FEELINGS OF INSECURITY IN CONTEXT: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR STUDYING FEAR OF CRIME IN LATE LIFE

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-Abstract-

This paper broadens theoretical perspectives on fear of crime in late life by exploring the concept against the backdrop of a changing society. Since the emergence of the first studies that address fear of crime in late life, research overemphasizes the search for related independent variables being heedless of a thorough theoretical framework. Recent researchers, however, perceive the construct of 'fear of crime' as an 'umbrella' concept, which encompasses crime related fear and more diffuse 'feelings of insecurity'. In response to a lack of macro-theorizing, this article illuminates some of the most important characteristics and descriptions of contemporary societies that are relevant to fear of crime. It is shown that in relation to fear of crime, the macro-level of society can be conceptualized as having four important ambivalences. In conclusion, the article

identifies societal processes and contemporary dynamics which can guide further exploration of increased feelings of insecurity and uncertainty in an ageing society.

Key Words: *Feelings of insecurity, fear of crime, safety, concern, post modern society*
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1. INTRODUCTION

The study of fear of crime in late life came into prominence in scientific literature when researchers demonstrated that elderly experience the highest levels of fear despite lowest levels of victimization. In spite of a growing number of empirical research there are only a few scholars (cf. Gabriel & Greve,2003; Farral et al.,2000) who have designed and conducted fear of crime research that was theory-driven. A systematic review of research on 'fear of crime' shows that most theories have an ad hoc character or sing the same tune (use the same variables). Clearly, there is a need to move beyond criminological literature, because fear of crime is an issue, on which scientists from diverse domains can share concepts, can exchange research methods and could contribute to an all-encompassing theory (Jackson,2006). Therefore, Vanderveen (2006) makes a call for more interdisciplinary research: when different perspectives are used, a more complete idea will be gained. Besides criminology also sociology, psychology, philosophy and gerontology have an important role to play. Sociology is a source of inspiration about how public perceptions of crime, insecurity, deviant behaviour, social order and social control can lead to social problems. From (social) psychology, we gain insight into feelings, cognition and emotion. Philosophy offers a critical framework for studying images and social changes in society (Jackson,2006). Gerontology, and particularly critically gerontology studies the process of ageing, not merely from a biomedical point of view but goes beyond everyday appearances and the unreflective acceptance of established positions (Estes et al.,2003).

The study at hand aims to provide a response to the lack of a theoretical framework, by exploring macro-theoretical dimensions which are relevant for fear of crime research. This article consists of four sections. The first section concentrates on the lack of attention to fear of crime research, by providing a short overview of the history of fear of crime research. Second, we seek to unravel the concept of fear of crime by presenting the two main, contemporary paradigms in which fear of crime is described. Following the line that fear of crime implies more than an individual characteristic; the third section introduces alternative perspectives by integrating societal

developments into the conceptual framework of fear of crime. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for future academic research.

2. HISTORY OF FEAR OF CRIME RESEARCH: LITTLE ATTENTION TO THEORY

The first studies on fear of crime date from the 1960's in the USA (Biderman et al.,1967), where the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice conducted research on crime-related fear for the first time. The initial idea was to register more accurately and in detail victimisation among the population, as a way to complete police statistics which experience the so-called 'dark number'. These surveys, however, showed that a significant proportion of the population experienced fear of crime. Upon this, we notice in the 1970's a shift in research, from mapping the actual level of crime towards the impact of crime on victims, the 'costs' of crime and fear of crime. Not only crime is considered to be a societal problem, as from then fear of crime is it too. Since the 1980's there is an expansion of these large-scale victim surveys across other English-speaking countries. e.g. The British Crime Survey and the International Crime Survey in the USA occur since then on a regular base (Vanderveen,2006). Throughout the history of fear of crime research, three areas are typically examined: some studies focus on conceptualisation and measurement, other studies discuss best ways to reduce fear and at the centre of attention is the discovery of accurate predictors. Indeed, concern over the measurement of fear of crime took a backseat and researchers soon focused on a search for related independent variables (Hale,1996). On the one hand a lot of quantitative studies aimed to identify fearful populations and on the other researchers tried to assess models which could predict the occurrence of fear of crime (cf. Ferraro,1995). The models, however, were mainly built on empirical grounds: they were often constructed a-posteriori but without attempts for cross-validation on other samples (cf. Tulloch,2000). Therefore, despite this large number of empirical research on fear of crime, a lack of theoretical framework is one of the main critiques regarding the (history of) fear of crime research.

3. UNRAVELLING THE CONCEPT OF FEAR OF CRIME

There is no fixed definition of fear of crime and there are multiple understandings of what it means. Researchers (and policy makers) have frequently confounded emotions, judgments and values about crime under the umbrella concept of fear of crime. This results in a confusing picture. This paper doesn't seek to add another relevant definition of fear of crime. However, we contribute to the literature by giving a broad overview of several paradigmatically distinct traditions of

theory, while incorporating multiple disciplines. Elchardus et al. (2008) distinguish two paradigms, in which explanations are offered for fear of crime: the rationalist paradigm and the symbolic paradigm. The former interprets fear of crime as a personal feature. It is a consequence of risk and vulnerability directly related to crime and victimisation. At the start fear of crime researchers assumed that fear of crime and actual victimisation were closely linked. This hypothesis did not hold due to two findings: Fear occurs more often than victimisation an sich and some populations that are most fearful appear to have the lowest victimisation rates. In the mid 1970's, scientists established the idea that fear of crime not only reflects (direct or indirect) victimisation, suggesting that it represents more general feelings of malaise. This refers to the latter, the symbolic paradigm in which fear of crime is considered as a sign of broader community problems and conditions of disorder. In the following section, we seek to further the theoretical understanding of both paradigms.

3.1 Rationalist paradigm

The rationalist paradigm starts from the assumption that people are very rational in their fears. Fear of crime is regarded as a result of people's individual risk perception, directly related with crime and victimisation. In this paradigm, an important role is reserved for the concept of vulnerability. Vulnerability seems to be particularly helpful in explaining disproportionate fear levels among older people for example. Killias (1990) developed the vulnerability hypothesis by distinguishing three dimensions of vulnerability and three dimensions of threat. In searching explanations for fear of crime the hypothesis employs an analytical framework that takes into account personal, social and situational dimensions (= dimensions of vulnerability) and that looks at the perceived risk (= threat), the seriousness of feared consequences (= vulnerability) and having no control over the risks nor the consequences (helplessness) (= dimensions of threat). The dimensions in interaction (not separately) can lead to fear of crime (Killias,1990). The concepts of vulnerability help to explain why elderly are more fearful of crime, even when they are less likely to be victims of crime. For instance, elderly may experience lack of control over the risk because they feel physical weaker (less physical strength, deteriorating sense of hearing and sight). The possibility to resist an attacker is also smaller. Furthermore, the seriousness of the consequences may be worse for elderly: they can recuperate slower when they are physically harmed. Next to their personal vulnerability, the social vulnerability could play a part as well.

Since the rationalist paradigm links fear of crime exclusively to crime one can ask what is understood when we talk about 'crime'. Becker's theory of labelling (1963) (also known as social

reaction theory) states that the filling-in of the notion 'crime' is a process of social construction. What people understand when they talk about crime depends on which conduct is experienced as deviant or exceeding the norms by individual members of society. Society creates its own definitions of 'deviant' and 'criminal'. In a different time or a different place certain behaviour can be more or less threatening for individuals, communities or societies. Crime and deviance are hence relativistic notions. Geldof (2008) demonstrates that the definition of crime is shifting over time. The concept is broadened from preventing crime to preventing disorder. In Belgium for instance, youth hanging around is perfectly legal, but recently police action also focuses on combating this kind of 'subcriminal behaviour'. This shift in 'defining' crime has its consequences on defining 'fear of crime'. The subsequent definition is a good example of the first theoretical broadening: fear of crime as 'the wide range of emotional and practical responses to crime *and disorder* which individuals and communities may make' (Pain,2000:367). Despite this enlargement of 'crime', the empirical evidence supporting a linear relationship between fear and criminal victimisation is relatively weak and mixed (cf. Hale,1996; Tulloch,2000).

3.2 Symbolic paradigm

Ferraro and LaGrange initially defined fear of crime as 'negative emotional reactions generated by crime or symbols associated with crime' (1987:73). Under that definition, however, it would not be possible to distinguish fear from sadness, rage or desolation. Ferraro (1995:24) adjusted his definition to 'the emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime'. He considers fear of crime not merely as a response to crime, but to all kind of symbols associated with crime. Pantazis (2000) goes on by suggesting that fear of crime among (poor) people should not be seen in isolation from other insecurities as a result of local, national, and international processes. This is the essence of the symbolic paradigm. Fear of crime is considered as a consequence of general feelings of malaise. It still concerns feelings of threat, vulnerability, and helplessness, but in contradiction with the rationalist paradigm, these feelings can have many origins such as illness, financial insecurity, general urban unease, social exclusion, ecological insecurity, etc. (Elchardus et al.,2008; Hale,1996; Pain,2000). Images or stereotypical representations play a vital role in the symbolic paradigm. These images can be passed on through education. In contemporary societies the influence of mass media is also unmistakable (Elchardus et al., 2008). Elderly in Western societies, for example, are culturally coded as vulnerable, helpless and are associated with images of bodily decline (Baars,2009). This negative stereotype can be internalized by elderly themselves. So, older people could adopt a vulnerable attitude and consequently exhibit higher levels of fear of crime (Elchardus et al.,2008).

Quite analogous with the distinction between the rationalist and symbolic paradigm, Jackson (2004:963) distinguishes between experienced fear and expressive fear. Crucial components of experienced fear are inferences about crime rates and people's personal sense of vulnerability. Expressive fear is shaped by more generalized attitudes and values, whereas crime is seen as a metaphor or a symbol for social problems. People don't fear becoming personally a victim of crime; they rather express their concerns about social problems through the 'symbolically dense concept of crime'. This dichotomy *crime related fear* versus *general feelings of malaise* turns up in a number of studies. Overlooking the fear of crime literature most research can be classified in the rationalist paradigm. However, there is a trend amongst recent researchers to broaden the definition of fear of crime towards feelings of insecurity.

4. FEAR OF CRIME IN CONTEXT: INTEGRATING SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENTS INTO THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fear of crime cannot be understood as a feature of individuals solely. The concept also comprises geographical, social, cultural and psychological dimensions and is influenced by a whole range of processes and relations scaled from the global, national and local level (Pain,2000). These social developments drastically influence the everyday life (including feelings and emotions) of individuals and communities. Fear of crime, therefore, needs to be conceptualized against the backdrop of a changing society. References to this macro-level of society are increasingly being employed in gerontological studies (Baars,2006). In relation to research on fear of crime in late life, however, this often occurs without the necessary elaboration of the debates that are taking place concerning these issues. In response to this lack of macro-theorizing, the next section illuminates the importance of societal processes for the topic of safety. In trying to summarize the most important characteristics and descriptions of the macro-level of society that are relevant to fear of crime, we aim to get hold of contemporary dynamics (Baars,2006), which can guide further exploration of increased feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. After introducing some basic categories that offer descriptions and evaluations of contemporary societies, some important dimensions of social changes are outlined. We show that in relation to fear of crime, the 'macro-level of society' can be conceptualized as having many important ambivalences.

4.1 Qualities and descriptions of contemporary societies

A) Features characterizing the process of modernisation

Most descriptions of contemporary societies begin with the theme of 'modernity'. In general, modernity is defined as a process of modernisation, which is characterized by 'a movement away from' traditional forms of life or ideas (Baars,2006). This theme has been given clear expression by different sociologists in the 19th century (Buffel et al.,2008). After Tönnies, other thinkers such as Durkheim (1858-1917), Simmel (1858-1918) and Weber (1864-1920) have devoted their entire careers to explaining the transition to a modern society as being a historically grown reality with unique traits. Whereas Tönnies has made the distinction between 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft', Durkheim distinguishes between 'mechanical' and 'organic solidarity'. On the one hand, the movement towards a modern society is characterized as an improvement, signifying prosperity and wealth. On the other, this development is considered as a loss; a nostalgic loss of the closer, warmer social relationships of pre-modern town life, a decline of connectedness, mutual trust and feelings of security. Despite the fact that several academic disciplines have criticized this polar typology, this classical characterisation of modernisation still has a great impact on how 'modern societies' are described in contemporary work. Dependent on the specific approach of the research, some features of modernity are emphasized in favour of others. The next section summarizes the most important and well-known qualities of modernity. First, *industrialisation* is often considered as an important feature of modernisation. Until the end of the 18th century our civilisation was known as an agrarian society. With the industrial revolution we came in an era called 'industrial society' or 'modernity'. At the beginning this era is typified by the increasing importance of factories and 200 years it has developed into a real 'industrial dominance' (Geldof,2008). Social conflicts concern the battle for distribution of wealth (cfr class struggle, Marx) (Beck,1992). A second characteristic which is strongly related to the modern society is *differentiation*. Durkheim mentioned it for the first time in 1893, in his book 'The Division of Labor in Society', but it returns throughout his life's work. Differentiation can be seen as a photographic mosaic, where a complete picture is drawn up by different parts. Literature distinguishes system and task differentiation. System differentiation aims at greater productivity by creating all kinds of subsystems (e.g. organisations and institutions) and task differentiation encompasses the specialisation of people by splitting up a task in different subtasks. This makes individuals more dependent upon each other, because each specializes in different types of tasks. Often differentiation is used in an economical context (division of labour), but likewise in social life differentiation becomes apparent to us. Tasks which used to be fulfilled in a family (e.g. caring for sick and older people) have now largely been taken over by specialists and professionals. On the question 'What characterizes the modern society more than anything else?', Weber answered *rationalisation*. This is a third important aspect of the modernisation process. The rationalisation process leaves traditional and religious explanations behind, and uses the practical application of knowledge to attain a desired outcome. It refers to efficiency, coordination and

increasing human mastery over both the physical and the social environment. The description of modernisation, though, no longer fits our contemporary society (Geldof,2008).

B) Beyond modernisation: neo-, anti- or postmodernism?

A lot of scientists indicate that we can no longer use the term 'modernity' in the 21st century. The debate about what it should be called then is mainly a discussion about how to evaluate contemporary developments. Baars (2006) argues that such evaluations at the macro-level can roughly be distinguished in three main positions. The first is called *neomodernism*. This position puts all its trust in the innovative advancements of the productive sources of modernity, i.e. economic and technological growth. According to Baars, this position is legitimized by the neoliberal identification of 'freedom' with 'a free market', without taking into account the costs of this equation in terms of inequality or ecological damage. The second position, *antimodernism*, criticizes modernity for its hopeless illusions and points to the necessity of a solid and unquestionable foundation that could be found in a specific tradition, such as traditional Marxisme, forms of Eastern wisdom, conservative Christianity or the Sharia (Baars,2006). Geldof (2008), however, states that this 'reaching for lost securities', on basis of a nostalgic romanticism of a past that has never existed, is a regression in thinking and puts the achievements of modernisation at risk. Finally, the third position calls itself *postmodernism*, which can be seen as the counterpart of neomodernism because it does not believe in the promises or hopes of neomodernists. Postmodernism also differs from antimodernism because it refuses to believe in any unquestionable foundation (Baars,2006). Instead, 'hybridity', 'discontinuity', 'liquidity' and 'plurality' are considered the constitutive qualities of a postmodern society (Bauman,2000). Postmodern individuals are often described as 'zappers' (Elchardus & Glorieux,2002), or people that continuously alternate between opposite values and choices. They 'zap' between various political parties, their tastes are continuously subject to change and they pick various aspects of different lifestyles. The postmodern emphasis on heterogeneity and difference, however, may easily become an 'academic cult'. This might mask the fact that important differences in life chances are just presented as different lifestyles. Another critique is that postmodernity criticizes not only the defaults, but also the achievements of modernity. The statement 'the end of sovereign stories' even generates the impossibility to discuss societal differences (Geldof,2008). This debate does not yet generate univocal conclusions (if this ever could be the case). However, they all commonly consider that contemporary society has passed the modern era.

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4.2 Ambivalences in theorizing the qualities of present-day societies

Nowadays lots of scientific literature cover these changes in societal structures. However while formulating 'the' key components of social change, different researchers utter different words. Without making a claim to be exhaustive, we give an overview of 4 important dichotomies by which we aim to clarify ambivalences in theorizing features of contemporary societies. The purpose of providing these dichotomies and linking them to feeling of insecurity in late life is twofold: firstly, we want to provide a broad societal framework for the symbolic paradigm by reviewing critically current ideas and comparing them with a seeming opposite. Second, we seek to identify possible research tracks which could offer additional insights to the debate of feelings of insecurity in late life. Besides, we consider these ambivalences from a gerontological interest.

A) The Age-dichotomy: 'Everyone gets old, but everyone wants to stay young'

It is currently well-known that nearly all countries have undergone, or are still undergoing, a demographic transition. In modern society traditional values placed upon fertility and the value of children in agrarian society, as breadwinners, changed. Combined with improvements in health care services, this led to a decline in death rate and birth rate and to a radical transformation of the age pyramid. For the first time in human history, society is confronted with a demographical phenomenon where elderly people constitute a large part of the population. This proportional rise in the ageing population will impact upon all dimensions of human life – from living arrangements, social support, relations and integration to economic activity (cf. Peace et al.,2007). Contrary to findings that society has increasingly more 'old' people; our contemporary society also knows a glorifying discourse of youth. This discourse emphasises on being young and especially on staying young. Baars (2009) gives the example of recent technocratic anti aging programs and their desire to control nature. This desire is raised by fear of losing oneself in nature, fear of having neither control over nor influence in one's own life. Moreover, Baars (2009) states that 'it comes as no surprise that a society focussed on being young, dynamic and 'in control' is at a loss where aging is concerned'. An uncertain future, without an accurate, controllable image of the ageing process leads to characterizing stereotypes.

Furthermore, this ageing process is considered as a radicalisation of vulnerability in life. 'Growing old' is not just adding years to life nor is 'being old' having a lot of years. 'Vulnerability' is the key-factor of ageing (Baars,2009). So our ageing society will be characterised by a growing number of people which are vulnerable. It is, however, not just a feature of older people.

Vulnerability is no synonym for 'frailty' as stated in lots of gerontological literature (De Witte,2009) but is 'inherent to the interhuman condition' (Baars,2009) and will stipulate inequalities between different social groups. The question whether and how this vulnerability influences feelings of insecurity deserves further research. Throughout the next dichotomies the concept of vulnerability will return a number of times.

B) The knowledge society: increasing development versus a widening gap

The concept 'knowledge society' gets often mixed up with the concept 'information society'. Stehr (1994:650) describes that the former is the oldest term and dates back from 1966 where Robert E. Lane employed the term 'knowledgeable society' for the first time. Knowledge society denotes the growing societal importance of scientific knowledge. The latter is the newest term and is introduced by Daniel Bell in 1973 in 'The Coming of Post-Industrial Society'. An information society is a society where information is the key-concept for societal change. The creation and the dissemination of information are crucial for economic and social activity. The notion 'knowledge society' became popular in the 90s, UNESCO for example uses the term, and is mainly used as an alternative by several academics to the 'information society' (Ambrose et al.,2005). In general two different approaches have arisen. The first approach refers to the importance of knowledge and information as a driving force of economical development. It is a political and ideological construct which is developed under the direction of neo-liberal globalisation towards an open and world market. According to the second approach information society supplies the acceleration of this development; but it is not neutral because economical growth is guided by games of interest. It thrives to include a more holistic idea that is not exclusively related to economical development. In this second approach, what is essential is not 'information' or 'knowledge' but rather 'society'. The information or knowledge society refers to human beings, cultures, forms of organisation and communication. Information and knowledge are used in benefit of society and not the other way around (Ambrose et al.,2005; Stehr,1994).

Several critical considerations can be made thereupon. A first remark is formulated concerning the use of 'society' in the singular, as if meaning there is one homogeneous world society. UNESCO (2005) prefers to speak of knowledge 'societies', using the plural form. A second comment deals with the narrow focus on a knowledge-based economy. Instead of using the achievements of scientific and technological developments on shaping the daily lives of individuals, discourses on knowledge society suffer from economic reductionism. Put even stronger, 'knowledge societies […] have little desire to redistribute the resources to improve the quality of life domestically, and

[…] neglect their humanisation and democratic responsibilities' (Hargreaves,2003:4). This brings us to a third comment; the issue of power. Foucault (1980) provides a framework where power and knowledge are inseparable: power is based on knowledge and reproduces knowledge. The well-known Matthew effect (Merton,1968) 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer' is applicable here. Those who possess power and knowledge will gain even more power and knowledge. Though since knowledge and access to knowledge are not evenly distributed, those who don't possess power and knowledge will loose even more power and knowledge. Instead of emancipating complete societies, as knowledge development and society advocate, they generate a widening gap or an *educational division* between people who are able to compete and survive in this knowledge society and people who are not. Beck (1992) for example states that especially people who adapt themselves poorly to societal changes (and accompanying risks) experience the highest levels of feelings of insecurity. Exploring these new features of vulnerability could provide some new insights in feelings of insecurity of an age group which is characteristically defined as vulnerable.

C) Freedom and agency versus control by social structures

One of the most classical debates in sociology concerns the contradistinction of agency and structure. 'Agency' stresses the capacity of individuals to construct their own lives by making choices autonomously. 'Structure' on the other hand states that what individuals do, think or feel is influenced, even determined by structural forces (social class, religion, gender, ethnicity…). In late modernity, this traditional dichotomy has undergone some specific changes: a radicalisation of 'agency' (cf. Beck) and an alteration of 'structural constraints' (cf. Foucault). Agency is closely related to the often mentioned process of individualisation. Promulgated by Giddens (1991) it is concerned about the individual engaged in living a 'life of one's own'. In our contemporary society individuals are increasingly required to construct their own lives. Even more, under the denominator of self-determination it appears that people can do whatever they want, as long as they don't harm anyone else. The individualisation thesis has major implications on 'the collective identity'. After all, many of the institutions of traditional society transformed. Not the family, nor the church, nor the state make up the rules. There are no more general norms and values. Individuals are their own 'rule-finders' (Beck & Gernsheim,2002:xi). Industrial society was marked by a standard, normal biography where people's biographies moved relatively predictable and linear. In contemporary societies the biography is open 'choice' and can be personally constructed. This concept of 'choice biography', usually referred to the work of Ulrich Beck, suggests that people ought to take place in the cockpit of their life. This large freedom of

choice stands opposed to the increasing insecurity about the consequences of these choices. There is an increasing tension between individual liberty and the possible risks, what eventually can lead to feelings of insecurity. Not everyone is able to cope with this evolution where there are no definite or right answers, where one has to make choices without being sure of the result. Moreover, people are no longer free to make their choices; they are obliged to make the choices themselves. An individual 'can' not make choices; he 'has to' make choices.

In his literature review on the emergence and development of the concept of choice biography, Woodman (2009) found that only a small number of researchers considered the concept of choice biography useful or positive. The main critique of scientists is Beck's overemphasizing on agency and the lack of empirical research to sustain his theory. For example, Elchardus and Glorieux (2002) conclude that individualisation, where the personal biography is created by personal choices, is an illusion. In a number of books, Foucault offers critical insights to understand changing institutions in our changing society. He discusses mental institutions in 'Madness and Civilisation', prisons in 'Discipline and Punish', and schools and families in 'The History of Sexuality'. In those books he discusses questions of social power and how social control used to focus on the body. With changing decades Foucault perceives a decrease of external supervision through command and violence. This, however, does not mean control has disappeared. On the contrary, a new form of control and supervision occurred, which is more severe as the former. Nowadays social control 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault,1980:39). Discipline is imposed by internal restraints. These institutions that impose those internal restraints can be found everywhere: e.g. school, education and especially media. It has become common to view the media as one of the main reasons of public insecurity (Jewkes,2008). For example, popular media tend to endorse a nostalgic view that things are not what they used to be through stories and images (Jewkes,2008). Apparently the individual can make his own choices, but actually his choices are pre-programmed. According to Elchardus and Glorieux (2002), the influence of these new forms of social control (e.g. school and media) does not replace the traditional recognized social forces (social class, religion, gender, ethnicity…). Jewkes (2008) states that it would be an exaggeration to conclude that media by theirselves are responsible for public insecurities. He joins Cohen who poses with the term 'media amplication' that media builds up and exaggerates social problems. Watching television, for example, heightens levels of fear of crime (De Donder et al.,2005). The manner, form and extent of influence of the new social forces, however, is determined by the power of the traditional one; the influence by popular media is felt stronger in the lower social classes (Elchardus & Glorieux,2002).

D) Globalisation versus glocalisation

Most contemporary societal self-descriptions elaborate on the theme of globalisation: 'the transformation of social geography market marked by the growth of supraterritorial spaces', which 'touches every person and locale in today's world' (Scholte,2000:8). This development has major consequences for the social environment and leads to new problems and questions. Most studies focus on the major challenges facing democratic control in and by nation-states, questioning their sovereignty. The argument developed then is that nation-states are no longer capable of regulating many important processes that take place within their territories (Baars,2006). A related consequence of globalisation, identified in different fields of literature, is that globalisation has fragmented and distorted the experience of community and place for elderly. As Phillipson (2007:323) puts it: 'The link between globalisation and themes associated with rootlessness, mobility and impermanence have become familiar and might be judged as a factor that limits the relevance of community to the current lives of older people'. Different authors, however, have provided an alternative view; Firstly, Phillipson (2007) argues that globalisation offers an opportunity for re-conceptualizing issues relating to community and place in later life. The importance of globalisation may lie precisely in its generation of much greater variation in the communities and environments experienced by older people. These global processes generate new social divisions between 'the elected' and 'the excluded'; or between those able to choose residential locations consistent with their biographies and life histories and those who experience marginalisation from their locality (Phillipson,2007). Second, Forrest and Kearns (2001:2129) oppose the view of globalisation generating a decline of the role of community and locality. They argue that global processes may have the opposite effects: 'As the forces which bear down upon us seem to be increasingly remote, local social interaction and the familiar landmarks of the neighbourhood may take on greater significance as sources of comfort and security'. Contrary to prevalent ideas of increased spatial mobility and a weakening place attachment, this perspective highlights a growing need of people to provide themselves with a stronger local identity as a reaction to globalisation and unifying processes (Buffel et al.,2009). The concept of 'glocalisation' (Robertson,1992) has been put forward to illuminate that there is a continuing historical articulation of local cultures, taking place under intensified confrontation with plural global influences (in Baars,2006). This idea of 'neighbourhoods' and 'localities' as potential sources of comfort and security (Forrest & Kearns,2001) is an area that deserves further research attention. As it is a well-replicated finding that neighbourhoods are likely to play a larger role in shaping quality of life of older than younger adults (Buffel et al.,2009), it is crucial to understand the ways in which older people experience feelings of (in)security in the locality, and how these sentiments impact their daily lives. Moreover, it has been argued that feelings of insecurity are 'rooted in

place and are variable between places' (Pain,2000:381), pointing to the importance of taking into account the local context in studying fear of crime in old age.

4. CONCLUSION: FEELING INSECURE IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

This paper broadens theoretical perspectives on fear of crime (in late life) by exploring the research and the concept against the backdrop of a changing society. The first section reviewed the global history of fear of crime literature. We noticed that since the emergence of the first studies exploring fear of crime, researchers overemphasized the search for related independent variables, being heedless of a thorough theoretical framework. This lack of attention to theory resulted in a narrow conceptualisation of fear of crime as 'fear' of 'crime'. In the second section, however, by examining the rationalist and symbolic paradigm we found a potential way out. The symbolic paradigm indicated that fear of crime has to be considered an 'umbrella' concept, which mixes up crime related fear with more diffuse 'feelings of insecurity'. This article has sought to theoretically broaden this paradigm by illuminating the importance of societal processes for the topic of safety. In trying to summarize the most important characteristics and descriptions of the macro-level of society that are relevant to fear of crime, we got hold of contemporary dynamics (Baars, 2006), which can guide further exploration of increased feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Feelings of insecurity may be understood as an expression of tensions in society which we have designated as four ambivalences.

The first ambivalence involves the matter of age. On the one hand, it draws from the demographical conclusion that elderly constitute a continually growing part of our population. Trying to understand this recent ageing process requires an understanding of those patterns and forces that underlie them. One of the main forces is the radicalisation of vulnerability (Baars,2009), which can lead to diverse inequalities. On the other hand gerontological literature states that despite this evolution people desire to be and stay young. The way society looks at ageing, as an image of decline and loss, influences the social identity of elderly. Concepts as ageism and multiple jeopardy could offer potential research links. The question whether and how these personal and social vulnerabilities influence feelings of insecurity deserves further research. Moreover, not the occurrence of changes nor the occurrence of vulnerability influences directly feelings of insecurity, but most likely the way people can master these (cumulative) changes. The second ambivalence wrestles with 'achievements' of the knowledge society. Knowledge and information are seen as driving forces of economical and social developments. Knowledge has become power. Not everyone disposes of the same knowledge and knowledge can also be

considered as the engine of the educational division, the knowledge gap. Despite appeals to lifelong learning, older people are traditionally people who stay behind on new knowledge-gathering. Hence, contemporary societies produce new and additional forms of vulnerability for older people, new forms of inequalities. Through Dannefer's theory of cumulative advantage/ disadvantage over the life-course (2003) it may become clear that variations in feelings of insecurity in late life are related to cumulative inequalities that have been accrued across a lifetime. This may heighten differences between individuals regarding their feelings of insecurity. The third ambivalence covers the contradiction of individualisation versus social structures. The end of the standard biography makes people making their own choices and creating their own life. This 'complete' freedom, however, is an illusion since the choices are pre-programmed by new forms of social control (Elchardus and Glorieux,2002). Also the traditional social structures as gender, class and age remain an undeniable factor in influencing people's behaviour and thoughts. From our point of view, the way people relate to these power structures leads to tensions and feelings of insecurity should be taken into account when studying fear of crime in late life. The fourth and last ambivalence we *discussed* is about social relations and interdepencies. A lot of researchers elaborate on the theme of globalisation: the contemporary world as one large social system. However, placing an exclusive emphasis on the importance of a fragmented and distorted experience of community and place appears to be too simplistic. On the contrary, the idea of 'neighbourhoods' and 'locality' appear to be crucial for feeling safe and secure in late life. Both the constraints as the opportunities of the local context in countering feelings of vulnerability, related with feelings of insecurity in late life, deserve further research. In sum, nowadays everything turns around developments, changing and evolutions. We live in a changed society (in comparison with the past), but that is not new in history: society changes continually. However, contemporary society is the first to be described as a society that is characterized by its rapid rate of changes. Moreover, this rapid rate of social and cultural changes leads to a society which main feature is 'fear' (Furedi,2006). Bauman (2001) perceives the tension between 'security and freedom', and between 'community and individuality' as a common thread throughout all different social changes. Furthermore, he believes this tension is not likely ever to be resolved. Instead of trying, we should be aware of this tension, its dangers, but also its opportunities. Stehr and Volker (2005:13), for example, don't see power and knowledge as synonyms as Foucault does. They acknowledge them being coupled to each other, but define knowledge as 'a capacity for action'. Knowledge does not only generate destructive or repressive consequences, but rather has productive and enabling features as well. Distribution and access to knowledge and information can offer prospects to groups of people who have been cut off in the past. It is so the cause, but also the solution to this growing inequality.

In this contribution we aimed to bring a theoretical framework to the attention of other researchers, at least to fuel discussion and to enhance research which is aware of these so-called societal ambivalences. Future research should 'move beyond identifying which groups are most afraid of crime, to addressing the different contexts and cues that induce unease, anxiety' and insecurity (Tulloch, 2000). It is not merely the number of fearing older people that should be at the point of interest, but the question how feelings of insecurity are linked to aspects of personal vulnerability, social identity and macro-social developments. In sum, we advise researchers to concentrate on a more holistic approach, from fear of crime to feelings of insecurity, striving for a combination of the micro-, meso- and macro-level.

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