



Fear of Crime in the EU-15 & Hungary

Assessing the Vulnerability, Victimization & Incivilities Model

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1. Introduction

- > Fear of crime research
 - > Vague global measures
 - > Need for new measures that acknowledge the complexity and deliver insight in the prevalence, frequency and intensity of fear of crime (Farrall & Gadd 2004; Farrall 2004; Gray, Jackson & Farrall 2008)
 - > Prevalence: “In the past year, have you ever actually felt fearful about the possibility of becoming a victim of crime” [yes; no]
 - > Frequency: “If ‘yes’, how frequently have you felt like this in the last year?” [count]
 - > Intensity: “If ‘yes’, on the last occasion, how fearful did you feel?” [not very fearful; a little bit fearful; quite fearful; very fearful]

- > Current research
 - > Theory driven approach on measurement of fear of crime
 - > Focus on emotional dimension of fear of crime (cf. Ferraro & LaGrange 1987; Hardyns & Pauwels 2010)
 - > Description of fear of crime in EU-15 and Hungary
 - > Explore how vulnerability characteristics, victimization experience and incivilities perception relate to fear of crime prevalence, frequency and intensity



2. Theoretical framework

- > **Vulnerability**
 - > Those perceiving themselves as vulnerable will feel more fearful
 - > Women, elderly, socio-economic disadvantaged, ethnic minorities

- > **Victimization**
 - > Prior victimization makes one more fearful
 - > Doubts on the fear-victimization relationship remain

- > **Incivilities**
 - > Those perceiving incivilities will feel more fearful

3. Methodology (1)

> **3.1. Data**

- > European Crime and Safety Survey 2005 (ECSS)
(EUICS 2007)
 - > EUICS Consortium led by Gallup Europe
 - > Sample
 - > N = 31563
 - > Residents of EU-15 & Hungary, aged 16 or older

- > Eurostat-database

3. Methodology (2)

> **3.2. Variables**

- > Dependent variables
 - > Prevalence, frequency and intensity of fear of crime

- > Independent variables
 - > Individual-level
 - > Vulnerability: age, gender, household combined annual income after tax deduction
 - > Victimization: personal crimes, property crimes
 - > Incivilities: contact with drug related problems in past 12 months
 - > Country-level
 - > Proportion of victims, incivilities concentration, GDP per capita, unemployment rate

3. Methodology (3)

- > 3.3. Analysis
 - > Generalized linear multilevel modeling
 - > Multilevel modeling because of multilayered ECSS-data
 - > Generalized linear modeling because of categorical nature of dependent variables
 - > Analytic strategy
 - > Intercept-only models
 - > All 3 individual-level models are independently specified
 - > All 3 individual-level models are combined into a single individual-level model
 - > Country-level variables are added to the combined individual-level model

4. Findings (1)

- Fear of crime is not widespread in the EU-15 & Hungary
 - Approx. 10% felt fearful in past 12 months
 - Those feeling fearful did so on irregular occasions
 - Last fearful episode is rarely experienced as 'very fearful'
 - cf. Farrall & Gadd (2004) and Gray, Jackson & Farrall (2008)



4. Findings (2)

- > Prevalence of fear of crime
 - > Inverse effect of age: not unsurprising (cf. Chadee & Ditton 2003; Kanan & Pruitt 2002)
 - > Victimization: important predictors (cf. debate on victimization-fear nexus)
 - > No contextual effects

4. Findings (3)

- > Frequency of fear of crime
 - > Vulnerability: only effect of age
 - > Victimization: important predictors
 - > Contextual effect of victimization risk
 - > As risk of victimization increases, so does the likelihood of frequently feeling fearful



4. Findings (4)

- > Intensity of fear of crime
 - > Inverse effect of gender: interesting in light of previous research that suggests men downplay and women exaggerate their experienced fear of crime (e.g. Sutton & Farrall 2005; 2009)
 - > Victimization: important predictors
 - > No contextual effects

5. Limitations

- > Measurement
 - > Vulnerability and proxy-measures (cf. Killias & Clerici 2000; Jackson 2009)
 - > Incivilities and a single proxy-measure (drug problem perception)
- > Exploratory nature of study
 - > Frequency and intensity measures and the logic of the vulnerability, victimization and incivilities model?
- > Representativity of findings
 - > Weights were dropped

6. Conclusion

- > Fear of crime prevalence
 - > Vulnerability, victimization and incivilities variables are related with fear of crime prevalence and behave more or less as expected
- > Fear of crime frequency and intensity
 - > General ideas of victimization and incivilities model hold
 - > Arguments of vulnerability cannot be straightforwardly extended
- > Victimization
 - > Victimization of property and personal crimes were consistent predictors of prevalence, frequency and intensity

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