

Crime Prevention Dreams and Nightmares

in Risk Societies

Beware of the Greeks Bearing Security Gifts

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Citation: N. Koulouris, "Crime Prevention Dreams and Nightmares in Risk Societies", (2008) 5
Intellectum, pp. 43-70.

Some twenty five years ago in Greece the publication of a book about the general prevention of crime¹ revealed or validated the major scientific shift which was already under way in developed western parliamentary democracies; *prevention was not anymore just one of the traditional justifications of punishing criminals, but a complex issue with serious socio-economic and political dimensions.*

In the first decade of the 21st century the combination of terrorism and criminality become the locus where international policy is exercised. The cries for the prevalence of law and order against criminality are the Holy Bible of the political centre, either it turns on the left or it looks at the right. Criminality is impressively characterised as "galloping" even when data show that crime rates follow a downward trend! Political investment on fear works in the long lasting era of the capitalist war against the working populations of the industrial North and the Third World nations. "Security" becomes the key concept of neoliberalism after the decline of the welfare state and "fear" is the means to discipline the dangerous classes and the excluded and marginalized "Forth World" populations², those who "all [they] ever wanted was everything" but "all [they] ever got was cold"³.

Criminologists are not content themselves with defining crime and searching for its causes and remedies in individualistic terms. They intervene to what is called crime control and fear management with the design and implementation of crime prevention and community security policies, no longer

¹ C.D. Spinellis, *The General Prevention of Crimes. Theoretical and Empirical Research of Social Control Forms*, ed. A.N. Sakkoulas, Athens – Komotini, 1982 (in Greek).

² P. Papakonstantinou, *The Era of Fear. The USA Empire and the Market Dictatorship*, ed. A. Livanis, Athens, 2005 (in Greek).

³ Lyrics from the song "All we ever wanted was everything", by Bauhaus, from their 1982 LP "The Sky's Gone Out", Beggars Banquet Music Ltd.

aiming only at the direct reduction of criminal acts but, also, at the influence on issues related to the quality of life that may have indirect impact on crime. Confrontation of crime is not exclusively a matter of the state, but, also, an important occupation for local communities, which presupposes the partnership of the private sector, the public sector, voluntary organizations and individuals. The very context of the concept “prevention of crime” changes essentially. Next to apprehending criminals and dealing with offenders in a way that deters others and changes the offender’s behaviour so that future crimes are avoided, prevention of crime currently means a number of intervention strategies directed to reducing the causes of and opportunities for crime before it occurs. ***Proactive prevention is added to its reactive counterpart.*** This extension of prevention and its connection to insecurity and fear of crime are the objects of the “PREVENT ACTION” project, conducted by the *CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW – THEMISTOCLES & DIMITRIS TSATSOS FOUNDATION* (Greece) in cooperation with *Associazione Antigone* (Italy) and the *Research and Development Center - Intercollege* (Cyprus) granted by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate General - Justice, Freedom and Security (AGIS PROGRAMME 2006), which is presented here.⁴

A. INSECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Consequently, as regards the first part of our project, ***crime prevention***, it appears under ***three main forms: primary, secondary and tertiary***. Primary crime prevention refers to initiatives aiming to prevent crime involving the whole population. Secondary crime prevention involves policies addressed to target persons or groups considered to be at risk of becoming offenders. Tertiary crime prevention aims to prevent those already convicted from repeating their criminal conduct, either imposing court orders and sentences or carrying out diversion and offender-victim mediation schemes. Primary and secondary prevention attract our interest. A supplementary element of the “new era” crime prevention techniques is the ***reduction of fear of crime and insecurity*** among the population, with a focus on the participatory nature of civil society.

⁴ In the study the crime prevention scenery and the impact of relative policies in contemporary societies, especially in fifteen EU member States, is analyzed. Nine experts, Th. Papatheodorou, Ch. Papacharalambous, Nikolaos Koulouris (Greece), A. Theofanous, T. Charalambidou, K. Mavros (Cyprus) and P. Gonella, V. Scalia, F. Vianello (Italy) and Y. Panoussis (scientific coordinator of the programme), contributed to this endeavour. The following sketchy presentation does not involve notes and references of the complete research report, which can be found in a forthcoming publication.

Starting from the late 1960s and moving to consequent decades, crime and insecurity became gradually issues of major significance for authorities as a phenomenon of *urban pathology*. A claim for security appears repeatedly, set forth by local administrators and citizens, many times urged by the media. The need to bolster security gave rise to prevention policies aiming to influence the risks and causes of certain forms of crime (low and middle scale criminality) and to upgrade *citizens' participation and joint responsibility for local problems*. This option presupposes and implies community empowerment, with a growth of citizens' skills and abilities. Specific prevention practices started to take effect at national, regional and local levels. In this scenery, the formal mechanisms of criminal justice have now a relatively limited role to play in comparison to the role entrusted to the community (schools, neighbourhoods, unions, associations) and the police (seen not only as law enforcement agents but as educators and community coordinators). All these, though, presuppose a *consensual, "social contract" model of community organization*, with cohesion and solidarity, characteristics that are usually to be pursued than to be found in the areas of programmes implementation.

In this context, the issue of security is related to the "demeritation" of state crime control policies in the western world. A widespread sense of insecurity either is partially attributed to an equally widespread feeling of fear of crime or is thought of as a process of approaching the real world. According to these two main perspectives, respective prevention policies either focus strictly on crime or they appear as welfare policies aiming to promote citizens' quality of life. Thus, reduction of both, (i) crime occurrence and (ii) perceptions of insecurity, is written with capital letters in the crime prevention agenda.

(i) Crime rates can be reduced with interventions either on individual motivations, or on the social structure or on the circumstances, which affect criminal behaviour.

(ii) Subjective perceptions of insecurity, empirical or intuitional, can be reoriented and guided towards desirable directions with the promotion of social inclusion (social prevention) and with interventions on the physical and environmental context of cities (environmental prevention).

At first sight it seems that these interventions meet the public interest. This is problematic when this interest coincides with what the "majorities" or the "powerful" want and satisfies their needs. In such cases, minorities and the powerless are excluded from enjoying other people's status of rights and freedoms.

(Urban) crime control policy reflects somehow the shortcomings of social and economic infrastructure; the state, competent security provider in the modern era, unable or unwilling to absorb

social tensions and to blunt inequalities, is seeking for the lost balance in the intensification of crime control and law and order policies. Public security and social freedom become competitive instead of supplementary fields in today's risk societies, where luck and fluidity replace rationalism and stability. The right to security (of those who have) puts into question if it does not threaten seriously the security of rights (of those who have not).

Community policing, the liberal version of crime prevention policies, is based on defensible space and territoriality theories and includes close encounters of the police and the public at neighbourhoods, considered beneficial for both sides. Community engagement, partnership and problem solving proactive approaches are elements of such policies, while **situational policing** allows for different neighbourhood types (strong, vulnerable, anomic or responsive neighbourhoods) to be matched with preferred styles of police intervention relying on participation and proximity. The role of the police is transformed, security policies are assimilating local crime prevention policies and public security as a good is communitised on the basis of decentralised, integrated action plans which are the subject of specific contractual commitments between the state and local authorities. Local crime prevention boards and security contracts are two methods tried with the aim to promote integrated public security policies at local level.

The version which is recognizable at the antipode of community policing, is the authoritarian "made in the USA" **zero tolerance policing**, namely inflexible and aggressive police over-reacting to minor disorders. According to this model, anomic conduct and social disorder are unacceptable and have to be confronted from their very beginning, to avert criminal developments. The European relatively mild "zero tolerance" variant is influenced by civil liberties rhetoric, but it still holds strong paternalistic and prohibitory components.

Law enforcement (traditional) policing, community building policing, problem (law and order and fear reduction) oriented and zero-tolerance policing differ in a lot of aspects as regards the role and function of the police, interaction with the community, formal and social organisation, and service delivery. It seems, though, that **there is not a pure model**, as nowadays policing combines elements of all of these forms.

The importance of crime prevention at the local level has been focused upon since 1987, when the NGO "European Forum for Urban Security" was created, bringing together hundreds of European local authorities; concerning the topic joint action on crime in the cities, the "Security and Democracy Manifesto" was a step in recognizing the role of these authorities.

A.1. PREVENTION POLICIES IN CERTAIN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Besides these developments, the situation varies from country to country, even within the same country:

France was one of the pioneering European countries in the adoption and implementation of community crime prevention policies after the 1982 Bonnemaïson report to the government. A National Crime Prevention Board, Prefectural Boards and Local Crime Prevention Boards were established in 1983. Results of the activities of all these bodies, though, never met promises and expectations. From the end of the 1980s, the prevalence of bureaucracy led to loss of reliability and effectiveness of these institutions. In 1992 Local Security Plans marked the marginalisation of crime prevention boards with their activities being brought under local judicially and administratively planned strategies. A few years later, in 1995, public security priorities were remodelled with the adoption of Local Security Contracts and the replacement of community prevention by measures to prevent conditions generating crime and victimisation with a clearly suppressive orientation. French Local Security Contracts put forward a proposal on decentralised anti-crime policy capable of responding to modern public security requirements, while also bolstering social solidarity. These were introduced in 1997 carrying three basic fields of action: a) crime prevention, b) proximity policing and c) supporting social solidarity. These actions require mobilisation of the municipal authorities, community agencies and the local crime prevention boards, which in 2002 were renamed Local Security and Crime Prevention Boards (LSCPBs without avoiding a series of operational problems (confusion and competition).

In **Belgium** the Supreme Council and the Regional Crime Prevention Boards were established in 1985 in an effort to decentralise crime prevention policies. The Ministry of the Interior issued guidelines for participatory local crime prevention policies in 1990. Crime prevention boards were established at the end of the 1990s. A reform of the Supreme Crime Prevention Board was followed by the introduction of Community Crime Prevention Boards as local advisory bodies. Lack of flexibility and overlapping duties of the local services and prevention bodies are referred to as important obstacles for the effective function of these schemes. Since the experiment with Community Boards in effect failed, Belgian crime prevention policy turned to the implementation of integrated security policies. In 1992 the Pentecost Plan promoted a techno-prevention amalgam, combining proactive and reactive elements. From 1992, the activities of Belgian Community Boards were assimilated by Security Contracts. Security Contracts were introduced to modernise police services and to improve their allocation, as well as to develop preventative policing actions with the participation of local bodies and the public. The purpose was to increase security for places and people by means of a continuous police presence and a rapid response from police forces and certain new prevention services. Although the SCs were enriched with social policy programmes, they failed to become integrated as they retained the dominating role gained for the police by the community policing model. Another answer was found, then, in the Safety and Community Contracts (SCCs), which forwarded the further decentralisation of the police and integration of its activities into local social contexts, taking into consideration neighbourhood needs and protection for individual rights. All these comprised a Safety Charter, which was periodically revised. The SCCs, though, did not meet expectations; they simply served as a tool for identifying measures to reduce the sense of insecurity among citizens. At the end of 2000 the Belgian Government therefore prepared a new federal plan, which introduced the model of integrated management and was bolstering the role of the police in what it called the "security chain": prevention, suppression, surveillance, and tying the implementation of any crime prevention policies into the effective management of security problems, thereby transforming SCCs into Safety and Prevention Contracts.

In **Italy** prevention actions developed within an institutional and political framework since the early 1990s, have been called Urban Security Policies. These are placed in the wider field of public policies, a field traditionally implemented at the local level, but actually used in a new way in order to assure preventive

action to deal with crime and insecurity. Local governments and police forces share this responsibility in cooperation with a set of different public and private actors (local social services, companies and private business firms on the territory, citizens). New integrated policies at an urban level demand the implementing of coordinated informative systems, infrastructures and pedagogical programs. Some features of these policies are: Community police with the proximity cop, education and social welfare agencies charged to take action in crime and insecurity prevention, projects with preliminary social research periods to study crime and deviancy phenomena over selected areas and eventual periods for their evaluation, involvement of growing private security industries, especially in support of surveillance functions, voluntary associations and non governmental organizations fulfilling auxiliary security functions taking care of victims, citizens committees watching neighbourhoods and patrolling in public spaces. The coordination of activities between national and local levels is assured by co-operational agreements. Security Contracts, borrowed by the French experience, are used as planning instruments for these policies. Best practices to reduce the feeling of insecurity among citizens are distinguished between social prevention practices, intended to intervene on the social causes of insecurity, and environmental prevention practices, intended to intervene on circumstances that amplify insecurity. One more kind of practices can be identified, related to the so-called "harm reduction policies", aiming to minimize the damages caused by phenomena that we must live with (drugs, prostitution). All these practices meet both the needs for preventing criminal and deviant phenomena and for reducing the feeling of insecurity among citizens.

The **Greek** case of local crime prevention boards offers an example of what is to be avoided. The development of these boards after 1999 was relatively slow and their establishment was usually not followed up by actual operation, besides the enthusiastic political declarations, the positive attitude of the Greek Police and some initiatives to give impetus to the institution with coordination and facilitation guidelines and statutory frameworks. Lack of structures, deficiencies in financing and staffing and the mentality that the management of crime and insecurity is exclusively duty and responsibility of the state put barriers in efforts to develop decentralised, participatory prevention and security policies. Changing the name of local boards while keeping the same philosophy, organisational approach and mission cannot solve the problem. Establishing a Central Delinquency Prevention Board which is just a renamed coordinating Project Management Group without any new powers and objectives, without a change in the framework for the local boards cannot produce the energy needed to overcome obstacles which create inertia. Beyond this situation other initiatives worth to be mentioned is the pilot national policing plan "Secure Cities", implemented since 1999. Foot patrols, school guards, neighbourhood policepersons, the Operational Programme Against Drugs 2001-2006, the intensive programme Polis based on police visibility and massive controls, are referred to as parts of an effort to bring the police close to citizens' routine and meet their need to feel secure.

Cyprus is making the first steps to implement crime prevention techniques and tactics according to a National Action Plan for the Prevention and the Confrontation of Criminality 2006 – 2010, introduced by the Council for the Prevention and Confrontation of Criminality. The majority of the proposed actions will begin their function in 2008 whereas others will start in the following years.

Large-scale, decentralised security policies were implemented in **Britain** over the last decade, with a focus on developing partnership and local crime prevention schemes. The Five Towns Initiative and Safer Cities Scheme contributed to the establishment of a highly productive collaboration in 30 large urban areas, the implementation of 4,400 prevention and security schemes across the country and greater citizen mobilisation via neighbourhood watch networks. The British government sought to attribute an organic and systemic character to the decentralisation of security policies, to introduce new management and administration methods for those policies and to retain the overall supervision of implementation of the actions. Local Safety and Prevention Contracts in Great Britain developed with a different structure and organisational approach to that tried in continental Europe as regards the statutory requirement to audit local crime and in the method for handling relevant local policies. The British example is an amalgam of security policy management based on private economy considerations, extended public participation under

the control of the police and local authorities, and techno-prevention measures, which in some cases are almost zero tolerance. This reflects the neo-liberal trend in crime policy in Europe under which citizens are viewed as consumers of security services. “Confident Communities in a secure Britain” is the current UK’s Strategic Plan for the reduction of crime, where a new neighbourhood approach is pursued with policing teams including community support officers. A variety of projects, organised through a multi-agency approach, are delivered by a number of police authorities and local organisations offering structured leisure -especially sports- activities, skills development, mentoring and promotion of high quality -artistic-interests, inviting residents to tell the police what their major concerns are, finding the right people in the right numbers in the right place.

Sweden’s 1996 National Crime Prevention Programme set off the importance of the collaboration between agencies of the justice system and local actors such as municipal institutions, associations, the business community, citizens’ initiatives and broad public commitment. Simultaneously, the Committee for Crime Prevention Work and since 1999 the National Council for Crime Prevention had been given the task to inspire, support and monitor crime prevention work, primarily at the local level. In early 2005 there were local crime prevention councils in over 80% of the country’s municipalities with substantial variations in the status, working methods, ambitions, levels and focus of their activities. Some of the councils are still in the process of becoming organised, whereas others have been in operation for a long period of time. Crime prevention projects focus on alcohol abuse among young people, aggressive behaviour, drug use and criminality among young people, forming youth associations, building recreational activities and arranging youth camps, improving neighbourhoods and organizing visible police presence and active patrols.

The **Finnish** National Crime Prevention Plan “Working together for a Safe Society” was adopted in 1999, with the aim to create a common policy for action in the prevention of crime and in the promotion of security. Priority was given to the cooperation of the state with municipalities, the business community, the church, civic organizations and private individuals. The program focuses on participatory local crime prevention, consisting mainly of measures designed to decrease suitable opportunities for crime. Some of the implemented corresponding measures are attractive leisure activities for young people at risk, changing their relationships with schools, families and other important areas of their lives, actively used, multi-functional city centres intended to be felt as secure places, school environments secure for pupils with anti-bullying interventions, targeting domestic burglary and other problems of order with neighbourhood watch schemes.

In **Ireland**, Community Alert is the national rural community crime prevention programme initiated in 1985, organised locally to raise the level of awareness amongst people of the need for greater social inclusiveness and care, including crime prevention measures and putting emphasis on human contact. The programme has extended its brief into areas of social inclusion, care, community safety and advice. Moreover the Policing Plan 2003 underlined commitment to community-led crime prevention initiatives. Neighbourhood watch and community alert programmes seem to affect mainly people’s feelings and attitudes. “A Crime Prevention Strategy for Ireland: Tackling the Concerns of Local Communities” published in 2003, links a partnership approach and strategic, focused planning. Finally, the Garda Special Projects are locally based youth crime prevention projects, managed by either a youth service organisation or an independent management committee.

In **Germany** citizens have the opportunity to contribute to local-level-crime policy. Nearly 2000 councils and boards under various titles and with different organizational backgrounds have been founded all over the country occupied with crime prevention at municipal level. The crime prevention structure in Germany is functioning at all levels, national, regional and local. All contributing agencies are meeting together at an annual German Congress for Crime Prevention. Responsibilities on crime prevention are mainly concentrated at the level of the “Länder”, and this an obstacle for a unified prevention approach to be achieved. It has been concluded that security feelings exist and vary independently from objective crime trends. Moreover, the engagement of local community authorities and the revival of the old neighbourhood spirit are crucial for the success of prevention efforts. Citizens want all the more proximity policing and

intense police presence while traditional policing is considered secondary in comparison to a multi-agency approach.

Community policing and preventive policies in general are underdeveloped in **Austria**. There are neither concerted actions of community policing, nor multi-agency activities initiated by the central state. The acceptance of an integrated prevention policy in the population is low, the competence of police to deal with crime is unquestionable and the trust of the population to them is high. Public-private partnerships are not popular. Some preventive projects have been proven successful in terms of security perceptions. It also seems that cultural peculiarities reject the idea of co-production of public security and favour clear-cut roles between the police, as a security producer, and the public as a security consumer. Crime prevention, as a task of police and gendarme, is provided for in the Security Police Law of 1993. Informing the public is a task undertaken by the Criminal Police Information Service (KBD). Specific groups have been formed for situational / technical prevention. Since February 2000 a central station for Youth Police has been established, which was especially pedagogically oriented and targeted youngsters, exerting only indirectly preventive influence. “Contact Officers” and “Contact Officers for Juveniles”, both belonging to the traditional Vienna Security Police, work towards the enhancement of solidarity and tolerance in society through contacts and discussions on criminality with the citizens. The public wants flexible and locally tied police stations, instead of bigger police units. Finally, there is a trend of transferring security issues not exactly to the communities, but to the private sector.

The policies of Urban Security in **Spain** undergo a complex social and historical process, divided into three periods. The landmarks of this process are the birth of a liberal-democratic state (1975), the entrance of Spain into the European Economic Community (1986) and the transformation of the EEC to the European Union (in the early 1990s). In the 1990’s the police have been restructured both on the national and on the local range. The Plan for Liberty and Security of Citizens introduced the police of proximity, allowing the police to cope with the demand of security in neighbourhoods and districts. Professionals and NGOs appear as actors of the security and social policies market, thus boosting the rollback of the State. The mentioned *Plan* provides for new policies of crime prevention and repression. In 1995 the government creates the National Council for the Security of Citizens in an effort to put police forces and citizens in closer relation. At the same time, the autonomous regions of Catalonia and Basque countries, promote their local police to the rank of main police force, substituting the National police. Implemented urban security policies aim at improving the cooperation between the police and local administration with a focus on dissuasion, reduction of risks, social prevention for groups at risk and creation of the mood for dialogue, debate and reflection.

The politics of urban security undertaken in **Portugal**, similarly to Spain, are divided into three periods. The first, ranks from the democratic revolution of 1974 to the entrance into the EEC in 1986. The second runs from 1986 to 1995, when the social-democratic governments apply a technocratic management and distribution of security resources, emphasising the aim of reinforcing the security of the newly established democratic State. The final stage runs from 1995 to nowadays, focusing on the attempts made by the socialist governments to implement a model of urban security centred on the modernisation of police and in particular on community policing. Municipal police, created in 1997, co-operate with local communities and with national police, in order to ensure the security of local communities through an action of surveillance and prevention. In 1998, Municipal Councils of Security are instituted to satisfy the increasing demand of security in local communities. Councils have functions of consultation, communication and information. Security contracts are also enforced in Portugal since 1996. The new era of security policies was innovative to the extent that new actors such as the academic world were involved both in the monitoring and in the implementation of security policies. Step by step, Portugal has come close to the multi-agency approach developed in other European countries. In 2005, the government approved the project Security in Metropolitan Areas, concerning the urban security in the metropolitan areas of three major cities. The project focuses on two aspects: the implementation of community policing and a multi-sectorial intervention over the social despairs affecting the most populated urban areas of the country.

The Netherlands is known for its tolerant culture and its political stability. This portrait, though, is not the same anymore. Socio-economic changes have triggered a feeling of insecurity within Dutch society, with demands for restrictive, zero tolerance policies. These were translated into discriminatory security policies against marginal groups. The Dutch approach of security combined a repressive attitude with policies of urban regeneration, resulting to an apparently strange mixture of neo liberalism and local community approach. In the new century, the Netherlands experiment the project of “lighter communities”, focused on the repression of the so-called “uncivil behaviour” under the slogan of “social re-conquest” of cities by middle-class and white Dutch at the expenses of marginal social groups. Despite the different policies adopted in the two major cities, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the issue of urban security in the Netherlands seems to be related to a plurality of other issues, such as industrial decline, interests of the building sector, social polarisation etc. The outcome is the re-appearing of security problems in other areas, under different forms.

The management of security in **Slovenia**, handled by the previous regime, now resembles the Western approach, with a focus on community policing and multi-agency approach. Local communities are involved in the process of policy-making. They co-operate with local administrations to set the agenda of security policies and prevent everyday crime. The involvement of citizens is filtered by the Local Security Councils, which operate in addition to town, city and municipality councils, and are vested with a consultative power.

In **Croatia** a reform of police and planned urban security policy has started. The country is gradually reproducing the European model of securitarianism. The Pilot Project Community Policing moves towards the improvement of police forces efficiency, police training, crime prevention, and decentralisation. It establishes a department for crime prevention with 12 experts educating both public opinion and police officers to crime prevention, leading public campaigns that involve the media. Crime prevention strategies at municipal level, by the establishment of crime prevention councils, which will cooperate with politicians are also deployed.

All in all, the main trend in Southern and Western Europe is to prevent the genesis of urban crime dealing with its social causes with the operation of local councils. In common-law countries and Northern Europe it is community policing where the transformation of the police to a preventive mechanism bridges the traditional gap between repression and prevention. A technocratic attitude is obvious in the whole system of community policing, as the case of “Security Contracts” shows. Even when deliberative components of prevention were preserved with the replacement “Security Contracts” with “Contracts for Security and Society”, techno-prevention remained a central element, as the institution of audits prove.

As neoliberalism prevails, preference is showed to circumstantial prevention and puts aside social crime prevention. Restriction of opportunities for crime, increase of apprehension risks and environmental change are the main ingredients of the recipe. It is forgotten that environmental changes without changes in the infrastructure and support through public institutions are futile. Neighbourhood-watch programs should be complemented with measures enhancing residents’ cohesion and fighting poverty and social-economic disparities. Defensible space theories ignore the importance of social policy measures in communities where authentic collective identities or experiences do not really exist nowadays.

B. FEAR OF CRIME AND ITS MANAGEMENT

Fear of crime is the second main locus of our interest. The war against crime of the 1960s and the 1970s, was followed by a war against fear of crime. Both are accompanied by a wide discussion about the *citizens' individual and collective responses to real or imaginary threats against themselves and their properties* in which the intensity of fear and insecurity in front of criminality is included. Here it seems crucial to *stop taking for granted what fear of crime and insecurity are* and try to reach to an agreement or at least to understand what we are talking about. This can be anxiety, worry, fear and the like, and it is possible to be a topic for public, scientific and political debate, manipulation and conflict when it is expressed in the outside world. These reactive expressions may be spontaneous or dictated, directly or indirectly, by various social factors and mediating institutions.

A mixture of factors is referred to as the propitious milieu for the emergence and growth of fear of crime. These can be generally categorized in two wide groups, one tied to the personal status, conditions and beliefs of some members of specific populations and one connected to the social and environmental circumstances in which these persons live. Four narrower and more concretely defined fields attract research interest in efforts to explain fear of crime, bearing in mind the general correlates of fear which relevant studies identify: vulnerability, victimization experiences, the environment and psychological factors. Many of these fear related parameters are revealed in the following words:

“Always steal from beggars / Especially if they are blind / If they are disabled you can sneak up behind / They are such easy victims / Steal money from their hats / They will never catch you up you can / Be sure of that”⁵.

It is widely known that various efforts have been undertaken in many countries and (locally focused) projects have been developed to alleviate fear of crime, mainly differentiated in those having a *situational change orientation* and those having a *personal intervention orientation*. Some of these efforts aim to increase household security, others to change features of urban life connected to the fear of crime by police influence. Changing the behavior of potential victims and making massive improvements of domestic dwellings and external environments are the priorities of other initiatives, which are designed to counteract fear. Improving residential security and environmental design, methods of policing and encounters of the police with the public, offering opportunities for education, employment, creative

⁵ Martin Jacques' words (The Tiger Lilies singer) from his four drawings published in the “Athens Voice” magazine, vol. 169, May 24-30, 2007, p. 26.

activities during leisure time, providing information, facilities and support, increasing and redistributing the movement of people, improving natural surveillance and lighting and ameliorating general appearance are some usual aspects of relevant policies. In cases where fear of crime is attributed to individual neuroses or misinformation about victimization risks, the fight against fear of crime in urban communities comprises confidence building among persons and groups who frequent and work in downtown areas. In cases where it is believed that feelings of security are generated when social interaction contributes to the establishment of interpersonal bonds and commitments, the answer to fear of crime is expected to be found in building cohesive communities.

In some cases projects remain at experimental stage. In other cases they are not implemented as envisaged. Sometimes crime rates are influenced while fear of crime remains stable etc. Scientifically evaluated examples of studies that measure with validity the extent of fear of crime or feelings of insecurity and measures or initiatives that reduce fear of crime are rare anyway. More particularly, the *relationship between* (increasing, stable or decreasing) *crime and victimization rates and fear of victimization* remains blur and problems concerning it continuously emerge. If this relationship is directly proportional, it can be easily understood that every available crime and victimization eliminating measure is proper to reduce fear of crime. Many initiatives planned and oriented to crime prevention are automatically transmuted into fear and insecurity reducing measures. This becomes part of the arbitrariness contest, which is conducted in the field. Regardless of how fear of crime emerges and rises, or as if it is directly connected to crime trends, whatever is considered that has a preventive outcome, is classified as fear reducing! Adequate research evidence to defend such a view is not available.

Furthermore, strategies aiming to cope with fear of crime and criminality are in many ways demanding and expensive. They can also backfire; trying to convince people that there is no ground for fear includes a danger to assure them that fear is justified. Increasing interaction in areas with class, race and cultural differences may make competition and hostility more acute, sharpen confrontations and deepen already existing fears. Avoidance of certain high risk places at certain times during the day may result in drops in the incidence of crime. Then a respective drop in fear of crime may result in carelessness on behalf of potential victims. They, in turn, abandon the alertness and cooperation, needed to achieve fear reduction, exposing themselves to a new risk of victimization. Advertising that an area offers secure conditions for various business activities and entertainment, being thus attractive to law-abiding citizens for their job and leisure, may attract also their presumptive victimizers and so on.

The connection of the very existence and the activity of special national crime prevention bodies in some countries with fear of crime is something else. The establishment of such agencies indicates that these countries are somehow more active and more seriously involved in the enterprise of preventive criminal policy. Comparing findings from surveys about crime risks and fear of crime in countries with and without special crime prevention agencies, it is clear that there is not substantial differentiation as regards victimization, while fear of crime is lower in countries, which seem to be more active in crime prevention than in countries, which are considered relatively inert. While populations in both groups of countries seem to be more or less equally victimized, fear of crime, independently of crime risks, accompanies more people living in countries classified as prone to prevent criminality.

C. SUMMING UP THE SUMMARY

Two widely known criminological slogans indicate that the best crime policy is social policy and that prevention should be preferred to repression. There is nothing new in claiming that crime, disorder, and fear of crime are important social issues with serious and lasting implications. Disadvantaged neighbourhoods are flooded by unemployment and poorness. Lack of open space, poor design and planning of the built environment, industrial and business activities, heavy traffic, graffiti and vandalism, litter, drugs pushing, prostitution, abandoned vehicles etc. can have (cumulative) deteriorating effects on citizens' quality of life. Persons belonging to ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and those with a record of offending face the ghost of exclusion from social life in general. Older workers and lone parents may also find problems of exclusion. All these situations are connected with the incidence of crime. The answer in a nutshell seems to be enhanced quality of life with organised efforts of proactive crime prevention, focusing either on non offenders or on persons being at risk of offending. Such efforts may concern the community or the police or both, and the aim is to increase security feelings and prosperity of citizens. Prevention and security policies at local level seem to have three basic axes: town planning, social and economic development and citizen's participation. Most crime prevention programmes are targeting youth, and each programme is matched to local circumstances. The most preferred forms of prevention tactics include surveillance and information sharing with the involvement of the police, insurance companies, property owners, local crime prevention bodies, residents of the implementation area and other cooperating organisations. Social prevention is usually presented as the main ingredient of an effective crime and fear reduction policy. Policies and programmes initiated to

prevent crime and combat insecurity end up in poorly evaluated, inconsistent or even disappointing results. Perhaps, then, we should ask one another if these policies and programmes become a version of the criminological “nothing works” discourse and, even worse, aggravate the problems to which they are supposedly proposed and implemented as solutions. Moreover, it can be asked if all this “fearology” of crime is a proper object for scientific research. Perhaps this should be the opening and not the closing remark of this and other similar projects...

In the lyrics of a Greek pop song, the artist sings: “I fear of all that will be done for me without me”⁶. New dimensions of fearology make at least arguable a variation of these words; “I fear of all that will be done against me with me”... Is it an exaggeration? Probably yes, but not an extreme one. Suffice it to think that the more secure a person feels, the less freedom he / she enjoys. Absolute security is the benefit of the dead⁷.

H. Truman, the 33rd President of the USA, well known for his leading role against the so-called communist regimes, declared that extreme and arbitrary security measures attack the heart of free societies. One of his predecessors, F. Roosevelt, stated that fear is the only thing we should fear of⁸. We can agree with them. But we can hardly believe that they meant what they said!

⁶ V. Papakonstantinou, “I fear”, written by G. Zouganelis and A. Pantazis, Minos Matsas and Son Ltd, 1987

⁷ See G. Veltsos’s answer to the question “How free and secure are we today?” in “Press”, November 2001, p. 181 (in Greek). Y. Panoussis, replying to the same question, declared that freedom, security and justice as values, as public and common goods, and as necessary conditions for the function of democracy, presuppose harmonization, or, at least, common direction and that instability and uncertainty are elements of the risk societies in which we all live.

⁸ Quoted in P. Papakonstantinou, *The Era of Fear. The USA Empire and the Market Dictatorship*, ed. A. Livanis, Athens, 2005 (in Greek).

