 Västerbottens-Kuriren (VK) is a Swedish newspaper, published in Umeå, in Västerbotten. The newspaper covers regional news from Västerbotten, especially Umeå, in combination with national and international news. It is the largest daily newspaper in northern Sweden.
Many men figured in the police investigation before the arrest of the actual Haga Man. A total of 14,000 names were gathered during the investigation, 2,500 men were questioned and 777 DNA samples were taken. The hunt for the Haga Man was one of the most intensive investigations ever conducted by the Umeå police. It thus follows that many men in Umeå were compared to and accused of being the Haga Man. The male respondents talked about experiences of people commenting that their appearance shared many similarities with the description of the Haga Man (as discussed in Paper II).

The hunt is over. The arrested man: a father with small children, living with a partner, homeowner and without a previous criminal record (VK 30 March 2006, front page)

The front page of local newspaper VK the day after the arrest is one example among many of the media discussion that followed, as the Haga Man proved to have had a ‘normal’ family life with no evidence of previous crimes or offensive behavior. With the arrest the media began reporting about the Haga Man as a person and a clear beginning can be discerned of what Livholts (2007) describes as “the normality as mystery”, with numerous articles in both local and national press discussing. The ‘normality’ of the Haga Man came to provoke and challenge notions about men who rape.

The village where the Haga Man lives, in a large red wooden house with white trim, is an idyllic spot about 20 kilometers outside Umeå. Beside the house are a paddock and a farmhouse. The couple have two children together; both under ten years old. He built the house almost entirely himself. He is very handy, says a family friend. Friends who spoke to Aftonbladet talk about a family man who always went straight home after work. He has never distinguished himself as a party guy. (Aftonbladet 30 March 2006, news article)

In the media, the Haga Man was described as a mystery that confused both the police and experts. Repeatedly, almost like a mantra, questions arose about how this ‘normal’ man could perform these violent attacks. As this
normality was so difficult to understand and so challenging, there were several attempts in the newspapers to ‘explain’ the Haga Man or look for signs of deviance, to reduce his normality rather than raise questions about how dominant discourses ascribe specific attributes to rapists and/or how commonly produced images of rapists could be challenged.

How could this nice guy, helpful neighbor and good-natured friend be a serial rapist? He went from a company party to a brutal attempted murder of the 51-year-old woman in Teg. How could he do that? His colleagues’ only explanation is that he was drunk. (VK, 31 March 2006 news article)

Hence, the newspapers emphasized that he must have been drunk during all assaults or he would have shown signs of violent behavior. These were assertions designed to shift the focus from his seeming ‘normality’. Paper II addresses this failure to ask questions about the potential associations between the sexuality of the normal Swedish heterosexual family man and that of a serial rapist, placing the focus instead on his cruelty (Lindgren and Lundström 2010), with some attempts to describe him as deviant rather than focusing on his similarities to other Swedish men (Livholst 2007). The fact that ‘some normal Swedish men commit rape’ was ignored, instead of challenging the image of men who rape, just as the issues raised by his whiteness were not articulated. Rather, the focus came to be on how this man differed from other ‘normal’ Swedish men.

This normality was therefore understood as provocative, and discussed in the media, but was also something the respondents returned to or reflected upon. This ‘provocative normality’ aroused emotional reactions among the respondents; the fact that he was “like anyone else” created almost more concern than if he had been a ‘dangerous other’. They also sought answers to the mystery of why and how he could do this. This was also something that puzzled the respondents.

I don’t think anyone can understand it. There’s no explanation. It would almost have been easier to handle if he had been a heavy criminal, involved in a gang, had problems, was an alcoholic or a drug addict. It would’ve been much easier to accept. But here’s someone who was none of those things. It’s difficult to understand that bit. (Man, 35 years, non-white, middle class background, interviewed in 2006)

Several respondents described how the Haga Man seemed to be ‘close’ to them, both following the last attack and (perhaps especially) after his arrest,
since he proved to be a family man with a solid job and functioning social life. Thus, it was easy to identify with the normality of the perpetrator's life. Further, several of the respondents found that they knew the man, or at least about him. In this context the respondents came to know the man, for example through acquaintances or staff at neighboring workplaces. This also challenged the local discourse about the perception of the perpetrator. The respondents described it as scary and difficult to understand, and as challenging their image of men who rape. The difficulties they had in understanding that the Haga Man was the ‘man next door’ shows the strength of the image of men who rape.

He was a normal guy with a normal family life and a normal job. But there must surely be something very abnormal. It’s a bit scary. (Man, 26 years old, white, working class background, interviewed in 2006)

It was almost worse that he could be a family man who had children and a job, but still do things like that on the weekends. This made him even more frightening. (Woman, 24 years old, white, working-class background, interviewed in 2006)

During the interviews after the Haga Man’s arrest, the respondents repeatedly stressed that it was difficult to understand. They would have preferred the perpetrator to be a man they could not relate to. This normality provoked the male respondents as it challenged their own positions, body image and use of space (as discussed in Papers II and III).

A collective fear, a collective concern and a collective relief

The media presented stories of the attacks and not only created an image of the Haga Man but also of the situation in Umeå during this time. In media articles you could read personal portraits of frightened women restricted by their fears, of men who were angered by the perpetrator and said the attacks must be stopped, of men who started various projects to keep women safe, and of men identified as the Haga Man who featured in police investigations. Through this women were also encouraged to be afraid and to be careful in their use of space, but not too afraid. A policeman exemplified this in an interview in one of the national newspapers:

This is a hyped fear that’s not realistic. In Umeå a great deal has been written about the Haga Man. Wild stories about all sorts of assaults we’ve never heard of have been circulating. The rumors
end up creating even more uncertainty. (*Aftonbladet* 8 April 2001, news article)

With this, I believe there is a certain paradox in the approach to women’s fear of the Haga Man. The fear was certainly taken seriously and was considered ‘well founded’, but at the same time it was stressed that it must not go to extremes. Thus a complex and problematic approach was created, not least creating difficulties for women who ought to be both afraid and not too afraid (as discussed in *Paper IV*).

Livholts (2007:112) discusses how linguistic practices create a collective victim position for women and how the media’s way of talking about the Haga Man and the events surrounding him was a way to talk about the events that create a dominant image of all women as victims. In addition, Lindgren and Lundström (2010:310) problematize the perception of just who came to be positioned as potential victims as they discuss the Haga Man’s victims as ‘ideal victims’: those who do not know the offender, can be said to be weak in relation to the offender, are conducting legitimate everyday affairs, and are blameless for what happens – and the offender is unambiguously bad. The fact that there was no focus on the victims as individuals contributed to the idea that any woman in Umeå was a potential victim, and related to the image of ideal victimhood as a democratization of the process of suffering (Lindgren and Lundström 2010:315). In the media reports during this time, all women in Umeå were positioned as potential victims.

Of course, the female respondents interviewed in this study related to the image of all women as potential victims in their talk about their own fear and their own experiences. Women became aware of their vulnerability and hence restricted their use of public space.

They wrote about this a lot in the newspapers, so it was all very big. They wrote something like all women in Umeå should stay inside. Although I didn’t really stay inside, I chose the times when I went out. I didn’t go out after eight o’clock at night. I went out walking in the afternoons instead, when there were a lot of people outside. (Woman, 29 years old, non-white, working-class background, interviewed in 2006)

Women suddenly stopped walking home alone, not only because of their own fear but also as part of a changed public crime discourse, because it was becoming unacceptable for women to do this. Women in Umeå adapted their use of space due to their fear but also due to the norms that clearly
marked that as a woman you should be careful and use your better judgment, and hence restrict your use of public space. Before the attacks Umeå was naturally not a completely isolated exception where women were not afraid, but what one can see from the interviews is that there was no direct discussion of women’s security and, above all, that it was not directly discussed as a major problem. Fears of violence were not constantly present when women were outdoors after dark.

Women’s fear of the Haga Man became an issue for all people in Umeå, and during this period several newspaper reports describe how ‘the whole city’ started to become engaged in promoting women’s safety.

One of the strongest distinguishing features of people living in Umeå is their commitment. Self-defense courses are arranged, young men escort their female friends, and students have full control over how they get from the pub, and there are discussions of how the male role is perceived. Umeå’s way of uniting to face the external threat is unique. (VK 27 January 2006, news article)

This is manifested in a variety of forms:

After two brutal rapes and four female assaults, the men of Umeå have had enough. Yesterday a group of friends got together at the Town Hall Square and offered free rides or escorts to all women who didn’t dare go out alone at night. (Expressen 25 March 2000, news article)

On Friday evening, Umeå’s residents marched against violence against women. A torchlight procession went from Teg through some of the places where the Haga Man and other perpetrators have violated women in Umeå. At the same time, the city’s church bells rang. (DN 21 January 2006, news article)

Underlying this general concern were assumptions that women need to be looked after, taken care of and protected, reinforcing the position of female vulnerability. At the time of the attacks this ‘general concern’ became more systematic and, to some extent, more organized. Concerns regarding the Haga Man raised many questions about women’s safety and use of space. Women were warned to avoid putting themselves in situations where they could be attacked (alone, on their way home, at night, in the dark), and there were numerous reports of how people (men) assisted women in avoiding situations where they could be attacked.
The female respondents expressed how their perceptions were affected by the Haga Man’s attacks, reports on him in the media and especially all the rumors that circulated in Umeå following the attacks. An awareness emerged that ‘it can happen’ in Umeå. The female respondents described constantly having in mind a fear of the offender, even women who did not actually live in Umeå during the attacks. They described how as a result, for instance, they began to check on their friends and make sure no one went home by themselves.

Like every person I met was talking about the Haga Man. And all the adults said, ‘You must never go home by yourself.’ No, no we never went home by ourselves. We always had company. And my mum and dad said, ‘We’ll come and meet you’, or they would pick us up, just so I didn’t need to go home by myself: ‘Never be afraid to call and ask for a ride.’ This may very well have left a mark on me; that everybody looked after each other.

(Female, 25 years old, white, working-class background, interviewed in 2005)

As the quote above illustrates, in the expression everybody looked after each other, this became a collective concern that also came to impact women’s fear as well as the expectations on women’s fear and the perception of their vulnerability. And women’s vulnerable femininity was enhanced by the concern and protective behavior among men. Certainly, as part of a dominant form of masculinity, there might already have been a protective attitude among men, even in Umeå, towards women they know and care about, e.g. coming and picking up daughters or girlfriends to avoid their walking home alone. However, this occurred more individually and not as systematically and comprehensively as it came to be. In Umeå, protecting women became an expression of a collective concern for their safety. When the Haga Man was then arrested, this collective concern turned to collective relief:

It means everything to Umeå that the Haga Man has been arrested. Not just the obvious facts that women can feel safe again and the victims can obtain redress through the Haga Man’s being behind bars. No, this has a broader significance as well. The Haga Man has gnawed into Umeå’s soul. Bit by bit, year by year. He has stolen the image of Umeå as an open, tolerant and safe city. He has made Umeå synonymous with fear, rape and a criminal who can slip through the police nets.

(VK 30 March 2006, news article)
After the arrest the description in the media was dominated by a collective relief in Umeå, descriptions and statements that it is finally over, everything else is forgotten, now things are back to normal:

With all the media attention you get the feeling that he’s the only man who ever did anything wrong. The arrest would mean that all men are cleared of the horrible suspicions, and free from liability. That Umeå is again a safe and secure city for all women to move freely in the night. A collective relief. (ETC April 15, 2006, news article)

The above quotation from the left-wing Swedish magazine ETC describes how after the arrest the Haga Man was presented in some respects as the root of all evil that occurred in Umeå; he overshadowed everything else. His arrest can be considered a turning point in the discourse about fear and safety in this particular space, highlighting how strongly the Haga Man and his assaults came to influence and symbolize this period for the respondents. His arrest became a ‘shared’ collective story, possibly because of the collective fear described earlier, which united people in Umeå. Below are some descriptions of the respondents’ talk about this relief.

When the Haga Man was arrested as I remember; it felt like this: YES! Everyone in this corridor was like woo-hoo, it was almost like Sweden won the World Cup. It was a little like that feeling. It was amazing! Then there was a lot of talk, for weeks afterward. At every coffee break everybody talked about the Haga Man. (Man, 32 years old, non-white, middle-class background, interviewed in 2006)

When we had landed at Arlanda Airport, or it may have been when we were on the bus on the way to the airport, a Swede said, ‘Yes, the Haga Man’s been arrested!’ My boyfriend and I simply said, ‘What?!’ We just yelled on the bus, ‘How have they managed to do that?’ (Female, 29 years old, non-white, working-class background interviewed in 2006)

I was at work. I got an SMS from my boss. He was sitting in the break room reading the newspaper. I remember it said, ‘They’ve arrested the idiot.’ (Male, 28 years old, white, working class, interviewed in 2006)
My own recollection is very strong regarding this particular piece of news. As I was working with my ‘fear/Haga Man’ thesis, this information was important to me not only because of my personal relief that he had been arrested but also as it came to influence my analysis and future work. I received the news of the arrest when I stepped out of my office, on my way to the break room; one of my colleagues immediately came and said, “Have you heard, they’ve arrested the Haga Man, he was apparently an ordinary guy”. I had a quick coffee and was updated by the short-hand information available at the time, and then went back to my office. I tried to go to VK’s website, but it had crashed due to overload. Everyone wanted to read the news and learn details of the arrest. Throughout the day I repeatedly tried to visit the website, to no avail. After work I had some errands to run downtown. It was as if there was a special feeling all over town. People talked to each other. Cashiers smiled and we commented on the news together. I got the impression that no one was in any great hurry. We all shared this; this relief. We smiled at each other and nodded in agreement.

The fact that my respondents (as well as I myself) so clearly remembered what they were doing when they heard the Haga Man had been arrested shows that it was a turning point in their positions and narratives about fear. It can also be described as a turning point in the public discussion about women’s fear of violence in public spaces and access to the city. The arrest was followed by discussion about reclaiming space, manifested in both the media’s reports and the respondents’ attitudes and talk about fear and safety.

The day after the arrest there were naturally several articles in which the collective relief was described and an image of the whole city celebrating was created. It was finally over. A women interviewed in the newspaper Expressen illustrates a kind of collective optimism that was highlighted in the media:

All girls, and women here should go out on the town and take back the night. I know girls who are celebrating with champagne now. (Expressen 30 March 2006, news article)

But it also describes how the Haga Man and the assaults had come to challenge the image of Umeå as a relatively safe city:

Many speak of joy and relief, while in the next breath they emphasize that it isn’t over. Umeå has been released from a monster that kept an entire city hostage. But the uncertainties still live there. (....) In the Umeå night, only one thing is completely true: the Haga Man is not alone. Neither here nor anywhere else. (Aftonbladet 1 April 2006, news article)
I use this quotation to summarize the description of Umeå and the Haga Man. The city of Umeå had previously had a self-image of a small-town, low-crime, ‘calm’ space, but the assaults perturbed the discourse of security and fear in Umeå and challenged this self-image, and also had effects on people’s experiences and use of space. In the literature connected to the geography of women’s fear, threat is often described and identified at an abstract level; a general threat based on the notion that if you are a woman you are at general risk of falling victim to men’s violence (e.g. Valentine 1989; Pain 1997). This perception was also prevalent in Umeå, but was ameliorated by the perception of the city as a relatively safe, small town. However, during the time of the repeated attacks on women the general fear and the abstract threat came to be incorporated into more specific fears provoked by the Haga Man’s assaults. The media reports from the period when the Haga Man was ‘holding Umeå hostage’ and the interviews reported in this thesis show that the general patterns of women’s greater fear of violation in public spaces was reinforced during the time of the Haga Man’s assaults. The assaults had an impact on the whole city, and the public narrative concerning safety and violence in Umeå changed. The assaults came to challenge Umeå’s self-image as a safe city as well as people’s behavior and use of space, and, of course, the Haga Man was the talk of the town for several years. The newspapers wrote articles urging women to avoid putting themselves at risk, the police increased their workforce on weekend nights, the university increased its security and lighting, and taxi drivers took on the role of extra protector and decreased their rates for women travelling alone. Then, when the Haga Man was arrested, the whole city celebrated and we could read in the newspapers that women were cheering and drinking champagne. After the Haga Man’s arrest books have been published and have sold out within a few days, documentaries have been shown on TV, and blogs have discussed him from numerous different approaches. This shows the great interest in him, his assault, and particularly how his assaults affected perceptions of the city. It is also this changed Umeå – including public representations of gender equality combined with an enhancement of women’s fear in public space – that makes the scene of this thesis so intriguing.
Fear of violence in public space - theoretical perspectives

In order to understand different aspects of fear and safety in public space and the significance of space and place for our understanding of fear, in this chapter I will present the main concepts and theories that have been important for this thesis, i.e., literature and ideas that came to influence this work. More specifically I will discuss the core concepts of space, place and gender as well as the interconnections between them, together with other analytical tools I consider important for understanding fear of violence in public space. I start by positioning myself in the broader research field of the geography of fear, a field that has made important contributions to research on fear of crime in public space. I then discuss other theoretical strands that have been important for my study, and finally conclude the chapter with a brief summary of my major theoretical influences.

Introducing fear

Quantitative studies have measured the shares of people who are fearful in public space, and have simultaneously highlighted the places people consider to be dangerous. For instance, since the late 1960s Statistics Sweden has identified the phenomenon of fear of violence in public space (SCB 2007). In these surveys gender is the most crucial distinctive characteristic, as women are more fearful than men (Koskela 1999). The studies show that it is not only a small group of women who report a fear of being exposed to crime, but that a large percentage actually more or less restrict their mobility because they feel afraid. From quantitative studies we know that high percentages of people are afraid in specific areas, and on the basis of these studies as well as several qualitative studies an important focus of research has been on how particularly women feel constrained by their fear of violence in public space.

The fear of crime is a phenomenon that varies between individuals. It is a phenomenon with geographical, economic, social, cultural and psychological dimensions, and is influenced by a range of processes and relations scaled from the global, national and local to the household and the body. It is rooted in place and varies between places (Pain 2000; 381). The problem of defining fear is discussed by Pain (2000). Fear of crime is not a fixed and measurable entity, but rather has marked contextual complexities that vary between individuals (Pain 2000, Panelli et al. 2004). Women’s fear of
violence in public space has been highlighted by feminist geographers in several studies since the 1980s (e.g. Valentine 1989, 1990, Pain 1997). Panelli et al. (2004) describe how fear and safety are fluid and situated within a social/spatial context.

The relationship between fear and crime is complex; perceived fear is usually not in proportion to the actual risk of being subject to a crime. Fear can result in lower life quality for people, and must therefore be recognized as a societal problem. Qualitative research on the geography of fear (Valentine 1989, 1990, 1997; Koskela 1999; Listerborn 2000, 2002; Pain 1997, 2000, 2001) has shown how underlying power relations between women and men influence uses and perceptions of city space. Women’s fear of violence is characterized by its temporality as well as its spatiality (Pain 1997). This means that women’s fear of violence in public space is related and connected to different times of the day but also to different spaces, and Valentine (1989) states that space can be regarded as divided in time according to age, gender, lifestyle and everyday routines. Fear is therefore connected to how public space is used, occupied and controlled by dominating groups at different times. Fear is based on, for instance, movements of other people, whereby they are seen as both potential threats and potential protectors. Koskela (1996) has shown which places are generally perceived as more frightening than others; e.g., parks and recreational areas are generally considered insecure spaces after dark. Women’s fear of the Haga Man in Umeå was initially first and foremost associated with a specific part of the city, Haga, and by naming the offender after the neighborhood the threat was connected to a specific place. Over time as the assaults took place in various parts of Umeå, however, fear became less related to the specific place of Haga: the offender was increasingly perceived to pose a general threat to women in all parts of Umeå.

Researchers on the geography of fear thus argue that fear of violence in public space should be addressed as a structural problem in society rather than an individual problem. In the end I define fear of violence in public space as being about control of space, whereby fear is an expression of people’s – gendered – unequal power relations. Fear is related to gendered power relations in space and created in gender practices in everyday life (Koskela, 1999; Rose, 1993). This is expressed in how gender relations create different spatial behaviors. Women are socialized to be more afraid than men, but also to be more open about their fears, while men are socialized to not show or express fear (May, 2001). Valentine (1989) highlighted the spatiality of women’s fear of violence, examining the relationship between woman’s fear of male violence and their perception and use of space, and connecting this to gender inequality. She argues that it is a spatial expression
of patriarchy when women restrict their mobility as a consequence of fear of violence. This in turn creates certain spaces that are considered appropriate for women to use. In urban space, women are more likely than men to be gazed upon (Massey 1994). In public space, women have their privacy invaded by unknown men, in the form of various comments, whistles and sometimes a slap on the backside (Stanko 1990). In urban space it is more likely that it is women who are observed, by men (Massey, 1994). Being a woman includes feelings of being constrained by space. Bondi and Davidson explain these feelings in terms of women’s awareness of embodiment, associated with a sense of being the object of other people’s gaze. They argue that “Women rarely claim or control space, instead they are caught and confined by space” (2005:24). Women feel they have no control over space, especially at night. The fact that women are more afraid at night has less to do with darkness and poor visibility than with who controls the space. In Umeå during the Haga man assaults, people expressed that the perpetrator had taken control over city space; the media even reported that the Haga Man was holding Umeå ‘hostage’. 

McDowell (1999: 149) argues that the division between the public and the private is a socially and gendered division. A clear example of this division is how women’s fear of violence in public space is highlighted while at the same time it is at home that most attacks on women take place. Although most violence against women occurs within the home, it is the image of the unknown perpetrator that frightens the most. For women, children and older people, domestic violence is more common than stranger violence. In the construction of safe/unsafe space the ‘outside’ is constructed as dangerous and the home as safe (Ahmed 2004, Stanko 1990). Media reports, and the image of the unknown perpetrator, often overshadow other types of violence against women (such as assaults in the home). In Umeå during the same time period discussed in relation to the threat from the Haga Man (1998-2006), 234 rapes were reported to the police in Umeå. Of these, 62 were perpetrated outdoors. However, the assaults by the Haga Man overshadowed all other media reports about violence against women in Umeå. Thus the public space was defined as unsafe and the home as safe, even though the most reported abuses against women took place indoors during this period.

In this thesis I place myself within this broader research field of the geography of fear, where feminist geographers have examined fear in relation to gender, place and space since the late 1980s. One of the key contributions of feminist work on the geography of fear concerns its analyses of power relations. This research has demonstrated how fear is related to gendered power relations in space, and produced in the gender practices of everyday life. These understandings of gendered power relations in space
have been important for my thesis as I examine how the threat from the Haga Man came to be a part of the production of gender practices of everyday life in the city among the respondents.

**Space and place**

If the social is inextricably spatial and the spatial impossible to divorce from its social construction and content, it follows not only that social processes should be analysed as taking place spatially but also that what have been thought of as spatial patterns can be conceptualized in terms of social process (Massey 1984:67)

Space and place are key concepts in geography. In everyday conversation we may sometimes use place and space as interchangeable, and they are often taken for granted and not reflected upon. The concepts of space and place are subject to debates within human geography and have different definitions and interpretations. A discussion of space and place that has contributed to my own conceptual understanding is that by Anderson (2010:38), who defines the difference between place and space as “in contrast to space, places are meaningful, they root people both geographically and socially, and are fashioned by culture from context”. Places can occur on any scale, and can be both material and imaginary. Massey’s (1994) work provides a clarification of the concepts of place and space. Social space is defined “in terms of the articulations of social relations which necessarily have spatial forms in their interactions with one another” (1994:120). She defines place as “particular moments in such intersecting social relations, nets of which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed”. Massey offers a conception of places as not so much bounded areas as open and porous networks of social relations. Some of these relations stretch into wide relationships and processes, outside their locality (Listerborn 2002). Massey also points out how different spatial scales coexist and thereby bridge the separation of place and space. Hence, fear is related to space and place through social relations. Places can perhaps best be understood as processes, always connected to other places and constantly reproduced (Massey 1994, Listerborn 2002). This is what I find useful in Massey’s definition: that places are constantly produced and reproduced in connection with other places; and that this also includes the reproduction of place images. For instance, the image of Haga came to be reproduced in a specific way as it was connected to violent assaults and the Haga Man, as discussed in the previous chapter.
Even if space is a fundamental and central concept in human geography, it has no general definition. There are many ways of defining, theorizing and conceptualizing space, and hence there are several different spatial perspectives. The concept has been debated and has different interpretations; e.g. an absolute spatial awareness, which means that the space is assigned its own existence; that space is something that exists independently of what is in it. Within human geography there has been a shift from such an absolute spatial perception to a relational spatial awareness, whereby space is understood more in terms of social relations and processes. Through a relational spatial understanding, space is attributed significance for analyzing social phenomena (Gren and Hallin 2002). My spatial understanding departs from the latter perspective: following Massey, I see the spatial as “impossible to divorce from its social construction and content” and the social as “inextricably spatial” (Massey 1984:67). Space is experienced and created by people; it is not only a container within which social life takes place. The physical infrastructure is included as part of a socially constructed space (related to, for instance, the building of men, for men). A perception of relational space implies an approach by which space can be produced, transformed and overturned. For example, and especially important in my study, space, place and gender are interconnected, and the spatial can be understood as social relations stretched out (Massey 1994:2).

Place is a space people have made meaningful; that people, in one way or another, have attached specific significance to. I have decided to return to Agnew's (1987) definition of three aspects of place as “a meaningful location”; location, locale and sense of place. This means that places are located, that they are material settings for social relations and the subjective and emotional attachments people have for a place. Creswell (2004) continues Agnew's reasoning on place with the clarification that “places are constructed by people doing things and in that sense are never ‘finished’, but constantly being performed” (Creswell 2004:37): Places are very much in process, and produced in everyday practices. For instance, we may avoid places we perceive as unsafe, while other places can provide feelings of safety. Urban geographers have also studied why certain places hold meanings for particular people. In this study I have not studied in detail which specific areas of the city of Umeå respondents perceived as safe or unsafe; I have rather examined how people responded in their everyday spatial practices as well as their experiences and feelings in public space in Umeå during the period of threat from the Haga Man. In my conversations with the respondents they did sometimes talk about specific locations, but more about the city of Umeå in general during the period of the attacks. The
stories were thus mostly related to their general spatial practices and feelings in public space during this specific and ‘exceptional’ period of time.

Of main importance in this study is to regard space and place as gendered, and according to Massey this gendering of space and place both reflects and has effects on the ways gender is constructed and understood in the society in which we live (Massey 1984: 186). In her classical book from 1994, Massey highlights some of the conceptual interconnections of gender and geography, and particularly how they relate to space and place as geographical variation in the construction of gender relations: “geography matters to gender” (Massey 1994:177). Gender relations are thus constructed in and through space and place, and equally, space and place construct gender (Bondi & Davidson 2005; Listerborn 2007). What Rose (1993) calls “paradoxical space” offers a thinking of gender, space and the relations between them. This concerns the relationship between space, place and gender in terms of contradictions in everyday experiences. Paradoxical spaces refer to, and attempt to hold together, spaces of experiences and spaces of imagination (Bondi and Davidson 2005), for instance spaces of fear. Massey (1994) extended her analysis of the connections between social class and spatial organization of production to include a conceptualization of space, place and gender as interrelated, mutually constitutive processes. Neither gender identities nor place are stable or given, but they are also not freely chosen or easily transformed (Bondi & Davidson 2005). When people move in city space they have an impact on how particular places are perceived by others. By using space they become part of the production of space. Spaces of fear are not only connected to specific places of fear but also have to do with relations between people. Spaces of fear are thus a combination of physical and social spaces. The concept of social spaces offers a useful way of understanding why some physical places are especially frightening (Koskela and Pain, 2000). Space is not only an area where social activities take place but also a product of these social activities. In their uses of space the respondents in my study were involved in the production of space, for instance when men adapted the way they walked as they perceived that women experienced them as a threat, or when women were constantly on their guard when moving in public space. Space is thus a product of social relations, of the interaction between people.

Fear of crime is related to space and place in many ways. However, as Listerborn (2002) points out; even if the literature on the geography of women’s fear puts emphasis on space and place, these concepts are seldom clearly defined. Pain (2000) argues that it is more important to study the symbolic meaning of safe and unsafe places and how these are constructed than to study the physical environment as such. In other words, there is a
need to connect social and political power relations to the physical environment in focus (Pain, 2000; Koskela, 1999). Beall (1998) writes about the relationship between power and spaces as the structure of urban space creates both restrictions and opportunities, which impacts in different ways on different groups in the city. She discusses an ideal city, the inclusive city, as the city for all. The inclusive city is a city where it is meaningful and possible to participate, a city where people can participate on equal terms. In inclusive cities inhabitants have control over their everyday life regardless if they are women or men. Since no city of today is inclusive for all inhabitants it is important to analyze the societal power relations in each context, as these relations create patterns of opportunities or restrictions. Koskela (1999) clarifies how fear modifies women’s spatial realities, and I follow her argument that fear is both a matter of personal spatial relation, constraints and peoples personal use of space, and at the same time a question of production and reproduction of space; “Space is not just a medium for interaction, but also produced in this interaction” (Koskela 1999b: 112). Space is thus produced in meetings between people; and in my study I focus in particular on how gender is produced in this spatial interaction.

Gender and its challenges

“We may think of class, race, and gender as different social structures, individual people experience them simultaneously” (Valentine 2007:13).

The concept of gender has been discussed, defined and re-defined by feminist scholars since the late 1960s, or even earlier. As discussed in the section on space and place, my understanding of gender links to my understanding of space as relational and processual. I depart from Joan Scott’s more or less classical discussion on the concept, presented in her 1986 article Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis. Here Scott argues that the study of gender must go beyond the study of women, and that gender analyses must include the meanings of gender in how social relationships are constituted and in signifying other relationships of power: “gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power” (Scott 1986: 1067). By gender I thus refer to the socially constructed positions, behaviors, activities and attributes a given society considers suitable for men and women, but also, as Scott (1986: 1069) continues: “a primary way of signifying relationships of power”. These signifying relationships of power have been very useful in studies focusing on
gender and fear of violence in public space, as women and men experience and use the city according to their positions in society. The gendered relations are therefore reflected in the spatial organization of the city. When women restrict their movement because of fear, they also reproduce male domination of space (Koskela 1999). When women in Umeå restricted their movements in space because of their fear of the Haga Man, they reproduced not only the perpetrator’s control of space, but also the male domination of space in general. The general pattern of women’s fear of violence in public space was reinforced during the time of the serial rapist’s assaults.

I understand gender as relationally produced in space and also as related to conceptualizations and understandings of the body. Different schools within the geographical field have dealt with the body in various ways. Feminist geographers have focused their attention on the mutually constitutive relationship between the human body and space, examining the ways places and bodies shape each other (Longhurst 2005). Bodies play a significant role in people’s experiences of place. Bodies not only occupy space but are also spaces in their own right (McDowell 1999). Rose (1993) argues that bodies have a history and a geography, and are marked by their positions within specific historical and geographical contexts. McDowell (1999: 40) asserts that bodies in space raise all sorts of questions about the space and place they occupy. For me, this concerns how gender can be seen as inscribed, through bodily practices, in the production of spaces. The relationship between body and space is complex and changing. Experiences of fear of crime in public space also depend on what body you have. As Sara Ahmed (2004:68) puts it, “Which bodies fear which bodies?”; following her I would also like to ask “Which bodies fear which bodies, when and where?” The question expands the discussion on fear and safety in public space to include both those who are afraid and those who scare, and in this a focus on both women’s and men’s bodies, as well as on the significance of space and place for our understanding of the complexity of fear.

Women’s fear in public space has many sources, but relates first and foremost to constructions of femininity and masculinity as well as men’s and women’s bodies (Preston and Ustundag 2005:220). Fear is an embodied experience; i.e., it is felt differently by different bodies and there is a relationship to space and mobility at stake in the differential organization of fear itself (Ahmed 2004:68). Ahmed (2004) discusses bodily and social space, considering how fear shrinks bodily space and how this shrinkage involves the restriction of bodily mobility in social space. In the talk about gender, fear and space, it has been important for me to highlight bodies in space, i.e. the respondents’ talk about their bodies in their use of space.
Gender is not a closed category, and it is important to discuss it in relation to other categories such as ethnicity, age and class in order to grasp a more complex picture of the meanings of fear. An increasing body of research has shown, for example, how categories such as class, ethnicity and age are important in constructions of masculinity (Connell 2005) and femininity (Dahl 2011). The challenges to a binary definition of gender have also increasingly been discussed in terms of intersectionality, which I will return to shortly (see, for example, Davis 2008 and de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005 for a discussion in the Swedish context). An awareness of how gender is also constructed in relation to other categories or power relations has influenced both my selection of respondents as well as my analysis.

Questions regarding ethnicity have not had a prominent position within Scandinavian research on fear geography. Studies from Britain have focused on race and its interconnection with fear of violence. Race is a strong predictor of fear of violence, and Pain (2001) shows how people of color have more fear of crime than white people do. Women’s fear and sense of vulnerability varies with ethnicity (Valentine 1989). Women of colour may fear hate crime (Valentine 1992), but at the same time they also feel the threat of sexualized violence. Following Kobayashi and Peake (1994, 2000) I take race to be a social construction, “not a biological essence, but a result of discursive, thoroughly material and human social processes” (2000:393). Kobayashi and Peake explain racialization as the process by which racialized groups are identified and positioned. Whiteness represents the societal norm and white people tend to think of racial identity as something that other people have, and fail to recognize the implications of their own whiteness. In this sense whiteness tends to be both invisible and “normative” (Frankenberg 1997), and is associated with privilege and power (Kobayashi and Peake 2000). In a Swedish context, having a white body usually means not being forced to reflect on one’s own position with respect to “race” (Mattsson 2010). Thus, the racialization of white bodies and the dialectics of reading a white body have been little discussed; however, it creates normative discourses and a silent understanding of which bodies and appearances are considered Swedish, not least in the paradigm of the Swede as blond and blue-eyed. Neither the “Swedish” nor “being Swedish” are stable categories, but rather must be created and maintained, defined in relation to something else (Mattsson 2010).

In this study I primarily use the concepts of white and non-white in the discussion of ethnicity, which resonates with other studies within the Swedish context (i.e. Hübinette and Tigervall 2009). I have chosen these kinds of broad categories as they illustrate the differences in having a white or non-white appearance in Swedish society. This broad classification will
end up focusing solely on the visualization of the body; it becomes a question of skin color. The stories of the respondents came to be about meeting strangers in public space, where the visual and the performance of the body were highlighted. Race is constructed in and through space, and space is also constructed in and through race (Mitchell 2000). A quote from one of my respondents illustrates how race can intersect with gender:

“I feel more exposed than my friends. They’re white and I’m black. Not only can I be raped by a guy that has some kind of hate towards women, but I can also be terribly wounded by a racist. So that’s something extra to consider. It’s very scary to think like that. The chances of me being raped are the same as being beaten (Woman 25 years old, non-white, interviewed in 2006).

This respondent makes clear links to how her body is “othered”, or racialized, and hence she feels what can be described as a double vulnerability, as a woman fearing sexualized violence and as an immigrant fearing racial violence. The outcome of the respondents’ experiences of race is hence a gendered practice.

Many contemporary Swedish studies show that class is still both a real and a significant factor in explaining differences (Ambjörnsson 2004, Neergaard and Mulinari 2004, Svalflors 2004), and Karlsson (2005) shows that a majority of people in Sweden think that Sweden is a class society and can place themselves in this structure. The case for the concept of class has been discussed in terms of its relevance to the analysis of society today. The English sociologist Beverley Skeggs shows how class membership still has vital importance for an individual’s living conditions. Skeggs (1997) emphasizes the importance of class for women’s feminine positions, and shows how subjectivity is constructed among a group of women in England. She presents the concept of respectability as fundamental to an understanding of how investments are made and affect different positions. She analyses how these women position themselves as special types of ‘women’ in relation to public narratives about what it means to be a working class woman. I saw a connection between Skeggs’ discussion about gender and class and some of the stories in my study about, for instance, women’s vulnerability and respectability, and about what is means to be protective and ‘good’ men. In this thesis, however, I have not performed a deeper analysis of the significance of class on the respondents’ positions and constructions of femininity and masculinity. At the time I started my work I did not consider class to be of central importance to my study. I did not think, for example, that women’s social class would be of particular relevance.
to their experiences and fear of violence in public space. However, during the analysis of the material I came to understand that the description of the Haga Man was also a description of class and Swedishness. Over time, my consciousness grew about the importance of class in the narratives of my respondents, but within the scope of this study I was only able to discuss it briefly (see Article IV). I have chosen to include class in a more ‘traditional way’ as I have, as Karlsson (2005) describes, an objective definition of class, i.e. an external classification which has primarily centred on the person’s profession, position in the labor market, level of education etc. I did not ask the respondents what class they identified with and hence, unfortunately, I have no possibility to make a subjective categorization of social class (Karlsson 2005).

Domosh (1999) argues that it is almost impossible to separate feminist geography from a discussion about sexuality. And concerning my work, over time this has proven to be true. For my understanding, an important reading has been Bodyspace by Duncan et al. (2006), which explores the role of space and place in the performance of gender and sexuality. The authors contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of heterosexuality as fundamental in interpreting women’s place in society, and hence women’s ability to use and shape space. In my understanding this argument also applies to men, and I also underline the need to regard sexuality in terms of power. Thus, in this thesis sexuality has been handled in relation to a discussion of heteronormativity, i.e. an understanding of sexuality in terms of power and privilege. As Valentine (1996:147) argues, I believe “our cultural/historical ideal of femininity and masculinity only makes sense within a heterosexual framework”, and hence it is important to connect the discussion about the constructions of femininity and masculinity to a discussion of heteronormativity. In my study, this has meant focusing on how heteronormativity works in relation to normative understandings of how life should be organized. This also means that I have not been interested in the sexual orientations of the respondents per se. In my view, focusing on heteronormativity is a way of scrutinizing normalization processes of femininity and masculinity as well as how norms of sexuality play out in these processes. It has also become clear in my analysis that the masculine and feminine positions I have highlighted have largely been connected to and constructed within a heteronormative framework. To summarize, and in a similar vein as my discussion on the importance of class, I have not performed a deeper analysis of the significance of sexuality in how the individual respondents are positioned in space, but have rather had the ambition to include sexuality as a privileged position, i.e. heteronormativity, in my analysis of how femininity and masculinity are constructed. In other
words, I highlight heteronormativity as one important dimension of the processes of normalization.

Age has been shown to be important for who is fearful and for who is feared. Age relations underlie many issues in respect to both older and young people’s fear (Pain 2000). Different surveys have shown that the elderly are more afraid than other groups. For instance, Statistics Sweden (SCB 2007) summarizes their survey as: the least vulnerable are the most worried. The so-called “fear-risk paradox” found in quantitative research – that women and older people’s fear of crime is greater than that of men and younger people, even though their “risks” are lower – has meant that the fear experienced by women and the elderly has been seen as “irrational”; this interpretation regards the relative fearlessness of men and younger people as normative and rational. Young men are also a group that is traditionally labeled as ‘feared’. In my study it has been important to consider age, especially since particularly young women were initially the focus of the debate on women’s safety in Umeå, while later a shift in female victimization occurred to also include older women.

The category of gender is complicated by ethnicity, class and age, and an awareness of these categories and their impact has been part of my research process. Research on fear of violence in public space has primarily been concerned with the category of ‘women’, while fewer studies have examined the intersections of fear, gender, race, social class, age and sexual identity (Hollander 2001). Notable exceptions include observations by Pain (1995) of the intersections of gender and age, and the analysis by Madriz (1997) of the shared and individual experiences of women from different ethnic groups. Pain (2001) examines the ways race, gender and age influence fear of crime, and argues that fear of crime is often structured by age, race and gender, and that when these categories are viewed as social relations, based upon unequal distributions of power, they provide us with a complex understanding of the meanings of fear. Clearly, while gender dimensions are major elements of fear of violence in public space, they cannot be analyzed separately from other structures of power relations.

Intersectionality is a concept that captures the complexity of the exercise of power and inequality in different contexts. Gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality are neither fixed nor essential categories, but rather social positions that have meaning in and through people’s actions in specific contexts. Intersectionality is an important theoretical tool for understanding power relations. It poses questions about how gender, class and ethnicity articulate the exercise of power at different levels in society, and how this is linked to greater exposure to discrimination (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005).
Valentine (2007) argues that despite the growing theorization of intersectionality within the social sciences, feminist geographers have not truly engaged directly in this debate. However, she does not believe this is due to a lack of knowledge of gender as a single category, or of an ability to see the relationships between different categories as between gender and race. Rather, it is because intersectionality as a concept has not yet been played out within geography despite its obvious spatial connotations. At the same time, much of the theoretical intersectional debate has greatly overlooked the importance of space.

In this study I use intersectionality as a methodological approach to study how different forms of discriminatory power relations interact in society. I see and use this discussion about intersectionality as a strategy in my analysis, a way to acknowledge the differences among my respondents. I find it appealing to, as Davis (2008: 79) explains it, “[alert] us to the fact that the world around us is always more complicated and contradictory than we could ever have anticipated”. I have adopted what I call an intersectional awareness, which has guided my analysis, as I want to capture the complexity of fear of violence and gendered power relations in space. An awareness of these categories and their impact influenced my selection of respondents as well as my analysis. With gender as a starting point, I am interested in how it intersects with other categories. In connecting gender, ethnicity/race and age to a discussion about bodies in space, I have formulated for myself a useful and manageable intersectional awareness. In a next stage, it would be exciting to try to also include class in a form of embodied analysis, in line with examples of studies that have highlighted the bodily performance of class (Skeggs 1997, Ambjörnsson 2004).

**Fear of crime in public space and the construction of femininity and masculinity**

Public fear discourses are constructed at local and national levels, with which people identify for different reasons (Holloway and Jefferson 2004). Different constructions of gender, produced through socialization and reinforced through media representations, give women and men distinctive ideas about typical victims and perpetrators of crime (Hollander 2001, Stanko 1997). Such crime discourses typically position women and older people as vulnerable, whereas the criminal is usually depicted as a young man (Holloway and Jefferson, 2004). Gender relations influence the ways a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. In this study I am specifically interested in constructions of masculinity and femininity in relation to fear
of violence in public space during the threat from the repeat offender. The meanings of various masculinities and femininities are prescribed within boundaries of time, place, race and sexuality (Pain 2001). Masculinity is constructed through social interactions and achieved through the use of cultural resources available to particular men (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman 2002:75). The same applies, of course, to the construction of femininity among women. I also find it crucial to stress the importance of contexts, relationships and practices in the construction of masculinity and femininity. Scott (2010) continues the discussion of gender as a category for analysis in order to think critically about how meanings of sexed bodies are produced in relation to each other, and how these meanings are developed and changed. It has been my ambition to critically focus on constructions of masculinities and femininities in the wake of the assaults by the Haga Man in Umeå during this particular time period.

Koskela (2001) argues that when gender has been acknowledged as important, the focus has been on gendered power relations; emotions and feelings have not been the centre of geographical observation. She hence asks why emotions have not been regarded as contributing to the production of space. In her study, emotions are conceptualized as being produced, to the last degree, by social power relations. Interactions between emotional and power-related processes form part of the production of space. I have highlighted the respondents’ emotional responses in order to relate them to wider considerations of gender and space, focusing on how people relate emotionally and in their practices to discourses on fear and safety, particularly their emotional reactions to threats of crime. Emotional relations shape society and space (Anderson and Smith, 2001). Emotions can clearly alter the way the world is for us, concerning our sense of time as well as space. Our sense of whom and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we feel (Davidson and Milligan 2004: 524). Anderson and Smith (2001: 7) have observed the “silencing of emotion in both social research and public life” and how this produces an incomplete understanding of the world’s workings, and note that to neglect the emotions is to exclude a key set of relations through which lives are lived and societies made. Emotions like fear therefore contribute to the production of space, for instance when women do not feel that they are free to use space and when men feel they are perceived as threatening in public space. It is not only a question of mobility or individual freedom of choice, but also of power relations.

To summarize my theoretical influences, I study gender relations in space with particular focus on the constructions of femininity and masculinity in relation to fear of crime in public space during the assaults by the Haga Man. I see gender relations as constructed in and through space, and equally,
space as constructed in and through gender. Spaces of fear are not only connected to specific places of fear but also have to do with relations between people. Space is not only an area where social activities take place, but also a product of the social activities. In their uses of space, people are involved in the production of space. An awareness of how gender is constructed in relation to other categories or power relations has influenced both my selection of respondents as well as my analysis. While gender remains the focus of this thesis in the discussion of fear of violence in public space, I have not seen it as separate from other power relations.
Methods and data

In this chapter I will describe the qualitative methods used in this thesis. I will present a description of the research material and reflect on my own role in the research process. During the process I have reflected on methodological issues associated with studying meanings of fear of crime in public space. Various kinds of narrative analyses have been used to address different aspects of the material. Paper I is based on a structural narrative approach using Labov’s model to identify key narrative structures. Papers II and III employ thematic narrative analyses to create conceptual groupings of narratives. In Paper IV a narrative biographical analysis is used to highlight the respondents’ personal experiences and emotions in relation to their individual biography. At the end of this chapter I will discuss how these different forms of narrative methodologies contributed to my research on fear of violence in public space.

A qualitative approach offers opportunities to study complex phenomena within their context. The reasons for, and consequences of, fear of violence in public space are related to complex power relations. Qualitative studies have contributed importantly to research on social and spatial processes behind fear as well as to research on the consequences of fear. The empirical studies of this thesis focus on meanings of fear of violence in public space, through analyses of in-depth interviews with women and men living in Umeå. Qualitative interviews provide opportunities to capture people’s personal experiences and to understand the dynamic nature of fear (Koskela, 1999:9). The qualitative methods I have used have allowed me to capture the respondents’ sense-making, how they interpreted their experiences and emotions in their stories, and how they positioned themselves in relation to public discussion of fear of violence in public space during this period of time. The thesis is based mainly on personal narratives of women and men living in Umeå. However, personal narratives are inevitably interconnected with the social context and relations in which they are located, and are hence connected to public narratives. I have sought to examine both the respondents’ personal and shared experiences of living in Umeå during the period of threat from the Haga Man. Public narratives related to the Haga Man in Umeå are discussed in the second chapter in this thesis, based on my continuous review of local and national media. This media coverage, previous research on media discourses on the Haga Man (Livholts 2007, Lindgren and Lundström 2010) and the respondents’ personal narratives constitute the main materials of the thesis.
Narrative analyses as research strategies

An important rationale behind narrative research is that stories provide a fundamental means to construct, organize and share human experiences. By analyzing people’s stories, we can explore both inner worlds and at the same time capture diverse aspects of social contexts and conditions. Wiles et al. (2005) argue that narrative analysis provides a tool for geographers to connect layers of meaning in interviews to broader spatial and social relations. We interpret and construct the everyday world through stories, and telling stories provides a way for people to construct and express meaning (Mishler 1986). A narrative framework can contribute to our understanding of how space and social relations are reproduced through the telling. Such analyses aim at discerning how people order experiences, events and actions in order to make sense of them. Narratives can give insight into social life, as “culture speaks itself through individual’s stories” (Riessman, 1993, p.5).

Reissman (1993) notes that people may use stories to reconstruct coherence and overcome breaches in their lives, for instance experiences of divorce or illness. Collective stories and the existence of social movements can help to create order from troubling experiences and give meaning to major events or crises and aid the formulation of narrative positions (see also Richardson 1990). The Haga Man phenomenon was a very specific threat at a specific time and place, which conditioned the production of narratives in the interviews analyzed in this thesis. I analyzed people’s personal stories as they provided insight into both specific individual experiences and broader socio-spatial relations. The ways people tell their stories are constrained by social norms, value systems and power relations; but these norms, value systems and power relations are also produced in people’s representation, in their telling (Wiles et al. 2005). This makes it possible to focus on, for instance, gender differences that might otherwise be taken for granted. Individuals speak in ways that seem natural, but history and culture influence the terms for ‘natural’ speaking.

Description of the research material

The empirical data of this thesis consist of in-depth interviews with a total of 47 women and men in Umeå, and were collected during three different time periods. The sampling of interviewees varied over time as I identified changes in the local public discussion in newspapers and people’s everyday talk. I lived in Umeå throughout the whole period, and my data collection was based on my understanding of what happened in the city related to my
research topic during the years. I thus see myself as part of my research context and, of course, I was not unaffected by everyday conversations on fear of crime in public space and the Haga Man phenomenon that took place, e.g. in media, in break rooms and among my friends and colleagues.

The first interviews were conducted in 2001, with eight women aged 17-50 years. At the time of these interviews, a year had passed since the Haga Man’s first known assaults. These first assaults initiated a public debate on women’s safety in Umeå. At that time I considered it crucial to focus on women’s fear. I conducted the first interviews as part of my bachelor’s degree and at this point I had no immediate plans to continue research in this field, or even any thoughts about how long and to what extent the Haga Man phenomenon would impact the situation in Umeå. However, while preparing my later interviews I realized that the first interviews provided valuable chronological material, and thus an important starting point for the subsequent interviews and analyses.

Table 2. Years of data collection, numbers of interviewees by gender and age ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Age range (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (follow-up)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interviews conducted in 2001, women talked about how they regarded men in relation to women’s fear of violence in public space. The analysis of the interviews showed that the image women presented of men was twofold: both as protectors and as perpetrators. At this point I started to realize it was important not only to focus on women’s fear but to also include men in my study of fear of violence in public space. As one woman commented in an interview:

The guys here in Umeå have become more attentive after the assaults of the Haga Man. They often take an alternative route so I can avoid having to go home by myself. But at the same time I don’t want to cause any trouble and have to ask for someone to walk me home (Woman, 24 years old, white, middle class, interviewed in 2001).

In 2005 I conducted interviews with ten young women and ten young men living in Umeå about fear of crime in public space. At the time of this data collection, five years had passed since the Haga Man’s latest assault and my
intention was not to focus primarily on the repeat offender. Thus I did not ask direct questions about the Haga Man. However, in our conversations about fear and safety it became obvious that the Haga Man and everything linked to him strongly related to the respondents’ perceptions of fear of crime in public space. Nearly all respondents mentioned the Haga Man in one way or another, either as a kind of explanation for their own behavior and fear or as a reference point. It was impossible to talk about safety and fear of violence in Umeå without references to the Haga Man. The first known assaults were on women in their twenties, and although local media described all women living in Umeå as potential victims, young women came to be regarded as particularly vulnerable (although one of the first assaults, in 1999, was on a 50-year-old woman). Assaults on younger women were given a distinct status and came to dominate the media image of the victims. At this time local media had also started to discuss the role of men in general for women’s fear of crime in public space. In research on the geography of fear some authors have focused on men (e.g. Brownlow 2005, Day et al. 2003), particularly on why they are not afraid, even though they are statistically at the greatest risk of falling victim to violent crime in public space (Brå 2008).

In December 2005 there was new assault by the repeat offender, but in March 2006 he was finally arrested. I conducted a third and final series of interviews approximately six months after the arrest. The assault in December 2005 was on a 51-year-old woman, who was seriously injured and fought for her life. Throughout the period, all women in Umeå had been described as potential victims in the media, but younger women’s vulnerability had been particularly emphasized. With the last assault, the image of potential victims broadened in local crime discourses. In my last series of interviews I wanted to capture this shift and I identified a need to also include fathers, husbands and other older men and women in my empirical data. Consequently, in 2006 I interviewed nine men and nine women (19-50 years old). Ten follow-up interviews with respondents who had been interviewed in 2005 were also conducted the same year.

Some people didn’t feel any great concern, and in my experience these were older women, maybe 50 plus. They didn’t seem to be fearful, as they felt he had just been going after younger women. But this changed in the end when he went after someone who was closer to 50 (Woman, 29 years old, non-white, working class background, interviewed 2006).

This woman was about my age and she had fought and fought and was certainly not drunk or anything. Things depend on how
you manage such situations. I’m actually very strong. I know how to scream and kick and bite. But when she described (in the media) what had happened... I got the feeling that there’s nothing you can do if you’re attacked like that (Woman, 50 years old, white, middle class, interviewed 2006).

The above quotes illustrate the shift in female victimization that occurred after the last assault. Women who previously had not seen themselves as being particularly at risk became aware that all women, regardless of age, were potential victims. Thus, over time I adapted the selection of respondents for my study as new questions emerged during the research process that I wanted to address.

Some of the interviewees had lived their whole lives in Umeå, while others had moved there to study or work. Their relation to the city varied as they lived in different parts of Umeå and used different areas. Most respondents were outgoing and spent time in the city centre during the day, evenings, weekdays and/or weekends. The interview sessions varied between 45 minutes and two hours. The interviews took place at my office, the respondents’ workplace, my home or the respondents’ homes, and one was held at an almost empty café – it depended on what was convenient for the interviewee. The interviews were not formally structured, but I had an interview guide that provided a checklist to ensure that we covered the main themes I wanted to explore. The interviews were tape-recorded with permission from the respondents, and were subsequently transcribed. The interview sessions included questions about fear and safety in public space, including both the respondents’ own and other people’s experiences, and hence their own and other people’s fear. During the interviews the participants described their use of the city and their perceptions of different spaces at different times. They also explained where they felt safe or insecure in relation to places, times and situations.

**Public narratives**

Interview texts are both highly individual expressions and manifestations of social discourses, with socially defined and shared discursive structures, “through these structures, then we can see how each individual text negotiates the interplay of the personal and the social, of individual expression and social praxis” (Portelli 1997; 82). Personal and public narratives are hence interwoven. Newspaper reports play a complex, formative role as public narratives, through which fear and safety are understood. During my research process I continuously reviewed local and
national media coverage of the Haga Man phenomenon, and I have relied heavily on the research by Livholts (2007) and Lindgren and Lundström (2010) on media discourses on the Haga Man phenomenon. Livholts (2007) showed how a pattern of norms and beliefs emerged in the media regarding masculinity and femininity, normality and abnormality, Swedishness and class. A public narrative was formed about rape that raises questions about who has the opportunity to speak in the media and in what ways it is possible to talk about rape. Lindgren and Lundström (2010) analyzed media discourses on rape and/or sexual assaults in the Swedish press and compared the case of the Haga Man with other salient cases of violent rape in Sweden. When I refer to public crime discourses and public discussions on fear of crime in public space in Umeå I rely on my collected media text material and the cited studies by Livholts (2007) and Lindgren and Lundström (2010), as well as my own perceptions of how these debates evolved in the media and in everyday talk among inhabitants of Umeå.

Public narratives, which include media stories, are closely linked to social or cultural formations such as families, workplaces and nations (Johansson 2005). There is now an extensive body of literature on the relationship between media representations of crime and fear of crime (e.g. Williams and Dickinson 1993, Sandstig 2010), discussing the influence of media descriptions of people’s awareness of and responses to crime. According to Heber (2007), media in general bear a major responsibility for fear of crime as much information on crime comes from media reports. It is difficult to show the ways the media have an impact on people’s fear of violence, but they certainly contribute to the public narrative. For instance, newspapers reported both on how the police described the progress of their investigations and on how women living in Umeå described their fear of the Haga Man.

As mentioned above, during this research project and throughout the period from 1998 to 2006 I monitored the local and national media coverage of the Haga Man phenomenon. Articles published in the major Swedish newspapers (Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter and Expressen) and the local paper Västerbottenskuriren (VK) were identified and collected from searches of the Mediearkivet database, which provides access to most of the major Swedish daily and evening newspapers’ articles. VK is the largest local newspaper in Umeå. The two national evening tabloid newspapers in Sweden, Aftonbladet and Expressen, and the morning newspaper Dagens Nyheter were selected to illustrate national press reports about events related to the Haga Man in Umeå. I used the keyword Hagamannen (English: the Haga Man), and identified 927 articles of which most (664) were found in VK, followed by Expressen (235), Aftonbladet (145) and
Dagens Nyheter (83). A majority (757) of the articles were published in 2006, and 101 of these were written in January, when the Haga Man assaulted his last victim; this was followed by extensive reporting in connection with his arrest in March and the trial that followed.

The articles were revised in order to obtain an idea of aspects the media chose to highlight, and possible changes in emphasis and major themes over time. I have not conducted a systematic content analysis of all articles, but in the analysis themes brought up in the media were related to the respondents’ stories, which I think has been a valuable contribution to my analysis. For example, it gave me a contextual understanding of changes over time, e.g. of the shift in female victimization that occurred after the last assault.

Co-construction of narratives

We do not find narratives, but instead participate in their creation (Reissman 2008:21)

Stories emerge in the interaction between storytellers and listeners, who influence each other throughout the process. Thus, in interviews (and explorations of narratives in general) it is important to formulate questions that lead to specific subjects and provide the narrator opportunities to develop answers that are meaningful to her/him, providing a verbal description of her/his experience (Reissman 1997).

Following Reissman (1993:8), I believe it is only possible to ‘represent experience’ and that one cannot ‘give voice’ to someone but can instead only interpret/analyze what others say. We always deal with ambiguous representations of experience; there is never direct access to another person’s experience. Reissman stresses that there are several stages, and associated levels of representation, in the research process: attending, telling, transcribing, analysing and reading. At each level the researcher makes decisions about representations, and this has to be problematized. The researcher’s story includes both the unique human experience and her/his interpretation and theoretical perspective. Through my interviewing, transcription practices and analyses I played a major part in constructing the narratives analyzed in this thesis. Through my presence, by listening and asking certain questions in certain ways, I shaped the conversations and hence the stories the respondents chose to tell. Thus I was part of the research process, an actor rather than an observer, and through my
interactions with the respondents we formulated the stories together, in the interview conversations.

Narrative analysis is a reflexive activity and I have thought about how I, as a knowledge producer, address, define, write and speak from my position as a white, feminist, 30-something, female academic. All knowledge is produced in specific circumstances, which shape the knowledge, at least in some ways (Rose 1997; 305). Thus, one needs to be aware of the situated and limited nature of our attempts to understand society. Notably, Rose (1997) argues that reflexivity has complex implications and that showing an awareness of the impact of one’s position relative to research subjects when acquiring, analyzing and presenting data is problematic for any researcher addressing social issues. Indeed, as noted by Rose (1997), it is difficult (if not impossible) even to be fully aware of one’s own position. These issues were relevant to my study; for example, since I lived in Umeå during the assaults I tried to be aware of how my own fear of the Haga Man influenced my data collection and analysis.

I was part of the world I studied, and carried with me my own experiences and memories of feeling threatened in public space. Fear was something I often had to confront when going out at dark. It was sometimes a challenge to not let too much of my own experiences, spatial behavior and attitudes influence the interviews, and rather let respondents tell their stories. Notably, in the interviews with female respondents I felt expectations to share understandings, since we experienced the same problems and the same public spaces in the same city, and responded in similar ways. In contrast, in interviews with male respondents, especially younger ones, I sometimes felt they expected that they had to present themselves to me as fearless men, which became difficult to get past. My strategy in such situations was to shift focus to talk about the respondents’ more concrete experiences and associated feelings or to talk about other people’s experiences and how they related to them, or to talk about fear and safety more generally. I think, and hope, this made it easier for them to open up in the interview situation as they could relate their own experiences to more general patterns.

**Narrative analyses - different approaches**

There is no narration without interpretation (Portelli 1997)

There are various ways of doing narrative analyses (see Reissman 1993 for an overview), and in this thesis I have used three forms: structural narrative
analysis, thematic narrative analysis and biographical narrative analysis. In this section I will describe these approaches and finally reflect on what their combination has meant for my study.

**Structural narrative analysis**

In Paper I a structural narrative analysis was applied, the so-called Labov model. A structural narrative analysis focuses on the telling, the way the stories are told. Paper I analyses the respondents' responses when asked if they could describe a situation when they did not feel safe. Hence, the narrative analysis in this paper is applied to brief, topically specific stories organized around a setting and a specific incident. These are distinct stories told in response to single questions that thus recapitulate specific events the respondents have experienced, and their reactions to them. An analysis of the respondents’ talk, paying attention to the structure of what is told in terms of Labov’s structural categories (which involves reducing the narratives to a core structure to examine how people say what they do and who they are), was employed here, and similarities and differences across narratives were identified in terms of the major components of the young respondents’ talk. An application of Labov’s model to analyze the functional parts of the narratives showed that the narratives differed significantly in structural terms, e.g. detailed stories were told by the female respondents and incoherent stories by the male respondents. However, to understand how these narratives related to dominant discourses in the context it was necessary to draw on theories developed in research on fear of violence in public space, since narratives depend on certain structures that hold them together (Reissman 1993).

**Thematic narrative analysis**

In Papers II and III thematic narrative analyses were used to explore what the respondents’ stories were about and the information that can be gained from them. The focus was on the content of the stories and recurrent narrative patterns in the interviews. A thematic narrative approach focuses on themes within a story to give narratives a sense of direction and purpose, with emphasis on the ‘told’, generally without attending to language, form or interaction. Narrative scholars usually keep a story ‘intact’ by theorizing from specific cases rather than from components across cases, while a thematic narrative approach is also useful for theorizing across a number of cases, finding common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report (Reissman 2008).
In these analyses I identified similarities and differences in the respondents’ replies as thematic patterns of the stories. Following Wiles et al. (2005), I applied a more contextual analysis and interpretation to the narratives. The stories referred to in the articles are quite brief, bounded segments of interview text, rather than longer biographical accounts. I was interested in the thematic meanings and the points they raised, but these points needed to be placed in context to really give meaning. Polkinghorne (1995) describes an approach he calls “analysis of narratives” for exploring categories (common themes across stories) and the relationships between them, focusing on what is told rather than its structure. I tried to retain the context of the narratives to identify patterns and processes in what was told by different respondents. Papers II and III address the various themes identified in the analysis of my material (masculine positions; men’s talk about themselves and their bodies; women’s ambivalence about their own fear) i.e. ‘the souls of the narratives’, with respect, for instance, to a changing consciousness of fear of crime in city space.

There are of course also problems related to analyzing respondents’ narratives thematically. When many narratives are grouped into a similar thematic category, readers must assume that everyone in the group means the same thing by what they say (Reissman 2008). However, it offers a way to access the content that a narrative communicates, rather than how it is structured, by theorizing across a number of cases and identifying common thematic elements, but preserving narrative features and sequences.

Narrative biographical analysis

The biographical-interpretative method is part of the narrative tradition in social science research, a tradition that has been most strongly developed in life-story research (Holloway and Jeffersson (2004). Analyzing biographies of respondents might allow us to trace the discourses, practices and power relations that inform investments in particular subject positions (Holloway 1984, Metha and Bondi 1999). A biographical approach permits an analysis of individual differences in responses, which can be explained (to some degree, at least) by differences in people’s individual biographies (1997, Holloway and Jefferson 2004). How individuals identify with fear of crime discourses partly depends on their unique biographies, especially their histories of anxiety (Holloway and Jefferson 1997:265). Further, people’s individual biographies may explain variations from the dominant discursive subject and show alternative subject positions as resistance to the norms. To capture the complexity of people’s actual emotional responses, we also need an understanding of their biographical investment in socially available
discourses and practices. This combination widens the understanding of the emotionality of social life, and people’s individual emotional responses to the Haga Man’s crime in particular and to discourses of fear and crime in general. In Paper IV we used a narrative biographical approach to analyze two women’s narratives; the analysis showed different individual investments in and responses to dominant discourses on fear and safety in Umeå. We did not analyze the respondents’ whole biographies but rather used a biographical approach in relation to specific events (focused interviews, according to Mishler 1986).

**Narrative analyses and fear of violence**

The four papers of this thesis share the same methodological starting points but different analytical strategies have been applied, and hence the focus in the papers differs. To conclude this methodological discussion I will once again quote Reissman (2008): “Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was”. The rationale of my analysis is that stories tell me about people’s lives and provide a means to understand both individuals and society more thoroughly. Hence, the approaches applied to analyze the stories have varied (as described above), but have always kept the narrative in focus. Through a combination of structural, thematic and biographical narrative analysis I have been able to focus on different aspects of the data, which has provided opportunities to highlight individual emotions and attitudes as well as recurring themes. The structural narrative analysis used in Paper I permitted a comparison between men’s and women’s ways of talking about their own fears. In Paper I short, topical narratives elicited how men and women talked about situations in which they felt afraid. The structural narrative analysis identified the functional details of stories, and the aspects respondents chose to highlight in their narratives. It showed, for example, the difficulties men had in talking about themselves in situations when they were afraid. I think the structural narrative analysis, with its focus on how respondents talk, also reflects the ‘prerequisites’ for the narrative. The thematic narrative analysis of Paper II and Paper III enabled me to theorize across a number of cases by identifying common thematic elements, and to capture some collective narratives among the respondents. I found both similar and diverse positioning among my respondents, e.g. in terms of masculine positions as discussed in Paper II, and shared experiences of representations of bodies in space as discussed in Paper III. Finally, the biographical narrative analysis of Paper IV permitted for more individual detail and distinction, which again pointed out the complexities of fear of crime in public space.
Papers and findings

In this part I will summarize the four papers of the thesis. I will highlight the major findings of each paper and then return to these findings in the final discussion of the thesis.

Paper I: Talking about fear of violence in public space. Female and male narratives about threatening situations in Umeå, Sweden

The first article of this thesis discusses methodological aspects of studying fear as a restriction on mobility and use of public space. The article argues that a narrative approach to analysing interview talk permits insights into how people make sense of their experiences or fear in producing different kinds of narratives; it further allows for the analysis both of the meanings individuals create and of how stories are permitted and controlled by social conditions. By telling stories, people construct and express meaning and make sense of experiences, which is particularly important in situations of change or crisis. In this article we argue that the use of a narrative approach to analyse the structure of the telling may permit insights into how young people construct different narratives conditioned by the broader socio-spatial context of unequal power relations between different social identities.

The narratives analysed in the article form part of an interview study conducted in 2005 with ten young women and ten young men, aged 20-26, at the time of the Haga Man attacks. The respondents were interviewed about their experiences of fear or fearlessness in city space and their feelings of security/insecurity when using different parts of the city. In these interviews, young men and women told their stories about fear of violence in public space. While the Haga Man, after his first rapes in the city of Umeå, became a general reference point for all interviewees, young men and women, white and non-white positioned themselves differently in their stories about fear, violence, safety and fearlessness in public space.

Labov’s model was employed to analyse female and male narratives about fear. We sought to identify similarities and differences across narratives in terms of the major components of young people’s talk. By analysing the functional parts of the narratives, we could see how narratives differed significantly in structural terms. This approach led us to consider how young
people were or were not able to produce shared stories about their experiences.

There was a clear difference in responses when the respondents were asked to describe a threatening situation. Without hesitation, female respondents of all backgrounds told of situations they experienced as frightening. They localized their story in concrete places such as dark paths or forests they had to pass. Across interviews, there were strong similarities in female talk about fear in public space with immediate responses to the questions. The women knew “how to talk about it”. The female stories of fear of violence in public space had similarities across the interviews in terms of structure and content, irrespective of ethnic or class background. They reproduced a kind of master narrative of experienced fear in localized situations. Women answered the way they “were supposed to” and made repeated references to the Haga Man as an explanation for their fear, but not as the only possible explanation as they also described fear in general.

White male respondents hesitated when asked about their own fear. Men rather talked about other people’s fear, usually women’s. The male respondents’ talk about fear was fragmented and seldom included a main point of the story. They themselves were rarely prominent in their stories. Their hesitation or silence showed that there was no shared story among them of male fear of violence. Instead, the male respondents expressed an understanding of how they as male strangers were defined as potential threats. Very similar narratives about causing fear in others and acting as “a good guy” were expressed by men of different ethnic backgrounds, but white men commented on how being perceived as dangerous was something of a novelty to them.

The examples given in the article demonstrate that women from all backgrounds reproduced a shared story of experiences of fear, and explained their fear in terms of the radical impact of the Haga Man. Male stories, on the other hand, were short, fragmented and diverse, especially in terms of ethnicity. In their stories women positioned themselves as fearful and in need of protection, while men in their stories positioned themselves as fearless protectors. Men and women reproduced ways of speaking considered appropriate to their gender, thus performing masculinity and femininity through their talk.
Paper II: “It was entirely his fault” - constructing white masculinities and the Haga Man assaults in Umeå, Sweden 1998-2006

The second article examines consequences of the Haga Man phenomenon on constructions of white masculinities in Umeå. Male respondents in this study talked about their experiences of women’s fear of violence, and this provided an opportunity to connect studies on women’s fear of violence to a discussion of normality, masculinity and violence, in connection to the assaults by the Haga Man.

This article is based on interviews with male respondents in 2005 and 2006, altogether 19 men of different ages, classes and ethnicities, living in Umeå. A thematic narrative analysis was used in the article and, hence, the contents of the stories were in focus. In their narratives, men positioned themselves in relation to crime, risk and fear, and made sense of their experiences in relation to these positions. In my analysis of the narratives I identified three masculine positions which I termed the dangerous stranger, the suspect and the protector.

The men I interviewed presented stories about how they felt they were perceived as dangerous strangers, and these stories were similar regardless of age, ethnicity or class background. Men were aware that they were feared by women in public space, and talked about their efforts to show that they were not dangerous. The male respondents found themselves in a context in which the repeat offender was described as an “ordinary man” of “normal Swedish appearance”, and this was the image that men related to. Several male respondents shared experiences of people commenting that their appearance coincided with the description of the Haga Man. Some men felt that people identified them as suspects, and these men talked with anger and frustration about the Haga Man. Their anger became a way for them to distance themselves from the offender and his crimes. When others perceived them as a potential suspect, they felt misjudged and accused.

Men interviewed in the study also presented stories about their “altruistic fear” and how they intended to be protective in their uses of space and in relation to women they knew. Certainly, men in Umeå had been concerned about the safety of their daughters, wives, and female friends before, but in these interviews men talked about how since the threats began they had changed their behaviour to protect women in more systematic and comprehensive ways. Walking female friends home or regularly accompanying women in public space also became a kind of justification for men in their own uses of space. Men of different ages, classes and ethnic
backgrounds expressed similar narratives whereby they positioned themselves as *protectors*, in control of and responsible for women’s safety. This protective position was also connected to media discourses on how women in Umeå were in need of protection from the Haga Man. Questions about why women would be in need of protection from a more general perspective, related to women’s and men’s positions in society, were not raised, either by the respondents or in the media. The respondents described women’s fear primarily as a consequence of one man’s crimes. Their anger was directed at the Haga Man as a person: “It was entirely his fault”.

These three constructions of masculinity were not clear-cut or ‘belonging’ to specific men – several of the interviewees articulated various forms of masculinities but stressed them in different ways depending on, for instance, age and/or ethnicity/race. I conclude that men largely positioned themselves as protectors as a strategy to separate themselves from the perpetrator (the image of the ‘normal Swedish man’ as a rapist) and to ensure that they were not perceived as suspects. Women’s increased fear of crime was explained as “one man’s fault”, and broader issues about gendered power relations in space were not raised.

**Paper III: “I try to use my body language to show I’m not a bad guy” – Male bodies and women’s fear of a repeat offender in Umeå, Sweden**

The third article of the thesis focuses on changing perceptions and representations of female and male bodies during the period of threat against women from the repeat offender in Umeå. Based on interviews with women and men in Umeå, the article aims to examine meanings of fear of violence in public space by focusing on constructions of the body during this specific period of time. It addresses the question of which bodies fear which bodies, when and where. The question summarizes and expands the discussion of fear and safety in public space to include both those who are afraid and those who frighten, and in this a focus on both women’s and men’s bodies, as well as the significance of space and place for our understanding of the complexity of fear. The research was based on the analysis of empirical data collected through in-depth interviews with a total of 47 women and men, of different ages and backgrounds, living in Umeå. A thematic narrative approach was used to focus on themes within the stories that gave the narratives a sense of direction and purpose. The paper focuses on topical stories connected to fear and safety told by women and men during discussions following the Haga Man’s crimes.
The article illustrates how a change took place in both individual and public narratives, from a focus on how women should conduct themselves to be safe, towards men’s bodily behaviour in order to present themselves in non-threatening ways. The case study stresses the importance of context and demonstrates the temporality in how bodies are perceived in space. A shift of emphasis took place towards bodies that frighten, rather than those who are afraid. Public descriptions of the Haga Man focused on characteristics of the perpetrator’s body and “normal Swedish appearance”, which constructed an image of the dangerous white body. White male respondents positioned themselves in relation to these descriptions and were partly challenged with respect to new perceptions and meanings associated with ‘normality’. Important themes in the narratives concerned the vulnerable/respectable female body and the dangerous white male body, and white male respondents described how they became aware of how their bodily behaviour influenced others. In descriptions of the Haga Man’s victims women were presented as vulnerable, but in contrast to many other cases there was no immediate focus on women’s bodies in terms of respectability. Women’s behaviour and bodily appearance were not questioned in the media and the victims were not blamed; respectability was not an issue in the local public crime debate. Men became aware and challenged by the ways their presence provoked fear in others, and this influenced their bodily behaviour. The findings contribute to a discussion of how gendered power relations can be understood through shifting representations of bodies in space.

**Paper IV: Afraid and restricted vs. bold and equal – Women’s fear of violence and gender equality discourses in Sweden**

In this fourth paper, women’s fear of violence is discussed in relation to Swedish gender equality discourses and contextual constructions of femininity. We argue that there are certain ways of being a woman that are seen as gender-equal, i.e. that the dominant discourse of gender equality demands specific forms of femininity. Constructions of femininity are seen as parts of discourses on gender equality in Sweden, which women in this case study related to in different ways.

The study analyses the responses and reactions among women in Umeå during the period of threat from the Haga Man, and highlights how women in this new situation handled feelings of vulnerability and fear of violence in public space. The paper analyses how women related to the new and more ‘fearful’ situation in the wake of the assaults by the repeat offender. We examine how the ways women positioned themselves in their narratives
could be understood in terms of how they negotiated spaces for agency within a context where public space has been represented as safe and gender-equal. The research is based on empirical data collected through in-depth interviews with altogether 27 women in Umeå in 2001, 2005 and 2006. We focus particularly on the constructions of two positions of femininity represented in the narratives of two women: the narratives of Marie and Sara illustrated a clash between two contrasting discourses of gender and fear in public space, and also resulted in two contrasting constructions of femininity. Sara related to – and also struggled with – an official discourse of gender equality, wanting to position herself in an “equality femininity” whereby women are equal to men and thus not afraid. Marie was “resting” more comfortably in a “traditional femininity”, the vulnerable – and frightened – woman, a positioning that despite the image of gender-equal Umeå did not seem to be difficult to occupy. This showed that the “traditional femininity” seemed quite easy to access, despite the image of Umeå as safe and equal. When the traditional discourse of the vulnerable woman met the established discourse of gender equality, it seemed as if the “equality femininity” was more difficult to uphold.

Several female respondents expressed an ambivalent attitude about their own fear; they felt afraid, but also felt that as (equal) women they should be able to do what they wanted, whenever they wanted. Women told stories about their anger in situations in which they adapted their everyday behaviour in ways they felt they were expected to. One of the women, Marie, had already assumed the position of the “vulnerable” woman, and her reaction to the changing discourses of fear and crime that followed the attacks was thus characterized by passivity and a resignation to the codes of conduct for vulnerable women. Sara, on the other hand, had a biographical investment in a position as an equal and independent woman, and as this position was challenged by her fear she responded with frustration and anger.

The results show the difficulties of claiming the official position of a gender-equal femininity. Fear became a part of life for women in Umeå, and the case of the single repeat offender challenged the official picture of a gender-equal city. The informants’ ambivalence, and partly anger, in relation to a femininity they wanted but could not have also created an opportunity for critique of women’s position in society and thus a challenge to a presumed gender equality that stands in the way of addressing issues of gendered power relations.
Concluding discussion

In this concluding chapter I will discuss what the thesis offers in terms of an understanding of meanings of fear of violence in public space, in the city of Umeå, Sweden. An intersectional awareness has guided my analysis of the complexity of fear of violence and gendered power relations in space, and I will discuss this understanding in relation to people’s emotional, embodied and spatial experiences in relation to fear of violence and the constructions of femininities and masculinities.

The shared narratives of women and the fragmented narratives of men

I have analyzed the positioning among the female and male respondents as both individual positionings in their personal narratives as well as positionings in public narratives about fear of violence in public space.

The findings of this thesis do not show a complex pattern for women’s fear of violence, but rather a uniform female position. Without hesitation, female respondents of all backgrounds (ethnicity, age, class) told of situations they experienced as frightening. Thus, the women’s stories of fear of violence in public space had similarities across the interviews in terms of both structure and content, irrespective of ethnic or class background. For example, they all localized their story to concrete places such as dark paths or forests they had to pass after dark. The female respondents expressed similar experiences of threatening situations, consistent views on their own vulnerability and experiences of expectations of taking a fearful, vulnerable position. This therefore shows a very uniform pattern, and an image of fear.
As I read the female respondents’ stories about when they were afraid an image got stuck in my head: that of a woman walking alone, on an isolated road, photographed from behind. This is an image we so often get in the media’s description and in horror movies. It is not an unfamiliar image. As we talked about their fear, women reproduced this image. The women knew how to talk about their own fear, with an obvious ‘impulse to tell’. White and non-white women shared these stories of fear. For white women this was solely a matter of fear of sexualized violence; however, non-white women expressed how they also lived with a fear of racist violence. The female respondents were very open in their talk about their own fears and made several references to the Haga Man as an explanation for the fear. In some way it can be argued that this made it easy for them to explain their fears. Given the situation their fear was not unjustified, and it was taken seriously.

Despite this shared story of fear there were some variations in how women with different backgrounds responded, and in the discussion about the female respondents’ responses it is important to highlight the dimension of age that took place after the last attack. During the first attacks, particularly young women came to be positioned as vulnerable, as potential victims due to the fact that the first known assaults were on women in their twenties, and although local media described all women living in Umeå as potential victims, young women came to be regarded as particularly vulnerable. As the final assault was on an older woman, however, this came to influence the
The way the female respondents responded to the threat from the Haga Man. The middle-aged women interviewed after the last attack described how the threat had become more concrete to them. This meant that women who had not previously seen themselves as being at specific risk were now alerted; now all women, regardless of age, were potential victims.

Umeå was naturally not a completely isolated exception, where women were not afraid before the Haga Man, meaning that there was also a familiar vulnerable female position available. And although the expectations on women to position themselves as potential victims could be seen as less prominent in relation to the image of gender-equal Umeå, this was not a new position for women. The vulnerable female position being close at hand also meant that the existing vulnerable position was enhanced. My conclusion is that this situation produced a shared approach to fear for women of different ages, classes and ethnicities in Umeå. They expressed this in similar emotional responses and embodied spatial experiences. Despite an awareness of that gender is not a dichotomous category, this homogeneous femininity appeared. The result was therefore partly surprising and I regard the similarities in women’s responses to the threat from the Haga Man as an expression of a normative femininity.

On the other hand, the male respondents interviewed for this study expressed complex emotional positions as they talked about their own fears, women’s fear of unknown men and how they felt they were under suspicion and compared to the perpetrator. The white male respondents hesitated when they talked about fear, and they themselves were rarely prominent in their stories. The young white men described themselves as feeling secure in public space, and the question about their own fear was not responded to with any impulse to tell about fear. They rather started to talk about other people’s fear, particularly women’s; this despite the fact that later in our conversation they could talk about threatening incidents they had experienced. Men’s lack of fear is accepted as ‘normal’; hence men describe themselves as fearless. Consequently, the white male respondents did not talk about their own fears. They rather appeared to conform to the norm of male fearlessness and described themselves as feeling safe and unafraid, at least most of the time.

In contrast, the non-white male respondents could articulate stories of their own fear and threatening situations they had experienced, i.e. they presented more detailed narratives. The non-white men simply had more to tell and there was a opening for them to talk not only about their fears but also about the fact that they felt others perceived them as dangerous. I see this as an expression of their position as ‘the other’ in public space. When talking about
their fears, they expressed an awareness of how they are perceived by others and how their bodies are positioned in space, all part of a silent everyday racism. Thus, they are positioned as ‘other’ in relation to ‘white Swedish men’. The narratives of the non-white men also pointed to how white men are in a position in which they do not relate to their own skin color. They occupy a kind of normal position that does not articulate fear, and what I show here is their way of handling a situation that does not normally ‘belong’ to them, as fear is not part of the ‘normal’ Swedish man’s positioning. In this case I would also argue that there was no space for the male respondents to raise and discuss men’s fear of violence. It was hard to articulate their own fear when this was compared and put in relation to the threat from the Haga Man that women faced. As the threat from the Haga Man became so significant for women in Umeå, there was no space to discuss men’s potential victim position, at this time in this particular context.

Despite this fragmented image of the men’s description of their own fear, the male respondents expressed similar experiences of how they experienced that they generated fear in others. All men expressed an ‘altruistic fear’ for women they knew rather than for themselves. The male respondents in this study became protective with respect to their use of space, and in relation to women they knew. These men started to worry about the safety of female friends, girlfriends, wives and daughters. The men had a shared story about their altruistic fear and their protective use of space that resulted from their awareness of women’s fear of rape. This protective masculinity united men of different backgrounds. However, one can distinguish a certain difference in terms of how this position was adopted. The younger men, who are perhaps more outgoing in public space, had a more protective position in their actual use of space, adapting their walk, while the older men living in a couple relationship had a more protective role in relation to their family members, and hence this position was here also more associated with the heterosexual relationship in which they live. The response to the threat from the Haga Man can also be discussed in terms of its spatial outcome. The male respondents responded by adapting their behavior in their use of space, in what can be summarized as a ‘good guy walk’.

**Not only fear; emotional responses and gendered fear of violence**

*Focusing on fear as an emotion does not cover the full variety of emotional responses connected to people’s fear of crime. I believe it is important to develop a wider understanding of this variety of emotional reactions; hence, here I discuss the respondents’ emotional responses in order to relate*
them to wider considerations of gender and space, focusing on how people relate emotionally and through their practice of discourses on fear and safety.

Fear of crime comprises various emotional appraisals of situations. Fear, worry, concern, fearlessness, anger and rage are all emotional reactions to the possibility of victimization (Madriz 1997: 49). Koskela (1997) argues that as an emotional reaction, fear can take a range of different forms and can be momentary. I combine the aspects of the emotionality of social life in the city and people’s individual investments/emotional positions in the discussion of people’s emotional reactions to the threat posed by the Haga Man. I do this by addressing fear as an emotion in itself and, for instance, discussing how responses to the threat posed by the Haga Man included more emotions than simply fear.

To continue with the argument of the shared stories about fear the female respondents expressed, I would like to connect this to how discourses of fear and crime position women as vulnerable and hence as needing to be afraid. Women in Umeå became aware that they were expected to be frightened by other people’s reactions, such as warnings and admonitions about not going home alone. It is a necessity to understand women’s fear of violence in the context of this dominating discourse of gender equality, and that the case of Umeå makes this even more important, due to the image of the city as being the gender-equal city in the gender-equal country. This is discussed through examples among the female respondents’ narratives about their fear regarding how they adapted to the crime discourses, since the feeling rules guided them to ‘appropriate’ feelings. They were not supposed to feel too afraid, but at the same time they felt they should not be too little afraid, and hence reckless. The public narratives on how women were expected to be afraid and in need of protection created different emotions among the female respondents, which can partly be explained by their biography and individual discursive investments. They encountered the same feeling rules, e.g. in warnings from families and friends, the police’s call for cautious behavior and crime discourses, but their responses varied according to their previous biographical investments. Some had already taken a position as the ‘vulnerable’ woman, and their reactions to the changing discourses of fear and crime that followed the attacks were thus passivity, a resignation to the codes of conduct for vulnerable women. Others had an investment in a position of the equal woman, and as this position was challenged by their fear they responded with frustration and anger at the fact that they were afraid and that they also felt they were supposed to be afraid. It was an anger directed both at themselves because they were afraid, as well as at the lack of gender equality in society that creates the framework for the expected female
fear. Women felt they should not have to be influenced by fear; they should have the right to go where they want, whenever they want. Many female respondents described how they tried to not be afraid, and ignored feelings of insecurity. Female respondents also expressed a resignation to their own fear, as a way to argue to themselves and others that it was not so bad and that they should just make the best of it. This resignation was one way to handle the situation and to be able to not be angry.

White male respondents talked about their experiences of being under suspicion and compared to the Haga Man. In their understanding of other people’s perception of them as potential suspects they felt uncomfortable, misjudged and falsely accused. This also resulted in their talking angrily about the Haga Man and, as they were in a situation in which they were suspect, their anger provided a way to separate themselves from the perpetrator and his crimes. The anger was directed at the Haga Man; not only because of his crimes but also because he made the ‘normal’ appear suspect. The male respondents’ self-positioning was an attempt to emphasize how they were different from the Haga Man, in that they expressed anger directed at the perpetrator, as a rejection of both the crime and the perpetrator himself since he came to challenge perceptions of who is dangerous and to position the ‘normal white man’ as dangerous. The self-image of white men was challenged, and it was important for these men to distance themselves from the Haga Man.

The complexity of emotional reactions is illustrated in the male and female respondents’ narratives of how they identified and position themselves emotionally in relation to discourses of fear. The feeling rules constitute, in a way, a framework that shapes how people are formed by discursive representations and how they think they are supposed to respond emotionally. But to get the complexity of people’s actual emotional responses, we need to also have an understanding of their biographical investment to understand their emotional responses and reactions based on their unique biographies and socially available discourses and practices. This combination widens the understanding of the emotionality of social life and people’s individual emotional responses to discourses of fear and crime in general and the Haga Man’s crime in particular.

The vulnerable, respectable bodies of women and the dangerous, frightening bodies of men

The increased threat from the single repeat offender came to influence the constructions of male and female bodies in space. Here, the temporality of
bodies in space are discussed through the positioning of vulnerable female bodies and threatening male bodies in space, and through the shift in emphasis from those who are afraid to the bodies that frighten.

Feelings of vulnerability and fear shape women’s bodies and how those bodies inhabit space. Women are expected to be afraid and hence take a vulnerable position, and the notion of the respectable body is also something women are expected to relate to. This is hence connected to expectations that a woman should be afraid; that there is a need to be afraid. Women’s restriction of their mobility can thus be seen as both a spatial outcome of their own fear and a consequence of the discursive positioning of female bodies in public space. In this case women’s behavior and bodily appearance were not questioned in the media and hence respectability was not really an issue in the local public crime debate. Nevertheless, a recurrent theme in the female respondents’ narratives was experiences of relating to the discourses of the respectable woman, and they described how they adapted their bodily behavior in ways consistent with how women are supposed to conduct themselves to be safe. Women of different backgrounds described an awareness of how the female body is supposed to look and act in order to be safe. However, the middle-aged women in this study tended to describe a greater confidence in their own ability to handle different situations. They were not as likely as the younger women to take on the role of victim, and instead expressed greater confidence in their own bodies. While the ‘hostage situation’ of threats from a single offender temporarily came to dominate public debates, the well-known pattern of the harassment or molestation of women was also prevalent in the public space of Umeå. Female respondents still described experiences of adapting themselves to the image of the respectable woman’s body – at the same time as other options opened up. In one sense the lack of focus on women’s bodies was something new, or it at least opened up for a more nuanced discussion.

The male respondents expressed an awareness of how their bodies were perceived by others. This was reflected in an awareness of how their presence in space could provoke fear. White men related their own bodies to the description of the Haga Man. Within this context there was a new focus in the discussion on which bodies are feared, and the image of the ‘normal’ Swedish man was challenged. The description of the perpetrator as a white man resulted in white, Swedish men reflecting on their own position with respect to perceptions and meanings associated with ‘normality’ and whiteness. Men felt forced to relate to and distance themselves from the Haga Man. Several of the male respondents shared such experiences, notably of people commenting that their appearance shared similarities with the description of the Haga Man. Male respondents, regardless of background or
age, were aware of being feared by women in public space; white men described this awareness as a novelty to them. The awareness of bodily appearance and location made men adapt their use of space. This became clear in their descriptions of how they tried to show, through their body language, that they were ‘good guys’. Thus white male respondents became aware of their position, also in spatial terms, and how their body came to influence others – white men actually got a body in public space. Women’s fear of the Haga Man worked to restrict men’s bodies through their adaptation and attempt to present themselves as good guys. That women adapt their bodies in their use of space is not a new phenomenon in itself, but in this specific situation we can also see how men were required to do the same.

From femininity and masculinity to gendered power relations

Understanding gender as socially constructed positions, and masculinities and femininities as many and various (though clearly, as they are fully implicated in power relations, some are easier to take up and enact than others), here I will summarize my findings in a discussion about how the threats from a single repeat offender had an impact on the constructions of femininity and masculinity.

The vulnerable femininity and the protective masculinity were created in a heteronormative context. The women interviewed in this study described an awareness of how men around them began to keep an eye on them and developed protective behaviors. This treatment meant that women were positioned as vulnerable and the men wanted to protect them. Women talked about this not only as a way for men to express concern but also negatively, using a critical tone. The female respondents criticized the protective masculinity and also argued that men were not only looking after people they cared about but were also reproducing women’s vulnerability. The protective position was connected to the public view that women were in need of protection from the Haga Man; men agreed on what it meant to be a ‘good man’, a non-dangerous, protective man. These positions were constructed within a heteronormative framework, and also show how masculinity and femininity are relationally produced.

I regard the similarities in women’s responses to the threat from the Haga Man as an expression of a normative femininity. This normative femininity is connected to certain emotions as well as to heterosexual relationships, resulting in the body becoming both a symbol and a tool in the production of
heteronormative femininity. This normative femininity is both contextually and historically rooted, and is constantly produced and reproduced in everyday interactions. Women’s fear of violence is discussed in the context of a dominating discourse of gender equality in Sweden, and the fact that the case of Umeå makes this even more important due to city’s image as the gender-equal city. There are certain ways of being a woman that are seen as gender equal; i.e., the dominant discourse of gender equality demands specific forms of femininity. In the interviews with female respondents it was noticeable how a similar femininity was produced among them. The female respondents also found themselves in the same public narrative, in the same social space, and were influenced by the same feeling rules. At the same time, the individual positions do matter. Of course, their age, ethnicity, class background and personal experiences are important for the construction of the individual’s femininity. But despite these personal differences, they reproduced similar stories and common positions in their talk about fear of violence in public space. Here it seems that in order to appear as an appropriately feminine woman you must meet gender expectations regarding vulnerability, be fearful, and at least act carefully in public space; at the same time, the gender equality discourse tells women not to be afraid because they are supposed to be gender equal and free to do whatever they want, whenever they want. Women in Umeå were supposed to be careful, but should not allow their fear to take control of their lives; they were supposed to combine two versions of femininity, the vulnerable woman and the independent woman. This created complex responses and raised conflicting emotions. When the traditional discourse on vulnerable women meets the established discourse of gender equality, it seems as if the ‘equality femininity’ is more difficult to hang on to. In the gender equality discourse there is no opening for women in terms of how they should handle their fear of men’s violence. Women’s fear of violence in public space is a consequence of women’s unequal status, and simultaneously contributes to perpetuating established gendered power relations. I would argue that it opposes an equality femininity. When women do not comply with this femininity, their fear is turned into an individual problem; women feel that they restrict their mobility ‘voluntarily’. They do not regard their inability to use space freely as a serious constraint but rather as a normal and accepted condition. I argue that this process of individualization must be understood as an effect of the lack of articulation of societal gender power relations. The equality femininity is based on the notion of society already being gender equal – the optional femininity is related to women’s individual fears. A femininity related to an understanding of gender power relations in need of change is lacking. I therefore see a need for, and also an opening for, another femininity: a femininity that allows women to position themselves as both afraid and equal at the same time, without taking on the vulnerable position.
Fear is not an individual’s responsibility, and it is not a failure for an equal woman to be afraid. Women dealt with this through the anger they expressed at the situations in which they met expectations that they should be afraid, and they actually felt afraid.

The masculine positions, on the other hand, were more differentiated and the interviewed men did not reproduce a common position. Non-white men’s previous experiences of subordination were expressed in their talk about their own fear. White men had no clear experience of subordination, and for these men it became a new realization and a new response. They described and positioned themselves as unafraid and reproduced the norm of male fearlessness, a fearless masculinity. On the other hand, being in the position of causing fear because they were perceived as ‘dangerous strangers’ connected men of different backgrounds across the interviews, as men from different classes, ethnicities and ages expressed similar experiences, while the underlying reasons for the construction of this position were different.

In concluding this discussion I want to stress the problem of individualization, and how individualization is largely a gain for men and a problem for women. Women took personal responsibility for their own fear, downplaying and managing it individually. Men explained women’s fear as a consequence of one man’s crime, which means that violence against women was individualized in relation to this particular offender. After the Haga Man’s arrest there were attempts to ‘explain’ him or look for signs of deviance – in other words to reduce his ‘normality’ – rather than to raise questions about the attributes ascribed to rapists and challenge the image of men who rape. The discussion stopped at the Haga Man as an individual offender rather than becoming a public discussion about men and sexualized violence against women. The discussion on women’s fear of violence and men’s violence against women in public space was not placed in a broader perspective. It thus lacked a focus on how fear of violence is part of and contributes to the construction of gendered power relations in public space. The findings of this thesis show how the focus on a single individual offender did not come to challenge long-term male power structures in public space. Instead, women’s fear of violence in public space was explained by the threats from the Haga Man while other examples of male domination of public space were overshadowed. As this thesis provides an understanding of how men and women responded and reacted to the threat from the Haga man, it contributes to a better understanding of how fear of violence affects people in their everyday lives.

Public narratives of safety in Umeå came to be about creating a safe way home for women; through talking about safe roads, safe means of transport,
and the need for following each other. Today have much of the discussion about how fear can be resisted centered on increasing lighting and removing darkening bushes on designing the physical environment so that it cannot be perceived as dark and intimidating. From a planning perspective safety is often discussed out a women's perspective, and women’s fear of violence in public space is a problem that I think today is taken more seriously than a few years ago. After the Haga Man's final assault in December 2005, the debate on male violence against women came in attention a slightly greater extent. We can hence se the effect as there are political proposals, and actions that are connected to the Haga Man's assaults. Even if there currently is an awareness and discussion this is still not discussed in terms of gendered power relations. The normality remains silent.
Sammanfattning (Summary in Swedish)


Inledningsvis var Hagamannens överfall koncentrerade till den centrala delen av staden, och gärningsmannen fick namnet "Hagamannen" efter bostadsområdet Haga, där de första överfallen inträffade. Haga anses i allmänhet vara ett lugnt och tryggt bostadsområde. Hagamannen, beskrevs i media som en man i åldern 25-35 med normal kroppsbyggnad och "normalt svenskt utseende". I mars 2006 greps Hagamannen och flera tidningar beskrev då hur hela staden firade. För detta projekt har totalt 47 kvinnor och män boende i Umeå intervjuats om sina upplevelser av rädsla och trygghet i det offentliga rummet. Denna avhandling undersöks både vad respondenterna berättar och hur de gör det, för en ökad förståelse av rädsla för våld i det offentliga rummet i förhållande till genusrelaterade maktrelationer.


Den tredje artikeln syftar till att undersöka betydelsen av rädska för våld i det offentliga rummet genom att fokusera på konstruktioner av kroppen under denna tidsperiod. Artikeln sammanfattar och utvidgar diskussionen av rädsla och säkerhet i det offentliga rummet till att omfatta både de som är rädda och de som uppfattas som hotfull av andra. Denna studie visar på att det växte fram en förändring kring uppfattningar och föreställningar om kvinnliga och manliga kroppar, från fokus på hur kvinnor bör bete sig, klä sig och föra sina kroppar i det offentliga rummet för att inte utsätta sig för.
onödig fara, till att mäns kroppsliga beteende kom i fokus, då de försökte framställa sig själva på ett sätt som inte uppfattades som skrämmande. Studien visar hur det skedde en förskjutning där de kroppar som skrämer hamnade i fokus för debatten snarare än de som är rädda. Beskrivningen av Hagamannen i exempelvis media, fokuserade på egenskaper hos förövarens kropp och "normala svenska utseendet", och därmed konstruerades också en bild av den farliga kroppen.


Resultat från denna avhandling visar att de kvinnliga respondenterna uttryckte liknande, gemensamma, erfarenheter, liknande syn på sin egen sårbarhet men också hur de upplevde förväntningar på att de skulle vara rädda. Detta visar därför ett mycket enhetligt mönster, och därmed en bild av rädsla som något gemensamt för alla kvinnor, oavsett olika ålder, klass och etnicitet i Umeå. Likheterna i kvinnornas reaktion på hotet från Hagamannen är ett uttryck för en normativ femininitet, där kvinnorna både uppfattade sig själva som sårbara, men också positioneras av andra som en grupp som behövde skyddas. Männens reaktioner på "hotet" från Hagamannen var däremot mera differentierade. Detta visade sig i hur de talade om sina egna rädslor, kvinnors rädsla för okända män och hur de kände att de blev missstänkiggjorda och hur de utpekades som potentiella förövare.
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30 March 2006; En fin och gullig pojk - Släktingar, vänner, grannar alla är chockade över att 33-åringen är Hagamannen (A nice and sweet boy - Relatives, friends, neighbors -everyone is shocked that 33-year-old is the Haga Man)

1 April, 2006; Nu vågar vi gå ut (Now we dare to go out)

*Expressen*

25 March 2000; Killarnas kamp för kvinnofrid. De gör Umeå gator tryggare efter våldtäkterna (The guys struggle for women’s safety. They make the streets of Umeå safer after the rape)
30 March 2006; Jag vet tjejer som firar med champagne (I know girls who are celebrating with champagne)

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21 January 2006; Kyrkklockorna i Umeå ringde för kvinnofrid (The church bells rang in Umeå for women’s safety)

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Appendix

Interview Guide
Appendix

Interview Guide

Background

Age
Education/work
Family
Accommodation, where are you living, how

Mobility pattern

- What kind of activities do you take part in, where, with whom?
- How do you get around, mode of transport?
- Can you describe what you did yesterday? Where did you go? How did these places feel?
- Has your mobility changed over time? Are there some areas you have started/stopped going to?
- Is there something you would like to do that you do not have the opportunity to do?

Perception of space

- What areas do you like? Why these areas?
- What do you associate with different areas? What is the first thing you think about regarding different areas?
- What do you think about these areas? What impacts your image of them?

Safe/unsafe space

- Can you describe a situation when you did not feel safe?
- When have you been afraid? Identify a situation. Where are you? How do you feel? How do you react?
- How/where/when do you feel safe?
- How/where/when do you feel unsafe?
- Are there places you do not use?
- What makes some situations, areas safe/unsafe