# The Unfinished Urban Democracy? The Social Costs and Democratic Consequences of Women's Insecurity in the Urban Environment

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## Introduction

The aim of this project is to examine the consequences of women's insecurity in the urban environment from both an economic and a democratic perspective. A city is not just a physical place it is also an emotional space. It is about feelings of being welcome, belonging, included and un-afraid or of being unwelcome, excluded, and afraid. For many women, their ability to use the city is curtailed by their fear of sexual assault and crime. From a demo-cratic perspective, the right to the city should be the same for all citizens, regard-less of sex, age, ethnicity or handicap. However, women's lack of security can impinge on their rights as a citizen. From an economic perspective, fear represents a cost both for the individual and society. It can mean a personal cost for women in that it may hinder them from participating in and enjoying many of the activities of-fered by the city. Figuring out strategies to take oneself home safely from work or pleasure can be enervating and time con-suming. If women refrain from eating out after dark, from going to the theatre or the cinema, from participating in evening courses or meetings, or from taking a job that involves unsocial hours, it involves not only a cost for them individually but also for society. This is not just in terms of lost potential income from goods or serv-ices; fear is destructive for the networks of trust needed to build social capital. It cre-ates a negative ambiance that leads us to avoid certain places, to choose not to live there; it is counter conducive to feelings of being at home and belonging for both women and men.

Previous research on women's insecuri-ty in public places has mainly focused on the geographical, criminological and soci-ological aspects or women's fear. Howev-er, in terms of disutility, women's fear is likely to cost society substantial amounts every year. Public strategies to make cities safer require inputs in terms of time and money and municipalities face many com-peting claims for resources. By identifying both the democratic consequences and the social cost of women's fear of violent crime, it is hoped that the importance of public investment in measures to bring about change and the benefits accruing from such investments will be highlight-ed. In this respect, the project represents a new approach drawing on theories and methods from political science and eco-nomics and aims at filling a gap in our

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knowledge about the consequences of women's fear in public places.

## Previous research

It is now recognized that fear of crime can be as harmful as crime itself and that the effects go beyond those who are actually physically or economically injured. A broad literature has emerged, mainly in criminology (Heber 2005) and in human geography (Pain 2000). Numerous studies have focused on explaining people's fear of crime and have considered different demographic aspects. The results show that for example women are more afraid than men and the elderly are more afraid than young people; and that fear seems to be independent of victimization, both victims and non-victims express similar amounts of fear. There is also a body of literature focusing on the physical conditions that impact on the fear of crime (Darke 1996, Greed 1994, Panelli et al 2005). These studies centre largely on urban environments and the way in which the city is designed and functions is linked to women's fear of crime. There are, however, other writers who have criticized this physical 'design' focus and have stressed the importance of locating women's fear within the broader unequal power relations in society whereby some groups (white, heterosexual, middleclass males) routinely dominate other groups (for example women, the elderly and ethnic minorities). They argue instead that it is important to study the social causes of women's fear (Koskela 1997, Koskela & Pain 2000, Pain 2001)

However, none of these approaches consider the democratic consequences and the economic costs of fear of violence. In the economics literature, studies measuring the aggregate cost of crime sometimes mention fear, but neglect it in their calculations (Anderson, 1999). Cost benefit studies of crime prevention discuss fear briefly, but it is often considered too difficult to measure explicitly (Roman & Farrell 2002). Studies of the willingness to pay for crime control programs (Cohen et al. 2001) generally do not explicitly aim at measuring the fear of crime. In political science, a number of writers have argued that women's lack of physical integrity curtails their democratic rights and their freedom in the public sphere (Eduards 2002 and Gustafsson et al 1997). Indeed Wendt Höjer (2002) argues that men's violence and women's fear constitute a central problem for democracy and Lister (2003) considers that it acts to the detriment of women's citizenship. However, women's fear of violent crime and the costs it involves in democratic terms are not discussed in relation to the city. A first attempt in this direction has been made by Hudson & Rönnblom (2006) in their study of women's visions of the city as a good place for women. Whilst not focusing specifically on women's fear of violence in public places, their findings from two Swedish cities showed that fear was a common factor amongst women from all walks of life in both cities. Although this had a circumscribing effect on women's participation in the city, they also found that many of the women interviewed were not just passive 'victims' of the city; but actively developed strategies for negotiating the city. However, no attempt was made to measure the 'cost' of women's fear or the toll their strategies to 'win back the city' took in terms of time, energy and emotional stress.

## Approach

This study builds on an interdisciplinary approach utilizing theories and methods drawn from economics and political science. We are aware that, statistically, women face greater risk of violence in the home. Our focus is, however, on women's fear in public places as we are interested in measuring the costs to society of women's fear of violence in public and their risk avoidance or risk reduction strategies. The economic costs of women's insecurity will be measured using two different methods (the contingent valuation method and an indirect method giving the economic value implicitly) that utilize the concept of shadow markets. Information would be collected by means of a questionnaire survey sent out to 3000 women in all parts of Sweden. Women would be asked about their willingness to pay to avoid sexual assault; about defensive behaviour and their level of fear. Questions such as "How safe do you feel walking alone outside after dark?" would be used to gauge the fear level and ordered responses from safe to unsafe used as a proxy of fear of crime. Ordered probit methods would be used to obtain the coefficients needed to calculate the shadow price of fear (see Moore & Shepherd, 2006). Although the emphasis would be on the economic costs, a number of questions relating to the democratic consequences of women's fear would also be included such as whether women's fear hampers them from participating in the city. In addition, questions about socio-economic and demographic factors such as age, income, height and strength will be included as controls. Our approach gives us the possibility to draw conclusions about how different demographic and socio-economic factors correlate with women's fear and about women's defensive behaviour.

With regard to the democratic consequences of fear, we draw on theories concerning the gendered nature of democracy (e.g. Gustafsson et al 1997, Young 1990, Wendt Höjer 2002). Eduards argues that democracy for women involves economic independence, political influence and bodily integrity and views the latter as essential for "the foundation of an egalitarian social order" (Eduards 1997: 23). Whilst considerable progress has been made with regard to the first two aspects, much remains to be done with regard to the third. As long as women lack the fundamental right to their own bodies, then it is difficult to talk about a functioning democratic order (Wendt Höjer 2002) or equal citizenship for women and men (Lister 2003). If this is to be achieved, if the unequal power relationship between women and men is to be changed, then gender equality must penetrate all aspects of life – the home, day care, schools, the work place, transport, public spaces. Within their work with integrating gender equality into their services and policies, many Swedish cities and towns are acknowledging women's equal right to the city and are making efforts to create places that are safer for both women and men.

There are, however, differences between places with some municipalities being more equal with regard to, for example, women's/men's levels of education, economic activity, unemployment, income, labour market segregation, utilization of parental leave, health, and number of female local councillors, as is shown by Statistics Sweden's Gender Equality Index. However, this index does not include any variables concerning assaults on women or how safe women feel. Nevertheless, those municipalities scoring high

*Table 1*

| Municipal strategies | Women's feelings of security | |
|---|---|---|
| | Safe | Unsafe |
| Limited | | |
| Extensive | | |

in the index might well be more likely to be developing deeper-going strategies that challenge the established gender power relations and in this way contribute to creating places where women feel more secure. Accordingly, a questionnaire will be sent electronically to the local government officer responsible for gender equality in each municipality. This will ask questions about the types of policies being developed and the measures being implemented by the local authorities.

It is not enough for municipalities to adopt a top-down approach focusing on improving the gender awareness of the professionals (e.g. town planners). There is a danger that this leads to an emphasis on solely physical solutions. It is not the physical environment itself that threatens women. Fear is embedded in the unequal gendered power relations in society. Improving street lighting or building footbridges instead of tunnels will not solve the root causes of women's fear in public places. Nevertheless, there is a spatial dimension to fear and previous studies have shown that women are more afraid in certain locations or avoid certain places because they consider that these are associated with greater risk (Heber 2005). Physical measures may possibly ameliorate the situation to some extent and help to make these places less fearful. We will classify municipalities only focusing on physical measures as pursuing a *limited or short-term strategy*

However, bringing about a change in the unequal power relations requires deeper going, more long term strategies that penetrate all aspects of society. Cities also need to be developing strategies that aim to change attitudes so that violence against women becomes unacceptable and women's physical integrity becomes an integral part of their democratic rights. Such efforts would include, for example, ensuring gender-aware pedagogy is developed in day care and schools; the provision of or subsidization of services to support women such as safe houses for battered women and children; measures to help men who are violent towards women to change their behaviour; confidence building programmes for girls and young women and for boys and young men to work with their masculinity. Municipalities that are developing these sorts of measures we would regard as pursuing an *extensive strategy*.

The results from questions concerning feelings of security/insecurity in the questionnaire sent to women in the municipalities would be used to classify the municipalities into *safe* or *unsafe* depending on the nature of the responses. These two classifications would be combined to produce four categories. (Table 1)

Municipalities would be selected from each of these categories for more in-depth study. Interviews would be carried out with local politicians, local government officers and representatives for women's

organizations to gain insights into how they view the municipality as a 'good place' for women. The intention is also be obtain more detailed information on the type of policies and measures the municipality is pursuing with regard to combating women's bodily vulnerability (Wendt Höjer 2002). We would also work with focus groups of women from different walks of life. Women use and experience the city differently at different stages in their life-cycle – when they are young, old, have children, depending on their job, their leisure pursuits, their economic situation and so forth (Hudson & Rönnblom 2006). The aim here is not only to explore how the social construction of public space as dangerous for women may exacerbate women's fear of violence, thus circumscribing their use of and access to the city and impinging their democratic rights, but also to gain greater insight into the strategies women adopt to negotiate and cope with these perceptions of vulnerability i.e. their empowerment strategies (Wesely & Gaarder 2004). The intention is also to encourage women to discuss what kinds of pubic policies/actions they consider could be important in enabling them to counter the patterns of exclusion and denial of opportunities for participation in the city.

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# Fisheries in sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparative Study of Property Rights Institutions and Sustainable Development

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## Background and purpose

On the one hand, millions of small-scale fishermen and their families depend on fish and fishing for income and nutrition. On the other hand, fish exports and licensing agreements with foreign fleets constitute an important source of foreign exchange and revenue for the cash-strapped African states. But, today, many fisheries suffer from overexploitation and ecological stress, endangering the livelihoods of some of the poorest segments of society, putting pressure on public finances, and also severely threatening the overall health of the oceans (Devine 2006; World Bank 2004; Myers 2003).

Given the severe challenges facing marine ecosystems, vulnerable communities, and fishing fleets of African nations, the purpose of this research project is to provide high quality academic research and empirically grounded policy advice on the relationship between institutional ar-

rangements and fisheries outcomes in Africa. A comparative study of African countries' fisheries management as outlined here would contribute to an understanding of why some countries' fisheries are more sustainable than others, and it would also help identify best practices for other countries to follow. In addition, the explicit focus on *enforcement mechanisms* as outlined below would also contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of institutional change and institutional dynamics inherent in various property rights institutions.

A growing consensus among researchers and policymakers now suggests that the problem of overfishing is, by and large, an institutional problem (Alcock 2002; Bailey 1988; Kaitala 1993). Weak or absent institutional arrangements have enabled overfishing to continue to this point of near-collapse, and in order to get fisheries back on a sustainable track, institutional reform is widely called for (FAO 2006; World Bank 2004; Townsend 2006; Iudicello 1999; Grafton 2006; Bromley 2005). But the institutional reforms and the solutions deployed in developing countries have rarely been evaluated in empirical research, and there is consequently a lack of a deeper understanding of the relationship between institutional arrangements and outcomes in the fisheries sector, especially in Africa. More specifically, this project focuses on the performance of various forms of property rights arrangements adopted by African states; quota systems, territorial use rights, marine protected areas, annual catch entitlements, customary and comanagement regimes etc. and in particular the enforcement dynamics inherent in each institutional arrangement. Performance is in turn evaluated along three dimensions: ecological sustainability (maintaining the re-

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source base), economic sustainability (enhancing macroeconomic resource rents), and social or community sustainability (securing the livelihoods of small scale fishermen and vulnerable communities) (Bennett 2005; Reed 2004; Jin 2003).

## Theoretical framework

"The fish in the sea are valueless to the fisherman, because there is no assurance that they will be there for him tomorrow if they are left behind today" (Gordon 1954). Preceding Coase's *social cost* (1960), Olson's *logic of collective action* (1965), Hardin's *tragedy of the commons* (1968), and Alchian and Demsetz's *property rights paradigm* (1973), Gordon early on recognized the resource characteristics that make the management of fisheries and other common pool resources particularly problematic, namely the inability to exclude outsiders (Coase 1960; Olson 1965; Alchian and Demsetz 1973; Hardin 1968). Intuitively, it would be in each fisherman's interest to leave some fish behind so that the prospects for future revenues were safeguarded. But as numerous deteriorating resource systems are evidence of: open access regimes make every resource user expect that others are overharvesting the resource and for that reason they engage in overuse themselves. This is the tragedy of the commons, also conceptualized as a collective action dilemma, a social trap, or as the prisoner's dilemma (Bromley 1992; Rothstein 2005; Axelrod 1984). In all these conceptualizations, the expectation that others will embark on a non-cooperative path and free-ride on conservation efforts makes every individual reluctant to participating in conserving the collective good or employing a cooperative strategy themselves, even if this would have been the rational thing to do.

But institutional theory not only comes with dismal predictions; it also provides potential solutions to collective action dilemmas and the resulting overuse of natural resources. By and large, these solutions have something to do with property rights (Christy 1996; Anderson 1995; Eggertsson 1990; Edwards 2003; Arnason 2005; Fox 2003). The early scholars of common pool resources predominantly suggested the introduction of private property rights because such an institutional arrangement was said to align social and private costs and as such internalize externalities (Scott 1988; Demsetz 1967; Matthiasson 2003). But even though the logic of the private property rights paradigm is compelling, the literature has not provided convincing empirical evidence of its validity. On the contrary, growing evidence of the pitfalls – in particular the high costs and negative consequences for the poor – have in many cases motivated a re-examination of natural resource management institutions. Although Hardin's tragedy of the commons has (mis)guided natural resource management policy for decades; the development in recent years has pushed governments and policymakers to reconsider the role of communities and actors in between the state and market dichotomy (Acheson 2000; Bromley 2005). In fact, communal organizations have proven able to solve problems that neither the state nor the market have been capable of managing effectively – like the production of local public utilities or the internalization of ecological externalities (Hilborn 2005; Hannesson 2005; Burton 2003).

In the fisheries sector, as well as in other areas of natural resource management, the institutional opportunity set thus include much more than private property rights, including a range of co-management and ecosystem based management