

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

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The primary objective of Criminology as an academic discipline, as well as the primary task of the criminologist, is the production of knowledge through criminological research and its subsequent promotion for utilization by the state in shaping its policies to address criminality. Therefore, criminological research serves the purpose of supporting crime prevention policies, aiming for them to be rational and effective in controlling the levels of crime. In this regard, developing criminological scientific research is a prerequisite for formulating and implementing integrated crime prevention policies, while the findings of this research can serve as a platform for the necessary training and education of individuals involved in implementing crime prevention policies and for the rational organization of official social control mechanisms of criminality.

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A seminal book in Greek academic literature regarding criminological research, which eloquently highlights the dual nature of Criminology as both a theoretical and applied discipline, is undoubtedly the “*Empirical Criminology*” by Professor of Criminology and Director of the pioneering Laboratory of Urban Criminology for our country, *Christina Zarafonitou*. The third revised edition of her book, recently released with a preface by the late Emeritus Professor of Criminology at Panteion University, *James Farsedakis*, covers in its more than three hundred and fifty pages everything we need to know about criminological research: methods and techniques of criminological research, crime measurement surveys, studies on factors of criminality, research related to official social control, and much more, enriched with a large number of statistical tables and graphs. The book systematically selects and presents, with a critical spirit, the most representative criminological research in each field of scientific inquiry; as the author herself highlights in the conclusion of her book, “*the empirical approaches selected represent the most significant areas of scientific research. These areas were operationally identified based on their integration into the two known theoretical streams of Criminology, the transition to action and social reaction*” (p. 319).

The current third revised edition of the book essentially constitutes the only textbook in Greek criminological literature on Empirical Criminology. Furthermore, the book serves as the teaching manual for students’ of Criminology, taught by the author herself for 30 consecutive years in the Undergraduate Program of the Department of Sociology at Panteion University (Criminology Sector), with all that implies the development of the science of Criminology in our country. Regarding the importance of conducting research and the undeniable need for promoting and supporting criminological research, it suffices to quote the pertinent observations of the late lamented Professor *James Farsedakis*: “*The significance of empirical research did not need to be emphasized. It is known that its findings constitute the benchmark of the validity of any theory. Regardless of the importance of a theory, if the findings of scientific empirical research do not support it, it cannot be classified as a scientific theory. It is only worthy of mention in the history of ideas*” (p. ix-x).

The presented book is structured into two main parts, an introductory chapter and a conclusion. As the author notes in the book's introduction, “*the distribution of the subject matter follows the dual structure, which stems from the prevailing scientific distinction in Criminology. Thus, scientific research is classified into two categories, according to the broader theoretical framework in which they belong: the passage to action and social reaction,*

while the introductory chapter is dedicated to the methods and techniques of criminological research” (p. 4).

The introductory chapter of the book presents the methods and techniques of criminological research (pp. 5-26). Specifically, according to J. Pinatel's<sup>2</sup> classification, both the individual types of research are presented with criteria such as the nature of the research (multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research), the field of research (basic and applied), its duration (short-term and long-term), and its nature (descriptive and experimental research), as well as the methods and techniques of criminological research, such as observation, analytical induction, typological analysis of criminality, the study of age series, and combined methods of criminological research, which are based on a combination of techniques. Particular reference is made to the levels of criminological analysis of the research subject (micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level), as well as to the particularly critical issues of ensuring ethical and moral standards in conducting criminological research and harmonizing the process with current legislation at national and European levels. It should be emphasized that the exhaustive presentation of the individual types of research, as well as the methods and techniques, is accompanied by the presentation of several examples practical for the reader, including both representative and pioneering criminological research examples for their time, for each type or method and technique, which have contributed over time significant scientific findings.

The first part of the book (pp. 27-183) refers to the research examining the passage to action (“*Criminology of the passage to action*”, “*passage à l’acte*”) and consists of two individual chapters. In the first chapter, research on crime measurements is approached, from which primarily “*basic research hypotheses regarding the geographical and chronological variations of criminality*” are derived (p. 28). Specifically, all methodological tools of crime measurement research are detailed: statistics with their distinctions, which constitute the essential methodological tool of crime measurement research, victimization surveys, and self-report studies. Subsequently, the particularly significant research case for Criminology science of studying both the chronological and geographical variations of apparent criminality is highlighted, using mapping techniques (i.e. point maps, area maps, and outline maps) and geographical profiling, which concern three levels of analysis (long-term, medium-term, and

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<sup>2</sup> Pinatel, J. “Le recherché scientifique en criminologie au point de vue international et comparative” στοL’ *équipement en Criminologie*, Actes du XIVe Cours International de Criminologie, Masson & Cie, Paris, 1965, σελ. 145-160.

short-term). On account of these research studies, among others, the increase in criminality at the international level after World War II revealed the positive relationship between criminality and settlement size and the concentration of crime in urban areas. Finally, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the first chapter presents the most representative criminological research for each examined topic. Also, research studies are included relevant to our country at the international, European, and national levels, with a particular focus on research on the variation of criminality in Greece, both during the economic (2009-2019) and health crisis with the onset of the Covid-19 global pandemic (2020-2021). In the second chapter of the first part, the research on individual and social criminogenic factors is extensively analyzed. Specifically, research on individual factors includes biological and psychological factors and the role of gender and age, while research on social factors includes economic, cultural, and environmental criminogenic factors. Research on biological factors presents those focusing on the role of heredity (chromosome studies, twin studies, and adoption studies) and brain dysfunctions within the so-called “Neurocriminology” framework. In research on psychological factors, those focusing on mental disorders, those directed towards establishing correlations between criminality and specific personality characteristics of the individual or the role of intelligence quotient (I.Q.) are presented. The role of gender and age is a cherished topic for Criminology science, resulting in related empirical investigations covering a large part of criminologists' research work over time, while the principal manifestations are presented succinctly and comprehensively in the book. Furthermore, the most significant research on the social factors of criminogenesis is discussed, which are classified into broader categories: [a] economic factors, both at a general and individual level, especially the role of general economic conditions, the geographical distribution of criminality concerning economic level, individual economic status, and “white-collar crime”, [b] cultural factors, with particular reference to youth gangs, violent subculture, and the role of family and mass media in criminogenesis, and [c] environmental factors, with particular reference to ecological empirical approaches and research examining the phenomenon of urbanization about violent crimes.

The second part of the book (pages 185-318) refers to research examining societal responses to crime (“*Criminology of social reactions*”) and consists of three chapters. The first chapter encompasses studies on the agencies of formal social control of crime (i.e. police, prosecution, and criminal courts), the stages of criminal justice administration, and the factors influencing decision-making. The second chapter delves into research evaluating the effectiveness and consequences of punishment, as well as the stigma processes stemming from

the criminal justice system, while the third chapter focuses on research interested in the public as a factor shaping crime prevention policy, particularly attitudes and informal social reactions (i.e. fear of crime, punitiveness). In the first chapter of the second part, the following topics are developed: [a] criminological research related to the police (evaluative research on its effectiveness and research on public attitudes and relations with the police), which constitutes the primary filter within the criminal justice administration system, [b] research related to the functioning of the prosecution, which represents the next filtering stage, [c] research concerning the operation of the criminal courts, the last filter within the internal system of criminal justice (studies on stages, legal and “extralegal” criteria of criminal treatment), and [d] research documenting public attitudes towards the criminal justice system. In the second chapter of the second part, an elaboration is provided on research related to the purpose, functions, and effectiveness of criminal sanctions (evaluative research, studies on the role of imprisonment in recidivism phenomena) and those related to the stigmatizing consequences of punishment. Finally, in the third chapter of the second part, research is focused on the public as a factor shaping crime prevention policy. Particular reference is made to the empirical investigation of the fear of crime phenomenon, a topic as we all know repeatedly and successfully addressed theoretically and empirically by the author<sup>3</sup>. The explanatory factors of the phenomenon are analyzed based on empirical research both internationally and at the European level, as well as nationally, within the framework of research projects implemented by the Laboratory of Urban Criminology (EASTE) of the Panteion University, which, initiated by the author, has been founded and directed by her since 2015<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the role of Mass Media in the fear of crime phenomenon is elaborated, which has repeatedly been the subject of independent criminological research, and the theoretical approaches attempted so far are presented (results approach, dominant ideology approach, and institutional approach). Subsequently, the formation of punitive attitudes at individual and social levels as a result of crime-related insecurity is presented through empirical investigations. Finally, the factors

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<sup>3</sup> Recently, the book "The Fear of Crime | Selections" (2023) was released by Nomiki Vivliothiki Editions, containing some of the author's representative studies on the fear of crime, which have been presented at international fora and published in reputable scientific books and journals. The book is prefaced by Emeritus Professor of Criminology, Yiannis Panousis.

<sup>4</sup> The Laboratory of Urban Criminology (EASTE) was established within the Department of Criminology at the School of Social Sciences of Panteion University (Government Gazette 2978/31-12-2015, vol. B'). EASTE serves the educational and research needs in the cognitive subjects of the science of Criminology, particularly focusing on urban criminal phenomena [easte.panteion.gr].

contributing to the non-reporting of criminal acts by victims are highlighted, as they emerged from empirical research into the reasoning behind victims' decisions regarding whether to report criminal acts against them, again at an international, European, and national level.

In conclusion, the brief yet comprehensive conclusion contemplates the future of Criminology, which, according to the author, appears promising: *“Today, Criminology is charting new prospects, leveraging past errors and achievements. These prospects tend towards mitigating the hitherto scientific conflicts by constructing new synthetic 'examples' and the desire for a foundation of strategies based more on synthesis than conflict. In this context, Empirical Criminology broadens its horizons towards new research fields and reconsiders its fundamental issues through new reflections”* (p. 319).

In summary, *“Empirical Criminology”* is the product of extensive research, and upon completing its reading, it becomes evident that this work is distinguished by its precision, systematic approach, and methodical rigour. It is worth emphasizing that the author's main scientific interests include empirical criminology, urban criminality and its mapping, victimization studies, fear of crime and insecurity, punitiveness, and, of course, crime prevention policy, with an emphasis on its participatory form. Moreover, all of this is theoretical and practical, given that the author has developed a plethora of pioneering research programs for our country<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, the book's content is enriched and documented by an extremely rich Greek and foreign language bibliography and numerous writings and tables that are particularly helpful for the reader. Overall, it constitutes not only a practical but also an essential resource for all those involved in criminological research, both in practical and theoretical terms, providing all the necessary knowledge that is a prerequisite for criminological research creativity. Undoubtedly, with the completeness of its documentation, this revised third edition can satisfy every demanding criminologist researcher and scholar, as reflected in the thirty

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<sup>5</sup> Over the past three years, Professor Christina Zarafonitou has successfully completed numerous significant transnational and national research projects under her scientific responsibility. These include: "Spatial aspects of Crime and insecurity in the era of economic crisis: Trends, dimensions and correlations – Urban Crime" (2020-2022), "A Holistic Urban Security Governance Framework for Monitoring, Assessing and Forecasting the Efficiency, Sustainability and Resilience of Piraeus - Be Secure Feel Secure" (2020-2023), "Innovative Approach to Urban Security – ICARUS" (2020-2024), and "PROBATIONET: A flexible, multidisciplinary and transnational VET model for the PROBATION services and practitioners" (2022-2023).

pages of total Greek and foreign language bibliography. Unquestionably, this work by Professor *Christina Zarafonitou* constitutes a significant contribution to the field of empirical crime investigation and the elements that co-constitute it.

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