

Ljubljana Residents' Knowledge of and Satisfaction with Private Security Guards' Work

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Purpose:

The purpose of the paper was to present out how Ljubljana residents know, understand and evaluate the work of private security guards.

Design/Methods/Approach:

A survey by internet and telephone was conducted among Ljubljana residents. The sample included residents between 18 and 75 years of age. A combined weights method was used in order to assure the representativeness of the sample by gender and age.

Findings:

Residents of Ljubljana are satisfied with the work performed by private security guards. Residents' satisfaction mainly depends on their trust in security guards' work, the help and assistance provided by security guards, security guards' attitude towards residents and residents' experience with security guards' work. Residents assess their work as stressful and dangerous, however, they still believe that security guards lack education and professionalism, which is a finding, common to many other studies.

Research Limitations/Implications:

The survey is limited to the Ljubljana area, so a similar survey should be carried out nationwide.

Practical Implications:

Findings could be used by private security companies to plan adequate processes of training, professional socialisation and public relations strategies, thus increasing the degree of security guards' professionalism. In turn, the improved professionalism would contribute greatly to a more positive assessment of security guards by residents.

Originality/Value:

In Slovenia, this kind of survey was conducted for the first time among the general population, as so far similar surveys have been carried out mainly among the student population.

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Keywords: private security guards, satisfaction with work, knowledge, professionalism, residents, Ljubljana

Poznavanje dela zasebnih varnostnikov in zadovoljstvo z njihovim delom med prebivalci Ljubljane

Namen prispevka:

Namen prispevka je raziskati, kako prebivalci Ljubljane poznajo, razumejo in ocenjujejo delo zasebnih varnostnikov.

Metode:

Med prebivalci Ljubljane je bila izvedena anketa po spletu in telefonu. V vzorec so bili vključeni prebivalci med 18. in 75. letom starosti. Reprezentativnost vzorca po spolu in starosti je bila zagotovljena z metodo kombiniranih uteži.

Ugotovitve:

Prebivalci Ljubljane so z delom, ki ga opravljajo zasebni varnostniki, zadovoljni. Na to najbolj vplivajo zaupanje v delo varnostnikov, pomoč varnostnikov, odnos varnostnikov do prebivalcev in izkušnje z delom varnostnikov. Prebivalci ocenjujejo delo varnostnikov kot stresno in nevarno, po drugi strani pa menijo, kar izhaja tudi iz podobnih raziskav, da varnostniki niso dovolj izobraženi in profesionalni.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Raziskava je omejena na območje Ljubljane, zato bi bilo koristno podobno raziskavo izvesti tudi na ravni celotne države.

Praktična uporabnost:

Zasebnovarnostna podjetja bi lahko na osnovi ugotovitev raziskave načrtovala ustrezne procese usposabljanja, profesionalne socializacije in strategije odnosov z javnostmi, s čimer bi prispevala k večji profesionalnosti zasebnih varnostnikov, ki bi v veliki meri pripomogla k pozitivnemu vrednotenju varnostnikov med prebivalci.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Avtorji so tovrstno raziskavo prvič v Sloveniji izvedli med splošno populacijo, saj so bile doslej podobne raziskave opravljene predvsem med študentsko populacijo.

UDK: 351.746.2(497.4)

Ključne besede: zasebni varnostniki, zadovoljstvo z delom, poznavanje, profesionalizem, prebivalci, Ljubljana

1 INTRODUCTION

The police have not been the only organisation entrusted with the provision of security for quite some time (Trstenjak, 2017). During the past few decades, several tasks related to the provision of security have been taken over by other legal

entities and natural persons. The protection of individuals, society and property has thus become the core activity of numerous private companies and sole traders performing various tasks related to the security and protection of people and property in the scope of a contractual relationship and against payment. This type of security provision is considered as private security.

The private security sector started prospering in the 20th century as a result of an increase in individuals' wealth, which coincided with the development of modern private security companies around the world, even though their initial evolution was hindered by the prevailing public policing and the public regulatory system (Johnston, 1992). The development of the first contemporary private security companies was mainly spurred by the need to protect fast-growing production sectors, such as the coal, iron and steel industries (Couch, 1981; Spitzer & Scull, 1977; Weiss, 1978). Private security companies were primarily established with the view of maintaining a smooth production process in such industrial facilities, since their security personnel made sure that workers remained obedient and carried out their tasks. The period after World War II saw the rapid development of the so-called modern private security industry. Since then, the number of employed private security guards has been increasing to such an extent that today, the number of private security guards in many countries around the world exceeds the number of police officers (Moreira, Cardose, & Nalla, 2015). The rapid development of private security companies mainly resulted from social changes, which led to new forms of ownership and, at the same time, contributed to an increase in crime (Sotlar, 2008). Since the police, as a principal State body responsible for the provision of security, was no longer able to perform tasks aimed at protecting everyone everywhere from crime, private companies and sole traders, which often organised themselves as private security companies, seized the opportunity and entered this increasingly important sector. According to Johnston (1992), this general increase in private security is considered as the re-birth of private security due to the remarkable growth in the number of newly registered private security companies and private security guards in this period.

Despite being a post-socialist state, Slovenia was no exception in this regard. In Slovenia, the predecessor of today's private security sector has already emerged in the period between 1976 and 1989, when the Associated Labour Act (*Zakon o združenem delu*, 1976) and the Companies Act (*Zakon o podjetjih*, 1988) were adopted. The very first private security company, i.e. the SOZD Varnost Ljubljana (*SOZD – Sestavljena organizacija združenega dela* (Composite Organisation of Associated Labour)), which consisted of 13 different TOZDs (*Temeljna organizacija združenega dela* (Basic Organisation of Associated Labour)) from across Slovenia (such as Varnost Moste, Varnost Maribor, etc.) began operating in that period. The SOZD Varnost Ljubljana ceased to exist after 1989 and individual TOZDs were transformed into independent public limited companies and limited liability companies, while the further development of the private security sector revolved around the establishment of new private security companies (Čas, 1999; Sotlar & Čas, 2011). After 1989, Slovenia observed an outstanding increase in the number of new private security companies, which were established rather quickly. Since the legal basis governing their functioning and operation was inadequate, the

State was forced to regulate the sector once again. The first systemic act, i.e. the Private Security and Obligatory Organisation of Security Services Act (Zakon o zasebnem varovanju in obveznem organiziranju službe varovanja, 1994), was adopted in 1994. The Act was in 2003 replaced by the Private Security Act (Zakon o zasebnem varovanju [ZZasV], 2003), and in 2011 by Private Security Act (Zakon o zasebnem varovanju [ZZasV-1], 2011).

Today, the private security sector in Slovenia is regarded as an array of services and activities which are available on the market and provided by private security companies or as in-house security, i.e. the provision of security services for the account and on behalf of an organisation by private security guards employed in the very same organisation they protect. This sector is governed by numerous rules and regulations prescribing the duties, rights and powers of companies providing private security services, which may use the aforementioned powers to legitimately interfere with human rights and fundamental freedoms when such an interference is considered to be in the public interest (Modic, Lobnikar, & Dvojmoč, 2014). This is also the point when citizens mostly come in touch with private security guards. Therefore, it is important to know how they perceive and understand the work of private security guards and the nature of private security – a form of policing that is not provided by the state.

The paper is based on a survey about Ljubljana residents' knowledge of and satisfaction with the work conducted by private security guards. In all previous studies dealing with the nature and work of private security guards in Slovenia, respondents were mainly students, while this time study was done among general population – residents of Ljubljana. Since this is the biggest urban area in Slovenia, and we can assume that contacts between citizens and private security guards are more common than in rural areas, results of the study can be more easily generalised.

2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH STUDIES ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH PRIVATE SECURITY GUARDS' WORK

A considerable number of studies aimed at assessing the knowledge of and satisfaction with the work performed by private security guards was conducted across the globe, initially in the Western world, then in Asia and recently in Russia. On a sample of 209 respondents, Shearing, Stenning, and Addario (1985) found that Canada's residents had mostly held a positive attitude towards security guards already in 1985. Similar results were obtained by Nalla and Heraux (2003) on a sample of 631 students in the USA. Respondents generally had a positive attitude towards security guards' work, however, students who had previously been in some type of contact with security personnel expressed a negative opinion regarding the nature of their work and their degree of professionalism. Nalla and Lim (2003) conducted a similar survey on a sample of 260 students in Singapore and their results were not substantially different from those obtained on the student population in the USA. When Nalla and Hwang (2004) carried out the study on a sample of 172 students in South Korea, they found that students expressed a

predominantly positive attitude towards security guards. The differences in terms of the degree of their satisfaction with the security guards' work were evident particularly in relation to the respondents' gender, their family income level and employment status. However, the results of research studies involving the general and not only student population are even more important for the purpose of this paper. The findings of Van Steden and Nalla (2010), who conducted a study on a sample of 428 residents in the Netherlands, show that they were mostly satisfied with the work performed by private security guards, however, residents who had a positive experience with security guards expressed a higher degree of satisfaction with their work. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the results of a study involving the residents of India (Nalla, Ommi, & Murthy, 2013). In addition, the findings of a study conducted by Moreira et al. (2015) on a sample of 163 residents in Portugal, which focused on the satisfaction with security guards' work, show that security guards' responsible and professional conduct was the most relevant factor influencing the degree of respondents' satisfaction with their work. Nalla, Gurinskaya, and Rafailova (2017) examined the knowledge of and satisfaction with security guards' work in Russia. They carried out the study on a sample of 364 students and found they had rather diverging views of the nature of security guards' work, their professionalism and effectiveness. Once again, positive contacts with security guards also proved to be a strong predictor of the students' satisfaction in Russia.

In Slovenia, the knowledge of and satisfaction with private security guards' work remains rather under-researched, since studies conducted thus far only involved the student population, while the opinion of the general public has yet to be explored. This is also confirmed in studies on plural policing in Slovenia, where Lobnikar, Sotlar, and Modic (2015) and Sotlar, Modic, and Lobnikar (2016) find out that public opinion on the police is well researched, while we now only little how citizens perceive other organisations of "plural police family" like municipal warden service, customs service, judicial police and especially private security.

However, the knowledge of and satisfaction with private security guards' work was the subject of two research projects carried out in Slovenia in the scope of two years. The first study was conducted in 2004 on a sample of 407 students (Nalla, Meško, Sotlar, & Bodiroža, 2004), while the second study was carried out in 2006 on a sample of 509 students (Nalla, Meško, Sotlar, & Johnson, 2006). The findings of both studies showed that students held a negative opinion of private security guards. Students believed that private security guards lacked education, were insufficiently trained and unprofessional in performing their work. On the other hand, both studies also revealed that students believed that the activities and services provided by private security companies in Slovenia were necessary and in the general interest.

3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The need for further research in the field of private security motivated the authors of this paper to look into an issue that had not yet been explored in Slovenia. When studying the field of private security, the authors were faced with the fact that

researchers had yet to discover what the general public thinks and knows about the work of private security guards and how it perceived and accepted their work. Following a literature review, the authors found that numerous research studies were dealing with police activities and the knowledge of and satisfaction with police work, while the opinion of the general public on private security remained unknown. In order to remedy the situation, the authors decided to research the described issue among the residents of Ljubljana¹. The aim of this research study was to determine whether residents were familiar with the work performed by private security guards and whether they were satisfied with their work. At the same time, the researchers wished to define the main factors influencing the degree of satisfaction. To that aim, they posed several research questions related to the way in which respondents perceived security guards or their work, which was the best predictor of their satisfaction with security guards' work and whether there were any links or mutual cooperation between police officers and security guards. In order to verify and validate their findings, the researchers had initially set the following six hypotheses:

H1: The satisfaction of residents of Ljubljana with the work performed by security guards primarily depends on respondents' confidence in their work, the help and assistance provided by security guards, security guards' attitude towards residents and residents' experience with security guards' work.

H2: Security guards are well trained; they are well educated and professional.

H3: The residents of Ljubljana believe that the work performed by security guards is demanding, stressful and dangerous.

H4: The residents of Ljubljana believe that security guards and police officers cooperate in providing security on the territory of Ljubljana.

H5: Ljubljana residents' age and gender influence their perception of security guards.

H6: Respondents' previous experience with security guards' work or the fact that their parents or relatives work in private security companies, civil service or the police has an impact on their perception of security guards' work.

4 METHODS

4.1 Survey Questionnaire and Data Collection

Data were collected with a survey questionnaire, which was a modified and adapted version of the questionnaire used by Nalla and his colleagues (Nalla, et al, 2004, 2006; Van Steden & Nalla, 2010), who had already conducted similar research studies both in Slovenia and abroad by surveying different entities, students and the general population. For the purpose of this survey, the questionnaire used in previous studies was examined in order to identify and adapt those questions that corresponded to the aims of the present survey. The questionnaire was translated from English into Slovene and then back into English. The aim of such a re-translation was to verify whether the content of the questions was

¹ Ljubljana is the capital of Slovenia and has a total of 292.988 residents (City of Ljubljana, 2019).

translated adequately. The questionnaire used in this research study consisted of 29 closed-ended questions, which were divided into the following 6 sections:

- satisfaction with the work performed by security guards,
- experience with the work performed by security guards,
- security guards' professionalism,
- nature of security guards' work,
- cooperation between police officers and security guards, and
- demographic data.

The responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale, while one of the sub-questions required a *yes/no* answer.

The research study on the knowledge of and satisfaction with the work performed by private security guards (opinions on complexity, stressfulness and danger on one side and satisfaction with private security guards work) was conducted in Ljubljana. As the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana is an urban area, which is why the researchers presumed that the scope of activities performed by private security guards was much broader than in other parts of the country. Data were collected by Valicon d.o.o., a company providing marketing consulting and research services. Data were collected by an online survey available on the company's website and a telephone survey. Such a combination of data collection methods was necessary in order to cover the age structure of respondents, which spanned from 18 to 75. The researchers presumed that the majority of respondents falling into the over 60 age group did not use the internet, which is why they were targeted by the telephone survey. However, data obtained both online as well as by telephone were weighted by using the combined weight method in order to guarantee the representativeness of the sample in terms of gender and age. The described weighing method also ensured the representativeness of data in terms of gender and age.

4.2 Sample Description

The sample consists of 332 randomly selected residents. The data they provided were weighted in order to obtain the most representative sample of the city of Ljubljana. Respondents participating in the survey were between 18 and 75 years of age. The sample was created by applying the probability sampling technique. Table 1 shows that the sample of 332 respondents consisted of 161 male and 171 female respondents. The share of female respondents is higher than the share of male respondents by three percent.

Table 1:
Respondents
by gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	161	48.6	48.6	48.6
	Female	171	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that the average age of respondents was 44. Half of respondents were younger than 42 (median), while the majority of respondents were 42 years of age (modus). The youngest respondent was 19 and the oldest respondent was 75.

Number	Valid	332
	Missing	0
Average value		44.3
Median		42.0
Modus		42.0
Minimum value		19.0
Maximum value		75.0

Table 2:
Respondents
by age

Apart from respondents' gender and age, the demographic data section also included a question aimed at determining the number of respondents whose family members or relatives were employed in civil service/police or in the private security sector. It turned out that only 13 percent of respondents had at least one relative working in civil service or the police (Table 3).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	44	13.3	13.3	13.3
	No	288	86.7	86.7	100.0
	Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table 3:
Do any of your
parents/relatives
work in the civil
service/police?

A mere six percent of respondents stated that one of their parents or relatives worked in the private security sector (Table 4).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	19	5.9	5.9	5.9
	No	313	94.1	94.1	100.0
	Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table 4:
Do any of your
parents/relatives
work in the
private security
sector?

5 RESULTS

5.1 Satisfaction with the Work Performed by Private Security Guards

The research results are presented according to the individual sections of the questionnaire in order to ensure the transparency of data analysis, since each of the six sections corresponds to a hypothesis presented above.

The first section deals with respondents' satisfaction with the work performed by private security guards. The researchers wished to determine whether respondents were generally satisfied with their work, establish which factors played the most significant role in defining respondents' degree of satisfaction and find whether these factors had been included in the survey. The researchers

set down the following hypothesis: H1 –*The satisfaction with the work performed by security guards primarily depends on respondents' confidence in their work, the help and assistance provided by security guards, security guards' attitude towards residents and residents' experience with security guards' work.* The validity of the hypothesis was verified by conducting the regression analysis.

Table 5:
The assessment
of regression
coefficients and
their statistical
significance

Model		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	p-value	Correlation		
		B	SE	Beta				SE	SE
1	(constant)	1.137	.366		3.107	.002			
	<i>The public generally trusts security guards with the protection of their lives and property.</i>	.168	.062	.172	2.700	.008	.601	.199	.125
	<i>The work performed by security guards contributes to the general safety and security.</i>	.106	.071	.099	1.508	.133	.570	.113	.070
	<i>Security guards generally help people.</i>	.270	.066	.277	4.086	.000	.670	.294	.190
	<i>Security guards understand the needs of the public.</i>	.144	.067	.144	2.153	.033	.613	.160	.100
	<i>Security guards abuse their powers.</i>	-.162	.059	-.164	-2.735	.007	-.527	-.202	-.127
	<i>Security guards are not aware of the needs of their clients.</i>	-.012	.052	-.012	-.234	.815	-.288	-.018	-.011
	<i>Security guards' attitude towards residents is marked by friendliness and correctness.</i>	-.035	.067	-.035	-.517	.606	.539	-.039	-.024
	<i>...your experience with security guards' work.</i>	.152	.062	.177	2.444	.016	.647	.181	.113

a. Dependent variable: I am satisfied with the work performed by security guards.

The results of regression analysis show that the variable *I am satisfied with the work performed by security guards* is mostly influenced by the following variables (Table 5): *The public generally trusts security guards with the protection of their lives and property* ($B = 0.168$; $p < 0.05$), *Security guards generally help people* ($B = 0.270$; $p < 0.05$), *Security guards understand the needs of the public* ($B = 0.144$; $p < 0.05$), *Security guards abuse their powers* ($B = 0.162$; $p < 0.05$) and *...your experience with security guards' work* ($B = 0.152$; $p < 0.05$). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the variable *I am satisfied with the work performed by security guards* is most strongly correlated with the variable *Security guards generally help people*, while it exhibits a negative correlation with the predictive variable *Security guards abuse their powers*. In light of the results obtained by regression analysis, the first hypothesis (H1) can be confirmed in the part that “the satisfaction with the work performed by security guards primarily depends on respondents' confidence in their work, the help and assistance provided by security guards, and residents' experience with security guards' work” but not to the security guards' attitude towards residents ($p = 0.606 > 0.05$) and also not to the security guards' contribution to the general safety and security ($p = 0.133 > 0.05$).

5.2 Security Guards' Professionalism

In the section on security guards' professionalism, the researchers were interested in exploring how the residents of Ljubljana perceived security guards or, in other words, what was their general opinion of security guards as the entities responsible for the provision of security. Responses to the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point scale, where 1 meant *I fully disagree* and 5 stood for *I fully agree*. The researchers set the following hypothesis: H2 – *Security guards are well trained; they are well educated and professional*. The validity of this hypothesis was verified by the *t*-test and the test value, i.e. $\mu = 3$. Therefore, according to the null hypothesis, the average value equals 3 i.e. indeterminate, while the average value is different from 3 (i.e. agree or disagree) according to the opposite hypothesis.

Table 6 shows that the null hypothesis for the variable *Security guards are well trained* and variable *Security guards are well educated* can be rejected. The results of the *t*-test revealed that Ljubljana residents believed that security guards were well trained ($t = 2.495$; $p < 0.05$), however, they were also of the opinion that security guards lacked education ($t = -9.040$; $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the null hypothesis in relation to the variable *Security guards are professionals* ($t = -1.112$; $p > 0.05$) cannot be rejected, which means that Ljubljana residents believed that security guards were relatively professional or did not know which answer to choose.

	Tested value = 3					
	T	Degree of freedom	p-value (2-tailed)	Difference from the median value	95% confidence interval for difference	
					Lower	Upper
<i>Security guards are well educated.</i>	-9.040	331	.000	-.476	-.58	-.37
<i>Security guards are well trained.</i>	2.495	331	.013	.133	.03	.24
<i>Security guards are professionals.</i>	-1.112	331	.267	-.062	-.17	.05

Table 6:
t-test

* Answers on the scale from 1 - *I fully disagree* to 5 - *I fully agree*.

5.3 Nature of Security Guards' Work

This section was devoted to examining how the residents of Ljubljana perceived the work performed by security guards or, in other words, what was their opinion of the work performed by security guards. The researchers formulated the following hypothesis: H3 – *The residents of Ljubljana believe that the work of security guards is demanding, stressful and dangerous*. This hypothesis was verified with the *t*-test, which confirmed the researchers' presumptions. Table 7 thus shows that the residents of Ljubljana believe that the work performed by private security guards is stressful ($t = 17.231$; $p < 0.05$), dangerous ($t = 23.294$; $p < 0.05$), and demanding ($t = 15.563$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 7:
t-test

	Tested value = 3					
	T	Degree of freedom	p-value (2-tailed)	Difference from the median value	95% confidence interval for difference	
					Lower	Upper
<i>Security guards' work is stressful.</i>	17.231	331	.000	.863	.76	.96
<i>Security guards' work is dangerous.</i>	23.294	331	.000	.992	.91	1.08
<i>Security guards' work is demanding.</i>	15.563	331	.000	.812	.71	.91

* Answers on the scale from 1 - I fully disagree to 5 - I fully agree.

5.4 Cooperation between Police Officers and Private Security Guards

In the section focusing of mutual cooperation between police officers and private security guards, researchers wished to establish whether the residents of Ljubljana believed that police officers and private security guards cooperated in providing the safety and security of the city. The researchers presented the following hypothesis: H4 – *The residents of Ljubljana believe that security guards and police officers cooperate in providing security on the territory of Ljubljana.*

To check the validity of the aforementioned hypothesis H4 the t-test was applied to the data collected with the question *Do security guards and police officers collaborate providing the safety and security in the society?*. Answers were on the scale from 1 - I fully disagree to 5 - I fully agree. It was found that the residents of Ljubljana believed that police officers and security guards cooperated in providing the safety and security in the society (test value 3; $t = 10.125$; $p < 0.05$).

5.5 The Impact of Gender and Age on the Perception of Private Security Guards' Professionalism

The researchers also wished to establish whether the gender and age of Ljubljana residents had any impact on their opinion regarding private security guards. They formulated the following hypothesis: H5 – *Ljubljana residents' age and gender influence their perception of security guards.* This hypothesis was validated with the analysis of variance. First the factor analysis was conducted on a set of five questions measuring citizens' perceptions of security guards capability to manage complex situations, professionalism, education and training to obtain single factor solution presenting the security guards professionalism. This single factor was then used in the ANOVA to validate the H5 hypothesis.

The factor analysis of the five variables within the security guards' professionalism section ($\alpha = 0.82$; $KMO = 0.86$) served as the basis for establishing a single-factor model (Table 9), while the eliminated factor, which was entitled *Security guards' professionalism*, can be used to explain 68.32% of variance, which clearly shows a strong correlation between the analysed variables and the eliminated factor (Šifrer & Bren, 2011).

	Factor 1
<i>Security officers are trained to manage complex situations.</i>	.854
<i>Security guards are professionals.</i>	.847
<i>Security guards are well educated.</i>	.841
<i>Security guards are well trained.</i>	.841
<i>Security guards are honest.</i>	.744
Elimination method: principal component analysis	
a. a single eliminated factor.	

Table 8:
Factor weights
matrix

The categorisation of age groups was subsequently performed with the view of conducting the analysis of variance. Six age groups, which included respondents from 18 years of age onwards, were thus formed (Table 10).

	Age category	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	18 to 25	46	13.9	13.9	13.9
	26 to 35	63	19.0	19.0	32.9
	36 to 45	75	22.7	22.7	55.6
	46 to 55	56	17.0	17.0	72.6
	56 to 65	49	14.8	14.8	87.4
	over 65	42	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table 9:
Respondents'
age groups

The factor *Security guards' professionalism* was then subjected to the analysis of variance (Table 11), which led to the conclusion that the age of Ljubljana residents indeed influenced their perception of security guards ($F = 1.363$; $p = 0.032 < 0.05$). The results of this analysis therefore make it possible to conclude that respondents' age influences their perception of security guards (older respondents perceive security officers as more professional). In contrast, residents' gender proved to have little or no impact ($F = 0.930$; $p = 0.679 > 0.05$). Since the factor *Security guards' professionalism* is evaluated as standardised variable, its values cannot be interpreted, for example the female-male averages are 0.027, -0.007 respectively, and standard deviations 0.96 and 0.99 respectively.

		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Square of average value	F	p-value
Age	Between groups	57626.586	213	270.547	1.363	.032
	Within groups	23225.877	117	198.512		
	Total	80852.463	330			
Gen-der	Between groups	52.133	213	.245	.930	.679
	Within groups	30.805	117	.263		
	Total	82.938	330			

Table 10:
Analysis of
variance –
ANOVA

5.6 The Impact of Respondents' Experience with Security Guards' Work and the Employment of Respondents' Relatives in Private Security, Civil Service or the Police

One of the presumptions of this research project was that respondents, who already had previous experience with security guards' work or whose family members work in the police or the private security sector, might have a different perception of security guards work than other respondents. Thus, the following hypothesis was devised: H6 – *Respondents' previous experience with security guards' work or the fact that their parents or relatives work in private security companies, civil service or in the police has an impact on their perception of security officers' work.* The hypothesis was validated by applying the discriminant analysis on the set of five questions regarding the perception of the nature of security guards work, i.e. that their work is stressful, dangerous, demanding etc.

The discriminant analysis was conducted with the aim of comparing the differences within four groups, which were divided on the basis of the following questions: *Did respondents already have any experience with security guards' work? (yes/no); What was the nature of that experience? (positive/negative); Are respondents' parents or relatives working in civil service or the police? (yes/no); Are respondents' parents or relatives working in the private security sector? (yes/no).* The results of the analysis show that there are no statistically significant differences between these four groups, which means that the opinions of the Ljubljana residents of the work performed by security guards are rather uniform. A statistically significant model could only be observed when comparing the group of residents, whose relatives work in civil service/police, and the group of residents, whose relatives do not work in these sectors.

Table 12 shows that the Wilks' lambda had a statistically significant value in this case, since the p-value was lower than 0.05. Therefore, the obtained model is statistically significant, which means that there are statistically significant differences between respondents, whose parents or relatives work in civil service or the police, and those respondents, whose parents or relatives do not work in the civil service or the police. Respondents, whose parents or relatives work in the civil service or the police, perceive the work performed by security guards as more dangerous, but less stressful and demanding. Furthermore, the results obtained with respect to the statement *Security guards should be well paid* show a difference, which is very close to the statistically significant value ($p = 0.057$), due to the fact that this group of respondents attributed less importance to it.

Table 12:
Wilks' lambda

Function test	Wilks' lambda	chi-square	Degree of freedom	p-value
1	.964	11.966	5	.035

These findings clearly show that the perception of security guards' work is only influenced by the fact that respondents' parents or relatives worked in the civil service/police, while their previous experience with security guards' work, the nature of that experience or the fact that their parents or relatives worked in the private security sector had little or no impact.

6 DISCUSSION

In Slovenia, the knowledge of and satisfaction with private security guards' work remains rather under-researched, since studies conducted thus far only involved the student population, while the opinion of the general population had yet to be explored. The literature review reveals that surveys, which were predominantly conducted in other countries, show that the satisfaction with the work performed by private security guards is generally assessed as positive by both students and the general public. These studies also show that positive contacts or positive experience with security guards were a strong predictor of the respondents' satisfaction with their work. The knowledge of and satisfaction with private security guards' work was the subject of two research projects carried out in Slovenia. Both studies were conducted on a sample of the student population (Nalla et al., 2004, 2006). Students were generally dissatisfied with the work performed by security guards and they believed that security guards lacked professionalism and education.

Even though the results obtained from the student population had been rather negative, the findings of the present study are much more encouraging. The general population – residents of Ljubljana – appear to be satisfied with the work performed by security guards and believe their work to be stressful and dangerous. However, the residents of Ljubljana still hold a negative opinion regarding security guards' education and professionalism. This very finding may be of key importance for all companies providing private security services in Slovenia. They may consider using the results of this survey to plan their education and training, professional socialisation and public relations processes, thus improving the degree of professionalism among security guards. Research findings clearly indicate that a higher degree of professionalism would greatly contribute to a more positive assessment of security guards by members of the general public. In this context another result of our study must be stressed, i.e. that respondents' age influences their perception of security guards professionalism meaning that older respondents perceive security officers as more professional.

These findings also guarantee the comparability of data and results obtained by similar studies conducted abroad. In particular, they may be compared with the findings of studies that involved the general population in the Netherlands, Portugal and India. The findings of all of these studies depict a rather uniform picture, i.e. the overall satisfaction of the general population with the work performed by security guards. The findings of studies conducted abroad show that positive contacts with security guards are the strongest predictor of satisfaction with their work, while the findings of this particular study carried out in Slovenia show that residents' satisfaction mainly depends on their trust in security guards' work, the help and assistance provided by security guards, security guards' attitude towards residents and residents' experience with security guards' work but not to the security guards' attitude towards residents and also not to the security guards' contribution to the general safety and security.

This study also represents an important starting point for further research of residents' attitudes towards private security guards in other cities and/or across Slovenia, as well as towards members of other organisations of plural policing.

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