

Fear of Crime in Cyprus **[Ο Φόβος του Εγκλήματος στην Κύπρο]**

Dr. Michael Hadjidemetriou

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The book deals with a very important theme in the field of Criminology, that of fear of crime and potential victimisation. It does so by providing primary empirical data from Cyprus, whilst at the same time analysing the most important components of this topic in a logical, comprehensive, and thorough manner. The author, through the rich subject matter of the book's chapters, attempts to map the multidimensional nature of the fear of crime both internationally and locally, using throughout recent research and findings to properly substantiate everything he presents and analyses.

The first three chapters of the book offer an in-depth introduction to the nature of the phenomenon. The fear of crime is conceptually defined, its 'ingredients' are outlined, and an important distinction is being made between its 'subjective' and 'objective' nature: Do we fear only when there is reasonable cause and perceived risk, or does fear of crime relate to other factors, too? Next, the main (sociological mostly) theories are examined which attempt, each through its own perspective and context, to 'decipher' the fear of crime by placing emphasis on either the individual himself/herself, his/her environment, or society at large. In addition, the main ways in which the fear of crime (and as a result of victimisation) can be measured are mentioned and evaluated, using well-known examples from abroad such as the British Crime Survey (BCS).

In the following chapters, the author focuses on different but equally important elements: the consequences of fear of crime which are analysed in Chapter 5 is such an example, and there are several interesting variables examined. Does our gender, age or even our demographic characteristics in general affect the way in which we perceive risk or danger and do they, in any way, shape how we react to the fear of potential victimisation?

What are the most frequent social and psychological effects of this fear, and in what ways does the ever-changing nature of crime seem to 'generate' new forms of insecurity, such as, for example, fear stemming from a potential terrorist attack? It is

particularly interesting to note here the author's reference to fear as a tool of manipulation of public opinion. It is well known that one way of controlling 'others' is by creating a climate of fear and insecurity.

The sixth chapter deals in depth with the various 'generative' factors of fear and feelings of insecurity. From Cohen's 'moral panic' and the role of the media in the spread of fear (as the author rightly notes 'fear sells'), to the role of neighbourhood in the escalation of fear and its 'transmissibility' through socialisation as the mathematical model advocates, it becomes clear that to properly understand the phenomenon it is not enough to examine it piece by piece in a fragmentary fashion, but it rather requires a more combinatorial (holistic) approach.

Having analysed extensively the 'why' (why do we fear), the author moves on to another important dimension which examines the 'how'. How, that is, can the fear of crime be reduced? Prior to considering the main ways in which fear can be controlled and/or decreased, he makes a particularly interesting parenthesis in which he briefly refers to the 'paradox' of the phenomenon. Often, the fear of crime doesn't precisely 'match' the reality of the situation. For example, the most frightened citizens are not necessarily those who have been victimised in the past, and the most frightened communities are not necessarily those which have suffered with high levels of crime. The world's perceptions are not always shaped according to actual events but are often influenced and even constructed by other social and/or environmental factors. In regard to possible ways of reducing the feelings of fear and insecurity, the author presents quite a few of them, many of which are being adopted at both international and national level, including community policing, restorative justice, crime prevention measures, social care policies, and proper environmental planning.

In the subsequent chapters of the book, the emphasis is placed upon the Cypriot reality in terms of the fear of crime victimisation and its features. Data available from local surveys and relevant professional organisations (such as the police) on crime indicators, feelings of insecurity, citizens' concerns and so forth, are compared to and contrasted with those of other European countries. Especially interesting and useful is the addition of a chapter on children and adolescents, focusing on both their fear of crime (mainly within the school environment) as well as their concerns and perceptions in a more general context. It is worth noting, as the author rightly reports, that research with children has specific peculiarities, and their 'methodological' needs and weaknesses must always be taken into consideration.

As mentioned above, the book includes and accounts in detail the research under-

taken by the author in order to record the concerns (fears) of young people (children of Middle and Technical Education, aged 13-18) on various topical issues, including delinquency and the potential risks arising in their everyday environment (school, home, or neighbourhood). Many important findings seem to emerge from this research, and the author compares these findings with similar research carried out abroad. Amongst other things, the results revealed that the most frequent concerns of the children surveyed were not so much related to criminality per se or potential victimisation, but rather focused on their performance at school, how they see their future, the health of their family, animal cruelty issues and environmental protection matters. At the same time, however, and in line with results from other relevant European research, all children seem to feel more secure when walking alone during the day than being alone at night, children from urban areas are more concerned about safety issues, and girls experience more insecurity (than boys) and trust the police more.

To summarise, the book provides a solid overview on the fear of crime and victimisation, and it examines closely the fear of crime in Cypriot society, presenting both theoretical and empirical aspects of the phenomenon. It is important to emphasise that it includes rich Greek and international literature on the relevant topics. It can be argued that its usage is of a dual nature: on the one hand, it is a very useful manual for teachers, researchers, and students alike; on the other hand, it can serve as a tool/aid to the development and formulation of crime prevention measures and policies, and as we know the combination of theory and practice usually proves the most successful!

Stavroula Soukara