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Feeling safe in one's place of residence is important for the well-being of older adults when ageing in place; in contrast, feeling unsafe is likely to have negative consequences for well-being while ageing. Although substantial knowledge of perceived unsafety has been accumulated within various disciplines, there are certain knowledge gaps related to perceived unsafety in older age. What perceived reasons for feeling unsafe are the most central to older adults? Can emotion regulation strengthen or buffer the negative effects of perceived unsafety on the well-being of older people? What differences exist among older adults regarding why they feel unsafe?

This dissertation aimed to address these questions while investigating perceived unsafety and its associations with well-being in the context of ageing, focusing on senior apartment residents. This dissertation adopted an interdisciplinary approach integrating knowledge of perceived unsafety from psychology, gerontology, and criminology. The findings suggest that perceived unsafety in advanced age is a multifaceted phenomenon. Specifically, perceived unsafety could be explained by different perceived reasons (i.e., fear of crime, unattractive social climate in the neighbourhood, and inconvenient infrastructure at home; Study I). Furthermore, maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies were associated with fear of crime and strengthened its negative association with life satisfaction (Study II). Moreover, distinct profiles of older adults could be identified based on compromises in their key life domains. Older adults belonging to different profiles differed in their perceived unsafety and well-being (Study III).

Overall, this dissertation findings indicate that feeling unsafe is associated with being less satisfied with life, experiencing more anxiety and depressive feelings, and relying on more maladaptive emotion regulation strategies. Therefore, safety-promotion efforts are considered an important investment in the quality of life of older adults living in senior apartments.

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Doctoral Dissertation

## Older and Feeling Unsafe? Unravelling the Role of Perceived Unsafety in the Well-being of Older Adults Residing in Senior Apartments

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