



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Yana Bagina

COPING WITH FEARS IN EVERYDAY URBAN MOBILITY

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM
WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: URBAN AND TRANSPORTATION STUDIES
WP BRP 08/URB/2019

*Yana Bagina*¹

COPING WITH FEARS IN EVERYDAY URBAN MOBILITY²

The paper is focused on the interrelations between citizens' everyday mobilities and the ways they cope with urban fears. It describes situations when people expect and experience security threats that trigger their fears, while moving in the city. To deal with fears urban citizens develop coping strategies - a set of actions that helps them to manage their emotional experiences. Coping strategies transform various elements of everyday urban mobility and, thus, rearrange and redefine it. The paper is based on semi-structured interviews with Moscow residents and digital diaries of emotions.

Keywords: fear; coping with fear; coping strategies; mobility; everyday travels; urban mobility.

JEL Classification: Z

¹ National Research University Higher School of Economics. Research Intern, Laboratory of Urban Sociology; PhD student, Doctoral School of Sociology. E-mail: ybagina@hse.ru

² The author is grateful to Oksana Zaporozhets (Higher School of Economics) and Varvara Kobyschcha (Higher School of Economics) for comments that greatly improved the paper.

Introduction

Urban life creates a wide variety of experiences and impressions. Contemporary urban scholars in recent decades have often addressed the emotional dimension of urban experience (Sheller 2004; Thrift 2007; Bissel 2010; Adey 2010; Jensen et al. 2015). Among the negative emotions they are especially interested in fear. Social theorists (Bauman 2013; Giddens 2013; Furedi 2003) see fears and anxieties as the key characteristic of the late modernity. Minor and weal fears infiltrate many domains of everyday life (Furedi 2003), including everyday urban mobility.

Researchers traditionally define city as “social laboratory” (Park, Burgess 2019), the place where different conditions and forms of people’s coexistence become particularly prominent and visible (Massey 2005). Considering that, it seems justified to look at the fears related to urban life: they guide people's actions, help to interpret the flow of events, to explore and adapt to the changing environment, to create individual and collective identity (Barbalet 2001; Simonova 2016).

Consequently, a study of urban fears should be combined with a study of everyday urban mobility. The theories developed within the ‘mobile turn’ describe a city as a space of movements, flows, and mobilities (Sheller and Urry 2006). Such urban space is essentially dynamic, it is constantly undergoing changes and is being redefined (Massey 2005). Therefore, it seems rather fruitful to focus on the fears produced not just by urban life in general but by citizens’ mobility in particular.

The fears that are (re)produced in the process of everyday mobility may be associated with crimes, traffic accidents, failures of infrastructure, natural phenomena, environmental problems, etc. Fear of crime and violence, as well as the strategies of coping with this fear, is one of the most well-studied subjects due to the great amount of research done in the fields of geography and cultural criminology. In this context coping strategy is defined as a set of actions performed by people in order to protect themselves from the violence of potential aggressors. A large share of the academic literature on this topic is produced by feminist geographers who started the discussion regarding various female coping strategies in relation to perceived male violence in public places (Valentine 1989; Pain 1997; Koskela 1997; Mehta 1999). Contemporary scholars follow and develop this research trend (Minton 2009; 2010; Burght 2015; Fileborn 2016). They emphasize that urban dwellers do not just passively experience fear of crime and violence. On the contrary, people actively resist the threats and produce a sense of security (Koskela 1997; Bondi, Mehta 1999; Burght 2015; Fileborn 2016). However, these researchers do not take mobility into account and do not see it as the mechanism that both generates coping actions and is itself changed

by those coping actions. I aim at filling this conceptual and empirical gap and examining how coping with fears transforms everyday urban mobility. The paper is based on the series of interviews with young Moscow residents aged 18-29 and the digital data collected through the diaries of emotions (a mobile app).

Urban Mobility

In social science, attention to movement as a valid research object has arisen within the mobile turn. The researchers who adhere to the new mobility paradigm insist on the variety and diversity of movements (Sheller, Urry 2006; Urry 2007). They draw attention to different modes of human mobility (walking, running, transport, etc.), the meanings of mobility, emotions and affect being generated in the process, imaginary mobilities, and material and non-material non-human mobilities (Massey 2005; Sheller, Urry 2006; Creswell 2010). According to this approach, the city is not an aggregation of static places but a constellation of intertwined human and non-human mobilities (Trift, Amin 2002; Massey 2005; Sheller, Urry 2006). It is constantly in the process of being made, establishing new relations and abolishing the old ones (Massey 2005).

On the other hand, the mobility-focused approach legitimately raises the question of whether city exists as a specific entity. The researchers define places as *concentrations* of flows of mobilities (Trift, Amin 2002; Massey 2005). According to Massey, cities actually are such places because they are “home to the weavings together, mutual indifference and outright antagonisms of such a myriad trajectories, and that this is itself has a spatial form which will further mould those differentiations and relations” (Massey 2005:169). Urry and Sheller (2006) consider cities as a network of places, but at the same time, they pay great attention to the infrastructures that provide mobility. Such infrastructures can be either material, like roads, stations, airports, or institutional. Consequently, “mobility is always located and materialised, and occurs through mobilisations of locality and rearrangements of the materiality of places” (Sheller Urry 2006: 210). At the same time, infrastructures do not only support mobilities but also are created by them. For example, Adey (2006) shows that even seemingly static objects, such as airport buildings, are produced through the interaction of many human and non-human mobilities. Accordingly, urban space may be considered to be a product of interaction of various mobilities supported and regulated by material and institutional infrastructures. Thus, urban mobility is fundamentally a social phenomenon.

Agency of Urban Citizen

I assume citizens' agency to be the key characteristic of urban mobility. People are able to actively manage their mobilities, which involves dealing not merely with their own behaviour but also with their emotions. To put in a broader theoretical perspective, I adhere to the idea that human agency, and not structure, plays the main role.

Initially researchers tended to analyse mobilities by looking at large-scale structures such as flows and networks (Sheller, Urry 2006). This approach does not take into account the micro-level of everyday life, where the interrelation of mobilities takes place. For instance, developing the non-representational theory, Thrift (2008) equates human actors and non-human actants.

Other urban researchers emphasize the importance of individual subjectivity and the ways how people manage their movement in urban space. Cresswell, among others, points at the primary significance and peculiar roles of city dwellers: "Mobile people are never simply people - they are dancers and pedestrians, drivers and athletes, refugees and citizens, tourists or businesspeople, men and women" (Cresswell 2006:4). Noteworthy, a sense of place is inseparable from the perception of a person who has a certain social position and specific bond with the place (Massey 2005). It has become possible to reveal the agency of urban citizens in the studies of mobility after the researchers started paying attention to *micromobilities*. A flow of mobility is considered to be formed by the slight, tiny movements of body through which meanings are created (Jensen 2006; Jensen 2009). This approach highlights the fact that that people in motion *create* mobilities and do not just go with the flow.

A Sociological Approach to Fear and Coping³

In the sociology of emotions, emotions are seen as having a social nature and allowing us to uncover the background of a social situation, reveal the social relationships behind it (Bericat 2016). Fear represents a set of sensations that differ in the ways how and in which circumstances they are expressed, how long they last, how intensively they are performed. The essence of fear is the feeling of being unable to cope with a situation of threat (Barbalet 1998). The object of fear is not a situation or another person as such but the consequences of a threatening situation (Barbalet 1998; Kemper 2006). A threatening situation may be at a greater or lesser distance in time and space. For example, Kemper (2006) identifies the following types of emotions: structural (stable

³ The term coping is used in social science but has its roots in psychology. It describes people's conscious, intentional actions in response to a stressful situation or event that is harmful or threatening (Eckenrode 1991).

social relationships), anticipatory (future interaction), and consequent (ongoing interaction) emotions.

Sociology of emotions provides us with two key approaches to fear. According to the structural approach, fear emerges from a person's position in the structure of social relations and unequal distribution of power (Barbalet 1998; Kemper 2006). According to the constructionist/cultural approach, fear emerges from people's orientations towards emotion norms that dictate what to consider a threat and how to respond to it (Hochschild 1989; Thoits 1990; Tudor 2003).

The active actions that city dwellers undertake to overcome the situations of threat and fear, can be better explained using the constructivist conception of emotions, and especially the ideas of Thoits and Hochschild. Such actions are an example of emotion management, i.e. the actions a person performs to change her/his experience in order to bring it in line with the emotional norms (Hochschild 1979; Thoits 1990). Hochschild identifies a number of emotion management techniques: cognitive (changing thoughts, ideas), bodily (physical changes), and expressive (gestures) ones (Hochschild 1979).

The theoretical model proposed by Thoits is a bit broader. Thoits (1990, 1991) studies coping strategies as a part of emotional management. In the process of coping various components of cognitive and behavioural experiences are being changed. By the components of experience, she means “situational cues, physiological changes, expressive gestures, and an emotion label that serves to identify this specific configuration of components” (Thoits 1990:192). Thus, Thoits divides coping strategies into situation-focused (a change of the situation) and emotion-focused (a change of physiological reactions, gestures, labels). Therefore, I assume that urban fears manifest themselves through these four components. Certain urban situations are perceived by people as unsafe. Perceiving a situation as unsafe implies experiencing particular bodily sensations and expressions that people *interpret* as those that are related to being unsafe (labels of the emotions may vary). I propose to expand the concept of situation as a component of emotional experience. An empirical situation includes not only social relations, as described by Thoits, but also its physical environment (Tudor 2003). Physical environment influences the way social relations develop and simultaneously is a manifestation of these relations. The spatialization of social emotions allows us to combine urban studies and sociology of emotions in a study of urban fears and coping strategies.

Methods

The research was conducted as a qualitative study based on 21 semi-structured interviews⁴ (primary analysis – 13 interviews; secondary analysis – 8 interviews) and 16 digital diaries. Urry and Sheller point out the necessity to study mobility using mobile methodologies. For this purpose, digital diaries have been chosen as a supplementary method allowing to capture emotional experience almost immediately as it occurred. The diaries were produced by the informants in the form of chronologically organised records (Zimmerman, Wieder 1977) in the mobile app “Day One Journal”. The research participants were describing the emotions that they experienced while moving around the city during 4–7 days, they were not given any particular instructions regarding the way they should describe the experience. The only request was to link experienced emotions to the particular place or the route. The diaries were used as a primary source of the data but also as a stimulus that helped to develop the interview, and as a way to attract participants' attention to their movements and emotions.

The qualitative sample included urban citizens aged 19–29 (8 women and 5 men) who travel around the city on foot and by public transport. The sample was formed according to the following criteria: a) area of residence (incl. the remote and central Moscow districts); b) mobility modes (different ways of travelling); c) of living in Moscow (since childhood, less than 3 years, and over 3 years); d) safety measures the informants use (e.g. carrying a pepper spray).

Types of Urban Fears

Mobility triggers a variety of fears as experiences associated with anticipation of threats (Barbalet 1998). Fear is the umbrella term for experiences of different intensity, produced by the events of varying degree remote in time and space (Barbalet 1998; Tudor 2007). Such experiences may be caused by the situations that actually happened or are expected to happen. They may also take shape of constant ongoing sense of fear that persists even without any actual threat - present or expected. In this paper I explore people's everyday experiences brought to life by potentially unsafe situations. The situations that involve a real danger and harm to the people are considered as a disrupture of everyday routine and are not included in the scope of my analysis. In other words, I do not consider people's behaviour in situations of apparent immediate danger, such as what they do when they are attacked by a dog, when someone grabs their phone out of their hands, etc. I am interested in the fear associated with anticipation of such situations.

⁴ Interviews for the secondary analysis have been collected as part of the study “Fear and anxiety in women's spatial stories in the city”.

Urban fears can be related to people's actions, to the contradictions between mobility modes and threats from non-human elements of urban environment. All these threats are embedded in city space, i.e. they are tied to certain events such as conjunction of people's and animals' movements, urban environment and transport, natural phenomena, noises and smells and other non-human elements. In the following paragraphs I will provide a couple of empirical examples of such situations that the informants discussed in the most detailed and reflexive manner during the interviews.

Darkness and a decrease of the intensity of urban rhythms leads to the fear that people who surround an informant in the streets or in public transport would perform threatening actions (for instance, unwelcomed interactions, invasion into personal space, harassment, fights, robberies, rape). The fear grows stronger in unfamiliar remote areas, empty streets, poorly developed or uninhabited parts of the city (parks, transit zones), and poorly lit roads. The female informants were also afraid to travel by taxi at night.

While being alone city dwellers feel vulnerable to potential aggression expressed by certain categories of people. The people who cause fear are endowed with negative qualities. For example, they are labelled as "strange", "suspicious", "shady", "unpleasant", "aggressive", and "unpredictable". These words are mostly used to describe drunk people, noisy companies of men and teenagers, people of certain ethnic groups, as well as "disadvantaged" and marginalised people.

Fear is also caused by the contradictions between mobility modes that can lead to human injuries or even death. In this scenario the informants felt fear in relation to the interaction of pedestrians and motorists, cyclists and motorists, public transport and pedestrians, etc. The most frightening situation for pedestrians is generated by unregulated pedestrian crossings at night. Drivers experience fear on a regular basis because automobile roads are perceived as space of constant instability. But there is one particular category of drivers who expose others to even greater threat and they are labelled "aggressive drivers".

Subway is a space where people get afraid of accidents (like falling on the rails), technical failures, and explosions. The last two fears are often enacted in the circumstances when the routine flow of everyday mobility is disrupted: a train stops in a tunnel, there are weird noises and smells, "lost" property, or media reports on terrorist attacks.

Travelling across the city on foot and by public transport causes the fear of theft and loss of personal belongings. It is the physical co-presence of a large number of people that makes a person vulnerable to such kind of threats.

Urban Climate of Fear

Fears do not exist in isolation from each other. According to Furedi (2007), they form the general climate of urban fear. The crucial characteristics of the climate of urban fear are the perceived inevitability of threats, distrust, uncertainty of the fear and its constant reproduction in social interactions. In general, such climate is a constituent of contemporary life in a large-scale, dynamic, and crowded city.

The big city is a place of everyday life saturated with numerous meanings, one of the persistent meanings associated with cities is potential security threats: *“A large city cannot be safe by definition” (male, 26 y.o.)*. Dangerous events become a routine, and their anticipation becomes a part of everyday life. Hence, it results a special attitude of urban citizens to their own safety which may be called “urban fatalism”. Various kinds of dangers are perceived as inevitable: *“Bad stuff happens in our lives, what can we do about that?” (female, 23 y.o.)*. At the same time, as I will demonstrate later, people do not reject the opportunity to actively influence courses of their lives by applying coping strategies.

The general climate of fear manifests in distrust towards other urban citizens and infrastructures (Giddens 2013). Fear becomes “free-floating” (Furedi 2007) and citizens seek out signs of danger in unpredictable urban environment (Bauman 2013) if a specific threat is not manifested in clear and obvious form. Danger turns out to be difficult to locate and identify due to the constant changes in human and non-human mobilities.

“Sometimes I am walking alone and there is someone else walking alone, and he is looking at me, I mean, he is passing me by and staring at me. And I think, why the hell are you staring at me? What do you need from me? Obviously, I begin to worry. You never know what might pop up inside someone’s head” (female, 21 y.o.)

Due to the pervasiveness and inevitability of threats, fear has become more and more uncertain. Within the flow of urban mobility, it is hard to define what kind of threats to expect and how likely they may actually occur. This uncertainty is most clearly expressed in discursive practices related to the fears. This type of discourse vaguely articulates the object of fear - an undesirable event that will be caused by a certain situation (death, injury, etc.). But it emphasizes the trigger of fear - an undesirable interaction or, by the informants’ definition, “invasion of privacy”. The threat in this situation is not obvious and clearly defined but, nevertheless, people's behaviour seems unpredictable, suspicious and, thus, dangerous. This and other examples described above reveal the fear of being afraid (Furedi 2007).

“There was a gang of 15 or so underaged guys walking towards me, they were smoking, swearing, and drinking... I did not think that anything specifically bad could happen... I did not see any danger, but I did not want to pass them by” (female, 24 y.o.)

The general climate of fear as well as individual fears are reproduced in social interactions through personal contacts and through the media. In this regard, it is interesting to look closer at one of the discursive practices that implied in a discussion of fears: “I am not afraid as much as I should be”. This statement serves as a good illustration of a way how people create an emotional norm in relation to urban fears. According to this norm, one should expect dangers in the city and be prepared to them.

“I think I do not pay enough attention to the personal safety issues since from time to time I notice that some of my female friends prefer not to go home alone if it is late at night ... I think that maybe they are right and not me” (female, 23 y.o.).

Components of Urban Mobility

As it has been discussed above, everyday life of citizens is a constellation of various mobilities in the urban space. Interviews and diaries of emotions allow us to see mobility through the analysis of components which are important from the citizens point of view. Based on the empirical data and the conceptual ideas of Creswell, Urry and Sheller, I distinguish the following mobility components (Sheller, Urry 2006; Creswell 2010):

- 1) body (incl. bodily sensations and body management),
- 2) rhythms and routes;
- 3) mobility modes;
- 4) appearance;
- 5) definition of the situation;
- 6) emotions;
- 7) perspective;
- 8) human Interactions;
- 9) non-human interactions;
- 10) interaction with personal belongings;
- 11) meanings of mobility.

The components listed above do not exist in isolation from each other. It is impossible to discuss any of them without referring to the others. First of all, mobility research concerns with the issue of human **body**, since the starting point of mobility is a relocation of a body and a way the relocation is managed determines how a particular mobility is going to develop. Bodily movement is carried out through the creation of **routes**, i.e. the ways that imply interaction with

certain parts of urban environment. On one hand, this process develops through the creative use of opportunities for movement provided by the city infrastructure. On the other hand, they limit physical movement by controlling mobility flows. A person moves in accordance with a certain **mobility mode**, i.e. a way of transportation: on foot, by public or private transport. In a chosen mode, a mobile subject moves with a certain **rhythm** created by a combination of infrastructures, flows of people, and the movement of his/her own body. Individual control over rhythm can be extremely limited, for example, in the case of a crowd.

Mobility may include **human interaction** not only with those who are present in close proximity but also with people who are not physically present in the situation. The latter type of interaction is maintained with the help of digital devices, for example, mobile phones. **Interaction with personal belongings** (such as clothes, a telephone, jewellery, headphones, bags, etc.) is also a significant component of mobility since they become an extension of a human body and participate in microactions. **Appearance of a person**, which, apart of the belongings, includes special features of body, also involved in interaction. It gives out information about the person, allows us to categorise him/her, for example, by gender, ethnicity, or social status. In addition, clothes can contribute to making the process of mobility more convenient or, on the contrary, limiting it, as it happens in case of comfortable and uncomfortable shoes.

Urban citizens perceive **interactions** with people, urban environments and other non-human elements through different senses and experience them through **bodily sensations**. What matters in this regard is to what the attention is directed to, i.e. his/her **perspective**. Any perception of urban situations is selective and people are often able to manage their attention to control their interactions with other people and the urban environment.

Citizens interpret and **define** interactions that are emerging here and now in certain ways. Mobility is constructed by the meanings formed in these interactions. **Emotions**, i.e. bodily sensations and expressions interpreted by a person in the context of a particular situation, also play an important role in this process. Finally, mobilities have some common and shared meanings that urban citizens tend to attribute to them. Moving around the city can be an “*everyday necessity*”, as one of the informants called it, and a part of everyday routine such as going to work or school. It can become a pleasant activity, entertainment, sport, or “time for my own”. Mobility can take the form of studying, exploring the city or new places. These are just a few examples of how mobility can be framed and interpreted.

The conceptual model described above fully implements the idea of agency of a citizen who experiences everyday urban mobility. All of these components matter only if they are

considered as intertwined and filled with the interpretations and choices of a person in action because they are based on his/her subjective experience.

Coping Strategies

Urban citizens manage numerous fears using coping strategies, i.e. actions performed in order to change the ongoing situation and emotions (Thoits 1990; Thoits 1991). In this process various components of mobility change under the influence of the coping strategies being applied. Relying on my field findings, I suggest to classify coping strategies related to everyday mobility the following way: planning and avoiding; changing the rhythm, route, or mobility mode; controlling the situation and belongings; moving around in a group of people; active resistance; appropriation of space; body control; impression management; rationalisation; self-convincing and ignoring negative thoughts; planning of further actions.

Planning and avoiding. Urban citizens choose their everyday routes taking into account situations in which they may face a personal security threat. Urban infrastructures offer people a variety of ways to travel within the city: which routes to take and how to combine different means of transportation. A choice of mobility plan is influenced by different emotional conditions, such as the right mood for a walk, irritation from a crowded subway car or unpleasant weather. When people experience fear, they choose such mobilities that let them avoid any interaction with potentially unsafe conjunctions of people and urban environments, i.e. the situations in which the fear is expected to increase.

“Usually, if it is late, I tend to choose well-lit routes. It has to be a pretty broad street and I don't cut through backyards, I rarely go there” (female, 24 y.o.).

“When we go out to smoke, my neighbour and me, we go to the children's playground. Of course, there is no one there. I mean, it is very late, maybe at midnight, for example. Sometimes I also think at such moments: well, I'm not going. There may be some dudes” (female, 25 y.o.).

Changing the rhythm, route, mobility mode. Mobility is an unfolding process. Its trajectories, practices, materialities are being depended on numerous circumstances and, therefore, constantly changing. These changes trigger and actualize fears. People change the routes and means of transportation in order to avoid a situation in which they may feel unsafe and face threats. People use public transport to avoid threatening situations or, otherwise, they get out of transport to feel more safe. If they do not change the routes themselves, they may alter the rhythm of movement: moving faster, slower, or stop.

"<My husband and I> have agreed that if someone is totally crazy and is speeding and driving about 150 kph and trying to push in front of us, then... I mean, even 120 kph, to be honest. In that case, we just let them do it" (female, 23 y.o.).

Passive mobility that is taking place in public transport limits passengers' opportunities to change routes or pace of moving. People try to occupy a safe place in the transport to avoid danger - when other coping strategies appear to be unavailable. In general, spatial boundaries of fears turn out to be very flexible and fluid. Even the slightest change in mobility can lead to changes in the nature and degree of emotional experience.

"I usually try to make sure that there is a distance between me and the edge of the platform equal to my height, so in case if I am falling, I can stretch my arms and lean on them" (male, 19 y.o.)

"Staying alert": control over the situation. Moving through urban space, citizens exercise visual and audio control over the environment. Certain urban events trigger fear, and the fear amplifies the attention people pay to the surroundings: sounds and smells, traffic, movements and appearance of other people. They assess the situation depending on how safe it is for them. In other words, fear forms citizens' perspective.

"The first thing I do is checking if there is a collar on the dog, if it is on a leash, if its owner is nearby, and how old they are - it also matters. ... Sometimes I even try to understand what breed the dog is" (female, 23 y.o.).

Control over the situations developing within mobility process is exercised through small actions and gestures that allow a deeper engagement with the person's own body and other elements of the environment involved in the situation. People try to see more and to hear more in order to be able to avoid threats or fight them.

"I try not to wear headphones, because once I was almost hit by an ambulance" (male, 26).

"...I watch the shadows... If someone is approaching you from behind, you can see how his shadow is getting closer to your shadow (laughs)" (female, 24 y.e.).

Mobility implies that urban citizens interact with personal belongings, and safety of these material objects also raises concerns. Belongings become an extension of the body (Ivanova, 2014) and require control just as much as the body does.

“Well, I don’t know. I don’t feel safe like no one can rob me and steal something from my backpack. I always have the feeling that I need to watch my stuff” (female, 24 y.o.).

“And if I wear any jewellery, watches, for example, or something else, I always cover them with my sleeve so that, when I am in the underground, no one can notice the jewellery” (female, 24 y.o.).

Moving around in a group of people. Mobility involves regular interaction with other people. The spaces filled with people are interpreted ambiguously: people are perceived simultaneously as one of the main sources of threat and as a major source of safety. A single urban citizen is seen as vulnerable, thus, merging together two or several human mobilities may work as a coping strategy. This strategy manifests itself in moving around together with a familiar person or joining strangers in the street to imitate belonging to a company of people. Another form of this strategy is moving with “invisible companions”, i.e. the people with whom the person is connected via phone.

“A friend of mine prefers to talk with someone on her phone while she is walking through a dark place. Because if a person is talking on the phone, it’s not that easy to approach and mug them (laughs)” (female, 29 y.o.).

Being ready to self-defence. Being aware of potential dangers, citizens form strategies to stand against threatening actions. They problematise the bodily dimension of their mobility and corporal vulnerability of an aggressor. They also perceive themselves as someone who is “ready-for-combat” and able to use the physical capabilities of his/her body.

“I know how to hit a man to hurt him, that is all. There is no special training” (male, 26 y.o.).

Means of protecting oneself against people and animals (pepper spray, handguns, knives, etc.), following this coping strategy, become attributes of everyday mobility. Moreover, sometimes citizens situationally redefine the meanings of common things that are a part of everyday mobility: they turn these things into the instruments for self-defence (keys, backpacks, etc.) (Molotch 2012).

“I take out a pepper spray just in case. In a taxi it will not help at all. If something happens, well, I will pepper-spray both of us, but what else to do?” (female, 25 y.o.).

Appropriation of space. Citizens may refuse to limit the scope and area of their own mobility regardless of fear they are experiencing. Space is appropriated through mobility despite the existing fears. For example, people can move through the places that are perceived as unsafe.

“I want everyone to stop, because it is a pedestrian crossing. So, I get there and do this: “Stop! It is a crossing!” (Shows: with arms akimbo, face raised up). As I have noticed, nobody else does this, everyone waits” (female, 25 y.o.).

Body control. Mobility depends on the condition of the human body and on the restrictions of movement the body experiences. Control over one's own body is crucial in threatening situations as it makes it possible to fight back. Restricting factors may be related to a physiological condition (for instance, with alcohol intoxication) or things extending the body.

“I try to dress comfortably before I leave, especially if it is late, and I tie my shoelaces tightly. Just in case I will have to run away” (male, 19 y.o.).

Impression management: appearance. People's appearance has a communicative function. For this reason, they manipulate their appearance by changing some elements of it (Goffman, 1978) to cope with their fears. Such strategy is primarily used by women whose attractive appearance becomes a reason for undesirable and threatening interactions. Women often intentionally get rid of specific features in their appearance.

“Sometimes if you're going out at night, you'll put your make-up later - when you already get there. Well, lipstick, for example. Sometimes I don't put on some of my clothes when I leave home; I mean, I take them with me to put on later” (female, 25 y.o.).

Impression management: emotional expressions. Interacting with people who cause fear, people tend to carefully manage the way they express emotions. Citizens try to demonstrate such emotions that, in their opinion, will help them to avoid undesirable interactions and protect themselves. This coping strategy works both in a form of verbal communication and bodily techniques.

“You need to feel confident enough and not to show weakness, then, in general, there is no problem. If there is an opportunity to simply ignore, I do it. It just is not always like this” (female, 24 y.o.)

“(speaking about his friends) <For example, they're> in a good mood. Someone's being aggressive to you, then they turn this person off like that (note: snaps his fingers) and become super angry. They emotionally destroy the guy...” (male, 27 y.o.)

Rationalisation. Coping with urban fears develops through normalization of threatening situations and attempts to make them fit into the course of “normal” everyday life. In other words, citizens look for explanations of the situation that could help to perceive it as safe.

“It's not every day that you smell smoke in the underground... That is, there are a lot of mechanisms that can produce sounds, smells, sparks; anything can break down there. And I asked my husband a lot about it, so I thought, “Well, I guess he would explain why there is nothing to worry about” So, I calmed myself down” (female, 23 y.o.)

There are considerably less emotion-focused strategies than situation-oriented ones.

Calming oneself down and convincing oneself. In contrast to the rationalisation strategy, this set of measures does not imply a search for possible explanations of the situation but is aimed directly at managing bodily sensations and expressions. Coping involves bodily techniques (e.g., deep breathing) and various ways to distract oneself from the situation of mobility.

“...I turn on some light music or read poetry to myself. Something like “I am not afraid, it is okay”. I try to calm myself down somehow with words that cheer me up” (female, 21 y.o.).

Creating the “shield”, ignoring certain thoughts. Mobility is related to what individual attention is focused while the person is moving, i.e. his/her perspective. Managing attention helps people to cope with their fears. They take action to prevent fear by putting up a “shield” protecting them from the thoughts about the danger, ignoring such thoughts. A “safe” perspective is also created by using various everyday things allowing to divert attention in the right direction. In contrast to the previous strategy, this is a proactive approach, i.e. people try to cope with the fear that they do not yet experience.

“In any situation something can go wrong, so it is better not to be afraid of it. Just walk calmly. ... You are just walking, listening to music and thinking about nothing” (male, 26 y.o.).

Action planning as a coping strategy can be of two types: oriented either towards the situation or oriented towards emotions. In the former case, it helps citizens to prepare for the possible danger. In the latter case it can contribute to changing bodily sensations and expressions of fear by calming people down, for example.

“I regularly imagine precisely what I would do <in the situation of danger>. All the time... Partially, it's a fantasy, of course. But partially it is not” (male, 26 y.o.).

“I have not yet thought of how I can get out of a taxi if something happens. Yeah. But I think I will make something up probably” (female, 25 y.o.).

How Fears Transform Everyday Mobility

An urban citizen controls various elements of mobility: emotions, appearance, body, perspective, interactions, interpretation of situations, mode, route, and rhythm of motion. Strategies of coping with fears involve various elements of mobility and, thus, through a series of coping actions fears transform mobility. First of all, coping strategies create the emotional dimension of mobility. They define emotional work that is conducted in order to change the situation of fear, bodily sensations, expressions and labels. Coping strategies form a perspective of a mobile subject: he/she looks for signs of danger in the surrounding environment. Interaction with people in the process of mobility is designed to avoid danger or be ready to fight back. This leads to impression management, i.e. the management of appearance which manifests itself through bodily expressions and verbalized emotions. Coping with fears also involves the material things that become an extension of a human body. Handling belongings ensures control over the environment, management of impression, and self-defence. Furthermore, coping actions determine the position of a body in space and bodily interactions with the urban environment: which mode of mobility to choose, which rhythm of movement to maintain, and where to stop. Finally, coping influences which mobility constellations the person is embedded in, with whom and with what he/she will interact in the city.

Conclusion

The climate of urban fear manifests itself in the course of everyday urban life. It consists of various ideas about potential threats. Fears for own safety are enacted in the process of everyday mobility but citizens take an active role in managing their motions and emotions by undertaking coping actions. While people are coping with fears, different mobility components are being transformed. Thus, paying attention to people's micro-actions, we can analyse how deeply emotional experiences, and fear in particular, are infused in everyday mobility.

This paper contributes to the theoretical studies of emotions associated with everyday mobility. Despite the growing number of studies focusing on human agency in urban studies, emotional management as a part of urban experience remains less explored. However, my research also has a number of limitations that are worth mentioning here and take as a point of departure for further investigation. As a result of the study, it has become clear that the spectrum of urban fears is not restricted to safety concerns regarding an individual body and belongings. Urban citizens worry about threats to their emotional safety as well: fear of others' bodies being in too close proximity in a crowded place, fear of being exposed to others' gazes in public, fear of being ashamed. Therefore, urban fears are a much broader concept than I initially expected. Besides, it

remains unclear what place fears occupy in the emotional life of citizens in general. Consequently, it might be productive to study urban emotions in their totality and trace their interrelations.

References

- Adey, Peter. 2010. *Mobility*. London: Routledge.
- Adey, Peter. 2006. "If mobility is everything then it is nothing: towards a relational politics of (im)mobilities." *Mobilities* 1(1):75–94.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2013. *Liquid Modernity*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Barbalet, Jack M. 2001. *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bericat, Eduardo. 2016. "The sociology of emotions: four decades of progress." *Current Sociology* 64 (3):491–513.
- Bissell, David. 2010. "Passenger mobilities: affective atmospheres and the sociality of public transport." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2):270–289.
- Mehta, Anna. 1999. "Embodied discourse: on gender and fear of violence." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 16(1): 64-84.
- Van Der Burgt, Danielle. 2015. "Spatial avoidance or spatial confidence? Young people's agency in the active negotiation of risk and safety in public space." *Children's Geographies* 13(2):181–195.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2006. *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*. New York: Routledge.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2010. "Towards a politics of mobility." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28(1):17-31.
- Fileborn, Bianca 2016. "Doing gender, doing safety? Young adults' production of safety on a night out." *Gender, Place and Culture* 23(8):1107–1120.
- Furedi, Frank. 2003. *Culture of Fear Revisited*. London: Continuum Press.
- Furedi, Frank. 2007. "The only thing we have to fear is the 'culture of fear' itself." *American Journal of Sociology* 32:231–234.
- Giddens, Anthony. 2013. *The Consequences of Modernity*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Goffman, Erving. 1978. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Harmondsworth.
- Jensen, Ole B. 2006. "'Facework', flow and the city: Simmel, Goffman, and mobility in the contemporary city." *Mobilities* 1(2): 143-165.
- Jensen, Ole B. 2009. "Flows of meaning, cultures of movements – urban mobility as meaningful everyday life practice." *Mobilities* 4(1):139-158.

- Jensen, Ole B., Mimi Sheller, and Simon Wind. 2015. "Together and apart: Affective ambiances and negotiation in families' everyday life and mobility." *Mobilities* 10(3): 363-382.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1979. "Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3): 551-575.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1990. "Ideology and emotion management: A perspective and path for future research." Pp.117-142 in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, edited by T.D.Kemper. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kemper, Theodore D. 2006. "Power and Status and the Power-Status Theory of Emotions." Pp. 84-113 in *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, edited by J. E. Stets, J.H. Turner. New York: Springer.
- Koskela, Hille. 1997. "'Bold Walk and Breakings': Women's spatial confidence versus fear of violence." *Gender, Place and Culture* 4(3):301-319.
- Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Miethe, Terance D. 1995. "Fear and withdrawal from urban life." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 539(1):14-27.
- Molotch, Harvey. 2012. *Against Security: How We Go Wrong at Airports, Subways and Other Sites of Ambiguous Danger*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Park, Robert E., and Burgess Ernest W. 2019. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pile, Steve. 2010. "Emotions and affect in recent human geography." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(1): 5-20.
- Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry John. 2006. "The New Mobilities Paradigm." *Environment and Planning*. 2006. 38. pp. 207–226.
- Thoits, Peggy. 1995. "Stress, Coping, and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 35: 53-79.
- Thoits, Peggy. 1990. "Emotional deviance: Research agendas." Pp. 180–203 in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, edited by T.D.Kemper. New York: State University of New York Press
- Thrift, Nigel. 2008. *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. London: Routledge.
- Thrift, Nigel, and Ash Amin. 2002. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tudor, Andrew. 2003. "A (macro) sociology of fear?" *Sociological Review*. 51(2):238–256.
- Urry, John. 2007. *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Zimmerman, Don, and Lawrence D. Wieder 1977. "The diary: diary-interview method." *Urban Life* 5(4):479-498.

Ivanova, Aleksandra. 2014. "Sumchatye. Horeografiya passazhirov gorodskogo transporta." [Marsupial. The choreography of passengers in urban transport] Pp. 70-93 in *Microurbanism. City in Detail*, edited by O. Brednikova and O. Zaporozhets. Moscow: New Literary Review.

Simonova, Olga Aleksandrovna. 2016. "Bazovye principy sociologii emocij." [Basic principles of sociology of emotions] *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta. Seriya 12: Psihologiya. Sociologiya. Pedagogika* 4:12–27.

Yana Bagina

National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia). Research Intern, Laboratory of Urban Sociology; PhD student, Doctoral School of Sociology. E-mail: ybagina@hse.ru

Any opinions or claims contained in this Working Paper do not necessarily reflect the views of HSE.

© Bagina, 2019