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DELIVERABLE 7.2

PIM Toolkit 4: Report on feelings of insecurity – Concepts and models





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1 Introduction

In Europe, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and security policymakers are not only responsible for ensuring that their citizens are safe—but also helping them *feel* safe. The extent to which citizens' feelings of insecurity are prioritised varies across different police forces, regions and countries. The Cutting Crime Impact (CCI) project project includes two LEA partners for whom tackling citizens' feelings of insecurity are a priority.

- Landeskriminalamt in the federal state of Lower Saxony in Germany – LKA
- Departament d'Interior, Generalitat de Catalunya in Catalonia, Spain – INT

This CCI deliverable presents a draft conceptual model conceptualising citizens' feelings of insecurity. This conceptual model is designed to help LEAs and security policymakers understand citizens' feelings of insecurity in a human-centred and practical way. This is a draft version of the model (version 1.3) that will be further refined: (i) for presentation the DesignLab in Barcelona, January 2020; (ii) during tool development for partner LEAs in Lower Saxony (DE) and Catalonia (ES); and (iii) for incorporation within the CCI Toolkit on measuring and mitigating citizens' feelings of insecurity.

CCI deliverable “D7.2 Feelings of insecurity – Concepts and models” contains:

- Critique of current approaches to measuring ‘fear of crime’
- The CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model
- Discussion of its use and relevant to LEAs

2 Methodology

Led by the University of Salford (USAL), this task has involved critically reviewing findings contained in the state-of-the-art around measuring and mitigating feelings of insecurity, undertaken in Task 2.6. Together with CCI partners, USAL identified relevant theories and constructs that will inform the development of a robust CCI conceptual model. This involved:

- Identifying and reviewing factors that foster and/or mitigate feelings of insecurity; and
- Identifying factors affecting the perceptions of different groups, including young people / older people, women, men and ethnic minorities

A draft concept model was developed by USAL (version 1.1), through a process of iterative development and formative evaluation with LKA, INT, DSP, EFUS, DPT and RUG (version 1.3). As the design was resolved, developed conceptual models were explored and validated through review by experts in insecurity—LEA practitioners and security policymakers. These reviews were carried out using telephone and/or teleconferencing (Skype) interviews, and the conceptual model refined in light of feedback—see “Appendix A” for a brief summary of modifications.

3 Critique of current approaches to measuring ‘fear of crime’

From the 1970s onwards, the concept of ‘fear of crime’ and feelings of insecurity emerged as a central topic in criminology (Glas *et al*, 2019). Researchers have attempted to measure feelings of insecurity—largely using quantitative methods—and identify the underlying causes of insecurity. This research has pursued a number of different research strands.

- Research into individual factors that impact on feelings of insecurity
- Research into contextual factors connected to the environment that foster feelings of insecurity
- Research into wider societal influences on feelings of insecurity, such as the national media and the emergence of particular themes within popular discourse that fuel citizens’ worries.

During this period, fear of crime also emerged as a key concern for policymakers and stakeholders responsible for the urban environment—all keen to tackle citizens’ feelings or perceptions of insecurity. So-called ‘fear of crime’ became positioned as a problem in its own right, alongside recorded and reported crime rates. The problem was initially framed around the mismatch between the actual risk of becoming a victim of crime and feelings or perceptions of insecurity. Researchers noted that citizens report ‘fear of crime’ when surveyed, even though the rates of actual victimisation for many types of crime has been declining since the mid-1990s. Furthermore, this apparent ‘fear of crime’ is high amongst some groups who are in reality at low risk of victimisation. Groups typically identified as fearful of crime but at low risk include: women and older people. However, recent findings have noted declining levels of insecurity amongst such groups—see information on Catalonia.

CITIZENS’ PERCEPTIONS OF INSECURITY – SURVEY FINDINGS IN CATALONIA

The region of Catalonia in Spain conducts a survey of victimisation that includes questions on citizens’ feelings of insecurity. Recent findings reveal that older people report feeling relatively safe—respondents over 65 years of age feel very safe. However, feelings of security are influenced by the context. Older people report feeling safe in their neighbourhood, but less safe in the city.

The recent survey also revealed that gender differences in perceptions of insecurity are decreasing, with women becoming more like men in their attitudes to safety and security.

Source: Francesc Guillén Lasierra, Departament d’Interior, Generalitat de Catalunya (personal communication, 6 December 2019).

The central method used in criminology and crime prevention research to measure insecurity and inform security policymakers and stakeholders responsible for the urban environment of the problem is the crime victimisation survey. The victimisation survey uses standard questions to which respondents provide a quantitative answer. The concept of ‘fear of crime’ is typically measured by questions that begin, for example, *“how worried are you about...”*.

The victimisation survey is a proven method for gaining an accurate picture of actual crime levels and trends. Indeed, its results are considered more accurate than police recorded crime data, due to the number of incidents that are either not reported to the police or that are not classified as a crime by the police. However, serious concerns have been raised about the questions related to so-called ‘fear of crime’. Standard methods of measuring feelings of insecurity are accused of actually constructing fear of crime as a significant social problem for a large proportion of the population (Farrell, Gray, and Jackson, 2007; Farrell, Jackson, and Gray, 2006).

Qualitative research to unpack the core concept of ‘fear of crime’ (measured using survey questions such as *“how worried are you about...”*) identifies different reasons for a respondent answering in the affirmative to questions about *“worry”* (Farrell et al, 2007). He or she may:

- Have personally experienced fears or anxieties generated by actual experiences of crime.
- Feel angry about having been a victim or the prospect of becoming a victim.
- Consider the prospect of being a victim frightening.
- Believe that crime is an important social issue that should be addressed.
- Take steps to improve his or her own personal security.

We can therefore see that so called ‘fear of crime’ seems to relate to a range of emotional reactions and cognitive processes—listed below in increasing order of impact on quality of life (Farrell et al, 2007):

- A set of feelings and attitudes about crime as a problem or issue for society.
- The awareness of the crime as a possibility and the need for added precautions.
- Nagging doubts about the security of one’s home and property, when left unattended
- The puncturing of mundane thoughts about security by sudden shock events that alert one to the possibility of crime; for example, arising from hearing about family or friends that have been victimised, or knowledge that an area is a crime hotspot or actual victimisation.
- Real moments of fear of victimisation, arising prior to or post- victimisation or threat of victimisation.

4 The CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model

In light of the deficit in the conceptual formulation of ‘fear of crime’, Davey and Wootton developed a model that aims to better operationalise the different aspects of worry, anxiety, fear, and feelings of insecurity that relate to crime. The Insecurity Lifecycle Model reserves the term ‘fear of crime’ for the situation immediately before victimisation, when the person is aware of an immediate threat and feels afraid.

The Lifecycle Model seeks to position feelings of insecurity in relation to actual victimisation. It is not assumed that all individuals will experience crime—or even immediate threat. Indeed, feelings of insecurity often arise without any actual victimisation or threat.

This human-centred model—the Insecurity Lifecycle—was first presented in a book chapter published in 2014. For the CCI project, Davey and Wootton have revised and extended the model, creating the CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model—see Figure 1.

Like the original 2014 model, the CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model conceptualises the experience of insecurity from the perspective of the person’s experience:

This model is divided into two parts:

- Individual experience
- Background context.

The first feeding the second, and in turn informs the first stage of the individual experience of insecurity, assumed situational vulnerability.

Individual experience

The lower part of the model represents “individual experience” – that is the citizen’s lived experience of insecurity. Their experience is divided into three aspects occurring prior to, and independent of, any victimisation—*pre-victimisation* factors. The factors are numbered –3 to –1 (with –1 immediately prior to victimisation and –3 furthest away).

An individual may not experience all aspects of the Insecurity Lifecycle—not all individuals will experience victimisation or even threat. However, their assumptions about being vulnerable in particular situations may inform their behaviours and their conversations with friends and relatives—potentially reinforcing (or perhaps challenging) their assumptions and views.

–3 Assumed situational vulnerability – Contextualised anxiety

This relates to a person’s thoughts about a situation and occurs in anticipation of future activity—planned or simply contemplated. The individual feels anxious at the prospect of being in a particular situation (for example, when considering walking home late at night after meeting

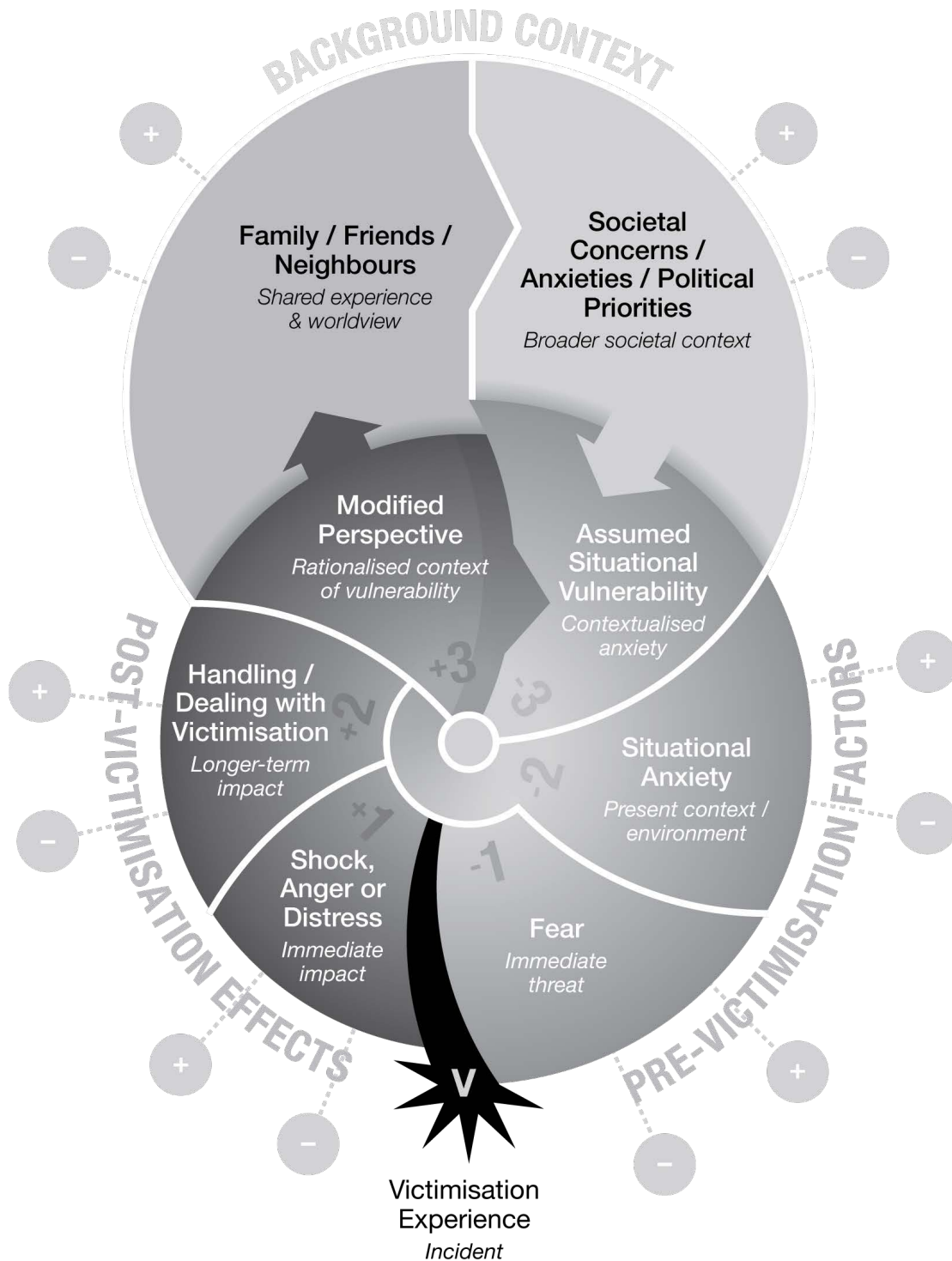


Figure 1: CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model

a friend). Their anxiety arises from the prospect of being or feeling vulnerable. The person is imagining walking alone along a route that is dark, isolated or through a neighbourhood perceived as dangerous. The person may take precautionary measures in response to their perceived vulnerability (such as carrying a personal alarm or walking home with a friend)—or might change their plans. For example, swapping walking for taking the car.

-2 Situational anxiety – Present context/environment

This relates to a person's experience of their current situation. The individual feels anxious as a result of the nature and quality of their immediate environment. Their anxiety may be fostered by visible evidence of antisocial behaviour (e.g., litter, graffiti, broken windows, vandalised street furniture, and so on) or poor-quality street lighting. The person is actually feeling vulnerable in their present situation. The person may come to avoid such environments, contributing to a potential downward spiral of underuse and raised anxiety levels amongst other potential users.

-1 Fear – Immediate threat

This relates to the period immediately prior to an individual being victimised. We have reserved the term 'fear' for this stage of the model alone when the individual is about to be threatened or victimised. For example, it may be the moment during which they are challenged, or even chased by a mugger. In some cases, the victim may be aware that something is wrong, that they are in danger. For example, an offender may attempt to intimidate by invading the personal space of their potential victim, acting aggressively, or otherwise breaking social norms. This threatening situation may trigger a "fight or flight" response in the victim. The person's fear may be exacerbated by the absence of other people who could potentially help or limited potential for escape.

V Victimisation experience – Crime incident

This is the actual crime being committed. In personal crime such as theft, robbery or violence, this may involve a face-to-face encounter with the criminal. Crimes such as burglary or theft from motor vehicle may not involve direct confrontation between victim and offender, but may be felt by the victim to be very personal—particularly in the case of burglary.

Postvictimisation effects

+1 Shock, anger and distress – Immediate impact

This relates to the person's immediate response to the crime incident. The responses to victimisation are identified in the model as shock, anger or distress. The individual's response will depend on a whole range of factors including: awareness of and perceived threat; availability of help; and duration and intensity of incident. This immediate impact can be very serious for victims; for older individuals, even life-threatening. The impact is mediated by factors such as capacity to

fight back, the response of other people (e.g., coming to the victim's aid, or offering help), as well as the speed and quality of response from the police.

+2 Longer-term impact – Handing / dealing with victimisation

This relates to the time after the experience of being victimised, when the person must process or handle the incident. The person must psychologically process what has happened to them—perhaps going over the incident in their mind, or discussing it with family, friends and also victim support agencies. The person's reactions will depend on the type of incident and on their personal characteristics—but might include: self-blame; anger towards the offender or towards bystanders; and anger at failings of public services. There may also be a range of practical issues to be dealt with—cancelling credit cards, claiming on insurance, dealing with the criminal justice system, etc. The victim's recovery might be improved by support from family, friends, their employer, victim services and health services.

+3 Modified perspective – Rationalised context of vulnerability

This facet of the model concerns the person's cognitive process of rationalising their experience of victimisation. The person may perceive heightened vulnerability relating to a particular context or location. This may give rise to avoidance strategies or, in extreme cases, complete lifestyle changes. For example, an individual victimised at a bus stop may avoid using the bus network. Alternatively, an individual may avoid certain temporal contexts as a result of a specific victimisation experience; for example, not leaving home when it is dark. Such responses to victimisation can seriously inhibit an individual's quality of life, limiting their use of local amenities and services and their participation in their community. This aspect of the model also concerns broader shifts in perceptions and sense of vulnerability arising from victimisation. For example, a reluctance to travel by bus may grow to become the feeling that all public transport is inherently unsafe. Thus, specific instances of victimisation grow to become a broader sense of vulnerability or helplessness. The impact on the individual may range from a reduced participation in civil society (e.g., not voting) to clinical depression.

Background context

Shared experience and worldview – Family / friends / neighbours

Feelings of vulnerability emerging from +3 (modified perspective), are shared with family, friends, and neighbours through narratives relating to actual victimisation experience. This can result in a relatively local shared perspective and worldview regarding risk of victimisation, and shared anxieties.

Broader Societal context – Societal concerns, anxieties, political priorities

Such shared experience are themselves aggregated to give form to a wider societal context. This contains the fears that a society may be having at any particular time. For example, in the West there is currently fear of terrorism, and specifically of suicide bombers. In the United Kingdom,

there are concerns about knife crime in London. Negative perceptions about crime among the general population are a key social issue for the UK government.

Positive and negative mediating factors may impact on both aspects of the shared/societal perceptions of insecurity. Positive factors may alleviate feelings of insecurity, while negative factors may increase them. An important new mediating factor at this societal level is the Internet. The communication of “stories” is used to share knowledge, build and strengthen societies, and to earn status. The rise of Internet services such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter has greatly increased the ability of stories to be shared very quickly, extremely widely, and often anonymously.

The sharing of 'stories' of criminal victimisation (sometimes involving extreme violence) has become much easier and may be used by certain groups to spread fear for political ends. In addition, the rise of 24-hour news services has left professional broadcasters searching for content to fill their schedules. This has resulted in sensational stories that become popular on the Internet being regurgitated by traditional news broadcasters.

Negative and sensationalist stories are “sticky” — more easily communicated and more easily remembered than positive ones (this draws the idea of "stickiness" popularised by [Malcolm Gladwell](#) in [The Tipping Point](#)). A constant background noise of negative stories can skew perceptions.

5 Discussion

5.1 Using the model

The CCI Lifecycle Model can be used:

- To conceptually understand citizens' feelings of insecurity – By considering the different levels of insecurity, reflecting on the stages in the CCI Insecurity Lifecycle that relate to both the pre- and post-victimisation factors and effects, a more comprehensive and precise understanding of what is meant by fear of crime and feelings of insecurity can be developed.
- To help explore feelings of insecurity related to particular demographic groups and situations – Individual experience of insecurity will be captured and explored in '*scenarios*'. These will be written descriptions of a particular person's experience of a specific context (e.g. a young woman walking home after a night out in a city centre).
- To help generate ideas to prevention feelings of insecurity or mitigation the impact on feelings of insecurity – By considering potential positive and negative mediating factors, it is possible to develop targeted intervention concepts to reduce feelings of insecurity and so improve wellbeing. CCI is particularly interested in interventions relevant to law enforcement agencies (LEAs). The ethical, legal and social issues related to a targeted intervention must be identified and addressed prior to implementation.
- To help identify factors and impacts related to citizens' feelings of insecurity that might usefully be measured – CCI suggests that the focus should be on the measurement of factors relevant to key stakeholders—such as LEAs and security policy makers. The aim should be to use information about citizens' feelings of insecurity to guide policy and practice.

5.2 Relationship of the model to other contexts

The Catalanian Context – In Catalonia, the focus has been on measuring feelings of insecurity. Feelings of insecurity have been measured for some time using quantitative questions within victimisation surveys. As a result, feelings of insecurity are more likely to be conceptualised in relation to the actual experience of victimisation.

The Lower Saxony Context – In the federal state of Lower Saxony in Germany, the focus has been on conceptualising feelings of security, and a victimisation survey of citizens in Lower Saxony was only adopted in 2017.

The theoretical approach to citizens' feelings of insecurity adopted by the LKA in Lower Saxony is based on concepts similar to those underpinning the CCI Insecurity Lifecycle Model.

The LKA distinguishes between feelings of insecurity and fear of Crime (Kury & Obergfell-Fuchs, 2003; Hirtenlehner, Hummelsheim-Doss and Sessar 2018). The LKA assumes that "*...the subjective experience of crime is not limited to victimisation, but includes concern for criminal threat*" (Reuband 2008).

The LKA's theoretical approach is based on an academic personal fear of crime model developed by Boers (1993) and its own evaluation of victimisation. The model covers:

- The affective dimension – emotional fear and anxiety about becoming a victim of a crime
- The cognitive dimension – probability of becoming a victim of a crime at a certain point in time
- Conative dimension – nature and extent of protective and avoidance behavior.

Dealing with victimisation and the associated fear of crime goes hand in hand with the ability to cope—i.e. Coping Strategy (Schwind 2001; Hirtenlehner, undated).

In France, Efus conduct surveys with local authorities to help them address citizens' feelings of insecurity. The survey asks those responsible for supporting citizens about: (a) their own feelings of insecurity; and (b) their views on citizens' feelings of security. This approach potentially helps to better differentiate between feelings of insecurity and experience of victimisation.

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7 Appendices

7.1 Revisions to model and reviewer feedback to date

Version 1.1	Skype meetings with USAL team (September 2019)	Original <i>Feelings of Insecurity Lifecycle</i> model considered too abstract / academic
Version 1.2	Skype meetings with USAL team (November 2019) Read Ethics report from RUG on feelings of insecurity	Model redrawn and text rewritten to simply explanation of factors.
Version 1.3	Written feedback on document containing model and text (INT & LKA). Skype meetings with LEAs / USAL	The model focused on citizens' feelings "fear", "anxiety" etc. making it more human-centred. Changes to text based on LEA feedback and RUG's report on ethics, legal and social issues.



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