

Fear of Crime in Colombo's Inner-City Settlements: Exploring Fear Adaptation and Normalization

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Abstract

Crime has been identified as one of the biggest forces shaping city life due to the levels of fear it triggers. This study aimed to discuss the aspects of the social construction of fear of crime, particularly within the inner-city settlements in Sri Lanka's commercial capital city of Colombo. Thus, the study collected community views by conducting focus group discussions with 20 participants from "Ginthupitiya" and "Messenger Street" in Colombo Central. It was also established that contextual factors such as lack of proper lighting and relatively poor infrastructure contribute substantially to the feeling of fear. Also, these fears are compounded by; age, gender and past experiences of victimization. In these areas, the population meets the most important prerequisites – food, clothing, and other primary needs, giving less attention to crimes. Fear of crime is more of a secondary level concern, primary being the fight for decent living standards. Fear has penetrated everyday practices of many citizens, and they have got used to 'being ready' for a danger lurking around every corner.

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