DESIGNING SAFE AND PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENTS:
SPATIAL DETERMINANTS OF NON-VIOLENT URBAN CRIMES

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Abstract
Crime is undoubtedly a great source of environmental discomfort in urban areas. Examining the spatial factors that stimulate crime is thus vital for designing safe and livable cities. This research aims to explain the variations in burglary crime rates within urban areas using spatial and socioeconomic variables with a special focus on physical characteristics of the city. Over 30 social, demographic, cultural, economic and spatial variables derived from the literature review are tested using data for a sample of 44 randomly selected streets in Izmir, Turkey. In the selected model specification, the total number of burglary crimes committed between 1998 and 2006 at the street level is the dependent variable. The independent variables include (1) length of the street, (2) total length of walls on the street, (3) distance from the city centre, (3) total length of parking lots adjacent to the street, (4) average housing value, (5) distance from the closest the police station, (6) presence of a bus stop and (7) presence of non-residential land-use. The results from the Ordinary Least Squares regression indicates that burglary crimes at the street level increases with the total street length and total length of walls on the street. The burglary rates decrease with (3) distance from the city centre, total length of parking lots, (4) average housing value, distance from the closest the police station, and with the presence of a bus stop and non-residential land-use.

Key words: Crime, city, socioeconomic factors, spatial factors.