

Christina Zarafonitou (2023) *Empirical Criminology [Εμπειρική Εγκληματολογία]*. 3rd edition. Foreword by: James Farsedakis. Athens: Nomiki Vivliothiki, pp. 353, ISBN: 978-960-654-144-5 (in Greek)

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In *Empirical Criminology* the author, Christina Zarafonitou, has pieced together a dizzying amount of studies, data and information with notable discipline. Excluding an introductory chapter on methods and techniques of criminological research, and a short epilogue, the work is structured along two substantial parts: Part I - on ‘the pathway to criminality’; and Part II - on ‘social reaction to crime’.

Part I, in turn, is based on two chapters: chapter one on research on the measurement of criminality and chapter two on research on criminogenic factors. In these chapters the author reviews literature from surveys, victimisation studies, self-report studies, to biological, psychological factors and the role of gender and age, to research on economic factors, subcultures, and environmental factors. Part II, reviews Greek and international empirical research on the police, prosecution, the courts as well as on public representations of the criminal justice system (chapter three) before moving to sanctions and their consequences (chapter four) and, finally, the role of the public as contributors to the design of criminal policy (chapter five). In the latter chapter, there is a robust account on fear of crime, which has been Zarafonitou’s ‘bread and butter’ for approximately three decades (see, for example, Zarafonitou, 2002; 2023; Tseloni and Zarafonitou, 2008 among many other works). Both parts are embellished with more than sixty, highly useful, tables and graphs. The breadth of the topics covered is so big that prevents any detailed summary of each chapter in this review.

Zarafonitou has done Greek criminology a service by producing a work of two main qualities. Firstly, it is based on a masterful treatment of extremely rich material from Europe, North America and, of course, Greece. The significant imbalance between the reviewed

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international empirical research on one hand and the *Greek* empirical research on the other, is a reflection of the fact that empirical criminological research in Greece is -compared to the European and American contexts - limited. The author seamlessly weaves Greek and international case studies, and presents the material with calmness and simplicity, which -given the amount and diversity of research reviewed here – is a sign of great scholarship, in my opinion. Granted, the work is heavy in its scope and is neither a ‘page-turner’ to be voraciously read nor the best book to leave on the bedside table; however, it is never ‘heavy going’.

Secondly, although not every single, relevant (or even best) criminological study is referred to, the work is intensely detailed. The book often has an encyclopaedic feel, and the readers will most certainly find in here the corpus of the relevant Greek criminological research and a significant part of international (predominantly western) criminological literature that is representative of criminological ‘branches’ or subfields and that “has significantly contributed to the progress of the science of criminology” (p.3). This will naturally result in the book under review being a standard reference for early career and more experienced colleagues alike.

The work being written in Greek naturally means that its ‘ability’ to reach an international audience will remain limited. This point, however, does not limit the importance of a book the writing of which has most certainly been a Herculean task. Zarafonitou straddles the boundaries between criminology and other social and penal sciences, and her command of empirical criminological work is as stunning as her ability to write about it. The work is the product of meticulous and extensive study, and it will be an indispensable source for Greek criminologists.

References

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