Chapter 1

‘Fear of Crime’: Debates, Definitions, and Problems - A Review of the literature

Generally speaking, researchers and policy makers alike, characterise fear as a destructive force, interfering with full participation in everyday life in civilised society. Many people for example avoid certain sections of the city or a neighbourhood, hesitating to frequent shops, theatres, pubs or sports events because they are anxious about their personal safety. Moreover, worrying about being attacked or having their homes invaded by burglars causes an exceptional amount of stress for certain groups, especially the elderly and women. These people have had crime prevention and fear reduction techniques specially designed for them (Stanko 1990).

Over the past three decades the ‘fear of crime’ has become an increasingly important issue for criminologists, victimologists, policy makers, politicians, the general public and policing. Indeed, if you go to your local police station the likelihood is that you will find an array of small publications on crime prevention through risk minimisation and on ‘fear of crime’ reduction techniques. For example, Neighbourhood Watch provides a leaflet which suggests that the resident go about ‘improv[ing] the quality of life in your area’ by ‘reducing the opportunities for crime’ by following various procedures and strategies. Such literature appears as part of a broader governmental policy response precipitated by individuals’ concerns about crime in communities and their fears about becoming a victim of crime. Further, it is a governmental strategy to reduce crime by hardening the targets of crime. However, the emergence of this literature can also be connected to the growing body of academic and governmental research that takes these concerns or fears as its subject of inquiry.

The ‘fear of crime’ is now seen by many researchers as being as serious a problem as crime itself (see Van Dijk 1992, Wilson and Kelling 1982, Hale 1996) and just as, if not more, debilitating (Braithwaite, Biles and Whitrod 1982). Walklate (1995) suggests that in the 1980s the ‘process of invoking the imagery of the crime victim’ became the basis for policy formation thus increasing the political and theoretical debates around ‘fear of crime’ and indeed interest in research into the subject. Williams et al (2000) suggest that criminologists have come to recognise that

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A program of community and police cooperation in watching and minimising criminal opportunity.

See Chapter 3 for a more thorough discussion of this.
victimisation is an important ‘dependent variable’ in their field of expertise. However, the ‘fear of crime’ literature extends itself well beyond any delineated legal or judicial definition of what constitutes victimisation or possible victimisation. Indeed, this body of knowledge has gradually expanded to include research into almost every conceivable socioeconomic group, gender category, ethnic origin, sub-culture and age group we might like to imagine. The imagery of the crime victim has expanded such that, in terms of ‘fear of crime’ inquiry, we are all imagined as potential crime victims (see Young 1996).

The proliferation of ‘fear of crime’ literature, both in the realm of public policy and in academic books, and journals, attests to the rapidly growing importance of the topic. From the embryonic beginnings of this literature\(^8\) in the late nineteen sixties to its position of relative importance within today’s canon of criminological knowledge ‘fear of crime’ literature has developed from numerous, and often competing, ideological and theoretical positions. Much debate has also revolved around what ‘fear of crime’ might actually be. Not surprisingly there has been a large range of theoretical approaches applied to the problem, particularly in the search for causation, the search for a remedy, and indeed in the search for an appropriate measure for ‘fear of crime’. In the search for causation alone an increasingly long and complex list of variables have emerged, from the psychological to the social, and from the economic to the geographical (Williams et al 2000).

Sparks (1992:119) has suggested that the ‘fear of crime’ has not only become the focus for ‘empirical disagreements’ but has ‘assumed a heavy polemic charge’ in both political and theoretical disputes\(^9\). Weatherburn, Matka and Lind (1996) argue that, ‘public opinion about the risk of criminal victimisation is probably more influential in shaping state government spending priorities in law and order than the actual risk. If public concern about crime is driven by an exaggerated assessment of the risks of victimisation then strategies need to be in place to address the problem’. Thus fear can shape the way we treat crime and those we legislate to criminalise; it can have effects on the machinations of the justice system. Ditton et al (1999) argue that the recognition that the ‘fear of crime’ had political power was almost instant following the first National American Crime Survey in 1986. However, the knowledge of this political purchase is nothing new and can be seen historically in debates around the transportation of convicts to Australia from Britain in the eighteenth century (see cf. Hirst 1998, Shaw 1966, and Pratt 1997). However, it is important to note that the term ‘fear of crime’ would not have been used in these

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\(^8\) See Chapter 3.

\(^9\) See chapter 3 for further discussion of this point.
debates; rather, it was concerns about the criminal class that were inextricably connected to the politics of the day. The term 'fear of crime' itself, as we shall see, is a much later invention.

It is worth noting that the notion of 'fear of crime' as a useful explanatory category for the phenomena it purports to describe has been contested regularly within the literature. Its use, here and elsewhere, should perhaps be regarded as having more to do with its status as an historical artifact, albeit a relatively recent one, rather than its utility as some kind of unifying descriptive category. If it does have a unifying characteristic it is probably that it has drawn a diverse body of literature and research together around itself in ways that might otherwise make such a bond seem quite arbitrary. The contingent nature of this bond will be explained further in the following chapters.

'Fear of crime', Stands Accused of the Following…

**Public Policy and Political Concerns**

Hale (1996) recently carried out a thorough review of the body of scholarly crime fear literature, and I see no need to repeat his earlier work here. However, in order to illustrate with clarity the subject of this thesis it is necessary to highlight the social and personal problems that 'fear of crime' has been associated with, and the methods of inquiry used in 'fear of crime' research, along with more recent directions in this research. The following is an overview of the social problems causally linked to the 'fear of crime' in the literature. Many of these issues will be expanded upon below and in the subsequent chapters. This list covers the main problems that have been identified by a varied array of writers, commentators, and academics, but does not claim to be exhaustive. Indeed, each of these issues, or what I would suggest are central themes in the literature, have many subsequent subtle variations and connected themes.

Thus, the 'fear of crime' is said to:

- erode a sense of community and neighborhood and create a suspicion of neighbors (Maxfield 1984, Skogan 1986, 1989; Box et al 1988; Conklin 1975; Taylor and Hale 1996), even

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10 Indeed, the recent explosion in the quantity of this literature being produced renders a complete coverage here impossible.
causing some residents to move out all together (Dugan 1999) engendering in some locations a spiral of community decline.

- fuel the security industry with the more wealthy able to take steps to protect themselves (see O’Malley; 1991, 25, 26), even adding to the sales of firearms in the United States in particular (Edmonson 1994, Jones et al 1986)
- exacerbate racism and xenophobia; the threat of crime being often projected onto minority groups (Sibley 1995, Chiricos et al 1997, Skogan 1995).
- have detrimental psychological effects (Skogan 1986; Gordon and Riger 1989).
- actually increase levels of crime as a result of many of the above effects (Skogan 1986, 1989 Maxfield 1984).
- prompt people to avoid public transport (Reedy et al 1994:29).
- constrain how women dress and express themselves (Stanko 1990, Braithwaite et al 1982; Smith 1986).

From a critical perspective it is worth pointing out, even at this early stage, that the first six points here have also been identified as having causal links with the production of the ‘fear of crime’.

- No-go public areas and physical decay may increase a ‘fear of crime’ (Wilson and Kelling 1982).
- Erosion of community may create suspicion of one’s neighbors and increase the ‘fear of crime’ (Kannich et al 1985).
- The security industry may attempt to increase the ‘fear of crime’ in order to increase its market share (Weatherburn et al 1996:7).
- Racism and xenophobia create fear and suspicion of possible criminal activity of minority groups (Sibley 1995).
- Advocates of punitive criminal justice measures using scare tactics may increase the ‘fear of crime’ (Hogg and Brown 1998).
• Women being afforded less access to public life, and thus being dependent on men, may increase the ‘fear of crime’ (Carach and Mukherjee 1999:4).

In fact the ‘fear of crime’ often slides between being depicted as a cause of more broad reaching social problems, and a symptom of more broad ranging social problems; all in the course of a single article. This causal / symptomatic quandary is one of many aspects that have proved problematic in ‘fear of crime’ research. Moreover, it has been argued that in much of this research the components of the ‘fear of crime’ have been misused as predictors (Williams et al 2000; van der Wurff et al 1989) and that the ‘independent and dependant variables have been arbitrarily transposed’ (Williams et al 1999:2). Other factors that have been identified as having causal links in the production of the ‘fear of crime’ are:

• Poor Street-lighting (Reedy et al 1994, Grabosky 1995).
• Incivilities, such as groups of rowdy teenagers in an area, drinking in public places, beggars (Skogan 1986, Maxfield 1984) or graffiti, and neighbourhood decay (Wilson and Kelling 1982, Skogan 1989).

Hale (1996) also identifies vulnerability, personal knowledge about victimisation and perceptions of risk as contributing factors. Of course in addition to these more ‘concrete’ causes and effects of ‘fear of crime’ there is the more general question of ‘what crimes are people actually afraid of’? Thus, the literature has focused on whether people are afraid of assault, murder, robbery, theft, sexual assault, domestic violence, pub violence, harassment, hate crime, and any number of offences (cf. Jones et al 1986, Lupton 1999; Stanko 1990), and of course which sections of communities are afraid of which crimes (Janson et al 1983, Yin, 1982, Madriz 1997, Maxfield 1984).

The Fear / Risk of Victimisation Paradox

One of the most ponderous and recurring themes of research into the ‘fear of crime’ has been that of the fear/risk of victimisation paradox. It is argued that the ‘fear of crime’ seems to operate quite independently of crime itself (Maxfield 1984:1). Thus, there is seemingly no identifiable statistical relationship between those who are the most at risk members of society in terms of
becoming victims of crime, and those members of society that report being the most fearful (Hough and Mayhew 1983). As I will suggest in chapters two and four, there are complex reasons for this discovery and indeed there are complex reasons for the continued criminological and governmental interest in this phenomenon. Much of the research into this paradox has focused on two specific social groupings, women and the elderly. Both these groups have been identified as being particularly ‘fearful of crime’, yet both groups are also identified as lower risk categories (cf. Weatherburn et al 1997; Jones et al 1986; Maxfield 1984; Braithwaite et al 1982). In light of such findings there has been an ongoing debate as to whether the ‘fear of crime’ is a rational or irrational response to living in the modern social world. It is worth stressing here that understandings of ‘fear of crime’ have been inextricably connected to notions of difference in gender, age, class and race. However, more recently interest has also begun to focus on men as a result of what is argued to be their irrational fearlessness (cf. Goody 1997).

**Gender and the ‘Fear of Crime’**

Much ‘fear of crime’ research has found that women are less likely to become victims of crime, yet as a group express a greater ‘fear of crime’ than men do (Furstenburg 1971, Garofalo 1979, Baumer 1978, Braithwaite et al 1982, Jones et al 1986). The question of women’s ‘heightened’ experiences of ‘fear of crime’ has become something of an obsession within criminological discourse. It has been argued that fear puts limits on the way women dress, their self expression, the use of the public transport system and whether women go out alone (Stanko 1990; Painter 1991). Braithwaite et al (1982, 222) in an early Australian study on fear even went as far as to suggest that ‘[t]he objective reality of rape, bad as it is, is surely of less importance [sic] to women than the way that fear hems them in to a protracted (sic) day-to-day existence’. Fear of sexual assault, it is argued, operates as an imperative of self-regulation whereby womens’ freedom of movement, self-expression, and social experience is compromised by the risk factors in everyday life (Gordon and Riger 1989, Stanko 1990). The U.K. Home Office in one report describes this restricted existence as ‘living under curfew’. Further, it has been noted that younger women – those most at risk of victimisation – are the least fearful and that fearfulness increases with age (Jones et al 1986:170) as a result of repeated victimisation and learned responses.

This recurring theme in the ‘fear of crime’ literature has resulted in protracted debates as to the rationality or irrationality of these fears (Hough and Mayhew 1983, Mugford 1984: Sparks 1992), the validity of the victimisation statistics used to arrive at this paradox (Young 1988), and the
lived reality of women’s lives in terms of physical and sexual harassment (Young 1988: Stanko 1990). Further, these debates have also begun questioning the rationality or irrationality of men’s lesser fears about crime (Goody 1997, Walklate 1994: Stanko 1990) and indeed the constraint of machismo in reporting feelings of unease about crime. Hale (1996) argues in his thorough literature review that:

Much research has focused on resolving the question why, when according to both published crime figures and victimisation surveys, they are less likely than men to be victimised, women express greater ‘fear of crime’ than men do. Merely posing the question in this way of course biases the issue and raises important methodological questions which until recently have been ignored. Now, however, feminist authors have begun to question the validity of ‘malestream’ criminology posing the victimisation-fear paradox in terms of a problem for women and suggested that a more fruitful approach might be to examine the ‘irrationally’ low level of fear amongst males.

I will discuss these issues and debates further and in some depth in the following chapters. Here it will suffice to identify some of the reasons given in the literature for women being more fearful than men.

Generally, the literature has been made up of two broad accounts in explaining the fear / risk paradox as it applies to women. The first general set of theories is that women have a heightened sense of vulnerability for a variety of reasons. There is little evidence to dispute the notion that ‘women are amongst the most vulnerable groups’ (Carach and Mukherjee 1999:1) in society. Killias (1990) argues that this vulnerability is not based solely on the risk of becoming a victim but entails three dimensions. Risk is one of these, the others being loss of control, and the consequences of victimisation. In short this argument suggests that because women may not feel that they have the strength of the average offender (Grabosky 1995) or are more likely to be in positions of dependency, there is a feeling of powerlessness about being able to defend oneself against victimisation. Maxfield (1984:13) also goes some way to defining what vulnerability might be in regards to ‘fear of crime’:

Physical vulnerability refers to an individual’s capacity to resist attack, and the likelihood of suffering injury from a given level of violence. Sex and age are
indicators of physical vulnerability since, in general, women and older persons are less physically vigorous than their male or younger counterpart, less able to flee or defend themselves against an assailant, and more vulnerable to harm if attacked. In the rather complex calculus of perceived threats to one's safety, the likely consequences of victimisation are as important as subjective assessment of risk.

Indeed Canch and Mukherjee (1999:4) found women's exclusion from the labour force was a significant factor in women's 'fear of crime'. These women were 1.9 times more likely to feel unsafe in the community than women who are either working or even unemployed and looking for work. Further, it has been argued that there is the perception amongst women that the outcome of any victimisation may be more serious due to the inability of the victim to effectively defend themselves.

The arguments in regards to women's 'fear of crime' tend to fit into two sets of general theories. The first set of theories tend to be either implicitly biological – women's vulnerability stems from less relative strength compared to men – or explicitly socio-cultural – gender variations in levels of fear are due to socialisation and historical processes; these encourage boys and men to be risk takers, and subjects of the public realm, on the other hand girls and women are encouraged to engage in activities confined to the private sphere (Sacco 1990). Grubosky (1995:8) further suggests that socialisation processes in Australia might be such that 'traditional sex roles in Australia have been learned in a manner which fosters in females a lesser degree of self-confidence and autonomy than those roles learned by men'. According to this set of theories – whether it is posed in rational or irrational terms – women's crime fears outstrip the reality of their risk.

The second general set of theories have been influenced primarily by left realist criminology, radical feminism and feminist criminology. These posit that women's tendency to be more fearful does reflect their levels of risk and vulnerability. It is simply the case that official recorded crime statistics, victimisation surveys and questionnaires, and the 'fear of crime' literature more broadly, has failed to capture or to take into account the full extent and broad nature of women's victimisation. Victimisation for women, it is argued is an ongoing 'sub-legal' (Goody 1994) process that includes being stared at, harassment at home and in the workplace, and being shouted at in the street (Stanko 1990, Goody 1994, Gordon and Riger 1989). Advocates of this position also stress the fact that women are much more likely to be the victims of hidden crime such as
sexual assault and domestic violence both of which are highly underreported in official statistics and victim surveys (Stanko 1990, Young 1988). Further, it is suggested that women have lower rates of victimisation primarily because they are less likely to place themselves in risky situations than men (Sacco 1990, Goody 1997). This suggests that women’s victimisation rates should be ‘adjusted up’ to account for the gendered differences in exposure to risks that are not reflected in the statistical data. Moreover, women suffer much greater levels of sexual assault, a particularly threatening and repulsive crime. Anxiety around this particular greater risk, it is argued, is not wholly separable from more general feelings of fearfulness and vulnerability (Sacco 1990). Further, it is argued that the criminal justice system’s failure to appropriately deal with sexual assault adds to concerns about these crimes, not to mention the fact that they rarely come to the attention of the police (Grabosky 1995:7, Gordon and Riger 1989, Stanko 1990). Thus, the general continued contact with sexual harassment of many kinds, combines to sensitise women to the fact that the environment is indeed unsafe and that there is a overriding requirement to adopt lifestyles which are precautionary and thus protective of themselves (Jones et al 1986, Stanko 1990, 1998, Hale 1996:98). Thus, for advocates of this position, women’s fears are a rational response to risks that are very often hidden.

More recent bodies of research argue that a combination of all these factors lead to women being more fearful of crime (Hale 1996, Carach and Mukherjee 1999). Contemporary feminist readings of fear problematise the measured level of women’s risk. Walklate (1995:69) suggests that ‘fear of crime’ for women needs to be connected to broader experience and knowledge of the consequences of victimisation. Thus, if we take ‘date rape’, ‘wife rape’, public abuse, murder, and sexual harassment in the street and workplace the general risk to women is far greater than it is to men. Further, she argues that women’s ‘fear of crime’ is connected to both their private and public experiences and knowledges of men. Thus, the threats of sexual danger permeate both the private and public lives of women and are illustrated in greater fear about crime.

The Elderly

Many studies have also indicated that elderly people, as a group, are overly fearful of crime, particularly given that they are a very low risk category (Skogan and Maxfield 1981, Hough and Mayhew 1983, Maxfield 1984). Vulnerability is also offered as the reasoning behind a greater ‘fear of crime’ expressed by the elderly (Hale 1996:100). This of course neatly dovetails with the thesis for women’s ‘fear of crime’. However, for the elderly it is argued that mugging is the crime
that is generally seen as being the most fearful (Hall et al 1978, Maxfield 1984). Generally it is argued that the older people become, the more fearful of crime they become. Maxfield (1984:11) suggests that this increase is not steady or straightforward. Indeed, the British Crime Survey findings suggest that a sustained increase in fear begins past the age of 45 for both men and women. This fear then climbs steadily until after age 60 and then jumps sharply (Maxfield 1984:11). Although, it must be added that elderly women, like their younger counterparts, have been found to be more fearful of crime than older men. As was suggested above, it is argued that fearfulness is learned through life experiences and so increases with age (Jones et al 1986). Interestingly, of the 17 sex offences reported in the 1982 British Crime Survey 12 of the victims were under the age of 30, the rest were under the age of 6011 (Maxfield 1984).

It is also argued that older peoples’ social circumstances may impact on their levels of fear. Most have lower incomes, lower levels of education, and less social support from other family members than their younger counterparts. Thus, their feelings of vulnerability may be amplified given the knowledge that there is an absence of others to turn to should they be victimised. Further, Maxfield (1984:17) makes the point that living alone is more common for elderly citizens and that this type of living arrangement is associated with greater fear. The British Crime Survey found that 31 percent of people over sixty living alone reported feeling ‘very unsafe’ compared with only 17 percent of those over 60 living with another adult. However, Walklate (1995:58) has more recently argued that when ‘fear of crime’ for the elderly is positioned within the broader context of worries about finances, health and other problems, the ‘fear of crime’ recedes in relative importance. This reading might suggest that the ‘fear of crime’ for the elderly is often an artifact of research design than a reflection of the lived realities of respondents. I will explore these issues in later chapters.

Fear for Whom: ‘Other Directed Fear’

Some researchers have suggested that much ‘fear of crime’ centers not on fear for the self, but fear that others may be victimised (Maxfield 1984, Reedy et al 1994). Unsurprisingly, it has been mainly family households that have showed such a propensity. In the British crime survey of 1982 only 35 percent of respondents who replied that they were worried about crime, were worried about being victimised themselves; thus their fears were projected on to significant others in their lives. Maxfield (1984:5) terms this ‘other-directed’ worry and suggests that it can be focused on other adults sharing the respondents household (43 percent), and the children of the

11 No doubt this crime was grossly underreported.
respondent (22 percent). Warr (1992) argues, that women in particular experience ‘altrusic fear’ the possibility of other family members being victimised as well as themselves (also see Reedy et al 1994).

Fear of Whom?

Some scholars suggest that what people fear most is the ‘shadowy stranger’, the unpredictable and unknowable criminal-other whose victims are randomly selected for no apparent reason other than their availability and vulnerability (see A. Young 1996, Bauman 1993). Such conceptualisations have fuelled the rational/irrational fears debate, especially given the statistical reality that most serious offences occur within the walls of the family home – 40% of all crime and 64% of homicide12 (AIC 1998) - and amongst friends, acquaintances, and family members. Stanko (1990) reminds us that it is the risk of the everyday acquaintance that is the greatest. In only 16% of murders, for example, is the offender a stranger to the victim13 (Gallagher et al 1994). However, the distinction of locatable fears for women has been criticised by Walklate (1995:58) who argues that fear inside the home, and outside the home, are not necessarily separable experiences. Indeed, for Walklate and others (cf. Stanko 1990, Gordon and Riger 1989) a broad range of experiences both inside and outside the home are influential to womens’ fears. There is no reason to believe that the same could not be the case for other societal groups.

Victims and Fear

One of the most consistently cited statistical correlations in ‘fear of crime’ research is that between ‘fear of crime’ and direct experience of being a victim of crime (Stafford and Galle 1984, Smith and Hill 1991, Hale 1996). However, as Maxfield (1984:7) argues these effects of victimisation on fear also vary greatly by the specific type of offence the victim endured. For example, the 1982 British Crime Survey results indicated that crimes which involve direct confrontation with a stranger, although very ‘rare’, were most likely to instill fear in the victim. Thus, crimes that involved at least the threat of physical harm, such as robbery or sexual assault14, were likely to be the most fearful offences (Maxfield 1984:7).

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12 Figures from the Australian context but closely mirrored in other industrial western nations.

13 Again, figures quoted are in the Australian context.
Definitions, Measures and Meanings: Fear, Danger, Risk, Anxiety or Concern?

To suggest that there has been theoretical confusion over how to measure the ‘fear of crime’ is an understatement. Maxfield (1984:6) has suggested that there were two reasons why it is important to think critically about how the ‘fear of crime’ is to be measured. Firstly, criminologists have long argued about how it should be measured and what types of fear might be worth measuring. Secondly, at the level of public policy it is important to understand relative levels of fear in terms of where and how policy might be directed. ‘Fear for personal safety on neighbourhood streets is not well suited to access anxiety about burglary or other household crimes, offences that are more common than most types of street crime…’ (Maxfield 1984:6).

Hale (1996) argues that the confusion over measurement is in part a result of a lack of a specific definition of what the ‘fear of crime’ might actually be, and also in understanding the difference in terms like ‘worry’, ‘fear’, ‘risk’, and ‘anxiety’. Indeed, he suggests that many of the debates about the rationality of fear are due in part to the lack of clarity in being able to distinguish between ‘risk evaluation, worry and fear’ (Hale 1996:84). Certainly there seems little uniformity in the way such terms are defined or ‘operationalised’. After numerous articles and thirty years of ‘fear of crime’ research there is little evidence that these definitional or conceptual problems are any closer to being resolved. In a recent study Williams et al (2000) argue that the term ‘fear of crime’ remains vague and that it is perhaps preferable to substitute the concept of ‘worry’: ‘Until the field reaches agreement on the elements of ‘fear of crime’, both psychological and physiological, we believe that the term ‘fear of crime’ should be put aside in favour of the term “worry about crime” (or victimisation)’. Ditton et al (1999) argue that although numeric historical measures of ‘fear of crime’ have been increasingly refined, conceptual development has stagnated. On a more positive note, Ditton et al (1999:84) also suggest that in more recent times the consistency of the instrument operationalised in the British and Welsh crime surveys (Hough 1995), and indeed their Scottish equivalents, now constitute a unique data source. They argue that despite the lack of any notable conceptual development in the subject, the retention of identical survey questions in successive sweeps and across geographic borders, it is now possible to speak with confidence about ‘fear of crime’ trends over time.

The failure to reach any consensus regarding the definition and measurement of ‘fear of crime’ and its components should not be seen as a sign that efforts at universalising these concepts and research subjects have not been forthcoming. Rather, this field of research is littered with

14 Most likely under-reported rather than ‘rare’.
attempts to do so, and an equally large body of literature which has seen each attempt criticised for some methodological reason or other. Maxfield (1984:3)\textsuperscript{13}, for example, goes in to some detail in attempting to define his subject. He argues that at its most basic, ‘fear is an emotional and physical response to a threat’. When danger is posed, psychological changes occur automatically to help people cope with the threat, a ‘fight or flight’ reaction (Maxfield 1984:3). Thus, for Maxfield danger is a component of fear. Importantly, he suggests that fear is different from a ‘more general concern’ about crime in that ‘it presents a threat to oneself’, a personalised threat rather than abstract views and beliefs (Maxfield 1984:3). He argues that one might be concerned about a rising crime rate but not be in the slightest way afraid of being personally attacked. He suggests:

Fear is also distinct from beliefs about crime. The latter include estimates of its frequency, and one’s perceived risk of becoming a victim. It is the combination of belief that victimisation is possible or likely, and the anxiety about the consequences that produces fear. This means that fear might result even if one believes that the risk of victimisation is low (Maxfield 1984:3).

So anxiety is also a component of fear for Maxfield but risk is a separate issue. Carach and Mukherjee (1999) simply suggest that ‘fear of crime’ ‘refers to people’s emotional response to crime’. For them the personalised threat element is seen as less important than the more general anxiety, quite at odds with Maxfield’s definition. Similarly, but with a more individualistic focus, Taylor (1988:252) defines fear as ‘an emotional affective concern for ones safety’. The latter obviously includes at least some component of personal risk assessment and indeed management thus also differing from Maxfield’s definition. Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) have argued that ‘fear of crime’, given its many divergent meanings, may have lost its utility altogether, although Ferraro argues in a later publication that ‘fear of crime is ‘an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime’ (Ferraro 1995).

The most widely used measures for the ‘fear of crime’ are those of the large-scale surveys such as the British Crime Survey (BCS). Since 1984 the BCS has included questions that attempt to measure the ‘fear of crime’. Such surveys can give accurate and consistent measures, however, there is disagreement as to what exactly the results are measures of. Hale (1996) concludes that these measures lack an emotional content and as such fail to give any indication of the rationality or otherwise of the replies, thus they are not measures of fear per-se. Some of these surveys (cf.

\textsuperscript{13} Contained in a British Home Office Research and Planning Unit Report.
Weatherburn, Matka, Lind 1996) have discarded the notion of fear – at least explicitly – and specifically attempted to measure the respondent’s personal assessment of their own risk. These studies use reported crime data to calculate the actual risk to individuals of becoming victims of specific offences. They then ask respondents to gauge their imagined risk of becoming a victim of such offences. The difference between the ‘actual risk’ and the ‘perceived risk’ then becomes what we might call the fear factor of the calculation. Weatherburn et al (1996) found that most respondents greatly exaggerated their risk of victimisation to a large number of offences, but is this fear? Ferraro and LeGrange (1987) are critical, suggesting that measurements of ‘fear of crime’ should tap emotional states of fear rather than judgements or concerns about crime.

Some researchers (cf. Ollenburger 1981, Goome 1986) have suggested that to accurately measure ‘fear of crime’ the focus should be on the behaviour of respondents. The general argument is that the extent to which individuals alter their behaviour will indicate their fearfulness. However, others have argued that these changes in behaviours are consequences of fear rather than indicators, as such they could be considered inconsistent across sample groups (Garofalo 1981, Maxfield 1987). Fattah and Sacco (1989:210) however, suggest that there may be vast divergences between how respondents really behave and how they say they behave, and that self-reported conduct can be vastly erroneous.

More generally, research into ‘fear of crime’ has tended, over time, to have moved from the study of specific forms of fear connected to specific crimes, physical violence and property crime in early surveys for example, to more diffuse concerns about personal safety and multiple contextual variables and details (see for example Hough 1995, Hollway and Jefferson 1997a, 1997b). This movement has added to the sophistication of the studies, but also confused the issues in terms of measures and meanings. For many working in the field (cf. Ferraro and LaGrange 1987, Hale 1996) there seems to be a push to consolidate these issues and to implement more universal definitions and measures in the hunt to define the reality of fear down to its most basic components (Hale 1996).

**Location: ‘Fear of Crime’, Rural or Urban?**

In recent years there has been a growing focus on geographical and environmental factors and how they influence crime fears (Krannich et al 1989, Hale 1996, O’Mohony and Quinn 1999). Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) ‘Broken Windows’ article focused on the ‘spiral’ of decay and decline of urban environments which they argued increased crime rates and caused fear at a
localised level. They point to a need for varying styles of community-based policing to counter this. Taylor and Hale (1986) however, argue that rather than being connected with decay or incivility per-se, 'fear of crime' is more closely connected to a more general lack of resources, that governments are not capable or willing to provide the resources required to keep areas safe. Thus, for them locality is not essentially an independent variable. Similarly, Lewis and Salem (1986) suggest that political power and the political will to address local issues was important in reducing or minimising crime fear. However, O'Mohony and Quinn (1999) argue that locality has been an overlooked aspect of 'fear of crime' research with more emphasis being placed on the individual over community. They argue that the *who* and the *where* questions should be afforded equal relevance in the field of research.

It has generally been accepted within the literature that the 'fear of crime' is a mostly urban phenomenon (see Maxfield 1984). Hale (1996) also argues that there is ample:

> Empirical evidence to suggest that the residents of inner neighbourhoods of larger cities are likely to be more afraid of crime than people who live in the suburbs, smaller towns, or rural areas. Related studies have found a positive relationship between community size and fear\(^6\).

Such a positive relationship is understood to be connected to both higher rates of crime and greater risks in urban environments (Maxfield 1984, Hale 1996) and the social isolation and heterogeneous nature of large population densities and urban lifestyles (Hale 1996). However, as I will argue in chapter seven, 'fear of crime' research has been overwhelmingly urban centered. For although the larger scale surveys have included rural respondents, little ethnographic work has taken place in rural areas. This is of particular interest in Australia where there are vast socio-economic, cultural, racial, and ecological differences between towns and within towns. Indeed, the Australian context varies greatly from that of the USA and the UK. For example, rural NSW is a statistically more dangerous place than most Australian cities (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1998), and many Australian rural towns have higher crime rates than their urban counterparts\(^7\) (NSW BOCSAR 1998). Moreover, many rural towns in Australia have a proportionately high police presence. Grubosky (1995) concedes that although the anecdotal evidence seems to mirror the British and American models, the availability of data is scarce\(^8\). It

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\(^6\) also see Lebowitz 1975

\(^7\) For example the Assault rate in North Western NSW is almost 2.5 times the state average (NSW BOCSAR 1998).

\(^8\) "The best available research in Australia identified... city dwellers... as significantly more insecure in their homes" (Grubosky 1995:12).
would seem completely unjustified to simply overlay the Australian context with the British or US findings given the vast differences in rural communities.

**New Directions – A Critical Discussion**

Over the past decade some ‘fear of crime’ researchers have developed more sophisticated modes and models of investigating the subject. This has resulted in an emphasis on considering the more multidimensional aspects of ‘fear of crime’. Social and economic issues, as well as vulnerability and isolation, have gradually been broken down into specific mediating factors that have supposedly enabled researchers ‘to understand the social context of people’s perception of crime and its consequences’ (Carcach and Mukherjee 1999:1). Amongst this literature there have been some innovative studies that I will now explore in some depth here and also in the next chapter where I will attempt to explore how these relate to my own methodologies.

Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson, working out of the disciplines of psychology or psychoanalysis and criminology respectively have, since 1997, been attempting to develop new methodologies for use in ‘fear of crime’ research. Their fusion of ethnography and psychoanalytical analysis is an attempt to take the ‘fear of crime’ debate beyond the realist notion that ‘fear of crime’ is causally related to risk in a fairly mechanical and highly rational kind of way. Central to their concerns is the ‘fear of crime’ paradox discussed above. An element of their strategy has been to develop a research instrument designed to elicit narratives about the broader experiences of the respondent, rather than just about the respondent’s fearful experiences. This, they argue, allows the researcher to understand how the ‘anxious, defended subject’ deals with their experiences, and indeed how the subject avoids or responds to the researcher’s prompts. They argue that:

A central feature of the ‘fear of crime’ debate is the fear–risk paradox: the finding that those least at risk, namely, elderly women, are most fearful. And vice versa. ...[T]his paradox can be resolved theoretically by placing an anxious, defended subject rather than a rational risk avoiding one at the centre of the debate...[W]e explore [ ] the importance of eliciting narratives... (Hollway and Jefferson 1997b:53).

These authors begin with an assumption that ‘anxiety is a fundamental characteristic of the human condition’ (Hollway and Jefferson 1997b:54) and that it is through this more complex
concept that 'fear of crime' operates or is at least mediated. Anxiety, they further suggest, is 'arguably the core' concept of psychoanalysis and, that this literature provides a complex and well-theorised understanding of the concept (Hollway and Jefferson 1997b:54). Thus, they argue that:

The psychoanalytic concept of anxiety... is based on a subject whose primary source of meaning and action is the dynamic unconscious, rather than cognitive reason. The desire for certainty and the related fantasy of controlling external forces are derived from psychic sources to do with the universal condition of anxiety, which none the less manifests differently in particular historical periods and places (Hollway and Jefferson 1997a:262).

The authors suggest that the subject is not simply a 'a product of the social environment' but is formed by the often creative and imaginative forms in which the self defends itself against anxiety. One of these forms of defense may be, for example, that a subject may displace a threat to the integrity of their own subjectivity on to another person or group in order to control their anxiety. Further, a subject may displace one type of fear or uncertainty, for example the fear of meaninglessness of ones life, on to another more discernable fear discourse, for example the 'fear of crime' (Hollway and Jefferson 1997a:262, 263). Thus, for them a 'fear of crime' discourse is not necessarily a negative force within ones subjectivity, it may in fact offer the subject respite from other more debilitating fears (Hollway and Jefferson 1997a:263, 264).

This work seems to be an important break with the tradition of 'fear of crime' research; the possibility of there being something positive in 'fear of crime' has been little mooted19. They argue that both survey methods, such as those used in the British crime surveys, and standard qualitative approaches fall short in any attempt to tap into these underlying anxieties of respondents. This is because each of these methodologies attempt to quantify or qualify what is regarded as the rationalised experience of the respondent. Rather, they argue the subject matter in itself is such that the respondent will be in a state of heightened anxiety and as such the researcher must look for 'absences and avoidances' in the narrative as much as what is said' (Hollway and Jefferson 1997:55). Thus, their research ultimately asks what underlying anxieties affect whether a subject invests in a 'fear of crime' discourse. The biographical approach to eliciting the respondent's narrative posits that each respondent life is informed by a 'gestalt', a whole more

19 An exception being the governmental literature that conceptualises fear as a possible risk minimisation tactic (see chapters 3 and 4.)
than the sum of its parts, or a hidden agenda (Hollway and Jefferson 1997b:60). It is this ‘gestalt’ that is of importance to how the anxious self might displace their fears.

This unique approach certainly has some benefits. Certainly the psychoanalytical aspect of their theoretical approach offers a novel and ultimately useful way of conceptualising how many seemingly diffuse fears and concerns can be psychologically projected onto what might seem more concrete and discernable fears about crime. However, I am not entirely convinced that the same issues could not be approached using other forms of discursive analysis. The problem with the psychoanalytical approach is that ultimately one suspect discursive construct, ‘fear of crime’, is discarded for another, anxiety, as the central object of analysis. The fact that anxiety is a ‘well theorised’ concept within psychoanalysis does not necessarily mean that it offers the body of ‘fear of crime’ research any really useful insights, or that it will not itself become universalising. Ultimately, Hollway and Jefferson still rely on a notion of ‘fear of crime’, at least as a discourse that might be taken up by a subject. That aside, I will expand on the value of Hollway and Jefferson’s analysis in chapter two and how it might offer this analysis some illuminating insights.

In another recent study, this time carried out in Glasgow Scotland, Ditton et al (1999) introduced the notion of anger into the ‘fear of crime’ debate. Armed with a newly developed survey, 1600 residents of the Strath-Clyde region were randomly sampled. Their findings suggest – and I will take the quote directly to avoid confusion – that ‘more people are angry than are afraid, but also that people who are more angry than they are afraid are much more angry than people who are more afraid, are afraid’ (Ditton et al 1999:89). Moreover, these findings were replicated for every age group and for both genders with only minor divergences: for example, females were found to be more afraid than males but also reported being angrier. Such findings would seem to cast considerable doubt on the utility of much of the existing literature concerning the ‘fear of crime’ given that it questions the overall relative significance of fear as an emotional response to crime or the threat of victimisation. The notion of anger seems to offer a competing discourse to the respondent and its introduction in the Ditton et al (1999) article certainly offers a point of deconstruction to the ‘fear of crime’ canon. It would also seem to cast doubt on studies such as those by Hollway and Jefferson (1997a and 1997b) that only offer the respondent a limited number of discourses from which to choose.
How to Proceed?

Overall, the field of ‘fear of crime’ research is as multi-dimensional and fractured as the subject it attempts to study. It seems that as more research is conducted, and that as more literature is produced, the concept of ‘fear of crime’ itself slips further from the grasp of those who wish to measure and define it. That is not to suggest that researchers have not comprehended the complexity of their subject; on the contrary it is this complexity that has been the subject of many of the studies I have discussed in this literature review. Rather, it seems that there is a general underlying assumption within the literature that these complexities can be overcome or tamed by way of producing more accurate research instruments, better definitions of their subject, a closer understanding of the variables, larger sample groups, more localised sample groups, or more universalised research design; I could go on. This constant revaluation and revision of the techniques and design of the research is a core symptom of what I want to suggest is an overriding modernist imperative within a field that seeks to know the truth about a subject that is itself perhaps foundationless. By this I mean to say that the ultimate goal of this research is possibly an unobtainable one. In the following chapters I will illustrate what I mean by this hypothesis. Moreover, I will employ alternative strategies for trying to understand this subject that do not rely on these modernist imperatives.
Chapter 2

Methods/Theories: Outlining an Alternative Framework

One of the overriding problems confronting a study into the concept of ‘fear of crime’ — as opposed to simply studying the ‘fear of crime’ — is that this particular criminological/victimological field is relatively devoid of such forms of critical research. While this engenders a certain sense of urgency, legitimacy and dare I say excitement regarding the current project, it also illustrates the need for the development and adoption of the appropriate research methods and theoretical conceptualisations to suit this particular approach. The methodological blueprints for such a research project do exist, however, and I am certainly laying no claim to having developed completely new approaches here; it is not my aim to develop new grand theories or methods but to apply suitable methods and theories to this rather more modest project. Hence, I require particular methodological and theoretical tools that will allow me to carry out very specific types of analyses. With that in mind the research methodologies and theoretical approaches employed here have been transplanted and borrowed from others and in some cases modified and developed in order to be suitable for use with this project.

I have commented on the general lack of critical analysis in this field. There are, however, those who have challenged the problematic nature of the field as it stands and outlined some possible alternatives to the status quo. Some theorists have pointed out the need for more rigorous forms of conceptual development. Sparks (1992:123) has suggested that:

The level of empirical detail which research on ‘fear of crime’ has furnished has not been matched by parallel conceptual development, and scope has arisen for confusion between questions which can be solved empirically (on the basis of current knowledge or further data gathering) and those which require further elaboration and interpretation.

This acknowledgment by Sparks, echoed by Hale (1996) and others, alludes to what I suggest has been one of the overriding problems associated with ‘fear of crime’ research: the unproblematic and systemic separation of theory and practice. The assumed amenability of ‘fear of crime’ research to the survey or interview technique has encouraged the theoretical and conceptual components of the research to be adjuncts to this seemingly more important empirical project. In
the scramble for meaningful empirical data it would appear that conceptual frameworks have been erected with the purpose of sustaining the truth-value of that data at any cost, with little or no acknowledgment of its often contradictory or flimsy status. It seems that with the vast amount of empirical work completed the field has developed its own momentum, and its practices and methodologies become relatively standardised. The taken-for-grantedness of these methodologies have made critical discussion of ‘fear of crime’ relatively difficult, given that alternative conceptual frameworks are likely to disrupt the research subject such that its very reality is made problematic. Thus, criticism has been, to some extent, self-censored and therefore confined to the accepted problems and conventions of existing research. It has been easier to conveniently gloss over the conceptual inconsistencies — we might note them, we might even devote a section of an article to them, but in the end the concerns for our empirical data oblige us to ignore them or leave them for others to tackle. By default the concept of ‘fear of crime’ has escaped any substantial criticism.

The only concerted attempts to look critically and historically at ‘fear of crime’ have been those of Hale (1996) and Sparks (1992). The former, while essentially achieving his overall aim of conducting a ‘review of the literature’ (Hale 1996), fails to really question this taken-for-grantedness of the notion of ‘fear of crime’ in any rigorous critical manner. That is not to suggest that Hale views ‘fear of crime’ research as unproblematic, rather, he highlights many shortcomings of such research in his article. However, essentially Hale’s critique falls into the ‘leave it for others’ category I have outlined above. For Hale, the question is not one of ‘fear of crimes’ historical conditions of emergence — the questions of genealogy. Rather, he is more interested in how we might best study, research, name, and understand ‘fear of crime’ as a research object; that is not to suggest that he uncritically embraces the notion that ‘fear of crime’ can be altogether known and understood, that it can be a totally unitary category of inquiry. However, for Hale the problem is one of semantics and measurement - shortcomings will be minimised as more appropriate forms of methodology are developed and put into practice and when more accurate terminology is universalised and the field better organised. I will return to the problematic of Hale’s approach at the beginning of Chapter three.

Sparks (1992) on the other hand could be credited with the beginnings of a much more critical approach to understanding ‘fear of crime’ than anything that had come before it — and much that has followed. Sparks analysis functions on a number of levels. Firstly, it is a gentle critique of left realist criminology and its propensity to construct ‘fear of crime’ in research (survey) respondents as uncritically ‘rational’. Sparks argues that the setting up of polarities such as
reasonable/unreasonable, appropriate/excessive, rational/irrational\(^{28}\) does nothing to further our understanding of ‘fear of crime’, and indeed sells left realism short. Secondly, Sparks critically considers the problematic of the category ‘fear of crime’ — and indeed the notion of ‘fear’ itself. He argues for the need for a:

...thorough reconsideration of what is meant by the category ‘fear’. Ordinary language, as usual, runs ahead of survey method by incorporating a variety of inflections, experiences and modes of perception in its uses of the word. We fear many things: war, accident, illness, death, financial ruin, scandal, estrangement and loneliness, the dark, dentists. It is not immediately apparent that the term ‘fear’ is being used in precisely the same way in each case, and we might recognise real scope for disagreement about the degree of attention or concern which would be warranted by the dangers which each of them presents (Sparks 1992:125).

The main point here being how it seems possible to have a debate about the rationality or irrationality of a fear, when the shape and form of the fear itself remains anything but clear. The two aims of Sparks’ article are thus intimately connected. The blurred nature of the term ‘fear’ is used by Sparks as a method of deconstructing the irrational/rational debate within the ‘fear of crime’ literature, and particularly within the left realist criminological paradigm. Sparks (1992:125) uses the analogy of flying to make his point regarding ‘fear’. He suggests that many people fear flying, yet most who are fearful still fly regularly without knowing the exact calculations of risk — which are infinitely more calculable than risks regarding crime. We make judgments on whether the risks are high or low, worth taking or otherwise. Sparks (1992:125) argues that there is no conclusive resolution to the problem of ‘rationality’ even in this much more objective case. Rather, we should end the search to prove one side of the debate or the other and instead focus on the need to understand the finer specificities of what constitutes ‘fear of crime’.

Sparks (1992:126) points out that one of the strangest aspects of ‘fear of crime’ debates, and indeed of the literature up to this point, has been the assumption that respondents to their research should be able to somehow calculate their risks of becoming a victim of crime. Indeed, this calculable risk for the observer/researcher is precisely a problem of incalculability and uncertainty for the participant. Yet these assumptions, Sparks rightly attests, are made by both

\(^{28}\) See chapter 5 for an expansion of the discussion of these binaries.
sides of the rational/irrational debate. For the rational side of the debate the risk calculation is seen as a result of hidden crime and other social factors — thus it becomes rationalised by the researcher. On the irrational side of the debate the respondent can only be analysed as rational if they ‘behaved like bookmakers, laying accurate odds against their own chances of falling victim of crime’ (Sparks 1992:126). He concludes by suggesting that the notion of a rational fear, whether it makes any sense at all, may not be empirically decidable (Sparks 1991:131).

There is no doubt that Sparks’ work has been highly influential. It seems almost every article concerning ‘fear of crime’ written since its publication has seen fit to cite the work. However, as I suggested above, it is much less clear that many researchers have really addressed many of Sparks’ concerns in any more than cosmetic terms. Rather, Sparks’ concerns seem confined to the short ‘critical’ section of each ‘fear of crime’ article. Most of these articles then go on to — relatively unproblematically — review their empirical findings. To be sure, the rationality/irrationality aspect of the ‘fear of crime’ debate has abated somewhat, possibly due in part to Sparks’ critique, however, I suspect that its trace still resides between the lines of more recent research.

The question that all this raises is as follows; how does the work of Hale and Sparks in particular — and I have already mentioned the work of Hollway and Jefferson and their contribution — contribute to the methodologies and theories used in this thesis? The contribution of Hale’s work, although theoretically slight, offers for this project a useful summary of the field to date — at least until 1996. Not only does he bring together the main methodological and theoretical approaches so far utilised, but he also indicates many of the shortcomings and inconsistencies of these. One of the main theoretical mechanisms of this thesis will be to re-contextualise much of Hale’s review into a genealogical framework. Such a reconceptualisation will allow me to ask a different set of questions about the ‘fear of crime’ and the origins of this fear research — questions that Hale’s framework has rendered unaskable.

Sparks analysis offers this project a set of game openings as it were — to put it in Foucaultian terms. His deconstruction of the concept of ‘fear of crime’ — although he never uses this terminology — opens up the opportunity of new forms of criticism to be directed towards the concept. To this extent I wish, as part of this project, to illustrate how the concept has developed into something in need of such deconstruction — how does ‘fear of crime’ assume its current set of assumptions? What processes, practices, and historical events have influenced and steered the
course of ‘fear of crime’ research to such an extent that it required this reevaluation by Sparks? Further, Sparks suggests that ‘fear of crime’ research could benefit by looking to the literature of risk distribution to broaden its scope. He suggests that: analysts of risk perception have long known that not all risks that are equally probable receive equal attention and concern. Rather, ‘the salience for individuals of particular risks is related to the place those risks hold in a given culture...’ (1992:127). I will draw on the work of Beck (1992) and others as a means of addressing this issue. Indeed, the notion of risk is one that looms large in ‘fear of crime’ research. Not only does it occupy the ‘objective reality’ against which fear is measured for many researchers; it also — if we are to follow Beck (1992) — offers a framework through which we might conceptualise the recent interest in the ‘fear of crime’. Lastly, Sparks (1992:132) suggests that empirical research into the ‘fear of crime’ must dispense with the ‘behaviorism of the broken window thesis’ and place research into the ‘fear of crime’ on a more ‘fully social footing’ by placing it in the realm of concrete social practices and experiences. In the final chapter of this thesis I attempt just that.

I mentioned in chapter 1 that the work of Hollway and Jefferson (1997a,b) also offers a starting point for this research, particularly in terms of their interview techniques for ethnographic work that might help us further understand the experiential elements of fear. However, there is also an element of the under-theorisation of fear in Hollway and Jefferson’s work. This is not a problem in itself; however, they then go on to rely on fear as a fairly unproblematic discourse in their analysis. This can be brought into focus through a closer inspection of their methodology. In theory, the biographical approach of their work is a good one, and one I wish to partly emulate in the research that follows — particularly in chapter seven. However, the problem of failing to really question fear as a concept pervades their research instrument such that they are in danger of creating the very discourses they then seek to identify. This is the element of their method I wish to avoid. Their interview questions were as follows:

1a. Can you tell me how crime has impacted on your life since you’ve lived here?
1b. (Follow up in terms of detail and time periods, following order of narrative)
2a. Can you tell me about unsafe situations in your life since you’ve been living here?
2b. (as 1b)

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22 See Chapter 1.
23 Administrative and ‘left idealist’ criminology in particular.
24 See discussion in chapter 1.
3a. Can you think of something that you’ve read, seen or heard about recently that makes you fearful? Anything (not necessarily about crime)

3b. (as 1b)

4a. Can you tell me about risky situations in your life since you’ve been living here?

4b. (as 1b)

5a. Can you tell me times in your life when you’ve been anxious?

5b. (as 1b)

6a. Can you tell me about earlier times in your live when you’ve been anxious?

6b. (as 1b)

7a. Can you tell me what it was like moving to this area?

(Hollway and Jefferson 1997b:60, 61)(emphasis added).

7b. (as 1b)

With the obvious imperative of separating the key concepts, fear, risk and anxiety, Hollway and Jefferson set up an interview schedule which attempts to peel back the layers of unsafety, fear and risk to reach the ultimate goal of understanding anxiety and its many facets – the imagined constitution of their subjects. The only problem is that this research instrument actually invites the respondent to pick a discourse – fear, risk, anxiety or unsafety - out of the four supplied thereby offering the subject little latitude to actually explain any of these situations within their own conceptual framework. Certainly there may be some explanatory power to such separation. However, ultimately this angle of questioning sensitises the respondent to give one of a number of acceptable responses to the negation of the respondents’ lived experiences and own explanatory language, precisely the information the researchers set out to analyse. These criticisms aside, the notion of an imagined subject of Hollway and Jefferson’s work is extremely useful. They rightly suggest that this offers a way forward from the rational/irrational debate and a way forward for ‘fear of crime’ research more generally.

Multiple Methodologies: The Argument for Complementary Perspectives

This thesis applies a number of differing theoretical and methodological approaches to the subjects herein. While the rationale for these shifts in theory and method will become more obvious as the reader advances through this work — each shift is ‘sign-posted’ at the beginning of relevant chapters — it is pertinent that I outline these in advance so as to avoid any confusion. That I would feel the need to switch between methodologies should alert the reader to the fact that my approach to this research project is – for want of a better term – eclectic. However, if a montage style of approach seems to offer the most effective means of understanding and explicating the
various perspectives I wish to analyse I see no reason to be restrained by any self—nor outside—policing of disciplinary boundaries, theoretical approaches or practices.

All this is not to suggest, however, that I am advocating a *laissez-faire* approach to research methodology. On the contrary I am suggesting that research methodology should be intimately tailored to needs both of the project and to the subjects of inquiry. Moreover, I am not suggesting that the melding of methodologies can be achieved altogether unproblematically. Rather, I consider that a researcher or researchers have an obligation to explain both how various methodologies can be drawn together in the pursuit of producing some coherent ideas, results or outcomes, and how the underlying philosophies informing each methodology can be reconciled in a manner that leaves the work free of any major fractures, flaws or contradictions. Garland (1990:13) eloquently argues that certain forms of research might be all the richer if they are informed by a number of, what might seem to be at the outset, conflicting theoretical positions. He suggests that it is not always necessary to make clear choices between theoretical approaches and that to do so can be an act of philosophical essentialism. Thus Garland (1990:13) argues that:

Theories are conceptual means of interpreting and explicating information. They come into competition only when they offer alternative and incompatible explanations for the same data. Since one theory effectively supercedes another only when it explains the same range of data and problems more plausibly...

Following Garland, I want to suggest that the theoretical approaches employed here—these theories obviously informing the methodologies24—operate as mechanisms for understanding different aspects or perspectives of the same problem or topic. They do not compete because they each analyse something different, albeit a different aspect or perspective of the same phenomena. It is this multifaceted approach that is best suited to the complexities of the subject at hand. Indeed, to limit one’s approach to this topic in the name of philosophical essentialism or disciplinary ideals would do this project a grave injustice and explain only part of the complex issue at hand.

However, there is also a sense that in some cases my choices of approach are best understood in relation to better knowledge of their practicalities. Thus, while I will be descriptive about my methodologies and while I will situate and contextualise what is to come, my rationale in

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24 I have already indicated my desire not to separate theory from practice.
selecting to work in these paradigms will become more obvious as the reader engages the chapters that follow.

There are four primary models of methodology employed here. Firstly, chapter three adopts what Michel Foucault has described as genealogical method. The chapter also calls on another of Foucault’s conceptual frameworks, *governmentality*. The governmentality framework is also used in chapter four albeit on a different level of analysis — government of the self. Chapter five is a discursive media analysis which attempts to trace some convergences of the discourses of ‘fear of crime’. Chapter six utilises an approach that could be described as — for want of a better term — deconstructive. Here I attempt to explicate the structural frameworks — whether they are imagined or cognitive — that ‘fear of crime’, particularly as it relates to gender, is constructed through. Chapter seven employs an ethnographic approach but could be described as a community study and discourse analysis. Here I use interviews carried out in regional NSW by way of exploring some of the broader issues that form and inform notions of ‘fear of crime’ and community safety.

Genealogy

*The Method of Beginning in the Middle*

The writing of a history is always a practice fraught with dangers. Dominant and/or contemporary modes of thought will invariably offer a hegemonic framework through which certain versions of history will emerge to the exclusion of more marginalised variations and narratives. Criminology, like other disciplines, has been the subject of a number of such flawed histories. Garland (1994:23) is critical of those who believe in a ‘textbook’ style history of criminology. He argues that many of the categories used to describe modes of criminological thought such as *positivism* and *classicism* are highly misleading and that the categories themselves dissolve under any close scrutiny. Garland also rejects what he describes as the ‘progressivist’, ‘presentest’ view of many histories which conceptualise criminology as a science which was ‘waiting to happen’. Indeed, we could add that this conceptualisation of criminology is also premised on the notion that criminology’s objects of enquiry are/were waiting to be discovered — and thus outside of discourse. This approach, Garland argues, ignores the cultural and historical specificity of the discipline, its knowledges, reasoning and investigative procedures; it cuts from view other problematisations that historical records reveal, and forgets that the way in which we constitute

\[^{25}\text{cf White and Hains 1996 for an example of such a history.}\]
‘crime and deviance are through established conventions rather than unchanging truths’ (1994:24).

Similarly, to paraphrase Rose (1988:180), authoritative, ‘textbook’, versions of disciplinary history establish a unity to the subjects of the discipline and construct a ‘continuous tradition of thinkers’ who have attempted to grasp the truth of its subject matter. The objects of the discipline are thus rendered ‘a-historical and a-social’; they are constructed as pre-existing any attempts to study them. ‘These histories establish the modernity of the science. They ratify the present through its respectable tradition...’ (Rose 1988:180). Through such historical narratives disciplinary boundaries become clearly demarcated and disciplinary subjects become objectified and naturalised. The discipline establishes its ‘regime of truth’, its legitimacy and authority about its chosen topic while criticism is either silenced or rendered ‘unscientific’.

Methodologically, my aim is to avoid these pitfalls of historiography. Rather than taking my subjects of research as given, as social fact, I will ask how it is that these subjects have come to be regarded as given, as a priori, as outside of discourse, and whether such conceptualisations can be upheld when subjected to rigorous critical analysis? Such an analysis has to ask new questions of the topic: what ends might the existence of these subjects serve and what institutions and institutional practices might benefit from their ‘discovery’? Rather than seeing disciplines such as criminology as enlightenment enterprises - sciences gradually uncovering and explaining crime and social life - I will ask how and why is it that particular disciplines have organised their analytical strategies, their systems of thought, and their objects of inquiry in particular ways at particular times? Further, I will ask what political, cultural and social forces have been at play in order that particular disciplinary and governmental arrangements and strategies have become possible?

The methodological ‘model’ I propose to follow in chapter three is a process which has been described as genealogical (Foucault 1984); creating as it were, a history of the present which will continually challenge the hegemony of various disciplines and their assumptions. Foucault has used this genealogical method, borrowed from Nietzsche (see Foucault 1984), in studies of punishment (Foucault 1977), sexuality (Foucault 1978), and has clearly articulated a set of ‘rules’ concerning its application (see Foucault 1984). I will attempt to follow these ‘rules’ while being aware of what other perspectives they may render silent. Thus, I will use genealogy as one tool amongst others in analysing the concept of the ‘fear of crime’.
Genealogy and the Subject of 'Fear of Crime'

Clearly my subject – the ‘fear of crime’ - is a present day phenomenon; this is not to imply that it is necessarily a new phenomenon. Rather, it has come to have substantive social meaning in contemporary western societies. What I wish to explore – and hopefully expose - are the contingent historical, cultural and political conditions surrounding and interacting with the discipline of criminology and governmental technologies which have made possible the emergence of specific types of knowledge and inquiry regarding the ‘fear of crime’ in some contemporary western societies. How and why has research into the ‘fear of crime’ emerged and proliferated over the past thirty years? It seems to me incongruous to suggest that this fear was laying dormant in populations and individuals waiting for the ‘science’ or disciplinary practices of criminology to ‘discover’ it. Yet, that is the assumption with which much of the research and literature regarding ‘fear of crime’ has approached its subject. This lack of reflexivity, however, is nothing new as Foucault, Garland and others have noted regarding other topics. It seems to me that the concept of ‘fear of crime’ is one that could benefit from the application of genealogical method. Foucault (1984) has suggested that his methods – genealogy included - are not universally applicable to any subject, rather, they offer up ‘game openings’ whereby others may wish to join in if the topic is suitably amenable. Thus, with the belief that this is such a subject I intend to take up his offer as it were. This process will also allow me to trace the emergence of the subject of this same form of knowledge, an imagined entity I will call the fearing subject. It is important to point out here that Foucault conceptualises subjectivity not as a self-conscious desiring subjectivity as in Kristeva or Lacan, but as the imagined object of historical analysis (see Lemert and Gillan 1982:105). Or as Deleuze suggests, ‘dividduals’ rather than individuals, the possessors not of some inner fixed quality, but with capacities and potentialities (See Rose 1998:234) that can become governable given precisely targeted technologies and tactics.

Foucault (1984:76) suggests of genealogy that it must:

[R]ecord the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising of places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. ...[G]enealogy must define even those instances when they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealised.
Indeed, the ‘fear of crime’ is a concept that invites us to think of it as a-historical and outside of discourse. Its very conceptualisation as an emotional response, as effect, produces understandings of it as given, as ‘social fact’. Its cause is always to be sought elsewhere, either in the fearful society or individual, or in technologies of information like the media — it invites a search for its causal origins. Genealogy on the other hand ‘opposes itself to the search for “origins”’ (Foucault 1984:77). In opposing this search we should not attempt to capture the pure essence of things, and not postulate that things have carefully protected identities. To attempt this is to assume the existence of immobile forms that exceed the external world of accident and succession (Foucault 1984:78). Indeed, this notion of the accidental and contingent is a strong one in the work of Foucault. For example in Discipline and Punish (1977) one of the central arguments is that it was anything but a progressive scientific, or political, discovery that the prison has come to be the central apparatus in systems of punishment. Rather, the birth of the prison was predicated on an ensemble of (accidental) technical and political alignments that fractured existing regimes of punishment and eventually formed completely new fields of ‘truth’ around the power to punish and the means to this end. Hence, genealogy must seek to ‘cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning’ (Foucault 1984:80), it must identify accidents, the small often overlooked deviations, and indeed the errors and complete reversals, ‘the false appraisals and faulty calculations’ that produced things, knowledges, and ‘truths’ that continue to have value in contemporary settings (see Foucault 1984:81). Foucault is at pains to oppose genealogy to metaphysics. While metaphysics seeks to place the needs of the present at the origin and postulate that some obscure purpose is realised at this moment (of origin), genealogy sets out to reestablish the systems of subjection; it attempts to trace the discursive connectedness of various systems of subjection and their various elements. I will return to this later. Suffice to suggest that genealogy provides a very worthwhile methodological approach for this project and one that has so far not been deployed with regards to this topic.

While drawing on the work of Foucault and his genealogical method, the work of David Garland also pervades chapter three. Garland’s insights into the shortcomings — as well as the benefits - of the Foucaultian method provide a framework through which to explore the issues – politics and representation in particular – that Foucault’s methods often render invisible or at least subjugate to the seemingly more pertinent topics of government and the archive.
Governmentality

Throughout chapter three I implicitly draw on Michel Foucault's (1991) notion of mentalities of government, or what he describes as 'governmentality', as the theoretical and analytic framework that underpins my argument. In chapter four, governmentality becomes even more central to my thesis concerning the imagined or constructed human subjectivities of government, the fearing subject. Thus, the conceptual tools of governmentality will require explication here in order to equip the reader with the necessary understanding of what follows.

Foucault's genealogical studies have focused on three interrelated concepts, knowledge, power and the body; these concepts are used to analyse particular 'structures' or regimes of domination (see Garland 1990:137). In studying institutions and their relationship to power and knowledge the researcher can develop new ways of understanding and conceptualising their place in broader social roles and governmental imperatives. Likewise, if we understand the body as something permeable, regulatable, in short governable, we can better understand why institutions and knowledge/power have developed in particular ways and how this in turn might influence and 'work' upon the body.

Foucault's methods give us an insight into particular modes of governance. In his later work Foucault refers to these modes of governance as governmentality. According to Foucault (1991), governmentality is the rational practice of government, it is government through calculated mentalities and reason. He believes that from between the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries onwards, new forms of governance began to develop in addition to the existing power of the sovereign and that the aims of this new governance were, and indeed remain today, plural. Foucault (1991) counterposes governmental forms of power to these sovereign forms of power as a means of explication. Sovereign power, he suggests, is exercised from above, with the provenance of god over men - by the prince over his subjects for example. Although sovereign

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26 This concept has fostered a growing body of literature from scholars keen to develop the ideas left in a relatively embryonic stage at the time of Foucault's death. These scholars include Colin Gordon, Ian Hacking, Nicholas Rose, Jacques Derrida, and Graham Burchell.

27 Specifically, Foucault (1991 102, 103) defines governmentality thus:

The ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of the very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.

The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereign, discipline etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole series of savoirs.

The process, or rather the result of the processes, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes governmentaialised.

28 Foucault (1991) uses the example of Machiavelli's The Prince to illustrate this.
power may well have as its aim the 'common good', in its ultimate circularity the common good is 'obedience to the law, hence the good for sovereignty is that people should obey it' (Foucault 1991:95). Governmental power is distinguishable from sovereign power in that the former relies on tactics and technologies for arranging things, whereby the latter relies on laws. Governmentality is government through knowledge, primarily knowledge of population whose government it seeks. This form of government is best described as:

the right manner of disposing of things so as to lead not to the form of the common good... but to an end which is convenient for each of the things that are to be governed. ...[W]ith government it is a question of not imposing law on men (sic), but of... employing tactics rather than laws, and even as using laws themselves as tactics (Foucault 1991:95).

Government, he suggests, is both an art and an economy of governance. An art in that it requires the development of techniques and technologies that allow the most minute and specific forms of governance to occur, and that these will be ever intensifying and perfecting themselves; applying themselves appropriately. That is not to suggest these can ever be perfect, quite the contrary, for perfection is a normative notion that Foucault would be at pains to avoid. Government is about an economy of governance in that its exercise is aimed at securing the greatest possible return from the investment of power; it must ensure the greatest quantity of wealth is produced, that people are provided with a sufficient means of subsistence, that the population can multiply and reproduce itself (Foucault 1991:95). Indeed, this form of government formed by necessity around the problem of population. Population was steadily growing in Europe in particular and progressively accumulating around cities. Cities themselves were changing with the onset of the new technologies of the industrial revolution. 'Security could no longer be guaranteed through force or conquest – government was no longer about securing territory against external threats – but managing population' (Carrington et al 1996:58). Thus, Government began to progressively take as its object population as opposed to territory. Government has the welfare of the population and the improvement of its condition as its purpose (Foucault 1991:100). That is not to suggest that such ends are always forthcoming. Rather, it suggests that governance should be understood as a set of practices that are not in themselves intrinsically good or evil, positive or negative, oppressive or libertarian. That is not to argue, however, that they may not be operationalised in ways that make them such for some subjects. Rather, for Foucault, as Gordon

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Foucault (1991:94) argues that territory was the foundation of principality and sovereignty. The regulation and maintenance of this territory were, for the sovereign, his principal concern.
explains, ‘everything is dangerous, with the consequence that things are liable to go wrong, but also that there is the possibility of doing something to prevent this...’(1991:46,47).

An important element of this new form of government has been the development of the ‘science of state’, statistics. In the last two centuries, in particular, changes in the art of government have produced what Carrington et al (1996) have described as the ‘statisticalisation’ of government. In turn, the development of statistics has had its effects on modes of government. The gradual development of this science made possible a shift, or what Foucault (1991:99) refers to as a ‘derestriction’ of the art of government through revealing that ‘population has its own regularities, its own rates of death and diseases, its cycles of scarcity...’. Statistics allows the problem of population to be made manageable and knowable, it allows a relationship of constant reflection, analysis, assessment and - as a result - malleability and regulation to be established between the bodies that govern and bodies that are to be governed. Indeed, government according to the Foucaultian principles of governmentality is the breaking down of the dichotomy of governing and governed, the de-centering altogether of the notion of government.

However, governmental power is only one form of power, so other modes of domination of the governed, by the governing, are likely, indeed required to continue. For Foucault, governmental power does not displace sovereign power. Rather, they continue to co-exist along with a third realm of power which I have previously mentioned: disciplinary power. Indeed, governmental power requires the intensification of disciplinary power. This might involve on the one hand the disciplines and their ability to amass knowledge on, and of, political economy (Foucault 1991:102). The disciplines, for example, are paramount in the analysis of statistics; they decide what to measure and how to measure it — they help develop objects of governance. Any exercise of power relies on a knowledge of the target or object of governance, whether it be natural or human, its forces need to be understood, its strengths and weaknesses known; the more known it becomes the more it becomes controllable (Garland 1990:138). On the other hand, disciplinary power was also required in the workhouse, the prison, the school, the armed forces, and also in regard to the disciplining of the self, an aspect of what Foucault has described as the ‘technologies of the soul’.

One of the central tenets of Foucault’s conceptual framework of governmentality is that the self becomes the subject of one’s own government. The art of government is premised on the notion that the problem of population can be overcome by the development of a grid of governmental
techniques and tactics through which subjects are not only governed, but take an active role in their own governance. Further, the needs and wishes of subjects are also central to the development of objects of governance. Thus, the Foucaultian subject of governmentality is not the powerless docile object of sovereign governance, rather, governmental power is productive, it produces modern subjects in their very subjectivity and imagines them in specific ways. The self governed or ‘self-controlled’ body of Foucaultian analysis is brought about by ‘exerting influence’ upon what Foucault refers to as ‘the soul’. Here, strategies of power and technologies of governance come into contact with, and indeed inscribe the bodies of their subjects. This is the microphysics of power, capillary forms of power that ingrain themselves in the learning processes and on into the actions and reactions of everyday life (see Foucault 1978).

Criminology and Government

The relationship between disciplinary knowledge - and this includes criminology - and the field of government is complex. Gordon (1991, 34, 35), following Foucault, argues that ‘twentieth century government postulates not an identity but an isomorphism, an intimate symbiosis between the cares of government and the travails of a society exposed to the conflicts and crisis of the liberal economy’. Criminological knowledge has a symbiotic relationship with the practices of modern liberal government in terms of ‘law and order’, crime, criminals and community safety. Government is to be thought of as intimately linked with developments in the human sciences including criminology, and the ways of knowing that they represent. Its mentalities are developed through the disciplines. But this mentality or reason is also contingent on variables such as political whims and electoral strategies; that is not to suggest that these variables themselves are not contingent on the modalities and mentalities of government and the cares and aspirations of populations. For my purposes, this formulation of Foucault’s notion of governmental power by Burchell (1993) is useful. Government, he argues, is:

a contact point where techniques of domination - or power - and techniques of the self ‘interact’, where technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself and, conversely, ...where technologies of the self are integrated into structures of coercion (Burchell, 1993, 268).

\[34\] We will see the importance of the development of statistics to this current project in chapter 3.

\[35\] See Garland (1990:137).

\[36\] To take Garland (1990:137) out of context.
This notion of contact point is central to the thesis that follows. I will suggest that the ‘fear of crime’ has become, not only a ‘technology of the self or soul’, whereby the individual attempts to govern ones own fear and risk, but that this notion of ‘fear of crime’ has also been well and truly integrated into the ‘structures’ of coercion. Further, I will argue that the ‘discovery’ of the ‘fear of crime’ was not simply a result of the progressive rigors of social science investigations or ‘better’ ways of doing research and statistics. Rather, I will suggest that conditions of the emergence of the ‘fear of crime’ became possible because of particular governmental and disciplinary alignments and allegiances and on particular ways of knowing and in particular modes of exercising power.

The Limits of Governmentality

While the conceptual tools of governmentality provide a useful methodological blueprint for the analysis of ‘fear of crime’ throughout chapters three and four, like all conceptual tools they too have limitations. I touch upon these limits in chapter three where I indicate that the parameters of governmentality must be breached such that political rhetoric — as opposed to policy - can be introduced into the framework of the genealogy. While it remains unclear to me whether Foucault himself would have identified this as a breach of protocol or ‘rules’, it seems likely that many who have built upon his notion of governmentality, and who often seek to delineate its acceptable parameters, would judge me most harshly for this infraction. However, there are also a growing number of academics in this area (cf. Stenson 1998, 1999; O’Malley 1996) who are intent upon pushing the theoretical boundaries of Foucault’s analytical concepts and it is from them I take my lead here.

Overwhelmingly, practitioners of governmentality have privileged two forms of qualitative data, the archive and the text, over social and political context. This privileging has been at the expense of less ‘authoritative’ sources. The inference in most governmentality literature is that productive government is achieved through an efficient and multifaceted apparatus of state highly sensitive to the needs of its citizenry and the demands of the liberal economy. Government is carried out at the level of technocracy, it is essentially apolitical, and managerial — it manages and controls population. While emphasising this domain of government, and of power/knowledge and tactics, is useful, and indeed paramount to this type of inquiry, it does gloss over some of the localised contingencies of political, popular and media representation through which the public consciousness and indeed subjects are constituted. Nikolas Rose (1999:xi) even
acknowledges/admits as much in the introduction to his book *Powers of Freedom*; although the book itself contains little evidence of these alternative discourses being incorporated in the analysis.

Garland aims a number of such criticisms at Foucault's work, particularly in his critique of elements of Foucault's thesis on the prison in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). Garland points to the underlying functionalist logic of Foucault's analysis that obligates him to conceptualise issues like imprisonment as 'political tactic', as mentality of government (Garland 1990:164). Thus, Foucault has to situate the *raison d'être* for imprisonment and the prison – institutions that he argues are proven failures - within a governmental will to control the working class by their criminalisation. Conversely, Garland (1990:166) suggests that when we see the prison in terms of its 'real social background', 'popular concerns' and 'political demands' it may be far less of a failure than Foucault might have assumed. Thus, its social role may be altogether more complicated than simply one of conquering and coercing a particular class of person.

Similar concerns are also raised by Lemert and Gillan (1982:99). They suggest that too often Foucault's focus on histories of discursive relations override his concerns for the histories of social institutions. While the latter is not ignored, its relevance is definitely downplayed within Foucault's broader analyses. Thus, institutions such as the family, the clinic and the confessional in *The History of Sexuality: Part 1* are only weakly portrayed and are the only visible social relations and institutions in the text; strange, given the centrality of the fractured body in Foucault's work. Lemert and Gillan ask 'is not discourse on the body practiced in social relations' (1982:100)? Hence this research will need to heed the advice of Lemert and Gillan, for politics and social institutions figure prominently in regard to the development of the 'fear of crime' as a concept. Giddens (1993:232) has raised similar concerns about Foucault's analysis and indeed pushes his critique further than Lemert and Gillan. He suggests that while he agrees with Foucault's arguments regarding subjectivity, that there are no *transcendental subjects*, he does not then concur that this denotes that there are no *knowledgeable human subjects* (Giddens 1993:232). To be fair to Foucault, he and Giddens conceptualise the subject rather differently. Foucault is concerned with imagined subject/object of discipline and governance while Giddens is preoccupied with the individual subject subjected to the constraints of particular choices within an historical context. Giddens' critique nevertheless does hold some value for this analysis. In

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33 Although I should add that at the time *Discipline and Punish* was written Foucault had not developed the notion of governmentality as such. That said, it retrospectively haunts the text and informs the analysis.
particular, it reminds us that these two subjects are different concepts and that slippage between
the two requires explication.

Garland (1990:166) also suggests that Foucault constructs an overtly deterministic
conceptualisation of discipline. In constructing a blueprint for a ‘disciplinary society’, indeed a
worthwhile conceptualisation, Foucault never opposes this with the reality of the political
opposition and resistance and other impulses at play in the protection and defense of liberty.
Thus, this disciplinary model and social reality become one-in-the-same. ‘One would have
expected him to go on to show the divergences between the real world and his heuristic model’
(Garland 1990:167). This is something I continually attempt do in this thesis.

A similar criticism is directed at Foucault’s use of the concept ‘power’ in Discipline and Punish—
although it is worth mentioning here that Foucault did account for many of these criticisms, at
least to some extent, in his later work regarding governmentality. Garland (1990:167) points out
that in Discipline and Punish power is used by Foucault as a thing, the word becomes a noun and
thus the concept becomes separated from ‘value’ (Garland 1990:169). Garland (1990:169) rejects
this interpretation of power arguing instead that power is always ‘relational’ and is the name we
give to a capacity to realise particular goals. Adding to this Garland (1990:171) suggests that
Foucault is never clear on who and what sort of people are in positions of power — remembering
that according to Foucault nobody ‘holds’ power; power is exercised. Rather, these nebulous
entities are sometimes called the ‘dominant class’, the ‘bourgeoisie’, the ‘administration’ or the
‘state’, or sometimes simply avoided through passive grammar (Garland 1990:170). Garland
(1990:171) argues, that for Foucault:

...in the end, power is a kind of total confinement which envelopes the
individual, molding the body and soul into patterns of conformity. Power is at
once socialisation and social control. It constructs the individual as a subject, but
it is always an individual who is ‘subjected’ or subjugated in the same process.

This emphasis on power as a confining and conforming entity and conversely the relative
dismissal of the importance of those who routinely exercise this power is problematic. While the
analysis of knowledge/power and how its affects forms and informs the social world is a fertile
area for research in the current project, I see no reason why this research should exclude an
analysis of the actors, institutions and their relation to this power. Again, this project must be
multi-perspectivist in order to overcome these concerns.
Garland raises one final issue that has important implications for the methodologies of this study. That is, if the prison — as a ‘totalised’ form of disciplinary institution — is a failure as Foucault (1977) contends in *Discipline and Punish*, how effective can other disciplinary institutions really be given that they lack the prison’s coercive advantages (Garland 1990:171)? This question of disciplinary apparatus will be considered in more depth in following chapters, however, it is worth noting here that if ‘fear of crime’ operates as a technology of the self — as I will argue later — what makes its exercise ‘successful’ given the lack of coercive disciplinary apparatus at its disposal? Such a question makes it paramount that this research look beyond the archive, or the ‘document as monument’ as Lemert and Gillan put it. It is certainly the case that Foucault’s work towards the notion governmental power or governmentality — coming as it did later than *Discipline and Punish* — overcame many of the shortcomings of the notion of disciplinary power as it might problematise my research here. However, Garland’s critique of Foucault’s reliance on the notion of discipline does serve as a warning not to allow the concept of government to take on a similarly deterministic role in this project.

As I have suggested, the Foucaultian approach has much to offer this project in terms of theoretical and methodological models and strategies. Moreover, while I have pointed out some of the limitations of Foucault’s methods as they may relate to my work here, the volume of Foucault’s oeuvre, and his shifting theoretical and methodological approaches, mean that such criticism of his work — while often justified in regard to specific texts — does not necessarily hold true across the range of his topics. Thus, criticisms I have aired here are not aimed at discrediting Foucault’s approach, nor do they pretend to be comprehensive. Rather, they operate by way of identifying possible avenues of inquiry for this project that are often ignored in genealogy and governmentality. These avenues will take this analysis beyond being a carbon copy of the Foucaultian method and on to being a study in which the methodology is truly in tune with the demands of the subject matter and the academic rigor that such a project entails.

*Media Analysis*

Chapter 5 Consists of a media discourse analysis of a number of ‘newsworthy’ events in NSW in recent years. While genealogical methods allow the historical contingencies of ‘fear of crime’ to be traced, and while the governmental conceptual framework allows a blueprint for the exercise of governmental power-through-fear to be examined, both leave areas of analysis important to this project un-theorised. Neither, for example, offers a framework through which to examine
how issues related to ‘fear of crime’ are played out in the popular imagination and in the mass media. That is not to suggest that these popular representations are somehow to be conceptualised as separate entities or discursively split from governmental notions of ‘fear of crime’; quite the opposite in fact. Rather, the media as an institution is also a site where governmental imperatives and knowledge/power regarding ‘fear of crime’ have contact with subjects. To paraphrase Gordon’s (1991) conceptualisation alluded to above we might see the media as a ‘contact point’. This notion of contact point should not, however, be seen as a deterministic one. I am not suggesting that the mass media is somehow subjugated to the whims of government, rather, the mass media are, like other social institutions, part of the web of bio-power. While representations in the media are traceable to governmental technologies and tactics the reverse is also true. And while the mass media may influence and indeed ‘form’ fearing individuals, the reverse is also true; that individual subjects and the public imagination produce certain types of representations in the media. Thus, methodologically, what I aim to do in regard to the media analysis, is to trace what we might call the chain of signs, the textual inscriptions in the representations of ‘fear of crime’ which link governmental tactic and individual fearing subject through the contact point of the media. The questions that inform this aspect of the analysis might begin with something like - how does the concept of ‘fear of crime’ maintain itself in the world of representation?

However, my analysis is not an attempt to uncover some deep structural imperative, myth, or hidden meaning behind or informing this chain of signs. Rather, the linkages and connotations of meaning that bind the representations should be conceptualised similarly to the temporal events traced within genealogical method. Thus, by deconstructing these representations of fear, by dismantling the chain of signs that inform particular types of news reportage, this aspect of the ‘fear of crime’ can be usefully drawn into this research project in a manner that both illustrates the importance of the media in the field and yet does not fly in the face of the approaches successfully employed in the pursuit of other perspectives.

The Value of Empiricism or the Infinite Regress?

The final chapter of this thesis consists of original empirical work conducted in western NSW, Australia. This is composed of a discursive analysis of some 120 interviews. The specific methodology of the interview process will be explained at the beginning of chapter seven. In regards to this research the question arises about how this empirical work, given the theoretical and methodological approaches already outlined above, might fit into the overall schema of the
thesis? Does not empiricism fly in the face of the genealogical and deconstructionist imperatives of this research? These questions, I believe, belie simple yes or no answers. From a purely ‘post-modern’ perspective the answer would no doubt be yes. Such research would inevitably feed into the ‘iron cage’ of knowledge/power and simply feed the modernist thirst for positive and objective scientific or social facts. However, while the potentiality of such outcomes are no doubt real ones, there is also an argument to be made that such research, given particular theoretical underpinnings and conducted and analysed in a rigorous manner, can offer an alternative to the existing orthodoxy of the field and actually benefit and complement the aims and ideals of the historical/deconstructionist project.

The aim of this empirical work is not to develop a new theory of ‘fear of crime’. However, it may offer ways of understanding effects now attributed to fear. Neither is its aim to simply ‘deconstruct away’ the concept of ‘fear of crime’ altogether. However, it will aim to make any claim to its universal application highly problematic. The aim of the chapter is not to show how subjects are the passive objects of governmental regulation. However, it will attempt to understand to what extent individuals govern their own actions in regard to concerns about crime. Such an analysis might offer a heuristic means of comparing the governmental ‘blueprint’ I will attempt to trace of the ‘fear of crime’ and its actual relationships to the fearing subjects it imagines. Mostly, however, this empirical work will offer the means to explore the complex relationships between the media, individuals, government and other institutions and how these relationships operate in regard to what previous researchers have conceptualised as ‘fear of crime’.

An Almost Imperfect Methodology

I do not claim that this methodology will offer all the answers in regard to the concept of the ‘fear of crime’. To make such a claim would be to confine my work to the very criminological traditions I seek to problematise. This thesis should be read not as a final or even authoritative word on the subject, but rather as a project that attempts to formulate a set of new questions, parameters, and dilemmas that research into ‘fear of crime’ should feel obligated to address if it is to further its conceptual program. What it will offer is a set of perspectives and lines of engagement that may at times be less than perfectly integrated, but then what methodology is perfect?
Chapter 3

‘Fear of crime’ and Self Governance: A Genealogy

At one extreme, individuals may be "prisoners of fear," locking themselves away behind steel doors and barred windows. At the other they may become activists, banding together with neighbours to prevent crime by taking aggressive steps to challenge strangers, intervene when they observe suspicious circumstances, and act to reduce the opportunities for crime. ...[A] great deal of money has been spent by the government in an effort to encourage the latter...(Skogan 1986:177).

Lifted from an influential chapter by Wesley Skogan published in 1986, this statement illustrates two major points about the ‘fear of crime’ as a field of investigation. Firstly, it reflects the profound seriousness with which criminologists, since the late sixties, have engaged in this field, indicating the important implications and influences of this work for the broader criminological project. Secondly, it indicates the interest invested by government in the ‘fear of crime’ problematic, an interest which, as I will explain below, has implications in terms of the governance of populations and the formation of individual human subjects as objects of self regulation.

The ‘fear of crime’, it is argued, has the potential to change the way we as individual subjects live our lives (see for example Skogan 1986, Stanko 1990, Gordon and Rigger 1988); it can affect our mobility through social space, our conceptualisations of others, our trust, the way we dress, and our confidence. Moreover, it potentially changes our being, our subjectivity, the way we think about ourselves, our unconscious and conscious actions in social space; what is possible within a society. The study of the ‘fear of crime’ has in recent years become one of the major concerns of contemporary criminological literature. Hale (1996:79) suggests that in the last thirty years the conference papers, books, and monographs written on the ‘fear of crime’ number at least two hundred. As I have suggested in chapter one, this body of literature has focused on vast and varied demographics and on almost every aspect of social interaction.

‘Fear of Crime’: An Alternative Approach

I am not especially interested in engaging in a project of measuring fear levels between groups of individuals, nor am I especially interested in the commonly posed, but conceptually flawed,

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question of whether the ‘fear of crime’ is rational or irrational\(^{35}\). What I am more interested in here, and what I will pursue throughout this and the following chapters, is an alternative approach to a question posed at the beginning of a recent review of the ‘fear of crime’ literature by Hale (1996) published in the *International Review of Victimology*. A question that, from a genealogical perspective, Hale failed to satisfactorily answer. He asks (Hale 1996:79):

[w]hat is it about fear of crime that has led to its ‘discovery’ over the last quarter of a century.

Indeed the answer to such a question should be of great interest to the large group of scholars working in this seemingly ever changing and quickly expanding field.

Before proceeding, however, I would suggest that the question itself is flawed on two counts. Firstly, the ‘fear of crime’ has certainly been a concern for western populations well before the ‘last quarter century’, one only has to resort to the literature of almost any era to find reference to the dangerousness of certain locales (see Morris 1957, Shaw and McKay 1931, Shaw 1930), or the fear felt of certain classes or types of person\(^{36}\) (see Pratt 1997, Hall *et al* 1978, Pearson 1983). Dandeker (1990:117) also argues that fear was acutely experienced by the propertied and respectable as the new working classes settled in cities in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain\(^{37}\). Indeed there was a perception that a ‘crime wave’ was spreading across the country. Dandeker makes the point that it was new effective modes of policing and the new procedures of the collection of criminal statistics that made this ‘crime wave’ visible. Pearson (1983:210) argues:

> That each era has also understood itself as standing at a point of radical discontinuity with the past. But when we reconnect these bursts of discontent into a continuing history of deterioration, must not the credibility snap – unless that is we judge ourselves to be in a worse condition than the poor, brutalised human beings who suffered the worst effects of the industrial revolution ...is it not a little fanciful to believe that Britain’s well policed streets in the 1980s are more perilous than Henry Feilding’s disorderly London... Or in order to guarantee the fears of the present in the terms in which they are presented, must we discount the fears and facts of the past?

\(^{35}\) See Sparks (1992) for a thorough discussion on the reason/unreason of ‘fear of crime’.

\(^{36}\) This is also obvious in the fiction of the time, see for example Dickens ‘Great Expectations’.
Secondly, and certainly connected to my first criticism, it is not so much the ‘fear of crime’ itself that is ‘discovered’ although the term itself has no doubt become saturated with meaning as a criminological subject. What we see in the last quarter century is the discursive formation of the ‘fear of crime’ at an empirical level. It is this formation I intend to trace in this chapter. The ‘fear of crime’ becomes a legitimate subject of investigation and analysis for the discipline of criminology and takes shape as an object of governmental calculation and regulation. From the late sixties, and even more strikingly from the early eighties, the ‘fear of crime’ emerges as an object of social scientific observation and popular discourse that can be measured, analysed, numericised and calculated. An object around which a body of disciplinary and lay knowledge has accumulated through social surveys, statistics, ethnographic studies and media analysis. This body of knowledge has sought the ‘truth’, and has often claimed to know the ‘truth’ of populations as fearing individuals, or what I will term fearing subjects. I wish to plot the emergence in the West of this body of criminological knowledge. The tracing of this genealogy will also allow me to undertake a second task; that is to discuss the implications of this knowledge, this new regime of truth, and its influence on contemporary modes and rationalities of government.

Given that this project examines the emergence of a concept (the ‘fear of crime’) into a discipline (criminology) that supposedly pre-exists it, there are many questions that arise regarding where to begin. Is there actually a specific event or moment that can be identified where the ‘fear of crime’ enters into criminological discourse? Is there some event that can actually be labelled as a convergence or beginning? Certainly a cursory glance at other genealogical studies that involve aspects of the discipline of criminology (Garland 1994, Foucault 1979, Pasquino 1991) illustrate that shifts in disciplinary paradigms, in ways of doing and seeing, are not clean breaks with past practices or modes of thought. It, therefore, seems unlikely that a moment where the ‘fear of crime’ becomes suddenly included into criminological discourse will be immediately locatable. Rather, new modes of investigation generally encompass many of the knowledges which informed and gave rise to the earlier modes of thought. Ultimately, a genealogy must deal with continuities as well as, if not more than discontinuities.

In comparison to many genealogical projects this project is modest in terms of its historical time frame. Indeed, the concept of ‘fear of crime’ has humble beginnings. These ‘beginnings’ - or I

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37 See for example Symons (1849).
38 This chapter will focus primarily on criminological literature from Britain, the USA and Australia.
think convergences or shifts may be the more appropriate descriptions - that I propose lay less
than a half century in the past. It does not coincide with the major paradigmatic shifts in
criminological discourse that took place 150 or 100 years ago - although these earlier shifts have
most certainly made possible the conditions I wish to focus on. Rather, it is the turbulent late
1960s and early 1970s that appear to be an appropriate point for this project.

This is a period when many assumptions made in criminological discourse were being
questioned, a period Rock (1994:135) has referred to as the ‘big bang’ period in British
criminology. A period where the number of scholars working within the discipline increased
dramatically – thus the scope of the discipline also began to expand. It is also a period when
criminology knowingly began to re-align itself with sociology.

In the United States this was a period in which a new social-democratic politics had begun to shift
the way in which citizens conceptualised themselves in regard to the state, and indeed, changed
the way in which the state conceptualised the way in which it should care for its citizens. Similar
socio-political changes also took place in Australia, although these lagged behind the US, with
the new political schema of the Whitlam Labor government which came to power in 1972.

Thus, to usefully plot the emergence of the ‘fear of crime’ in its modern context, this genealogy
must follow the shifts, continuities, and alignments of a number of seemingly disconnected
discourses which range from the governmental, popular, and political, to the disciplinary.

The Birth of ‘Fear of Crime’

The Will to Knowledge and the New ‘Social-Democratic’ Plan: States of Fear?

It is no accident that the notion of the mass victimisation study as a guide to
public policy was invented in the 1960s by an American Democratic Party
committed …to a vision, social democratic in all but name, of social justice as a
necessary basis for social order (Jones, MacLean, and Young 1986:1).

The United States of America has been described, by Robert Lane (1969) as the ‘knowledgeable
society’, although others (see Melanson 1973) suggest that the term ‘knowledge society’ better
describes the ideological and political manoeuvring that such a concept should encompass.
Gradually in the US, as in most Western nation states, specialised statistical and social scientific knowledge has become an essential commodity in industry, politics, social policy, crime and even sports (Melanson 1973). Historically, the first US national census was carried out in 1790 and was the forerunner to the current body of statistical information collected by numerous government and private bodies; the US was no stranger to the ‘science of state’. During the 1930s the emerging social sciences received a great boost in prominence as they developed an ever increasing appetite for social indicators: socially significant statistically descriptive data about the national wellbeing of American society, gathered in time series so as to show social trends.

Moreover, in the US the will to be a ‘knowledgeable society’ accelerated substantially in its urgency in the decade of the 1960s with a huge increase in the scope and types of surveys and studies being carried out. This acceleration owed much to the growing sophistication of statistical collection and evaluation – and indeed to the massive advances in computing technology and computing networks - but equally, it was a result of a growing political will for the state to ameliorate and intervene in the lives of its citizenry. As many have argued (Jones, MacLean, and Young 1986, Phipps 1986) the US Democrat led government at this time had become social democratic in all but name. In short, the great social movements of the 1960s had begun to have their influence on political will by the mid 1960s and this was helping drive a new thirst for information about population. This new interest in social indicators was also taking place at municipal level, and by private industry (Report of the Special Commission on the Social Sciences to the National Science Board 1973). ‘Data on labour relations, labour productivity, manpower resources, educational achievement, crime statistics, health and welfare data, consumer purchasing plans – to name but just a few’ were increasingly proving valuable in the planning and management of organisations and businesses (Report of the Special Commission on the Social Sciences to the National Science Board 1973).

However, the 1960s heralded more than just an increase in the production of new statistical knowledge and inquiry. It also saw a new democratisation of knowledge on a scale that had previously been thought both damaging and impossible. Habits of secrecy which had taken hold of American governmental departments during World War II and the administrative mythology regarding the ‘secret’ of the atomic bomb, were partly responsible for a hide-and-seek political atmosphere which prevailed throughout the cold war period (Longaker 1973:219). While there is no doubt that such an atmosphere continued through the 1960s particularly with regard to foreign policy – for example the Nixon Administration kept secret the nature of peace proposals which

39 This big bang period seems to have had it’s equivalent in Australian criminology.
were presented to the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong over a number of years, 1968 to 1971, releasing the information later for political gain (Melanson 1973:8) - there is evidence that the emergence of new modes of governance in terms of domestic policy was sparking a need for not only more social scientific knowledge but also its almost universal availability. Indeed Lane (1969:61) rather optimistically suggested that:

[ ]f one thinks of a domain of “pure politics” where decisions are determined by calculations of influence, power, or electoral advantage, and a domain of “pure knowledge” where decisions are by calculations of how to implement agreed upon values with rationality and efficiency, it appears to me that the political domain is shrinking and the knowledge domain is growing...

As far back as 1962 the President’s Science Advisory Committee made recommendations that social scientific organisations make an effort to produce descriptive statistics on behaviour in American society. Another three reports were presented between 1965 and 1968 which concerned the problem of centralised data management and indeed the proposal for a National Data Centre. Such a centre had been proposed by a committee of the Social Science Research Council and had been given endorsement by a government task force (Report of the Special Commission on the Social Sciences to the National Science Board 1973:92). The President also made a directive to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that they produce a report on the social state of the nation.

Thus, the ‘Great Society program’ became President Lyndon Johnson’s agenda for Congress in January 1965: increased aid to education, an attack on disease, increased Medicare, urban renewal, beautification, conservation, development of depressed regions, a wide-scale ‘fight’ or ‘war’ against poverty, control and prevention of crime and delinquency, and the removal of obstacles to the right to vote. Congress, at times augmented or amended but generally rapidly enacted Johnson’s recommendations.

Momentum was also gathering for new methods of collecting crime statistics to be introduced, particularly where victims were concerned. Traditional methods of calculating crime rates, police reports, had been attracting growing criticism from criminologists and others. Phipps (1986:99) suggests that a number of criminological papers began to appear between 1960 and 1965 in the
US that argued strongly for such re-evaluation. For reasons relating to the internal and external histories of the discipline concern of the accuracy and utility of crime statistics was revived within mainstream sociology and criminology and this included new types of studies into victims (Phipps 1986:98). This resulted in new methods of data collection being formulated. Here we see the beginnings of new governmental technologies such as crime surveys which were to operate in a similar fashion to the modern census.

In the USA several organisations in the late 1960s began to individually interview citizens about their personal experiences of crime victimisation (Gordon and Riger 1988:33,34). In 1965 the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) interviewed people in 10,000 households. Further surveys were carried out by the Bureau of Social Science Research in 1967 in Washington and by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan in several other cities. Pilot studies were also conducted as part of the US president’s Crime Commission (Zedner 1994:1210). These and other survey findings led to the emergence of National Crime Surveys. These surveys are now conducted regularly along with the US census and are conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Gordon and Riger 1988:33,34, Zedner 1994;1211). Through these surveys the scope of public concern about crime was ‘discovered’ empirically for the first time. However, even with the development of Johnson’s social democratic plan two overriding crises had been gaining momentum since 1965. A growing crime rate and the problem of black riots. These also required the attention of the Johnson government.

Growing with a similar momentum in the USA was a popular and political discourse that had taken root from an almost opposing ideological position to that of the progressive social democratic one. This was a politics of law and order that based itself, like the social democratic discourse, on a perceived growing lawlessness in the US, and indeed on a perception that the public was becoming anxious about the steadily climbing crime rate. However, the methods proposed for dealing with the ‘crime problem’ could not have been more different. And if the will to become a more ‘knowable’ society developed in part from the civil rights movements of the 1960s, so too, in part, did the new politics of law and order. For despite the new antipoverty and anti-discrimination programs which had had little time to run their course, the unrest and rioting in black ghettos troubled the nation and its politicians. President Johnson steadily exerted his influence against segregation and on behalf of law and order, but not always with the desired outcomes. Thus, calls for tougher action in terms of policing, disciplining, and punishing criminals began to grow.

See for example Bell (1962), or Wheeler (1967) and Wilkins (1964) cited in Phipps (1996).
The emergence of this discourse is well traced by Richard Harris in his extraordinarily insightful book published in 1969 *The Fear of Crime*. As well as being the first publication that actually takes the ‘fear of crime’ as a title – which is of course vitally important to this genealogy - it also eloquently places public fear as a result – at least partially – of political manoeuvring. Harris plots the progress of a piece of legislation titled *The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act 1968* through the Congressional process, and into law. This process begins in early 1967 and is finalised in congress on the 6th of June 1968, the day Robert Kennedy died, and the day following his shooting. Indeed, Harris (1969) suggests that Kennedy’s death helped hasten the Bill through its final hurdle. President Johnson, a Democrat, was alas not in favour of the passing of what was originally his Bill; at least not in the form it finally took. The story of the passing of this Bill is a story of political vengeance, populism, pay back, and machiavellian allegiances of the highest order.

Without delving too deeply into the complexities of the Bill itself, it is sufficient to outline that it sought to do the following:

1. Give police increased or at least loosened powers in holding and arresting suspects, in tapping communications networks, in the taking of confessions.
2. Put in place a minimal amount of gun control measures.
3. Reverse two US supreme court decisions which had resulted in suspects being freed due to legal ‘technicalities’ in the way police had obtained confessions (Harris 1969).

The Bill in the form that it was finally passed had been the brainchild of Senator John L. McClellan, a Democrat from Arkansas, who was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures.

However, the history of the Bill went back even further. In 1965 President Johnson had set up the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in a move which was supposed to produce solutions to the crime problem in a non-political, non-partisan environment. The Commission’s brief was to look at why crime was rising at such alarming rates in the US. Early in 1967 the Commission submitted its report, ‘The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society’ to the White House (Harris 1969:15). This report contained none of the rhetoric of the later Crime Bill, rather, it suggested that lasting solutions to crime would require comprehensive programs involving increased education, the elimination of poverty and inadequate housing, new family

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\* See Harris (1969) for all the particularities of the Bill and the many alterations made to it on its passage through Congress.
counselling services, new Civil Rights laws, and the improvement of ‘inner cities’. It went on to suggest that: ‘To speak of controlling crime only in terms of the work of the police, the courts, and the correctional apparatus is to refuse to face the fact that widespread crime implies a widespread failure by society as a whole’ (cited in Harris 1969:16). It also suggested that there was a need for a ‘scientific and technological revolution’ in criminal justice, thus, a continuation in the will to be a knowable society (cited in Phipps 1986). Phipps (1986) argues that this Commission heralded a turning point in the reorientation of mainstream criminology towards the collection of knowledge about victims of crime. Indeed, as a direct result of the work of the Commission a number of large scale samples of crime victims were carried out. The largest of these, produced by Ennis (1967), began to offer information on ‘fear of crime’, indicating that it was becoming a problem in its own right.

Thus, the Commission set out, principally, a blueprint that sought to continue and refine Johnson’s ‘great social program’. It provided social democratic images of crime and social structure that authoritatively suggested Johnson continue on with his program and his ‘war on poverty’. However, when President Johnson - with the intention of having Congress pass legislation on many of the provisions that the Commission had suggested - passed his Bill over to the McClellan’s Subcommittee a train of events began which would see the Bill altered almost in its entirety (see Harris 1969).

Senator McClellan was, to quote Harris (1969:20), a:

Puritan patriarch who has just led his band ashore and must get down to the real task of saving them from themselves, McClellan has scoffed at the notion that social unrest has social causes; he has sought not more laws but more freedom for police and prosecutors to use the laws they have - and more or less as they please. Those inside Congress and out who hoped that it would not approach the task of insuring domestic tranquillity by simply locking everybody up had little reason to believe that McClellan would provide the leadership they had in mind.

Senator McClellan’s convening of the Subcommittee gave him the opportunity to hold hearings on the state of crime in which he could selectively offer up his own solutions. Moreover, he also had an opportunity to overturn the two landmark Supreme Court decisions he found so distasteful - *Mallory v. United States* (1957) and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966). However, Harris (1969:30) suggests that McClellan’s persistent attempts to punish the Supreme Court had more to do with
him ‘getting even’ for its seemingly pro-civil rights decisions of the 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed, McClellan was an avid segregationist, thus for him Dr Martin Luther King’s peaceful “sit ins” were crimes rather than political acts against unconstitutional forms of law enforcement; as Robert Kennedy’s successful attempts to take the cases through the supreme court finally proved. Thus, Harris convincingly argues that, as far back as the 1960s, the ‘fear of crime’ had become a political issue of monumental proportions; and it had racist overtones, the relevance of which will become obvious in later chapters.

Throughout the course of stacked senate hearings, McClellan, who Harris (1969:33) contests was ‘the most adroit committee chairman on the Hill when it comes to generating publicity for something he...[ ] wants to appear to be concerned about’, stuck to repeating the point that ‘decisions of the Supreme Court endangered the nation’s stability’ (Harris 1969:33). Not one of those he invited to speak at the senate hearings was a ‘criminologist, a leading professor of law, or an expert on the constitution. Instead most of them were police officers and prosecutors, with a few judges who agreed with McCellan thrown in (Harris 1969:34). Harris seems to indicate that discourses of law and order and of the ‘fear of crime’ that began to have currency around this time could be traced in part to the discursive strategies used in these senate hearings. He argues:

To keep his viewpoint sharply in focus, McClellan relied on repeated use of several currently popular phrases—chiefly, that members of the Supreme Court and others in high places, by “coddling criminals” and “handcuffing the police” had dispatched “the depraved to roam the streets at will” and “prey on the innocent”. No one seems to know for sure where these phrases originated, but it would appear that they gained currency through constant reiteration by police officials and prosecutors... [ ] In time the clichés began to appear in newspapers and on television... [ ] and were taken up by and pushed by right wing spokesmen as part of their general attack on the “Warren Court”. With increasing frequency, the phrases began to pop up in letters written to members of Congress, until today a perusal of the mail that any of them receives reveals that nine-tenths of voters who complain about “crime on the streets” complain in these terms. [ ]

...In any event, it is increasingly clear that such clichés can have a monumental effect on the political life of a nation. Their repetition thousands of times a day has brought a great many people to the point where they seriously doubt that the government’s interest is the same as their own (1969:34-35).
Thus, what Harris and others opposed to the Bill contend—many Senators did oppose the Bill, in particular Senator Philip A. Hart, a Democrat from Michigan led a sustained but ultimately fruitless opposition to the measures—was that it contravened civil rights, that it was unconstitutional, and discriminatory. Yet the sustained fear campaign kept it moving steadily through congressional channels with most congressmen feeling powerless to vote against it for fear of their political futures. McClellan even found support from the Republican—soon to be president—Richard Nixon, who had released his first policy position paper titled ‘Toward Freedom From Fear’ (Harris 1969:73). Nixon argued that ‘If the conviction rate were doubled in this country, it would do more to eliminate crime in the future than a quadrupling of the funds for any governmental war on poverty’ (cited in Harris 1969:74). Throughout the process of the Bill voting from the Senators was split but not along party lines. Some Republicans and Democrats opposed the Bill while the majority supported it. Harris contends that many that supported the Bill knew that this was ‘bad’ law but that their political situation necessitated a ‘yes’ vote. When President Johnson delayed signing the Bill for some seven days—if it is not stamped within ten days the President can no longer sign it—there was concern that he would veto the Bill or let it pass into law without his signature. Indeed, Harris(1969:109) argues that the President was very unhappy with the Bill but would not risk discrediting members of his government by failing to sign it. Interestingly he was prompted by the then Congressman Gerald Ford with a demand ‘what is he waiting for’. Thus, the stage was set for this type of conservative populist fear mongering to continue through the Presidencies of both Nixon and Ford. Throughout the 1972 election campaign Nixon constantly repeated the rhetoric that ‘welfarism’ and ‘social Keynesianism’ have fuelled inflation and failed to prevent higher levels of crime, and have fuelled black insurrection. Phipps (1986:104) has convincingly argued that this position was made possible by the new attention given to the victim in social scientific and criminological discourse. If this is the case, the very will to be a ‘knowledgeable society’ led both by a social democratic governmentality and social scientific rationale, and a liberal criminology, may have contributed to a conservative discourse on crime which would scuttle the former’s brief hold on mainstream criminal justice policy.

Thus, in the US, two almost competing discourses helped place the ‘fear of crime’ in the political, disciplinary, and public realm; not to mention the new focus provided by the media on the issue of fear. The growth and sophistication of statistics in the ‘knowledge society’ and the new governmental focus on law and order, first reluctantly under President Johnson, but then more expressly under Presidents Nixon and Ford, set victim surveys and their resultant studies into fear into motion in the US. In essence, all the sites of power and discursive strategies required to set in
train a self sustaining 'fear of crime' feedback loop fell into place in the US at about this point in its history.

In the early seventies in the UK no such large-scale victim surveys had yet been conducted. However, Hall et al (1978) and Cohen (1973) point out that the concerns of the citizenry, through media and political attention, had turned to crime. Hall et al point to the panic concerning the 'new' crime of 'mugging' that emanated from an incident in Handsworth (Hall et al 1979:7). They argue that between August 1972 and August 1973 crime reports, editorials, statements by police spokespeople, by judges, the Home Secretary, politicians, and other prominent public figures, all responded to this supposed new blight on British society with outrage. Indeed the processes by which the media and politicians of the right had began playing on the fears of the population in Britain became a focus for the emerging radical criminologies in the UK.

Disciplinary Knowledge and Fear: Radical Criminologies

In the late 1960s and early 1970s criminology, in line with the broader political and academic realms, was shifting its focus. From a post-war conservatism, based loosely on capitalist ideals and legal definitions, there increasingly emerged radical voices critical of many hitherto unquestioned societal institutions, including those of the state (see for example Taylor, Walton and Young 1973). This new radical criminology was strongest in the UK; however traces of its discourse could also be found in the US and Australia. This shifting focus resulted in a thorough paradigmatic re-thinking and re-positioning of many disciplines including criminology. Positivist notions that centred on the criminal being somehow outside societal norms came under increasing scrutiny, as crime was instead to be radically re-conceptualised as being 'structured' through social process — such notions had obvious discursive connections to the American social democratic project. Hogg (1988:25) suggests that '[t]he dominance of a pragmatic, legal-administrative criminology ...[was] increasingly challenged by radical critics drawing on the social sciences, especially the disciplines of sociology and history'. The rhetorical approach used by Cohen (1972:12) in his early seventies work demonstrates this challenge and it is worth quoting him at length:

This reorientation [of criminology] is part of what might be called the sceptical revolution in criminology and the sociology of deviance. The older tradition was canonical in the sense that it saw the concepts it worked with as authoritative...
The new tradition is sceptical in the sense that when it sees terms like ‘deviant’, it asks ‘deviant to whom?’ or ‘deviant from what?’, when told something is a social problem, it asks ‘problematic to whom?’; when certain conditions or behaviour are described as dysfunctional, embarrassing, threatening or dangerous, it asks ‘says who?’ and ‘why?’.

The explanation of a radical or ‘sceptical’ position here by Cohen is interesting in that he in some respects, foreshadows the various forms of radical criminology’s own theoretical shortcomings and ultimate fall from academic and criminological grace, particularly that school later referred to as ‘left idealism’. The typification of his form of radical criminology as a ‘new tradition’ ultimately expresses the school’s own will to knowledge and an implicit desire for this ‘new tradition’ to itself become canonical. Indeed, to some extent the anti-canonical position is the same platform from which later criminologists, left realists and post-structuralists in particular, will attack the radical school or ‘tradition’ of criminology.

If I can digress momentarily, this also serves as a point of warning in terms of the methodology of this project. One of criminology’s failures has been to dismiss the work of earlier scholars without adequately engaging with the specific arguments or positions their works express, or without historicising and contextualising the work within the broader cultural and political concerns of the time. This type of ahistorical critique generally takes the form of caricaturing the earlier work without reference to the nuances, specificities, subtleties and political imperatives it often contains. A glossing over of the intricacies of the argument in a way that allows the work to be categorised as a specific ‘type’, school, or paradigm, synonymous with a very specific position and temporality; usually a less enlightened time. What must be avoided is a version of history that produces the present as enlightened and the past as nostalgic if not an altogether worthless relic in comparison. Indeed, to use the Cohen example again, he did not see radical criminology as the pot of gold at the end of the path of enlightenment — although he certainly saw it as a giant leap forward. Rather, he elaborates on the comments quoted above by suggesting that:

Sceptical theorists have been misinterpreted as... implying that the behavioural questions are unimportant. While it is true that they have pointed to the dead ends which the behavioural questions have reached ...what they [behaviourists] say has positive implications for studying these questions as well (1972:13).
Hence, Cohen does not conceptualise radical criminology as the death of positivism or behaviourism. Rather, Cohen's prospective *canon* of radical criminology would retain space for alternative positions providing they did not over-exercise their disciplinary authority. The point I want to make is that criminology is not, and never has been, a homogeneous discourse; nor is it a group of differentiable paradigms which, placed end to end in historical formation, lead to a final moment of criminological enlightenment or disciplinary perfection. To the contrary, as a discourse criminology encompasses a surprisingly diverse range of political and academic positions that continually jostle for legitimacy, historically overlap, and often reinvent themselves. Criminological discourse in the early 1970s, therefore, was not dominated by a single form of 'radical criminology'.

So, following the lead of Garland, Foucault and others, as is my intention, it would be reductionist to suggest that the new directions in criminological thought of the sixties and seventies could be lumped together and effectively labelled as radical criminology; the range of views encompass such diverse schools of thought as neo-Marxist criminology, labelling theory, radical pluralism and - if only due to the structure of their critiques - some feminist criminologies. It is also true to say that the ghosts of criminologies past haunted these newer paradigms either implicitly or explicitly; strain theory, anomie theory, labelling theory, and symbolic interactionalism had profound influence on the opening of discursive space for the later radical schools. However, the aims of this chapter would not be furthered through an in depth explanation or discussion of each of these theoretical positions and to attempt such a project would ultimately be itself reductive. Therefore, I intend to refer to these schools collectively as 'radical criminologies', thereby acknowledging the variations, differences and divergences between each school and the nuances of those writers working within each school.

The commonality that I wish to stress here is that ultimately, for these schools, the causes of crime are seen to be in one way or another institutionalised, embedded into the structures of society. Crime is not a pre-given natural phenomena, rather it is produced by societal structure. Further, within some of these radical modes of criminological thought, the offender is constructed, not so much as a criminal, but more as the victim of a class system that favours the interests of capital over the working class (see Taylor, Walton, Young 1973). Certainly the notion of mens rea has only a small part to play in such forms of analysis. Moreover, many radical

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42 For example the emergence of Left Realism from 'Left Idealism'.
43 For a more thorough, although itself reductive, discussion on each of these 'schools' of criminology see White and Haines (1996). Alternatively, for a highly subjective version of history from one of the most influential writers involved in both radical criminology and left realism see J. Young (1994).
criminologies argued that due to processes of policing that overwhelmingly focused on street offences, working class crime was criminalised while other criminal activity such as white collar crime was obscured by hegemonic, capitalist or class ideology.

Many Radical criminologists stressed that the extent of crime and the perceived risks of victimisation, particularly as a result of street crime, have been overstated or ‘amplified’ (see Cohen 1973). Radical criminologies, particularly that school which was later described as left idealism, came to depend on this ‘moral panic’ thesis which constructed public concerns about crime and deviance primarily as media instigated events; or additionally, sought to place the blame for fear onto external signs of poverty. This form of analysis was taken to its zenith in the Stuart Hall et al authored Policing the Crisis (1979). Their analysis of the fear generated by political and media related sources, while an excellent analysis of these, almost totally ignores the lived realities of the fearing public. The implication in these forms of analysis - sometimes explicit - is that the fears about crime are unjustified or irrational. Young (1987) later argued that the radical criminologies of the early seventies engaged in a 'great denial' of the full impact of crime on communities. 'This facilitated both an abstentionist politics of radical pessimism and a concentration on discourse about crime and deviance, especially in the mass media, to the detriment of any careful attention to crimes as social facts...' (in Sparks 1992:120).

The ‘fear of crime’ for radical criminology was regarded as subsidiary to the main line of inquiry, which was to determine empirically the extent of victimisation, and therefore, the objective measures of risk. ‘To this extent fear [in radical criminologies] has generally come to be treated as predominantly a function of risk’ (Sparks 1992:120). However, the focus of radical criminologies on the moral panic thesis and the media did bring the ‘fear of crime’ further into the discursive realm of criminology, and most notably, criminologies of the left. I do not wish to make a judgement on the value, or otherwise, of various radical criminologies, suffice to say that historically their theoretical contribution to criminology, sociology and other disciplines should not be discarded brazenly. However, it seems that as a political instrument radical criminologies came to have only a limited appeal to the public, to administrative criminology, and therefore to politics, which has conceptualised the reality of crime as something altogether different. Hogg (1988:47) has since argued that radical or socialist solutions in regard to criminological issues have been constructed outside contemporary social conditions.

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44 Young came to be critical of his past position as an ‘idealist’ and was an originator of the left realist movement in criminology.
My interest here in radical criminologies is this: given their emphasis on social structure and its plurality, and its productive relationship to crime, the philosophical basis of radical criminologies ultimately led to notions that explanations of crime and criminality could be found in the measurement and the analysis of these various structures; the analysis of class, capitalism, patriarchy, gender, race and age. The ‘fear of crime’, although a ‘subsidiary’ line of inquiry, had to be accounted for, or at least explained away, by radical criminologies in order to expose its very irrationality. However, whether this was in terms of the fears being irrational now seems of little consequence to the history of the ‘fear of crime’ as an object of investigation. This was a phenomenon that required some form of explanation, the ‘fear of crime’ had become subject to radical criminological inquiry.

Furthermore, explanations of the ‘fear of crime’ had, as I have suggested above, become of interest to those influencing public policy. There is little doubting that modern liberal governments have come to have a profound interest in the fears, aspirations, beliefs, cares, anxieties of the populations they seek to govern (Foucault 1991), and criminology ultimately plays a role in this. As Garland (1994:27) argues:

Criminology, in its modern form and in its historical development, is orientated towards a scientific goal but also towards an institutional field, towards a theoretical project but also towards an administrative task. Whatever fragile unity the discipline achieves emerges from the belief that these two projects are mutually supportive rather than incompatible, that aetiological research can be made useful for administrative purposes, and that the findings of operational research further the ends of theoretical inquiry.

In terms of administration, the ‘fear of crime’ had to be explained quantitatively rather than theoretically as was the project of radical criminologies. The ‘subsidiary’ theoretical subject of inquiry for radical criminologies would ultimately have profound effects on the direction and scope of the overarching of the administrative project. Administrative criminologies would make a project of analysing and attempting to lessen these fears through the acquisition of knowledge about those fearful.

However, it was not only administrative and radical forms of criminology that would take an interest in the ‘fear of crime’. Broader cultural and social movements that encouraged the population - and for the first time the female component of the population - to engage in the
pleasurable pursuits of full democratic citizenship brought with them new forms of real and perceived bodily risk (see Pratt 1997:150-152). This new freedom was partly a result of second wave feminism which also helped open up new concerns and anxieties about the risk of victimisation. Thus, fear gradually became more popularised, and the fear feedback loop gradually encompassed more sites of popular, political, and disciplinary power that would in turn increase interest in the 'fear of crime'.

Women's Movements and Feminist Criminology

Rising alongside radical criminologies were feminist criminologies and a resurgence in women's movements more generally. Certainly, by the early 1970s the subordination of women to male violence and the inherently patriarchal social order had become a major concern for newly emerging feminist criminologists and others. Feminists rightly believed that historically, criminology had slighted the offences most likely to victimise women: domestic violence, incest and rape. Some feminists pointed out that criminology as a discipline had ignored the fact that men were overwhelmingly the perpetrators of crime and some even argued that the reason for men's criminality could be found in the offenders' very masculinity (Allen 1988); even labelling theorists and radical criminologists, the self appointed progressives of the 1960s and 1970s, were seen as ignoring women (Rafter and Heidensohn 1995:5). This new and specifically gendered set of discourses about crime victims had its effects on the relationship between gender and conceptions of the 'fear of crime'.

Much of the work of feminists in the 1970s and early 1980s produced literature on women for women. By this I mean that women were mostly the subjects of a body of scholarship which was attempting to fill a void concerning women and the effects of crime. As Smart (1995:4) suggests, women were then uncharted territory, there was an eagerness to traverse, map and know this new terrain. A crucial element of this new knowledge was produced through attention to women's experiences as victims of male crime. It was assumed that women as readers would relate to the experiences of women as subjects and women as scholars. I don't want to suggest that there was only one feminist discourse or even one dominant paradigm within feminist criminology. Ideologically, politically, theoretically and philosophically feminism has historically been, and remains, a highly contested and constantly shifting discursive space (Carrington 1994).

45 I will deal with these particularities in more depth in later chapters.
Feminisms have been influenced by, and in turn influenced other theoretical, political, legal, and governmental concerns. Certainly, a considerable amount of the influential feminist literature and rhetoric of the 1970s, particularly in Britain, was influenced by Marxist and socialist agendas (see Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1975, Grosz 1989:92). While radical criminology had firmly placed class analysis on the criminological agenda, new feminist criminologies were placing equal analytical importance on issues of gender. Thus, research into the ‘fear of crime’ would have to take gender into account, the fearing subject would be a gendered fearing subject.

Nineteen seventy five was declared international women’s year, and it seems, however tokenistic such a declaration may be, that this period did produce some gains for women on a symbolic level at least. This period was a pivotal historic moment in the growth of women’s movements, the opening of women’s refuges, and also in progressive legislative change (see Smart and Smart 1975:1). In Australia, for example, a rape crisis centre was opened in Sydney by the Sydney Women’s Liberation Movement with some ‘minimal’ government funding (Allen 1990:226). Women’s refuges had already been opened in Britain - the first in Chiswick in 1972 - and the USA - the first in 1973 (Dobash & Dobash 1992). The year 1975 also saw the introduction of ‘no fault divorce’ in Australia, potentially making it easier for women to escape violent relationships. Further, in 1978 the NSW government established help centres for sexual assault victims in five Sydney area hospitals. These initiatives dramatically increased public, political, and police awareness of crimes against women and resulted in an increase in the reporting of such offences to police, although convictions remained universally low - around 3% in Australia (Allen 1990). Dobash and Dobash (1992:2) describe how stories of violence against women came into public discourse:

In the 1970s the stories at once described what were then unfamiliar accounts of abuse, and informed a disbelieving public of its widespread nature. Women’s accounts revealed the nature of men’s violence and the sources of conflict leading to attacks. They also described women’s emotions and reactions as well as the inactions of social and legal institutions.

The ‘Help Centres’, shelters, and refuges became sites of knowledge for a new form of feminist research and scholarship that would both engage in an exercise of public consciousness raising regarding issues of violence against women, and provide a more detailed and critical social

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*I don't wish to imply here that existing discourses concerning crime were not themselves gender specific; i.e; phallocentric. Only that with the emergence of feminist criminology and a feminist discourse on crime more generally*
analysis of the problem. As Lisa LeGhorn, an American feminist activist, urged ‘any research that is conducted should be conducted hand in hand with women who have been through the abuse’ (cited in Dobash & Dobash 1992:256). So began a body of literature that has taken as its subjects, women, as victims and survivors of male sexual/physical violence. By the late seventies, in the face of this new body of feminist literature, it was no longer possible for radical criminology to successfully sustain the argument that women’s greater ‘fear of crime’ was irrational - the ‘moral panic’ thesis was failing at least in part. Thus, feminist criminology has achieved what radical criminologies had failed to do, it had created forms of critical criminological analysis that also had considerable political purchase and public policy applications. Feminist criminology would eventually have a major influence on the emergence of a new criminology of the left, left realism and in the way it deals with the notion of the ‘fear of crime’.

The power effects of this new literature, however, were not limited to shifting criminological discourse, a lessening of male violence, or a new general awareness of such violence. It also instilled within feminine subjectivities the possibility that male violence could be a reality in the lives of women. While the emergence of the women’s refuge and the plethora of new studies that followed enabled a mapping of the violence and fear on the bodies of those who had experienced it first hand, the accompanying literature, reports, and programs enabled its trace to be inscribed on the bodies of women more generally. The irrational fearing subject had become a rational gendered fearing subject.

*Administrative Criminology: The Convergence of Fear and Government*

A more concerted and integrated approach on the part of respective governments and their agencies in determining the ‘real’ levels of crime and comparing these against estimated levels of fear began as the great surveys of the 1960s gradually became more sophisticated. Like the US, other western democracies began to develop agencies that could more effectively statisticalise crime and victimage rates. In Australia, for example, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research was set up in 1969. The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), a Commonwealth statutory authority, was established in 1973, and operates under the Criminology Research Act 1971.

gender became explicitly a central concern.
Thus, from the mid seventies there begins an outpouring of administrative governmental research - from agencies such as the Home Office in Britain, The Bureau of Justice Statistics in the USA, and the ABS\textsuperscript{47} in Australia. All of these agencies began, or further developed, their inquiries into the ‘fear of crime’ around this period or shortly thereafter; again with the US initially leading the way.

Before proceeding, it is worth stressing that the administrative criminological ‘task’ that I referred to earlier\textsuperscript{48} and which finds its expression in these forms of research is not some distinct or unitary manifestation of criminological thought. Rather, it should be conceptualised as a constantly shifting set of practices, technologies and techniques that are historically enmeshed in the formation and knowledges of the discipline. These practices continually operate in chorus with, but at varying distances and degrees from criminology’s more theoretical or academic concerns. For example, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research often attempts to theorise the results of their statistical findings with varying degrees of success and sophistication, and academic or theoretical criminologists are not strangers to statistical and empirical studies through which they may seek to influence public policy. I should also stress that in exploring the governmental and political imperatives which have influenced the discourses of the ‘fear of crime’ there is a need to diverge from what hitherto may have seemed like a relatively chronological ordering of criminological thought\textsuperscript{49}.

In terms of criminology’s administrative project the increasing ‘problem’ of the ‘fear of crime’ had to be explained in a predominantly statistical manner rather than a theoretical one. The approach adopted by the respective governmental agencies was to first determine the ‘real’ levels of crime, thereby making possible the estimation of ‘objective’ levels of risk, and finally estimating the levels of population fears through the deployment of various survey data. If the ‘fear of crime’ was ‘irrational’, administrative criminologies would have to prove this as a statistical ‘truth’ through its quantification as some kind of unitary concept; the ‘fear of crime’ could then be addressed as a problem through the acquisition of statistical knowledge about those fearful and the reasons for their fears. These new methods of figuring crime rates were vital in the further emergence of fear as a calculable object. The ‘fear of crime’ soon became a key subject in these new surveys (the British Crime Survey being a good example); and it was only with the development of these surveys, as new technologies of governmental inquiry (see Rose 1991), that

\textsuperscript{47} The Australian Bureau of Statistics. Other agencies involved in the production of this knowledge in Australia are the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and the Australian Institute of Criminology.

\textsuperscript{48} See pp63.
it became possible for the ‘fear of crime’ to be empirically grounded as a legitimate administrative object of inquiry; an appendage to the rapidly developing technologies for calculating risk (see Pratt 1997).

The Home Office in Britain, led primarily by Ronald Clarke and his associates, began what Jock Young (1994) later termed a ‘new administrative criminology’. This criminology relied on commissioning the British Crime Survey to provide its data base. The British crime survey has been ‘carried out in successive sweeps since 1982’ (J. Young 1994:94), although the first major local survey in Britain pre-dated ‘new administrative’ criminology and was carried out by Sparks, Genn and Dodd in London in 1977 (Zedner 1994:1211). Clarke states in the foreword to Michael Maxfield’s 1984 Home Office Research and Planning Unit Report that ‘despite what has been learned from the 1982 British Crime Survey... [about the fear of crime] there are still gaps in the knowledge and understanding. For this reason, the topic of fear will be covered again in the second British Crime Survey (Maxfield 1984:iii).

Administrative criminology gradually became more interested in target hardening, reducing the risk of crime by minimising the opportunities for crime or the availability of ‘criminogenic situations’

50 With this new administrative criminology, and this new quantification of crime and victimisation, came a new way to conceptualise the criminal and victim, and a new (or return to) de-politicisation of criminology. Here we see the criminal depicted as market actor, consumer, a re-worked liberal subject. Garland (1997) argues that criminology has begun to develop an economic rationality, and a reliance on an analytical language. The criminal subjectivity of this New Administrative Criminology has ‘...nothing but choice and rationality. Disembodied from all social context - deprivation, racism, urban dislocation, unemployment, are airily listed as “background factors”’ (Cohen 1996:5). The ‘fear of crime’ became a target of this consumer centred economic rationality. New administrative criminology had set out to provide the ‘facts’ about crime rates in order to lessen irrational fears. However, these new crime surveys instead began to further establish that many crimes were unreported and unregistered in police recorded crime figures. Notions that the ‘fear of crime’ was irrational began to fade after the first few sweeps of the BCS.

As I have already indicated, radical criminology had sought to dismiss or explain away these fears as the result of media hype, ‘irrational fears’ or at least as of secondary importance to their

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50 For example, I deal with left realism after an analysis of administrative criminology which ultimately holds true to present day conditions.
fundamental enterprise. Similarly, new administrative criminology had originally had a similar philosophy and attempted to show how these fears were overstated, amplified, media related. Some, such as Clarke (1984) had hoped that in demonstrating ‘actual’ crime levels, they would be able to ‘normalise crime’. They had hoped to illustrate that the chances of victimisation for the average person were relatively low, and that the public, particularly women and the elderly, greatly exaggerated their chances of victimisation. Indeed, one of the most striking empirical findings of this research was that the victim was very like the average criminal: male, young and single. However, the experiences of many groups within society remained unrepresented in radical critique and ignored by the early paternalistic explanations of the administrative project. The incorporation of feminist perspectives, not to mention accounting for experiences of racial and cultural difference, became a major problem for the radical and administrative criminologies. Arguing that the ‘fear of crime’ was irrational was of no consolation to the individuals whose experiences of fear were very real, and indeed it began to look like a shaky thesis in terms of the results of the new crime surveys which also indicated that crime rates had been generally understated and that crimes were under reported.

So began a new approach to dealing with the ‘fear of crime’. Administrative criminologies in many countries advocated measures aimed at ‘responsibilising’ individuals in various ways, which dovetailed nicely with the establishment of police-based schemes such as neighbourhood watch. Thus, there was the suggestion that the public have an important role to play in the minimisation of criminal activity. Securing one’s own environment and, hence, also managing one’s fear. Further, they recognised that the role of police in controlling crime was limited (J Young 1994:95). These measures constituted what is now described as ‘situational’ crime prevention, the notion that to minimise crime, measures have to be taken to ‘harden’ any possible criminal targets and enhance surveillance. There was also the hope that such schemes as neighbourhood watch, based on a sense of community as they were, would lessen the ‘fear of crime’ or at least modify it so as to alleviate its socially debilitating effects. Subjects would consume and practice processes of safety via a free market neo-liberal ideal. The social justice solution had been overturned in favour of the technological solution.

Paradoxically, there is also little doubt that new administrative criminology had begun to appreciate that ‘fear of crime’ might serve as one of a plethora of technologies that could function as modes of social regulation; mentalities of government-through fear. This is evident in this quote from Maxfield where he asks ‘should public policy seek to modify the behaviour associated

\[\text{See Garland 1997.}\]
with 'fear of crime', or is it functional in reducing the risk of victimisation?' (1984:38). Thus, the neo-liberal subject is expected to be both governed by fear and to govern fear. I will return to the paradoxical governmental implications of this later.

Certainly raising public awareness of crime through schemes such as neighbourhood watch was not, with hindsight, necessarily the way to minimise the 'fear of crime'. In fact research now indicates that these schemes may indeed exacerbate fear (Mayhew et al 1989). The mobilisation of communities, neighbourhoods, and individuals in the fight against crime in essence relied upon a common understanding that all citizens were potential victims. Its very success relied on the population's fears of victimisation, or on what Alison Young (1996) has described as a shared victimimage. It relied on individuals positioning or constituting themselves as fearing subjects. Further, at the level of politics the 'fear of crime' now required a more simple 'commonsense' solution; there is little doubt that this has had its effects on and has itself been affected by administrative criminology and the constitution of the fearing subject.

The New Right and Right Realism: The Political Economy of Fear

The changes that have taken place in administrative criminology between 1975 and 1985 - and continue to take place - were not purely a result of new research mentalities and methodologies, indeed, were not necessarily purely neo-liberal. There had also been changes in the political climate more generally and these had been, at least in part, reflected in the administrative project of criminology. Certainly these had their gestation in the US under the presidencies of Nixon and Ford as I outlined above. It may seem disconcerting to switch from a discursive field that has concerned itself with criminological practices and knowledges, to one concerned with political manoeuvring and popular representations of crime. However, to negate the influence of these popular and political representations would be to offer a version of events which prioritises the neo-liberal administrative and long term objectives of government over the short term political imperatives, namely, the rise of neo-conservatism, and populism. Indeed, as my reading of Harris (1969) has indicated, the two discursive fields are intimately interconnected. Further, as Garland (1997:202) argues, 'switching between rationalities, or moving from one discursive register (the economic-administrative) to another (the populist-political), is very much a political process'. It is, however, unavoidable and I make no apology for this.
Public fears have lately proven fertile ground for New Right, often neo-conservative, political movements and their associated populist approaches to the governance of crime. Crime occupies an often divisive position within the politics of the right in that it has the potential to fracture the often delicate balance of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. By the early eighties the policies of Thatcherism in the UK, Reaganism in the USA and a ‘tougher’ approach to criminal justice by the respective States of Australia, had successfully exploited the public’s ‘fear of crime’ in order to push a conservative political agenda (Lee 1996). Law and order had become a politically charged topic. Braithwaite, Biles and Whitrod (1982: 226) argued tellingly in Australia that:

While fear of communism might be seen as the most appropriate address to a local RSL by an astute conservative politician, law and order might be perceived as an even more appropriate topic for an address to the country women’s association.

I am not suggesting that it was somehow the fault or shortcomings of radical criminologies, or for that matter administrative criminology, that enabled the Right to mount such pervasive and politically successful campaigns on ‘law and order’, or even that this was historically the first time such campaigns had been mounted. Additionally, I would not want to imply that the New Right somehow directly laid claim to criminological knowledge generated by radical critique or administrative criminology, or on the other hand, that the New Right has completely rejected radical critique at an administrative level. The relationships between government and disciplinary knowledges are much more complex than this would imply.

My emphasis here is that New Right neo-conservative political campaigns, focusing on law and order, had as their currency ‘fear of crime’: ironic, given that ‘fear of crime’ was ‘discovered’ through the surveys initiated by Johnson’s social democratic plan. Were it not for this ‘discovery’, the New Right campaigns would have been unable to engage in the same forms of populism that we have witnessed. Claims of the existence of a fearing population could now be backed up by statistical ‘proof’. Further, as an object of investigation, new interest in the ‘fear of crime’ was generated precisely because it lay at the nexus of neo-liberal new administrative

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51 See Hogg and Brown 1998 for a detailed discussion of this.
52 See Weatherburn et al (1996) as an example of administrative criminology operating in a way that contradicts the ideologies of New Right policy.
53 Hogg (1996: 46) suggests that: to assume that government may simply lay hold to the latest theories and ideas within criminology is to ignore or underestimate the practical arrangements that are involved in the translation of theories and research findings into government programs and practices and the limits that they necessarily impose.
concerns and calculations and a New Right neo-conservative political agenda. Further, with the emergence of right realist criminology, particularly in the United States, the new right found a criminology with which it could align itself and operationalise its policies at an administrative level.

The success of the ‘New Right’ in the politicisation of ‘law and order’ had disastrous effects on the left in general. The ‘New Right’ even found considerable political support within the working class, historically the constituency of the left – the so-called Reagan Democrats, the Thatcherite working class, and more recently in Australia the Howard ‘battlers’. In respect to law and order policy this is really not that surprising given that, as was suggested above, the working class are the most likely victims of crime. The continuing political appeal of the New Right in its engagement with a public fearful of crime cannot be understated. In Australia, the neo-conservative element of New Right rhetoric has recently dominated the law and order policies of both the major parties - the Liberal/National Coalition and most interestingly also the Labor party - in the 1995 Queensland and NSW State elections respectively (Lee 1996). The populist appeal of the ‘New Right’ has been in terms of its ‘get tough’ approach to law and order. The philosophy of the New Right places the responsibility for crime squarely on the individual, virtually ignoring the structural determinants of crime; additionally, it reasserts the importance of the punishment fitting the crime, ‘an eye for an eye’. This has resulted in longer gaol sentences for offenders, the expansion of coercive agencies such as the police, attacks on welfare expenditure, and more prisons. It promotes a shift from a welfarism whereby the state takes responsibility for its citizens and their actions, to an individualism whereby the legal subject takes responsibility for her or his own actions and behaviours. These shifts in political philosophy have also been accompanied by shifts in the language and nationalities of crime control, although these shifts have generally been two-pronged: on the one hand the free market liberal ideal and on the other the moralistic, populist, neo-conservative program. Thus, we have seen shifts from notions of rehabilitation and individuation, towards incapacitation, and retribution. Individuals become populations and economies. Moreover, many of these ideologies – particularly those of the liberal element of the New Right - are not wholly incompatible with the neo-liberalism of the later administrative project at a practical level even if they are often philosophically incompatible.

The work of James Q. Wilson and right realism in the United States has been the most notable criminological example of a form of criminology converging with the New Right position. Wilson was for a time an adviser to the Reagan administration. That is not to suggest that Wilson is supportive of all of the punitive measures of New Right politics. Wilson and Kelling (1982)
suggest that the reduction of ‘fear of crime’ should be a major priority in the maintenance of order. Further, they suggest that to reduce fear police should be empowered – particularly at the level of neighbourhood and community – to re-criminalise ‘disreputable’ behaviour. They suggest that (Wilson and Kelling 1982:35):

Arresting a single drunk or a single vagrant who has harmed no identifiable person might seem unjust, and in a sense it is. But failing to do anything about a score of drunks or a hundred vagrants may destroy an entire community. …

And

…one broken window becomes many. The citizen who fears the illsmeiling drunk, the rowdy teenager, or the importuning beggar is not merely expressing his distaste for unseemly behaviour; he (sic) is also giving voice to a bit of folk wisdom that happens to be a correct generalisation – namely, that serious street crime flourishes in an area in which disorderly behaviour goes unchecked (1982:34).

This suggestion by Wilson and Kelling is one of the strongest statements – which importantly is at once (arguably) academic, administrative and political – in which fear is accorded a central and autonomous status as an object of inquiry and government. This is in complete contrast with radical criminology in which fear was regarded as a displaced symptom. Here again the ‘fear of crime’ emerges in a paradoxical discursive position, this time in regards to the aspirations of New Right politics and the project of Right Realist criminology. As I have suggested, in terms of the politics of the right fear proves a key factor in providing electoral support for its tough law and order policies – thus fears are increased by electioneering aimed at securing votes on the promise of reducing fear and crime. However, in terms of Right Realist criminology it is the ‘fear of crime’ that has to be reduced by restoring order to the streets. To reduce the ‘fear of crime’, for Right Realism, will break the cycle of community dislocation that produces crime.

That the ‘fear of crime’ is a legitimate area for investigation for criminology is no longer in question. Here we see again how a discursive paradox has driven the emergence of the ‘fear of crime’. As I have suggested, in terms of the politics of the Right, fear proves a key emotive factor in providing electoral support for its tough law and order policies - the electioneering actually
produces and plays on community fears. However, for Right Realist criminology it is the ‘fear of crime’ that has to be reduced in order to restore order to the streets.

**The Criminal and the Fearing Subject of the Right**

New administrative criminology - through its attention to the statistical calculation and quantification of criminal acts, its crime surveys, and its development of what could be described as an economy of crime - has unintentionally produced a language and rationality about crime that has been integrated into some aspects of New Right ideology – in particular its neo-liberal variants. I do not wish to suggest that this notion of the criminal as a self reflective, independent and rational actor is in any way purely the product of the New Right or administrative criminological thought: to the contrary both have invoked one of the main tenets of classical liberalism that emerges in the eighteenth century, precisely the notions of free will embraced by ‘classical criminology’.

Pasquino (1991:240) describes the criminal of classical criminological knowledge as *homo penalis*, and argues that, in classical conceptions of the criminal, *homo penalis* exists as a potentiality in each of us, but is actualised only through such violations of the law as any person may commit simply as the outcome of an erroneous calculation.

The positive side of constructing the offender as an agent of free will is that it has highlighted individual rights, and in particular, the right to feel safe and secure (White and Haines 1996:149). However, as a result of this, notions of rational choice have also been applied to the ‘irresponsible’ or ‘inappropriate’ actions of victims of crime. Individuals are expected to take responsibility for their property, their valuables, and their bodies. Hence, the emergence of private policing firms and a user pays system of policing security (O’Malley 1991:25,26). Here ‘fear of crime’, through the ideology of the New Right, operates as tool of policing in governing or regulating the self, insuring the self in one way or another against the actions of others. The discourse of victim carelessness removes responsibility from a failing police service, and poor political tactics. It helps produce legitimate and illegitimate victims. Hence, Margaret Thatcher has said, ‘We have to be careful that we ourselves don’t make it easy for the criminal’ (The Age cited in O’Malley 1991:25). This is a line also pursued by insurance companies; take for example the rebates offered for the installation of alarm systems; or the sponsorship - up until recently - of the neighbourhood watch scheme in NSW by the NRMA. Insurance operates as a moral

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54 Garland (1994) argues that there was no unified Classical Criminology as such.
55 A large Australian insurance company.
technology in this contemporary caricature of classical liberal thought. The 'fear of crime' becomes a tool in the economic management and minimisation of risky behaviour. In what might be conceptualised as a shift from dangerousness — and unknown and incalculable actions of others — to risk, the calculations of the behaviours of the everyday, the 'fear of crime' becomes a governmental tool. All fearing subjects are expected to manage their bodies and property in terms of risk; calculated by themselves and others. Ewald suggests classical liberal thought postulates that:

[to calculate a risk is to master time, to discipline the future. To conduct one's life in the manner of an enterprise indeed begins in the eighteenth century to be a definition of a morality whose cardinal virtue is providence. To provide for the future does not just mean not living from day to day and arming oneself against ill fortune, but also mathematizing one's commitments. Above all, it means no longer arming oneself to the decrees of providence and the blows of fate, but instead transforming one's relationships with nature, the world and god so that, even in misfortune, one retains responsibility for one's affairs by possessing the means to repair its effects' (Ewald 1991:207)

The 'fear of crime', through the neo-liberalism invoked in modern administrative practices, brings a particular form of fearing subject into the realm of government - the potential victim who like the criminal of classical thought, is an everyman (sic). This subject is constituted by two mutually supportive governmental discourses. Firstly, as a fearing subject one is the passive and innocent object of possible criminal wrong-doing; but secondly, a responsible actor who must do her or his utmost to insure against the potentiality of victimisation, I will deal with this aspect further in chapter four. As a fearing subject one has the right to conduct oneself 'freely' but only to the extent that this freedom is amenable to the rationality of specific modes of neo-liberal government. One's victimage is his or her own responsibility. Burchell (1993:276) argues that Liberalism constructs a relationship between government and governed that increasingly depends upon individuals assuming the status of subjects of their lives, upon fashioning themselves as particular kinds of subjects, upon ways of practising their freedom. It increasingly impinges upon one's very individuality, 'in their practical relationships to themselves in the conduct of their lives; it concerns them at the very heart of themselves by making its rationality the condition of their active freedom' (Burchell 1993:276).
The ascendancy in the law and order debate driven by the New Right, and the imagined fearing subject of right realist criminology, paralleled with the re-emergence of re-assertion or a re-worked form of the liberal subject – provided at least partly by administrative criminology - was the impetus for a re-thinking by criminologists and others on the Left. The outcome of this is what has come to be known as Left Realist criminology. This also has had its effects on the ‘fear of crime’ debate and on how fearing subjects are imagined in academic criminological discourse in particular.

Left Realism: The Measurement of Fearing Subjects

The project of left realism, coming as it did as a response to the perceived ‘failures’ of the radical criminologies, was to put the focus back on to the criminal, the victim, and the reality of crime, to expose the ‘real’ levels of crime in society, and to carry out this project in a highly empirical way. The focus of the radical criminologies on crimes of the powerful and crimes of the state, the realists’ argued, had missed the point and did not address the realities of the working class, who were themselves the most likely victims of street crime which was the context of most victimisation (cf. White and Haines 1996:155). Left Realism emerged primarily from radical criminology in Britain. However, its research methods have been borrowed in Australia, the US and elsewhere.

The primary empirical technique of data collection for Left Realism was to be the victim survey, conducted on a more localised but ostensibly more sophisticated basis than the larger administrative crime surveys. Left Realists argued that:

Criminology must embrace the totality of the criminal process; it must be true to its reality. And this reality must include the offender, the victim, informal social control and the state (for example policing). These are the four dimensions of criminology. Victimisation studies fit into this paradigm to the extent that they indeed represent an audit of peoples experiences, anxieties and problems of crime. Further, as victimisation studies [extend]... themselves from the study of victims to that of the police, to public attitudes to penalty etc. they... [begin] to provide the sort of empirical basis necessary for a realist criminology’ (Jones, Maclean and Young 1986:3-4).
Out of this vast new empirical knowledge provided by realist surveys, and the avalanche of published material that has followed, it becomes apparent - and unavoidable, considering the brief outlined above - that a major object of investigation is the 'fear of crime'. With Left Realism we see a fascination with the 'fear of crime', and accordingly with a new form of imagined *fearing subject*; a subject who it will attempt to represent in 'anxieties', 'attitudes' and 'experiences'. Most particularly it will attempt to turn crime (and fear) to the political advantage of the Left. Who is most fearful and why? What produces this fear? Why are the least likely victims the most fearful subjects? These are questions that Left Realists would attempt to answer in a politically pragmatic way, and according to the rhetoric, a more 'effective' way; they were to do this by addressing the 'real' conditions of criminal victimisation and fear. Certainly the politics of the Left have gradually taken Left Realist concerns on board and into their political platforms, for example the Blair government's 'tough on crime tough on the causes of crime' rhetoric in Britain. This recent realist focus on the 'fear of crime' moved Hale (1996:131) to suggest that as a topic for investigation 'fear of crime' has become a distinct sub-discipline within criminology which may be studied independently of crime itself. The 'fear of crime' as an area of study was now firmly part of the criminological canon and has been paramount in the rise of the sub-discipline of victimology.

Left Realism conceptualises the *fearing subject* as largely rational in his or her fears. Fear is seen as an understandable response to a largely undetected or grey area of crime. This grey area of crime is hidden due to methodological problems involving the collecting and recording of crime statistics but can be exposed by use of a well constructed victim survey. The main 'realist' argument has been that the discrepancies between public fear and concerns about crime and actual risk of victimisation are more apparent than real and that they have rational explanations. Jones et al (in Sparks 1992:122) argue that:

> to take only the most important and controversial issue in the area, namely women's fear of crime, 'realist' social surveys indicate that a proper account of women's subjection to domestic, work related, and other peripherally visible forms of victimisation, their experience of other harassments and marginally criminal incivilities, their unsatisfactory experience of police protection and the multiplication of each of these problems by factors of race, class and age, entirely dispels the apparent disparity between risk and fear.
Realist criminology refuses to concede that the public could be simply mistaken in their relationship to the social world and believes that public understandings of crime - and therefore their fears - have a rational core. Left Realism, moreover, has sought to measure this rational core; to organise a body of knowledge that would make the fearing subject understandable and knowable. A project that would, it was hoped, loosen the stranglehold of the New Right on the ‘law and order’ debate. This has resulted in ongoing discussion and disagreement, both within and from outside the Left Realist paradigm about how fear should be measured. Firstly, there has been widespread disagreement on the form and structure of the victim surveys that would be most appropriate for the measurement of fear (see Hale 1996, Zedner 1994). Secondly, and most importantly for my argument, there has been almost universal disagreement on what the ‘fear of crime’ might actually be. This disagreement, however, has not resulted in the abandonment of attempts to objectively measure the ‘fear of crime’. Rather, it has resulted in a multiplication of discourse, a preoccupation to find the ‘truth’ of its make up.

Conclusion

This recent obsession in ‘fear of crime’ should not come as any great surprise. Cohen (1985:177) has suggested that criminology has approached its disciplinary practices via a process he describes as the ‘what works’ principle, or - borrowed from Raymond Mack - as a ‘Reverse Midas Principle’. ‘Whatever turns to gold you touch’. There is little doubt that the ‘fear of crime’ has proven its worth, and contemporary criminology can’t get enough. The public are more than happy to discuss their fears. The mass media are more than happy to hype crime and criminals and perpetuate fear. Politicians are seemingly ever more relying on people’s fears in order to be seen as a party that will act on the ‘crime problem’ and alleviate these fears.

Further, the ‘fear of crime’ has proven itself from an administrative and academic perspective. Its ‘objective reality’, it is supposed, can be measured through the processes of the social survey. Such research has attracted generous funding support from government and hitherto attracted more research projects. For example the first major project by the new ‘National Campaign Against Violence and Crime’ in Australia (1997) was a study on the ‘fear of crime’. There has, in effect, been established what might be described as a feedback loop (Cohen 1985, Hacking 1995), a self-perpetuating process of knowledge formation that has utility for all involved.
Chapter 4:

Fear, Truth, Government and Subject Formation

An element of fear can be considered helpful in persuading people to guard against victimisation. Arguably, however, being mentally prepared in this way is better defined as awareness or concern, not fear. Fear itself can slide into hopelessness or terror, either of which can be counter-productive in terms of taking reasonable precautions (British Home Office 1989:12).

Governance-through-Fear: Governmentality and the Libertarian/Paralysis Nexus

At the beginning of chapter three I made mention of the governmentally produced information packages available from police stations, through neighbourhood watch, and via other state, community and private institutions. This chapter will deploy a closer inspection and content analysis of some of this material to illustrate the rationale and role of government and other social institutions as a contact point in the production and attempted regulation or tutelage of fearing subjects. Other material that would normally be considered ‘non-government’ or private sector literature will also be analysed, for it too plays a vital role in this production and regulation given the broader definition of governmentality⁵⁶. Additionally, this chapter will make note of the increasingly important role of private police, the security industry, and insurance companies in the governance of fear. I do not want to suggest that such literature is the only site of government-through-fear, rather, that it is one site amongst many that take as their target some form of fearing subject.

As I have shown in chapter three, historical contingencies and their resultant shifts in disciplinary and governmental rationalities and practices have played a considerable role in forming the current discursive term regarding the ‘fear of crime’. Indeed, these factors have informed the entire notion of the ‘fear of crime’ as an empirical subject of inquiry. Moreover, these empirical inquiries have produced a rationale, essentially a rationale of crime prevention, that supposes a particular form of governable subjectivity, or to put it another way, subject of government; the fearing subject. This is not to suggest that the fearing subject is a social fact or objective reality in a Durkheimian sense. Rather, he or she is the imagined and targeted subject of particular governmental policies and in turn of many academic (disciplinary) inquiries – a circularity which I will attempt to make more clear. It is particular mentalities of government that have attempted

⁵⁶ See Foucault (1991)
to govern, shape and indeed objectify this governmental subject. I will explore the objectification of this fearing subject in this chapter keeping in mind Burchell’s\textsuperscript{57} conception of government as contact point. However, it is important to reiterate that the historical conditions of the emergence this fearing subject, and the contemporary modes of its governance - are not empirically separable, rather, each constitutes part of and reinforces the other; their development has been in a sense parallel and complementary. They are part of this circularity, this ‘fear of crime’ feedback loop.

\textit{The Paradox of the Fearing Subject}

The ‘fear of crime’ has emerged as a potential instrument or technique of governmental normalisation or at least self-regulation, whereby the fearing subject, sensitised – through instruction or advertising for example - to the reality of these fears, is constantly expected to evaluate, police, govern and insure her or his body and property against the wrong doings of others. The fearing subject is an imagined responsible citizen whose civic duty includes keeping one’s self and belongings safe. This has the effect of minimising active and coercive state intervention but is intervention in itself: albeit of a seemingly much less intrusive kind. There are no curfews in place, no legal restrictions on individual’s movements, yet the fearing subject is expected to curfew the self and only venture into areas of low risk; to become self-regulating. Thus, in the Foucaultian sense fearing subjects are not to be disciplined as such – certainly not in the context of Foucault’s use of the term discipline in \textit{Discipline and Punish} (1977). Not disciplined but governed. It is to Foucault’s later work to which we must turn for this conceptualisation\textsuperscript{58}.

We might equate such forms of government and shifts in philosophy with the policies of neoliberalism, policies that emphasise individual responsibility and free choice over broader social state interventions. And indeed we should not downplay this equation. Neo-liberal governmental intervention often takes the focus off the failures of the police force (O’Malley 1991), the continued rolling back of the public sector (Stanko 1998) and structural inequalities, by attempting to produce these responsible individuals. However, this intervention is not only the result of New Right policy, its beginnings are far more disparate and the rationalities informing it far less sinister or conspiratorial than the ‘shift to the right’ thesis would imply.

\textsuperscript{57} See chapter two discussion.
\textsuperscript{58} See for example the three volumes of \textit{The History of Sexuality} and Foucault’s later work on Governmentality rather than his work on discipline per-se.
The intervention is, in a sense, governance through instruction — it constitutes and makes attempts at the tutelage of the fearing subject. Stanko (1997, 1998) has made repeated and concerted attacks on such intervention arguing that it is misguided and ignores the realities of women’s risk at the hands of men - particularly men they know. While I believe Stanko’s point is an important one, on the other hand, I also want to suggest that we should not lose site of the productive libertarian possibilities in terms of personal safety that this intervention may make possible. If such tutelage actually helps some individuals stay safe we can hardly characterise it as wholly coercive or negative — even if it might be misguided or naive. If we take this middle ground and conceptualise these interventions as, for the most part benign, we can see how the ‘fear of crime’ constitutes a problem for the government of population rather than simply a tactic of coercion — although it can of course also be this in some cases. ‘Fear of crime’ can impinge on individual’s freedom to the extent of contributing to ‘social dislocation’, ‘ill ease’, ‘anxiety’ and ‘restrictions to movement’, problems which themselves have their effects on politics. Therefore, it is vital — from a governmental policy perspective - that the fearing subject is not made too fearing but is fearful enough to govern their own risk-taking activities. This inherent contradiction is eloquently illustrated in the statement from the British Home Office (1989, 12) with which I opened this fourth chapter. One of the reasons that the ‘fear of crime’ makes such a problematic object of governance is this nexus between its supposed ability to make citizens — or fearing subjects - live safer lives, and its propensity to hinder individuals lives by rendering them too fearful to engage in their normal social and communal activities — and thus actually eroding community and social ties. I will refer to this problematic as the libertarian/paralysis nexus as its operation is an important element in understanding the notion and machinations of what I term government-through-fear. However, this nexus is also a primary reason for continued interest in both ‘fear of crime’ — from a disciplinary perspective — and in the fearing subject from a governmental perspective. There is no doubt that it has research and policy implications.

There is another theoretical point that may require some clarification before I proceed; what might be referred to as the rejection of the negative hypothesis concerning ‘fear of crime’. That is, I want to suggest that ‘fear of crime’, as a technology of governance — like all knowledge/power for Foucault (see Foucault 1978) - should not be conceptualised as an inherently negative regulatory force. Rather we should conceptualise it as a productive force, neither inherently negative nor inherently positive but part of the processes of the production of modern liberal subjects. If there is to be some sort of normative evaluation conducted of the effects of government-through-fear it should be gauged on the performance of specific forms of governance
and their ability to enhance an individual’s access, sense of ease and worth within their everyday private and social interactions. Although I will touch on this here and the following chapters a thorough evaluation is beyond the scope of this project. Particularly, I want to emphasise this productive capacity of power for it is this conceptualisation in particular that sets the analysis contained in this chapter apart from some similar academic work which has preceded it.

Privatisation and Governance

However, it is important to emphasise some of the private interests and commercial calculations that have come to be part of the neo-liberal ‘fear of crime’ feedback loop — and have become part of the governance of fear. In chapter three I have briefly touched upon the interests of insurance companies in ‘fear of crime’. These companies have an economic interest in sensitising populations to crime fear; put simply, the fearful buy insurance; likewise, the burgeoning private policing and security industries share this self-interest. Indeed, we might think of these private sector institutions as ‘servicing’ ‘fear of crime’ amongst other things. One enlists these services for ‘peace of mind’ — to paraphrase one company’s advertising slogan — as it is increasingly seen to be the responsible thing to do. Yet, these services come at a cost. For individuals (or companies for that matter) to feel adequately compelled to invest in these services there must exist the notion that their financial outlay will be exceeded by the potential savings the particular service has to offer. This means that these private sector institutions will keep premiums and service charges to a minimum in order to operate competitively in this increasingly unregulated economy. Or, alternatively, they can be actively engaged in the process or representing the social (and business) world as one that is dangerous enough for citizens to warrant consuming the services on offer; a world so disorganised and untameable that these new service industries become a requirement. Indeed, Shearing and Stemming (1985) argue that with the growth of these services has emerged a whole ‘new class of delinquent’, the individual or group who does not responsibly take up the preventative services on offer. In reality then these industries engage in both of the practices I have mentioned above. Certainly service charges and premiums are set at levels seen to be affordable to potential customers, but additionally, extensive and consistent advertising from these industries play on, and often attempt to increase, ‘fear of crime’ — a responsible fearing subject consumes insurance, private security, and security hardware. Moreover, we have already seen in chapter three how some companies increase their competitiveness by becoming involved with other social institutions and with local communities — the involvement of the NRMA in Neighbourhood Watch schemes being a pertinent example.
Governments have been active in encouraging this engagement with the private sector. As Sarre (1997:67) has pointed out, many governments have actively adopted strategies encouraging specialist forms of social ordering such as the services offered by private policing and security firms. Indeed, he claims they have in recent times been embraced as junior partners in the collaborative production of community safety. This fills the void left by the retreat of the state and is consistent with the neo-liberal ideal of ‘governing at a distance’ (cf. O’Malley 1991).

Of course, private policing and security firms are not new. Indeed, private policing dates back to well before the emergence of the public forces and services we now take for granted. What is new is that with the emergence and quantification of ‘fear of crime’ as a governmental and disciplinary object, they now have an additional object to service. Fear becomes a target for these companies in the chase for profit. They offer a ready fix solution to the void left by the retreating state. Zielinski (1995:1) argues in the North American context that, as a result of rhetoric and fear about crime, the private security industry is ‘profitably positioned at the intersection’ of the ‘right-wing’s most cherished crusades: privatisation and law and order’. However, the new wish to have a mix of private and public policing operating simultaneously is certainly not confined to ‘right-wing’ governments or politicians. As Sarre (1997:67) points out, private policing has survived the formation of centralised police forces; it was a crucial component of policing in the past, it is in the present, and still will be in the future.

Private sector involvement in crime concern, however, makes the governmental regulation of the object all the more difficult. With consumer demand in this area given over to the private sector the libertarian/paralysis nexus becomes increasingly difficult to balance. This situation is partially responsible for some of the ambiguities contained in the governmental literature on ‘fear of crime’. On the one hand the move to smaller government, and to governing at a distance, brings with it the desire for private sector involvement in this area of social life. But it also opens up ‘crime fear’ to the market economy necessitating increased governmental activity – in this case regulation by public authorities - in trying to explain crime fear, ‘define it down’, and/or declare it ‘irrational’, in attempts to counter the sustained campaigns of the private sector.

However, while there is little doubt about the influence these private sector institutions have on the shape and form of the ‘fear of crime’ feedback loop, a thorough discussion of this is beyond the scope of this thesis. My focus remains on investigating how various institutions bring into discourse and imagine ‘fear of crime’ and fearing subjects. While there is little doubt these
institutions engage in this imagining, their cues most often come from media representations, risk assessments, and other already-existing 'fear of crime' discourses. Moreover, to single out the private sector for critique tends to mask its operation as an extension of governmental practice — governments make choices about the extent of private sector involvement in these enterprises and any negative ramifications of these decisions should be viewed in the context of this governmental continuum.

'Forming' the Fearing Subject

One of the consequences of the governmental conceptualisation of the fearing subject has been the proliferation of literature and other materials aimed at its regulation, its self-discipline, and its normalisation. This material is produced, not as a coherent or organised body of literature by, if you will, a central government, but as a diffuse and relatively dis-organised array of documents that spring from a host of decentralised governmental functionaries. The police to be sure, but also women’s advocacy groups, insurance companies, local councils, private policing companies, the security industry, community groups, academics, and others. Thus, these are not totalised 'iron cage' forms of governance but multifarious and mostly multifunctional institutions and organisations that have organised themselves, to varying degrees, around the disciplinary 'discovery' of the 'fear of crime' and the governmental produced fearing subject. Thus, these modes of intervention and instruction are governmental. They are the tactics and technologies which have been identified through the many academic and government studies discussed in the preceding chapters.

What becomes evident through any examination of the literature produced by these agencies is that the production and promotion of self-governing fearing subjects is a constant ongoing project. The subject itself becomes progressively more perfectly defined while at the same time these subjects as individuals are implored to make the safety of their bodies and possessions subject of the governance of self. The literature in a sense offers the prescription of habits for the everyday in order that we avoid the risky situations of the modern social world. Of course there are differing degrees of prescription and differing objects of risk contained within these texts. These differences are largely a result of the particular agency or company through which particular texts are produced and specific ideologies or programs of these agencies. Thus, there is little worth to be gained in a totalising form of analysis here; the imagined fearing subjects of these texts, no doubt, vary quite considerably from text to text. Further, each individual — to turn more to Giddens' (1993) conceptualisation of the subject — has differing degrees of access to the
material and differing ways of dealing with the material. Thus, its effects are anything but
totalised. Rather, they are imperfect and diverse. Their resultant subjects probably look little like
the fearing subjects the texts imagine.

**Fear Literature**

The topic of ‘fear literature’, to put it fairly crudely, has recently been explored by Elizabeth
Stanko (1997, 199859), the findings of which are contained in her articles ‘Warnings to Women:
Police advice and Women's Safety in Britain’, and ‘Safety Talk: Conceptualising women’s risk
assessment as a “technology of the soul”’. These follow her earlier work ‘Everyday Violence:
How Women and Men Experience Sexual and Physical Danger’ (1990) which I will address in
chapter six. I feel it only fitting that I acknowledge the debt this chapter owes to Stanko’s work.
While my interest in the topic is not necessarily gender-centred, a passing glance at the
literature’s content reveals that it is mostly directed at women. The fearing subject of this
literature is indeed a gendered one. Thus, there are parallels between my aim here and that of
Stanko’s project even by default. However, my analysis differs from Stanko’s in a number of
fundamental ways. Where the two projects diverge most notably is in their theoretical approach.
If the reader will excuse a brief digression a short exploration of these divergences might explain
my aim more thoroughly.

Stanko’s radical feminist critique of these forms of literature prompts her to suggest that:

In many ways, women – the supposed audience of these booklets – are largely
silent, presumed unified in their needs, and are treated as simultaneously
needlessly frightened, yet rationally wary, the voiceless objects in the negotiation

It is hard not to concur - at least in part - with Stanko’s criticisms. The literature is patronising,
prescriptive and – as Stanko rightly points out – often places the responsibility for one’s – in this
case women’s – safety with the responsible reader. Further, there is little doubt that each
particular form of literature imagines a totalised and particular subject. She concludes that:

59 Originally published in 1996.
Publicised advice, generated by in-house police publicity... reinforces the message of our sexual vulnerability... Our anxiety may be raised: By placing the responsibility for avoiding men's violence once again on our shoulders - for it is our behaviour that can minimise the chances of becoming a target of men's violence - we are responsible for sorting safe from unsafe men (1998:422)(my emphasis).

Again, Stanko's argument is powerful. The perpetrators - 'men' - are in no way the focus of these governmental discourses. Such literature presents itself in the form of a step-by-step instruction manual but gives no 'instructions' to the perpetrators of crimes of violence and sexual violence in policing or disciplining themselves at all. While I again concur with Stanko, I want to suggest that her analysis does perhaps oversimplify the processes of subjectification at play here. That is not to suggest that women should in any way be responsible, or be made to feel responsible, for their own victimage; an all too common occurrence within and without institutions. Rather, as Stanko suggests this responsibility lies entirely with the offender. She is right to suggest that the advice 'fails to question why we [women] are at risk' (1998:19) and to argue that such issues should be on the 'state agenda'. Indeed, Carrington (1998:169,170) makes a strong case for the regulation of masculinities through intervention at a community and state level. She argues that 'the ability to negotiate safe sex is one learned, not possessed, [and this] raises the possibility of all kinds of opportunities for tutelage. [...] Too little attention is directed on how young men can take responsibility for their sexual urges... and can be respectful of the rights of others'. Likewise I implore communities and government to explore these 'opportunities' and to engage in this much needed and well overdue 'tutelage'; this is a highly neglected aspect of governance. But does it necessarily follow that the neglect of these measures render all the 'instruction' literature useless, or worse an impediment to safety as Stanko seems to imply? Is there not at least the possibility of some productive outcomes from such literature?

The tools of governmentality adopted here allow for an alternative reading of this literature. This broader conceptual framework situates the fearing subject within a grid of normalising and regulatory techniques and practices through which, rather than being necessarily rendered powerless by these responsibilising discourses - which I admit is still a distinct possibility, depending on the tenor of the specific literature - individuals may actually be empowered or at least kept safe. Again, I remind the reader of Foucault's conceptualisation of power as productive and Burchell's notion of government as contact point.
The Foucaultian Subject Within the Literature and Giddens’ Subject Without?

The literature discussed below has been collected from various police stations, other governmental agencies, and private companies around Sydney. The NSW Police and their various area commands, like police services in most western countries and their various jurisdictions, produce posters and leaflets on how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. These may focus on any number of offences. This information can be broken into three distinct groups for the purposes of this research: Information about how to avoid sexual assault, information on how to avoid being burgled or robbed, and information on how to avoid being assaulted or worse. However, much of the literature covers more than one of these categories. The following are examples of this literature and of how, to varying extents, it attempts to govern-through-fear often treading the fine line of the libertarian/paralysis nexus.

Example 1

A poster produced by the Leichhardt Area Command in conjunction with the local council, the safety committee, and the local member of parliament, is headed: ‘Leave it about and it will go without a doubt’. Such a slogan is indicative of much of such literature – the ‘imagined’ fearing subjects of the literature, it is supposed, rarely get past the slogan or catch-cry or at least that is what is to be left ringing in their heads. This particular slogan is currently being used in NSW police crime prevention campaigns more generally and on a state-wide basis. This is obviously part of the second category of literature discussed above. The poster further suggests that:

Crimes of opportunity are becoming a major concern to our community. They affect all of us and visitors to the area ... [ ] Remove visible articles from your bag when parking and be careful with handbags, luggage, and other valuables when shopping or dining. Advise visitors and guests to do the same. It is better to prevent crime than to replace or repair your belongings.

Making the public aware of the risk of having property stolen may seem quite removed from the governance of fearing subjects. However, such literature illustrates the rather mundane but rigorous techniques of governance designed to sensitise residents to the dangers posed by having ‘non-existent’, ‘imprudent’ or ‘ill-conceived’ security measures. The rationale being that these behaviours can be minimised and appropriate behaviours fostered if the appropriate information is available. Moreover, we are instructed to tutor other citizens – ‘visitors’ – in these precautions
along with ourselves. Through this further tuition the field of governance is expanded. So while the concept of 'fear of crime' is not necessarily central to the concerns of this literature it is without a doubt both a target to be sensitised as part of individual subjectivities, and an almost intentional by-product of the literature.

Example 2

The NSW Police service also produces literature on how to prevent home burglary. They are at pains to tell us that ‘Police are here to help’ and that ‘the NSW Police Service is working hard to reduce the incidence of household burglary’. That ‘beat police are patrolling NSW streets and local patrols are developing specific operations targeting problem areas’ (NSW Police Service:1995)⁰. However, they also offer some points of clarification. For they suggest that they ‘cannot do it alone’. Rather:

The community needs to be our partner in the fight against crime. We need to be aware of what’s happening in your neighbourhood and to contact your local police or Crime Stoppers if you notice anything suspicious (sic). We also need to make life more difficult for burglars by increasing the security of NSW homes. Only by working together can we make our homes safe from burglars (NSW Police Service:1995).

The message is unambiguous. ‘We’ all have a role to play in policing, and policing burglars also means, to some extent, policing ourselves. However, the content of the brochure is relatively factual and relatively benign as far as government-through-fear is concerned. There is tuition to be sure. We are told for example to ‘lock all doors and windows’, ‘don’t leave keys sitting in the lock’, ‘never [put keys] in hiding places’, and to ‘engrave...your property’ (NSW Police Service:1995). However, the extent to which fear is used as a technique of governance is minimal. It lies not in the text but in the small drawn images that border it: A pot plant being lifted up by a gloved hand to reveal a hidden key; a lock with a key left hanging tantalisingly in it; a slightly opened window with the pitch black outside, a blackness that could easily hide an intruder.
Example 3

Westfield, a company which owns and runs ‘enclosed mall’ style shopping centres, produces some brochures in conjunction with the NSW police. In particular they produce a leaflet on ‘bag-snatching’ (no date). The brochure suggests the ‘bag-snatching’ has increased in ‘recent years’ and that this could be due to ‘The thief realising every handbag contains money’, that ‘the handbag is a visible target, usually draped over the shoulder’, and that ‘women normally do not have the strength to resist such an attack’. It goes on to suggest that:

There needs to be strategies in place where women can hopefully avoid the “trauma” of a handbag snatch. The following information has been provided to give some “tips” on how to keep yourself and your properties safe when going shopping or out and about generally (Westfield, NSW Police No Date) [my emphasis].

There are a number of inferences that can be drawn here. Firstly, these points leave little doubt that the shadowy stranger, the bag-snatcher in this instance, is male. The victim, indeed fearing subject of this literature is female — not surprising given that the focus is handbags but worth highlighting just the same. Secondly, there is the danger of ‘trauma’ or worse used to instill some concern in the reader who, it is supposed, positions themselves as the potential victim of this crime. The message is again clear, be responsible or risk the consequences. Thirdly, the brochure makes no secret of the fact that these are ‘tips’, ‘tips’ that will keep you ‘safe’ if you follow the tuition. Fourthly, there is no doubt where the danger lies, its ‘out and about generally’. It goes on to suggest that in being out and about you should try to:

- Travel and shop with friends (safety in numbers).
- Be in control of your handbag at all times.
- Be aware of the people around you...have eye contact...thereby, you may assess someone’s possible actions before anything happens.
- When driving your car, lock all the doors, especially if you have central locking and place your handbag under the seat or on the floor.

* Titled ‘The keys to keep burglars out’.
• When withdrawing money from Automatic Teller Machines, ensure no one is directly behind you who may memorise your pin number and can see what amount of cash you’re taking out (Westfield et al No Date).

There is no doubt that these are instructions that most of us carry out fairly automatically. They are either ‘common sense’ or we have already been tutored in these procedures — without necessarily being aware of the tuition — on other occasions. However, there is also quite a fear-inducing message being told here. The subtext of the first point is that you are not safe alone; there’s ‘safety in numbers’. The third point tells us that no stranger can be trusted and must be ‘assess[ed]’, surveilled as a matter of course by the maintenance of ‘eye contact’. Moreover, that this should be carried out in the name of general risk management ‘before anything happens’. The fourth point tells us that even in our cars we are not safe, the responsible citizen will ‘lock all the doors’ to guard against the unknown outside. And the tuition continues suggesting that ‘most importantly’:

• If someone physically attempts to steal your handbag, DON’T RESIST, as no amount of money is worth the risk of serious injury.
• Bag snatching usually occurs around shopping centres and parking areas. However, this may not always be the case as this could occur on the street or elsewhere. Consider the “danger” times and locations and take preventative measures (Westfield et al No Date) [my emphasis].

These last two points really sum up the entire tenor here. If someone does ‘physically attempt’ to victimise you, you are essentially powerless. If you have taken every precaution you are an unfortunate victim, a responsible citizen fallen foul of life’s ungovernable contingencies. However, as a responsible citizen you will keep yourself safe by letting the contingency take its course and by reporting to the police after the event. Conversely, if you have not heeded the earlier warnings you are by your very ungovernability implicated in your own misfortune, you are an illegitimate victim to some extent. The second point here also asks us to ‘consider the danger times and locations’ before we venture out. Here we are all, as responsible citizens meant to be our own risk managers. We are expected to know the dangers, know when our fears are justified, and act accordingly.
Example 4

The NRMA/Police/resident co-operative initiative Neighbourhood Watch produces a number of brochures that instruct us how to conduct our lives in safety. The particular examples used below fit into the second and third categories of this type of material. The advice offered here includes how to ward off threats by ‘thieves’ and other types of criminals. Similarly to the first example they inform us that ‘carelessness accounts for nearly 20 per cent of all house robberies in New South Wales’, and for us to ‘remember, a lock is not a lock unless you use it’ (NRMA 1990:1). Thus, responsibility within the literature is placed squarely on the victim - nobody wants to be a careless citizen do they? The word-play of the second slogan (the interplay between the interchangeable verb and adjective, ‘lock’) is designed, once again to be the remembered slogan. Thus, in the name of being a responsible citizen we are told to:

- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street for emergency services.
- Make sure there are good locks on perimeter doors and windows to the home and use them.
- Lock away tools, ladders and other implements which a thief could use to break into your home.
- Never leave notes that a thief could read (to milkman, family, friends, etc).
- Don’t leave keys in ‘hiding places’ around the house for a thief to find.
- Don’t forget to lock up even if it is only for a few minutes.
- Trim trees and shrubs away from around doors and windows.
- If you go on holidays, use timers on lights and radios to give your home that ‘lived in’ appearance.
- Have your neighbours clear mail and maintain the lawns whilst you are absent.
- Make an effort to know your neighbours and their daily routines.
- Check your neighbourhood for things that might contribute to crime, poor lighting, abandoned cars, vacant land littered with rubbish or abandoned buildings (NRMA 1990:1).
And that:

If you take the precautions outlined in this brochure, a would-be thief will quickly see what he is up against and probably look for an easier target. Be aware of the need to protect your home and yourself at all times.

- Break-ins occur when people are at home asleep, watching television etc.
- Assaults do occur in the home (NRMA 1990) [my emphasis].

There is little doubt that these final two points in particular are aimed squarely at changing or keeping in check subjects habits through igniting fear. They are aimed at a particular form of fearing subject. There is no clarification, nor is there an explanation. These points are presented as objective facts – no statistics need be entered into. Not only do these Neighbourhood Watch brochures instruct us how to look after our property, they also instruct us how to look after ourselves by providing us with 'some very important DOs and DON'Ts: These are as follows:

- Never admit you are alone in the house — either to a caller at the door or to someone on the telephone.
- Never allow a stranger to enter your home — check their identification or telephone the organisation they claim to represent. If they are who they say they are they won’t mind.
- Never wait at bus stops or railway stations at night any longer than you have to — know the timetables.
- Never take short-cuts at night through parks or vacant lots.
- Never place an advertisement in the newspaper which requires people to call at your home, unless you have someone with you.
- Never walk close to doorways if you are forced to use a poorly lit street.
- If you are forced to wait for public transport at night, stay as close as possible to the lit area (shop front etc), or where there are other people (railway staff office).
- Fit good quality locks to your house (front and back) and have either a security door or peep hole - USE THEM!
- Always carry your handbag clutched in front of you — don’t let it dangle from your shoulder or hand.
If you are walking and a car is following you, go to the nearest place where people are likely to be (a neighbour’s house, a shop etc), taking care to get a description of the vehicle – notify police immediately.

**SELF PROTECTION**

- First and foremost - don’t panic.
- Your best protection is noise
- If you can’t escape, scream as loud as you can.
- Yell ‘FIRE’, rather than ‘HELP’, as people seem to react more readily.
- Avoid violence if possible – most women escape by talking their way out of trouble.
- Think about carrying personal safety devices, such as a shrill alarm.
- Remember, there are always items in a women’s handbag which can be used to defend yourself, such as a nail file, bunch of keys etc (NRMA 1990:1).

The list of self protection and security measures here is long and relatively detailed. Indeed it reads like a pedagogy for the ‘at risk’. Certainly it leaves us with the feeling that the social world is far from a safe place to be – it also leaves little doubt that it is the outside world that is to be feared rather than the familiar, or more to the point family*. It does not necessarily follow, however, that this list of behaviours would not be beneficial in reducing victimisation or risk of victimisation; clearly many of these listed behaviours are carried out by individuals as everyday ‘common sense’ risk reduction procedures. However, it is very probable that such instructions also increase ‘fear of crime’ through sensitisation. Such is the inherent problem in these forms of literature – this is part of what constitutes the libertarian/paralysis nexus. In providing avoidance techniques to guard against dangerous assailants or robbers, implicitly the reader is being informed, rightly or wrongly, of the dangerous and indeed fearful nature of their environment. Thus, these publications unavoidably steer a tight discursive course in imparting information that will make the reader fearful enough that they adopt the avoidance techniques, but not so fearful that they become hindered or constrained by their fears.

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* Even the point quoted on above that suggests that ‘assaults do happen in the home’ seems to indicate that these assaults are as a result of intruders.
Some points of clarification

Whether knowledge of these dangers, and information on how to deal with them, increase or decrease the ‘fear of crime’ directly is neither a question that is easily answered nor an avenue of research that is particularly fruitful. Indeed, individuals may heed or ignore the instructions for a variety of reasons; some will act because they are fearful, some will act because they do not want to be inconvenienced, others will ignore the advice – these are the subjects of Giddens’ analysis. There may also be numerous reasons why a subject will ignore such advice; they may think themselves not at risk or they may enjoy the thrill of risky behaviours. Thus, I would not want to suggest that these ‘instruction manuals’ are followed to the letter by all readers or even that large numbers of the population even bother to read them. Rather, such literature should be conceptualised as part of a body of knowledge and information that both illustrate the importance afforded to regulating the individual in terms of crime prevention, but also to the array of rather disparate institutions, hospitals, universities, local councils, and the like - which engage in the production of such knowledges. They illustrate the importance of the fearing subject as a target of governance, but it does not follow necessarily that every individual will be governed.

Private Advice

In Fear or Freedom: a woman’s options in social survival and physical defense (1986), North American writer Susan E. Smith offers the reader a ‘how to’ manual on the minimisation of danger for women. She also implores women to take a much more active role in this avoidance, even to the extent of providing tips on self-defence. In fact she does not see her manual as advocating avoidance at all. She argues:

Guidelines for avoiding rape take up a large portion of various women’s self defense publications, pamphlets, presentations and seminars. These voluminous lists of rules serve several purposes. They make the reader or participant feel as if she can control events by performing compulsive rituals (1986:65) (original emphasis).

Here she is certainly identifying the types of literature discussed above. She continues:
Each time a violent crime occurs, an avoidance specialist examines all the details determined to discover how the victim brought the attack on her/himself. A person who is a strong believer in avoidance rules is also a skilful victim blamer (Smith 1986:65).

In regard to these second points there is no doubt Smith's position is aligned, in part at least, with that of Elizabeth Stanko. However, where the two diverge is on the point of avoidance. Where Stanko argues that these avoidance mechanisms are 'already known' by women, Smith's position seems to posit that they are indeed taught/learned behaviours and that as such they are not particularly useful.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Smith's position is probably as much a question of semantics as ideology. Particularly given that she goes on to outline an equally 'voluminous list' of behavioural traits – albeit more forthright or proactive ones – which are designed to make women 'equals' to men and thus 'deter attacks'. She argues that men learn to expect subordinate behaviour from women and that most become shocked, insulted, or even outraged when women fail to behave as their sex roles dictate (Smith 1986:66). Thus, she advocates that the female subject learn how to attack back. For example she suggests that:

> Limiting the scope of your vision is ultimately more dangerous than meeting a man's eye by chance. You should practice variations of looking at your environment until you feel comfortable. Your eyes are one of the most important assets in avoiding danger. [ ] [E]xercising the social freedom to be yourself in public is not demonstrating social subordination or fear (Smith 1986:76, 77) (my emphasis).

And that:

> The worst form of bondage is footwear that hinders women's walking (Smith 1986:78).

Ultimately she argues:

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62 'Men do not rape their equals' (Smith 1986:65).
If you believe in your power to defend yourself, then you have defeated your greatest enemy: your own fear. When you are not paralysed by fear, all your decisions and choices will be more powerful (Smith 1986:104).

Thus, the libertarian/paralysis nexus is actually strongly articulated by Smith in this last statement. Power is all about not being ‘paralysed’ – ‘fear is the enemy’. Yet surely within Smith’s text are examples of outcomes the likes of which can only be described as fear inducing. Moreover, there is no doubt that the techniques advocated by Smith might be quite daunting – to put it mildly - for many women. Indeed, the thought of having to use such violent counter-measures might well have the effect of paralysing some women, particularly given that Smith herself suggests that most women ‘talk’ their way out of danger. Indeed, they are premised on some forms of physical prowess and mental stamina that many, both men and women, might not possess no matter what forms of tutelage are deployed. The fearing subject for Smith is one to be dispensed with; it is counter productive and the antithesis of power. To be a fearing subject is both a hindrance to women’s safety and a symptom likely to lead to paralysis in the face of danger. But what is likely to lead women to take up Smith’s offer of tutelage if it is not in part fear?

A Liberating Governance of Fear?

The above examples all employ varying modes of governance-through-fear by imagining the fearing subject in differing ways. But can we have a liberating governance-through-fear? Possibly, but it seems that we really do not understand how ‘fear of crime’, as a technology of government, operates at all. Moreover, it may not be understandable. The Home Office tells us that awareness and/or concern is seen as useful but that terror is ‘counter productive’63; but how is a balance to be found? Governing imagined fearing subjects, it seems, is precisely about finding this balance. A balance based on technologies provided by the objectification of populations - victim surveys, crime statistics, social theory, beliefs, experiences, etc. - through knowledges of the population - disciplines such as criminology, sociology, psychology, etc. - for the government of the population in terms of economically managing both individual and social bodies – fearing subjects. However, Hunt and Wickham (1994) argue that, paradoxically, while knowledge is used to select objects of governance, objects of governance are only ever known through processes of governance. This being the case, ‘fear of crime’ may be a concept that is mutated by the very modes of knowledge production that seek to understand it. The imagined fearing subjects of the

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63 See the Home Office excerpt that introduces this chapter.
above governmental literature are just that; imagined. They are artifacts of research design and particular forms of knowledge production. As I will argue below, there is not necessarily any consistency to the way individuals 'fear crime' so the liberating effects — or otherwise — of this literature remain difficult to gauge.

In addition to providing a snapshot of the governmental problematic and possibilities of the 'fear of crime', the Home Office statement - quoted at the beginning of this chapter - alerts us to the ongoing criminological project of attempting to conceptually separate the elements of 'fear of crime'. We are asked to accept that the 'fear of crime' can somehow be placed on a scale from 'awareness' to 'terror' and within this administrative criminological discourse we are asked to accept that these increments, these subdivisions of fear, can be objectively measured. Sparks (1992) argues that left realist and administrative researchers have sought to approach the 'fear of crime' by way of breaking it down to ever smaller categories: place, people, worry; and the possible increments go on ad infinitum. If Wickham and Hunt are correct, it follows that as an object of investigation this measurement, conceptualisation, dissection, and attempted disentanglement from related discourse will ultimately fail to find the ideal method of governing-through-fear.

Every attempt at knowing the 'truth' of the 'fear of crime' and its governance will fail and be replaced by a differing attempt which will itself fail. This is the nature of liberal governance (Wickham and Hunt 1994). The failure of each successive regime of knowledge to successfully objectify, and thereby know and control the 'fear of crime' will open up the discursive space required to conduct further attempts; this process seems clearly illustrated by the genealogy I have outlined in chapter three. I am not implying, however, that we should cease all inquiry into the 'fear of crime'. Only that we should recognise its contingent nature as a unitary category, and accordingly as an instrument and problematic of, and for, government in the governance of populations.

The 'fear of crime', in terms of governance, has emerged empirically at the nexus of various regimes of criminological knowledge, public beliefs, and imperatives of government. This emergence, in terms of the broader political and criminological discursive terrain, has been contingent upon various historically specific regimes of disciplinary, political and cultural knowledge and utility. As a result of these ongoing attempts at the objectification of the 'fear of crime' combined with the neo-liberalism apparent in contemporary western political thought, there has been the putting into discourse of the individual as a fearing subject. The 'fear of crime'
now operates as an instrument of government in terms of the self-regulation of this fearing subject. By this I mean the ‘fear of crime’ has become part of the mentalities of modern liberal governance in terms of the regulation of individual subjects and the wider population.

This Other Conclusion - The Fearing Subject and the Feared Subject?

One of the effects of the governmental production of the fearing subject over the past decades has been the production of, or at least some clarification of its Other; what could be referred to as the feared subject. This shadowy figure pervades the sub text — and often the text itself — of these forms of literature and is wanting of its own analysis. Often this Other is featured in drawings or photos, half obscured from our sight, hidden in bushes (the ones we should have cut back), lurking in the shadows as we saw above. The notion of feared Others is of course not new, indeed from the eighteenth century onwards this pariahic figure has haunted the imaginations of the respectable classes. The homeless, the vagrant, the indolent, the idle, the ex-criminal, the unemployed at various times all become the embodiment of this flaneur-like figure.

I will use the analogy of the flaneur to briefly explore the Other of the fearing subject. The flaneur is the man who wanders the city, the man who finds pleasure in being away from home, freedom in being non-locatable. Lechte (1995) describes the flaneur in Baudelaire (1972) as ‘an ego athirst for the non-ego’. The flaneur:

...searches out the ephemeral, the transitory and the contingent. The flaneur’s trajectory leads nowhere and comes from nowhere. It is a trajectory without fixed spatial coordinates; there is, in short, no reference point from which to make predictions about the flaneur’s future. For the flaneur is an entity without past or future, without identity: an entity of contingency and indeterminacy (Lechte 1995:103).

Like the unidentified spectre-like criminal of the governmental literature, he is unknowable, unplaceable. What is the task of managing one’s risk through engaging in the practices outlined in the governmental crime prevention literature if it is not guarding against the unknown, the contingent, the hidden danger? There is of course a need not to push this particular analogy — between the flaneur and the feared subject — too far. For, according to Baudelaire (1982), the flaneur was anything but dangerous. Rather, he was one at play; a player whose playground was the city, the metropolis, his game was to observe — maybe also to be observed — but not to harm.
However, to exhume a little more mileage from the analogy, Wilson (1995:65) describes the *flaneur* as a gendered concept or subject. This freedom, to wander where one wishes is, she argues, a masculine freedom. He is the embodiment of the ‘male gaze’ and is the symbol of men’s ‘visual and voyeuristic mastery over women’ (Wilson 1995:65). Like the *he* of the instruction literature this unknowability and invisibility are unsettling and gendered male. Thus, the *feared subject*, like the *fearing subject* can be conceptualised as gendered — indeed they are binary opposites.

So while the *feared subject* that haunts the instruction literature is quite removed from Baudelaire’s *flaneur* in terms of intent, they do share a number of traits. Both are only possible through the infinite lens of the contingent. Their movements are unknown, they are removed from discourse, from the social body, and indeed from history. One could never be sure they are not being viewed or observed by either. Their embodiment takes place in only a moment in time and a discrete place in space. Both can come into being only in regard to their opposites and can come into being at any time. The *feared subject* must feed off the *fearing subject*. The floating *flaneur* must have fixed spaces and the others that inhabit them in order to play and gaze.

Indeed, it might be that the feared subject has replaced the *flaneur* in the public imagination to some extent and that the continuum between the two is not all that accidental. As Bauman (1993:176) suggests:

Today’s action is, after all, different: it is, mostly, about passing from here to there as fast as one can manage, preferably without stopping, better still without looking around. Beautiful passers-by are no more to be seen; they hide inside cars with tinted windows. Those still on the pavement are waiters and sellers at best, but more often *dangerous people* pure and simple: Layabouts, beggars, homeless conscience-soilers, drug-pushers, pickpockets, muggers, child molesters and rapists waiting for prey. To the innocent who has to leave for a moment the wheeled-up security of cars, or those others (still thinking of themselves as innocent) who cannot afford the security at all, the street is more a jungle than a theatre. ...A site fraught with risks, not chances; not meant for gentlemen of leisure... The street is the wilderness ‘out there’ from which one hides, at home or inside the car, behind security locks and burglar alarms (my emphasis).
While Bauman’s apocalyptic poetic — here taken out of context — might seem an overexaggeration he eloquently illustrates two important points. Firstly, the imagined unknown dweller of social space, the flaneur, has been replaced by a much more feared entity. In the risk society (cf. Beck 1992) the unknown is no longer exciting, rather it becomes an anxiety or indeed a fear. That is not to suggest that this fear has an objective reality but that the fearing subject would do well to believe that it has. Secondly, that the concept that one should fear this space is a relatively new one for theorists. For the subjects of Baudelaire’s work the street was a playground, for those of Bauman it is a ‘nightmare’.

In the next chapter I will discuss more closely some examples of these imagined dangerous individuals. In chapter six I will discuss further the gendered nature of fearing and feared.
Chapter 5

The Media, Representation and ‘Fear of crime’

*The mass media operate with certain definitions of what is news worthy. It is not that instruction manuals exist telling newsmen that certain subjects (drugs, sex, violence) will appeal to the public or that certain groups (youth, immigrants) should be continually exposed to scrutiny. Rather, there are built in factors, ranging from the individual newsmen’s intuitive hunch about what constitutes a ‘good story’, through precepts such as ‘give the public what it wants’ to structured ideological biases, which predispose the media to make certain events into news* (Stan Cohen 1972:45).

As I begin this chapter, and lead into the next, it might be worth reiterating a couple of key points regarding this thesis. Firstly, this thesis does not in any way attempt to argue that individuals do not fear crime or that these fears are unfounded. It is not my aim to undermine or diminish the obvious reality of the anxieties some individuals feel about crime. Secondly, I do not want the thesis to be read as a work that, to paraphrase the left realist rhetoric, does not take crime and victims of crime seriously. On the contrary this thesis aims to trace and discuss the specificities of concerns about crime from an individual, a community, and a research perspective.

Aims: The Media Watch

This chapter discusses ‘fear of crime’ and the media. Specifically, it looks at three quite different examples of how the media deal with crime stories and how this might affect the ‘fear of crime’ in the community, and more importantly, the notion of ‘fear of crime’. These examples concern and inform differing aspects or perspectives of what I have referred to above as the *fear of crime feedback loop* and how the media often plays an important part in the intensification of this loop. The first example here discusses the media’s recent interest in conducting ‘fear of crime’ surveys and how some media organisations increasingly see themselves as the social scientists of the masses. Here I take the example of a local suburban ‘fear of crime’ survey conducted by a free suburban weekly newspaper. Secondly, I look at the killing of a British tourist in the Sydney suburb of Bondi New South Wales. This analysis explores the multiplicity of media discourses surrounding the death and how these intersect with fears and anxieties about crime. This example is important in that it introduces the notion of how a combination of newsworthiness, locality, and anonymity combine to form a narrative that becomes defining in the local community and more
broadly. Thirdly, I examine the media discourse surrounding the release from prison of a convicted ‘child-sex-killer’ after serving a 25-year sentence. This example explores the media at its most intrusive, disruptive, emotive, and perhaps at its most productive as far as ‘fear of crime’ is concerned.

This chapter is not an attempt to cover every aspect of the media or media coverage and how these intersect with the ‘fear of crime’. To attempt to do so would be to over-generalise the role of the media given that media institutions and their reportage of crime vary from town to town, from city to city, and country to country. Meta narratives explaining media coverage and its affects are destined to fail; in the media world there is always an exception to any general rule. Not all media institutions operate on the same sets of ethical (or unethical) reporting standards; not all media outlets report crime the same way. Rather, a much more effective method of exploring media discourse might be to analyse particular examples of media reporting in their local cultural contexts. The analysis that follows makes a concerted attempt not to over-generalise the operations or functions of media institutions. The sheer volume of news items now available to media networks and the public via new forms of information technologies — satellite and internet for example — has increasingly placed time constraints on programming in ways that often relegate more ‘mundane’ stories to having little or no coverage. Moreover, reporting — particularly television reporting — has increasingly come to rely on the ‘five second grab’, a process that often results in more complex statements being taken out of context, simplified or ‘dumbed down’. As the quote introducing this chapter illustrates, often a story’s reportage, and the tenor of that reportage, is dependent on the individual reporting team, a producer, or simply time and programming constraints.

Further, given some recent analysis (see A. Young 1996) it might be questionable as to whether a chapter on the media is of any analytical use at all. Young (1996:2) argues that crime is imagined through a multiplicity of discourses, practices and institutions she calls the ‘crimino-legal complex’64. Within this ‘crimino-legal complex’ Young includes:

The knowledges, discourses and practices that are deemed to fall under the rubric of criminology, criminal justice and criminal law... I wish to include all these, together with popular discourses that are manifested in the media, cinema, and advertising, in order to convey the sense that ‘crime’ has become (been made?) a potent sign which can be exchanged among criminal justice personnel,
criminologists, politicians, journalists, film-makers and, importantly, (mythically) ordinary individuals (Young 1996:2).

Given Young’s analysis we might rightly question the merits of reifying the media and media discourse in any way at all. For its functioning must surely be intimately inter-linked in exchanges – in signs of ‘crime’ - with other discourses of the ‘crimino-legal complex’. However, I do not think we have to imagine the media as discursively discrete from this complex to make some of its operations subject to analysis. Rather, we must constantly reflect that the media discourses, narratives, and practices that are analysed below do not function autonomously. I have attempted to situate this interactivity in terms of the fear of crime feedback loop. This feedback loop, like Young’s crimino-legal complex, is an attempt to draw in the multiplicity of affecting and affected entities that enable ‘fear of crime’ to function. The first example below is an excellent illustration of this interactivity. For here, as we shall see, the media actually pick up on a discourse of criminology; the ‘fear of crime’ survey. In the second example discourses of social vs individual responsibility resonate. Again, these are socio-legal discourses that inform media narratives. In the third example fears of a dangerous individual are inscribed with discourses of retribution, rehabilitation, and the operations of the criminal justice process. However, these relationships are never simply causal.

Thus, to suggest that there is an intersection between the media and ‘fear of crime’ is not to suggest that there is a direct causal link between the two – although this may be the case in some instances. Rather, I want to suggest that, on the one hand, what and how the media reports in regard to crime is mediated through imagined – often borrowed - narratives about crime (cf. Sparks 1992 and Young 1996) and that understanding the discursive operation of these narratives is important in understanding how media institutions situate their readership. To relate back to the last chapter, media institutions too imagine a particular form of consuming (fearing?) subject. On the other hand, I want to suggest that the public consume (read) crime stories in a multiplicity of ways and that whether this consumption leads to increased ‘fear of crime’ is dependent on the lived experiences of the consumer and their cultural context amongst other factors (cf. Walklate 1998). So the analysis that follows serves a number of functions in regards to this thesis. Firstly, to look at how the media is beginning to directly engage in the ‘fear of crime’ debate. Secondly, to explore the narratives through which crime stories are reported. Thirdly, to explore how media institutions situate or position their readership in terms of their reportage.

* I should point out that Young specifically credits Peter Rush with coining this term.
Crime Makes a Good (Bad) Story

As an incident makes its way into the media, as it becomes news, it also becomes extraordinary, different, nonroutine. When television news highlights an event it simultaneously obscures the ‘quotidian setting’ of the events actuality (Gooding-Williams 1993:1). The media rarely acknowledge complicated and contingent processes by which events develop out of the often-mundane situations which produce them. Thus, it is the elevated event, pure event, de-contextualised and de-historicised, which is flashed and reflected, often fleetingly, onto the psyche of the ‘news’ consuming public or community.

There is no doubt then that crimes involving violence make good ‘bad’ news stories. A gruesome murder is likely to gain weeks of media exposure, be one of the top stories in any news bulletin, and create much public comment around such issues as capital punishment, the erosion of society’s moral fabric, the need for more police, and the un-safety of the streets. This is particularly the case when a stranger commits a murder or when the victim is deemed an ‘innocent victim’ (cf. Carrington 1998). These cases of murder are of course relatively rare. Statistically in Australia, as in the western world more generally, most murders are committed by members of the victim’s own family or by close acquaintances. As Madriz (1997:111) argues, with few exceptions, the media does not portray husbands, boyfriends, lovers, or other acquaintances as predators even if an event makes the news.

In the world of the mass media reportage feeds on reportage as certain stories take precedence over other stories. Smith (1986:118) concluded, in his study of provincial press in Birmingham, that 70 per cent of the total column space devoted to crime was devoted to violent personal crimes – including mugging - when these crimes constituted only 5 per cent of the total number of offences reported to police. Therefore, according to Smith, what the media presents as being representative of all crime is actually representative of only a minority of offences. What may begin as an item on a news bulletin can quickly make its way into various other forms of editorial or public talk back forums and programs. Initial reporting of these issues can be followed up by the talk back radio demagogues - the local examples being Alan Jones, Stan Zemanik and John Laws. Tabloid current affairs such as Today Tonight and A Current Affair have the ability to expand the

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65 Between 1989-1996 68% of homicides in Australia were committed by family members or acquaintances. Only 16% of homicides in Australia were committed by strangers to the victim. Note: these figures are for homicide which includes both murder and manslaughter (AIC 1998). It could be assumed that the figure for murder would be lower than 16%.
coverage even further as do columnists for newspapers such as Piers Ackerman, Padric Macginnes and Miranda Devine66.

The proliferation of media outlets and sources, and the saturation of information that has occurred in recent decades, will ensure a story’s exposure to almost the entire population. Most importantly, in terms of the ‘fear of crime’, these stories can become discursively connected to the notion of ‘crime’ more generally and will be conflated with stories on rises in property crime and other less serious offences. Thus, crime as a general category becomes connected to personal safety and dangerousness. Such conflation makes it possible for newspapers like the Daily Telegraph to run front-page headlines like ‘Crime; we’re losing the fight’ (The Daily Telegraph, 02/05/97). This way almost any crime story has the potential to play on people’s fears and concerns about crime. In effect the media has the potential to operate as part of the feedback loop in terms of fear. The media sensationalises crime stories thereby increasing public concern and subsequent interest in such stories. This interest makes crime stories more newsworthy and therefore reported more regularly and sensationally. It will be unlikely that crime statistics which show that homicide rates have remained relatively stable since early in the century - to take just one example - will be quite so newsworthy (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1998).

Hogg and Brown (1998:20) explicate this last point eloquently, particularly in regard to populist tabloid media such as the Rupert Murdoch owned Sydney daily the Daily Telegraph. They explore the discursive mechanisms whereby the reportage of crime rates and crime statistics in the paper, almost without fail, point to increases in crime. This is despite the fact that in many of these same cases any informed reading of the statistics in question would be at odds with such reportage. If the statistical data being reported tends to point to a drop in specific crime rates the Daily Telegraph routinely points out that the information is collated by ‘‘ivory tower academics and bureaucrats’ who know nothing of real life...’ (Hogg & Brown 1998:20). If the ‘official’ data indicates drops in crime, factors affecting the correlation of crime statistics are highlighted by the paper as examples as to why these statistics are flawed. For example, the paper often suggests that drops in ‘official’ crime rates are due to the fact that people are unwilling to report crime for a variety of reasons. Thus, drops in crime rates are explained away as being due to the ‘common sense’ notion that ‘crime has become so common that victims no longer bother to report it’ (Hogg & Brown 1998:25). However, if ‘official’ crime statistics point to increasing crime the opposite

66 Of course to anybody outside Sydney or Australia these commentators are unknown. I name them only because, in the discussion that follows, they are important players in how them media covers certain crime stories which produce fear. Moreover, I am certain the reader can insert the name of their local ‘shock jock’ over the names I have supplied – they are almost generic.
tactic is applied. The increase in crime is real, this is ‘common sense’, it cannot be explained away due to factors such as increased reportage. Thus, the public’s ‘common sense’ understandings about increases in crime are confirmed and the newspaper for the ‘common man’ feeds its target demographic the ‘bad’ news it already knows to be a ‘true’ reflection of the ever deteriorating social climate.

Another argument that some researchers (cf. Pearson 1983, Hogg and Brown 1998) have made is that historically, crime has almost repeatedly been (re)presented in the media as being ‘worse than ever’. In other words, crime reportage often takes up the discourse that suggests that the crime situation is deteriorating. Moreover, such reportage suggests that the peaceable days of the past have been replaced by violence and disorder. Hogg and Brown refer to this discourse as ‘law and order nostalgia’:

The depiction of crime as a problem of novel proportions is heightened in the press by juxtaposing the menacing present with nostalgic references to an apparently harmonious and peaceful past... Such nostalgia is largely misplaced and misleading. ...[S]imilar things have been said in ... 1844 as in the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s (1998:27).

Thus, each successive generation seems able to have its own ‘crime wave’ or ‘moral panic’, and for each successive era the reportage has remained surprisingly similar (see Hogg and Brown 1998, Pearson 1983). Each era understands itself as being quite different from the past, as being a period that is much more violent and much more dangerous than the preceding one. Further, Hogg & Brown (1998) point to the discursive mechanisms whereby local crime stories are explicitly associated with crime in other ‘more violent’ or unruly cities or ‘crime hot spots’, New York and Los Angeles being the often-quoted examples. The Daily Telegraph recently used the example of Beirut being analogous to problems in Sydney and Bondi (the Daily Telegraph, 9/06/96). I will expand on these spatial associations in the second of my examples that follow.

It has also been suggested (Madriz 1997:113) that the media reconstruct reality in ways that present us with understandings about crime that privilege the predatory stranger; they construct what she refers to as ‘media icons’. The sources of these icons are not just exclusively the evening news and the print news media. Rather the images presented by these news sources connect discursively with TV drama and film images to become a constant presence in the
average home. Madriz (1997:98) further suggests that discourses on dangerous strangers (or outlaws) are often racialised and that 'fear of crime' collapses together with a racial fear discourse. In the analysis that follows I will discuss an example of media reportage of a predatory stranger and the will to identify this strangeness. In this example, however, the stranger is not racialised but sexualised — a violent sex offender and homosexual.

Firstly however, I want to explore the way in which the media is increasingly becoming a monitor of crime fears. By this I mean that the media is increasingly taking a quasi social-scientific role in measuring 'fear of crime' by way of fear surveys, phone-ins, and the like. This is not surprising when we consider that these same crime fears are what helps sell papers or attract viewers to nightly news bulletins.

**Fear Surveys**

Apart from just sensationalising (cf. Cohen 1972, Hall et al 1978) crime stories, and thus possibly increasing public concern and fear about crime, some elements of the media have in recent years, like the disciplines, taken a much greater interest in the 'fear of crime' as a concept — something to measure and report on in and of itself. Pratt (1997:150) argues that this new interest coincides with a shift in the way individuals conceptualise their own bodies and indeed their liberty. Thus, our fears and risks are reported back to us, the print media and television news and current affairs shows us ourselves in numbers, and there is nothing more compelling to the viewer/reader than that which presents us our self interests. Baudrillard (1988:212) has argued that people have become public: that we now enjoy the luxury of witnessing the fluctuations of our own opinions in the daily reading of various opinion polls. We witness these not as truth, according to Baudrillard (1988 212), but as 'a game of truth effects in the circularity of questions and answers'. A feedback loop? Thus, segments of the media now embark on their own elementary forms of 'fear of crime' surveys. Indeed governmental statistics on fear, the only information available less than two decades ago, have been joined by many new types of statistical surveys and studies that borrow from their general format. Indeed, as these new 'regimes of truth' about 'fear of crime' have proliferated so has the contestation of governmental statistics. Pratt (1997:152) argues — in a broader context - that official crime statistics have become:

One amongst a number of statistical sources of information on crime that have been made available to us. These include university-organised crime surveys,
independent victim surveys, self-report studies, surveys conducted by the phone, those organised by sections of the media and so on. All of these indicators claim to represent the reality of crime – albeit a different version of this reality: a reality which by and large portrays the risk of crime – particularly sexual and violent crime – as being significantly greater than when computed from official crime statistics.

In this section I will focus on an example of the final type of survey Pratt refers to; that of the survey organised by, or at least through, the media. The following is a particularly crude example of such a survey. Nevertheless, its prominence as a front page story in a local Sydney suburban weekly publication illustrates well how such surveys and their reportage can fuel the fear production feedback loop.

*The Hills News*

‘CRIME FEAR IMMENSE’ announces the headline on the front page of the ‘*Hills News*’ a small weekly paper distributed in the Castle Hill area of Sydney. The front pages of these small and localised publications almost inevitably carry crime stories. However, this story is not about any particular crime, it is about ‘fear of crime’. This story begins:

> A survey of 300 local people aged between 13 and 23 has revealed widespread fear of violent crime in Baulkham Hills Shire. The survey conducted by the newly formed Hills Community Safety Council to help strategies to combat crime in the district (*Hills News*, Gainsford, 26/05/98)

The Hills Community Safety Council’s credentials are established early in the piece by way of its ‘youth representative’, Melissa Stevens, being also the ‘shire’s Australia Day young citizen of the year’ (*Hills News*, Gainsford, 26/5/98). The article goes on to outline the findings of this ‘survey’ but precedes these by emphasising that ‘of the 300 interviewed, 27 had friends who had been stabbed in the Hills district in the past three months’ (*Hills News*, 26th May 1998). Putting to one side the glaring methodological flaws in survey design* we will take a closer look at the results of the survey. They were represented in the *Hills News* as follows:

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* There is no indication of exactly what was asked in the survey nor how the survey was structured. Additionally, there is no indication as to how the survey was operationalised, how the sample group was chosen, what methodologies were used, how the survey was delivered, whether it was written or oral, how the results were correlated. Of course it is possible that this survey methodology was rigorous. However, it seems unlikely, that ‘Ms Stevens [who] visited local youth groups, community organisations and local shopping centres to compile the survey over a weekend’ (*Hills News*, 26th May 1998).
81 per cent of adolescents under 18 years of age said they were scared of getting stabbed by the increasing number of gangs in the Hills district.

78 per cent said their major fear was that gangs from Parramatta, Blacktown, and Penrith districts were coming in to Castle Hill because it was a richer area.

72 per cent said transport in the Hill district had failed them and they were scared to go out at night because they could not get transport home and were stranded at bus stops late at night.

[...] “These results showed that there is immense fear over the increasing amount of violent crime and that adolescents live from day to day with the constant threat of being attacked” Ms Stevens said (Hills News, Gainsford, 1998).

It is not clear of course just how these summations were translated from the survey results to the ‘news’ article, however, what is clear is that it is unlikely that any credible survey design could have produced the results as they are shown. The first ‘finding’ suggests unproblematically that there are an ‘increasing number of gangs’ in the Hills district. If the suggestion that the ‘number of gangs in the Hills district had increased’ was included in the survey design there is no doubt that the findings would be flawed. Further, respondents replied that they were ‘scared of getting stabbed’ as a result of these gangs. The question must be asked who would not be ‘scared of getting stabbed’. If, as seems to be suggested in the article, the survey was conducted verbally, how could these questions be verbally posed without leading the respondents?

In the second finding above we see the adoption of the powerful motif of crime being committed by strangers from elsewhere. This result also touches a nerve in terms of class, and on issues of borders, purity and locality. The unruly others moving in to threaten the propertied and law abiding citizens of the Hills metropolis. Dummm (1993:185) suggests that the freedom and mobility of dangerous others has historically been of concern to the propertied and political authorities (cf. Bauman 1993, Sibley 1995). It is worth noting that the Hills district represents or imagines itself as the up-market or ritzy area of Sydney’s western suburbs, thus, concerns about property might be high on the priorities of the Hills News readership.

26th May 1998) would be capable of such rigour without help from a number of researchers. Indeed, this must be some kind of record for compiling such statistical data.
The third point in the list of ‘findings’ regarding public transport also raises methodological issues - although it must be added that the public transport system in Western Sydney is indeed abysmal. For example, it is easy to see how respondents might reply that public transport had failed them and may leave them stranded; however, it is difficult to know how a question might be structured that then connects this to being ‘scared to go out’.

Not surprisingly the article ends with calls for a crackdown on crime, tougher laws, and more police powers. We are left with the unproblematic inferences that violent crime is rising in the area, more gangs are forming, young people are afraid to go out of their houses, dangerous others are invading the area, fear is rising, criminals are not punished, and the list goes on. One likely productive effect of such reporting, and such surveys, might be that it will make residents more concerned about crime in their area and, as a result, less likely to go out. With fewer people on the streets or catching public transport both will be less safe and services may be further cut. What is most worrying about such stories is just how such a profound lack of journalistic, scientific, or academic rigour, or for that matter credibility, can gain such widespread and unquestioned coverage. Not once in this article are any forms of credible statistics cited which may confirm some of the Hill Community Safety Council’s claims about rises in local violent crime or increases in the number of gangs in the area. The salience of such surveys is to be found elsewhere.

These forms of survey and/or their accompanying narratives make their way into local publications like the Hills News on a regular basis. In a rough count I recently made of two local papers in my own area, the Glebe and the Village Voice, crime stories were front-page news in every second edition. Almost all these stories followed the pessimistic ‘crime out of control’ narrative. This seems quite astounding given the relatively low crime rates in their areas of publication. It would seem unlikely that such reportage has no influence on concerns about crime in local areas. Indeed, stories concerning the reader’s local environment, as has been suggested in chapter 1, are more likely to be internalised by the reader/viewer. Thus, all such reportage has the potential to contribute to the fear feedback loop.

However, of more interest is the discursive narrative through which this ‘survey’ operates. Its truth-value is not constituted in and of itself. The survey format, as I have suggested, gains legitimation through being a tool of social science; because it is a survey it must be true and accurate. Moreover, it speaks to ‘real people’. The surveyed are the readership and other locals. The readership see themselves in the numbers and the numbers inform them on how to conduct
themselves. Readers of newspapers, it has been suggested, are interested in what editors call ‘local, local news’\(^6\). They want to know about the local business community, their child’s school, their neighbourhoods. So the local fear survey has particular salience. It is personal. That is not to say it necessarily increases fear in every individual. Although it does sensitize the reader to the notion of ‘fear of crime’ as a concept – an emotion one might feel. Maybe as Baudrillard (1988) suggests the readership treat such surveys ironically, and certainly as Walklate (1998) suggested any fear is mediated through experience. Further, as Sparks (1992) suggested some readers may even revel in the increasingly risky nature of their local environment. However, we can conclude that at very least, such surveys must result in an intensification of discourse around ‘fear of crime’, and, consequently, an intensification of the fear of crime feedback loop.

A final point about such publications. Generally research and literature analysing crime and the media overlook any analysis of small local publications of the type I have discussed. Rather, larger city-wide or countrywide publications are discussed almost exclusively. While these analyses of the ‘major’ papers are no doubt valuable, local concerns reported in local publications have obvious implications for how residents conceptualise safety and conduct their everyday activities in terms of concerns about crime in their local environments.

**Example two: Fear, the Media and Locality: ‘Death in Bondi’**.

Locality and place are, as I have suggested, of great importance in terms of both the impact and substance of crime reportage. An alleged homicide in Newtown\(^7\) will not necessarily be reported in the same way as similar crime would be reported in Bondi. This next example of media reportage discusses the symbolic nature of particular violent crimes. In this instance a number of discourses intersected in ways that encouraged vigorous media reportage. A number of issues pertaining to location (place), the unknown (possibly predatory) assailants, the (perceived) complete (legal) innocence of the victim and his status as a tourist, the strange circumstances of the crime, international media and governmental attention, and a prolonged hunt of the assailants made this crime particularly attractive to media institutions, especially the newspapers. Why newspapers? Because the nature of newspaper reporting today – particularly ‘broadsheet’ newspapers – is to explore some of the broader linkages to the crime and circumstance\(^8\). Such reporting often sees the same newspaper drifting between discourses and ‘angles’ especially when the socio-cultural ‘meaning’ of the crime is somewhat ambiguous.

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\(^7\)A multi-cultural suburb in inner western Sydney.
\(^8\) cf. interview with Judy Pace-Christie (editor of Florida Today Newspaper) ABC Media Report, June 24 1999.
Bondi was always Sydney’s innocent playground - plenty of sun and surf with just a dash of seediness. Last weekend the famous beach irrevocably lost its innocence with the brutal murder of one of the thousands of tourists who flock to visit it (Sydney Morning Herald, 10 September 1996).

Thus read a header of a story in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 10th of May 1996, three days after the alleged murder of Brian Hagland, a 28 year old British tourist.

In Australia in 1997 there were 360 recorded incidents of homicide (AIC 1998:10). Some of these crimes became (were made?) media and/or political events – others passed relatively unnoticed by the majority of the population. A number of incidents were given long running and/or intense media coverage. Few, however, were given the same analysis, or made the same symbolic impact on the psyche of a city or State as did the killing of Brian Hagland in 1996. In a sense, the media coverage given to this killing was unusual. Hagland was a young man, not the demographic normally associated with innocence which usually attracts more media and public attention (cf Carrington 1998, Madriz 1997). Somehow, however, this murder was seen as pivotal to the way Sydney as a city understood itself. No matter what atrocities had occurred in other suburbs, in other cities, in other states, in the minds of the Sydney press, and maybe to a similar degree in Sydney-siders’ own understandings of their city, Bondi had remained the last bastion of fun, safety and innocence. Bondi was not supposed to be a dangerous suburb in which one should fear crime.

From the beginning of the news reporting of the killing the print media was full of metaphor and symbolism. The first reportage of the alleged murder appeared on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald on Monday September 9th 1996. The headline read: ‘Bondi murder: hunt for two “robots”’ (Gripper, Sydney Morning Herald, 9/9/96). The robot metaphor was initially used by Brian Hagland’s fiancée Connie Casey by way of describing the glazed look that the two alleged assailants purportedly had as they walked towards her and Mr Hagland. With no suspects to speak of at the early stages of the police investigation, the ‘robot’ metaphor developed its own momentum as a way of describing these dangerous, unknown strangers – they were un-human. “We didn’t know these people”, Ms Casey said, “they just picked him up off the street and killed...

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2 I use the 1997 figure primarily because of the volatility of the 1996 figure that takes into account the massacre at Port Arthur.
him. I just don’t understand why someone would want to do that. He didn’t stand a chance. Those men were like robots”’ (Gripper, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 09/09/96). On the following page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* a second story on the alleged murder was headlined “‘Save our streets from this evil’” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 09/09/96), the inverted commas emphasising the collective outrage which was highlighted in the article that followed. The article began: ‘The brutal murder of British tourist, Brian Hagland, in front of his girlfriend, Connie Casey, has sparked calls for upgraded police protection for the area amid fears by locals that it will tarnish Australia’s safe image’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 09/09/96) (emphasis added). So from the outset fears – of the unknown, unhuman - for the safety of residents are mixed, and indeed interchangeable, with fears of damage to the city’s representability and reputation. The incident had an assemblage of elements that engineered the magnitude of its reportage.

In the *Daily Telegraph* the metaphor was a little different. The headline here was ‘Paradise turns to Beirut at night’ (the *Daily Telegraph*, 09/06/96). Thus, the war metaphor is used to illustrate the dangerous underside of the ‘tourist icon’. I have commented upon the media’s technique of displacing a location for another more dangerous one above. Further, here the writer draws on the discourse of war. This is certainly not an unusual technique either; the discourse of war is an omnipresent one in crime reportage; the ‘war on drugs’, ‘war against organised crime’ are just two examples.

By September 10th politicians began to weigh into the issues surrounding the death. The tone of these interventions could hardly have been better scripted:

The state opposition yesterday claimed the government had been aware of the lack of police resources at Bondi for the past 18 months and had done nothing. The opposition’s police spokesman, Mr John Hannaford, claimed the number of police on the streets had been cut by 14%. …Mr Whelan [the minister for police] said yesterday that it was a terrible event and that it was “cheap” for the opposition to try to make political mileage out of it. Sydney regrettably has a fair degree of violence and it is a large international city and violence takes place at various locations (*Bearup & Harvey, Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/09/96).

Thus, the familiar narrative of more police is taken up and the media discourse draws from the political discourse and vice versa. With the lack of an offender or offenders in the days immediately following the killing Bondi, as a community, seemed to have to explain to greater
Sydney just why this crime had taken place. What was it about this iconic location that had made it a dangerous location. Thus, a *Sydney Morning Herald* special report under the headline ‘Death in Bondi’ began as follows:

Barbara Armitage hasn’t seen any international news reports about the brutal killing of British tourist Brian Hagland, but the Mayor of Waverley knows that in the short term mud will stick to her beautiful Bondi. Listen to talk back radio, talk to people on the streets, and you’ll find the random murder of the tourist early last Saturday morning has touched a deep chord of dismay. Bondi was always a place of sun and sea, touched by seediness, for generations a summer *lifetime* of Sydneysiders. Now it appears *sullied*. Dangerous. The demands of a city grown to three and a half million people have *overwhelmed* Bondi. Its success has been its *downfall* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/09/96)[emphasis added].

So ultimate responsibility, or at least the ultimate response, to the murder is sought from the leader of Bondi’s civil society, the mayor of Waverley. Bondi must explain the suburb’s *downfall* to a panicked (dismayed) Sydney whose very proportions have *overwhelmed* its own connection to this *lifetime*. This murder as an event is held out to signify the extent to which Sydney has lost control of itself and its citizens. Thus, Sydney is fouling or *sullying* its own nest and being punished for its poor self-control. The fear and anxiety that this killing has engendered is both internalised - Bondi is part of Sydney, its *lifetime* – and simultaneously externalised - it is Bondi that is *dangerous*, Bondi that is *sullied*, not Sydney in its entirety. Bondi is both self—collectively ‘our’ — and Other. Therefore, the location of Bondi, both geographically and symbolically, is a vital factor in understanding how this crime is reported and experienced by Sydneysiders.

**The Terrifying Other**

Kristeva uses the notion of *abjection*\(^\text{73}\) to illustrate how shifting borders are produced and maintained by subjects; in this instance we might conceptualise the subject as Sydney’s social body. When ‘the obedient, law-abiding, social body, emerges, the cost of its emergence, which [Kristeva] describes as *abjection*’ (Grosz 1994:192), ...is that of the body which falls away, but which is irreducible to the subject/object and inside/outside oppositions. Thus the abject is the perpetually present threat to internalised understandings of self and social identity and yet also an

\(^{73}\) Here she draws on the work of Mary Douglas (1980).
integral part of the production of such identities. The ego is threatened by the non-ego, purity by its excrements, society by its outside. Thus, *Sullied* Bondi perpetually shifts in its representation in this reportage, it is both ‘Other’ and self, externalised but simultaneously internalised.

Interestingly, Bondi has a far less metaphorical attachment to greater Sydney than just as a *lifeline* to the sea and sun. Sydney does literally *sully* Bondi, Bondi is the site of a huge ocean outfall system that caters for much of Sydney’s sewage needs/waste. In recent times this outfall itself has created major controversy as Bondi Beach has, on numerous occasions, had to be closed as levels of effluent in the water reached dangerous proportions. The construction of a huge new ocean out-fall pipe which pumps the sewage kilometers out to sea may have rectified this problem in the short term but the growing city will, unless new controls are put in place, continue to *sully* Bondi with its refuse.

Thus, the anonymous killer or killers are metaphorically Sydney’s ultimate terrifying Other; its ultimate abject. Not only a danger to the city’s social body, but a danger to that body’s representation to itself and others. The victim was of course a ‘tourist’, indeed a British tourist. Thus, the shared fear is also about ‘international news reports’ and how ‘the mud will stick’.

Further, in Britain there is the risk that Australia will be represented once again as the unruly colony—a fearful place of criminals. Brian Hagland was also represented in these reports in terms of his profession, a postman, the passive public servant. The distinction between Mr Hagland and his two alleged ‘robotic’ assailants could hardly have been more striking. Sydney’s Other had literally killed the messenger.

The authors of the above article then go on to quote from a British press report on the murder authored by the *Press Association*:

>A visit to Bondi Beach has become a pilgrimage for many British tourists who dream of the Australian sun and surf. [...] But the death of Brian Hagland is one of several violent episodes that have marred the idyllic setting in recent years. Hagland, a 28-year-old postman from London, was beaten to death by two thugs apparently for holding hands with his fiancee [sic] Connie Casey (cited in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/09/96).

Once the writers have established that Bondi’s reputation has been sullied internationally they go on to an interview with those intimately connected to Bondi’s representation, a spokeswoman
from ‘BGM’ a promotions company which promotes Australia internationally. ‘Bondi Beach has become an Icon of Australia. [...] It is appalling that this murder has happened here’ (cited in the Sydney Morning Herald, 10/09/96). Thus, this alleged murder has, for both Bondi and greater Sydney, created a crisis in representation which has resulted in the discourse that if something is not done to control Sydney, not only will its own residents and icons be forever tarnished, but tourists and innocent visitors will also be at risk. Bondi is the culprit. Sydney is the accomplice. The cause being that Sydney fouling itself via Bondi.

Of course there were processes by which Sydney could remove itself from at least some of the responsibility for the death but this abdication would be a long process. Below the Death in Bondi article in the pages of the Sydney Morning Herald lay a companion piece, Inside the mind of an Attacker (Ali Gripper, Sydney Morning Herald, 10/09/96). With this article begins the search for reason in the individual mind, thus begins the processes of abdication. If the Death in Bondi article was vaguely sociological (drawing on disciplinary discourse), this article was its psychological equivalent. The search for reason began with the usual experts in their respective fields: Professor Paul Wilson a criminologist, Dr David Kavanagh a Psychologist, Professor Bob Montgomery a psychologist, Professor Don Thompson a forensic psychologist, and Professor Arie Freiburg a criminologist are all interviewed for the story in an attempt to make sense of the attack. The article begins: ‘Alcohol, drugs, alienation from society – or a combination of all three – can be driving the fist of a random attacker’ (Gripper, Sydney Morning Herald, 10/09/96)[my emphasis]. Thus, although Bondi as a community is metaphorically charged with the crime, the processes of individuation soon begin. These will eventually see it acquitted. Individual responsibility will enable Bondi to become a community of victims (cf Young 1996). Responsible fearing subjects will eventually identify the guilty dangerous individual in their midst.

**From Machine to Man: ‘A Man Steps Forward’**

On Wednesday September 11, the media were at last forced to begin to humanise the crime. The front page Sydney Morning Herald headline read ‘As Bondi grieves, a man steps forward’ (Beanup & Harvey, Sydney Morning Herald, 11/09/96). Thus a photograph of a pixilated man accompanied by his solicitor, the ‘high profile’ Ms Leigh Johnson, appeared on the front page. The pixilated image gave the man a ‘robotic’ like presence in the frame. The Daily Telegraph didn’t bother to pixilate the image. It’s front page was constituted by the headline ‘Bondi’s fatal Fight: “HE WAS HIT BY A BUS”’ and the photo a third the size of the page. The photo was
captioned 'The man who went to Bondi police station yesterday' (the Daily Telegraph: 11/09/96). The photograph, however, depicts a guilty man, his red, bloodshot eyes turned towards the camera in an image taken through a window and greatly enlarged. The image was of a ghostly figure, identifiable but elusive.

By this time the political implications of the death were also becoming more obvious. Page two of the Daily Telegraph announced ‘11 new officers in Bondi’ (11/09/96). The newly appointed NSW police commissioner, Peter Ryan, was quoted as saying:

"Bondi is not just a Sydney suburb, it is a national icon and international symbol of Australia...[ ] I am acting today to ensure community concerns about safety for visitors and residents in (sic) Bondi area". The British born commissioner said images of Mr Hagland's death sent a disturbing picture to people overseas of street violence in Sydney. "Bondi is for young and old, families and visitors and we share the (sic) the responsibility for ending the perception about the safety of Bondi" Mr Ryan said. Commissioner Ryan's announcements follow a political storm over police numbers at Bondi. [emphasis added]

Thus, the fear feedback loop is intensified. Politicians weigh into the discussion and more police are deployed in the Bondi area so that 'perceptions about the [un] safety of Bondi' can be rectified. Again, the symbolic aspects of the killing are echoed, this time by the police commissioner. Mr Ryan's words are particularly resonant given his background as a British subject, a 'bobby' as the Australian press had reported him. The symbolic embarrassment to NSW of having a British subject police the unruly locals - of the convict settlement - with the aim of keeping tourists - often British subjects - safe reaches the heart of the Australian psyche.

The discourse of lost innocence continued in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 12/09/96. However, this report also acknowledged that beneath the iconic, carefree, innocence has always resided a problematic ugliness which has not been addressed:

Throughout the world Bondi is a symbol of the carefree lifestyle of Australia. But the junction where Brian Hagland was murdered in the early hours of Saturday was always an ugly place – three streets coming together in acres of bitumen and concrete. [...] The grass on the verge is dying for a drink. On Friday and Saturday nights, it is noisy – “people are always yahoo-ing” a resident said – and
local residents are kept awake by the din of squealing tires and wailing emergency services (Bearup & McGeough, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12/09/96).

Suddenly, in the space of two sentences Bondi is transformed from the image of a ‘carefree lifestyle’ to a scene which would be at home in the ABC drama series *Wildside* (or *the Cops*) and Sydney is made aware that under Bondi’s welcoming exterior resides an ‘ugly’ side.

The lost innocence metaphor was not discarded quickly however. On the 14/09/99 the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran another story which took this tack, albeit in a slightly different manner. This article was contributed by the author Robert Drewe, it was titled *How Bondi lost its innocence* (Drewe, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14/09/99). The sub heading/introduction begins, ‘It is one of the quintessential images that says “Australia”. But author Robert Drewe... despairs that it is becoming an international symbol for calculated violence’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14/09/96). Drewe then goes on to suggest that ‘...never until the “gentrification” of Bondi began some ten years ago, did it seem dangerous at any time of the day or night’ (*Drewe, Sydney Morning Herald*, 14/09/96). Drewe makes this strong association between community and social and architectural change and perceptions about crime. Thus, there is a strong (law and order) nostalgia for ‘safer’ times mixed with a broader concern with aesthetic changes in the area. Here a number of discourses intersect and influence how crime fear is experienced and expressed.

**Spotlight on a ‘Community of Victims’**

The killing of Brian Hagland proved influential in highlighting a number of issues in Bondi that would not normally have been of particular interest to the media and the public of Sydney more generally. In fact on Monday September 16, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, consigned three quarters of page 6 to issues involving Bondi. The headline reading ‘Beachside facelift sparks fears of a squeeze on renters and increased traffic on the new look Campbell Parade’ [my emphasis] (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16/09/96). Thus, the fear of dangerous others in the area spilled over into broader concerns and fears about increased traffic, gentrification, increasingly high rents, and an influx of tourists. So the reporting of the Hagland killing, in a sense, allows us to see in print how discourses concerning crime and the ‘fear of crime’ intersect with broader concerns and fears within the community - how these various fear discourses are not disconnected from each other, and indeed how they are not readily disconnectable. From the outset the perceptions of fear surrounding the killing in Bondi, and how the incident was reported, were
broadly connected with these other concerns. Thus, Bondi was a ‘community of victims’ (to borrow from Alison Young 1996) with a multiplicity of concerns waiting for an event through which they could find voice. The Brian Hagland killing was such an event.

_The ‘Robot’ Has a Name._

On the 16th of September 1996 Aaron Martin was charged with the murder of Mr Hagland. By this time there had been a noticeable shift in the way the death was reported. The front-page story in the _Sydney Morning Herald_ (17 September 1996) was headed ‘Mother’s tears for Bondi accused’ and was followed by a large photograph of Mr Martin embracing his mother. The caption under the photograph read “‘My boy, my boy, they are going to charge my boy with murder’. Jan Martin hugs her son, Aaron, yesterday’. From this point on Bondi took a back seat in the reportage of the case.

In mid 1999 the case made it to court. The _Sydney Morning Herald_ reporting had now lost all its sensationalist Bondi underpinnings. Rather, the headline stated ‘Drunk shoved tourist under bus, court told’ (_Sydney Morning Herald_, 10/6/99). The reportage had now taken the ‘objective observer’ position, indeed it seemed that the _Sydney Morning Herald_ did not actually have a journalist covering the court proceedings as the story was sourced through AAP. The innocence or otherwise of Bondi was no longer of concern to the paper, rather the story begins:

> A drunk, aggressive man murdered a British tourist in a ferocious and unprovoked attack which included shoving him into a moving bus, a jury was told yesterday. In his opening address, crown prosecutor Mr Richard Cogswell, SC, said Aaron Lee Martin had tried to throttle the stranger and kicked him when he fell after colliding with the bus at Bondi Beach (_Sydney Morning Herald_, 10/6/99).

Thus, the crown’s side of the case is outlined. The reporting by now is completely drained of its earlier symbolism, the role of Bondi in the story is now exhausted. About half way through the story the case for the defence is also outlined:

> But Mr Peter Bodor, QC, for Martin, said his client would say the attack was not unprovoked and he never intended to kill or seriously injure Mr Hagland. “It is
for the crown to eliminate that the accused, at any stage, was acting in self
defence,” Mr Bodor said. Martin has pleaded not guilty to murdering 28 year old
Mr Hagland early on September 7, 1996, on a Bondi Street. [...] Sean Leigh
Cushman, 25, has pleaded not guilty to being an accessory after the fact of
maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm (Sydney Morning Herald,
10/06/1999).

One of the reasons that Bondi is no longer the defining site in this new Herald narrative is that all
the parties now have identities. Initially Bondi was both the victim and the perpetrator of this
crime. It was Bondi which had transgressed and thus lost its innocence. Now blame could be
shifted from the suburb to the alleged assailant. Further, Bondi abdicates all collective
responsibility for the crime as the subjects Aaron Lee Martin and Sean Leigh Cushman are thrust
forward into the gaze of the media, and on to them is thrust the responsibility. The dangerous
individuals are no longer strangers – no longer un-human ‘robots’. Thus, ultimately Bondi retains
its ‘innocence’ through a process of individuation which will securely attach the responsibility for
this criminality to Others. If not to Mr Martin, then to the actions of both Hagland and Martin and
their ‘brutal fight’.

A verdict in the case was reached on Friday 17th of July 1999. Aaron Lee Martin, 25 years of age,
was found not guilty on charges of murder and manslaughter. Rather, he was found guilty of the
lesser charge of maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm by strangling and sentenced to five
years gaol with a minimum of two years three months. Sean Cushman 25 was found guilty of
assisting after the fact. The Sydney Morning Herald (17 July 1999) reported ‘Mr Hagland, 28, a
London postman, had been out on a work celebration with his partner of seven years, Connie
Casey, when he was set upon near a Bondi Café’.

The Dangerous Individual and the Media: The Production of Evil

Some events seem custom made for media reportage. When a convicted child-sex killer was
recently released from a Sydney prison after serving 25 years for the offence, the media pursuit of
him was relentless and sensational. The media representations that accompanied his release tell us
a lot about the construction of dangerousness and evil and of the narratives of fear available to the
media. It also tells us much about how media institutions conceptualise their readership in terms
of their fears and concerns. John Lewthwaite was released from Long Bay Gaol in mid 1999. The
following account tracing the media reportage — particularly the reportage of the Daily Telegraph
— of the release will attempt to tease out the particular narratives and discourses employed by
some journalists and illustrate again how media reports operate as part of the fear feedback loop and how such reporting might affect community perceptions about crime, risk and fear.

Three days short of spending 25 years in prison, on the 21st of June 1999, 43 year old John David Lewthwaite was released from Long Bay prison on parole. Lewthwaite had been sentenced to life in prison in 1974 after being convicted of murdering a five year old girl, Nicole Hanns, in the bedroom of her Sydney home. Lewthwaite, who was a stranger to the victim and her family, but who lived only one kilometre away from the murder scene at the time, stabbed his victim 17 times with a kitchen knife he took from the Hanns’ family home. Apparently – from evidence given at Lewthwaite’s trial - Lewthwaite had intended to kidnap and sexually assault the victim’s older brother, then nine years old, becoming obsessed with the boy after seeing him nude through the bathroom window of the Hanns’ family home. Nicole Hanns had apparently interrupted Lewthwaite in his criminal endeavours and was violently murdered for her intervention. Lewthwaite, who was 18 at the time, later turned himself over to police. Lewthwaite had also been on parole after serving time in prison for two counts of arson after ‘setting alight’ to schools at the time of the attack.

As a dangerous individual Lewthwaite had haunted the Australian psyche for some time. Political pressure, and the pressure of victims’ rights groups, had kept him in prison for many years after he had been eligible for parole. Applications for his parole had been turned down on a number of occasions. His eventual release was accompanied by a strict regime of parole requirements.

Lewthwaite’s original ‘life sentence’ had been altered following the introduction of the 1990 truth in sentencing legislation. However, it is important to note that prior to ‘truth in sentencing’ a life sentence was understood to not necessarily mean life behind bars in NSW. The system of review and parole that had underwritten the notion of rehabilitation made this a reality. It is even more important to note that the same judge that delivered Lewthwaite’s original life sentence, Justice Slattery, also fixed his new minimum sentence at 20 years, apparently content that this was an appropriate sentence under the new legislation.

The NSW Christian Democratic Party (CDP), led by Rev Fred Nile MLC, issued a press release just prior to Lewthwaite’s release. It suggested, amongst other things, that:

John Lewthwaite is clearly a homosexual paedophile as he planned to rape/sodomise a young boy and murder his parents. But instead he brutally
murdered the boy’s younger sister stabbing her 17 times. All the evidence suggests that once a paedophile, always a paedophile. The experts recommend that such a person should not be released as they will re-offend (Christian Democratic Party June 16th 1999).

Therefore, Lewthwaite’s credentials as a dangerous individual were reiterated prior to his release. Moreover, his release was opposed by ‘experts’, although the press release never actually tells us who these ‘experts’ are. However, the CDP tell us that Lewthwaite will re-offend; he is a danger to society.

In the days leading up to Lewthwaite’s release the Daily Telegraph embarked on a concerted attempt to appeal to community fears and sensibilities about this dangerous individual. In the 7/6/99 edition a page 9 headline announcing Keep this Killer in his Cage appeared over a story by journalist Rachel Morris. The headline was not contained in inverted commas, establishing therefore, that this was in ‘objective’ news not opinion. This story outlined that NSW Corrective Services Minister, Bob Debus, had written a letter containing the ‘government’s objection’ to Lewthwaite’s release. The story fudged the truth of Lewthwaite’s altered sentence by conveniently omitting the fact that the new sentence was handed down by Justice Slattery. I have already commented on the relevance of this. In this same issue, the Daily Telegraph ran an editorial (the Daily Telegraph, 7/6/99) that was headed The public must be protected. The story begins:

Every so often, a crime so shocks and outrages the community that the offender forfeits the right to “rehabilitation and reintegration” upon which our justice system is based.

So the release of Lewthwaite made the public unsafe, they must be protected, there is much to fear if Lewthwaite is not kept behind bars. The editorial then went on to argue that Lewthwaite had not been released the previous year due to the evidence of ‘Rod Milton, a psychiatrist’. Indeed it explains that on Milton’s evidence Lewthwaite was as dangerous as ever. It is worth noting that Rod Milton, actually a forensic Psychiatrist, has worked as a consultant to the NSW police since 1982. He is notorious for expressing opinions synonymous with those of the NSW police and with conservative elements of the parole board.

The editorial continued:
There is now considerable evidence that some people, particularly those who
commit sexual offences against children, can never be successfully rehabilitated.
Lewthwaite – despite arguments on his behalf that he has ‘changed’, apparently
because he now considers himself a homosexual rather than a paedophile – is
such a person (the Daily Telegraph, 7/6/99) [my emphasis].

So Lewthwaite is dangerous because he is unable to change. Here the Daily Telegraph becomes
psychiatrist; if the parole board will not do its job the Telegraph will do it for them. Finally the
the Daily Telegraph plays its trump card. Its editor(s) views become a synthesis of the views of
Rod Milton; the Telegraph becomes ‘expert’. It is suggested that the evidence they draw on is
that of Milton, although this is never sufficiently elaborated. Rather, the evidence is plainly laid
out in the final sentence for any ‘common sense’ reader to see for themselves. Lewthwaite has not
really ‘changed’ because he still outwardly occupies the position of a dangerous individual, he is
‘a homosexual’. Thus, Lewthwaite’s Otherness, his homosexuality, in the absence of any other
proof becomes his current deviance.

The Daily Telegraph continued its unrelenting attack on the 9/6/99. This time the story was front
page and was headlined For her Sake (the Daily Telegraph, 9/6/99) and began: ‘Anthony Hanns,
34, said he had no doubt Lewthwaite would kill again’. This would be the first of many occasions
where the Daily Telegraph would use the victim’s family to push their cause, and indeed to sell
papers. As a member of the victim’s family, and indeed the intended victim of Lewthwaite’s
crime, Hanns was the ideal spokesman for what Alison Young (1996) might call the imagined
community of victims – or fearing subjects - to which the paper was appealing. With each one of
the stories regarding the Lewthwaite release the Daily Telegraph repeated the horrific nature and
‘facts’ of the crime thus imprinting this heinous act onto the psyche of its readership. The
regularity of the repetition meant that readers would be able to internalise the murderous
narrative; this was a crime that could have happened to anyone and could happen again. The
Daily Telegraph, therefore, conceptualised a particular type of readership. One that would be
eager to hear the story retold, one that would revel in the scandal, one that could position itself as
innocent victim in opposition to this dangerous, evil individual.

On the 11/6/99 the Daily Telegraph again took the (anti) ‘homosexual’ angle. This time the story
was headed; ‘Child Killer cannot live with Lover’. It continued:
Child Killer John Lewthwaite has been forbidden from living with his homosexual lover when he is released from jail (sic) next week.

The story also told how the ‘lover’, Brian Craig, lives in a unit only ‘11.5km’ from the family home of Lewthwaite’s victim Nicole Hanns. This story also employs the victim’s family discourse quoting Gwen Hanns, Nicole’s mother, pleading: ‘I don’t want anyone to know exactly where the grave is because Lewthwaite might come and deface it’ (the Daily Telegraph, 11/6/99).

Again the ‘facts’ of the case are repeated in full – a well-trodden judicial practice. Thus, the story becomes a combination of the previous techniques used by the Daily Telegraph; the community of victims, using the victim’s family, the dangerous habitual homosexual, and the graphic repetition of the event.

Lewthwaite, it was intended, would be released from prison on Monday the 21st of June to live with his parents at Lauretin, on the New South Wales north coast. However, when elements of the media revealed the location of Lewthwaite’s residence, local residents complained vehemently. The result was that the Department of Corrective Services had to procure Lewthwaite a new address. This was found in the inner Sydney suburb of Waterloo.

On the 22/6/99, the day following Lewthwaite’s release the story is front page of the Daily Telegraph once again. The headline reads Booted out: Killer Lewthwaite leaves Long Bay jail (sic) in car boot (the Daily Telegraph, Morris and Gelastopoulos 22/6/99). From here on the media hounding of Lewthwaite reached new levels. Again the media revealed Lewthwaite’s whereabouts. Indeed, from this point onwards the Daily Telegraph began making the news as well as reporting it. Some residents in Waterloo then went about taking ‘justice’ into their own hands with acts that could be described as ranging from verbal abuse to vigilantism. The evening news showed a rowdy mob holding vigil in front of Lewthwaite’s house. They had pelted the house with eggs, they had graffitied his front door, they have verbally abused him, and one woman even stuck a hose in through the mail slot and sprayed this inside of the house.

The following day the Daily Telegraph again furnished their front page with a Lewthwaite story. The headline was Hate Mail: Lewthwaite under siege from his new neighbours. The accompanying photo was one of a neighbour sticking a garden hose through the mail slot housed in the front door of Lewthwaite’s residence. It continued: ‘Child killer John Lewthwaite was under siege last night after neighbours threw rocks and sprayed water through his letter box’ (the Daily Telegraph, Morris and Trute, 23/6/99). Page two of the reportage featured an aerial
photograph of the area in which Lewthwaite was residing with arrows pointing to a school, a hotel, and the residence, to highlight their close proximity. A feature of the story was the details of the vigilante tactics being used by some local residents. In addition to this a small story appeared on the same page detailing how an English child-sex killer who, released at the age of 72, was literally forced back into a quasi prison through the vigilante-like actions of local citizens in a number of British towns. All in all the reportage read like a ‘how to’ guide for would be vigilantes.

The vigilante actions of local residents, urged on by the media contingent camped outside the Waterloo house, began to take their toll. The tenor of some of the media reporting can be summed up by articles such as this editorial headed ‘Jail (sic) best place for this killer’, in the Daily Telegraph (24/06/99):

They [prisoners’ rights advocates] will argue in whining voices that his guilt is now expunged and that he should be accorded the same rights and freedoms as other men and women. What rights did he accord his victim... [] There is one place he would be safe – back at Long Bay among his own kind.

Eventually Lewthwaite was again forced to move, this time to an undisclosed location that remained so. In the same edition of the Daily Telegraph three full pages, including the front page, were dedicated to ‘news’ on Lewthwaite, his crime, and his whereabouts. The front-page read ‘WHERE NOW; Lewthwaite quits Waterloo for a suburb near you’ (the Daily Telegraph, Trute, Morris, 24/06/99). Thus, for the Daily Telegraph readership, nowhere in the state was safe; Lewthwaite could be your new next door neighbour, he could live near your child’s school. This dangerous individual was left to wander through the imaginations of the Daily Telegraph’s fearing/reading subjects.

Eventually the fear feedback loop came full circle. By the 25 of June 1999 the reportage had hit the mark with politicians once again joining the fray. The page two headline read: Introducing the law we already have (the Daily Telegraph, Morris, 25/6/99). The story outlined how the police minister, Mr Peter Wheelan, intended on drafting new legislation so that ‘pre-schools, schools, and other community groups could be informed if a serious sex offender moves into their suburb’ (the Daily Telegraph, Morris, 25/6/99). The police commissioner, Peter Ryan, had informed the minister that such a law in essence already existed. All this followed similar but even stronger rhetoric from Mrs Kerry Chikarovski, the NSW Liberal/National coalition opposition leader.
Familiar Narratives

The media narratives surrounding John Lewthwaite’s release were not extraordinary. As I suggested in the previous chapter the production of fearing subjects is reliant on the simultaneous production of feared subjects. In positioning — or imagining - their readership the Daily Telegraph must also position their Other, a position Lewthwaite was custom made for. Lewthwaite was the ultimate textual outlaw (A. Young 1996:1).

There is little doubt that the Daily Telegraph played an active role in creating the news in this instance. Moreover, their ethical and moral stance was highly questionable. However, the narratives through which this saga was played out are familiar ones and are not wholly reliant on the actions of a publication like the Daily Telegraph. In chapter seven I will illustrate how similar narratives are played out on much more localised levels in quite different settings.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to draw together a number of issues around the media and its role in the fear of crime feedback loop. In drawing attention to these practices, discourses and narratives that circulate within media institutions and their reporting I have also tried to reiterate that these do not operate in a vacuum. That the media is one institution amongst many that inform, function and are informed by such narratives.

However, I have also illustrated that in depicting crime stories in particular ways media institutions simultaneously presume a particular type of readership. Certainly this presumption is not universal; rather, each institution presumes their own type of reader. The narratives that operate in certain crime stories do so with reference to the position of particular readerships. In the example of the Brian Hagland killing the Sydney Morning Herald, a daily broadsheet, attempted to flesh out the background to the crime. Broader understandings about the crime and its impact were sought in a multiplicity of sites and in the concerns of local readers. With the release of John Lewthwaite the Daily Telegraph presumed an outraged readership which would polarise in support of its ‘tough’ stance. The paper’s actions would inform and keeps its readership safe — up to a point anyway.

If these later two examples offer only glimpses of how the fear of crime feedback loop might intensify through media intervention, the ‘fear of crime’ survey example offers something much
more concrete. Here the intensification of discourses and practices around the ‘fear of crime’, becomes clear. The *Hills News* survey shows us how governmental, disciplinary, media, and popular discourses around the object ‘fear of crime’ can perhaps influence the way we as citizens understand and conduct ourselves. The final chapter will explore this conduct and these understandings in even more detail.
Chapter 6:

Criminology and the Gendered ‘Fear of Crime’

If humans are born human, as cats are born cats (within a few hours), it would not be... possible to educate them. That children have to be educated is a circumstance which only proceeds from the fact that they are not completely led by nature, not programmed. The institutions which constitute culture supplement this native lack (Lyotard 1991:3).

In recent criminological research into the ‘fear of crime’ gender has become a potent signifier of difference in fear levels, or to use the language of many studies, an important ‘independent variable’. Studies have consistently found that women are much more fearful of being victims of crime than men and yet are less likely to become the victims of most violent crime. I have discussed this risk/fear paradox in earlier chapters and will expand further on it here. This statistical, and ethnographic, anomaly has plagued scholars who have developed a diverse and often contradictory array of explanations for the phenomenon. Criminology’s obsession with the ‘fear of crime’ has, since the early seventies, fixed its gaze on the bodies of women – those it considers more fearful. Criminologists have taken as their object, from the outset, gendered bodies, or more to the point women’s bodies, and attempted to carry out a mapping; cartographies, of these fearing personages. The questionnaire, the victim survey, these are the tools which provide this mapping. They also give the criminologist access to minds, gendered minds – although as we shall see feminine minds can never really be trusted from the (male) researcher’s perspective. This chapter explores the relationship between criminology’s will to objectify the ‘fear of crime’ and how this will depends on a specific form of relationship with gender, and with difference more generally.

In the previous chapters I have traced the emergence of ‘fear of crime’ as a disciplinary subject and explained how its very ‘bringing into discourse’ has made possible its operation as a technology of governance. I have shown that ‘fear of crime’ research has a socio-cultural history intimately connected with the utility of governance. Tracing the ‘fear of crime’ in this manner has proved useful. However, like all conceptual tools, those of ‘governmentality’ have their limitations. The ‘governmentality literature’, and theoretical approaches associated with this literature, can verge at times on constructing a deterministic set of governmental parameters.

I should also add, that for the purpose of this chapter victimology is to be conceptualised as part of the criminology I refer to.
through which power/knowledge operates. These can set up a structure of governance, 'the iron cage' as some critics have suggested (cf. Garland 1990), which can obscure the more subtle operations, exchanges, resistances, and negotiations in meaning that take place at the level of representation and signification. Thus, while the tools of governmentality can effectively explicate and trace the machinations of 'fear of crime' through practice and process, it cannot directly explore why 'fear of crime' - as opposed to 'risk of crime', 'anxiety of crime', 'anger about crime', 'danger of crime' or any number of other explanatory titles - dominates the literature. I think this question - as obscure as it might seem at first glance - is in need of some exploration. Criminologists have almost routinely criticised 'fear of crime' as label for the subject of a specific set of inquiries into an emotional response to the threat of crime, yet the title has dogmatically persisted despite this criticism.

This chapter, therefore, does consist of a switch in theoretical approach. Conversely, however, I do not want to suggest that 'fear of crime' as a sign harbours some deeper meaning in a semiological or structuralist sense; that my inquiries will somehow hermeneutically uncover how 'fear of crime' is structured through language or the like. Rather, I begin with the notion that meaning is inscribed through praxis and these practices are likewise delineated through the meaning inscribed in the sign - the sign being 'fear of crime' as a title for an object of research. Thus, I will suggest that 'fear of crime' is pure sign, but a sign that is inscribed and animated through the exchanges with other productive signs that a certain praxis establishes and maintains. Moreover, these metonymic relationships, these chains of meaning, are mutually productive; the 'fear of crime' as sign inscribes those other signs with which it exchanges and imbues these with new meaning too.

This chapter then aims to discuss two particularities of 'fear of crime' research simultaneously. To explore how and why the term 'fear of crime' has prevailed in research and literature, and to explore how the relationships between gender, 'fear of crime' and difference have driven 'fear of crime' research.

Unaskable Questions

On a general level I want to suggest that the 'fear of crime' literature and research has been limited by criminology's epistemological foundations as a discipline intimately entangled with, and emergent from, the project of modernity. These modernist foundations have meant that the

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form of knowledge produced, organised and indeed sought in regard to the topic of ‘fear of crime’ has involved a relentless search for causation; the overriding question for researchers in this area has been ‘what causes the ‘fear of crime’?’. This search for causation has intensified interest in the fear/risk paradox and gender and difference more generally through the subsequent questions of who is most afraid of crime and why? Simultaneously, however, all this has hindered attempts to research and theorise beyond these differences and thus left many other questions about ‘fear of crime’ obscured and indeed unasked and unaskable.

The rational/irrational fear debate on which I have also commented in earlier chapters has been a product of the ‘discovery’ of, and subsequent interest in, the risk/fear paradox. The two sets of binaries are metonymically linked. These two sets of binaries – risk/fear and rational/irrational – have almost characterised research and literature into, and about, the ‘fear of crime’. Indeed, it is these binaries and their further metonymic connections to gender that has been largely responsible for the proliferation of research into ‘fear of crime’, and indeed for these inquiries consistently retaining the title of ‘fear of crime’ research. ‘Fear of crime’ has an almost assumed objectivity upheld partly through its relationship to gender and difference.

So far I have generally avoided the question ‘what is fear of crime?’ Apart from, that is, in the explication of other scholars’ definitions of their subject in chapters one and two. I am not the only one to avoid answering this question as I shall explain. I now want to explore this question but not with the aim of fixing or saturating the three words with semantic meaning. Let me suggest at the outset that this question is unanswerable in either a positivist or structuralist sense. Rather, I want to explore the play of differences, or what Jacques Derrida (1991) has called differance, the chain of floating but mutually reinforcing signs – to use the language of ‘postmodernism’ – that give the ‘fear of crime’ its meaning, its ‘what is’ value. Such an exercise may allow us to undermine its taken-for-granted authority as a disciplinary topic and understand its broader implications without a constant regression to the mundane level of the current dichotomous debates. I want to suggest that the domination of ‘fear of crime’ as a sign for specific forms of research, and objects of research, is more than just an accident of semantics or semiotics. The broader connections and flows of meaning, which are both inscribed in the notion of ‘fear of crime’, and inscribed onto other floating signs – like gender for example – have produced a sense of objectivity and reality which has given ‘fear of crime’ as a topic currency even despite itself.
Terminology and Definitions

To better prepare the reader for some of the concepts I have used in the course of this chapter I will define and explain these here. I ask that the reader will forgive this brief digression into the realm of theoretical abstraction. These terms once explained will render this chapter, and its relevance to the thesis and to ‘fear of crime’ literature as a whole, much clearer. Alternatively, the reader may wish to use this small section of definitions and terminology as a point of reference which can be returned to while engaging with the analysis that follows.

This chapter is informed, at least in part, by a number of connected ‘deconstructionist concepts’ developed primarily by Jacques Derrida. These ideas have also been explored and expanded upon more recently by a number of contemporary feminist authors. The three most important of these are *différance*, Play, and presence. Firstly, as regards *différance*. Derrida (1991:64) suggests that:

> What is written as *différance*, then, will be the playing movement that “produces”... these differences, these effects of difference. *... Différance* is the nonfull, nonsimple, structured and differentiating origin of differences.

This being the case, Derrida (1991:64) goes on to suggest that the word *origin* itself can no longer be of use to describe the moment or space of *différance*, for the centrality and structure of an *origin* is only brought into being through *différance.* *Différance* is both to defer – in the temporal sense – and to differ – as in to create space between. Secondly, as regards *Play*. We might then substitute the term origin with the term *Play*. For *Play* is the movement between differences – in both the spatial and temporal sense: the deference of difference. It is the Play that produces meaning, that produces the sign – to use the semiological term. Thirdly, in regards *presence*. Let’s look briefly at Derrida’s critique of semiology and structuralism. He suggests (Derrida 1991:61) that:

> The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, “thing” here standing equally for meaning and referent. The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present, the being-present, when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. ...The sign in this sense is deferred presence.

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Derrida sees structuralism and semiotics — and indeed the entire history of western philosophy — as an *epistémé* that has been founded upon the *presence* of origin truths. The origin is understood in semiotics as the signified that produces the sign through a system of signification. We have already established that this origin is a fallacy, that it is in fact endlessly deferred, that its myth is the product of a play of difference, of *différance*. Derrida demonstrates that identity, presence and man are conditional (Gatens 1991:112). Within each of these terms exists that which the term seeks to define itself against — its binary opposite — presence/absence, man/woman, self/other. In structuralism, in semiotics, and indeed in empiricism, the myth of origin is *presenced*. However, according to Derrida, it can only be present in its absence. Its trace is inscribed in the sign even in its absence. Thus, without *presence*, a thing, an idea, particular concepts become drained of definition, of meaning. Objectivity and subjectivity are premised on the *presence* of things, objects of inquiry in the social sciences. Let us explore how the objectified sign of ‘fear of crime’ functions in the literature and research that seeks to explain and understand it.

**Empirical Problems for ‘Fear of Crime’ Research: The Normative Presence Deferred.**


> Given that fear involves an emotional, and sometimes physiological, reaction to perceived danger, there exists an inherent difficulty in measuring fear from questionnaire or interview data collection methods.

Still, the overriding premise of researchers in the area is of course that ‘fear of crime’ *can* be measured empirically — even if the literature constantly speaks of the difficulties in doing so. Further, that it is only a matter of constructing the right type of survey instrument, the perfect set of interview questions, or the right conceptual framework, so that fear will reveal itself and its secrets in all its pure objectivity. All its secrets will emerge naked and free of the complexities that have troubled previous less enlightened research projects. This is the modernist ideal par-excellence. And I will only concede that this statement might be overtly reductive if the reader will concede that, at very least, the trace of this notion permeates the literature and research produced around the topic. However, the assumption that ‘fear of crime’ can be measured inherently jumps the mark. For this assumption itself rests upon another deferred assumption; that
there exists something tangible against which to take measure, some kind of normative value of 'fear of crime'.

What is a 'normal' amount of 'fear of crime'? And how do we know? Here, it seems, the Bell curve reigns supreme and the very history the 'fear of crime' research itself— all thirty or so years of it — accumulates in a manner that obstructs us from attempting to answer this in any other way but with the power of numbers. The research itself builds us an answer and obscures the fact that the question remains unresolved. To suggest that we can have a normal amount of 'fear of crime' is also to simultaneously suggest that there exist abnormal levels of fear. The research only functions if we leave this question unanswered and the normal/abnormal binary deferred. The abnormal is present and absent in any conceptualisation of a normal amount of 'fear of crime' but it is this (the abnormal) that is of interest. But let me put forward another proposition: that the (re)search for 'fear of crime' is almost by definition a search for the abnormal. If all 'fear of crime' were normal there would be little need to research it.

To test this proposition let's return to the 'what is fear of crime?' question again. Throughout the literature there is, as I have suggested earlier, a general assumption that 'fear of crime' is something like an 'emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols a person associates with crime' (Ferraro 1995:23). Here the word 'emotional' passes almost unremarked on. What is an emotion? Surely such a definition must be of vital interest to those who would research the 'fear of crime'? Tellingly, the Oxford Dictionary specifically defines emotion as a 'disturbance of the mind; mental sensation or state; instinctive feeling as opposed to reason' (1976:338) (emphasis added). Thus, reason and emotion are binary opposites, emotion functions in meaning and language as Other to reason. Thus, 'fear of crime' as emotional response is by definition irrational, Other to reason. Therefore, 'fear of crime' is both abnormal and irrational—not by measure, not by some abstract philosophical proposition, but by definition.

**Floating Signs and Metonymic Linkages**

Throughout this thesis I have set out to problematise the rational/irrational debate. Above I have suggested that the rational/irrational dualism could only have established itself on the assumption of a normative measure of 'fear of crime' and that by definition 'fear of crime' is abnormal, irrational, Other to reason. To take this suggestion a step further I will argue that interest in gender differentiation is intimately connected to the rational/irrational debate. Gender is another of the factors that saturate or inscribe the sign the 'fear of crime' with meaning and objectivity.
Thus, our sets of binaries grow to include those that constitute gender distinction. As they grow layer upon layer of ‘truths’ pile up upon our deferred questions and obscure them further. Man/woman, male/female, masculinity/femininity, science/nature, reason/emotion, fearless/fearful, can all be added to our original rational/irrational binary. Contemporary post-structuralist feminist theorists have continually contested such binary distinctions — operating through language and in meaning — and have shown how these serve to normalise and indeed obscure masculinity by making femininity problematic. Historically, women have been associated with the body, with emotion, with nature (cf. Thornton 1995, Gatens 1991, Young 1996, Derrida 1977, Mohanram 1999). Indeed, this has been the case in ‘fear of crime’ research and literature. Maleness has remained neuter, unmarked, unspoken, while volumes, chapters and papers about ‘women and the fear of crime’ have multiplied. Women, in criminological discourse are to fear and emotion as men are to risk and reason. Women have been the abnormal of ‘fear of crime’ empiricism and ethnography, the abhorrent and the unknown, or the Black Continent to paraphrase Freud (1923). And the reader will recall that I have already established that it is the abnormal that is of interest in ‘fear of crime’ research.

The Inscriptions of Fear and the Bodies of Women

Let me turn now to empiricism in ‘fear of crime’ research and take a closer look at the ways in which statistics operate and indeed normalise. Alison Young (1996) makes an important point about the uses and productive potential of statistics; and certainly crime fear and victim surveys could be included here. Difference is actually produced as truth through cartographies. In creating the cartography the researcher ‘discovers’ gendered subjectivities. Statistics can be used as evidence of sexual differentiation; women commit many less crimes than men, or men commit more crimes than women; or, men are less fearing of crime than are women, women are more fearing of crime than men. These statistics are held to provide the evidence that sex roles are realised in the social world in ways that prove the social world’s division along gender lines. Gender identities are imposed upon individuals through research findings. The differences between identities as ascribed by research and identities as experienced by individuals are rarely questioned (Young 1996; 43).

Thus, the ‘discovery’ of gender distinction through ‘fear of crime’ research, a ‘discovery’ that dates back to the very beginning of the research, serves to prove the worth of the research itself.

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77 See Simone de Beauvoir’s (1949) groundbreaking text The Second Sex for an early account of the Othering of femininity.
This ‘discovery’ has led to a whole program of research activities that have allowed researchers to ‘gloss over’ many of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies that underlie a good proportion of this work — the ends are held to justify the means. The ‘will’ to know gender difference both obscures and produces the play of differrence that allows such research to function with objectivity.

Further, this myth of womens’ conformity here operates simultaneously as their deviance. Conformity — inscribed through statistics - marks women as ‘fearing’, but leaves masculinity unmarked, neuter, indeed natural. Thus, Young (1996:46) is critical of calls from some feminists for the study of womens’ conformity, maintaining that to do so is to collude with the criminological canon which implicitly accepts women in this way. This process of thinking sexed bodily groups only serves to reinforce a phallocentric conception of what sexed difference may be. Young argues that:

The notion of femininity as obscurity can be discerned in the construction of women as objects to be decoded (by the analyst/criminologist/detective). For example women have to be represented as analytic opacity: their nature is not open to be read by the criminologist, who is thus unable to know them. Women have also been represented as hysterical, thus rendering their real natures hidden to themselves as well as the analysing criminologist who is forced to interpret behaviours as symptoms and symptoms as traits (1996:28).

Women are both victim and offender. Victim precisely because of their fearfulness. Offender, because the obscuring of reason behind womens’ ‘fearfulness’ becomes the pursuit of criminology, indeed an offence against the rationale of the discipline — it must find reason in unreason. Criminology engages in the interrogation of women, the search for ‘truth’: It attempts to peel back the layers of ‘femaleness’ that must cover the rational core. Yet this project is destined to fail from the outset. I have already identified that women are discursively constructed as all body, thus any search by criminology that seeks rationality, reason in the mind will ultimately fail.

Enter Risk?

We might then surmise that if ‘fear of crime’ is not a useful or accurate object to measure, we could frame our research differently. Kenneth Ferraro (1995) in a very influential book titled
Fear of Crime: Interpreting Victimisation Risk (emphasis original) suggests (as have many others) that respondent’s ‘perceived risk’ might be a more fruitful object to measure. Such a project sounds useful until we see that Ferraro’s project operates on exactly the same hidden premises and deferred questions that I have outlined above. To begin with, the fact remains that the title of Ferraro’s book is ‘Fear of Crime’, not ‘perceived risk of crime’, not ‘risk assessment’, but ‘Fear of Crime’ (no inverted commas in original). Why? Is this not precisely the research topic Ferraro sets out to problematise? The reasons for this I believe are twofold. Firstly, there is now simply a history of research about the ‘fear of crime’ and this title enables the book to take its place within this canon of research and literature despite its criticisms of it. Thus, it is essentially a sales/readership ploy. Secondly, to do away with this title would diminish the standing of the research by way of draining the subject of the emotion inscribed in the notion of ‘fear of crime’. As I have suggested above, the word fear is historically inscribed with emotion and accordingly with gendered meaning. I have already suggested that notions of masculine/feminine are metonymically connected to notions of reason/emotion. Ferraro’s book includes a chapter on women, Unravelling Fear of Crime Among Women (Ferraro 1995)—quite apart from the amount of gender discussion (rather discussion about women) that permeates the whole book — yet there is interestingly enough no chapter about men. For Ferraro, womens’ secrets are to be ‘unravelled’. They are indeed the Dark Continent, the unknown, the problematic. Masculinity is hidden within the text and outside it - indeed outside discourse altogether - as femininity’s Other.

Ferraro’s book is only one example, however, and it seems unfair to single this work out. Indeed, the notion of risk has, more generally within ‘fear of crime’ research, become the surrogate normative level of fear. Here I will return once again to the work of Richard Sparks (1992) and his criticisms of Left Realism in particular. Sparks contests that Left Realists — but we might broaden this category of researchers here to include people like Kenneth Ferraro (1995) who positions himself within an interactionist framework — despite their wish to conceptualise women’s ‘fear of crime’ as completely justified, cannot let go of the totalising model of rationality based on an antecedent and “real” level of objective risk (Tullock et al 1998). Thus, the objective risk of crime becomes the rational, the normal, against which levels of fear — or perceived risk (to use the Ferraro example) - are systematically justified. Rather than risk breaking our growing list of binaries it simply adds to them, it further inscribes our chain of signs with meaning. Risk/fear — and remember this was our original paradox, our original binary, is again added to rational/irrational, fearless/fearful, culture/nature, male/female, men/women,

\[\text{\textsuperscript{78}Not such a grand claim really given that fear, by dictionary definition is an emotional response.}\]
normal/abnormal, science/art, reason/emotion and we might add mind/body. The growing set of couplets adds to the urgency of the search for causation. The researcher must rationalise women's fear, search for the unexplained and hidden anxieties that might explain women's greater fears. Maleness, still, remains unmarked and normal with this search for femininity's lack. Apart from those feminists who have attempted to subvert or reverse the binary — and I will return to them below — the tenor of the focus on femininity remains: to explain why women are more fearful of crime than men; to explore the Dark Continent, to make visible the secrets of femininity. Thus, researchers over the course of ‘fear of crime’ research have produced a string of factors that are said to account for their ‘surplus fear’ — to use Sparks (1992) terminology.

For left realists and many feminists ‘the home’ becomes the rationale of women's heightened anxiety of crime (cf. Young teal 1986, Stanko 1990). Rather than abandoning the search for rationality or irrationality in the gendered specificity of fear, the origin of fear is located in a geographical site obscured from the criminologists’ vision, in a space where even the victim survey may have failed to penetrate. Similarly, I alluded above to the inclusion of mind/body in our set of couplets. Here the search for surplus fear concerns itself with the bodies of women. These bodies — precisely because of their femaleness and thus their un-governability — are at risk. Women are all body. Sexual assault (Gordon and Rigger 1989), vulnerability (Canach and Mukherjee 1999), and domestic violence (Stanko 1990) are thus to be added to our examples of the reason for surplus ‘fear of crime’. Masculinity's metonymic association with the mind as opposed to femininity's association with the body obscures it as an object of inquiry.

Let me now expose these chains of signs, these metonymic links further and to their ultimate ends. ‘Fear of crime’ research, conceptualising fear as something to be found in women, as irrational (by definition) also invites us to exclude women from the social body, these irrational, emotional (all) bodies have no place in the decision making processes of the polity. If fear is the antithesis of freedom and freedom the mark of citizenship, women must be non-citizens. As Margaret Thornton (1995) suggests,

women have never been fully accepted as citizens of the polity. Their indelible association with nature, the body, disorder, and non-rationality has been used to render them less fit for public sphere responsibilities according to both historical and prevailing democratic norms. Thus, while women have been ‘let in’ it is only as fringe dwellers...
Conceptualising women's bodies as fearing in effect continues the phallocentric tradition of seeing women in terms of lack. The deferred anti-question for criminology has been: what do men have in relation to 'fear of crime?' The answer is of course, fearlessness and freedom, the ability and acceptability to engage in risk taking activities, maleness is fearlessness, fearlessness is freedom and freedom is citizenship. The next line of inquiry is why are women lacking these qualities? Or, why are women incomplete? Why are women non-citizens? Women have been constructed through research – indeed in criminological discourse - as desiring to be free of fear, as free to experience the social world as men. Thus, women are seen as desiring the positionality of men. This desire has always been seen in these terms of lacking, of being incomplete. The project, therefore, for criminology has been to make women complete, make their experiences equal to men's, to extinguish desire by delivering the tools for equality – again, a modernist project and patronising to say the least. However, to make complete, to make equal, can only ever have the opposite effect. To have to make equal proves difference.

A Deconstructionist Moment?

Some feminist writers (Walklate 1994, Goodey 1994), as I have suggested above, have argued for a reversal of just who the irrational and rational subjects are in the 'fear of crime' debate. They have suggested that it might be young men who are the irrational subjects because of their lack of fear and their dangerous behaviour in the face of evidence which indicates that they are the most likely victims, the most at risk social group (See Walklate, 1994, Goodey 1994). This tactic, while an extremely useful one, merely shifts the object of disciplinary focus while leaving the notion of gendered difference, and indeed the string of signs that inform it, intact. However, it also represents a deconstructionist moment. At this moment criminology as a discipline - and 'fear of crime' research in particular - is implicated in the inscription of women's bodies with social meaning. A moment also that stresses the role of criminology in the processes that naturalise men's bodies. A moment, therefore, when criminology is implicated in the production of truths that constitute gendered difference. Here feminism unwittingly deconstructs. The textual space in which this subject of criminological inquiry is situated is violently disrupted. If feminist criminologies can flip the rational/irrational and masculine/feminine binaries that give truth-value to research into 'fear of crime', and indeed inscribe, a gendered fearing subject within this research, it demonstrates the arbitrary and contingent nature of such division.

Why then is this 'switching' of binaries not enough? The problem is that what it still seeks to establish is a women's rationality. This strategy too cannot let go of the positivist criminological
discourse of establishing conformity. Moreover, in attempting to prove women rational it essentially attempts to make women ‘normal’. Women are thus expected to transcend the female body – with all its baggage – usurp masculinity as the bearers of rationality. Moira Gatens (1991 58,59) eloquently argues against this strategy in her critique of de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex (1939). If the escape of Otherness means escaping from the female body surely this doubly emphasises the shortcomings of this body.

Thus, it might be pertinent at this time to have a closer look at how feminist writers have dealt with the issue of ‘the fear of crime’. This may in some way open up new avenues for research which go beyond, and deny the fixed objectivity of, previous research and literature. I have mentioned the important work of Elizabeth Stanko above. I now want to take a closer look at her work as a way of outlining some of the problems that underlie theorising about the ‘fear of crime’ from certain feminist perspectives.

**Feminism, Fear and the Violent Textual History of Gender**

One of the major projects of Feminist criminology has been to focus on the way many crimes against women are hidden from official recognition. Thus these authors have attempted to expose the ‘true’ levels of crime against women. Probably the most cited Feminist work on the ‘fear of crime’, although it concerns what the author calls danger, is a study by Elizabeth Stanko titled *Everyday Violence: How Women and Men Experience Sexual and Physical Danger* (1990). I have briefly discussed this work earlier in the thesis. While this work is now somewhat dated – published in 1990 using research initiated in 1985 - it remains highly influential. This influence remains even given that Stanko herself has moved on considerably from the position she took in this publication. I want to suggest that some of its underlying assumptions appear in need of revision in light of contemporary feminist social theory and some of the criticisms I have raised above. My critique of this work is not aimed at devaluing this particular study but in problematising some of the underlying assumptions that inform much of the research into ‘fear of crime’.

Stanko’s work draws on existing administrative criminological research, realist criminological methodologies and sociological material on the ‘fear of crime’ and combines these with a radical feminism. She regularly cites the late 1970s early 1980s quantitative administrative research analysed by Maxfield (1984, 1987), and Skogan and Maxfield (1981) in which victim surveys were operationalised in localised geographical sites in order to measure levels of fear. The results
of these victim surveys form the statistical basis of her research. This material is interspersed with Stanko’s own extensive ethnographic research which takes the singular voices of her 51 female and male (Stanko 1990:10) informants and places these in a textual space which advances a polymorphous reading of the ways in which physical danger is experienced.

Stanko sets out to debunk the common notion that crime is an out of the ordinary occurrence that is perpetrated by strangers. That is not to say that she believes crime to be good or healthy for society in a Durkheimian sense, or even that we should tolerate certain levels of crime. Rather, her argument is that women’s ‘fear of crime’ in particular, can be explained, or rationalised (made normal?), by the everyday threats to ‘our’ safety. She argues ‘that modern day conditions make danger a reality’ (1990:5). Further, she believes that these threats come, not in the guise of the ‘shadowy stranger just out of reach’ but from acquaintances and family members; husbands, brothers, uncles and friends. She argues that:

Danger, many of us believe, arises from the random action of strangers... Yet according to most people’s experiences, reinforced by the statistics of academic researchers and police alike, danger and violence arise within our interpersonal relationships... (Stanko 1990:3)

The data she draws on, in the form of administrative research, frames for her an objective reality of danger. She opposes this finding to the assumptions of other criminologists who have argued that fear is something that can be measured separately from risk. Fear according to Stanko, is a rational response to the more pertinent issue of danger. The two are fundamentally inter-related. The experiences of her interviewees are used to prove the social reality, or otherwise, of these statistics and so illustrate the dangers many women face in their daily lives.

Stanko is particularly interested in the way individuals manage dangerous situations; or what has more recently been referred to as an economy of risk (cf. Ewald 1991, Donzelot 1991). The media and state institutions are implicated as sources of information and instruction that come into play in the course of risk management. This management is seen as a continuing and routine set of practices. In short, what Stanko is researching - although she does not refer to her object of investigation in this way - are the techniques of self governance, the practices of the self or the ‘technologies’ (cf. Mauss 1966) that become part of the constitution of every individual’s subjectivity. What she stresses as being of particular concern is the gap between media and governmental (mis)-information and the experiences of individuals. She believes that:
The current thinking about safety and danger fails to capture what people know and experience as personal violence. Whilst our attention is continuously attuned to that which happens in public places, there is a stony silence, almost a denial of the extent of violence that happens in private... The public discussion of about women and violence only acknowledges women's fear of attack at the hands of strange men (Stanko 1990:9).

Stanko is strident in her criticism of the silences of the media, criminology and government in this area. She argues that what gets reported in the media, what constitutes criminological knowledge and accordingly what becomes government policy, has ‘important implications for understanding what it means to be male and female’ (1990:9). It influences the production of gender specific subjectivities. In addition, in more recent research Stanko is also critical of much of the government produced safety booklets aimed at women. She (1997:417) argues that what these booklets attempt to do is to create ‘responsible women’.

Despite the importance of this work, I have a number of criticisms of Stanko’s (1990) methodology, and ultimately, her analysis. The first is that it fundamentally fails to empower women, or more to the point, to question a history of gender formation that has naturalised women as dis-empowered, as fearful. She speaks only of power as repressive, as something used to illicit fear or danger in either its political or physical guise. This means that power is naturalised, it becomes a product of physical or psychological strength rather than a contingent historical variable which might offer some respite from danger and fear. Power essentially becomes an attribute of maleness. Indeed her conclusion offers little in the way of avenues of resistance for potential victims (read women) other than further tutelage for both themselves, in terms of avoidance, and for the potential male perpetrators in terms of abstinence.

Secondly, Stanko seems to operate on the assumption that some form of sexed or gendered difference pre-exists her analysis - indeed any analysis. She positions her informants and readers as discursively disconnected from the productive capacity of the knowledges her interventions inevitably produce. Truth is constructed through a series of narratives that emanate from the

9 It may be useful to note before proceeding that in recent times, in Australia at least, there has been an increase in the acknowledgement by the media, and by government agencies of the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault. This has also been reflected in the small but steady increase in likelihood of women reporting such crimes. Certainly the work of scholars such as Stanko has contributed to this shift. There are, however, sectors of the society which still fail to acknowledge crimes of a domestic nature as crimes.
central character of woman as victim or potential victim. This makes it convenient to speak of women as a homogeneous group. Again this is understandable given Stanko’s ‘radical’ political allegiances. She propagates this understanding of gender not so much in terms of an innate sexed difference, but in terms of an abistorical gendered victimage. By not destabilising the set of binary based relationships that exist between danger and gender her research invites women to engage in what Alison Young (1996) has described as a notion of a ‘shared victimage’. The reader is implicitly asked to compare the various recollections and experiences of victims to her own experiences of feminine victimage or perceived feminine victimage. Other scholars have pointed out that a viewer/reader’s predication to be able to associate or position themselves similarly to the victim actually heightens the ‘fear of crime’ (Grabosky 1995). On these grounds, Stanko’s work has a productive effect that actually produces both binary gender difference and fear. That is, it puts in place a ‘feedback loop’ whereby knowledges produce objects, in this case gendered fearing subjects, which confirm and conform to the knowledge and therefore reinforce it (cf. Hacking; 1995, 61). The conception of woman as an eternal and universal victim undermines the productive and empowering possibilities that may be available in either alternative forms of femininity, or more importantly, alternative, more positive, forms of masculinity.

Stanko argues that:

Womens’ lives rest upon a continuum of unsafety. This does not mean that all women occupy the same position in relation to safety and violence. Many other features of their lives - such as direct experience, class, race, sexual orientation, or physical disabilities - will mean their circumstances differ. Somehow, though, as all women reach adulthood, they share a common awareness of their particular vulnerability. Learning strategies for survival is a continuous lesson about what it means to be female (1990: 85).

However, if risk or danger management and, therefore fear, are components of subject formation, vital factors that go toward constituting or inscribing subjects with gendered characteristics, then it follows that gendered subjects do not pre-exist this formation but are part of it and product of it. These processes are actually part of the production of gendered difference – the inscription of meaning is bi-directional. Stanko never makes this connection and so never questions assumptions which imply an inevitability to the dualistic nature of gender. This failure to question the historicity of gender production hinders the very basis of her methodology. Her informants’
behavioural strategies are, I would argue, not a result of being a man or woman but part of the historical processes which inscribe bodies as such, and further, that ‘fear of crime’ research is a part of this inscription process.

Moreover, if danger, risk and the ‘fear of crime’ are a part of what constitutes our gendered subjectivities and visa versa, couldn’t we then say that contemporary understandings of gender are a part of what constitute our understandings of what ‘fear of crime’ might be. How is it possible to argue that the ‘fear of crime’ is an artefact of a history of gender relations without also arguing that the notion of a dualistic gender division itself is what has made the ‘fear of crime’ such a legitimate object of investigation. The ‘fear of crime’, as an object for criminology, would be of much less importance were it not for the fact that, statistically, it serves to reinforce the notion that the social world can be, and somehow naturally is, divided along gender lines. Further, the notion that women ‘...share a common awareness of their particular vulnerability’ ignores the fact that many women actually engage in what would be classified as risk taking activities. Thus, these women either do not share this ‘common awareness’ or should be seen as irrational subjects. If we construct them as the latter we are but one metonymic connection away from constructing them as deserving their victimage.

Lastly, Stanko fails to overturn criminological knowledges that produce the gendered fearing subject as passive, or as somehow misreading the situation. On the one hand she is arguing that the media and government must confess the truth about crimes against women so that women can form their subjectivities accordingly; the truth being that crimes mostly occur in domestic situations perpetrated by acquaintances or family members. But paradoxically, the women interviewed already ‘somehow’ recognise where the dangers lie and have already ‘somehow’ formed their subjectivities accordingly - avoidance techniques or risk management were already in place. Stanko offers only a warning, indeed a tutelage, that the fearing subject understands where the dangers lie, inscribe their gendered fear and understand their victimage accordingly.

We are left with a shared (common) and inevitable gendered reality that transcends individual differences, neutralises other ways of doing gender, and negates other indices and experiences of fear. We are left with gendered subjects with essences — essentialism. Indeed, on another level Sandra Egger (1997:94) has criticised Stanko’s insistent focus on the familiar perpetrator and domestic sites of victimisation at the expense of other geographical sites and strangers as perpetrators. She argues that this overlooks the fact that, even though the majority of crimes against women do occur in these circumstances, significant victimisation also occurs in other
settings; in other words there is a danger of a reductive analysis which may offer a false sense of security in some settings.

Stanko's emphasis on the experiences of women as a group also overlooks another dimension of the fear/risk issue. The statistical 'reality' which informs us that women are at risk from the familiar offender is just that, a statistical 'reality'; an artefact that speaks, like Stanko, of women as a group but ignores some important lived realities. Thus, her argument that women should be informed, and be fearful, of the threat from husbands and partners rather than strangers is misguided. For most women these are known risks; women who are subjected to violence in their relationships don't need to be told about it. On the other hand those women who are not subjected to violence in the home are understandably more fearful of 'stranger danger' than of intimates.

Escaping the Canon of Essentialism

Kerry Carrington (1994) has argued against those who would defend a culturally essentialist theoretical position. She stresses that feminist criminology must break out of the canonical mould that makes it possible to speak of women as a meaningful, unity category even where race, class, background etc...have been taken into account. She echoes this same position in relation to men and masculinity (see Carrington & Watson 1996). Carrington protests that much feminist criminology continues to take the view that the essential make-up of the women's body remains at the base of the multiple and less important inscriptions that colour and decorate its surface. She argues against the belief that shared experiences of subordination make meaningful both the adoption of essentialist positions and the authority to speak about 'women as a group'. Her most strident criticism, however, is aimed at those 'cynics' who believe that essentialist positions, while problematic, are unavoidable and inescapable and that feminist scholars need to preserve the notion of women as a group at least for rhetorical purposes. The problem with all these defences, Carrington argues, is that they rely on the 'dubious assumption' that women's experiences of their social world and their own subjectivities are 'monotonously similar', regardless of the infinitely heterogeneous cultural, spatial and historical specificities from which these experiences emerge (1994:225). Further, the rhetorical effects of constituting 'women as a group' can be, and historically have been, used both positively and negatively. Never could such a unitary gender construct remain the exclusive domain of a progressivist feminism. Essentialism whatever form it takes can only ever reproduce the reductionism of binary opposites (1994: 225, 226).
Certainly, in most feminist readings of the relationship between gender and the ‘fear of crime’, women have been erased as active participants in their own forming, making or becoming. Rather, their individual experiences are subordinated to a monolithic category based on gender. Stanko herself points out that women are aware that danger comes mostly from acquaintances rather than strangers but laments the forms of information being supplied to women. Women are reduced, at least theoretically, to docile objects (cf. Easteal 1994) subject to manipulation, formation, or oppression resulting from the inherent masculinisation of the public sphere, misinformation emanating from the media or other communicative sites, or irrational behaviour caused by feelings of powerlessness. This plays into the hands of the very patriarchal and often paternalistic discourses that feminist critiques attempt so forcefully to overthrow. It confesses the limitations of the female body in a way that could be misused to justify its historical subjugation to the power of patriarchy. As Grosz (1994:14) suggests:

[m]ysogynist thought has commonly found a convenient self-justification for womens’ secondary social positions by containing them within bodies that are represented, even constructed, as frail, imperfect, unruly, and unreliable, subject to various intrusions which are not under conscious control. Female sexuality and womens’ powers of reproduction are the defining (cultural) characteristics of women, and, at the same time, these very functions render women vulnerable, in need of protection or special treatment, as variously prescribed by patriarchy.

Oppositionally, men are constituted as active, as either going about their daily routines ignoring the dangers and intentionally engaging in risky behaviours, or as active participants in the oppressive potentiality of violence which inhabits and places limitations on the lives and bodies of women. I do not wish to suggest that the stereotypical subjective positions are not at times taken up. However, new ways of doing ‘fear of crime research’ need to be developed that look beyond these. The tendency to see women as the unknowable, but universal, victim simply adds another binary to the growing list, offender/victim. And again it is the feminine side of the binary that seems to warrant criminological attention as the growth of victimology as a ‘science’ would attest.

The recent criminological attention given to the victim side of this binary has recently been noted. Alison Young (1996) is critical of this recent focus on the victim. She argues that in a period of ‘ultramodernity’ the figure of the victim has offered a kind of certainty against a loss of limits and horizons. Certainty against a loss of structure without which criminology’s modernist theoretical
and disciplinary base is unable to be maintained in the form we have come to recognise. For criminology, the positivist search for the reason, the causality, of criminality in the individual personage, or indeed group of personages has been exhausted. That is not to say it has ended. The quest to ‘discover’ criminality has gradually been replaced with the convenience of the universal victim. A new dualism is born in criminological discourse - criminal/victim — where once it concerned itself explicitly only with criminality. The criminal, as a societal subgroup, has, in criminological discourse, gradually become less central, less important. The concept of criminal as individual actor, as a subject of free choice, has hastened this. The tendency of some feminist authors, and we could include Stanko here, to run the ‘all women are victims’ all men are potential perpetrators colludes with the criminological project that conceptualises women as lacking.

**Existing Methodologies and the Productive Role of Research**

Thus, methodology used in the ‘fear of crime’ research has tended to involve two broadly definable dimensions. This methodology was followed in the work of Elizabeth Stanko, and is followed widely by left realism and in much of the administrative literature. The first of these dimensions is the collection of some form of statistical data (usually a victim survey or recorded crime statistics), whereby the data collected is used to objectify the subject of investigation. The second dimension involves some form of social, psychological or ethnographic analysis of this object with the intention of explaining or discovering the conditions of its very objectivity. This form of research takes gendered divisions unproblematically. It actually produces the *gendered fearing subjects* it then seeks to explain.

Left realism has certainly participated in this neutralisation or naturalisation process. As Alison Young (1996:58) argues:

The world of realist criminology is one composed of disparate subjectivities defined by disparate spaces. It is here that the crime survey comes into its own, addressed to the specific task of capturing the disparate spaces of the city. A survey is concerned with spacialization; once the spatial dimension is captured, the realist gains access to subjectivities. In short, realism creates a cartography of the modern subject.
The ‘fear of crime’ is imbued as a characteristic to be explained in certain types of subjects in specific geographical space. The broken window, graffiti, the dark alleyway and other floating signifiers become the signs that could constitute rationality in the gendered fearing subject. The shadowy and impenetrable space of the home, the ‘private sphere’ also becomes the site which helps provide a gendered specificity of ‘fear of crime’.

Further, this imposition of ‘fear of crime’ onto subjects, as carried out by these researchers may also turn out to be self substantiating in terms of future research. As Ruggiero (1992:128) observes:

Little attention is devoted by the realists to the effects of their own presence in the field and their very work affects the evaluations and definitions of crime. It is well known, for example, that when sensitizing the public through preventative campaigns, unintended effects may easily result.

Some (Young 1996, Egger 1996) have argued that crime prevention tutelage, in the form of media and governmental strategies, aimed at relieving anxiety about crime, can actually induce fear in individuals. I have dealt with this in the previous chapter. If these strategies can sensitise the public why not the questions of a researcher. Thus, research may not only produce representations of the ‘fear of crime’ in research results, but may actually produce ‘fear of crime’ in the populations it surveys. As Grosz argues, the disciplines have tangible effects on the bodies they study. ‘Bodies are not inert, they function interactively and productively’ (1994:xii).

How to Proceed? Some Conclusions and Directions

So do we cease empirical research into the ‘fear of crime’ altogether? Can the social scientist or the criminologist never speak of difference, or gender, given that this discourse has a history and metaphysics based not on absolute truths but on the différance of binary oppositions? Will we not simply reproduce these binaries with any such inquiries? Yes, probably. However, even Derrida (1977:282) suggests there is some respite:

That if no one can escape this necessity, and no one is therefore responsible for giving into it, however little he (sic) may do so, this does not mean that all ways of giving into it are of equal pertinence. The quality and fecundity of a discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which this relation to the history
of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought. Here it is a question of both a critical relation to the language of the social sciences and a critical responsibility of the discourse itself. It is a question of explicitly and systematically posing the problem of the status of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for the deconstruction of that heritage itself. A problem of *economy* and *strategy*.

So how to proceed? Firstly, we must problematise the notion of ‘fear of crime’, question its authority to speak of itself. This has been the project of this chapter and it must continue into the ethnographic field of research in the next. My strategy of containing the term ‘fear of crime’ in inverted commas is also an attempt to undermine its authority. We must historicise and textualise it, to give it a contingent status. In short, we must abandon the positivist notion that ‘fear of crime’ is a stable object of knowledge. Secondly, any statements, and findings, any utterances, anything we can say regarding the ‘fear of crime’ must concern respondents only at localised levels. Generalisations must be kept to a minimum. Thus, it will not be productive to measure populations, to analyse differences, or to search for reason or unreason. Rather, the ‘fear of crime’ must be de-centered in the analysis. We should not ask it to speak its truth in subjects, rather, we should ask with what discourses it functions. Thirdly, we must not approach our research in a way that feigns objectivity. We must surrender the research/topic, object/subject, question/answer binaries. Thus, the researcher must be conscious of the influence their intervention might have on the field. To really understand how ‘fear of crime’ operates and how it affects individuals of either sex/gender we need to break ‘fear of crime’ down to the level of discourse. We must understand with what other discourses these discourses function. Most importantly ‘fear of crime’ must not be seen as a lack, something to fix. Women must not be conceptualised as desiring to be men. Rather, desire should be seen as productive difference, not lack (cf. Grosz 1994b, Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Thus the desiring subject is not a subject that can somehow be made whole—as in the modernist project I have outlined above. Rather, desire is a product that itself makes connections, and itself produces. Criminological understandings of the ‘fear of crime’ may require similar approaches to desire.
Chapter 7:

Expressing ‘Fear of Crime’: A Case for a Rethink?

This chapter deals with the ‘fear of crime’ on a more empirical level. Thus, it is constituted by a relatively discrete body of empirical research which requires a separate clarification of aims, methods and analysis. This does not imply, however, that this is an attempt to quantify or classify ‘fear of crime’. It is not quantitative research. Rather, this chapter consists of a discourse analysis of interviews conducted in three small ‘rural’ towns in Western NSW over a two-year period from January 1998 to December 1999. As such this research focuses heavily on how the specificities of locality influence the ways people express their concerns about crime(s) which might have occurred, or might be perceived to have occurred, in the local area and further afield. This discourse analysis is backed up by some participant observation; this was conducted while on numerous field trips to these towns. Additionally, some statistical data and local news reportage are used here as quantitative sources. The three towns researched here are Cobar, Brewarrina and Gilgandra. These towns, although simplistically definable as ‘rural communities’, have diverse socio-economic, cultural, racial, and historical backdrops. The scope of these diversities and differences within ‘rural’ domains make simplistic notions of a rural/urban dichotomy somewhat problematic.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. Firstly, this analysis will attempt to highlight the connections, continuities, discontinuities, and inter-relations that comprise the backdrop or discursive building blocks of what has lately been defined as the ‘fear of crime’. Secondly, identifying these building blocks will problematise the often simplistic or reductive conceptualisation of this disciplinary and governmental object. This research constitutes an attempt to reconceptualise the empirical study of ‘fear of crime’. It seeks to engage in a mode of inquiry, the results of which render highly problematic much of the existing literature in regard to crime fear. However, this project is also an attempt to move beyond simply deconstructing the existing body of knowledge of the ‘fear of crime’ - beyond rendering all research into the subject theoretically problematic and thus redundant. Rather, through making use of such diverse research techniques as participant observation, semi-structured interviews and secondary sources such as the media and official statistics in terms of data collection, this research concerns itself primarily with the specificities of locality and local culture and the way this influences subjects’ understandings and conceptualisations of fear. Thus, the focus and scope is specific as opposed to universal; the research does not attempt to construct meta-narratives about fear. The discourse
analysis itself draws from both sociological and anthropological methods, modes and traditions. However, it is not operationalised only in the sense that it concerns itself with governmental knowledge, the ‘archive’; it does not practice any form of the academic exclusivity championed by some practitioners of governmentality work (see Carrington and Hogg: 1999a). Rather, it concerns itself as much with lay knowledge and understandings as it does with the governmental and ‘authoritative’. As Tulloch et al (1998) argue, the perceptions of people themselves has been the missing ingredient in most ‘fear of crime’ research.

Locality and Fear: Exploring Crime Fear in Three NSW Towns

In the context of this thesis, coming as it does from what could be suggested is a deconstructionist tradition, attempting to engage in ethnographic or empirical research may appear problematic. However, as I suggest toward the end of chapter three, I am not in this thesis advocating an end to empirical research into ‘fear of crime’ altogether. Rather, I am suggesting that researchers be aware of two far reaching points. Firstly, the possible power effects of ‘fear of crime’ research in producing and reproducing their own objects of enquiry unproblematically. Secondly, the universalising tendencies of much ‘fear of crime’ research which offers a false sense of conformity about what the sources of fear might be and indeed how fear is experienced. Thus, this study of three towns is not a comparative study in the sense that some empirical measurement of the ‘fear of crime’ will be garnered from each town and systematically compared against the others. Rather, I will attempt to explore the complexities of fear in each locale and explore the ways in which ‘fear of crime’ is intimately connected to the histories, and the numerous social indices of the town and its residents. Thus, ‘fear of crime’ as an object is highly ‘de-centered’ throughout this research process. Further, this research and the research instrument were specifically designed not to ‘sensitise’ the respondent into either expressing or actually feeling fear purely as a result of interview or research processes. Moreover, this research makes no claim to any universality or generalisation of the experiences of the respondents herein.

The aim here is not only to compare many accounts of the respondents’ concerns about crime in particular towns, but also to compare the overall shape or tenor of the discourses of fear in each town with those noted in the other towns. Thus, this research is comparative on two levels. However, I stress that there is no attempt to measure ‘fear of crime’ comparatively between respondents or between towns. Thus, the reader should not expect to find comparative graphing, nor the statistical analysis of the ‘fear of crime’ here. Rather, my interest is in the varied discursive arrangements of ‘fear of crime’, the different ‘versions of events’ that are available in
localised narratives and the varying ways these narratives play themselves out in regard to these localities.

*Why Explore ‘Fear of Crime’ in Rural Localities?*

Maxfield (1984:9) contends that ‘fear of crime’ research has most often been carried out in large cities. He suggests that crime levels are higher in cities, that there is a greater police presence in cities, that spending on law enforcement is higher in cities, and that it is the city street that has historically been the target of public policy and the site of crime concerns (Maxfield 1984:9). However, the statistical data he draws on to reach this conclusion is overwhelmingly urban-centric. Even though the 1982 British crime survey used a sample of 11000 persons chosen randomly in England and Wales, little attention is actually given to fear in rural communities. Indeed, it is city-focused surveys which are used as examples of how city dwellers are more concerned about crime than their rural counterparts.\(^6\)

The reality is that, like criminological research more generally, little attention has actually been paid to ‘fear of crime’ in rural communities. Thus, my hope is that this study goes some way in redressing this imbalance. Further, even if Maxfield is correct in his assessment of the urban centered nature of ‘fear of crime’ in Britain, that does not necessarily mean that the same is true in Australia. The realities of life in rural Australia could not be very much more different than in Britain. Firstly, many rural towns in Western New South Wales (NSW) have recorded crime rates either higher, or on par with, their city and suburban counterparts (see figure 1). Secondly, the police presence in many towns in Western NSW is much greater than in most city and suburban areas on a police per citizen basis. Thirdly, even if the streets of Australia’s largest cities are not exactly conceptualised as safe places, it has been country towns that have predominantly been the sites of law and order rallies, calls for tougher penalties, and grabs for more police powers and personnel.

\(^6\) Maxfield (1984:9) for example draws on Sparks *et al* (1977) and their study of London to indicate the extent of fear in cities yet has little to say about the extent of rural fear.
The use of ‘rural’ towns in this research is useful for a number of other reasons. Firstly, I want to suggest that it is neither rurality or urbanity per-se that influences the way people might express their crime fears. Nor is it the ‘objective’ reality of statistically higher crime rates in particular localities which equate to the residents expressing fearfulness. Importantly, at least two of the towns discussed here have high to very-high recorded crime rates when compared to the state average (see figure 1). Thus, if the ‘fear of crime’ were simply a measure of the extent of criminal activity in a locality a sample population such as that investigated here should indicate this clearly. Rather, as we shall see it is locality and the specificities of locality that are of much greater importance to how concerns about crime are expressed. Thus, the rural/urban dichotomy begins to collapse once we begin a closer examination of the constitution of contemporary rural localities. The differences between each town are such that any notion of rurality (in any universal sense) begins to look quite shaky on any close examination. In a sense the only intrinsic value that these towns share are conceptualisations of themselves as non-city which manifests itself in particular ways in particular towns.

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81 See discussion in chapter 1.
Exploring ‘Fear of Crime’ Methodologies: Some New Directions and Old Problems

The unique aspect of this research is the character and form of the ethno-methodology that has been deployed. Research into the ‘fear of crime’, as I have suggested in the earlier chapters, can be highly problematic and as such raises a number of methodological conundrums for the researcher. For example, the ‘fear of crime’ has the potential to become self-fulfilling - and very often self-serving - in that in many instances the research instrument actually sensitises the interviewee or respondent to the notion of fear which he or she will then describe to the researcher. The object of their inquiry, the ‘fear of crime’, is potentially produced empirically by the very form and methodology of the research instrument used.

This technique is actively deployed by some in insurance companies and private security industries that have a vested commercial interest in research that sensitises its subjects to become more fearful, and obtains research results which indicate an increasingly fearful population: thus we buy insurance in order to minimise our fear and risk. Indeed, I have experienced as a would-be respondent a simple version of this type of survey conducted by an insurance company in my own neighbourhood in Sydney’s inner West. This survey like many conducted by companies with a vested interest in fear, was deliberately loaded such that it provided the type of data required by the particular company or institution involved. The style of question runs to a relatively familiar and over simplified format. For example, one of the questions the survey asked was ‘are you concerned about crime in your area’? When is one not concerned about crime in their area? Not only does such research misconstrue and misrepresent the scope and complexity of the ‘fear of crime’ issue but also potentially fosters and instils fear in the community collectively and in individuals. Further, the methodologies deployed in many governmental and academic studies — at best flawed, at worst manipulative and cynical - are often frighteningly similar to that of the ‘insurance company’ model in their research design, as I have discussed in earlier chapters.

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In March 1997 I was ‘door knocked’ by a woman who asked if I ‘would mind answering a few questions regarding crime in the area’. She went on to inform me that her survey was ‘in conjunction’ with the local police. She asked me three questions. The first was, ‘do you have an alarm? When I informed her that I did she replied, in a patronising way, ‘oh very good’. The second question was ‘have you been broken into at this place of residence?’ I replied ‘no’. The third question was ‘are you concerned about crime in your area?’ I informed her that this was a loaded question, of course everybody is ‘concerned’ about crime in their area, what exactly was this ‘survey’ attempting to prove. This led me to ask her more questions regarding her employer. ‘So you work for the police?’ I suggested. ‘No, but we have police permission to carry out the survey’. ‘So you don’t work for the police and the police are not involved in the survey?’ ‘No, no’ she said. Finally it transpired that she did in fact work for an insurance company. This company had given the local police information that they were conducting the survey and then used the ‘in conjunction’ as a way of giving the survey an authoritative tone. This type of survey is structured to elicit the kind of answers required by the insurance company and can then be used in press releases or advertising as a way of selling a product. Results from
Indeed, Maxfield (1984:4) tells us, without the slightest apprehension, that the ‘British Crime Survey included several questions that sought to *elicit expressions of fear* and related attitudes’ (my emphasis). Thus, the very *raison d’être* of the survey was to *look for fear*, something quite different to seeking knowledge on whether ‘fear of crime’ was felt by their respondents.

One example of research that has attempted to overcome these methodological problems is that of Hogg, Brown, Egger, O’Toole, Stubbs, and Travis (unpublished)\(^9\). These researchers conducted a well-designed and rigorously sampled victim survey in an inner western suburb of Sydney in the late 1980s\(^4\). One of the main research interests pursued in the course of this victim study was to explore the ‘fear of crime’ in the area. However, they were careful to approach the subject of crime fear in a way that addressed many of the concerns I have outlined above. In preparation for this research they reflected on various methods of conducting ‘fear of crime’ research and it is worth stressing elements of their thesis here. They convincingly argued that (Hogg *et al* unpublished:4):

> Most surveys have asked people about their fears or feelings of unsafety directly and in circumstances where the respondent is aware at the outset that the primary interest of the interviewer is in crime or safety. Emotional states or reactions are thereby abstracted from context and from any regard for their specific impacts on the daily lives of citizens. Responses to such surveys which show high levels of fear may in part be tapping into a more diffuse and generalised concern about law and order which the language of survey and poll questions themselves perpetuate. This is perfectly legitimate but misleading...

These concerns were perceptive at a time when, as I have outlined in chapter one, many researchers were quite non-reflexively conducting victim surveys without confronting these issues in any meaningful way. This was the case in Britain in particular where much realist ‘fear of crime’ research was falling into precisely this methodological trap and thus arguably perpetuating and reproducing the fears themselves. The research instrument used here attempts to avoid many of the potential pitfalls outlined by Hogg *et al* and those examined in the earlier chapters of this thesis.

\(^9\) Such surveys can also be used in press releases in order to drum up business. I later contacted the local police who knew nothing of the survey.

\(^4\) I will reference this Article as Hogg *et al* henceforth.

\(^4\) Due to the huge scope of this survey a great proportion of its findings remain unpublished.
Hogg et al (unpublished: 11) also found that ‘fear of crime’ in Australia had been ‘over-simplified and distorted’ by what they refer to as ‘unrefined methods’. Moreover, Goody (1994) suggests that research into fear must now move beyond the questionnaire. ‘The questionnaire is an excellent tool for quick, large scale, analysis, but may fail through its directness and the nature of its formatting to deal with the “delicate” subjects...’ (1995 311). Further, Hogg et al (unpublished) believe that there is a ‘need to distinguish between what people say’ when asked by a researcher or a survey, from the impact these stated feelings and attitudes have upon their everyday activities, behaviours, and routines (also see Stanko 1990). While the interview format used here was operationalised such as to allow the respondent to discuss these issues within the interview, in order to more fully explore these ‘everyday activities’, ‘behaviours’ and ‘routines’ of residents and respondents it was also necessary that the field research should also involve some level of participant observation.

While it might seem appropriate to distinguish between, for example, fear on one hand and concern on the other, on the basis of how respondents ‘everyday activities’ are modified as a result of the former, I wish to at least partly resist this realist-like temptation here. The problem with much of the existing research is that a fear/behaviour modification link is either implied or (spuriously) demonstrated, when this link may actually be an artefact of the research instrument. Fear need not be approached directly in terms of its impact on behaviour, and equally it is important to avoid attributing certain patterns or behaviours (eg. Not going out at night) to fear. It could be further suggested, in response to this, that the notion of fear could be altogether dispensed with and that only a measure of ones propensity to modify their ‘everyday activities’ could provide any real measure of the problem? Might not this conceptualisation provide us with some kind of concrete object to which we can direct the healing hands of public policy? I believe that the answer to this is a qualified yes. The problem is that this ignores many of the complexities in regard to how subjects manage both their safety on the one hand, and their fear on the other. It also ignores the fact that many people engage in risky behaviour for a variety of reasons, often simply – in the case of young people in particular - because they enjoy the thrill of risk taking, or on the other hand through necessity for some. Thus, while I want to acknowledge the benefits that research focusing primarily on the modification of everyday activities might deliver I also want to get beyond any simple cause-and-effect conceptualisation of how fear might modify such behaviours. Hence, the use of many forms of data from an array of sources and indeed the indirect nature of the research instrument.
The Collection of Research Data

This research was conducted in unison with, and with the co-operation of a larger research project which explores the cultural, historical, familial, economic, and imagined constitution and composition of these towns\(^{69}\). The collection of the research data used here involved up to six field researchers making several field trips to each of the three rural towns which were the subject of the research project. During these stays many hours were spent observing the day to day - often mundane - activities of these communities in addition to conducting tape-recorded interviews with a large and diverse cross section of residents\(^{66}\). This has resulted in a richness and depth of data only obtainable from such a large-scale multi-faceted research project and its accompanying research instrument. As Burgess (1982:79) has suggested:

\[
\text{The value of being a participant observer lies in the opportunity that is available to collect rich detailed data based on observations in natural settings. Furthermore, the researcher can obtain accounts of situations in the participant's own language which gives access to the concepts that are used in everyday life. The researcher can, therefore, construct an account of a social situation based on the various accounts that are obtained by informants. In these circumstances there is an opportunity to collect the different versions of events that are available. Here it is the researchers' aim to compare these accounts with each other, and with other observations that the researcher has made in the field of study.}
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Thus, during the course of this research, field notes and diaries were kept and recorded, photographs of the towns were taken, mundane events noted and recorded, conversations recalled, and everyday life in these communities was viewed with an analytic and critical social scientific eye. Even some video footage was taken in the towns in an attempt to capture some dynamic images of the town aesthetics.

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\(^{69}\) I wish to acknowledge the great dept I feel to Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg, and Peter Martin who have allowed me to conduct and indulge my research interests in conjunction with their ongoing ARC funded project \textit{Violence, Rurality and Civilising Processes} on which I have also been employed as the research co-ordinator. I would also like to thank the above researchers as well as Dawn Delaney, Diarna Gordon and Cassandra Piesman - research assistants on the aforementioned project - for the field work contributions to this thesis.

\(^{66}\) This research is drawn from 120 tape recorded interviews. This constitutes a little over 1\% of the entire population of the research towns.
This research instrument itself consisted of a number of broadly based questions about community that aimed to initiate semi-structured 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess 1984). Part of these 'conversations with a purpose' was to explore how the respondents expressed any crime fears both in the community and elsewhere. The respondents were not directly asked about their 'fear of crime'. They were asked three questions about safety in their community, but these questions were asked in the context of another fifty or so questions about the community in general. Thus, the resulting exchanges did not focus distinctly or primarily on the subject of 'fear of crime'. Although this methodology has its own problems in terms of the complexity of the analysis, it made it possible to 'de-centre' fear within the research instrument and in the resulting discussions. Thus respondent's feelings about 'fear of crime' were 'teased out' with reference to much broader and complex local and national issues. Opportunity is given for respondents to develop their answers well outside of a structured questionnaire or survey type format (Burgess 1984:102). The bounded-ness of the localities in which this research was conducted facilitated well this chosen methodology and allowed for a multi-layered and contextually rich form of analysis. The fact that these towns were in some senses very discrete civic entities made the project manageable in the form that it was undertaken. Indeed, the choice of locality was of utmost importance to the accuracy and success for the methodology. Sites were chosen simultaneously with the development of the research instrument and broader methodology.

The interviews ranged dramatically in duration. The shortest interview being fifteen minutes and the longest being seventy minutes. This discrepancy was primarily a factor of the time a particular respondent was willing or able to allocate to the research team and the depth in which particular questions were answered. The respondents were notified at the beginning of the interview that they could discontinue the session at their discretion and that the interview process would take only as long as they wished. Very few of those asked to take part in an interview declined the invitation. Indeed, only two of those asked to take part declined the invitation. In all 120 respondents took part in these interviews. The interviews were conducted between January 1998 and December 1999. The majority of the interviews were conducted either at the respondent's home or their place of employment. Again, the choice of location was primarily left up to the respondent. However, this choice was also influenced by factors such as the respondent's profession; for example police officers were unlikely to want the interview conducted at their

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87 I will henceforth describe the semi-structured set of research questions as the research instrument. This instrument is included in full as appendix 1.
88 The exact number of questions a respondent was asked was highly dependent on their answers and where these answers led the specific interview.
89 See Appendix 1 for a copy of the research instrument.
The majority of respondents were selected through snowball techniques, however, in each
town police, town councilors, welfare professionals and the like were approached.

The interviews - in the context of the broader research project - sought to compare the cultural,
historical, familial, and imagined constitution of these towns with a view to understand what
makes some towns more peaceable, or more violent than others. Thus, interviewees were
questioned on issues of community, kinship networks, local economy, historical issues, their past,
knowledge of crime in the area, their everyday activities in the town. These cultural contexts
provide a deeper insight into the constitution of people's fears or concerns (see Walklate 1995,
64). As I have suggested above, issues regarding fear were never approached directly but through
broader conversations. More often than not the discussions broached the subject of safety rather
than fear per se. Most informants conceptualised themselves not so much as fearful, but as safety
conscious. While this is not to imply that many were not in some way, or in some situations
'fearful' of crime, it is worth stressing again the problematic of reducing the interviewee's
emotional responses or expressions and everyday practices to being factors directly associated
with fear and/or risk.

Walklate (1995:57) rightly argues that to conceptually transform fear to safety, and for that matter
safety to fear, is not a straightforward process. Further, directly linking fear, risk, dangerousness,
and behaviours and practices together is both theoretically and empirically problematic. Such
linkages may appear to be useful in seeking solutions to concerns about crime, for example in
order to produce literature which is designed to enable individuals to manage their risk. However,
research which reduces or ignores the complexities of this subject runs the risk of providing
solutions that only serve to make the problem worse. An individual's 'fear of crime' is not based
on simply calculating competing risks and choosing from possible courses of action on numeric
balance. Individuals are likely to vary considerably in the amount of information and/or resources
they have in which to engage in such processes (see Walklate 1995 64, Sparks 1992:132). Hence,
the importance of the discursive terrain through which such utterances and courses of action are
mediated.

From the outset the field researchers involved in this project approached their work in an ethically
sound, culturally appropriate, and gender sensitive way. Indeed, it was of great concern to the
overall project that the archetype model of the city-based authoritatively educated anthropologist

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90 This research instrument was designed collectively by the research team of Karry Carrington, Peter Martin, Russell
Hogg and myself.
travelling to rural areas to 'study' the unusual locals was avoided\textsuperscript{91}. This is not to suggest that the role of researchers in this project has been a purely objective one in which they simply collect a plethora of data that can somehow be unproblematically studied and compared. On the contrary one must acknowledge that the makeup of the researchers’ backgrounds, experiences, cultural histories, personal characteristics, and prejudices will to some extent unavoidably influence the research findings.

The following discourse analysis only comprises a very small portion of the total interviews conducted. Indeed, due to the indirect approach of this research design, only a very small proportion of each interview touched directly on issues associated with or involving the ‘fear of crime’. This in itself is testament to the relative (un)importance of fear in the everyday lives of the respondents. However, the exploration of these broader concerns has meant that not only was there some focus on how the respondents behaviour and routines were modified in relation to the ‘fear of crime’, but that there was an investigation of the more complex discursive connections that the ‘fear of crime’ has with other localised and general issues in specific towns. As I will argue below, issues like race, rural decline, the relative homogeneity of community, localised policing procedures, media reportage, town planning, tourism, and local cultural knowledges and practices are important elements in understanding how the ‘fear of crime’ manifests itself in such settings and in understanding how our respondents articulate or indeed play out their fears or concerns.

\textit{Discourse Analysis}

The analysis of the research data that follows could be best described as a discourse or discursive analysis. Foucault (1972, 116) argues that discursive formations are the general enunciative systems that govern a group of verbal performances, they ‘divide[ ] up the general plane of things at the specific level of statements’. Thus, discursive practices are not homogeneous or somehow linked in a linear tradition to some kind of historical origin. Rather, discursive practices are ‘a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a

\textsuperscript{91} The data produced will therefore be an amalgam of the experiences of those studied and the experiences and backgrounds of the researchers (Burgess 1982:89, Dawe 1973). However, care has been taken with this research in order to ensure that each interview has been conducted in an appropriate way for both ethical and technical reasons. The team involved in the research comprises of three men and three women, two of the men being from rural backgrounds and one identifying herself as an indigenous Australian. The team is varied in individual ages and in backgrounds. The voices of the researchers are often present in the analysis that follows. Where interviews have obviously been directed in certain ways due to the background and experiences of the researchers I have attempted to indicate this as such.
given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of the operation of the enunciative function’ (Foucault 1972: 117).

Foucault further suggests that ‘each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true…’(Foucault 1984:73). In the opening chapters I have argued that particular understandings of the ‘fear of crime’ have become objects of the governmental and disciplinary general politics of truth in late 20th century western societies. I have plotted the emergence of these using the theoretical tools offered up by Foucault known as ‘governmentality’. Here I want to suggest that, at least at the level of lay knowledge, the general politics of truth that govern verbal performances and discourse regarding the ‘fear of crime’ also vary significantly between similar towns within identical temporal frames. Further, that this is also true at the micro level of community: that each of the communities discussed here indeed have their own general politics of truth that vary considerably from town to town and community to community. In order to explore these discourses it becomes necessary to stray from the recognised tools of the governmentality literature; the ‘official’ archive. Here lay knowledges of various kinds are afforded the same level of status as the ‘official’ archive. Thus, not only will it be observed that dominant social scientific and popular lay representations of ‘the fear of crime’ only selectively reflect the diverse range of localised understandings and conceptualisations of what constitutes fear, but that these understandings are quite discursively marginal when localised settings are more closely investigated.

The research data provided by the multifaceted research instrument establishes an insight into these ‘historical rules’ that govern verbal performances in the social, economic and geographical areas examined in the study. Thus, the discursive strategies of the respondents, rather than offering us some objective reality of the fear the respondent is experiencing, tell us much more about the arrangements of the social systems in which the respondents find themselves, and how these systems produce and re-produce fearing subjects or otherwise. We cannot say that the ‘fear of crime’ as an objective reality in any direct way causes a respondent to express their fearfulness. Rather, it is the social and discursive arrangements through which such utterances are mediated that govern their own discursive form or physical expression — in the form of risk avoidance. Thus, this discourse analysis attempts to tease out some of the issues that govern the expression of the ‘fear of crime’ in particular ways in particular localities.
The Towns and the Themes

These three rural towns were each chosen as research sites for specific reasons in regards to their respective economies, racial makeup, industry, relative isolation, and their population numbers. Each of the towns consist of, and are constituted from, quite different cultural and historical backgrounds. Inevitably, however, there are also many similarities, not least of which is that each town is situated in Western NSW and thus share many elements of geography, history, and historical settlement and indigenous dispossession patterns.

Brewarrina is a relatively poor town with a proportionally large Aboriginal population. Gilgandra is surrounded by agricultural properties and has recently been the centre of a law and order debate focusing on tougher penalties and more police. It has also undoubtedly gone through a period of higher than normal rates of officially recorded offending. The town also has a relatively large Aboriginal population. Cobar is a relatively rich mining town, although recent events have seen mine closures and increased unemployment. Thus, at the time this research was carried out Cobar was in a state of change and in the process of re-inventing its future and identity somewhat. I will expand on these differences and similarities in the analysis of each town that follows. See figure two for the respective town populations.

Figure 2. Total Persons in Towns.

There were some consistent themes that ran through the replies recorded in this research. Firstly, in line with the findings of other research, women were more likely to express concerns for their own safety. However, rarely was this concern ever expressed in terms of fear as I will explain
below. Secondly, and also in line with other research findings, men were more likely to express concerns for the safety of women or the elderly rather than for their own safety. Interestingly there was a tendency for men to suggest that they would be fearful for the safety of women in some localised situations where they themselves would show little concern. This is consistent with what I have described in chapters four and six as the gendered nature of the imagined fearing subject. Such was the response for a local RSL manager in discussions regarding some of the local ‘troublemakers’ in the town of Brewarrina:

‘I’m not scared of them, and they know I’m not scared of ‘em. But an elderly woman... walking past the middle hotel, I’d be scared for her...’

Such responses, however, cannot be fully understood in isolation. Taken at face value the response above would no doubt justify many of the simplistic approaches used in ‘fear of crime’ research: men as reckless and fearless, women as fearful, men as protectors, women as trapped and socially disadvantaged by fear. While there is no denying that such stereotypical situations and subject positions exist, such readings turn out to be extremely simplistic when such utterances are fully contextualised, spacialised, and historicised. Throughout the following discursive analysis I will attempt to reconnect, contextualise, and historicise such discursive utterances in order to achieve two goals. Firstly, to explore the complexities of the discursive fields in which these utterances take place. And secondly, to explain and explore the shortcomings of many current approaches into ‘fear of crime’ research. The following analysis will be broken down into three separate sections, one for each of the three research towns. Each specific town analysis will simultaneously contain comparisons to events and discourses in the other towns thus forming a running ‘comparative’ discursive study.

Brewarrina

History and Social constitution

Brewarrina is situated in North Western NSW some 300kms north-west of Dubbo, this being the closest ‘city’ and over 700kms from Sydney. The closest town is Bourke, 99kms to the west. Brewarrina is located on the banks of the Bogan River, part of the massive Murray-Darling river system and has a total local government area (LGA) population of 2193 (ABS 1996), most of whom live in the town itself. Of this population 1165, or 53% of the population identify as being Aboriginal Australians (see figures 3 and 4) although the real total is most likely somewhat
higher. Ninety one percent of Brewarrina’s population are Australian born making the town’s racial and cultural makeup a largely dualistic affair of Aboriginal and Anglo-Australians. Like many rural towns in the west of NSW Brewarrina has, over the past thirty years, been experiencing a progressive decline in its population. The current population of the LGA is almost 30% lower than it was in 1966.

Figure 3. Town Populations Over Time.

In 1974 Brewarrina lost the train service into the town and more recently it has lost bank branches, health services and other amenities adding to the effects of its already isolated geographical position. Indeed such losses have produced a sense of alienation in the town, particularly in terms of state and federal politics with which the majority of respondents had become increasingly disillusioned. There was a general sense amongst the respondents that the major political parties cared little about those in ‘the bush’. Such discontent led to considerable support for the populist Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party in the region, a party with an underlying racist agenda.

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Historically many Aboriginal people do not identify as being Aboriginal for fear of added government intervention in their lives. Although this statistical problem seems to be receding there is little doubt that some still fear making public their Aboriginality.
Although Brewarrina is located at the crossroads of a number of major inland roads its isolation could hardly be more startling. The town is surrounded by an arid landscape suited only to a small range of agricultural practices - sheep and cotton make up the majority of agricultural land use in the area (see plate 1). The town is also the home of a kangaroo meat factory that at the time of writing employed up to forty locals.

Plate 1. The arid hinterland surrounding Brewarrina.

The banks of the Bogan River at Brewarrina have profound significance for the local Aboriginal people and those from surrounding areas. The river near the town centre is criss-crossed by a large number of elaborate stone structures. These structures are ancient Aboriginal fisheries which were still in operation early in the century. Historically, these fisheries were the site of massive tribal gatherings attended by Aboriginal people from many tribes and localities. The fisheries, coupled with an impressive Aboriginal Cultural Museum provide for some tourism in to the town.

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93 One could suggest that the existence of such traps makes a mockery of the notion of terra-nullius, the legal precept on which Australia was settled and colonised and on which Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their land.
The white settlement of the area now known as Brewarrina, as with the rest of the continent, made life for local indigenous people perilous at best. Just outside of Brewarrina at a location known as Hospital Creek a memorial marks the site where up to 350\textsuperscript{44} local Aboriginal people were massacred by white squatters in the late 1860s. Such events have been all but wiped from the white local history books and collective memories of the Anglo population, however, they are not forgotten by many local Aboriginal people. In 1887 (see Mathews 1977) a mission was built just outside of town and all of the local Aboriginal people were forcibly relocated there. Moreover, Aboriginal people from other tribal regions were also forcibly relocated there—no doubt many peoples from hostile tribal groups were forced to reside away from their lands, and with their tribal enemies. The mission only closed its doors in 1966 and from then on a large group, of largely institutionalised people, were moved back into Brewarrina and its surrounding satellite ‘suburbs’. One such suburb is ‘Dodge City’, a neighbourhood first constructed in 1966 precisely for the housing of the ‘mission people’. It is situated one kilometre to the west of the town, it has no shop, no public phone, and on the map provided by the local shire council for tourists and other visitors it does not exist. Thus, attempts to render the local indigenous population invisible are alive and well in Brewarrina. This seeming denial of the Aboriginal identity of the town also renders a rich and alive traditional Aboriginal culture invisible to the white community. Many Aboriginal elders that we spoke to expressed the view that this culture was still a vital part of their everyday lives but was completely hidden from the broader community. Ironically, many of the local indigenous population are anything but invisible, and as I will explain below, it is this visibility that contributes greatly to perceptions of crime and unnuilness in the town and how the ‘fear of crime’ is expressed in this locale.

In 1987 Brewarrina became a focus of media attention after ‘race riots’ broke out in the town. The riots began when anger regarding an Aboriginal man ‘dying’ in police custody came to a head on the day of the dead man’s funeral. Many Aboriginal people had travelled from other areas for the funeral greatly increasing the local population. There was also a media contingent in town to cover the event. Most residents consider these riots a blight on Brewarrina’s good reputation and attempt to play this part of their recent history down. Many also explained to us that the riots were started not by local Aboriginal people, but by ‘blow ins’ who had in turn been incited by the visiting journalists—reputedly those working for the ABC\textsuperscript{45} who had ‘provided alcohol’ to an angry mob. The riots garnered national television coverage and many local

\textsuperscript{44} This number is contested depending on whose version of history you believe.

\textsuperscript{45} The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia’s public broadcaster.
residents blame and have not yet forgiven the ABC. There seems little doubt that this event and others have made many locals guarded in their willingness to express their feelings in studies such as this. Thus, this may explain some respondents’ seeming attempts to play down any concerns about crime.

**Discourse and Analysis**

Brewarrina has a surprisingly high police presence in terms of police per resident in the population. Twelve officers are stationed in the town, more than one per every two hundred residents. Crime was generally of quite high concern with the residents. However, most conveyed the belief that the town was a relatively safe place and that apart from locking doors on houses and motor vehicles concerns for their personal safety rarely altered their everyday behaviours. There was no concerted denial that crime did occur in the community but there seemed to be a general attempt to ‘play down’ any overbearing concerns. The local police sergeant, a thirty five year old male, expressed this quite clearly suggesting that, from his position of relative authority, he would tell visitors that the town was a safe place:

‘Generally people ask, is it safe to walk the street at night, and I say, of course it is. We have had assault and robs [robberies] here but...’

Although understandings of the town’s relative safety were the most regularly articulated discourses, not all residents were quite as willing to share this relatively positive view of the town. Some expressed a fear for the safety of others, if not necessarily showing a great concern for their own safety. There was some evidence to suggest that these types of concerns were most often expressed by those who were more recent “blow ins”66 to the town. For example, this next response comes from a thirty five year old RSL manager, a resident who had only moved to the town two years earlier. What is particularly interesting in his response is that his focus on safety is simultaneously motivated by an undercurrent of racial tension if not racism.

Q: ‘Do you think this is a safe town?’

A: ‘People come into this town and they’re scared. You know, of the swearing - you can walk up the street you got blokes using F’s and C’s and yellin’ it out at the top of their voice and callin’ everyone a white C or whatever, you know, that’s not on. That’s not a community environment, especially for children. When
you got a bloke walking up the road swearing and carrying on, you know, I don’t know how many times I’ve had windows smashed in this place’. 
Q: So do you think it’s unsafe?
A: ‘Well to a degree, I would not bring my children up here’.
Q: The way it is now?
A: ‘No, it’s too racist (sic), yeah, they say about the white side of the population being racial (sic) against the Aboriginals, well I don’t believe that’s right, I reckon it’s the Aboriginals (sic) are racist (sic) against the whites, cause that’s all you get all the time, its always “you white, you white”’.

What begins as a discourse on fear, safety and dangerousness, ends up as a discourse on race and difference, even when the interviewer attempted to lead the respondent back to questions of safety. It is not the ‘fear of crime’ that worries this informant, apart from having ‘smashed windows’, rather, it is the fear of difference and disorderliness that is of concern; the nuisance of mostly minor property crime. This also appears to encompass an insecurity of being in a minority population. As I suggested above, in this town those who identify as being Aboriginal outnumber those who identify as white or non-Aboriginal\(^7\). Hence, what could have constituted - in written survey form at least - a ‘fear of crime’, was in fact not simply that at all. Rather his concerns were based more on commercial imperative than on concerns of personal or public safety. Disorderliness on the streets was seen as a detriment to the business of the RSL (see plate 2). There was little indication that the informant saw himself or others as being at risk at all, and indeed he certainly showed no sign of anything that might rightly – in the terms of the existing ‘fear of crime’ literature - be conceptualised as a ‘fear of crime’.

Plate 2. A police officer confronts a local Aboriginal woman drinking in the park at Brewarrina.

\(^{7}\) In a town like Brewarrina one could be a local for up to five years and still be conceptualised as a ‘blow in’.

\(^{7}\) 53% of the population identify themselves as Aboriginal (ABS 1996). However, it is likely that the Aboriginal population is much higher than the official statistics reflect given the reluctance that many Aboriginal Australians still feel in identifying their Aboriginality.
There was however, some evidence, largely circumstantial, to suggest that concern about crime had changed or curtailed some long time rural cultural practices in the area. One elderly farming lady suggested that the long held country practice (tradition) of holding and attending ‘balls’ (fund raising social dances) had died out because of people’s concerns about crime. However, the concerns she expressed were not to do with walking the streets alone, or being out at night more generally. Indeed, rather surprisingly, the concerns she raised were not to do with fear for personal safety at all as this statement clearly suggests:

There’s no balls (now), there used to be a golf club ball, the RSL club ball, hospital ball, you name it everyone would have a ball. It used to be fantastic. No more.

Q: Why is that do you reckon?
A: Crime. You wouldn’t like to go in there and go to a ball and be all dressed up and come back three hours later and find your cars gone, or been damaged. See that didn’t happen [in the old days]. When you first came here you didn’t have to lock your car... back in the seventies early seventies, you did not have to lock your car. Look at it now days.

So for this respondent the practice of holding, or attending, social balls had been curtailed due to concerns about crime, but this change was certainly not expressed in terms of fear or concerns for personal safety. Rather, it is the risk to property which has made it undesirable to attend — or even to hold - such events and which according to her has led to their demise, a demise which she laments. It is also worth noting, however, the demise of the country ball is not a phenomenon particular to Brewarrina. Indeed social and cultural changes and difficult economic times in the bush would seem to be more to blame for the demise of the ball than would concerns about crime per-se.

One very common discourse expressed regarding concern about crime, particularly by people in Brewarrina, was that crime happened elsewhere. Again, this is in line with the findings of other researchers (cf. Weatherburn et al 1996:1). The sense of knowledge about, and of, others in small towns seemed to engender a sense of safety almost exclusive to the particular location for many residents. It was the unknown other space, elsewhere, that was fearful and unsafe. This was particularly true for city spaces. This young childcare worker describes how her everyday practices of safety are modified if she is in the city (in this case Sydney):
A: ...suppose you feel more secure in a place where everybody knows you. In Sydney you drive along and you got all your doors locked.

Q: So you have no need to do that here?

A: No!

Q: So you think Brewarrina is a safe place?

A: Oh Safe, but if you go out and cause trouble you find it, like anywhere.

So here, although personal safety is an issue, it is not as much of an issue in the interviewee’s home-town as it is elsewhere, most notably in Sydney. Rather, on a local level, if one risks performing particular types of behaviours which ‘cause trouble’, one risks their own personal safety and the safety of others.

Similarly a council manager describes how he feels safe in Brewarrina but that this same feeling of safety would not be present, and indeed is not experienced, in other towns. It is worth noting that this respondent is not a long time resident. However, his position at the council may have prompted him to paint a positive image of the town for the interviewer. It is also worth adding that he intended leaving the town in the near future at the end of his contract:

A: I would feel safe walking around the streets at Bre at night, I wouldn’t feel the same safety walking around the streets of Bourke, Walgett, or even Toowoomba at night, Dubbo at night.’

Q: Wouldn’t you feel safe in Dubbo, I would...?

A: ‘I’ve got some good friends in Dubbo and relying on them and on what you read in the paper and that sort of thing... we went for a drive down the street on - we were down there for a Wedding - Sunday ... I don’t know, it’s just a feeling that it’s unsafe...[ ]... no, I feel safe walking around the streets here in Brewarrina.

Another interesting and important point to make about this exchange is that the interviewer was, at the time of the interview, a resident of the Dubbo area. She is surprised when the respondent names Dubbo as an area that he would avoid because of feelings of unsafety. Further, it transpires that his feelings of unsafety in Dubbo come not from his own knowledge of the area but from the advice of ‘friends’ and from ‘what you read in the paper’. This is obviously at odds with the experiences of the interviewer. Thus, it appears personal knowledge of respondents to an area
may engender a sense of safety through knowledge and familiarity, whilst fear, anxiety and concern regarding security in other places is often based on second hand knowledge.

The same can be said of the response of this shop owner, a male 40 years of age:

Q: Do you personally feel safe living here?
A: ‘Yeah, I think it, yeah, compared to ah...I think it is a safe place to live, I don’t feel that there’s a problem at all, my mum’s 83 years old she strolls down the street every day and back again, she doesn’t feel unsafe, ah I walk down the street anytime of the day or night and wouldn’t feel any more at risk than anywhere else. And like there’d be places that I could think of where I wouldn’t walk down the main street, in the daytime probably, let alone the night time’.

Like many of the above respondents this man felt that violence was elsewhere. Unlike some of the respondents above, this man felt not only at ease with his own safety but with the safety of women and the elderly, in this case his 83 year old mother. It does not take a great deal of investigation into the background of the respondent to understand why this man may have such different views to the RSL manager to take one example. It transpires that this respondent’s wife is Aboriginal. Further, he has lived in the town much longer than the RSL manager, thus he has a deeper understanding of both localised cultural practices and the towns people. Thus, this local cultural and historical knowledge engenders a sense of safety that seems less attainable to newcomers or ‘blow-ins’.

Gilgandra

History and social constitution

Gilgandra – meaning long waterhole - is situated in central western NSW on the gently undulating land surrounding the Castlereagh River. The shire has a population of 5000; 2000 of these live in a rural environment while 2500 reside in the town proper. The closest city is Dubbo which is situated only 62km to the Gilgandra’s south. Dubbo is an inland city of 35,000 people and its relatively close proximity makes Gilgandra quite unique in comparison to the other two towns discussed here. Ironically, many locals see this close proximity as problematic in terms of the numerous services Gilgandra has systematically lost to Dubbo in recent years as Dubbo
expands at an astonishing rate; indeed Dubbo is Australia’s fastest growing inland city. Gilgandra’s surrounding hinterland supports primarily wool production and wheat growing.

Gilgandra, unlike Brewarrina, has not experienced massive de-population. There has been a slight drop in the overall population since 1966 but this drop seems to have stabilised (ABS CDATA 1996, ABS Census 1966). However, a stable population certainly does not indicate that the town is experiencing anything like a period of growth. Indeed many residents are concerned that more services and retail outlets may soon face closure. Like Brewarrina the majority of the population are Australian born, 93% (ABS CDATA 1996) in fact. Unemployment at the time of writing was 9%96, much higher than the state average, and 13% of the population work in agriculture, fishing, and forestry industries, far and away the biggest employing industries in the town and its hinterland.

Unlike Brewarrina most of the Aboriginal population of the town are relatively recent arrivals moving into the town proper in the 1940s. The town itself, again unlike Brewarrina, does not have any prominent Aboriginal sites, or if it does, history has conveniently erased their significance. Only 9% of the local population identify as being Aboriginal. However, the Aboriginal population of the town itself — as opposed to the hinterland — is likely to be proportionally higher given that few Aboriginal people live in farming or agricultural environments in the area.

Gilgandra’s past is dotted by a number of notable historical events. The town’s first European settlement began in the 1840s when squatters first arrived in the area. Gilgandra was then proclaimed in 1888. In 1900 the area became infamous after the brutal murders of two women, and three children by the Governor brothers and John Underwood. All three men were Aboriginal and all five of their victims Anglo-European. The town today is still struggling to deal with this part of its history. Locals admit that there are tourist dollars to be made by the exploitation of the site of the murders as a tourist destination but there are many ethical and racial issues which must be reconciled with such exploitation. Indeed a worker in the tourist centre expressed to the field researchers the problematic nature of promoting tourism around the event.

Gilgandra is also ‘famous’ for the ‘Coo-ee marches’, a march held in 1915 that began in Gilgandra and went all the way to Sydney rallying volunteers for service in the First World War. The march plays an important part in the remembrance of Gilgandra’s history and is celebrated
with a festival each year (see plate 3). Indeed, when locals are asked of important historical
events in the area they unfailingly place the Coo-ee march at the top of the list. The march seems
to constitute an important inscription of the town’s representation of itself. More recently the
march as a symbolic gesture of defense, strength, and social change has taken on a new role in the
town. When residents decided that they needed to take a public stance against lawlessness and
what they considered to be the growing crime problem in the town it was the march which
constituted the vehicle through which they vented this concern publicly.

Plate 3. A local woman paints a
mural to commemorate the
Coo-ee march.

Discourse and analysis

In Gilgandra, two recent acts of violence have put quite a different slant on the fear and safety
issue. In one incident an elderly woman was bashed as she left her ground floor unit to investigate
a commotion. She spent over a week in the local hospital. In the other incident, a visiting Telstra\textsuperscript{99}
worker was seriously bashed, on two occasions in one night, by a number of young local men.
These two serious incidents took on almost mythical proportions in the town and the stories
gradually became represented differently and more seriously than the official versions seem to
justify. These stories seemed to have increased the community’s concerns about their own
individual risks of becoming victims of crime. Moreover, the concerns about crime became so
great that law and order meetings and, as I suggested above, marches were held in the town. A
march was even organised to promote the message that the town needed a strong response to
criminals. The idea was to draw the State Government’s attention to the issue and supply the
town with increased policing resources. Indeed such calls for more police resulted in NSW police

\textsuperscript{98} As of the 1996 census.
\textsuperscript{99} An Australian Tele-communications company.
commissioner Peter Ryan visiting the town on the 23/3/98 in an attempt to placate residents. The Gilgandra Weekly (24/03/98) quoted Mr Ryan saying:

Everyone wants more officers in every town you go to, but I’m afraid that just isn’t the case [that new officers can be allocated]. What we have to make sure is that we enable the officers to do the best they can with what resources they have.

The story then went on to suggest that:

One of the difficulties that police face is the restrictions that have been placed on them since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and amendments to the crime act. It is necessary for two police officers to be present when an offender is charged.

Thus, the reforms intended to ensure the well being of those in custody were represented in the paper as being an impediment to police work. Such criticism of the legal system is common amongst some outspoken Gilgandra residents, as I will explain below.

Crime, or at least perceptions about crime, in Gilgandra had undoubtedly changed many of the everyday practices of safety for a number of the towns-people. Some, for example, had purchased dogs as a form of protection for themselves and their property. Others had installed alarms and/or sensor lights. Unlike Brewarrina a large percentage of our interviewees said that they would not walk the streets at night. However, there was also a feeling at the time that the interviews took place that the worst of the ‘crime wave’ was over and that, for the most part, normality had returned to the town. A further contrast with Brewarrina was that the respondents seemed much more willing to talk about crime. Indeed, it seemed a hot topic of conversation. Where the residents of Brewarrina seemed careful to paint a relatively positive picture of their town, the residents of Gilgandra made a point of talking up the crime problem seemingly in the hope that authorities would pay more attention to their calls for increased police numbers and tougher sentencing. Indeed, reporting in the local papers The Gilgandra Weekly and the Dubbo based The Daily Liberal constantly reflected on, or increased, these concerns. At times the reporting reached a fevered pitch such as in this reportage from The Daily Liberal (Hardy 26/2/98) headlined Gilgandra becomes a town under siege:

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Frightened residents of Gilgandra were barricading their homes last night in fear of gangs which blitzed their town in a spree of terror.

While angry townsfolk begged for more police protection, Dubbo MP Gerry Peacocke warned: ‘I have reliable information that people are starting to arm themselves – because of the failure of the courts to protect them’.

In a scathing attack on judges and magistrates, Mr Peacocke warned ‘This will lead to bloodshed – and the people to blame will be the courts, who are unleashing dangerous criminals on the community’. [...] 

The frightened community awoke on Wednesday after the gangs:
- Attacked and injured a guest after breaking into the Windmill Orana Motel.
- Punched a 68-year-old woman in the face in her own home.
- Trashed the local Fosseys store in an orgy of destruction that caused damage estimated at thousands of dollars.
- Smashed windows in another motel.

The thugs rampaged through the streets at will and a strong force of police were still hunting them last night.

[...] (the Mayor Mr Weelan said) ‘Our people are looking for action – and we’ll be looking at zero tolerance policing when we meet Mr Bender’, he said.

[...] We also need a lot more support from the government than we’re getting. The government must look at the needs of policing and social behaviour in rural areas’. [...] (emphasis added).

This single story contains enough emotive language to lead the most hardened reader to believe that Gilgandra is indeed a very dangerous place. The residents are repeatedly described as frightened, their town is supposedly being blitzed by gangs in a spree of terror. Indeed, there is the fear that this orgy of destruction might lead to bloodshed as these thugs continue to rampage.

This type of emotive reportage is certainly not isolated in the district. The following week the reportage continued in The Daily Liberal with the headline Gilgandra faces its own civil war (27/02/98).  

[^1]: The close proximity of Gilgandra to Dubbo means that many ‘Gil’ locals read the Daily Liberal.

[^2]: I have commented in chapter five of this media device of using ‘war’ metaphors to describe crime.
Over the past two years The *Gilgandra Weekly* has also been literally littered with crime related stories\textsuperscript{102}. Adding to the general reportage has been regular features by the then local NSW National Party MP Jerry Peacocke\textsuperscript{103}, who is an outspoken advocate of ‘zero tolerance’ policing. His opinion column regularly sports headlines such as *Street violence is increasing* (The *Gilgandra Weekly*, 14/06/97) and *Parental responsibility a major issue* (The *Gilgandra Weekly*, 16/06/98).

Like many local small town papers part of the normal journalistic process of The *Gilgandra Weekly* is to report the police and court news. Thus, each week the local police sergeant is interviewed in order that the town can be updated on criminal events. Even when no crime takes place space in the paper is filled with a crime story as was the case on 7/04/98 when the headline for the ‘police column’ was *Police report quiet week*. Most crimes can appear in the column a number of times, once for an apprehension, once for a run down of the charge(s), and once for the court appearance and sentence. Indeed, such reportage processes constitute a process of public shaming of offenders as they make their way through the criminal justice system.

However, the simplistic and often violent snapshots of the town offered by the media are quickly dispelled once one actually converses with the local residents. Indeed the situation is infinitely more complex than such reporting indicates with issues of race, politics, youth, popular understandings, and myth playing important parts in the constitution of residents’ understandings of both themselves and their town.

Those working in the policing area, for example, indicated to us that it was not particular incidents, or statistical rises, in crime per-se that were responsible for crime being such an important issue in the town. The local police sergeant had worked in Gilgandra for ten years. He grew up in Dubbo nearby and has lived in the general area for his whole life. He admits that Gilgandra has had some crime problems but also suggests that the perceptions of the community are important, particularly regarding community fears:

\[Q:\text{ You were saying that the crime on the streets was what scares people more than anything, and if they see the police during the day, they assume they are}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{102} This is in stark contrast to how crime is publicly discussed in Brewarrina which has no local paper.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{103} At the time of writing Gerry Peacocke is the Mayor of Dubbo.}\]

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there during the night, if they don’t see them during the day, there’s a fear that they are not doing their job correctly?
A: That’s correct. Community perception. I’ve actually proved it here. We had a few problems, and what I did was I had the majority of my staff working at the night-time, but as people weren’t seeing police in the daytime they actually complained. As soon as I put the police back on of a day, they were quite happy, cause they saw them walking around, so the perception is, if they’re there in the daytime, they’re there in the night time. The same can be said for street crime, or crimes in general. If they see what they consider to be the unruly group hanging around in the daytime, they’re obviously hanging around in the night time, regardless of whether they are or not. Because they see them in the daytime, the perception is they’re there at night.

For this police officer, public perception is a major concern in regard to effective policing and public well being. He regards the town rumour mill to be one of the most serious impediments to his work, and the publics’ fears that are generated by this rumour mill to be a strain on the entire town. He goes on to suggest that it is not crime per-se that produces these fears and perceptions, rather it is difference. Not just difference in racial or ethnic backgrounds - although this is an obvious issue in the town - but generational difference between the generally ageing town population and younger members of the community. These fears are then exacerbated by youth who congregate in groups or dress in a different fashion from what might be expected. Indeed the police Sergeant believes that people from different generations have totally different expectations of what is acceptable behaviour:

The biggest problem is groups. People in groups cause a fear. If you dress different... a seventy year old person’s idea on how people should behave, as opposed to a fifty, as opposed to a thirty, as opposed to a twenty year old, they’re all different. A seventy year old person is threatened by ten twenty year-olds. And rightfully so. A twenty year old person is not threatened by ten seventy year-olds. Because there’s no way in the world that group can hurt them. So it’s perception. Whether or not there’s a problem there I don’t know. The group of seventy year-olds consider there could be, and they’re at risk’.
Q: And this is an aging community as well, so you get a lot more of this type of perception?
A: Certainly, yes.
He also believes that the law and order marches that were held in the town, rather than countering fear and combating the crime problem, actually made the situation worse. Once the town begins to represent itself as one with a crime problem a feedback loop (see Bauman 1993, Hacking 1995) is produced which actually heightens fear and strengthens the perception that crime is out of control in the town. The media then feeds off the rumour mill and vice-versa.

The perception [of crime], be it right or wrong, is blown out of proportion [by the media]. It’s education. I’ve had many a meeting with people that say this has happened, that has happened. When you put the acid on them and say well ‘commit yourself to paper, they go “oh, can’t”’. I suppose people listen to gossip. It’s much easier to listen on the radio to a riot at Gilgandra than it is to ‘police at Gilgandra have locked up such and such...’ We’re an information society and people become scared here and now because they hear something [in the media]. There has been, they call it law and order marches here, to get extra police and get this and get that, that to me is negative on the community. There’s got to be better way to do it, because it then makes the town looked at negatively... The media’s there waiting. Every time they see Gilgandra they go ‘BINGO they’ve had the law and order marches, lets blow this out of proportion’... We’ve had reports of all sorts of things that are not genuine, they’re not right.

Indeed the law and order marches have come to define the ‘crime problem’ in the town. The ‘logic’ is – or has become - that there must be a crime problem because there are law and order marches. The marches become part of the fear feedback loop that becomes entrenched in the public psyche. Further, the marches themselves were calls for outside help to rectify the town’s problems. ‘More police’ and ‘tougher penalties’ were seen to be the solution. However, the police Sergeant indicated that the result of all this was that it actually hindered that community in finding localised solutions to the problems, from taking ownership of the problems and rectifying them within the community.

However, some residents took more concrete steps to guard themselves against the risk of becoming victims of crime. In some cases elaborate security systems were put in place to ensure the safety of person and property. This example from a local Historian, a woman of approximately seventy years of age was not an isolated response to the perceived crime problem:
I have sensor lights all around the house, if somebody walks in my front gate - at the moment it's not going because I think it's blown a bulb - ... that light goes on, if they walk around the side, there's one there that goes on, walk around the back, there's one around the back that goes on. If I thought someone was outside of a night I certainly would not open my door, and I would be very careful about looking out too. I'd have to have all the lights off in the house before I looked out of the window, because I wouldn't want them to see me looking out, whoever might be out there, because I think you're asking for trouble'. If you opened the back door and someone hit you, well your well within your rights to open your back door, I wouldn't open the back door. I've got deadlocks on all the doors, well the police advised me to put deadlocks on all my doors, it cost me I think $5000 dollars to upgrade my locks... its deadlocks on all these doors, and there's locks on all the windows. ...but if I'm here on my own, and I hear somebody at the back door, mostly what I do is I turn on a few lights in the house and whoever... I think they knock to find out if you're home and if I didn't turn on the lights they might smash a window and come in! But, I don't know, I think I've learned to live with it. My granddaughter's the one that gets more upset than I do.

Obviously this respondent has some complex strategies for keeping herself safe from a threat, that to her, is indeed a reality. If she suspected a prowler she would 'have all the lights off', if the prowler saw her looking out she would 'be asking for it', thus she would be careful to remain invisible. Her strategies have gone much further than just her own bodily actions however, and extend to spending '$5000' on security hardware. This seems to have made her feel more secure, or at least she has 'learned to live with it'. Again though, with all her elaborate security devices she never expresses fear per-se. Rather, her actions are discussed as safety strategies. This is significant given the format of our research instrument and semi-structured interview techniques in that fear is not necessarily a component of her safety strategies and she remained un-sensitised to the notion of fear.

Another respondent, an elderly retired man of approximately eighty years, laments that he is now unsure whether it is safe enough to venture out at night. He also has his own methods of risk minimisation:
A: At least we used to be able to go out at night and be safe, and I don’t know whether it’s safe enough...
Q: What about locking your doors and that?
A: Oh well we never locked our doors... but now you don’t dare go out [without locking them]. And I lock my doors up there, and I leave music playing, to give everyone the impression that someone’s there. But there are..., we had an incident in our street the other day, someone lit a fire in one of the old houses.
Q: There was no one living in it at the time?
A: No, no, Aboriginals used to live in it but I don’t know who lit it.
Q: So is it because of things that you know happen, or reports, or gossip that you feel unsafe?
A: I don’t feel unsafe too much, I take precautions. I don’t feel unsafe myself. I get warned ‘don’t go out at night, outside the house if you hear any noises’ but I don’t always pay too much attention to that.

One important contextual point to make about this informant is that he lives in a ‘granny flat’ at the back of his daughter’s residence. This may affect his views on safety in that he feels more secure having his daughter within close proximity. Further, his habits or strategies concerning his own personal safety are obviously influenced by the wishes of his daughter. So while he questions his own safety his insecurities have more to do with the warnings of others rather than his own experiences. ‘If I want to be private I can’ he suggested. He begins his response suggesting the he does not ‘know whether it’s safe enough’ to go out at night. However, by the last sentence he suggests ‘I don’t feel unsafe too much’. Thus, his feelings of unsafety come from contexts which are out of the normal experiences for him. In his normal regime he ‘takes precautions’ and is thus not fearful.

His views on the police also importantly back up some of the comments made by the police Sergeant as is evident in the following exchange:

Q: Do you have much to do with the police?
A: I don’t have anything to do with the police, and I believe that they’re a bit lax.
Q: As in not following up, not policing on the streets, or just not putting people away?
A: No, I don’t mean it that way... ah... you don’t see too much, they’re not visible enough to me down the street. I mean you might see them occasionally down the
street but you could go down there time and time again... but they might be
around at night, I don’t go down the street at night so...
Q: Do you feel threatened down the street?
A: Well, I’m only there at daytime, I wouldn’t go at night. ...You see a lot of kids
down there during the day, you wonder what they’re doing? That never happened
in my day...

Thus, for this informant there is absolutely no doubt that police visibility affects his concerns
about crime. When he says that the police are ‘lax’, it is not necessarily that they are not carrying
out their duties appropriately, rather it is that they are ‘lax’ in not keeping a greater presence in
the town. This means that although ‘...they might be around at night...’ the informant would not
feel secure enough to go down town to find out because this would be an ‘unsafe’ situation.
Further, given his situation he may have no need to go down town.

The protests against local crime in 1997 led to about 500 people marching from the council
building to the police station in order to air their concerns which included calling for more police
and harsher penalties to deter criminals. There was at this time certainly a problem with break and
enter offences in the town with many that we spoke to having been victims of such offences in
recent times. This respondent expressed how he believes crime in the town has become a major
problem in recent times. It has impacted on his daily routine in that he has to spend more time in
his shop in order to ease the fear of his female shop assistants:

Q: What about other issues such as crime, how do you think it’s changed?
A: For the worst... I’ve got a pretty good security system and I only live up stairs.
But the girls were scared at night because of the armed robberies that were going
on, like a couple of service stations were armed robbered (sic), ah, it made it
harder on myself because I had to be here all the time, from 6 o’clock in the
morning till half past 8 at night. ...back when I was a young bloke you could walk
the streets at night no drama. People used to walk around and go and get an ice
cream at 8 o’clock at night in the summertime... You wouldn’t dare do it now.
You wouldn’t go down to the pub and leave the house open.

As with many other respondents, indeed the previous respondent, here there is a nostalgic lament
for ‘the good old days’ when you could leave ‘the house open’. This respondent has found
himself acting in the role of security guard on his own premises at night in order to ensure the
safety and security of his shop assistants. Therefore, his risk reduction techniques have impacted quite strongly on his everyday activities. Again the respondent’s knowledge of crime was second hand: ‘the armed robberies going on’.

The following respondents, two young women, also expressed a very common concern about the threat to personal safety in the town. They too had undoubtedly changed their everyday approaches to personal safety in the town. Again this is in line with the findings of other research (Stanko 1990). Indeed it appears that their practices of self government had become quite debilitating:

A1. I would never myself, or let my children, walk anywhere at night. Even six years ago I walked at night to go to things but now I never would.
Q. So you don’t go anywhere?
A1. Well I drive, but I wouldn’t walk.
A2. No I wouldn’t either’.

This type of response was far from isolated. Many of the towns-people, particularly the female inhabitants, expressed similar concerns. Such was the response from these two older women:

A1. They rock your roof and stone your windows and all sorts of things. It’s quite out in the open, there’s nothing underhanded about it.
Q: I heard hunter park was a bad area?
A1. It’s a bit better now I think, but still you wouldn’t want to walk through there at night...
A2. I wouldn’t walk anywhere. When young men, young fit men, eighteen to twenty five get their heads belted and broken ribs and... so if they get it what hope has a woman got.
Q: So is this through actual knowledge of events or is this through media...?
12: Oh no it’s knowledge, its all knowledge.

Thus, if local knowledge can add to a sense of safety in the town, as seems to be the case with Brewarrina, it can also add to a sense of unsafety as seems to be the case in Gilgandra. The role of the local newspapers in disseminating this knowledge and the types of knowledge they choose to disseminate must also be acknowledged here. Brewarrina, as I suggested, has no local weekly and
thus local crime stories receive much less coverage than in Gilgandra where, as I have suggested above, they receive an extensive and highly emotive coverage.

A young local journalist, who had been in town for only twelve months, suggested that it was not so much the locality but the combination of age and gender that made walking at night unsafe. Again in this instance, this seemed to be connected to the fact that she was new in town:

Q: What do you think about walking down the street at night by yourself?
A: At night? I wouldn’t, no. I wouldn’t do it, not by myself, not because it’s Gilgandra, but because I’m a young female that I wouldn’t do it anywhere I don’t think. I mean you walk down the street in the middle of the day and there’s kids hanging around that you know should be at school. You just wonder why they can’t come down and just get them back up there.

It is important to note how this discourse on avoiding walking at night alone shifts considerably throughout the duration of this response. Although the interviewee suggests that it is not because of what goes on in Gilgandra that she is not willing to walk the street at night but then directly connects her apprehension with very localised issues such as male youth on the streets throughout the day. However, it must be stressed, on the other hand, that these issues are not confined to the Gilgandra locale. Her local knowledge is in a sense intricately connected to her broader understandings of self as a ‘young woman’ and what that means in terms of her vulnerability and risks (see Stanko 1990).

There were also additional issues regarding what we could broadly define as ‘fear’ raised in the interviews carried out in Gilgandra. One is the fear of reprisals if a crime was reported by a resident. It was suggested that this reluctance to report crime was a considerable hindrance to local police. Thus, these two women suggested that:

A: If you do [take a stand] they take it out on ya family, or your car, or your house, or your kids or... cause they know where everybody is.
Q: So certain groups have got that much of a hold over the community at the moment?
A: Yeah, I think people are scared to do anything about it.
A2: They know they’re in a position to threaten.
A1: If you see them they’re always in groups.
A2: ...and what are you going to do anyway, as soon as you do something you’re gonna be sued for assault or, you know....

So for these respondents the (‘they’) ‘criminals’ are almost untouchable. This is seen to be due in part to the relatively small size of the town and its population and the resulting ease with which the ‘criminal element’ can monitor such a population. This would seem to be an inversion of the rationale for why rural towns are not seen as fearful, that the ‘criminal element’ can be easily monitored. Thus, these ‘groups’ are understood as having a ‘hold over a community’ that is ‘scared to do anything about it’.

The local police sergeant also had his ideas on this. Although he did not believe that in reality reprisals were a significant problem he suggested that there was certainly a community perception that they were:

> I think that the biggest problem is fear of reprisal. Once again it goes back to perception. People don’t want to become involved because they think that their house will be vandalised, they’ll be raped, murdered, and hung upside down. That type of thing. I’m not suggesting that that will happen, but that’s why they don’t want to become involved... They don’t do anything to protect their comfort zone.

Thus, he sees this perception as an impediment to his successful policing of the town. For him, community involvement in the policing process is the only way to successfully confront criminality in the town. Therefore, it was important that this fear of reprisals should be minimised.

The director of the local hospital eloquently explained how he thought fear had taken hold in the community following a number of highly publicised incidents. His account is interesting in that he is not a local resident but travels to work in the town daily from a close by larger centre. He believes that the close knit nature of small town culture makes it easy for concern about crime to permeate through the community:

> When there was that last big upsurge (in crime) over the summer months, when it received all that publicity, we had people here [in the hospital as patients] who’d been victims, and that caused a lot of discussion amongst the staff, there were
sort of ripples going through the community daily about who'd done what and what was going to happen next, and in a small community, that, that has quite an impact socially. People then start expressing their fears about going out at night, that fear then turns into anger, you then get threats of repercussions, and 'we know who did it and we're going to get them', and a lot of that emotional talk comes out, especially when one of the victims was a lady in her sixties... and her nephew was working at the hospital so the police were coming in and getting statements and what have you so there was a lot of trauma, and how could these louts hit an old lady, and all sorts of innuendoes about what it was for and so on. So the gossip mill takes off. And the hospital, as I said, because most of the staff live here in town they were part of it, they also were frightened or angry, or whatever, they had their own feelings about it, ...the media kept it on the boil a bit.

This response explains certain crimes can take on mythical proportions in the psyche of the local populous. Indeed it goes some way towards explaining the workings of the fear feedback loop in the town which was discussed earlier.

However, as with the hospital worker above, some residents showed a real understanding of the way 'fear of crime' was generated in the community. Once again the possession of this knowledge was particularly the case for those working in parts of the medical profession. When a young mental health worker was asked about safety in the town he replied as follows:

There's nowhere I wouldn't go at night or any other time. But, I'd be a fool if I was to walk through the park on the way home from the pub at 2o'clock in the morning, well intoxicated, cause like anywhere, I'd become a target, vulnerable. There might be one or two offenders in town who are brave and would do that sort of thing [assault somebody who was intoxicated late in the park]. There really is only one or two people. But that creates fear, the media jumps on the bandwagon, the old gossip and rumour mill and stuff like that, and all of a sudden... you just create this self perpetuating or generating fear...

So although this informant did practice at least a minimal amount of risk management, his belief was that it was highly unlikely that he would be a target. Certainly his reply would seem to be in line with the arguments of Walklate (1995) and Sparks (1992) regarding the ways knowledge
about risk is culturally mediated and differently accessible to individuals. His relatively authoritative position makes it possible for him to calculate his concerns about safety fairly explicitly in terms of risk and its management. He knows that there are only ‘one or two’ people in the town likely to commit a violent offence against him and even then, only if it is late and he is ‘well intoxicated’. Such knowledge is backed up by his thorough understandings of the lines of communication in the town which generate concerns about crime in the community, the ‘media’, ‘gossip’, and ‘the rumour mill’.

Thus, questions of locality, local knowledge, town culture, and communication networks seem to influence the ways in which fear (or otherwise) is expressed. The contrast between Brewarrina and Gilgandra could hardly be more striking. In Brewarrina, with much higher reported assault rates (see figure 1) and crime rates more generally, very few respondents expressed to us that they were fearful or unsafe. In Gilgandra, on the other hand, a town with lower crime rates, feelings of un-safety (although not necessarily fear) were frequently expressed. As we will see below, respondents in Cobar expressed their concerns rather differently as well.

Cobar

History and social constitution

Cobar is primarily a copper mining town located some 300kms west of Dubbo. It marks a central point between Melbourne and Brisbane and so also operates as a truck and traveler stop on the Kidman Way, the highway that passes through the town. Cobar, like Brewarrina is extremely isolated, perhaps more so. Unlike Brewarrina and Gilgandra, Cobar was not established on an inland river. Indeed, Cobar’s Aboriginal meaning is ‘small waterhole’. The population of Cobar is 5676 with only 8% of the population identifying as being Aboriginal. Unlike the other towns in this study the population of Cobar has been steadily climbing over the past decade whereby it has increased by almost 20% (refer figure 3). The history of Cobar shows that the population of the town has been a fluctuating one and is highly dependent on the copper market and the economic sustainability of the mining industry. Unemployment has been very low in the town until the recent mine closures. Ninety one percent of Cobar’s population was born in Australia thus making the town extremely racially homogenous. The average income of workers in Cobar was also substantially higher than in the other towns, with 6% of the population earning between $1000 - $1500 per week (ABS 1996). In Cobar 12% of the population are employed directly in
the mining industry with the majority of the town’s population dependent on this industry for their livelihood (ABS 09/96).

Settlement in Cobar began in about 1869. From the outset a water supply for the town was of major concern. Indeed, when the first European explorers, Charles Sturt, Hamilton Hume and their party passed through this region of Western NSW in 1828, the general lack of a water supply had made them fearful for the safety of their expedition. Yet, by the time Surveyor-General Mitchell and his party surveyed the area some six years later, white settlers (squatters) were literally following in their fresh footsteps (cf. Clelland 1984: 15-17). Tanks, wells, and bores accompanied the early settlers who were primarily there to explore the idea of mining copper in the area. Copper was first extracted in Cobar in 1871 (Minfact 23: 1). From the outset then the Cobar economy, based as it was on mining, was quite different from other towns in Western NSW whose economies were established almost exclusively on the sheep’s back.

Literature from the Department of Mineral resources suggests that Cobar went through a ‘great Cobar period’ between 1869 and 1921 (Minfact 23: 1). The notion of this ‘great Cobar period’ is no doubt true in terms of mine prosperity and population growth in the town. However, a closer examination of Cobar’s history also suggests that during this period life for the average local resident was anything but great, particularly when it came to living and health conditions in the town. Dust from the mines, and indeed the accidental poisoning of water supplies, meant that ill health was common. Many residents — such as school teachers who could ask for alternative postings — relished the chance to leave the town and the population turnover was rapid. It was not until the late 1950s that a permanent water supply was established by piping water from Nyngan, some 130km away (No Author 1969).

Contemporary Cobar is notable for the size and number of licensed premises in the town. The main street is literally lined by five huge hotels that dominate the streetscape. Indeed one, the grand hotel, sports a huge beer can on its awning, a symbolic reminder of the popularity of the cold amber fluid in the town. Cobar has the highest per capita intake of beer of any region of NSW. The miners work and drink hard in the town — as they have for the past 130 years - and now earn enough money to support this relatively expensive social habit. The relative affluence of the mining sector has also been paramount in keeping the cost of housing high in the town. Where rental costs in Brewarrina could be described as minuscule and Gilgandra not much more expensive, rental in Cobar in times of mining affluence is on par with rental in inner city Sydney — around $300.00 per week for a three bedroom house.
Plate 4. The main street of Cobar. Note the giant beer can on the awning of the Grand Hotel.

However, the cycles of good and bad times in the mining industry and the international pressures on mining economies continue to place Cobar in a tenuous socio-economic position. Our research visit coincided with a period of layoffs and shutdowns in the industry which had obvious effects on the town.

Plate 5. The desolate view of Cobar’s hinterland. The scars of mining on the landscape are everywhere apparent.

**Discourse and Analysis**

Concerns about crime in Cobar were considerably different to both Brewarrina and Gilgandra. Indeed, in Cobar there seems to be very little concern expressed apart from a recent feeling that youth crime had worsened slightly. However, the types and seriousness of the crimes committed by youth and described by our respondents were relatively insignificant compared to the other towns. The police sergeant in charge of policing the town described it as an ‘oasis in the desert’ compared to other country towns in the west of NSW and indeed a sought-after destination for officers working in western NSW. This is generally borne out in the reportage of the local paper the *Cobar Weekly*. Each week the paper includes a column of police news titles ‘Police Beat’. This column highlights all the police incidents for the week. The following is an example of a heavy week of policing in the town:

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Cobar Police have experienced another very busy week. Over the past seven days, three juveniles have been arrested for the possession of cannabis. A woman was arrested for driving with a high range prescribed concentration of alcohol. A juvenile was arrested for stealing a motor bike. Police executed a search warrant on a house an arrested the occupier for having a firearm without a license. Police found a burned out Valiant sedan on Louth Road. A number of break, enter and steal offences have been reported...[goes on to list these eight offences which include two private residences, a tool box, and rims and tyres] (Cobar Weekly 5/08/98).

Certainly there appears to be few major offences (at least public/visible/reported offences) committed in Cobar that come to the attention of, or are reported to, the police. However, there was evidence from the interviews that interpersonal violence in the town’s pubs was relatively routine. Moreover, in contrast to the visible representations of crime, there is evidence that since the mine closures domestic violence has increased within the town (Cobar Weekly 3/06/98). This issue was also of concern to a domestic violence support worker in the town who we spoke to.

There had also been some recent reports of a man ‘trying to pick up school children in a car’ (Cobar Age 9/9/98). This led police in the district to offer this warning reported in the Cobar Age (9/9/98):

Constable Charne Musgrove said on Monday more such incidents had been reported to Cobar police. ‘Parents are reminded to encourage children not to talk to strangers or to get into vehicles with strangers...’ Police have been giving ‘stranger danger’ talks at the Cobar schools in recent weeks to emphasise these dangers.

Indeed the police ‘stranger danger’ talks were also covered by the local press complete with a photo of the police constable in front of a group of young school children.

The notion that danger might come from ‘passers through’ manifests itself in varying ways in Cobar. On the 5/11/97 the Cobar Weekly reported the observations of a local security worker who
was concerned about the growing numbers of children roaming the streets of Cobar at night. She was quoted in the interview as saying:

I have seen boys playing chicken with cars and semi trailers, in all kinds of weather, even wet weather. What concerns me is that someone is going to get seriously hurt one day. They wear dark baseball caps and dark clothing and put their lives at risk darting in front of vehicles. ...These boys are putting themselves at risk in other ways. They are just lucky that they live in as safe a place as Cobar — but you never know what sort of person might be passing through town. ...I blame the government for this type of situation. They have taken powers away from parents and police and given them to kids who don’t know how to handle them... (*Cobar Weekly* 5/11/97).

So although there is contained in the statement the discourse that the boys are a danger to themselves and the town — the interviewee is a security professional — her supposed reason for wanting to get them off the streets is that they themselves may be ‘at risk’ from somebody ‘passing through’. The idea that a local might be a danger to the boys is not even entertained — it is the ‘unknown stranger’ (feared subject) who is dangerous. Further, the blame for these boys being ‘at risk’ is squarely placed with ‘the government’ for taking away the rights of police and parents to effectively govern their children. So to some extent the local community and parents are pardoned and the responsibility for these boys is abdicated.

However, in the collective conscience of the Cobar population crime seems of little concern, and as is reinforced by the interview transcripts below; the ‘fear of crime’ seems to be focused outwards, to other areas or strangers passing through, rather than toward their own community. Indeed, there was a notion held by some that we spoke to that the stranger offering local children a lift was from out of town, thus the problem was to some extent externalised. When the coordinator of a business group in the town, a young woman, was asked ‘are there any crime problems in this town’ she replied:

A: I think there will be if they take the court system out, because that’s what people use, the public vilification which is hated here because everyone knows everyone.

Q: So shaming is important?
A: Yeah, that's what's seen as a big deterrent here. I'd say really that its [crime] not a big issue, but there does seem to be an increase in break-ins in homes an that. From what I can work out they're saying that it's bored kids or whatever, because their parents may not be able to discipline, like their dad might be away now commuting and mum's just too tired running the household, getting food on the table so the kids are just running... I get back from work sometimes and there are just kids looking for something to do. I think it's more of a boredom thing but I don't know...

Q: So it could stem from the mine closure then?

A: Yes, well there does seem to be an increase, but I don't know if that's just 'cause its being publicised more now or what... It was all positive in the newspaper before but now it's all negative so I don't know if they've decided right... maybe there's been a change over of editors or something and they purely write the negative stuff...

...Generally crime in the past has been just a couple of families, a couple of groups of people, and then they grow up or leave or whatever... until lately and reading in the paper, and I go, oh wow, but I don't know if that's just to cover some of the issues now...

Like most country towns the residents of Cobar are concerned about having services withdrawn from their community due to the broadening web of economic rationalisation -- this is despite the long term increase in population. The withdrawal of the court system is one such concern. In a small town the court system has other roles that reach beyond merely the handing down of a punishment to those who transgress legal boundaries. An appearance at the local court potentially enables the entire town to name and shame the offender. Thus, the threat to 'downsize' this service is seen as a threat to the entire peace-ability of the town, and therefore to the safety of its citizens. So crime not being seen as a big problem is prefaced with the notion that it could well become a problem if these services are withdrawn. The interview above also puts a different spin on the 'problem' of kids on the street. From her perspective it's is not government intervention that has led to 'boys' being on the street, rather it is family and community unrest possibly caused by mine closures.

Connected to this is the concern about unemployment. Some of our respondents believed that the closing of the mine has meant that youth are not being disciplined as they once would have because the fathers have to leave town in search of work. Thus, mine closures, unemployment,
and a perceived increase in break-ins combine to create a negative media image within the town. This image is then internalised by the citizenry which helps perpetuate a cycle of negativity.

A local school principal suggested that the reported rise in break-ins could be attributed to a very small group of youth and a rising unemployment problem, although the town still enjoys relatively low unemployment rates:

A: There is some [youth crime], you would have read the local newspaper there’s been an increase in break and enters and that sort of thing.
Q: But are they young people doing that do you think?
A: I’m not really sure, I know some are... [ ]...the impression I get is that they are probably people in their late teens, you know, twenties, that sort of age group.
Q: So would there be a relatively large group around that age group unemployed around town?
A: No, I don’t think it’s a big group.

The relative absence of detected crime in Cobar seemed to mean that what might, in other towns, be relatively common occurrences took on greater relative importance. Although the media had reported an increase in ‘break and enters’ (Cobar Weekly 11/11/98, 18/11/98) knowledge of these seemed relatively confined to secondary sources rather than the first hand experiences of our respondents. Concerns about increases in crime were intimately linked to concerns about the employment situation. Personal safety was of little concern as this young business woman insisted:

Q: So you feel safe yourself?
A: Yeah, I don’t feel threatened at all, oh, you know I go to the pub every now and again, you know I do meet friends there. But I’ve go no worry about driving my car and I’ve got out of the habit of locking my car and I’ve still never had a problem with that, never had my house broken in to.
Q: What about your personal safety, you never feel threatened or...
A: No. Not at all, but then, I think I’m quite outspoken and people would probably know that... maybe if you were a bit more submissive or that.... but I’ve never found it an issue. But I do meet a lot of people, so maybe you also get into that, you know where everyone sort of knows everyone; I don’t know what happens behind the scenes. But I’ve never had a problem going out anywhere.
Her risk minimising behaviours, or rather lack of them, contrasted significantly with many of those of the female respondents from the other towns. Rather than locking the car, or learning new strategies to decrease her risk, she has ‘got out of the habit’ of doing this since moving to Cobar. She suggests that her position in the town may lower her chances of being victimised and that she has never found safety ‘an issue’. That is not to suggest that she roams happily around the streets at night but, rather, that she feels no constraints about going about her social and business activities, such things as ‘going to the pub every now and again’.

She also suggests that knowledge of others may keep her own concerns about crime down. The fact that she ‘meet(s) a lot of people’ through her work means that she has knowledge of a high percentage of residents, thus, the fear of strangeness is minimised. Indeed, the lack of strangeness in the town could have a profound effect on residents’ understandings of crime in their community and thus their lack of any real expressions of the ‘fear of crime’. Cobar has only a very small Aboriginal population and very little ethnic diversity generally. Indeed, it could be described as consisting of a rather well off, homogeneous, Anglo population. As was mentioned above 91% of Cobar’s population was born in Australia.

Even for elderly locals safety and fear are not huge issues in the town, even though – as in all of these towns and with most respondents - they do feel that ‘things have gotten worse’ in recent times\textsuperscript{104}. This discourse is actively pushed in the local paper with headlines such as ‘Crime figures jump’ (Cobar Weekly 3/12/97). As in Brewarrina, for Cobar residents there was a tendency to see issues of safety and fear as elsewhere. Thus this response from an elderly town local, a woman in her seventies and a CWA\textsuperscript{105} member, is fairly typical:

Q: So you like the town, you feel safe...
A: Yes... I wouldn’t walk around the streets at night by myself. But during the day... but I believe in some towns it’s not. Now I’ve been told just recently that a person was told by somebody else that it’s not even safe to walk down the street of Narandra\textsuperscript{106} in the middle of...daytime. Have you heard anything...? That was one report this person had ‘cause she used to live at Narandra.

\textsuperscript{104}I have commented in chapter 5 of Hogg and Brown’s (1998) notion of law and order nostalgia.

\textsuperscript{105}Country Mens Association.

\textsuperscript{106}A country town situated 100km from Cobar.
What begins as a focus on the local situation quickly shifts discursive ground without really teaching on any local problems at all. In terms of minimising her risk this woman does not walk ‘the streets at night’ but does not feel that this is anything abnormal—it is not expressed as fear. However, stories that she has heard from ‘somebody’ about elsewhere, ‘Narandera’, indicate that the situation there is quite different and that even in daylight walking alone is a dangerous event. Indeed she questions us as to our knowledge of problems elsewhere. All this serves to paint a relatively safe situation locally.

She continues by suggesting that:

…it’s sad to see the way things are going, I don’t know what the solution is, I think some of it is that too many mothers are working, and the children are left to their own devices too much.

But even though she harbours the notion that things are in decline because of ‘mothers working’, there is no indication that she is actually fearful for her safety, even in what may have been a threatening situation such as what follows:

Q: You haven’t had any problems with break-in’s or anything like that have you?
A: Well, a few years ago I had a prowler here one night. I was asleep in bed and I heard a knock, it must have been to waken me and when you’ve been asleep you’re not quite sure. Then I heard the door bell tinkle, I thought oh that’s strange and I looked out through my bedroom window, and you know, I couldn’t see a vehicle there, oh I must have been dreaming and went back to bed. And then I heard someone trying my bathroom window, and I foolishly put the light on and rang the police, of course they went [the prowler]. The police came up but I said oh, I’ve done the wrong thing I put the light on and rang, but I could see the silhouette of someone through... If I had done it [rang the police] in the dark they might have caught someone. Anyway, they did eventually get that person.

Throughout this reply regarding a potentially fearful encounter with a prowler, particularly for an elderly widow living alone, she shows little sign of actually having been scared at all. Certainly she eventually rang the police and turned the light on. However, her concerns about carrying out this line of action was that she had scared the prowler away—she was angry with herself (see Ditton et al 1999). For many having the prowler leave her property would have been the main
concern but for her this was ‘the wrong thing’ to do, and indeed ‘foolish’. In a sense her feeling was that she had failed in her civic duty in the way she reacted because the police had not ‘caught someone’. Here crime is certainly conceptualised as being elsewhere and affecting others as far as this informant is concerned. The locality of the prowling incident — in her home-town and outside of her residence — cognitively map it as relatively non-threatening. This is in stark contrast to the way in which crime is conceptualised in the Gilgandra locality. I would hypothesise that an encounter such as the one described above, should it have happened in Gilgandra, would have been recalled quite differently: more emotively and much more fearfully. Further, the fearfullessness of the encounter in itself would probably have been enough to ensure that it became part of the town ‘rumour mill’ and thus part of the perpetuation of the town’s fear feedback loop.

Another local concern in Cobar at the time of our research — as was mentioned above — was reports of an attempt to abduct children as they walked home from school. However, this reply indicates that this concern was not just a recent phenomenon because it has happened ‘all over the ages’:

A: Another thing that is a big worry, and of course it’s happened all over the ages, is there are people that hang around waiting to pick up children in their cars, abductions... Well that has happened [here].
Q: That would be a shock for a community like this?
A: Well that’s right, in a place like this you don’t expect that...

A little later, the respondent asks the interviewer a rhetorical question and gives her answer thus. Again crime is elsewhere:

What do you think about all these robberies where they have syringes, and knives, and things? I think they did the wrong thing with the guns, they shouldn’t have taken all our guns[107], because they’re turning to other things now. It’s knives and syringes and that’s frightening.
Q: That hasn’t happened out here has it?
A: No, but you hear of it [elsewhere].

[107] The Australian government has recently put in place tougher gun licensing laws and a gun buy back scheme in an attempt to minimise firearm-related deaths in Australia. This legislation was passed in the wake of the Port Arthur massacre. This ‘disarming’ troubled many people in “the bush”.

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So what is frightening to this informant is robberies with ‘knives and syringes’ that she has heard about that happen elsewhere. It can be concluded that knowledge of such events is gathered through the metropolitan media or out-of-town personal contacts because apparently it ‘hasn’t happened’ in Cobar. However, what is also interesting in this reply is that guns, obviously much more lethal a weapon than either a knife or syringe, are seen as an answer to this problem and are somehow much less frightening. This is not so surprising when it is considered that guns are much more a familiar part of life and culture in Cobar as in most of western NSW. Once again it is the unknown quantity, the knife or syringe just like the stranger passing through or the city far away, that is to be feared.

Ironically, it may be that the reasons for a general lack of fear about crime in the Cobar locality might well be similar to the reasons for a profound concern about crime in a town like Gilgandra; local informal networks of communication. It seems that in Cobar the local pubs are an important site for the dissemination of information and the general isolation of the town assures that this information is primarily locally based. Such was expressed by a local police officer, a woman in her twenties:

We’re so isolated that there’s not influence from other places as well, it’s one place where everyone knows each other and knows what they’re doing, I mean because we’re so far from every other town everyone does know who you are and what you’re doing.

Thus, in a place where ‘everyone knows each other’ there are likely to be few ‘strangers’ for locals to fear. The isolation means that residents can separate local experiences from those seemingly violent events taking place in other locales. Events elsewhere only serve to confirm that Cobar is indeed an ‘oasis’, even if there is a perception that crime has increased slightly since the mine closures.

One respondent, who lives out of town but works in Cobar and boards in the town during the week, suggested that, like the other locals interviewed here, Cobar was a place where she felt safe. Indeed she suggested that most women felt safe walking the streets of Cobar at night. She contrasted her feelings of relative safety in Cobar to her concerns about walking around Condobolin - the township nearest to her large property—at night:
I haven’t heard that women in this town feel unsafe. The lady I board with, she always goes to the hotel on Friday night and walks home, her and her friend. She’s never felt uncomfortable about walking home... [People] who come in the younger age group haven’t said that they experience any problems...

Q: But they’re also not likely to either?
A: Oh no, but they will talk about someone else who has... They seem quite happy to go out and walk home at night. There’s not a high level of fear amongst the people, you know to be on the streets at night of anything. Where I wouldn’t walk the streets at two in the morning in Condobolin.

Further, she was amused that some in town had held ‘law and order’ meetings given the relative safety of Cobar. What is enlightening, however, is that she also talks about the violence at the local pubs between ‘friends and acquaintances’ and how this violence is part of the culture of the town; indeed she agrees that it is a town sport. When questioned about firearm related injuries in the town she suggests that these are not common at all but that:

...stabbings and bashings are probably - and knocking each other out - is much more common here [than firearm injuries].

Q: Oh, so you are aware of that?
A: Oh, physical assaults and violence in the pubs, and in general... people that are known to one another generally.

Q: So they don’t become police matters?
A: Oh yeah they would, but a lot wouldn’t. They’re not that serious. ...scrag fighting on a Friday night in the Ox [local pub] doesn’t really rate the police unless someone manages to get seriously injured.

Q: So it sounds like a sport almost?
A: Oh well it is for the observers, if not for the participants.

Thus, her response contains some minor, yet very interesting and important, contradictions. While pointing out that pub violence is relatively common in Cobar, even amongst women, she is far more fearful of strangers while ‘walking at two in the morning in Condobolin’. Thus, her local knowledge of the pub fights rendered them non-threatening to her. This was in contrast to the general feelings of the research team when they visited the local pubs. One pub in particular seemed a potentially very violent and dangerous place to us as relative strangers to the town.
This same respondent also indicated that the local school, with the help of local police, kept tuanting to a minimum. Thus, there were few young people visible in groups in the main street. This strategy was later outlined by the local high school principal. Passes were required for all school students who were not on school grounds through the school day. Thus, the visibility, or lack of visibility of young people in the town may keep perceptions about personal safety at a low level.

One interviewee, a local publican did however have concerns about the youth of the town having no responsibility and no respect for others and their property. However, she didn’t believe that this was problematic either for her safety or the safety of others in the town:

Q: What about safety, personal safety?
A: In the hotel you mean?
Q: Oh, for yourself in and around the town...?
A: Well I’m silly and walking down the street doesn’t worry me, quite frankly, honestly, I’m not worried, I’m not scared of anything, in Cobar I’m quite happy, I walk home from the pub at four o’clock in the morning, I don’t worry about it, I’ve got no problems about coming down here and unlocking the hotel myself, I’ve got no worries about locking up the pub on my own at night, as far as I’m concerned it’s a fairly safe town.

In this exchange the interviewee expressly communicates that she is not fearful of crime in the town. Indeed, even with the pub probably being the most violent site in the town she feels no real concerns for her personal safety. Interestingly though she suggests that she’s ‘silly’ for having such a lack of concern. Her failure to be a responsible fearing subject is internalised to the extent that she is willing to problematise her lack of fear. Any fear she feels is projected on to the future as she laments the changes which she sees an inevitable as expressed here:

A: I am worried about the future, because you hear down the line all these little things happening, that’s a bit of a worry…
Q: So have you been broken into here?
A: Once last year but I think it was only kids and they didn’t really do a great lot… but there has been a lot of break-in’s around town, mainly juveniles. But listening to what’s down there [in the cities, Sydney] we’re gonna get the blood filled syringes, we’re probably gonna get a hold up, but I’ve dealt in this hotel for
twenty two years on and off, and I count my money in the office every morning without the door closed, tucked away a bit, but I don’t sit there and be frightened "oh my god someone’s gonna come and bong me on the head", I don’t worry about that. I could quite happily take a bag of takings down the street, deposit it in the bank without having to think I need someone with a shotgun, like basically as I said, I think safety in the town is pretty good.

Thus, until the ‘city problems’ hit Cobar she will not become a ‘responsible’ fearing subject. This same absence of fear is expressed in response to questions about security at home:

Q: Home Safety?...
A: Yeah, I’m a bit slack on it. I’ve kept my front door locked all the time, I’m a bit slack on the side door, cause [we’re] coming and going all the time, I say to Peter, make sure the front door’s closed when you go cause I there’s no car there I just think someone might go and try and break in...[ ], but it doesn’t worry me cause I haven’t got a great deal of valuable things in my house. [...] I know there’s a lot of neurotic people in town - not neurotic, safer - who every time they walk out they lock everything up and things like that, but I mean we have our spates here I suppose, they are only being cautious. You do have to lock your car in the town where before you didn’t [...].
Q: So you don’t hear of many assaults in the town or anything?
A: No very few really. No, as I said you get your pub brawls, you get people who want to get pissed and have a fight, but ordinarily you don’t get someone being attacked in a back ally and having their wallet stolen, not a lot of it. It might happen every now and again, but it’s nothing to really worry about.

Here she first suggests that there ‘are a lot of neurotic people in town’ but changes her way of expressing this. ‘Neurotic’ becomes ‘safety conscious’. It is difficult to know whether or not this slippage has to do with what she is expecting the interviewer to deem as acceptable attitudes in relation to safety, or if she does really have mixed feelings as to whether some people are better described as neurotic or safety conscious. Ultimately, however, she is acknowledging the expectation that she should be regulating her body and belongings in ways that minimise her risk of victimisation. She is also resisting the governmental discourse on safety, she feels safe, even
given that she acknowledges the relative commonality of pub brawls. The absence of any notion of stranger danger, as far as she can tell, in the town puts her at relative ease.

Comparison and Discussion

This research indicates, that in each of these three towns, fears about crime are experienced and expressed in quite different ways, and that these differences are also quite notable between individual residents of the same towns. In Brewarrina, for example, race issues deeply influenced how fear was expressed -- that is when it was expressed at all. Those who seemed to be at ease with the race relations of the town expressed little or no concerns for their safety. Some that seemed uncomfortable with race relations expressed some concerns -- even if these concerns were not necessarily experienced as concerns for their own safety. The town history was also such that there may have been an effort on the part of some respondents to downplay their concerns about crime. If this was indeed the case it raises some interesting methodological questions for 'fear of crime' research in general. The methodology used here at least allows us to assume this effort to down-play concerns might take place. If a survey, or an ethnographic study were to be utilised which ignored local histories and events this anomaly might go unnoticed. Unlike Gilgandra there were no calls from residents for 'the state' to 'fix' the crime problem. Rather, there was a general ownership of local issues. Obviously, there are a number of factors at play which produce these differences in discourse. However, amongst these demographic and geographic factors should not be ignored. The mix of Aboriginal and Anglo residents means that it is difficult to Other a minority; to constitute a feared subject. Geographically, the isolation means that relying on state intervention to rectify a problem is simply fanciful.

In Gilgandra many respondents relished the opportunity to discuss concerns about crime in their town. Further, it was often the familiarity with issues in the town which led to concerns about crime in the town. Indeed, many had lobbied tirelessly over the past couple of years to enlist increased government support in fighting crime in the town. In Gilgandra issues of policing and youth visibility seemed to be of vital importance. The town offers an excellent example of a fear feedback loop with many elements of the town's social linkages playing a part in the production of concern. However, here again these concerns were only rarely expressed as fears. Again, we can only wonder what utterances might have eventuated had we asked our respondents specifically about fear. Might we have elicited results that would have enabled us to constitute the population as fearful?
In Cobar, once again concerns about crime, where they were expressed at all by our respondents, were experienced differently from the other towns. Although there was the suspicion that crime was on the increase, there was an overriding discourse which constructed crime as elsewhere and as committed by others. Here Cobar shared some characteristics with Brewarrina. A sense of unease in the community regarding mine closures seemed also to have spilled over into some anxiety about crime in the town. However, this anxiety was minimal compared to the situation expressed by the Gilgandra respondents.

This research tells us much regarding how concerns about crime in localised areas are constituted. Firstly, the plethora of discourses expressed here tell us that there is little use looking for universal ‘causal’ relationships in ‘fear of crime’ research. Secondly, it shows us that even if there are some connecting discursive threads within localities, it cannot be unproblematically supposed that these can account for situations in other locales in any way whatsoever. Thirdly, it illustrated the importance of local history and culture, of demography and geography in understanding peoples concerns about crime. Fourthly, it indicates the limitations of ‘traditional’ survey style ‘fear of crime’ research. And lastly, it again shows us the limitations of the concept of ‘fear of crime’ and that the concept, as I have argued, is more an artifact of research and discourse than an objective emotional response experienced by great numbers of citizens.
Conclusions

Final Notes and Future Directions

Knowing Less About ‘Things’ is not Always Counter Productive

This thesis has used what could be described as an eclectic, multi-disciplinary, and multi-perspectivist approach to analyse ‘fear of crime’ and the concept of ‘fear of crime’. It has used the tools of historiography, but it is not purely historical. It has engaged heavily with the writings and work of criminology but it is certainly not expressly criminological. It has discussed how we understand crime victimisation but it is not victimological. It has applied the tools of ‘governmentality’ yet often ventures outside of the general parameters of the governmentality literature. It has been, to some extent, deconstructionist yet has been careful not to fall into the trap of abandoning empirical research and becoming a purely textually focused analysis.

No thesis, however, can be everything to everybody and cover every aspect of a topic. To claim to do so would be foolish. There are no doubt silences and gaps in this thesis that could do with explanation. There are no doubt a number of points that could do with further explication and elaboration. However, as I pointed out in the introduction, many of these should not be seen as weaknesses in argument or missed research opportunities in and of themselves. Rather, these might offer invitations for others to elaborate or ‘move forward’ to new areas of analysis.

‘Game Openings’

In a sense this thesis is meant as a pointer to these new areas of analysis. In and of itself it perhaps offers little to the criminological research of ‘fear of crime’, if this research is conceptualised as a gradual building and accumulation of knowledge that seeks to know the essence of its research object in a modernist sense. However, as a critical reassessment of the research field and research methods it offers a number of new potentialities.

Firstly, it offers a warning to researchers to be wary of the foundationless and shifting nature of the concept of ‘fear of crime’ — and we might expand this to include other descriptive terminology which attempts to stratify this field. It alerts us to the contingent nature of the field of investigation and of the modes of investigation themselves.
Secondly, it implores us to take note of the power effects of both ‘fear of crime’ research and of the notion of ‘fear of crime’ at the level of governance and culture. It stresses the need to understand the implications of our engagement in the field and the various repercussions this engagement might generate.

Thirdly, the thesis offers a sophisticated insight into the assemblage of discourse which constitute ‘fear of crime’. Not only in terms of the relationships within and between communities and individuals, but between individuals and governmental institutions, communities and media institutions and indeed between all of these and social scientists and other researchers in the field.

Fourthly, the thesis implores us to look at the gendered nature of ‘fear of crime’ as a concept and of our research practices in terms of their productive capacities regarding gender.

Lastly, it suggests that the specificities of locality are of vital importance in understanding how fear discourses operate in any community. It suggests that there is a need to look beyond the survey technique and into the social, historical, and cultural specificities of communities, individuals, and their interactions with institutions within and outside particular localities.

**Findings**

Like the discourses that this thesis has traced through the past seven chapters and roughly 91,000 words many of the findings are interconnected and interrelated. However, I have tried to summarise the main points below.

- This thesis has investigated genealogically the emergence of ‘fear of crime’ as a subject within the human sciences – particularly criminology - and in government. In doing so I have suggested, that far from being an objective thing ‘discovered’ – or waiting to be discovered - by the human sciences, ‘fear of crime’, as a researchable concept and a subject for the disciplines, is the result of a number of discursive realignments, technological shifts, historical accidents, political and popular discourses, and governmental imperatives. These include the development of new forms of ‘statisticalisation’ (Carrington et al 1996) beginning in the mid 1960s; the emergence and increasing utilisation of victim surveys within the discipline of criminology and other social sciences; a shift in focus within the discipline of criminology from the offenders on to the victims of crime; the development of new paradigms of thought within the discipline of criminology: paradigms such as ‘new
administrative criminology’, left realist criminology, right realist criminology, and feminist criminology; the utility of ‘fear of crime’ as a technology of government and technology of the self (or soul). These developments and realignments have not necessarily been causal, in any concrete sense, in bringing the ‘fear of crime’ into discourse. Rather, ‘fear of crime’, as a research topic and object of governance, could not have developed the way it has if it were not for these developments.

- This thesis has also explored the ways in which these various governmental institutions and instrumentalities have gradually come to see ‘fear of crime’ as a way of governing individuals and populations. I have argued that ‘fear of crime’ has progressively been conceptualised as a technology of the self, in that fear is seen as a way of imploring individuals to take responsibility for their own safety and to regulate themselves accordingly. This has been in line with a broader shift in governance toward this neo-liberal ideal. In attempting to carry out various modes of this governance-through-fear the subjects of governance have been imagined in various ways. I term these imagined individuals – or ‘dividuals’ - fearing subjects. There are the individuals of crime prevention literature emanating from government departments and some parts of the private sector.

- The thesis has suggested that the ways in which ‘fear of crime’ becomes a discourse within popular culture and the mass media are complex and multi-dimensional. It has suggested that fear discourses in the media are often connected to broader social and political imperatives, and as such belie simplistic analyses critical only of media reportage. Through a thorough analysis of three crime fear related media ‘events’ I have suggested that the tenor of media reportage is highly dependent on other concerns, events, and fears within the community and on other political and cultural discourses.

- The thesis has also explored how and why gender is a potent sign in ‘fear of crime’ research. Here a feminist/deconstructionist methodology was used to problematise gender in relation to the fear of crime’. Indeed, this approach has also problematised the notion of ‘fear of crime’ completely and argued that, as a concept, ‘fear of crime’ has been an intrinsically gendered one. Moreover, the form of analysis has disrupted the lineage of ‘fear of crime’ research which has attempted to conceptualise ‘fear of crime’ as somehow rational or irrational. By deconstructing the lines of binary opposites which inform much of the thinking about ‘fear of crime’ I have argued for an analysis which looks at crime concerns in their specificities. Such
an analysis would be extremely careful in making universalising generalisations about
gendered fear and indeed of almost any other aspect of crime fear.

The thesis has employed original empirical research in Western NSW to disrupt 'taken for
granted' methods of researching 'fear of crime'. It is argued that traditional 'survey' and
'interview' techniques often encourage the fear-laden response from respondents required by
the researchers. This research also offers future researchers a glimpse of how research in to
'fear of crime' might begin to take into account some of the broader concerns of this thesis.
The results of this research indicate that in specific localities a number of intersecting and
competing discourses are likely to underlie how respondents express their concerns about
crime.

For example, the racial makeup of Brewarrina – being that it is majority Aboriginal, the fact
that it has no local newspaper, various historical events (such as the 1987 riots), and its
profound isolation, seemed to influence our respondents to underemphasise any local crime
problem. In Gilgandra by way of contrast, residents freely expressed their concerns about the
town's 'law and order problems'. This was despite the fact that Gilgandra had significantly
lower levels of recorded crime rates than Brewarrina. Here the abundance of crime stories in
the local paper, the presence of a minority Aboriginal population, the close proximity to the
larger centre of Dubbo, and other factors seem to compel many of the towns people to speak
openly of their concerns. Cobar residents expressed differing discourses on crime concern
again. Their extreme isolation and relatively low levels of recorded crime rates meant that
residents in Cobar expressed more concerns for crime in other places. Indeed, their biggest
concerns seemed to be of strangers passing through the town and of crime in Sydney or other
country towns. This was despite the fact that our research suggested that violence – at least
unreported violence – was widespread in the town and that domestic violence was on the
increase.

All this is not to suggest that residents in Gilgandra, by way of example, fear crime more than
residents in Cobar or Brewarrina do. Only that within the semi-structured interview
methodology employed by this project they more freely expressed their concerns to myself
and my fellow field researchers. Remember, we never asked directly about their 'fear of
crime' so as not to reify this experience of their daily lives at the cost of marginalising other
communities. The point is that the 'level' of fear which supposedly underlies these expressions or
utterances is not something tangible that can be measured and known. Rather, if we can
understand the discursive frameworks which induce residents to express their fears we might better understand how these concerns operate within the local context. It may be that they are a productive part of life in the community.

- Finally, all of the above findings and all the elaborations made about ‘fear of crime’ in this thesis have been with reference to what I have called a fear of crime feedback loop. I have suggested that my multi perspectivist approach to the topic has allowed me to explore the ways in which a multitude of discourses, often competing and contradictory, have fed into the feedback loop which has given both the research topic of ‘fear of crime’, and the popular and governmental discourse of ‘fear of crime’, a particularly pervasive reality as objects. This feedback loop seems to be an almost insatiable beast that is capable of increasing in intensity very quickly, and it seems that the more it is fed the more intense and pervasive it becomes. In roughly thirty-five years the ‘fear of crime’ has gone from something unremarked upon to a central concern for the disciplines, for government, and for the population. It has been the target of millions of research dollars, of hours of research, of policing, of governance, and the like.

A Final Remark

This thesis has never argued that people do not fear crime, nor has it argued that we should put a stop to ‘fear of crime’ research. Indeed, one of the main reasons I have written this thesis is because of the importance I place on this research and on the topic. However, I believe critical analysis is both justified and necessary. It is my hope that the thesis might offer something to future researchers and in particular may give those who continue to reconstruct a purely objective reality around the notion of ‘fear of crime’ cause to rethink their position.
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APPENDIX
Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

Personal and Local History

1. Can you tell us whereabouts in (insert specific town) you live? (map)

Is it different from or similar to other areas of the town or locality? How and Why?

How long have you lived in ......... and what has it been like?

Do many of your relatives live in .........? Have many moved away? Why and where to?

How far back do your family links go in this area?

(for mid / long term residents) Has ......... changed? How?

(for new residents) What are your impressions of .........? How does it compare with other places where you have lived?

What type of housing do you live in? Do you (for example) Own your own home, rental, public?

2. Would you prefer to live somewhere else? Why or why not?

What are the things you like about where you live?

What do you see as the major problems confronted the town at the present time?

What is the history of these problems?

Do you go out often? How often? Where? Why? How (access to transport)?

Social Relationships and Locality

1. What types of social organisations exist in .......? (for Ex) landcare, CWA, Chambers of Commerce, sporting, recreational, political, church...

Are you involved in some of these?

Are many people in ..... involved in these?

Which are the most active?
Are people of all races involved in these organisations?

2. Do you have friendships/associations with Aboriginal/White people?
How do these friendships come about?

**Civic and Governmental Involvement**

1. Are you on the electoral roll?
(If not) Why not?

2. (if on roll) Do you vote in council elections? Why or why not?

3. What are your feelings about the local council? Do they do a good or bad job? Why?

4. What are your feelings about the State government? Do they do a good or bad job? Why?

5. What are your feelings about the federal government? Do they do a good or bad job? Why?

6. (if applicable) Do you vote in ATSIC elections? Why or why not?

7. (if app) Do you have recollections of people being separated from their families by authorities?
When did this happen? How and under what circumstances?

8. Do you have adequate access to services such as Medical, Legal, Educational?
If not, why not?
How could this be improved?

**Personal and Community Safety**

1. Do you think .....(town/area) is a safe or unsafe place to live? Why?

Do you feel safe or unsafe? Why is this the case?

What do you think are the main sources of danger or risk? Why? Is this from personal experience? Local newspapers? What others say?

What do you think are the major causes of such safety problems?
Do you think other people share your concerns?

Are you aware of any patterns of violence that impact on where you live?

Do you think there is much hidden violence in .....? Why is this violence hidden?

**Education**

1. **Did you go to school in ... (place)?**

   prompts

   What was school like for you?

2. **Did you continue any education after you left school?**

   If so what type? Where?

**Income and employment**

1. **What is your main source of income?**

   Are you employed?

2. **What is the employment situation of others in you family and your area?**

   What jobs do they have?

3. **Is unemployment improving or worsening in your area?**

   Why do you think this is the case?

**Conclusions**

1. **If you could change things what would be on your wish list?**

2. **How could you contribute to the changes you have suggested?**
THE 'FEAR OF CRIME' AND GOVERNANCE: A GENEALOGY OF THE CONCEPT OF 'FEAR OF CRIME' AND ITS IMAGINED SUBJECTS

By

Murray J. Lee BA (Hons).

A thesis submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in The University of Western Sydney (Hawkesbury)

June 2001
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or a diploma in any University and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text.

[Signature]
Sections of chapters three and four of this thesis have previously been published:

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The writing of a thesis is a long and relatively solitary process. My experience seemed all the more isolated given the relatively long distance between my home and the University campus at which my colleagues and supervisors were based. However, this difficulty was disproportionately offset by the many wonderful people who, over these past years, have supported and nourished me in mind, body and soul - most of whom have given something of themselves so that I might pursue this project, and for that I am eternally grateful.

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Finally, a special thank you to my daughter Manon who celebrates being eight months old as this thesis is born into the world. Seeing her smile, laugh and crawl makes this thing seem pretty insignificant really. I dedicate this thesis to her and Wendy.
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ABSTRACT

The ‘fear of crime’ has become an increasingly popular topic of inquiry for criminology, victimology, psychology and other academic disciplines. Since the late 1960s scholars have offered a wide array of explanations and analyses, from an assortment of theoretical positions, for the supposed increase in the number of crime fearing individuals, or what I will refer to as fearing subjects. Hence, there has been a concerted effort to understand crime fear: to know who is most fearful of crime and why? To know how ‘fear of crime’ affects individuals, neighbourhoods, communities, policing, crime prevention, and social interaction? Much of this scholarship has focused on the rationality or irrationality of these fears in particular population demographics as compared to objective risks. Therefore, ‘fear of crime’ has generally been understood as something separable and discrete from the objective risk of crime victimisation.

This thesis is somewhat critical of this approach. Indeed, it is somewhat critical of the notion or concept of ‘fear of crime’ altogether. That said, the thesis does not necessarily call for an end to the study of ‘fear of crime’ as such. Rather, coming partly from a genealogical perspective, the thesis, firstly, attempts to trace the proliferation of academic, governmental and popular interests in the ‘fear of crime’ in three Western democracies, and secondly, seeks to explain how this interest has affected both the subjects of inquiry and the very modes of inquiry themselves.

The thesis carries out this task in a number of ways by using an array of theoretical and methodological perspectives and approaches:

(1) It investigates historically the emergence of ‘fear of crime’ as a set of discourses in the human sciences and in government. Here, the thesis makes the claim that ‘fear of crime’ is not an objective thing ‘discovered’ – or waiting to be discovered - by the human sciences. Rather, it is the result of a number of discursive realignments, technical shifts, historical accidents, and governmental imperatives.

(2) The thesis explores the ways in which these various institutions of ‘fear of crime’ discourse have imagined the subjects of their inquiries. It terms these imagined individuals fearing subjects. Further, it suggests that with the imagining of these fearing subjects has come repeated and varied ‘attempts’ to govern ‘fear of crime’ through individuals. This is termed within the thesis governance-through-fear.

(3) The thesis discusses the ways in which ‘fear of crime’ has become a discourse within popular culture and the mass media. It suggests that fear discourses in the media are often connected
to broader social and political imperatives and as such belies simplistic analyses critical only of media reportage.

(4) It explores why gender is a potent signifier in ‘fear of crime’ research. Here a feminist/deconstructionist approach is used to problematise gender in relation to ‘fear of crime’. Indeed, this approach also problematises the notion of ‘fear of crime’ completely and argues that, as a concept, ‘fear of crime’ is intrinsically gendered.

(5) Original empirical research in Western NSW is used to disrupt taken for granted methods of researching ‘fear of crime’. It is argued that traditional ‘survey’ and ‘interview’ techniques often encourage the fear-laden response from respondents required by the researchers.

The thesis is not the final word on ‘fear of crime’ or its related fields of research. Rather, it is hoped that this text raises a number of new questions about ‘fear of crime’ and ‘fear of crime’ research. In doing so it offers future ‘fear of crime’ research some alternative directions and new imperatives. It also establishes methodologies that might offer us a better understanding of people’s concerns and anxieties about crime and other issues.
Introduction

The problematic of 'fear of crime': how to read this thesis

The Customary Introductory Anecdote

My seven year old son is most upset at suggestions that the Northern Territory should remove its mandatory sentencing laws. He wants someone close when he's going to sleep and when out after dark last night (sic) asked, "Dad, where are the robbers?" "Why?"

Because a friend had someone break into his bedroom window (sic) and my son is afraid it will happen to him.

"Johnno" chose to steal, then a few days later chose to steal again, even though he would have know that he would be sent to jail (sic). He then chose to hang himself. My son didn't choose to be afraid, it was forced on him. How about some thought for the innocent for a change.

Adrian Gallagher,
Dapto. (My emphasis)

(Letters to the Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald, 26th February 2000)

This 'opinion' was published as a response to calls from legal practitioners, liberal and left leaning politicians,1 social workers, bureaucrats, academics, and others calling for the Northern Territory and Western Australian jurisdictions to repeal their mandatory sentencing laws. These laws had led to the imprisonment of many young (minor) offenders for offences such as breaking a window, stealing biscuits, and stealing a towel. The Northern Territory and Western Australia mandatory sentencing laws2 had taken sentencing discretion away from the judiciary and in its place erected legislative requirements for custodial sentences for young repeat offenders - regardless of the gravity of the offence. More specifically this debate had followed the hanging suicide in custody of a 15-year-old Aboriginal boy in the Northern Territory. He had been imprisoned for stealing pens and textas3.

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1 Not necessarily along party lines.
2 s.53AE of the Juvenile Justice Act 1983(NT) and Criminal Code Amendment Act(No 2) 1996 (WA).
3 The boy's nick-name was Johnno.
While I don’t wish to get involved in the specificities of this important debate here, the letter above tells us some interesting things about ‘fear of crime’ and how it is expressed. What it illustrates is the vicarious manner in which the ‘fear of crime’ can seemingly manifest itself, or at least be expressed as manifesting itself, in individuals. There is perhaps little reason to believe that the recited exchange between Mr. Gallagher and his son even took place. However, the reality or otherwise of the exchange is of much less importance than the discursive ground on which it seemingly supports itself; the way in which we as a population of readers assess the letter’s value as reflecting some kind of lived reality — we understand something about being ‘afraid’ of crime.

The overriding thrust of the letter is that Mr. Gallagher’s son will be more fearful of becoming a victim of crime if the law is repealed. Further, that Mr. Gallagher himself will be fearful for his ‘innocent’ son should the laws be repealed. Thus, mandatory sentencing, for Mr. Gallagher, is keeping him and his son both safe, and feeling safe. With mandatory sentencing the ‘robbers’ are in ‘jail’(sic) not ‘out after dark’ ready to pounce on an ‘innocent’ boy. However, what is even more interesting about all this is the geographical fact that Dapto — the supplied address for Mr. Gallagher — is on the NSW south coast, thousands of kilometres away from both the Northern Territory and Western Australia. No doubt Mr. Gallagher’s point is that if NSW had the same mandatory sentencing laws his son would feel safe and he would feel his son was safe.

All this despite the fact that there is no evidence to conclude that this type of sentencing keeps anybody any safer. Indeed, such legislation contravenes a number of international treaties to which Australia is a signatory as well as breaching a number of pre-existing State and Territory Acts of legislature.

The ‘fear of crime’ is a strange, amenable and mutating beast. It seems, if we believe Mr Gallagher, to travel across geographical borders. It is seemingly projected from one person to another person. It can be the result of ‘lenient’ laws, and it can be the result of offences against others. The black and white arguments, as contained in Mr. Gallagher’s, letter erect a dichotomous set of societal relationships between the innocent and the guilty, the fearing and the fearful. Being a robber entails nothing but the free rational choice to embark in this career and thus situate the self on the guilty side of this dichotomy. The result is clear, the rest of us share

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5 Indeed, in Australia it is Aboriginal Australians who are demonstrably most affected by mandatory sentencing, just as in the US it is Afro Americans who are most affected.
our innocence, and with it our fears and concerns about those who inhabit the other side. All these discursive connections can be made in just this one letter to the editor, so what of the broader field of research into the topic of ‘fear of crime’?

On the Topic of Crossing Boundaries...

Like ‘fear of crime’ this thesis also crosses boundaries. In chapter three a genealogical discourse analysis crosses national boundaries from the United States, to Great Britain, to Australia. There is no doubt that this seemingly arbitrary nation hopping might seem problematic, not least because of the locations it excludes. Moreover, there is no doubt that such exclusions and inclusions probably lead to some over generalisation. However, this section of the thesis is a history of discourses and discourse knows little of national boundaries. That is not to suggest that ‘fear of crime’ discourse is the same in all locations; rather, in chapter seven I will argue quite the opposite. Rather, it is to suggest that particular discourses emerge at different times in different places, and that it is often particular assemblages of these discourses that enable particular objects to emerge. That said, every analysis has its exclusions, this one being no exception. I only hope these exclusions will not necessarily be seen as faults but as invitations of others to fill in the gaps that my project might reveal.

The ‘Object’ of Inquiry

This thesis is about ‘fear of crime’. It is not so much about ‘fear of crime’ as an ‘emotional response’ (Ferraro 1995) to crime or the threat of crime – although it is about that to some extent – but about the notion, object or concept ‘fear of crime’. This thesis seeks to understand how we understand ‘fear of crime’. How we study, measure, and think about ‘fear of crime’.

Do you – the reader - fear crime? Do you experience ‘fear of crime’? Do you express ‘fear of crime’? If so how? Being social scientific types – you the reader and me the author/writer – we probably have our own reasonably strong ideas about how we feel about, and experience, crime fear, or anxiety, or perceived risk, or objective risk or whatever measure, or concept, it is we use to understand our relationships and unease about crime. However, I ask the reader, if I may be so bold, to continually ask yourself these questions as we engage with this text. It has been these same questions I have asked myself as I have written this thesis. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, it implores us to think about exactly how we feel about our crime concerns – if we have any – and whether these feelings are easy or difficult to describe and categorise. Secondly, from the outset, this sets us up as subjects of the ‘object’ we seek to study. It places us within the text
rather than outside it looking on, observers. We are no longer objective observers but a part of 'fear of crime' discourse, we are its constituents. This means that whenever we superimpose some kind of abstract category on to our research subjects, we must also think of ourselves in relation to this category; we must ask 'does this describe our feelings'?

The Rise and Rise of 'Fear of Crime'

Throughout the past three decades there has, it seems, been a dramatic increase in 'fear of crime' in most Western nations. A considerable body of research (see Hale 1996) attests to the extent of 'fear of crime' and its debilitating effects. With the acknowledgment or 'discovery' of this social malaise has come increasing attempts to understand its social implications, extent and causes. Indeed, this interest in 'fear of crime' has led Ditton et al (1999) to lightheartedly suggest, 'fear of crime is bigger than general motors'. Hale (1996) has commented that there has been over six hundred manuscripts, books, and articles written on the topic, and in the time since Hale's observation this may well have doubled. I will comment further on the rise of 'fear of crime' in chapter one. Suffice to say here that this exponential increase of discourse around the concept has gone critically un-remarked upon for too long.

The Body of Work: What to Expect

This thesis looks at the 'fear of crime' from a number of perspectives. For the most part each chapter discusses a different aspect of 'fear of crime' as a concept.

- Chapter 1 consists of a literature review. Here the thesis discusses the various findings and contradictions of research into 'fear of crime'. I look at just what it is that 'fear of crime' is said to cause and be caused by. Towards the end of the chapter I discuss some new directions and ideas that begin to lay the foundations for this thesis.

- Chapter 2 is essentially a methods chapter. It looks at some of the theories and methods which inform this thesis and give rise to its concerns. This chapter introduces the reader to many of the concepts which recur throughout the text although many of these are expanded upon in the relevant chapters. Concepts such as governmentality, genealogy, and discourse are defined and explained in chapter two.

- Chapter three consists of a genealogy of the concept of 'fear of crime'. Here I trace the emergence of the notion of 'fear of crime' and explain how it has come to be seen as such an important concept in criminology, victimology, psychology, and by government. Historically, the chapter begins in the early 1960s by looking at an assemblage of discourses that enabled
'fear of crime' as a concept to emerge. It traces this emergence through to contemporary research and governmental activity.

- Chapter four in a sense continues and expands on some of the ideas of chapter three. Here I discuss the utility of 'fear of crime' as a technology of government and a technology of the self. Various forms of governmental crime prevention literature are analysed as a way of understanding how fearing individuals (fearing subjects) are imagined within governmental discourse. The chapter concludes by way of discussing the modes of this governance and its continuance despite its perceived failures.

- Chapter five consists of a media analysis. Here I attempt to trace an array of discourses that assemble around the media reporting of some crime. The chapter discusses three particular forms of crime reportage in order to show how 'fear of crime' operates with the public imagination. This analysis goes beyond a simple critique of media reportage and discusses broader linkages and alignments within public discourse that give particular stories considerable discursive pervasiveness.

- Chapter six discusses gender and the 'fear of crime'. Here a deconstructionist feminist analysis is employed in order to disrupt the 'fear of crime' as an objective research concept. The chapter argues that the notion of 'fear of crime' in an intrinsically gendered one and that gender difference has been one of the driving concerns of the 'fear of crime' literature.

- Chapter seven consists of an ethnographic study of 'fear of crime' in three small western NSW towns. The research employs a methodological approach that is designed to give us an alternative way of understanding 'fear of crime'. It focuses on locality, history, community, events, and actors and uses a discursive analysis. Here I argue that generalisations about crime fear are not a useful means of understanding the specificities of concern in particular communities.

Some Notes on My use of the Term 'Fear of Crime'

By now the reader will be aware that throughout this thesis I am placing the term 'fear of crime' in inverted commas. There are very good reasons for this strategy that will become clearer as the reader continues through this text. This thesis sets out to disrupt the discursive legitimacy of the term 'fear of crime', so the inverted commas are intended to render the term problematic and remind the reader of, what I will argue are, 'fear of crime's' shaky disciplinary and governmental foundations.
This being the case, it could be argued that this thesis should dispense with the use of the term ‘fear of crime’ altogether. Perhaps this thesis even presents some persuasive arguments to do just that. However, to replace the term, something a number of researchers have attempted to do in the past (cf. Ditton et al 1999, Hollway and Jefferson 1997, Ferraro 1995), is problematic in other ways. As I will argue below, replacing the term ‘fear of crime’ with ‘anxiety about crime’, ‘perceived risk of crime’, ‘concern about crime’, ‘anger about crime’, and the like only serves to replace one suspect conceptual term with another.

In this thesis I actually allow some slippage between a number of these alternative terms. There is also a purpose to this. Such a strategy is a form of textual resistance against producing a hegemonic understanding of what ‘fear of crime’ might be. In other words, all of these alternative terms, like ‘fear of crime’, have their own assemblage of meanings and discourses that will themselves construct an authoritative account of just what ‘fear of crime’ might be should they be given the textual opportunity.

Of course all these strategies can only be partially effective. For try as we might to retain an ‘open finding’ on what the ‘fear of crime’ might be, my socio-cultural baggage as writer, and your socio-cultural baggage as reader will inevitably and repeatedly attempt to reconstruct meaning and objectivity around ‘fear of crime’. For my part, I don’t necessarily want to resist this reconstruction. Rather, I want to allow meaning to reconstruct itself in ways that recognise that no construction can ever be complete, finished, or whole. That there will always be an excess of meaning, an outside, an Other that cannot be reconciled with any particular reconstruction. That fear resists the incorporation of anger, that concern is not quite anxiety, and that crime itself is not a stable or objective thing. Thus, our reconstructions should be deferred – to borrow from Derrida (1971). The project should not be to know the ‘object’ ‘fear of crime’ but to observe it with all its contradictions and incompleteness.

But I digress; this is all too much too early. This introduction is beginning to read like a conclusion. If this is the case, however, maybe that is not such a bad thing. To conclude is to finish, to complete, and this is one of the very things about ‘fear of crime’ research that this thesis attempts to resist. Let us continue and open up this field.