

Fear of crime in urban environment

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The study explains fear of crime on the basis of two models: socio-psychological and socio-demographic (Van der Wurff, Van Staaldouin and Stringer, 1989). The first model is based on the presumption that fear of crime depends on four components: likelihood that a person will become a victim, detrimental influences of social environment, a person's self-confidence and circumstances in which a criminal event may occur. Socio-demographic model complements the first model and explains a fear of crime with regard to a gender, age group, educational level, financial possibilities, characteristics of social life etc. The study is in fact the adaptation to our circumstances and repetition of a similar research study, conducted in Scotland in 1997.

The sample of research study consisted of 1100 residents of different age of Ljubljana. For research purposes a Van der Wurff's and Farral's adapted and improved questionnaire (1996) was used. Data were processed by using methods of descriptive statistics, χ^2 procedure.

In the frame of socio-demographic model, results revealed that about 30% of the citizens feel threatened; among them there are more women than men. Fear of crime is greater in persons with lower financial status and lower education level. It is also more pronounced in adolescents and residents 65 years old and older. A socio-psychological model confirms these findings and at the same time calls attention to two circumstances which are most responsible for feelings of threat. Both of them are connected with the evening hours and fear of strangers and the purposes they have. Analysis also points at the concept of "stranger danger", what means the attribution of danger to strangers and suggests also xenophobia. Results, obtained by this study are similar to those reported abroad.

Keywords: fear of crime, socio-demographic model, socio-psychological model

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