FEAR OF CRIME
CRITICAL VOICES IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY

The text visible on the burning page reads:

you solve right away and which should you solve that problem is to save for professional programmers. The students had to solve train problems, so must still be careful that random returns a random walk. Initialize the cumulative array and Algorithm 3 uses a simple form of divide-and-conquer, textbooks on algorithm design describe more advanced forms. Scanning algorithms' Problems on arrays can often be solved by searching for each array element in order: first $x[0]$, then $x[1]$, and so forth. This gave binary search particularly favorable memory access patterns and wonderful branch prediction. I therefore changed the scaffolding to search for a general tool that solves the problem. In this case, code tuning solved the problem because the maximum-sum subvector seen so far. The maximum is initially zero. Suppose that we've solved the problem with a couple of miles from

Edited by
MURRAY LEE and STEPHEN FARRALL

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Contributors

Derek A Chadee is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Behavioural Sciences and Director, ANSA McAL Psychological Research Centre, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. One of his major research tracks is in the area of fear of crime, currently undertaking a three-year longitudinal fear of crime study. In 2004, he was a Fulbright Scholar undertaking research on fear of crime at two American universities. His other research interests include fear and HIV/AIDS stigmatisation, media depiction of crimes and antecedents of emotions. He has maintained a cross-cultural research agenda.

Kristen Day is Professor of Planning, Policy, and Design, at the University of California, Irvine. Her research addresses issues of social justice tied to race and gender, in the use and perception of public spaces. Her current research examines the impacts of local anti-immigrant policies in Latino communities.

Jason Ditton was Professor of Criminology in the School of Law, Sheffield University until 2006. He is currently Senior Research Fellow in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at Glasgow University, and is currently researching knife carrying and drug use by young offenders.

Mike Enders is the Senior Consultant/Lecturer in the Continuing Education Directorate, NSW Police College – Westmead Campus. Currently, his main duties involve facilitating and lecturing on the Crime Managers Development Course. Mike has over 20 years policing experience and was a Senior Investigator with the Independent Commission Against Corruption from 2000 to 2002. He was a Lecturer in Policing Studies at Charles Sturt University from 1995 until taking up his present position. He is co-editor with Benoit Dupont of *Policing the Lucky Country* (Hawkins Press).

Stephen Farrall is Reader in Criminology, School of Law, Sheffield University. His research has explored the reasons why people stop offending; petty

forms of criminality amongst the middle classes; patterns of offending in the late eighteenth and early–mid nineteenth centuries, and the fear of crime. He is currently embarking upon research into the long-term impact of neo-conservative social policies on crime, and designing new survey measures of confidence in the criminal justice system for the European Commission.

David Gadd is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Keele University. His research focuses on the biographies of offenders, the psychosocial dimensions of crime, masculinities, racism and violence. His first book *Psychosocial Criminology* was written with Tony Jefferson and published by Sage in 2007. David is currently writing a research monograph about the perpetration of hate crime with Bill Dixon and editing the *Handbook of Criminological Research* with Susanne Karstedt and Steven F. Messner.

Jonathan Jackson is Lecturer in Research Methods and Member of the Mannheim Centre for Criminology at the LSE. His research – which centres on public attitudes towards crime, cohesion and criminal justice – has been published in *Risk Analysis, British Journal of Criminology, Journal of Social Policy, European Journal of Criminology, Policing and Society, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Science, Nature Materials,* and *Public Understanding of Science.* With Stephen Farrall and Emily Gray, he is currently writing a book based on an ESRC-funded project into the fear of crime. He is also embarking on two new studies. The first (funded by the European Commission) seeks to provide European Union institutions and member states with new social indicators for the assessment of public confidence in criminal justice. The second (funded by the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines at the LSE) tracks the trajectories and correlates of public sentiment towards crime and criminal justice over the past 25 years.

Tony Jefferson is a Visiting Presidential Scholar at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. He has researched and published widely on questions to do with youth subcultures, the media, policing, race and crime, masculinity, fear of crime and, most recently, racial violence. His more recent published works include: *Psychosocial Criminology,* 2007 (with Dave Gadd); *Resistance through Rituals,* 2nd edn, 2006 (edited with Stuart Hall); and *Doing Qualitative Research Differently,* 2000 (with Wendy Hollway). Formerly the British editor for *Theoretical Criminology,* he is currently working on a book on racism.

Christine Jennett is a political sociologist and a Senior Lecturer in Justice Studies in the School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies at Charles Sturt University. She has taught in various policing programmes for CSU

and is currently Course Coordinator of the Bachelor of Justice Studies (Policing) and the Bachelor of Social Science (Criminal Justice). Her publications are in the areas of race and gender relations, public policy, social movements, fear of crime and intra-community violence.

Murray Lee is senior lecturer in criminology and co-director of the Institute of Criminology in the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney. His research interests include fear of crime, law and order politics, and criminalisation through social isolation and exclusion. His current research includes exploring the geographies of criminalisation and the spatial distribution of recorded offending. He is author of *Inventing Fear of Crime: Criminology and the Politics of Anxiety* (Willan 2007)

Dennis Loo is Associate Professor of Sociology at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. His research revolves around the use (and misuse) of polls, the making of public policy, and the rise of the neoliberal state. His publications include articles on the social construction of crime and policy-makers' use of the fear of crime. Loo is a recipient of the Alfred R. Lindesmith Award and Project Censored's Award. His book, *Impeach the President: The Case Against Bush and Cheney*, co-edited with Peter Phillips, was published by Seven Stories Press in 2006.

Rachel Pain is a social geographer at Durham University, UK, whose research interests have centred on fear of crime for over 15 years. Her current participatory action research project with young people is examining everyday fears, migration and the war on terror. Her books include *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* (Ashgate 2008), *Connecting People, Participation and Place: Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods* (Routledge, 2007) and the *Handbook of Social Geographies* (Sage, 2008).

Susan J Smith is Professor of Geography at Durham University, UK. Her research has focused on racism, the health divide, the threat of crime, social justice and the management of a wide range of social, financial and environmental risks. She was one of the first British social scientists to take fear and its effects seriously. Her books include *Crime, Space and Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), *The Politics of Race and Residence* (Polity Press, 1989), *Children at Risk?* (Open University Press, 1995), *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* (Ashgate 2008), and the *Handbook of Social Geographies* (Sage, 2008).

Robbie M Sutton is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology, University of Kent. His research on strategic aspects of communication and on perceptions of crime and justice has been published in the leading

social psychological journals, such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, as well as the *British Journal of Criminology*. He is currently working on a model of how the justice of social situations and systems is socially constructed

Marian Tulloch is a psychologist and is the Director of Charles Sturt University's Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching. In her previous position as Head of the School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies, she was the statistical consultant on the project with Mike Enders and Christine Jennett.

Nikiesha J Virgil is Assistant Lecturer in Psychology. She was a Fulbright Scholar and teaches at The University of the West Indies in the areas of Industrial Psychology, Statistics and Research Design and Community and Environmental Psychology.

Leanne Weber is Senior Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences and International Studies at The University of New South Wales. She has studied the detention of asylum seekers in the UK and is currently researching migration policing networks in Australia. She is the editor, with Sharon Pickering, of *Borders, Mobility and Technologies of Control* which was published in 2006 by Springer.

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A reintroduction to the fear of crime

Stephen Farrall and Murray Lee

When faced with writing an Introduction, or indeed any sort of overview of the fear of crime, one is immediately struck with two questions. The first is 'where to begin?' and the second is 'is there anything left to say?'. We think that there is still plenty left to say about the creature which has become known as the fear of crime (and since we do not intend to attempt an overview of the field, we give the first question a bit of a body-swerve). Those hoping to find between the covers of this book a review of the relationship between the fear of crime and various socio-demographic variables, or looking for a 'quick fix' to issues of how to reduce the fear of crime for some or other government target will find themselves sorely disappointed. We make no apologies for this. Such is the generally repetitive nature of most research on the fear of crime that Hale's review (drafted in the early 1990s and published in 1996) is still an excellent summary of the field. However, this collection, we hope, drives on the debates which surround the fear of crime. All of the chapters are written by people who have some considerable experience of researching and thinking about the topics at hand. Our 'critical voices' come from around the industrialised world and from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds (urban geographers, sociologists, psychologists, psycho-analytically-inspired criminologists, political studies, and so on). Yet each, in some way, challenges some of the basic premises of the field. We shall return to these voices and what they have to say presently, but before we do we want to locate the fear of crime both in terms of the shifting nature of the debates and in terms of its place in wider social and political processes.

Locating the fear of crime 1: An example from the UK

Interest in the fear of crime has ebbed and flowed since it was first discovered in the 1960s (some, see Loo, Chapter 2, in this book and Lee 2007, may prefer the word 'invented'). Initially, the fear of crime was viewed as legitimate topic of research, expressing as it appeared to a range of concerns about urban disorder in the US and rises in crime rates in the UK. Debates at this point focused on the seemingly strangely high levels of fear given the

objectively low levels of risk. 'Why were fear levels so out of kilter with risk levels?', we asked ourselves. However, the tone of the debates changed, at least in the UK, from the 1980s onwards, as left realists and feminists waded into the field, questioning what crime surveys 'did' and what the fear of crime 'meant' and was 'used for'. Some answered the 'rationality question' with a further question (along the lines of 'what would a rational level of fear be, anyway?', Sparks 1992) whilst others suggested that if one viewed levels of fear through the lenses of patriarchy and low level but enduring intimidation then the higher rates of fear for, amongst others, women, ethnic minorities and the urban working class, started to make sense. Following these debates, the UK's Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) commissioned a programme of research entitled Crime and Social Order. A number of the projects touched on the fear of crime (or as it was sometimes called 'anxieties about crime' or 'public sensibilities towards crime' – and some of those most centrally involved in that programme and its work as it pertained to the fear of crime are amongst our contributors).

The Crime and Social Order programme ended towards the end of the 1990s. Various of the projects which had explored the fear of crime ended on notes which suggested that the fear of crime was a confused and congested topic (which indeed, it was and still is). For example, Wendy Holway and Tony Jefferson (2000) pointed to the importance of making sense of individual biographies when exploring the fear of crime. Others, such as Evi Girling, Ian Loader and Richard Sparks (Girling et al. 2000: 66) suggested that public sensibilities and 'crime talk' constitute 'a means of registering and making intelligible what might otherwise remain some unsettling, yet difficult to grasp, mutations in the social and moral order'. This involves, they suggested, the use of metaphor and narrative about social change and the folding of stories, anecdotes, gossip, career, and personal biography together with perceptions of national change and decline. Yet others, for example the team lead by Jason Ditton, reported that they had pretty much lost faith in the then current survey measures used to explore the fear of crime (see Farrall et al. 1997 most notably). So, just as the Labour Party (or New Labour as they preferred to be called) came into office, academic criminologists in the UK dropped the fear of crime as a research topic and went off in pursuit of new toys. However, as Lee (2007) notes, despite the critical nature of this later qualitative turn, fear of crime had already become an object of intense governmental interest.

As academic research on the fear of crime in the UK pretty much dried up completely, so the fear of crime 'industry' switched homes; leaving academe and taking up residence first in central government departments before, like many approaching their forties, moving out to the provinces as part of a key plank in the Crime and Safety Audits inspired by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (see also Lee, Chapter 3, in this book, for a review of the situation in Australia). If academics had appeared reluctant to engage with

the fear of crime for methodological or conceptual reasons prior to this, there was now no way that many of them were going to get their hands dirty with the messiness of 'delivery'. This is not to suggest, by any stretch of the imagination, that there are no UK academics prepared to 'roll up their sleeves' and put the concept to good (and critical) use, for some notable exceptions do exist. Betsy Stanko, now of the Metropolitan Police, but formerly well and truly of academe, is amongst the best known of UK-based researchers who has taken on this task, and of course, her work will be familiar to more than just British readers. Still, by and large, academic criminology in the UK has fallen out of love with the fear of crime.

We hope that, perhaps, this book can go someway towards reinvigorating academic interest in the topic – certainly if this collection of voices cannot inspire further research, it is hard to see what can. For while many contributors to this book might lament the invention of fear of crime as an organising principle for this body of research and literature, most would also be wary of it becoming the exclusive domain of an 'administrative criminology' conducted only in the service of government and government-inspired targets. To disengage with the debates now runs the risk of a poor organising principle, and a range of mediocre if not counter-productive methodologies, becoming even more ingrained. As we have seen with the development of this body of knowledge, time-series data can often become normalised in a way that reinforces its own truth value (Farrall 2004; Lee 2007).

Locating the fear of crime II: Where 'is' the fear of crime, what does it 'do'?

By posing these questions, we do not mean to embark upon a series of (frankly, quite tedious) paragraphs devoted to discussions of 'hot spots' of crime, 'sink estates' or to go through the houses on poorly-lit underpasses. Nor do we see ourselves initiating a review of the fear of crime as enforcer of after-dark curfews or of reducing levels of social cohesion (although, undoubtedly for some, it does have this effect). Rather, we see these (and similar questions) as a way into our own efforts to think through what it is that the fear of crime does to debates in contemporary societies and how it influences debates about 'law and order' (for want of a better term). We sketch these ideas out as Figure 1.1.

This figure attempts to describe the relationship(s) between the fear of crime (at the centre of the figure) and key political, social and economic organisations and institutions (in bold in the square boxes). The relationships are represented by the arrowed lines, and their operational characteristics described in italics in smaller square boxes.

Let us start not with the fear of crime, but with government. Governments initiate crime surveys in order to assess crime in their jurisdictions. This is partly because of a widening disillusionment with official crime statistics
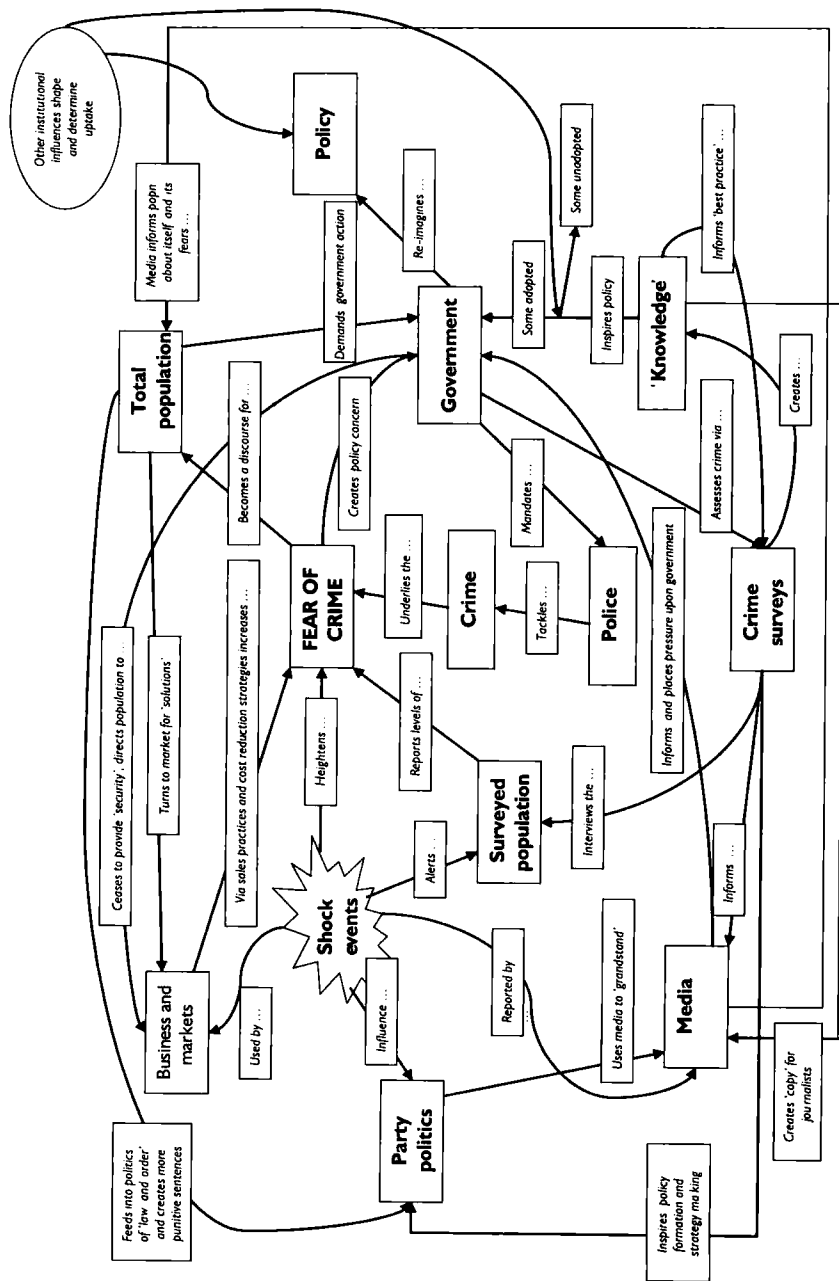
Figure 1.1 Relationship(s) between the fear of crime and key political, social and economic organisations and institutions

(which comes in part from 'knowledge, that is academic and officially-approved versions of truth which point to the failings of such official crime statistics) and the media (which report such views). Having commissioned crime surveys, samples of the population are surveyed, and over time, the information gained from such surveys fed back to the media and the wider population itself (the 'double hermeneutic' as Giddens (1984) would have it, or the fear of crime feedback loop in Lee's work, for example 2001). The surveyed population reports varying levels of crime fears (amongst other things, of course). Such fears become a discourse amongst the wider population for making sense of events (Girling *et al.* 2000) or for expressing other anxieties (Taylor and Jamieson 1998; Farrall *et al.* 2006), and also creates a pressure for the government of the day to 'do something' about crime. As well as placing pressure upon the government, the views of the populous (along with the data from crime surveys) are used by political parties to attune policies and encourage some to appeal to the electorate by making crime (and/or the fear of crime) an election issue. Survey data also, of course, assist in the formulation and reformulation of 'knowledge' and hence policy suggestions.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the government is slowly moving away from its role as 'provider of safety', instead pointing citizens towards the market for solutions to crime and their fears (which the population, with its understanding of budget restrictions and their own responsibility, has little choice but to embrace). Businesses operating in this market, which is – like all markets – competitive, need to exploit such fears and anxieties in order to sell their goods and services (new credit cards which are 'fraud-proofed', new windows which are burglar-proof and such like, see Hardy 2006 on the motor cycle insurance industry). Such practices remind the population that it is 'at risk' and serve to heighten crime fears. Shock events (murders of 'decent passers-by', abductions of children, serious crimes against members of the public, unexpected rises in crime rates, etc.) are used by those operating in the market to 'ram home' their message, and in so doing such events both directly and indirectly increase fears by their usage by businesses, media reporting and political grandstanding.

'Knowledge' suggests to government various policies which could be pursued to tackle the fear of crime. Some of these are adopted, others are not. The reasons for the adoption or non-adoption of such policies is influenced by a range of institutional pressures. Some of these relate to cultural norms which are unique to each nation, its history, political colour and popular ideas (which influence both government officials and academics, of course) about the causes of crime. All of these will vary over time and are not in anyway static.

This fluidity of crime fear discourse, its diffuse and yet often intensely localised nature, is often lost in its attempted quantification – or at least in the way it has traditionally been quantified. If there is one theme that,

perhaps, defines this book, it is this inclination to move away from a static enumerated reading of fear of crime and to see it in its socio-political, psycho-social and geo-spatial contexts. That is not to suggest that the contributors here have disengaged with quantitative methodologies; rather they engage with these in new and reflexive ways with intense critical reflection which takes account of the researchers' own role in the production of knowledge. Reading this book will, no doubt, confirm that fear of crime is irreducible to specific 'causes', inherently political, discursive and yet intensely personal.

The collected essays

Our first essay is that by Dennis Loo. Loo takes us back to the 1960s, and to the US. Loo identifies the Republican Party's desire to challenge the bedrock of values which had produced and been consolidated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his New Deal programme and the notion of a Great Society under Democratic President Lyndon Johnson. Loo argues that 'elites fabricated a fictive consensus around "law 'n' order" in the 1960s and employed it as a device to introduce momentous public policy changes', directly challenging the notion that these changes in social values occurred naturally. In a telling passage, Loo argues that:

> By combining several different items into a category created after the fact, Gallup created the impression that crime concerns were much higher than they actually were. Other polls publicised in the remainder of 1968 also either conflated categories, perpetuating the impression of more robust crime concerns than were actually justified by the data or particular polls were selectively presented in a manner that generated the same impression. The polls *not publicised* in 1968 actually revealed crime concerns were *dropping*.

The ultimate message of Loo's essay, however, is that the Republican Party shifted the terms of the debates from social injustices to a focus on law and order, pollsters manipulated or selectively reported their results to reflect this shift, leaving the Democratic Party little choice but to follow the agenda as it moved. A similar, although, of course, not identical process was witnessed during the UK's 1979 General Election campaign, when Mrs Thatcher (who won the campaign for the Conservative Party) spoke of citizens having the right to feel 'safe in the streets' (the central referent of a key measure of the fear of crime in many a crime survey) and needing 'less tax and more law and order' (see Farrall 2006).

Following from Loo's essay, we turn to that by Lee. Lee's aim is to 'identify a range of obscured dimensions of knowledge and power in relation to the representation of data concerning public anxieties about crime'. Lee argues that the intensely political dimensions of the fear of crime (and the