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TESTING SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODELS OF FEAR OF CRIME IN SLOVENIA

Research and theorising about the fear of crime has, in the main, been dominated by researchers who have relied upon sociological or socio-demographic variables to account for variations in fear levels. Whilst this body of work has contributed greatly to our understanding of the fear of crime, we are still far from a full understanding of this important and most corrosive aspect of contemporary society. This paper first compares three independent evaluations of what is currently just about the only social psychological model of the fear of crime. The data, collected in Slovenia (1998), Scotland and Holland, sheds further light on both the social psychological model proposed and the wider study of the fear of crime. In addition to this comparison, the authors have conducted a survey on fear of crime using the same questionnaire in Slovenia in 2001. Some preliminary results are presented in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

The fear of crime is nowadays one of the most researched topics in contemporary international criminology. In the United Kingdom and United States, crime surveys have expanded rapidly since the late 1960s. For example, the British Crime Survey now biennially interviews in the region of 10,000 residents of England and Wales. This survey has shed light on attitudes to policing, victimisation, perceptions of risk and people's fear of crime. In Germany the first nation-wide victim survey was done in 1989 (Kury u.a. 1992). In the last 15 years several surveys were carried out (see for example Kury *et al*, 2000). The results of the first representative nationwide survey about victimization of women with a sample of more then 10.000, were presented 2004 (Mueller and Schroettle 2004). Similarly, in Slovenia, two major crime and victimisation surveys have been undertaken to date. The first in 1992 and the second in 1997 (Pavlović 1998). A comparative survey about sexual victimization in Germany and Slovenia was published 2004 by Kury, Meško *et al*. (see this volume). The findings of the UK and USA research are now well known. A plethora of studies have concluded that the fear of crime impinges upon the well-being of a large proportion of the population. Some have even gone as far as to suggest that the fear of crime is now a larger problem than crime itself (Hale 1992, Bennett 1990 and Warr 1984). Chambers and Tombs (1984:29) reviewing the 1982 British Crime Survey (Scotland) reported that "more than half of the respondents (58%) said that at some time in the past they had been concerned about the possibility of being a victim of crime". In Germany the discussion about fear of crime, especially in the media, is often the background for asking for sharper punishments.

As well as receiving much attention at an empirical level, many have attempted to explain the fear of crime. These efforts have tended to be dominated by researchers influenced by sociological insights. Thus such variables as age, gender, household income, friendship networks, length of residence, earlier victimization experiences and so on have been suggested as key in explaining fear of crime. Such models have indeed been found to be of utility in explaining the fear of crime.

However, by concentrating on sociological variables, researchers have largely ignored social psychological and psychological factors that may be important in explaining the fear of crime (Van der Wurff *et al* 1989:142 and 1986, and Farrall *et al*, forthcoming). This domination of the literature by sociologically informed theorising has ignored important processes occurring at the individual level. In this article we discuss further analyses of the only social psychological model of the fear of crime (Van der Wurff *et al*, 1989). The aim of the current article is to shed further light on the relationship between social psychological factors and the fear of crime, and as such to develop further the analysis undertaken by Van der Wurff *et al* (1989) and Farrall *et al* (forthcoming) and our own analyses on the basis of international data, especially from Germany and Slovenia, including other regions.

This article is constructed in the following fashion. We start by outlining the social psychological model proposed by Van der Wurff *et al*. Following this we describe the methodologies employed in each of the surveys (and the countries in which these surveys were conducted). We then discuss the question wording employed in the surveys. Having assessed the data in terms of its suitability for replicating the earlier study, we present our findings. We conclude the article with a discussion of what these findings mean for the social psychological investigation of the fear of crime and for crime surveys in general.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY MODEL

The social psychological model that we shall discuss in this article was originally proposed and tested by Van der Wurff *et al* (1989) using data collected in the Netherlands. Van der Wurff *et al* develop a social psychological model based on the assumption that the fear of crime is associated with four social psychological components. These four they describe as follows (1989:144-5)[1]:

"The **Attractivity** [component[2]] is intended to refer to the extent to which people see themselves or their possessions as an attractive target or victim for criminal activities. It involves the attribution of a characteristic to oneself and one's possessions. One thinks, for example, of the peculiar sensation one may have when walking on the street with a great deal of money. Another example would be the fear of burglary, which may be experienced if one keeps valuable articles in the house.

The **Evil Intent** [component] relates to the wrongdoer's role in the phenomenon. It is represented by the extent to which a person attributes criminal intentions to another individual or particular group. Thus, one may be afraid of having one's pocket picked the moment one sees a gypsy. Or one can experience fear as a result of a feeling that society is in moral decay and a conviction that present-day youth are prepared to commit murder for a paltry sum of money.

The **Power** [component] refers to the degree of self-assurance and feeling of control that a person has with respect to possible threat or assault by another. In principle it is a question of two related sub-factors: one's own power and the power of the other. The first of these relates to a person's confidence in his[3] own efficacy. This need not be directly related to the dangers of crime, of course. Feelings of self-assurance, control, and confidence in meeting the challenges of life will by generalisation tend to lower a person's sensitivity to feelings of threat. Almost anything can contribute to the feeling of one's own power, from a good family relationship to an optimistic temperament.

The power of the other is the wrongdoer's side of the coin. It concerns characteristics attributed to potential criminals, such as their strength, agility, resources, and general

ability to carry out their criminal intentions. A comparison of one's own power with power of other determines whether a person faces confrontations with that other with confidence or not. Thus, the idea that even the smallest thief goes about carrying weapons can lead to feelings of uneasiness or fear, if one has no compensating power of one's own.

Criminalisable Space is the fourth and final [component]. Whereas the first [component] refers to the potential victim, the second to the potential wrongdoer, and the third to both of these parties, the last ŠcomponentĆ has to do with the situation in which a crime may take place. The emphasis is on characteristics of place and time and on the presence of others, It is a question of the extent to which a situation lends itself to criminal activities in the eyes of a possible victim – of how much the situation facilitates crime or the criminal. A criminalisable situation might, for example, include walking at night through a poorly lit pedestrian subway or through a dark wood, although estimates of criminalisability for any one situation can naturally vary between individuals. The interest here lies in the extent to which people have a general tendency to heed the criminalisability of the situations into which they venture."

As is evident from outlining their model, Van der Wurff *et al*'s primary consideration in the construction of the model was the perception of the individual. Van der Wurff *et al* (1989:143-4) are careful to note that there is no causal ordering inherent in their model. That is to say that these components are merely associated with fear of crime. The fear of crime may exert an influence upon these components and vice versa they may exert an influence upon it. A further feature of this model is that it operationalises Young's (1988 and 1992) observation that the research on the fear of crime has ignored the perpetrators of crimes, but might include them in future models.

VAN DER WURFF ET AL'S RESULTS

From their data (N = 440), Van der Wurff *et al* find that the social psychological model explained about 24% of the variance of the fear of crime (1989:155). This is more variance in fear of crime levels than is usually explained. A previous replication of this model (Farrall *et al*, 1999) finds similar results, although they report a significant gender bias in the model and propose that socio-demographic variables can be added to the model to increase its power still further.

THE PAST STUDIES

The replication of any study is a generally worthwhile endeavour. Replication allows for an assessment of the both the extent to which one can generalise the findings of the model to different populations, and the validity of the instrument used. In this article we compare the initial results reported by van der Wurff *et al* with those of Farrall *et al* and with a similar survey undertaken in Slovenia (and hitherto unreported). We are concerned primarily with the utility and operation of the social psychological model, and for the sake of brevity will not concern ourselves with either socio-demographic variables or the confounding issue of gender.

SLOVENIA: GENERAL OUTLINE AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Slovenia is a small country on the Adriatic coast, between Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Its total population is about 2 million. Slovenia became a full independent state in 1991, until that time it had been part of Yugoslavia. Most of the population lives in urban areas, but there is still a large rural population spread evenly across the

country. The major industries include wine making, tourism and coal mining. Slovenia is a part of European Union since May 2004.

The data comes mostly from a survey of people living in three urban areas in Ljubljana, (the capital city of Slovenia with a population of about 300,000 residents). The survey is of residents aged 15 years and over. The fieldwork was conducted in 1998. The survey yielded usable responses from 443 respondents. Data were collected in person.

SCOTLAND: GENERAL OUTLINE AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Scotland is one of the three countries which forms the British Isles. It has a total population of around 5 millions, about half of which lives in the countries two principle cities or the conurbation which bridges them (referred to in local parlance as the 'central belt'). Once heavily industrialised (the major industries included coal mining, steel working and ship building), Scotland went to a severe economic recession in the 1980s (along with many other industrialised parts of Europe), but has enjoyed something of an economic renaissance since then. Fiercely independent of the central control of London (capital of England), Scotland had recently be granted partial independence in the form of it's own parliament.

The data for Scotland comes from a survey of those aged 16 years and over living at private addresses in the Strathclyde area of Scotland. People were randomly selected by their address and interviewed face to face by trained interviewers. This took place in Strathclyde (unrecently a region of Scotland, but since the survey the region has been broken up into smaller regions).

The survey was undertaken during January-March 1996. The survey yielded responses from 1,629 respondents, although only a subset (N = 485) were asked the questions relating to Van der Wurff *et al's* social psychological model.

THE NETHERLANDS: GENERAL OUTLINE AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Netherlands is a Western European country which boarders the North Sea, Belgium and Germany. Its total population is about 15.5million. The economy is highly developed and it is based on private enterprise. Industrial activity features food- processing, oil-refining and metal working. The highly mechanised agricultural sector employs only 4% of the labour force but provides large surpluses for export and the domestic food-processing industry.

The data comes from a survey of people living in two medium-sized cities in the Netherlands, in two neighbourhoods per city. A random stratified sample of 110 residents was drawn from each of the four neighbourhoods. In each area 110 people were interviewed (van der Wurff: 1989:149).

COMPARING SLOVENIAN, SCOTTISH AND DUTCH SAMPLES

A proper comparison of the data sets cannot proceed until we have assessed the similarities of populations concerned. It is hard to fully assess the similarities (or otherwise) of the Dutch sample against the Slovenian and Scottish samples, as the original report does not provide very much information about the characteristics of the studied sample. However, we have no reason to suspect that the Dutch population would differ in such a dramatic way as to make comparisons of no use.

Whilst Slovenia and Scotland in general have many similarities (for example they are both relatively small countries on the geographical fringes of Europe with a mix of

primary, secondary and tertiary industries), our samples show some differences in terms of socio-economic characteristics and crime-related experiences.

The respondents in the respective samples portray countries with similar proportions of homeowners (Slovenia 66%, Scotland 59%), and with a similar gender breakdown (Slovenia men/women 44/56% in Scotland 45/55). However, differences exist in terms of the samples' experiences of victimisation in the year prior to the survey (in Slovenia 13% had been victimisation, in Scotland this figure was 23%), rates of employment (in Slovenia 84% were employed, in Scotland only 41%), and age (average age in Slovenia was 32 years, in Scotland it was 50 years[4]). Finally, the Slovenes rated themselves as being in 'good' physical health to a greater extent than did the Scots.

QUESTION WORDING

We are fortunate that Van der Wurff *et al* reproduced translations (into English) of the items upon which they relied. These English translations were then used largely unchanged for the Scottish survey, and translated into Slovene for the Slovenian survey. For the Slovenian survey, the present authors corresponded on this issue so as to ensure that the meanings of the words used were as comparable as was possible. In order to fully assess its utility, the questions used to produce the social psychological model developed by Van der Wurff *et al* were employed in the crime surveys outlined above. All questions referred to here are reproduced in the Appendix (along with notes concerning any recodings performed). Unlike Van der Wurff *et al*, who relied upon a stratified survey of 110 respondents in each of four sampling points, the Slovenian and Scottish surveys employed simple random sampling techniques.
The measure of the fear of crime employed by Van der Wurff *et al* relies upon vignettes which outline six situations. Vignettes (one of which is reproduced below – the rest are reproduced in the Appendix) have the benefit of providing the measurement of complex phenomena in social contexts.

Vignette Four: To a party

> You've been invited to a party in a neighbourhood you don't really know. Early that evening you set out by bus. When you get off you still have a long way to walk. Suddenly you notice that you've lost your way. A group of youths is following you and begins to make unpleasant remarks at you.

Each of these vignettes are followed by questions on associated feelings of unsafety. Of these questions, only one for each vignette, referred to as the 'unsafety' question is employed in further analysis. These six 'unsafety' questions are summated and used as the measure of the 'fear of crime' (i.e.: as the dependent variable). Each of the vignettes was employed in accordance with the procedures outlined by Van der Wurff *et al* (1989:148).

The four components of the social psychological model (**Attractivity, Power, Evil Intent** and **Criminalizable Space.**) were measured through the use of eight questions (twoper component). In the original article these eight questions were left unnamed, however, we have employed the same titles as given to these variables by Farrall *et al*. These questions are also reproduced in the Appendix.

PREVIOUS ANALYSIS OF THE DATA SETS

Van der Wurff *et al* go to considerable lengths to examine their data set. They test the six unsafety items employed for their distribution of answers, their reliability and their

uniformity. In order to assess the extent to which our data set is comparable to that of Van der Wurff *et al*'s, we commence our analysis by repeating these tests in order to establish the generalisability of the model to other populations. Table One reproduces our results for the six Unsafety questions for each vignette (Meško and Farrall, 1999).

Table One – Degree of Safety in 6 Situations

Situation	Mean			SD		
	Slovenia	Scotland	Holland	Slovenia	Scotland	Holland
Doorbell	3.31	3.05	2.35	1.01	1.28	1.29
Car	2.41	2.53	3.27	0.92	1.15	1.23
To a party	2.05	1.73	3.77	0.86	0.86	1.08
Bus stop	2.76	2.53	2.30	0.86	1.14	1.14
Telephone	3.27	3.18	1.96	1.01	1.19	1.25
Café	3.24	3.25	2.31	0.95	1.19	1.32

Ns = Slovenia (443), Scotland (482-485) and Holland (440).

Our Mean scores for the Unsafety questions are (in the main) higher than those reported by Van der Wurff *et al* suggesting that the Slovenian and Scottish populations are slightly more 'fearful' than the Dutch. The standard deviations (SD) are similarly very small (none greater than 1.32). Van der Wurff *et al* test the Unsafety questions for their reliability, and report an Alpha coefficient of 0.743. The Slovenian data set produces a slightly higher Alpha of 0.8424, and the Scottish a slightly lower Alpha of 0.724. Van der Wurff *et al* test the unidimensionality of the six Unsafety questions through factor analysis. Table Two reports the comparable factor scores for the three data sets.

Table Two – Summary of Factors Loadings

Situation	Factor Loadings		
	Slovenia	Scotland	Holland
Doorbell	.76	.66	.66
Car	.77	.54	.71
To a party	.69	.29	.63
Bus stop	.71	.51	.61
Telephone	.71	.71	.47
Café	.67	.56	.36

Ns = Slovenia (443), Scotland (482-485) and Holland (440). Maximum Likelihood Extraction used. KMO statistic: (Slovenia) .835 (Scotland) .779.

As with the earlier study, both the Slovenian and Scottish data sets produce just one factor, suggesting unidimensionality in the data set. Along with the similar Alpha coefficients, this suggests that the Slovenian and Scottish data sets enable us to undertake a robust replication of the earlier study (See for Germany the results from Lichtblau and Neumaier 2004; Kury *et al*. 2004).

COMPARING THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL

We come now to the presentation of our findings with regard to the replication of the social psychological model. These takes the form of regression runs, and are to be found in Table Three.

Two results stand out as being of particular interest – the relative differences in the adjusted R-Square figures produced and the similarity of the models produced when only significant values are considered. The R-Square values range considerably – from

over 35% (Slovenia) to under half of that (17%, Scotland). The exact meaning of this is hard to fathom. It could be due to some of the differences observed earlier between the Slovenian and Scottish samples – or alternatively due to some unanticipated influence of question wordings.

The second, more interesting observation concerns the elements which enter the three examinations of the model. In all three of the examinations undertaken, the two elements of 'Criminalisable Space' enter the models – and at the highest levels of significance ($p > .01$ and .001). In addition to this, in all but one of the models the two elements of 'Power' also enter the model. The other two elements of the model ('Attractivity' and 'Evil Intent') fare less well, and their entry to the model is ambiguous or uniformly non-existent. Van der Wurff *et al* (1989:155) report a similar finding in their regression analyses.

Table Three – Social Psychological Models

	Slovenia			Scotland			Holland		
	Beta	b	SEb	Beta	b	SEb	Beta	b	SEb
Attractivity									
Target	**.218*** **	.154	.030	.052	.199	.194	.050	–	–
Jealousy	.009	.007	.034	.036	.186	.253	.000	–	–
Evil Intent									
Trust	**-.123** **	-.103	.033	.023	.009	.184	**.100***	–	–
Distrust	-.052	-.003	.030	.073	.272	.161	.020	–	–
Power									
Attacker	**-.286*** **	-.213	.029	**-.108***	-.402	.163	**.220*** **	–	–
Rows	.012	.009	.031	**-.145*** **	-.838	.256	**.120** **	–	–
Criminalisable Space									
Obstruction	**.238*** **	.159	.029	**.244*** **	1.059	.210	**.180*** **	–	–
Safe Route	**.212*** **	.147	.029	**-.141** **	-.554	.183	**.250*** **	–	–
R-Square (adj.)	35.3			17.6			24.0		

The Dutch study did not report unstandardised Betas or their standard deviations.
Constant included in models. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

The variable which we named 'Obstruction' in the 'Criminalisable Space' component is partly interesting, as it is entered in the same direction for each model at the highest level of significance (in short, thinking that one would have one's path blocked, is associated with feeling unsafe). The direction of second element of the 'Criminalisable Space' component ('Safe Route'), is less clear, but for two of the three models, taking a 'safe route' is associated with feeling *less* safe. In Scotland, taking a safe route is associated with feeling more safe, but this is at a lower level of significance. The elements of 'Power' ('Attacker' and 'Rows') act in a less uniform manner, but generalisations are still possible. Thinking that one can chase off an attacker is associated with feeling more safe (Slovenia and Scotland), whilst steering clear of rows has the same effect in Scotland, but not Holland.

This suggests a number of points to us. First of all anxieties about crime are perhaps reducible to features of the relationship between the individual and the person they imagine as their assailant. Anxieties are observed to be associated with having one's route blocked, but mitigated if one feels one can chase off an assailant. Hence anxieties appear to be related to imagined vulnerability and perceptions of one's physical strength relative to the assailant. Similarly, exhibiting a degree of consciousness about one's personal safety (making sure one takes a safe route home), is related to greater levels of fear – suggesting that the fearful take precautions (but to no avail).

THE PRESENT STUDY

Data were gathered with a help of 1760 participants in 2001, their age varied from 15 to 90 years. For the benefit of an analysis participants were separated into 5 age groups (adolescents – 15 to 20 years; young adults – 21 to 30; middle aged adults – 31 to 55; early seniors – 56 to 70 and seniors – 71 to 90). Among participants there was 53 % of females and 47 % of males. Majority number of respondents comes from the capital city Ljubljana (63 %). Van der Wurff's and Farrall's questionnaire was used.

RESULTS

CHI SQUARE TESTS – SOME SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Considering the connection between variables estimation of health and fear of crime it is obvious that persons with a high self estimation of health have lower level of fear. They also think that a potential perpetrator could be quite dangerous and they are not prone to take risks. It looks that persons with a high estimation of health are more self protective, not only considering their own health but also in avoiding any risk behaviour.

Difference between male and female respondents is shown in variables which are connected with more direct personal threat (e.g.: "When I'm on my way home, I sometimes imagine that someone would obstruct my path" or "When I have to go out somewhere, I make sure that I take a safe route."). Results of women reveal higher level of fear, the differences come up to 25 % (the level of fear is present at 22 % of males, by females 47 %) and they are all statistically significant.

No significant difference exists among different age groups in fear of crime. In every age group there are less than one third of participants whose level of fear is upon average value. In two groups – adolescents and seniors a bit higher percentage of participants with higher level of fear is noticeable (adolescents 31 %, early seniors 36 %, seniors 33 %, $p>0,05$). Findings are in accordance with results abroad (e.g. Houghes, 1998). Adolescents stays out late in the night and seniors are aware that they could be a crime target.

Fear of crime is lower among participants with a higher socio-economic status and a higher education level. The correlation is quite low but significant ($p = < 0,1$; $p < 0,02$). It is assumed that well situated participants have no difficulties to ensure themselves satisfactory level of safety. They can choose a safe living environment and provide themselves better technical equipment or a security service.

Vignettes "A Car" and "To a party" represents the most threatening circumstances. Probably is the reason in fact that they are quite possible to happen in real life.
Who are participants with the highest level of fear? A typical representative is female, aged 21 to 55, employed and outgoing (stays out late in the night). The lowest level of fear is perceived among outgoing and well situated men (all age groups). This could be due to the fact that men are not prone to show their own weakness therefore their expressed level of fear is lower, the true level may be higher.

Table 4 – Summary of Factors Loadings – Slovenia 2001

Situation	Factor Loadings
Doorbell	.706
Car	.707
To a party	.680
Bus stop	.686
Telephone	.680
Café	.608

N = Slovenia (1752), Maximum Likelihood Extraction used. KMO statistic: (Slovenia) .844
45.93% of variance explained with the factor "fear of crime".

Table 5 – Social Demographic and Social Psychological Models – Regression Analysis - Slovenia 2001

	Beta	**b**	**SEb**
Age	.022	.001	.002
Gender	**-.259*** **	**-.142**	**-.050**
Victimisation in last year	-.009	-.028	-.009
Time living in area	.020	.001	.002
Speed running	**.075****	**.060**	**.075**
Financial resources	.062	.041	.016
Health in last year	.009	.007	.023
Educational level	.004	.004	.027
Household composition	.014	.060	.098
Work activity	**.061***	**.128**	**.055**
Chat to people	-.008	-.009	-.032
Have friends locally	.017	.016	.028
Walk after dark	**.178*** **	**.156**	**.024**
Streets unsafe PM	**-.084*** **	**-.174**	**.049**
Shops unsafe PM	-.035	-.099	.066
Woods unsafe PM	**-.099*** **	**-.179**	**.044**
Attractivity			
Target	**.085*** **	**.058**	**.017**
Jealousy	**.068***	**.005**	**.018**
Evil Intent			
Trust	-.095	-.076	.019
Distrust	-.006	-.004	.017
Power			
Attacker	**-.108*** **	**-.077**	**.019**
Rows	.035	.027	.018
Criminalisable Space			
Obstruction	**.247*** **	**.162**	**.017**
Safe Route	**.094*** **	**.064**	**.017**
R-Square (adj.)		**43.0**	

Constant included in models. *= p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Table 6 – Social Demographic and Social Psychological Models – Regression Analysis - Slovenia 2001- Controlling for Gender

	Men			Women		
	Beta	**b**	**SEb**	**Beta**	**b**	**SEb**
Age	.090	.004	.003	-.042	-.002	.003
Victimisation in last year	-.005	-.014	.100	-.036	-.103	.100
Time living in area	.044	.002	.003	.000	-.001	.002
Speed running	**.155****	.115	.033	.010	.003	.034
Financial resources	**.104***	.070	.026	.044	.025	.021
Health in last year	-.006	-.004	.037	.031	.024	.030
Educational level	-.012	-.012	.042	-.001	-.001	.035
Household composition	-.031	-.129	.154	.028	.103	.128
Work activity	.049	.098	.081	.077	.142	.077
Chat to people	-.080	-.087	.053	.018	.018	.041
Have friends locally	.089	.083	.047	-.023	-.020	.036
Walk after dark	**.211*****	.181	.034	**.164*****	.138	.033
Streets unsafe PM	-.041	-.076	.068	**-.138*****	-.276	.071
Shops unsafe PM	-.044	-.126	.107	-.008	-.018	.085
Woods unsafe PM	**-.087***	-.159	.067	**-.108****	-.182	.060
Target	**.123****	.0183	.026	**.076***	.045	.022
Jealousy	.022	.016	.027	**.105****	.072	.025
Trust	-.032	-.002	.028	**-.171*****	-.119	.025
Distrust	.004	.002	.025	-.013	-.008	.022
Attacker	**-.184*****	-.138	.029	-.055	-.038	.025
Rows	.077	.063	.030	.016	.001	.023
Obstruction	**.281*****	.184	.026	**.250*****	.148	.022
Safe Route	**.086***	.054	.025	**.100****	.063	.023
R-Square (adj.)	Men: 35,2			Women: 31,5		

Constant included in models. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

The results of the regression analysis imply higher level of fear of crime in women, people who perceive themselves as less physically fit, the unemployed, those who expose themselves by walking alone in dark and those who perceive streets and woods as sources of danger. In addition, respondents who consider themselves a potential victim due to the jealousy of others or being attractive to a potential criminal in other ways, incapable of chasing of a potential assailant, and perceiving places as dangerous (criminalisable space). Differences in men and women are quite typical and will be studied closely in the continuation of our research. What women and men share in regard to the fear of crime are the following variables: walk alone after dark, perception of woods as dangerous places, one's perception of being a suitable target, imagining that someone could obstruct respondent's path and taking a safe route.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has sought to assess three different examinations (The Netherlands, Scotland, and Slovenia (1998)) of the same social psychological model of the fear of crime and a subsequent study of fear of crime in Slovenia in 2001. These examinations were conducted by different researchers in different countries. Despite this example of researcher, data set and population triangulation, discernable patterns do emerge. People's fears appear to be related to perceptions of oneself relative to an attacker who approaches one outside of the confines of one's home. Imagining oneself to be physically stronger than this person reduces fear. These findings have implications for the original model, theoretical work in this field and crime surveys.

In terms of the original model, it suggests that not all of the components are operating as first imagined. For example, the components relating to the intentions of others one may encounter, play very little part in the role as a whole. This could be due to a number of reasons. For example, it could be that this feature is not an important part of the constitution of the fear of crime, or it could be the result of poor operationalisation of the concept. Further research is required before an answer to this can be known. Fear of crime is insofar a very important concept as there is a strong influence on political decisions. The last years we find more and more punitiveness in western countries (see Roberts *et al*. 2003), often based on the discussion of fear of crime. As Farrall *et al*. (1997) could show for Great Britain and Kury *et al*. (2004) for Germany the regular measurement of fear of crime overestimates the fear level, that is we need a better operationalized and more valid measurement of this important concept.

At a theoretical level, this suggests to us that more attention needs to be given to the relationship between those that report being fearful and those that the fearful imagine will attack them. Or, in other words, that theories which aim to account for fear levels need to address the relationship between an individual's beliefs and stereotypes about crime and their levels of anxiety.

These findings have important implications for crime surveys too. For the best part of 30 years crime surveys, which ask about the respondents' age, gender, employment, assessments of the local community and the such like have been undertaken. Very few (if any) have broached the fear of crime from a social psychological angle – this article, taken in the light of the pioneering work of Van der Wurff and his colleagues and also Farrall and his staff – suggests that in future crime surveys should ask fewer questions about broken windows, dark alleyways and strange men and more questions about what is people's understandings of a term "crime". Very helpful and fruitful to bring criminology forward also in this topic are international comparative surveys. Such studies are very helpful to test theories on a broader level of information.

APPENDIX

THE VIGNETTES EMPLOYED

Doorbell
One evening you're at home on your own. It's late. The doorbell rings, but you're not expecting anyone.

Car
One evening you go out to put the dustbin out. A short way up the street you see two men walking around a parked car. When they see you looking at them, they begin to walk toward you.

To a party
You've been invited to a party in a neighbourhood you don't really know. Early that evening you set out by bus. When you get off you still have a long way to walk. Suddenly you notice that you've lost your way. A group of youths is following you and begins to make unpleasant remarks at you.

Bus stop
One afternoon you're standing at the bus stop nearest home, when a group of 15-16 year olds comes along. They begin kicking the bus stop and daubing graffiti on the bus shelter.

Telephone
You've going out one evening. You're ready and just about to leave when the phone rings. You answer, giving your name. But at the other end you hear only irregular breathing. You ask who's there. They hang up.

Café
You're travelling through a town where you've never been before. You have to ring home to say you'll be late getting back. Because you can't find a telephone box, you go into a café to ring from there. It turns out to be where a group of bikers meets.

Each of these scenarios was followed by the *Unsafety Question* "How unsafe would you feel in such a situation?" [response codes = 1 = very unsafe, 2 = quite unsafe, 3 = don't know, 4 = quite safe, 5 = very safe]. It is the summation of the answer to this question after these six scenarios that is used as the measure of the fear of crime (i.e. as the dependent variable).

THE COMPONENTS OF THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL

"Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements…" [response codes = 1 = agree strongly, 2 = agree, 3 = don't know, 4 = disagree, 5 = disagree strongly].

Attractivity
Target: I think that people who are up to no good are likely to target especially on me and my possessions.
Jealousy: I think that people are jealous of me.

Power
Attacker: I think I'm capable of chasing of a potential assailant.
Rows: I generally stay clear of rows.

Evil Intent
Trust: I generally trust strangers.
Distrust: I distrust particular people in my surroundings.

Criminalisable Space
Obstruction: When I'm on my way home, I sometimes imagine that someone would obstruct my path.
Safe Route: When I have to go out somewhere, I make sure that I take a safe route.

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ENDNOTES

1 We discuss the original operationalisation of these components and our minor changes to them in the Appendix.

2 Van der Wurff *et al* use the word "factor". We use "component" so as not to cause confusion when discussing factor analysis in future sections.

3 Sexism in original text.

4 This partly explains the different rates of employment, in that more of the Scottish sample would have been retired, and therefore counted as 'non-employed,

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