

Regional Inequalities in Security

Research Subjects: women aged 15 and above living in Yasouj City

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Introduction

The results of many studies on women's security are indicative that women experience various degrees of insecurity in urban zones. These studies, however, are mostly influenced by three dominant and restricting presuppositions. First, "city" is considered as a "whole" in contrast with "village" and the intra-urban diversity is ignored. Secondly, most studies, for the fear of falling into a geographically oriented determinism, tend to neglect or underestimate the effects of the physical environment on security. Thirdly, women are regarded as a homogeneous category in contrast with men, and intra-sexual variations, issues and difficulties of different groups of women are ignored. In other words, previous studies are influenced by the dominant methodological dichotomist logic (urban/rural, women/men, social /environmental, etc.). They have ignored or neglected intra-urban and intra-sexual distinctions as well as the security-related features of physical environment.

Material & Methods

In order to get rid of aforesaid limitations, the present study has investigated the intra-sexual security of 15-year old and older women of Yasouj, residing in two main districts, in regard to social and physical features of their domiciles. District 1, the main part of the city, is socially considered as "uptown", the dwellers of which are mostly white-collar servants or traders earning high incomes. District 2, on the contrary, is more densely populated, and is socially regarded as "downtown", where the majority of population are

blue-collar servants, workers and urban margin-dwellers. Researchers, upon assessing the related views (theories of crime experience, social control, ecology and broken windows), studied and compared the security of women dwelling in the two districts, using a survey method including questionnaire.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions

According to the findings of the research, women's insecurity in district 1 is mostly related to the physical environment and in district 2, it is

mostly connected with the social environment. Three most important insecurity factors are respectively back alleys, rascals and villains and robbery in district 1, and grappling, sexual disturbance and rascals and villains in district 2. In other words, the women's insecurity in the two districts is not originated from the same factors. In addition, the social characteristics of dwelling place results in more insecurity of single women in comparison with married women. However, physical characteristics do not have any significant effect on single and married women's insecurity. The women's literacy level has a significant correlation with the insecurity caused by physical features of the dwelling place. That is to say, high school graduates, bachelors and holders of higher degrees experience the highest extent of insecurity on the side of the physical characteristics of their domicile. With regard to the professional status, too, university students, self-employed workers and pupils experience the highest degree of insecurity rooted in their domicile social features. The results of the two-way ANOVA of the correlation between the domicile and the marital status showed that the single women of the two districts had experienced more insecurity in relation to the social features of their domicile than the married women of the two districts. The uptown married women, in comparison with the single women of the same district showed a lower security caused by the physical features of their dwelling place. In the downtown, the single women had experienced a lower security than the married women of the same district. Moreover, the uptown married women had a more considerable security originated in the social characteristics of their domicile. In general, single women were more insecure than married women. Based on the findings of the present research, it can be concluded that the insecurity of the women of the

two districts is rooted in relatively different factors. Furthermore, neither the effect of social and physical factors on the security of the two districts, nor the security of all women in any of the two districts is equal or is the consequence of identical factors. Eventually, people like university students, pupils and the self-employed who are more engaged in urban commutation and are, more often present in urban public spaces have had the highest degree of insecurity.

Keywords: Women, Security, Regional Inequality, Social and Physical Environment, Yasouj

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