

## A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE WORK OF BOROUGHS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND VICTIMIZATION AT A NATIONAL LEVEL: FROM AN ISSUE OF CRIMINOLOGY TO AN ISSUE OF ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The work of boroughs regarding criminal policy for minors is mainly performed by the Groups for Protection of Minors (GPMs) which are constituted in every borough and aim at prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and victimization at a local level. As it is the case for various other groups and bodies, their work is coordinated by the Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Treatment of Minors' Victimization and Criminality (C.S.C.P.T.M.), which was constituted in 2010. Its tenure though has expired in summer 2019 and since then, it has not been reconstituted, this having a negative impact as regards the coordination and supervision of the GPMs. Given the importance of the boroughs' work on prevention and treatment of delinquency and victimization, a preliminary research was conducted by interviews, focusing mainly on the GPMs' function and work at a national level. After a systematic approach of 15 boroughs, it was found that the GPMs continue to function and work albeit that the tenure of their coordinator has expired, nevertheless their work and effectiveness are reduced. It was also found that the interviewees remained silent about the expiration of the coordinator's tenure, these leading to proposals about its reconstitution and better dissemination of information towards the boroughs' personnel and residents.

**Key words:** prevention, juvenile delinquency, juvenile victimization, participant criminal policy, local government

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## 1. Introduction

The work of boroughs and municipalities on crime and victimization in cases of minors is essentially performed by the Groups for Protection of Minors (hereafter GPMs), which are established by article 8, par. 3 of L. 3961/2011<sup>4</sup>, aiming at prevention and treatment of juvenile victimization and delinquency at local level. Such Groups are constituted in every borough at the initiative of the Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Treatment of Minors' Victimization and Criminality (hereafter C.S.C.P.T.M.)<sup>5</sup>. The latter was established by article 12, par. 3 of the L. 3860/2010 at the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and consists of 11 members, whose term of office can be renewed. The main function of this central body is to serve as an instrument of coordination between GPMs' work and other sector initiatives. The GPMs rest within the competence of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity as well as the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and they aim at providing social care, concern, solidarity and protection of minors in danger and juvenile delinquents<sup>6</sup>.

The GPMs fall into the organized network by the C.S.C.P.T.M. and are staffed by social workers, who usually, belong to the social service<sup>7</sup> of each borough. Their competence as defined by the Ministerial Decision No 49540/04.05.2011<sup>8</sup> is the following: They conduct social inquiry on child abuse, in case they receive a) notification from the 'national line of children protection, b) a complaint, even anonymous, which is made within the administrative limits of the borough or c) an order by the prosecutor. However, the tenure of the C.S.C.P.T.M. which is the central coordinating body of the GPMs' work, expired on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2019<sup>9</sup>. Since then, there has not been any decision published for its reconstitution, by the Minister of Justice, who is in charge of its publication<sup>10</sup>. As a result, the already constituted GPMs, all over the country, are not concerted, this having a negative impact on

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this article was not included in the first law draft, when submitted to the Greek Parliament for debate and vote. It was added later, by the Minister of Justice, Charalampos Castanidis, during the discussion on the principle of the Law Draft "Amendment of the L. 3126/2003 on Ministers' Criminal Liability", in order to treat urgent and emergency needs that have appeared, while organizing the coordinating sector of the GPMs (see Parliamentary Documents, Sitting of the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011, pp. 8938 – 8940-in electronic form).

<sup>5</sup> The C.S.C.P.T.M. has been a sector with a long history record and very broad responsibilities. In the present paper though we focus only on its duties concerning youth and minors.

<sup>6</sup> As foreseen in article 8 par. 3, under b, of L. 3961/2011 in OGG A'97/29.04.2011.

<sup>7</sup> More particularly, for the social services' tasks of preventing juvenile delinquency and victimization, such as informing parents, constituting networks of volunteers for help and information for victims, reintegration of juvenile delinquents via social policy strategies etc., see Xenouli, Voudouri & Mantas 2022, pp. 59 ff., esp. pp. 66 & 70.

<sup>8</sup> See text of this Decision, entitled "Coordination of actions and services for children protection" in OGG B' 877/2011.

<sup>9</sup> See Ministerial Decision No 44562/30.06.2016, par. 2, in OGG YODD 387/18.07.2016.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding its reconstitution, there has been a relevant question addressed to the Minister of Justice on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, by the loyal opposition member of Parliament Spyros Lappas, entitled "Abandonment of the Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Treatment of Minors' Victimization and Criminality" (in electronic form). It is inferred that this question has not been answered, given the fact that until now, the C.S.C.P.T.M. has still not been reconstituted.

their work's effectiveness. On the other hand, the contribution of the GPMs to the social protection of minors in danger, as well as delinquency and the level of crisis they might undergo, is estimated by high-ranking members of the Judiciary as very important<sup>11</sup>. After all, the significance of the local projects of crime prevention strategies in general has already been stressed in the relevant literature, as it combines administrative decentralization, transference of competences to local government sectors and involvement of the citizens to the treatment of problems within the context of participatory democracy<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, given also the fact that youth and minors carry future hopes and prospect, we have decided to conduct a preliminary research on these matters and more specifically, to focus on the GPMs work at a national level. The basic issue tackled by our research project is to find out if and to what extent the GPMs' function and its work continues albeit that the tenure of their coordinator (C.S.C.P.T.M.) has expired. A related matter here is the impact of its expiration on the boroughs and the local society. In view of this impact, the relevant inquiry aims at proposing solutions to possible malfunctions created, both at local and national level.

## 2. The research project: Preliminary inquiry and first results

In our attempt to approach our field of study, we have defined the target population after a previous research work of ours on another institution, namely the Local Councils for the Prevention of Delinquency (hereafter LCPD)<sup>13</sup>. The population of our second, longitudinal research on this institution, conducted during autumn 2022, consisted of 43 boroughs in the Greek territory<sup>14</sup>, where from decisions of constituting LCPDs were announced, through the site 'Diavgia' ('Transparency Portal which falls under the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance)<sup>15</sup>. We have considered these boroughs as the source of our sampling for interviewing a member of the borough, competent for the work on preventing and treating delinquency and victimization of minors.

Regarding the results of our previous longitudinal research, we have observed that from the respondents of 43 boroughs, only 15 referred to the work which is done concerning juvenile delinquency and victimization. For instance, some have noted that in their borough, actions on dealing

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<sup>11</sup> See conclusions of the Supreme Court Attorney's Opinion 3/2012 (*Legal Database NOMOS*).

<sup>12</sup> See Karagiannides 2023, who also notes that the participants *are able* to contribute to crime prevention, in the places where they live or work as well as *have the interest* in doing so, since they are mostly the victims of their districts' criminal incidents (in electronic form).

<sup>13</sup> See Kranidioti, Papanikolaou & Gioti 2020, pp. 225 ff.

<sup>14</sup> For that research see Kranidioti & Gioti, pp.90 ff.

<sup>15</sup> In our initial research project (2018-2019), the population comprises of 102 boroughs all over Greece, which were spotted by a) decisions of constituting LCPD or at least, by b) 'invitations of declaring interest for constituting such Councils', raised through their sites. Due to time limit though, it was not possible to repeat this process for the present inquiry and this has some consequences concerning sampling process and generalisation of our results (see below, 5).

with offending and prevention of victimization of minors are organized. Others have not referred particularly on these matters, but they have noted that those who participated in the LCPDs were often secondary education professors, members of the Union of Parents and Guardians, psychologists or members of GPMs etc. From this information, by assuming that such activities and participants often focus on school and family problems, we have inferred that the respective boroughs may also produce an improved understanding of juvenile delinquency and victimization work.

After our first observations we have decided to approach these 15 boroughs for further inquiry by a phone-call and finally, we have managed to have a short interview with a social worker or another member of the boroughs' social service or administration. After the interview, it was found that 7 of these boroughs have carried out work in the area of our research focus. Then a brief questionnaire was developed<sup>16</sup> and sent to most of these respondents by which they were asked to give us more oral and if possible, recorded information on juvenile a) delinquency and b) victimization for the last ten years (2013 – 2023) or since the time that a GPM was constituted in their borough. Finally, they were asked c) to assess their borough's work, the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency<sup>17</sup> of private and public sectors they have cooperated with for incidents of juvenile delinquency and victimization as well as the responsiveness of the State(see appendix). To this questionnaire, nobody has replied as yet<sup>18</sup>.

### 3. Main results and observations

From the 15 servants of the respective boroughs' social service, who were interviewed, 8 have replied that a GPM was constituted in their borough and from those, 7 have described its work. Some of them have reminded that, according to the institutional and legal framework in force, the GPMs belong to the boroughs' social service and they are staffed by social workers, whose responsibility is mainly focused on executing public prosecutor's orders. More specifically, according to the respondents, the GPMS' social workers sometimes come in direct contact either with the children in danger or with their parents, perform family therapy, inspect their living conditions and finally propose

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<sup>16</sup> This is a tool including mainly requests addressed to the respondents for gathering more detailed and valid information on research issues, *not* an instrument for direct data collection (for the latter, see indicatively, Gouseti, Sagoimidou-Daskalaki and Georgoulas 2018, in *Dictionary of Criminology*, pp. 518 ff., 1007 ff. and 1006 ff. respectively).

<sup>17</sup> "Effectiveness" refers to the degree of achieving the objectives pursued and "efficiency" to the ratio between economic or social cost and benefit (Spinellis, 2014, p. 152).

<sup>18</sup> The process of collecting data has taken place during the period of the municipal elections in Greece and this partly explains the replies' delay. Anyhow, all the respondents have noted that they are going to reply in due time.

means for supporting the families and their children<sup>19</sup>. Two respondents noted that they organize events in schools on issues as bullying, safe Internet, drugs, alcoholism etc. The one though of them mentioned that this is rarely done, because these actions are not performed by specialists. Another two respondents noted that their borough's staff cooperates with institutes and hospitals, especially for cases of child psychiatric assessment or psychological support as well as clinical examination of children<sup>20</sup>.

**TABLE: SELECTED BOROUGHES & INTERVIEWEES' REPLIES**

<b>SELECTED BOROUGHES</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>GPM CONSTITUTED</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>53.3</b>
<i>Description of work</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>7</i>	<i>46.7</i>
<i>Integration of GPMs</i>	<i>x</i>											<i>x</i>				<i>2</i>	<i>13.3</i>
<b>GPM NOT CONSTITUTED</b>		<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>33.3</b>
<i>Remits → social service/ peripheral region</i>							<i>x</i>						<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>3</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>School for Parents</i>		<i>x</i>														<i>1</i>	<i>6.7</i>
<b>AMBIVALENCE</b>														<b>X</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>NO REPLY</b>			<b>X</b>													<b>1</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>OTHER COMMENTS</b>																	
<i>Considerable amount of work*</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>73.3</i>
<i>Much / satisfactory work</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>6</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Under- staffed</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>66.7</i>
<i>Need of permanent, specialized posts etc.</i>	<i>x</i>				<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>			<i>6</i>	<i>40</i>

\* As inferred by the researchers from some replies plus the above ones (respondents' statements).

While assessing their boroughs' work, a considerable number of respondents (6) stated that, given the means at their disposal, the work is much and satisfactory. Furthermore, most of these respondents have noted that there is need of staffing the GPMs, by recruiting personnel e.g. on permanent posts in the social service of each borough, since, due to excessive workload, their activities are covered by social workers of the program "Help at Home" or by staff from the "Centers of Open Protection for the Elderly" (hereafter C.O.P.E.), hospitals, community centers etc. Some respondents have also underlined the need of employment of specialized personnel, e.g. child psychologists or psychiatrists as well as legal practitioners, who could help the social workers in performing their duties. Moreover, two of them have proposed the integration of GPMs in the Courts of First Instance or in the Public Prosecutor's Office<sup>21</sup> and one the recruitment of medical doctors in the Health Centers, as regards problems of delay of social workers' referrals for paediatric or psychiatric examination, due to

<sup>19</sup> According to the findings of an earlier research work conducted in Athens, the Public Prosecutor's Office adopted the recommendation-proposal of the person conducting the inspection or the assessment in all such instances (70/70) (Kranidioti & Zagoura 2017, p. 1467).

<sup>20</sup> Both respondents of these boroughs, which are located in different districts of the country, have referred to the cooperation of their boroughs' staff with the Smile of the Child Association, a well-known nonprofit organization (see <https://www.childreanmilefoundation.org/>).

<sup>21</sup> This might facilitate criminal justice administration as well (see in this respect, Council of Europe, Recommendation no. R (87)18, concerning the simplification of criminal justice (in electronic form) and also, Spinellis 2007, pp. 25 ff.).

personnel deficit. Additionally, one respondent has proposed the establishment of self-contained services for families and children at high risk, so that the latter are spotted in time – already while in the nursery –in view of preventing juvenile delinquency in the long run<sup>22</sup>.

However, a noteworthy observation is that none of the 8 respondents from the boroughs that have constituted a GPM, has referred to the tenure's expiration of the C.S.C.P.T.M. and the non-appointment of new members, during the last four years. This might mean that these interviewees have just forgotten to make reference to it, or else, it may be due to the lack of information dissemination about this coordinating body and its duties, which means that the boroughs' personnel is not aware about its existence and functions. An alternative interpretation is that the respondents just want to stress their borough's contribution to treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency and victimization, while considering the formal coordination of its work and any horizontal cooperation with other boroughs or the State of less importance<sup>23</sup>.

The respondents of 5 boroughs have stated that they have not constituted a GPM, albeit the existence of a legal provision for its constitution<sup>24</sup>. They claimed this was due either to the small size of their borough or the lack of appropriate scientific personnel for recruitment. In one case, certain remits of the GPMs, even main ones, as the execution of public prosecutor's orders, have been included in the boroughs' social service, while in another two, the incidents have been assigned to the peripheral region under which the respective borough falls. One borough has founded informally a School for Parents, whose role is advisory, that is, they organize briefings on issues of delinquency for parents, whereas the social service of another, organizes advisory actions for schools on bullying and safe Internet. Finally, nobody has replied to the successive phone-calls on the central phone number of one borough, while the respondent of another has avoided to reply to the question whether there is a constituted GPM in his borough. Nevertheless, he stated that its constitution is mandatory, which means that he most probably knew that the respective provision of the law is incomplete<sup>25</sup>. Given the latter it seems not to be a paradox that the respondents of all the above mentioned 5 boroughs have stated that they have not constituted a GPM.

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<sup>22</sup> The connection of child abuse and neglect with juvenile delinquency and the continuity of the "vicious circle of violence" is often revealed through the relevant research literature – e.g. it has been estimated that 97% of delinquent boys who are recidivists, had a track record of serious punishment and abuse in their family (Kranidioti & Zagoura 2016, pp. 716-717).

<sup>23</sup> In the light, though, of administrative criminology, the reorganization of the State's crime control strategies is necessary for rendering its control effective and efficient (Spinellis 2014 op. cit., p. 48).

<sup>24</sup> According to the letter of the law (article 8, par. 3, under d of L. 3961/2011), this is an incomplete provision, which means that there is no consequence for the boroughs, if they do not comply with it (as in the case of LCPD constitution – see Kranidioti & Gioti op. cit., p. 90, footnote 5).

<sup>25</sup> See above, footnote 24.

In short, according to the interviewees who have replied to the relevant question (14/15), more than half of the boroughs we have approached (8/14), have constituted a GMP and, according to our estimation, most of the boroughs in general, have produced a considerable amount of work (11/14), while more than half of these interviewees (6/11) consider their borough's work much and satisfactory (see table). Overall, 2/3 of the respondents (10/15) have stressed the under-supply of staffing, most of those (6/10), the need for recruitment of new personnel (specialized and/or on permanent posts), but nobody has commented upon the absence of a GPMs' central coordinating body.

#### 4. Thoughts, critique and proposals

The outcome of the respondents' description in our preliminary research permits the inference that in cases where a GPM is established, the practice followed by the boroughs' personnel is in accordance with the legal provisions in force (article 8, par. 3 of L. 3961/2011 and Ministerial Decision No 49540/04.05.2011). This applies to the extent that their compliance with the law is feasible, while the contrast among the importance attributed to the GMPs officially<sup>26</sup> and the information we have gathered by our inquiry is noteworthy. Anywise, our interviewees belong to the personnel of the boroughs and have a view of matters from inside. Therefore, their comments, remarks and proposals during their interview should be considered valid with respect to the improvement of the GPMs and the boroughs' functioning.

The fact that the tenure of the central administrative body of the GPMs (C.S.C.P.T.M.), as aforementioned (see above, 1.), has expired at about 4 years ago, results to malfunctioning as well as to ineffectiveness and inefficiency of these groups, yet, as we have observed (see above, 3.), some of them still continue to produce a considerable amount of work at a local level<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, lack of coordination by a central instrument has resulted in a shrinkage of their work, which is now confined mainly to executing public prosecutor's orders. As noted by two respondents, the social services in their boroughs are staffed just by one or two social workers<sup>28</sup>, while in others, by informally posted workers from outside sectors, programs or services (e.g. C.O.P.E. or community centers).

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 11.

<sup>27</sup> Similar conditions were observed after research conducted mainly by a qualitative method, that is, a case study of a "twofold intervention" minor, from the Juvenile Probation Office's archive in the First Instance Court of Athens. The researchers have concluded that the absence of a system of children protection was covered *ex post* by the criminal justice system for minors. The actors within the system of justice, operating along the lines of a "fair justice plus social care" perspective, have worked so that the minor and his family are referred back to the social care system (Zagoura & Kranidioti 2016, pp. 1982-1983).

<sup>28</sup> As a result, the GPMs are "overloaded" and their work's completion is delayed, this being a similar problem to that appearing in the justice process (see Spinellis 2007 op. cit., pp. 27 ff. and also Council of Europe, Recommendation no. R (87)20, on social reactions to juvenile delinquency (in electronic form).

Consequently, for the improvement of the GPMs' and the boroughs' functioning, some interviewees proposed that they are staffed with more and specialized personnel. More specifically, from their viewpoint, what is needed, is the appointment of appropriate scientific staff, as children psychologists and psychiatrists as well as experienced lawyers with work history on matters of children protection, who will assist social workers. The number of the latter should also be increased in certain boroughs, this rendering humanly possible the processing of a vast amount of work undertaken by just one or few persons.

Furthermore, one should reflect upon the non-mandatory provision of the GPMs' constitution. This has been a crucial issue on which most of the respondents either were not well informed or have chosen to remain silent about (see above, 3.). A relevant question here is, if it is fair or not that the boroughs where a GPM is constituted, are rewarded or at least their contribution is somehow recognized by their community or by the State. We had made such a proposal in a previous study of another local institution (LCPD)<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, the suggestion to render the creation of GMPs mandatory by law, seems too far-fetched, in view of the "boroughs in need". It is clear that even if the GPMs' constitution was mandatory, many boroughs would not be in a position to conform to the law due to the lack of the appropriate means and of the support by the State. Then another question arises here, if the support of the "boroughs in need" -instead of or in parallel to the reward of the "lawful" ones- is fair or not. What are the advantages of favoring the first ones over the second or vice versa? Should both be favored but with different means?

According to our opinion, there is no reply to the above questions unless a central body of the boroughs' coordination is established, even in a different form and structure than the previous one. The creation though of a new type of coordinator seems difficult under the present conditions<sup>30</sup>. A feasible solution then would be that the C.S.C.P.T.M. is officially reconstituted to supervise and coordinate the GPMs<sup>31</sup>. Such a solution will facilitate the horizontal cooperation of their staff with that of other GPMs' or sectors' staff as well as render their functioning and work more effective. This

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<sup>29</sup> See Kranidioti, Papanikolaou & Gioti, op. cit. p. 231 and Kranidioti & Gioti, op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>30</sup> Even a well-meaning analyst of postmodernity, who focuses though on the international level and within a different context, finishes his thoughts by admitting that "we cannot really count upon a shared, universally settled, common constitutional frame" (Palombella 2023, p. 29).

<sup>31</sup> It has already been suggested that the C.S.C.P.T.M. be transformed into an instrument for policy development, which will cooperate with counterpart sectors abroad and promote means or institutions of prevention, by coordinating initiatives of sectors, such as the church, the social workers and voluntary groups of aware citizens or NGOs (Courakis 2012, pp. 655-656, esp. footnote 24). An example of good practice here is the application of the program BeSecure-FeelSecure in the municipality of Piraeus, which is one of the three municipalities that have been chosen in 2019 to be financed by the European Regional Development Fund (see for this program, Zarafonitou 2022, pp. 2 ff., 7). The scientific managers of the BSFS program have searched to find a common ground of active cooperation among many relevant to prevention and security sectors, including the Minors' Protection Association of Piraeus (p. 9).



proposal should be accompanied by a second one, the better dissemination of adequate and valid information towards the boroughs' personnel and residents, on their benefits and liabilities, as regards prevention and treatment of serious incidents of juvenile delinquency and victimization in case they have already or might decide to constitute GPM in their borough<sup>32</sup>. Such information should be directed par excellence towards those boroughs that either have not constituted a GPM or their GPM is inactive.

## 5. Cautionary Notes

The above information collected by our brief interviews does not lead to certain conclusions concerning the work of the boroughs on local prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and victimization and the function of the GPMs in practice. After all, we have conducted a preliminary inquiry, relying on a previous research project of ours for another local institution. The units selected from the initial target population by a certain criterion (reference of the previous interviewees to our subject under study) are very few and far from being representative of the boroughs at the national level. In short, our project does not meet the basic criteria of quantitative methods and the results of our observations cannot be generalized. On the other hand, we had no chance of conducting qualitative research thoroughly, e.g. by focusing on one or a small number of boroughs (case study), since nobody has replied to our questionnaire (see above, 2). However, the results of our study are somehow *transferable* in the sense that their readers are invited to make connections between elements of our study and their own experience<sup>33</sup>.

Given the problems we have faced in all steps of our inquiry and most importantly, the above mentioned difficulties, we estimate that a research project, starting with a target population, which would include all municipalities (boroughs) of the country (332) would be very useful. The results of a research based on such a project could be generalized at the national level and possibly inform us about arrangements related to the implementation of laws and local government<sup>34</sup>. Then it could also be expected that the relevant research outcomes would shed more light on the work of boroughs at

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<sup>32</sup> In this context, it is noted that the ultimate goals of information campaigns should be to facilitate the dialogue among the national and local authorities on the one hand, and the citizens' unions on the other, to provoke the critique of the latter for the measures already applied and to take into account their opinion for organizing city life (see Alexiades 2011, p. 325).

<sup>33</sup> See about generalizability and transferability Writing@CSU Guide (in electronic form).

<sup>34</sup> As L. 3852/2010 "New Architecture of Self-government and Decentralized Administration", OGG A' 87/07.06.2010, as amended by L. 4555/2018 L. 4555/2018, on reform of the local self-government institutional framework and the improvement of economic and developmental function of the respective Local Government Organizations (Κλεισθένης Program), OGG A' 133/19.07.2018 and also L. 4804/2021 "Town and Regional Authorities' Elections and other provisions", OGG A' 133/19.07.2018.

sensitive and problematic areas as juvenile delinquency and victimization as well as minors in danger and even more generally, on crime prevention.

## 6. Epilogue

From the time that thoughts and programs focusing on the above mentioned issues and themes emerged, were elaborated and applied, many negative events have taken place at local, national and global levels: the economic crisis –with austerity particularly intensive in Greece–, the outbreak and spread of Covid 19, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East with disruptive consequences. In this background, plus the absence of a “common constitutional frame”<sup>35</sup> at macro, but also at the micro level (GMPs coordinating body), the country’s boroughs seem to have continued to produce considerable amount of work and to propose solutions regarding juvenile offenders and victims as well as prevention of negative incidents concerning the youth.

Most importantly, their work has taken and still takes place in a far from favourable local environment, while, to use the words of a macro-analyst “in the concrete world of democracy practices, the ideal kind of democracy is rarely reached”<sup>36</sup>. In this environment, the country’s boroughs are invited to constitute GPMs and the State a central coordinating body for them. No matter how difficult this is, given the long lasting experience on minors and youth dimension policies<sup>37</sup>, the State and the country’s local authorities as well as citizen residents must find ways to implement relevant programs and to employ effective and efficient means of prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and victimization.

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<sup>35</sup> Palombella, as above, p.29.

<sup>36</sup> See Klabbers 2023, who also mentions that democracy in practice is often perverted “by party-political manoeuvres, gerrymandering, the impact of financial rules, and an electorate that often does not seem to take the demands of democracy very seriously” (p. 49, in electronic form).

<sup>37</sup> See for instance J. Wilson 2001, in respect of the restorative justice framework, but also a twenty years later critique, by A. Wilson 2022 (first published in 2021), who claims that “restorative justice practices require mature responses, yet the ethical concepts it has at its disposal are all grounded in primitive conceptions of shame and guilt” (p. 49).

## A P P E N D I X

**RESEARCH** on the work of boroughs on juvenile delinquency and victimization at a national level: A preliminary inquiry.

First researcher: Maria P. Kranidioti, Associate Professor, Department of Penal Sciences, Law School, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (retired: 31/8/2022).

Field researcher: Ilektra P. Gioti, Lawyer at Supreme Court, Msc. in Criminal Law and Criminology, PhD candidate of the Law School, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.



### INFORMED CONCENT FORM FOR RESEACH

We are pleased and honored for your decision to participate in our research on the work of boroughs for the delinquency and victimization of minors at a national level. This is a scientific research project, therefore, the data we are going to collect will be used exclusively for research purposes.

Below we are asking you to reply to certain questions<sup>38</sup>. Your participation in this study will pose no risks to you. It is forbidden for us to use any technical or other means without your consent.

Your replies will be anonymous and transformed to coded categories that will be analyzed in relation with other data. Before publication or any other announcement of our results, all data collected by us will be anonymized, this including also the names of the boroughs.

If you have any questions, you may communicate with the first researcher Dr. Maria P. Kranidioti (tel. no. \_\_\_\_\_ mail: \_\_\_\_\_).

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<sup>38</sup> The researchers explained orally that they were asking for replies escorted by recorded data and information, if possible (see below, questionnaire).

Your participation in the research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate even now or you may not reply to certain questions or choose to reply only to some questions. Such choices are not going to have any consequence for you.

If you want, we can send you a copy of the present text signed by us (see below) as well as a copy of our notes, after elaborating the information and data you are going to give us. We remind you that you may quit your participation, whenever you want, without any consequence.

Signatures

1<sup>st</sup> signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



*During a previous discussion with a representative of your borough we were informed that you have constituted a Groups for Protection of Minors (GMP). The GMP undertakes certain actions on juvenile delinquency and victimization (as foreseen in article 8, par. 3 of L. 3961/2011) normally in cooperation with the Public Prosecutor's Office.*

*From what we know, the serious cases are undertaken by the Public Prosecutor's Office. In our previous discussion though, you have stated that after the findings of a certain incident are transmitted to the Prosecutor's Office, you don't get any information about the cases' progress and outcome. However, we would like to ask if you have in your borough, some recorded on cases for which you have been informed or even have handled.*



## QUESTIONNAIRE

*We are asking for information and data on juvenile delinquency, if possible, for the last decade (2013-2023 or at least for the time since a GPM was constituted in your borough), for the following:*

1. Number of cases according to the offence committed (regardless of the offence seriousness, attorney's prosecution or not etc.).
2. The minor acted in relation with other minors or not (cases of collective action – brief description).
  - 2.1. If there are cases of collective action, could you characterize them as gangs? (Please, justify your answer).
3. Characteristics of delinquents (gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnic group – if he/ she/they is/ are aliens).
4. Family/ living background (e.g. extended family or not, homeless or not etc.).

5. Brief description of the incidents (if they are many, describe the main of themn). Please make reference to common characteristics of such incidents of your borough, for which you are informed or taken over.

6. a) Which service of your borough has handled these cases and b) in relation to which public or private sector/s?



*We are asking for information and data on juvenile victimization, if possible, for the last decade (2013-2023 or at least for the time since a GPM was constituted in your borough), for the following:*

7. Number of cases according to type of victimization, e.g. child abuse, neglect, bullying (regardless of attorney's prosecution or not etc.).

8. The victimized minor/s is/were one or many in each incident.

9. Gender and age of victimized minors

10. Family/ living background (e.g. extended family or not, homeless or not etc.).

11. Characteristics of the offender/s (gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnic group – if he/ she/they is/ are aliens).

12. a) Which service of your borough has handled the cases and b) in relation to which public or private sectors?

*[Explication: If you have already recorded data, it would be very useful for our research that you share them with us, in accordance with conditions set out by you – for instance, on the condition that we send you a signed by us document certifying the confidentiality of information exchanged.*



*We are asking you also, to assess the work of your borough as well as the responsiveness, efficiency and the effectiveness of the public and private sectors you have cooperated with for the above mentioned incidents (of juveniles' delinquency and victimization). Finally, want to ask you to assess the State's work and responsiveness<sup>39</sup>.*

13. How do you assess the work of your borough on juveniles' delinquency and victimization?

The work of GPMs and their cooperators is (choose one or more of the set answers below):

a) Rich, big (please, describe briefly the work of your borough's GPM).

b) The work of the GPM and its cooperators at the borough's level b1) efficient but not (enough) effective, b2) is effective but not (enough) efficient. Which is the cause of this inefficiency or ineffectiveness? Please, justify the reply you are going to choose, briefly.

<sup>39</sup> In this context, the State is conceived as Polity (Πολιτεία).

- c) The work of the GPM and its cooperators at the borough's level is neither efficient nor effective. Which is the cause of this? Justify your reply please, even if it is addressed by the following answers).
- d) The members of the GPM and its cooperators make efforts, but they encounter problems of recruitment of adequate staff, maladministration etc. (In case you choose the present reply, describe these problems briefly).
- e) The members of the GPM and its cooperators have other priorities and they are not interested in dealing with the work they have undertaken.
- f) Other, external private or public sectors undertake initiatives and carry out this work.
- g) The coordination among the boroughs' services and the State is not good (or there is no coordination at all).
- η) Other (complete in case you are not covered by any of the above set replies).

**14.** How do you assess the State's response to your borough's needs as regards juvenile delinquency or victimization? The State a) responds always/ usually, b) sometimes does, sometimes does not respond/ in respect of certain actions it does, in respect of others it does not, c) responds very rarely/ does not respond at all. (Please, justify your answer).

**15.** According to your opinion, is the State rewarding as regards the work of the boroughs in general? (Please, justify your answer briefly).

**16.** Irrespective of your replies to the above questions, what would you suggest for the improvement of a) the work of boroughs, b) the State, c) their interconnection etc.

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