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

  - 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’
4. Findings (2)

- **Prevalence of fear of crime**
  - 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
References


