Everyday Aesthetics, Space, and the Sensory: Fear of Crime and Affect in Inner Sydney

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we explore pre-conscious aesthetic and sensorial aspects of affect in fear of crime. Drawing on data from focus groups undertaken in inner Sydney, Australia, we link the sensory and aesthetic preconditions of fear of crime to its affective, behavioural and cognitive elements. We argue that fear is grounded in the structural, personal and inter-subjective components of individual's lives and their interaction with physical and social environments, which then influence how individuals cognitively understand their own risks and react behaviourally to these emotional responses. By bringing alive the importance of environmental cues and the cultural and structural positions of those who are likely to frequently worry about victimisation, we hope to provoke a minor reassessment of, and encourage more focus on, fear's sensory and aesthetic origins.

Introduction

Understanding people's perceptions of crime remains a complex and complicated task. Almost as a footnote to early victim surveys (Ennis, 1967; Reiss, 1967; Biderman, 1967), a range of survey questions that aimed to capture (negative) perceptions about crime or worry about crime produced a construct labelled 'fear of crime' (Lee, 2007). The conceptual and methodological issues with fear of crime research are well rehearsed, indeed we have discussed these in some detail in a companion (quantitative) piece to this article (Lee *et al.*, 2020). Our goal in the current paper is to develop a deeper understanding of the aesthetic, sensorial and spatial aspects that provoke negative emotional responses to crime.

In the early 1990s and into the 2000s, a body of work developed that amounted to a 'deconstruction' of fear of crime as measured by the victim survey model. Some research experimented with a variety of new questions to establish just what elements of fear were being captured in established surveys (Ditton et al., 1999a; Ditton et al., 1999b; Farrall & Ditton, 1999; Jackson, 2004, 2009; Farrall et al., 2009). Other researchers used qualitative techniques, either through in-depth one-on-one interviews (Taylor et al., 1996; Pain, 1997; Hollway & Jefferson, 1997; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) or focus groups (Tulloch et al., 1998a; 1998b; Loader et al., 2000; Goodey, 1997). This 'qualitative turn' in fear of crime research (see Lee, 2015) raised new questions about the inter-subjective and experiential elements related to fear of crime.

The first section of this article revisits and expands upon some qualitative conceptual scholarship on fear of crime. In the second section we outline the methodology. The third section of the article integrates the results and analysis. Lastly, we discuss the implications and conclusions of this analysis. Overall, we argue that understanding emotional responses to crime necessitates a more thorough assessment of the aesthetic, sensorial, and spatial affects of the everyday that intersect with structural, personal biographical and inter-subjective components of individual's lives. The emotional responses to these affects in turn influence how individuals cognitively understand their own risks, and also how they react behaviourally to these emotional responses. To this end, we make the claim that what has been termed affective fear in fear of crime scholarship is something of a first order construct from which cognitive and behaviour responses to the perceived threat of crime follow.

Qualifying fear of crime

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was a moment when qualitative research methods began to hold some sway on the fear of crime research agenda. In more recent times, qualitative methods appear to have ceded ground or been pushed aside by increasingly sophisticated quantitative research—apart, perhaps, from feminist research that has continued to produce important qualitative insights (Fileborn, 2021; Walklate, 2011, 2018; Fanghanel, 2018; Pain & Smith, 2008). Subtleties around perceptions, emotions and behaviours can remain obscured when we rely solely on the survey model, especially when all one has are the stock demographic, behavioural, and neighbourhood perception variables of most fear of crime research. This means that the political, cultural, structural and expressive elements of worry about crime are often marginalised.

In this section we outline a conceptual and theoretical framework for qualitative fear of crime research. We incorporate key findings of innovations derived from quantitative research with cultural, visual, sensory, and spatial criminologies in order to reconnect an empirical analysis of fear of crime to the 'aesthetics of the everyday' (Saito, 2021), i.e. the physical environments we pass through and live in, the objects we engage with, and beyond this, non-visual experiences that sharpen our sensibility and speak to architectural practice and urban planning that are also dominated by the visual. There are existing models of qualitative research that provide a basis for the current framework. In the late 1990s, Tulloch *et al.* (1998a, 1998b; Lupton & Tulloch, 1999) used the findings of focus groups to question the direct link between 'fear' and 'crime'. They suggested, drawing on the anthropological work on risk and

dangerousness by Douglas (1966), that a range of social, economic, aesthetic and existential biographical variables could influence one's position in regard to what we might call a fear of crime discourse. As two of the authors note:

> An important development in understanding fear of crime is the positioning of people as reflexive subjects who experience and respond to crime via communal, aesthetic and shared symbolic meanings. We use the term 'reflexivity' here to encompass not simply a process of rationalist self-monitoring through cognitive or normative categories. … Aesthetic or hermeneutic reflexivity is rooted in background assumptions and unarticulated practices and in intuition, feeling, emotion and the spiritual. This type of reflexivity involves the processing of signs and symbols rather than simply 'information'. Aesthetic reflexivity relies upon an individual's membership of a community, moral and culturally learned and shared assumptions, preferences and categories. (Lupton & Tulloch, 1999, p. 512)

Hollway and Jefferson (1997a, 1997b, 2000), and later Gadd and Jefferson (2009), sought to understand fear of crime qualitatively using psycho-social frameworks drawn from psychoanalysis. A starting premise was that anxiety is a key human trait, and that the emotional responses to anxiety can be understood in the complex biographies of individual lives. Founded on post-structuralist theory, Jefferson and Hollway argued that the inter-subjective defending against anxiety can be central to understanding fear for some individuals. This, they suggest, re-links the concepts of fear and anxiety. As Gadd and Jefferson (2009) put it:

> In essence then, what we are arguing is that subject positions are negotiated in relation to the individual's biography and attendant anxieties, the discursive fields available to the individual (often constrained by their class, ethnicity and gender), and intersubjectively through the responses to others. Whether someone invests in the position of the fearful subject preoccupied with the ever-growing threat of victimisation depends, in part … on how available that position is to him or her. (Gadd & Jefferson, 2009, p. 139)

The difference between the two approaches discussed above is, in essence, the centrality of individual anxiety in Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) psycho-social approach. The authors argue that the cultural anthropological risk literature (see Lupton & Tulloch, 1999; Douglas, 1966) fails to take into account an individual perspective and has therefore not succeeded in re-theorizing the notion of the 'rationally calculating subject' it critiques. There is some truth in this, and the risk literature from which, for example, Lupton and Tulloch (1999) draw, is more likely to

fall back on structural concepts such as ontological insecurity to explain individual differences rather than exploring individual narratives and inter-subjective anxieties—although the methods do not necessarily exclude this.

However, we believe that by introducing an analysis of the aesthetics of everyday sensorial encounters, and the associated inter-subjectively experienced emotion of such encounters, we can draw together an analysis of both the individualised psycho-social elements of worry, and the cultural and structural preconditions that influence these. While this may sound relatively straightforward, it goes to the heart of fear of crime's ontology as a socially constructed yet instinctual and personal phenomenon. As Wrenn (2014, p. 338) has said of fear more generally, 'it must be studied as a process that develops under its own inertia, feeding off its antecedent and instinctual past, as well as a phenomenon that is shaped by and in turn shapes its institutional setting'.

Individual vulnerability, vulnerable populations, and ontological insecurity

Feelings of vulnerability are important to understanding an individual's or group's relationship to fear of crime (Killias, 1990; Jackson, 2009; Chataway & Hart 2019). We know, quantitatively, that the frequency of worry tends to be high when people judge the impact of crime to be high, and feel they have a low level of control over its incidence (Farrall et al., 2009). The concept of vulnerability has been crystallised into three related components (Killias, 1990). Firstly, worry about crime based on vulnerability is related to exposure to forms of non-negligible risk—a sense of vulnerability that reflects a risk that one feels they cannot easily guard against. Secondly, it reflects a sense of a loss of control, a lack of an effective defensive or protective measure or the absence of an escape mechanism. Thirdly, vulnerability reflects the anticipation that serious consequences could follow victimisation. Judgements of relative risk (how comparatively likely is it that people from one's own social group will fall victim) and absolute risk (how likely is it that one will become victim themselves?) are also important predictors of worry (Jackson, 2009).

Yet this characterisation of vulnerability, while useful, struggles to account for vulnerability as an imaginary, contingent on individual subjects, yet influenced by cultural systems of meaning, or indeed vulnerability as the result of structured power relations which serve to feed this imaginary. Jackson (2009, p. 382) has noted the need for fear of crime research to understand more about how 'dispositional perceptions of risk … interact with situational risk appraisals (the perceptions that relate to a specific situation to produce momentary worries about falling victim)'. Moreover, Walklate

(2011, 2018) has argued that much fear of crime research has reductively assessed vulnerability and failed to account for the analytical distinction between innate vulnerability, structural vulnerability, and experiential vulnerability (Walklate, 2018). In recent work, Fanghanel (2018, p. 418) has shown how 'rape culture' operates discursively at a bio-political level to construct 'the female body as a problem in public space'; it renders the female body vulnerable. She theorises this through a Deleuzo-Guattarian (1987) lens, with such a construct constituting part of the apparatus of the state.

We can also explore the same structural dynamic through what can be seen as a parallel notion of the *affect* of rape culture. That is, how these structural gender relations produce affect. However, where affect has been theorised in relation to fear of crime it has generally been loosely equated with the emotional elements of fear (Gabriel & Grieve, 2003)—as contrasted to the behavioural (conative) or cognitive (individual perceived risk). Questions that seek to understand affective fear include standard measures such as 'how worried are you about being a victim of … (particular crime)'. We are not suggesting that the complexity of these emotions have been understated. As Gray et al. (2011) argue:

> Emotions shape our beliefs, our relationship with others and the ways in which we operate in private and public spaces. Emotions about crime impart important information about how we feel about our neighbours, communities and culture. They can also influence our perceptions of the social world and affect our quality of life and our physical and psychological health. (Gray et al., 2011, p. 89)

Quantitative and qualitative researchers have taken emotional and affective fear seriously. The problem is, however, that there is slippage between emotional responses to crime and affect to the extent that affect is generally equated with emotion. This obscures careful consideration of the very everyday aesthetic, sensory and spatialised affective encounters that give rise to these emotions. To this end, we turn to cultural, visual, spatial, and ultimately, sensory criminology, and a multi-methods approach in the hope of linking expressions of worry, vulnerability and anxiety to everyday aesthetic encounters. Our aim is to develop more nuanced policy on interventions based on fear of crime research.

Affect, aesthetics, space, and the sensorial

Aesthetics

Research on fear of crime has, by definition, discussed perception in depth, in the sense of how people make sense of their social and physical environment. Yet, while visual and other environmental cues have been seen as important in explaining emotional responses to fear of crime (and by extension affect), little work has taken a fuller aesthetic approach. As an exception, Young (1996, p. 15) introduced the notion of an imaginary of crime, 'the process by which we make images of crime', and how images of crime make us. She uses the notion of the split between I/eye to examine the relationship between seeing or not seeing (the eye) and the way subject formation (I) only takes place through the construction of others. This aesthetics of the body of crime offers a conceptual frame for understanding the complexity of affect—or fear of crime as an expression of the sensorial, embodied. Vanderveen (2018) too, has discussed the potential of further exploring visual and aestheticized methods as cues for respondents in fear of crime research.

Space

In many ways such research aligns with a recent provocation by McClanahan and South (2020) for the development of a 'sensory criminology', which would extend beyond cultural criminology or visual criminology's occularcentrism. Importantly for our argument, McClanahan and South (2020) build on Hayward's articulation of the need to thoroughly research 'phenomenological place over abstract space in an attempt to take seriously the cultural and structural relationships that contribute to crime and disorder or, for that matter, community safety and stability' (2012, p. 442). While Hayward notes that cultural criminology already has a sophisticated rendering of space where it is 'understood almost as if it were a living thing, a multi-layered congress of cultural, political and spatial dynamics' (Hayward, 2012, p. 443), he also suggests that drawing from the spatial turn in cultural geography might provide understandings of how 'landscapes function as systems of social reproduction' (2012, p. 449). The point here is that while spaces and places reproduce culture, culture also reproduces place in the classic de Certeauian (1984) sense.

Hayward proposes what he terms 'five spaces of cultural criminology' (2012); more-than-representational spaces, parafunctional spaces, container spaces, virtual/networked spaces and acoustic spaces. All of these spaces are important in understanding the interaction between culture and place, but of keen interest to us for the present study are the first two; more-than-representational spaces and parafunctional spaces. More-than-representational space refers to, to simplify

Hayward's definition, the capacity of space not to just operate symbolically at the level of culture, as it has tended to be operationalized in environmental criminology for example, but rather to be made up relationally. To both give, and to take on meaning through structured power relations and through intersubjective engagement. Parafunctional space, in part drawn from Papastergiadis' (2006) spatial aesthetics, refers to spaces that 'lack any formal surveillance mechanisms, but they also represent the abandoned, anonymous and seemingly meaningless spaces within our midst—the places on the (metaphorical) edge of society' (Hayward, 2012, p. 453). As we will see, both types spaces are useful in understanding the affects that result from individuals' interactions with spaces and places.

The sensorial

In articulating a sensory criminology McClanahan and South (2020) suggest the need to also map sensory spaces. They argue that:

> [W]e can think of the five interior sensorial spaces as mapping over the five external (though also affective) spaces described by Hayward (emphasis in original). Transposing internal and embodied sensorial spaces (sight, sound, taste, smell and touch) over and across the external spaces elaborated by Hayward offers a new layer to the map of cultural criminological thought, new and intensely affective sites of analysis that we feel strengthen cultural criminology's already well demonstrated commitment to creative ways of thinking about crime, harm, control and power. (McClanahan & South, 2020, p. 6)

This has important implications for understanding fear of crime more generally, and the affective elements of the fear of crime concept specifically. Below we attempt to build a nuanced understanding of fear of crime based on the aesthetic and sensory elements described by our respondents. In particular, we take seriously the affective elements of fear of crime as a way of understanding and analysing subjective and inter-subjective expressions of fear, risk, worry or concern and linking these to broader structural issues. In this we also take cues from Massumi (1993) and his conception of affective fear not as emotion (as it seems to be generally articulated in the fear of crime scolarship) but as producing particular emotional responses in subjects:

> Emotions and the character types they define are the specific social content of the fear affect as the contemporary human equation. They are derivatives of that equation: secondary expressions (in the mathematical sense) of capitalist powers of existence. Character is the derivative of a power equation. It is power

> determined, as presence-effect. Emotional makeup is the face power turns toward the predictably unbalanced, saleably empty content of an individual life (Massumi, 2013, p. 25)

This expands our notion of *affect* from simply the emotional to an analysis of the sensorial, spatial and political (to the pre-conscious, pre-emotional). Yes, fear of crime is about how we feel, our experiences, and expressions (Gray et al., 2008), but it is also about how these feelings and emotions are derived through what we see (or don't see)—inter-subjective experiences, and differential relationships to and of power. The problem then, is that while fear of crime research tells us how frequently or intensely (on a quantitative level), respondents express or report experiencing worry (and it can even tell us something about the behavioural responses and evaluations of risk which over-lap with these emotional responses), it gives us little detail of the sensorial, imaginative, aestheticized. That is, it accounts for the emotional responses to affect, but does not explore its pre-conscious conditions. We can explain this by returning to the way in which rape culture operates in Fanghanel's model discussed above. The affect associated with rape culture are 'prepersonal' and non-conscious (Massumi in Deluze & Guattari, 1987), that is, worry about rape is an emotional response related to the affects of a structured rape culture. Feelings of vulnerability may also be a response to rape culture, and here 'prepersonal' affect is (inter)subjectively processed in relation to cognitive evaluations of one's physical capacities, but also in relation to the imaginary of an assault, themselves the result of crime narratives, stories, media reports and personal experiences.

With this renewed perspective we can then reconnect a more expansive view of affect with what has become known as the 'ABC' of fear of crime in a more nuanced way; the affective, the behavioural (or conative or behavioural) and the cognitive (Gabriel & Greve, 2003; Gerbner et al., 2010). However, even here we need to expand on the overlapping nature of these concepts—there is no clear Kantian distinction between cognition (a conceptual judgement) and affect (an aesthetic or nonconceptual judgement). Rather, as Pouivet (2000, p. 51) puts it, 'I suggest we view aesthetic emotion as a function of a cognitive activity. I do not see aesthetic experience as noncognitive; nor do I see knowledge as a nonemotional process'. So, our analysis proceeds with attention to the aesthetic, spatial, and sensory elements of our participant responses, with an emphasis on interrogating affect in its broader context, its pre-personal context. However, we do this by thematising the analysis via the ABC of fear of crime: affect, behaviour and cognition.

Method

Thirteen focus groups were conducted in 2016 across the Sydney Local Government Area with seventy-one respondents in total (n=71). The purposive sample for the focus groups was recruited to gain a deep understanding of the lived experience of a range of perceived vulnerable groups or non-resident groups. These groups included a cross section of the community, but perhaps more importantly, a number of harder-to-reach or minority community groups took part in these focus groups. These included a group of Cantonese speakers, a group of Serbian speakers, students, LGBTI youth, and also people who work (rather than live) in the area. This purposive sample, while non-representative, allows us to enhance understanding of the boundaries of a phenomenon or situation (O'Leary, 2014). The interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in the analysis, interpretation, and writing stages of the study. Transcripts were thematically coded in NVivo 11 software and these themes cross checked using inter-rater reliability. The responses have been anonymised to protect the identity of the participants. A key has been developed to identify demographic characteristics of each respondent.[1]

Results and analysis

Affect and fear

A public housing resident clearly articulated the way background anxiety influences some participants' lives. This perspective also neatly encapsulates the ways in which one's socio-economic position, which in turn orders life temporally, spatially and emotionally, align with individual biographies and anxieties to create uncertain and anxious subjectivities:

> I think that feeling unsafe and feeling on edge has become the new normal. That's what our expectation is. As much as this place is home, it's a troubled home and we need to be on our guards. (R7: Female, 48, Northcott Resident, 2010)

For this woman, feeling 'on edge' and 'on … guard' is normal. This anxiety is structured into, and felt as part of life's narrative. Home, as it is, is 'troubled'. This fear, then, is not some irrational emotive response to crime. It is, using our heuristic framework of affect, an understandable response to what she interprets as a 'new normal'. In this sense the new normal is pre-conscious, with feelings of unsafety flowing from her everyday context in this 'troubled home'.

For some respondents, night-time increased feelings of worry. The affect generated through sensory encounters built-up to produce an emotive narrative for this young woman:

> Well I wouldn't visit Sydney at night. I just come in the daytime and I don't like catching trains at night because I've seen people on the train, like really weird people. The train is two hours, it's a long time and in the dark, no, no good. And the city is dangerous at night because you hear on the news all the time that someone got stabbed and someone got shot and someone got robbed in Sydney. So I wouldn't come here at night, only in the daytime, unless I had somewhere to stay overnight at a friend's house or something and I was with a friend, but I'd never come up here on my own at night. (R34: Female, 19, LGBTI, visitor)

First there is the issue of darkness; the perception that dangerous situations or individuals might be out of view. The sensorial affect of darkness is felt acutely, even with an absence of the specific genesis of the fear. This affect is intensified through *seeing* 'really weird people' and the combination of feelings and emotions that this engenders, as well as *hearing* news about other people being victimised. These sensory aspects then, are also mediated through a structured and gendered experience of the enclosed 'more-than-representational' space of the train which heighten 'feelings of *inter-alia* fear, danger, ennui, ... isolation' and vulnerability—a 'territorialization of affect' (Hayward, 2012, p. 451). The emotional response to this affective encounter in turn results in behavioural modification, such as not visiting Sydney at night, and cognitive evaluations that 'the city is dangerous'. However, it begins with the pre-conscious and the phantasms that darkness can conjure, and that space can capture.

As per the previous respondent, the issues of crime's imaginary (Young, 1996) runs through the interview data with those that worry regularly. What might happen when one *can't see* allows for the imposition of scenarios, narratives, emotions—here from a public housing resident regarding a neighbour that can't be trusted:

> I think just a reflection of ... the unknown. I'm not worried about the next-door neighbour, if I can see him I'll take my chances, but it's that thing about what does he do when you're not there, that's the thing—no control over that. That's the issue. (R8: Female, Elderly, Northcott Resident, 2010**)**

Having 'no control' over a particular spatial situation was clearly the problem for this woman, heightening her sense of vulnerability (Jackson, 2009). This lack of control

was, however, about the 'unknown' actions of this neighbour. While suggesting she is 'not worried', that only extends to her ability to collect information using visual and other sensory cues—when she can *see* him, and thus be aware exactly what the neighbour is up to. Once her ability to *see* and thus manage the risk is removed 'when you're not there', her emotionally related worry increased—and so did her cognitive evaluation of risk. Behaviourally also, she was reluctant to leave the spatialised security of her flat—even this spatialised security was contingent on sensorially containing the neighbour. Affective fear then becomes embodied experiences through these sensory narratives.

Affect and cognition

The sensory elements are also important in relation to evaluations of safety in the street. As this woman asks herself, '*how do I feel about travelling this way tonight'?*:

> When I go out socially in Surry Hills, travelling from Surry Hills to Redfern, if I'm riding sometimes I'll go the quieter back streets to stay away from cars. There's one route I take and think oh, how do I feel about travelling this way tonight, because I know it's a quiet area and there are not many people around and you sort of get the butterflies in the stomach, but I tend to do it anyway. If I was walking from Surry Hills to Redfern I just tend to take Cleveland Street and stay on the busier streets where there are people around. I live in a secure building and I like that, not just because I'm in Redfern, it's anywhere in the city—I love to be in a secure building, it just gives me a sense of safety I guess. (R28: Female, 45, 2016 Resident and Worker)

Clearly, how she 'feels' about the street drives her evaluation of risk—that is, the emotional influences the cognitive. However, this is not an objective measure, but based on feeling 'butterflies in the stomach'. These butterflies are also influenced by the sonic landscape—it's 'quiet'. While she acts spatially against her feelings of worry to 'tend to do it anyway', being on her bicycle reduces her sense of risk, physically distancing her from the street. On top of that, she speaks of the 'sense of safety' (again something felt), that she experiences being in a 'secure building'—the safety of what Hayward has called a 'container space' (2012, p. 453). So here, the affect of the urban environment that she sees and experiences provokes entangled intuitive and emotional feelings, and thoughts of changes in behaviour, not to mention risk evaluations based on these quite complex cognitive processes that lead from the pre-conscious (Massumi, 1993) and sensory.

The affect of structured gender power relationships to fear comes into stark relief, particularly in relation to feelings of vulnerability around crimes like sexual assault:

> I would—in the day time advise [people] to go wherever they want, explore as much as they want, and mostly at night time as well. I suffer from anxiety and I am naturally really cautious, being sexually assaulted is my biggest fear in life, so I'm constantly aware of that. Even if it's in the day time I'm constantly looking out, but I think that's my own fear. Even on buses and trains I just am constantly—if it's just me and another person on the train and stuff, I'm just a bit more aware. But I feel like that's my own anxiety, I don't think that's something everyone would feel. I just get a little bit worked up and afraid sometimes. (R46: Female, 20, Visitor)

This young woman articulates her 'own anxiety' about sexual assault—expressed as being 'my biggest fear in life'. For her this fear is singular and intensely biographical, even as it reflects gendered narratives of 'structured vulnerability' (Walklate, 2018) and particular shared imaginaries (Young, 1996). Moreover, this affect plays out spatially 'if it's just me and another person on the train and stuff' in more-than-representation spaces of fear (Hayward, 2012). And this fear is clearly felt at an emotional level to the point that she gets 'a little bit worked up and afraid'. She is almost apologetic for her fear, possibly feeling it is out of proportion with others who could explore at night comfortably in a way that might make her anxious. In this sense fear 'feeds off its own inertia' (Wrenn, 2014, p. 338). Yet this gendered fear is structural and a 'pre-personal' (Massumi, 1993), a shared experience for many women rightly concerned about men's sexual violence and rape cultures that support this (Fanghanel, 2018). Again, the behavioural norms and cognitive evaluations that follow are influenced more broadly by the affective and aesthetic elements, but here we clearly see how these interact with important subjective biographical variables.

A young gay male participant highlights how fear can play a real part in guiding people's behaviour; but also how the feelings of unsafety come from a broad mix of external, spatial, structural and biographical inter-subjective pre-conscious affects. He notes earlier in the interview that he is worried on public transport at night, but there are a whole range of behaviours and decisions that are limited by his worry:

> I do like have like sort of concerns for my own safety. Like I try to get home early and like some neighbours like have drug problems and like when there's been like sort of problems at my own place with people living with me, like one person.

> Yeah, I just have like fear for my own safety. I've thought about trying to move to a new place but I figure now I'll just stay on my own. (R32: Male, 24, LGBTI Group)

There are very real personal, physical and spatial issues driving his concerned emotional response, that overlay both his cognitive perceptions of risk (which are high), and his behavioural traits to 'get home early'. These 'problems at [his] own place' and with some 'neighbours' means his home remains an 'affective landscape' producing a fearful emotional response (Hayward, 2012) which is, in this case inescapable. His perceived vulnerability, a deeply felt ontological insecurity, essentially follows him around, including on his trips on public transport.

An older male respondent almost encapsulates the entire theory of the way in which affect produces emotional responses based on sensory experiences, individual biography and structural issues. Indeed, this is quite an accurate summation of the theoretical approach of affect that we have outlined above. It accurately connects individual anxieties and biographical characteristics to incidents, stories, and socio-structural concerns:

> I think some of these scenarios, too, it really depends on your individual perception. Just the relatively minor incident that [other respondent] had the other day, he will shrug it off and go, just a loony, a bit of an idiot, but someone else, that would be crippling for them, they'd be a bundle of nerves, they wouldn't come out of their house for weeks, what's happened to society, everything I'm reading in the newspapers is right. Perception is different. (R16: Male, 83, 2050)

Perceived vulnerability, then, is amplified by prior victimisation, too. This woman having been robbed experiences worry acutely of a night. As a result, her behaviour is altered—she walks 'in the middle of the street'. While this might actually increase her danger of being injured by a motor-vehicle (an objective measure of risk), this is a risk she is clearly willing to take in dealing with her worry:

> I was robbed twice in the street. Now, if it is late, when I get off the bus I walk in the middle of the street. There are two streets to go to my house. The drivers in the cars can see me. When they pass, I stand and wait for them to pass. The footpaths are not well-lit and it is scary at night. (R62: Serbian speaker, Female, 69, Visitor, 2217)

For her, the sensory elements of the night are again fear inducing—amplified by the fact that things are 'not well-lit'. In a sense she projects her past victimisation, the

dark background of the night bringing pre-conscious affect into emotional experience. The spatialised geography of the situation is cognitively well mapped out—only two streets to her house—but two streets of sensory experiences where vision is obscured on footpaths that are 'not well lit'.

The sensory elements of spaces were also protective factors for some—local familiarity and seeing and hearing lots of people around activating spaces. These welcoming aesthetic cues can provoke feelings of inclusion:

> I feel quite safe around Redfern, maybe because I live near the station and there's always people around. I think where there is a lot of people out at night, generally I think it's a safer area. (R11: Female, 69, 2016)

Others, because of the accepting nature of people around areas where they study:

> No. I don't feel unsafe or like I'm going to be harassed or anything. I think around UTS campus is quite an accepting and diverse range of people and they're all really understanding, or what I've experienced so far. So my perceptions of safety in this area have been great. Up until now I haven't had anything to make me believe otherwise. (R43: Female, 27, Visitor)

So for these respondents, their cognitive evaluations of risk were also very much led by their inter-subjective experiences, aesthetic evaluations, and sensory determinations, which shaped their feelings about the spaces in question.

Affect and behavioural

In many ways, behaviours are the most tangible and easily identifiable response to the fear of, or perceived risk of crime. Given these are experiential they are also easily articulated by respondents. However, as we explore these, we again see that it is the affective sensorial elements of crime's imaginary projected on to environmental cues, and the structural, biographical and intersubjective variables with which they intersect, that influence these behavioural changes:

> At night-time I always avoid the stairwells from a safety point of view—I don't want to see someone using them as a toilet. From walking two dogs I'm aware of where the cameras are now and I tend to stay in areas where there are cameras. And the boldness of people—you get into the lift with a total stranger and they'll ask you point-blank where can I get some ice; do you have a syringe—those sorts of questions. So, I'm always like sorry, mate, I don't know, sorry—and I get out of

> the lift and get home as soon as I can. But I think the stairwells are definitely a no-go zone. (R7: Female, 48)

Here the stairwell becomes a 'parafunctional space' (Papastergiadis, 2010; Hayward, 2012)—a zone 'designed for one function but have been reclaimed by different people and adapted for alternative uses' (Papastergiadis, 2010)—in this case a toilet, and the lifts spaces for drug dealing. These 'no go' zones affect avoidance behaviours and pre-figure particular spatial movements such as staying 'in the areas where there are cameras'. An inter-subjective experience with a 'total stranger' asking about illicit drugs helps to bring crime's pre-conscious imagining into a foreseeably risky scenario and renders the space of the lift in a particular way—essentially remaking the space.

The following respondent specifically talks about 'the psychological factor' and warnings circulated that 'someone might throw something off the stairs'. Here, behaviour is altered to cope with the perceived threat that has been narrated by others. This threat does not come from experience *per se*, but from stories. That is not to suggest that the threat is not real, only to highlight again the role of imagining in these scenarios and the subsequent affect that results in behaviour modification:

> The psychological factor. A lot of people are scared. They say, we're better not to go around the building, we'd better go straight up the stairs than go round this way by the street because somebody may throw something and we're not safe. (R15: Female, 70, 2017)

The participant above also feels unsafe due to the inter-subjective and shared feelings and emotions—'a lot of people are scared'. This inter-subjective experience of fear creates space for the respondent to take on a position as a 'fearing subject' (Lee, 2007), sharing these concerns. These shared concerns again come from feelings about, and feelings that construct, particular types of spaces. The building as a danger 'that somebody might throw something off' becomes a parafunctional space, a launching pad for objects, and the stairs in this case, a safe path 'straight' to ones' flat (although not somewhere to loiter).

The following participant articulates in quite a complex way the steps she takes to feel safe in getting home. What plays on her mind, the imagining of where trouble might be, the 'nice dark spots and lovely little alcoves'. As she puts it, people 'feel' the alternative route is much safer:

> The buses run along Elizabeth St. People in my building normally—I live in Dobell [public housing building], but they don't get off at the Wellington St stop, they'd rather get off at the McEvoy St stop and walk down McEvoy which is very well lit and there's usually traffic there, too, which is why the little so-and-sos go to the traffic lights, but it's fairly safe to walk there, whereas Wellington St has nice dark spots and some lovely little alcoves where people can hop out and get your handbag. So most people from that end of town walk down McEvoy; it's much safer, they feel. That's what I do. It's shorter anyhow. I don't have to walk quite as far that way. (R12: Female, 77, 2017)

So, again, the sensory cues of these 'dark spots and lovely little alcoves' where vision is limited that provoke an emotional response (that actualise a fear)—which in turn directs behaviours and assessment of risk. There is also present the inter-subjective element in her colourful description, 'they' and 'most people' being others who share her concerns. On the other hand, there are the nameless imagined victimisers—'little so and sos', bag-snatchers. Sticking to the 'well-lit' areas provides a cognitively safe passage and a different sensory experience.

Not that everyone's behaviour modification is about the use of space, although it does speak to the capacity to move and react quickly in that space. For some, wearing clothing that provides for a quick getaway or even carrying 'items of self-defence' would help them 'feel better':

> I absolutely always wear shoes that I can run in. I try to wear things that would be easy to move quickly in, so trousers, not tight jeans or short skirts. I think sometimes, if it was legal to carry items for self-defence that would feel better. (R33: Female, 19, LGBTI, visitor, 2048)

There is of course an age issue here. A younger woman feeling her perceived vulnerability might be reduced with the capacities she has to fight back, and to escape any dangerous encounter (Killias, 1990). But here we also see the structural elements of fear writ large—the heightened emotional fear here is not from experience, but structured gendered affects that produce such vulnerability (Walklate, 2018).

For this respondent, going out at night is something they prefer not to do, and a taxi home is ordered when they do. Again, one's sensory assessment of the area as 'disorderly', things out of place, drives these behaviours. However, being of Chinese background clearly amplifies the issue again, creating the intersection of the sensory,

and the biographical vulnerabilities. She then goes on to detail later in the interview the structural difficulties of communications with neighbours or indeed, police:

> In our area, I am still concerned. My area is quite disorderly. We don't go out at night. If we do, we come home in a taxi, quickly get inside my place. ... Overall, the public order is still not good. Scary. I am still scared. (R 67: Cantonese speaker, female, 2016)

Finally, no matter how strong the emotional response of fear is, some people feel they can work against it behaviourally. The final word goes to this elderly female participant who's 'heart beats really fast' with fear, but who is more than ready for a fight:

> To be quite honest, I forget about myself sometimes. I just worry about other people. I always try and think I'll fix that mongrel up. I may be frightened but I don't go there—inside my heart beats really fast—I'm ready for you, go for it. (R8: Female, 74, 2010)

Conclusion

That people's perceptions and worries about crime can be strongly emotional has never been in question. However, the full range of sources of that emotion have been harder to pinpoint. Our analysis of qualitative responses to questions about fear of crime in this article has focused on the affects of everyday interactions individuals have with aesthetic, spatial, and sensory cues. These interactions highlight the meaning-making processes that construct crimes imaginary even as they remake, reshape, and (re)present those very objects, spaces and experiences. This inter-subjective experiential process is in turn marked by biographical, cultural, and structural factors that result in individual expressions of worry being diverse, but also adhering to particular dominant-narratives—gendered worry about rape for example. Other dominant-narratives concern the sensory—fear of dark places being a recurring one in our data. Spaces, too, have meaning attached, and while not in any way universal, the train carriage here represented a space that could be unsafe for some depending on demographic and biographical factors.

We have also attempted to re-conceptualise affect as pre-conscious, and emotional worry or fear as part of an emotional response that is triggered by these pre-conscious cues. Further, we have highlighted how many of these preconscious cues are sensory—things seen (or not seen), heard, or felt though crime's imaginings that then provoke fear: the disorderly street, the urine smelling stairwell, dark recesses where an offender may hide. We have argued that these affects which provoke emotion are a

higher order element of fear of crime's three components and that negative personal risk assessment and behaviour modification, if indeed they take place, are likely to follow these affective provocations.

However, we also wish to emphasise that these affects are strongly mediated by experience and biography. Firstly, through the socio-structural drivers of people's lives and living conditions; and secondly through biographical and inter-subjective issues that will be unique to individuals. In the first instance, these respondents were predominantly from groups that could be considered marginal or vulnerable. Many live somewhat precarious lives, sometimes in less-than-optimal public housing or where threats (real and imagined) from neighbours, strangers or the broader community play a part in feelings of personal vulnerability. These concerns are amplified through structured gender power relations, homophobia, and racial or ethnic marginalisation. They are also filtered through the inter-subjective and biographical which might concern issues of past victimisation, issues with neighbours, personal relationships, housing location, or simply being an anxious person. Indeed, all of these structural and intersubjective elements are borne out in our focus group data.

Implications

All this has implications for perceptions of crime research and scholarship in terms of taking a more wholistic account of affect, aesthetics and the sensorial. It also has implications for policy in a range of ways including the need for more complex responses to the ways in which people use and engage spaces and places beyond the relative simplicity of CPTED (which relies on an imagined rational calculating actor). In offering this modest reassessment we hope to encourage further interrogation of the affective, sensorial, spatial pre-conscious dimensions of fear (pre-fear if you like), to encourage more focus on fear's everyday aesthetics , rather than responses to these. Large quantitative surveys do not capture the emotional and sensory responses that such intersectionalities can illicit, and which need to be considered if nuanced policy interventions in response to emotionally and sensory driven aspects of fear of crime are to be addressed.

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Acknowledgement

Reviews

Footnotes

1.

Key to the respondent quotations:

R: Respondent and respondent number; Gender: male or female; Age: specific age or if not given 'Elderly'; Postcode if local (see Table A2, Appendix 3); LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans or Intersex; If the respondent identified as a specific cultural background that was also included. ↩