

Feelings of Neighbourhood Safety in Living Environment: Cross-cultural Comparison - Slovenia, Serbia, Japan

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In this article, the authors focused on the environment and investigate the importance of participants' sense of security in the neighbourhood they live in. They were interested in a cross-cultural comparison, based on the demographic characteristics of the participants from Slovenia, Serbia and Japan. A quantitative method based on a questionnaire was used, and in the study participated 1006 Slovenian, 385 Serbian and 264 Japanese respondents. Using analysis of variance, the research shows that the Slovenian participants and participants of other cultures express a statistically significant difference with regard to the feeling of security. What is interesting is that this difference does not relate either to the age of the participants nor to the ownership of the property. Women of all three nationalities express a significantly higher level of feeling of security than male participants, and this reflects the apparent paradox, because stereotypically women feel the least safe. All participants typically express a lower level of feelings of security in the cities.

According to monthly spending to solve their housing problems, the results show that among the Slovenian and Serbian participants the highest feelings of security is expressed by the participants who spend less than 30% of their income. In case of the Japanese participants, we see the reverse; they who consume more than 30%. Comparatively, the lowest level of sense of security is reflected by Japanese participants, which can be attributed to their highly expressed dissatisfaction with living in an urban environment, followed by Serbia participants, which we associated with poorer maintenance of neighbourhoods (physical disorder). It is important that planners of the urban environment know how the participants, regardless of their demographic characteristics, perceive the feeling of security. Research shows that one of the key factors is well- built local environments and quality of housing construction, which has a positive impact on residents' satisfaction and their perception of safety. Further research is necessary to determine how these factors affect the value of their purchasing decisions.

Key words: living environment, feeling of security, fear of crime, Slovenia, Serbia, Japan

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