GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE FEAR OF CRIME IN ONLINE AND OFFLINE SPACES

Simon White
Cardiff University
whitesp@cardiff.ac.uk
• Victimisation surveys show that Fear of Crime (FOC) is a serious problem disproportionally affecting women (Box et al. 1988; Hope and Sparks 2000).

• CSEW has been subject to a range of cuts – there have been reductions in the number of questions, interviewer hours and sample size (ONS 2017a).

• Social media provides an unprecedented opportunity to study social interactions (Williams et al. 2013).

• Twitter is predominantly used by young people (Sloan 2017).

• Can the same trends in FOC observed in the CSEW be found using Twitter data?
HYPOTHESES

• $H_1$: FOC would be observable in Twitter data.
• $H_2$: the majority of tweets relating to FOC would be generated by women.
• $H_3$: there would be a comparable relationship in the gender of those reporting FOC on Twitter and in the CSEW.
• $H_4$: temporal variations in FOC would be observable in Twitter data.
CSEW DATA

• CSEW 2015-16 non-victim form (ONS 2017b).
• Questions used:
  • How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?
  • How safe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (grouped)</th>
<th>‘In the day’</th>
<th>‘In the dark’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-19 years</td>
<td>∞</td>
<td>3.0 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>5.1 to 1</td>
<td>4.4 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>2.3 to 1</td>
<td>3.7 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>3.5 to 1</td>
<td>3.8 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>2.9 to 1</td>
<td>2.9 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>2.5 to 1</td>
<td>2.4 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+ years</td>
<td>3.5 to 1</td>
<td>2.6 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.2 to 1</td>
<td>3.0 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TWITTER DATA

• Collected using the Collaborative Online Social Media Observatory (COSMOS).
• Between the 27th May 2018 and 8th July 2018.
• Cross-sectional design.
• Analysed using open source software ‘R’.
TWITTER ANALYSIS

- 3,893,867 • Raw data
- 183,129 • Geolocated data
- 6,904 • Synonyms and antonyms associated with FOC
- 693 • Indicators of being alone
- 311 • Manual data clean
### H$_2$ AND H$_3$ GENDER ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>106 (34.1%)</td>
<td>89 (10.6%)</td>
<td>116 (37.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Experience</strong></td>
<td>4 (11.4%)</td>
<td>18 (51.4%)</td>
<td>13 (37.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altruistic</strong></td>
<td>102 (37%)</td>
<td>71 (25.7%)</td>
<td>103 (37.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Of those tweets with identifiable gender, the majority were generated by men.
- Regarding personal experience tweets, women are 4.5 times more likely to tweet about FOC than men.
- Men are more likely to tweet altruistically.
H₄ TEMPORAL RESULTS

*unique tweets
CONCLUSIONS

- **Supporting H₁** - FOC is present in Twitter data.
- **Disproving H₂** - More Tweets are generated by men than women. Also, different modes of Tweet are present, ‘Personal Experience’ and ‘Altruistic’.
- **Supporting H₃** - Personal experience tweets show a similar relationship to CSEW data in the ‘Under 30 years’ age group. Also, altruistic tweets demonstrate a previously unidentified example of ‘mansplaining’ (Solnit 2014).
- **Supporting H₄** - There are more FOC-related tweets on a Thursday and Friday night and this may be related to the night-time economy (Swann 2012).

Next step – extended data collection to confirm results (part of an ongoing PhD).
REFERENCES: