

# Measuring Fear of Crime by the Use of the CIS Barometers

*La medición del miedo al delito a través de los barómetros del CIS*

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## Key words

- Crime
- Public Opinion
- Social Perception
- Social Problems
- Citizen Security

## Palabras clave

- Delincuencia
- Opinión pública
- Percepción social
- Problemas sociales
- Seguridad ciudadana

## Abstract

This paper explores whether the concern shown by the Spanish population about crime as being a problem for the country as a whole and a personal problem in the CIS barometers is a good measurement of the concept of fear of crime. Firstly, the dimensions of fear of crime are shown, and the conceptual and empirical basis for the concern that we have called the problematisation of crime is presented. Secondly, the theoretical relevance of adopting this concept as an indicator of fear of crime is evaluated. Thirdly, empirical data are provided to demonstrate its usefulness. The analysis concludes that the problematisation of crime, constructed on the basis of the barometers of the CIS, is a good measurement of fear of crime, in addition to having some advantages over those used by victimisation surveys.

## Resumen

En este trabajo se explora si la preocupación por el delito que manifiesta la población española como problema del país y personal en los barómetros del CIS es una buena medida del concepto de miedo al delito. Primero, se muestran las dimensiones del miedo al delito y se presentan las bases conceptuales y empíricas de la preocupación que denominamos problematización del delito. Segundo, se evalúa la pertinencia teórica de adoptar dicho concepto como indicador de miedo al delito. Tercero, se presentan datos que demuestran su utilidad empírica. El análisis concluye que la problematización del delito, construida a partir de los barómetros del CIS, es una buena medida de miedo al delito que además incluye ventajas frente a las utilizadas por las encuestas de victimización.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The concept of fear of crime —and its counterpart citizen insecurity— has been studied in Spain using two different data sources. These include, on the one hand, the victimisation surveys conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) between 1978 and 2007. They were specific periodic studies lacking regularity and comparability (García España *et al.*, 2010: 1), as they were conducted through the use of different techniques and measurements, and in different geographical areas (Madrid, Catalonia, Spain, etc.). The Crime Observatory of Andalusia (ODA) has also conducted this type of survey in Andalusian capitals (García España *et al.*, 2007) and throughout Spain (Díez Ripollés and García España, 2009). These sources also include, on the other hand, the CIS barometers<sup>2</sup> that contained one question concerning the country's three main problems and, since October 1997, another question concerning the three main personal problems experienced. The analysis of the answers to these questions has led to measuring the level of the Spanish public's concern about crime (Soto, 2005; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007). When compared with the victimisation surveys, the main advantage of the barometers is its regularity and availability, something that is not to be taken lightly considering the scarcity and opacity of criminological data in Spain (Díez Ripollés and Giménez-Salinas, 2010).

This paper proposes the relevance of using these barometers to measure the fear of

crime in Spain. In addition to the regularity, availability and timeliness of the data indicated above, the reasons for this choice are: that these barometers include several theoretical considerations on the concept of the fear of crime described in the literature; that they provide a twofold measure of the fear of crime in terms of a personal dimension and a social dimension; and that, unlike traditional victimisation surveys, the barometers make it possible to measure three dimensions of the magnitude of fear: aggregate, preference-based and relative intensity.

The paper is structured into three parts. Firstly, the necessary methodological considerations of the data used are discussed. Secondly, the theoretical dimensions of the concept of fear of crime are analysed. And thirdly, an explanation is provided of the reasons which suggest that problematising crime is both empirically useful and a good measure of the concept of fear of crime.

## METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section discusses the methodological aspects that sustain the scientific arguments used in this paper. It deals with aspects such as the validity and reliability of the *problematisation of crime*, which inform the theoretical constructs to be developed further in subsequent sections.

Barometers are monthly surveys. From October 1997, they included two open-ended questions on Spain's three main problems and the three main personal problems. From 1997 until the present, a variable percentage of the Spanish population have repeatedly answered these questions with "citizen insecurity", "drugs", "violence against women", "ETA terrorism", "international terrorism", "corruption and fraud" and/or "tax fraud". Considering these issues as being a social and/or personal problem is called *problematising crime*. Its validity and reliability as a concept are presented on

<sup>1</sup> This study has been made possible partly thanks to the funding given by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness to the research project entitled 'Social quality in Europe. Design and construction of composite indices for measuring and monitoring the quality of European societies', PAI Group: SEJ029, a non-oriented Fundamental Research Project in the 2012 open call for submissions; and also by the PAI Group SEJ 474 of sociological analysis of social trends.

<sup>2</sup> "Barometers" will hereafter be understood to refer to those carried out by the CIS.

page 30, by the use of factor analysis of correlations and Cronbach's alphas, separately and together, of two CIS time series: the two open-ended questions about the main personal problems and the country's main problems from January 2001 — the date when the barometers were conducted every month, except in August — to November 2015 — the last barometer available when this paper was written.

These series are also used on page 32 to study two of the procedures used to measure what we call the magnitude of problematising crime: aggregate and relative intensities. These concepts are measured respectively by the percentages of the population concerned about crime presented by the CIS, and a specifically-designed indicator of relative intensity (RI), which measures the distance between concern for crime and the issue of most concern to the public. This makes it possible to know the volume of the population that problematises crime, together with the percentage that does so in relation to other questions being problematised, such as unemployment, politics, etc.

At the end of the page 32 the third type of measurement of the magnitude of problematising crime: preference-based intensity is examined. Three barometers were selected and analyzed as typical cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). The first one, from June 2004, represented the 2001-2008 period, when the percentage of people concerned about crime increased compared with the most important issue for the public. The second one, from March 2008, covered the 2008-2009 period, when this trend reversed. The third one, from December 2012, belongs to the period 2010-2015, when the problematisation of crime was at one of its lowest levels in the CIS series. Based on these three barometers, is examined on p. 37 another dimension of the fear of crime: what we call locus of projection. This idea leads to exploring the direction towards which the public's concern for crime is projected towards:

namely, towards themselves, towards others or in both directions.

## THE CONCEPT OF FEAR OF CRIME

The literature on fear of crime has a long tradition in criminology and has become almost a sub-discipline (Hale, 1996)<sup>3</sup>. The concept of the fear of crime was problematic from the onset, as several authors noted in the 1990s (Hollway and Jefferson, 1997; Hough, 1995; Sparks, 1992). The most important problem was its poor semantic clarity and the low level of methodological consensus on how to measure it (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 9-10). This situation has been partly caused by the fact that the most frequently quoted definition of the concept is that by Ferraro, who argued that fear of crime is an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime (Ferraro, 1995: 8). This definition made it difficult to operationalise the concept, which is an umbrella term that means something along the lines of "a range of anxieties and worries about crime" (Hough, 1995: 1), including fear, anxiety and lack of confidence (Walklate, 1998).

Above and beyond the lack of conceptual clarity, different dimensions have been identified that make fear of crime an increasingly complex notion. Fishman and Mesch (1996) acknowledged that it refers to several types: "fear of family victimisation, fear of personal victimisation, fear of violent crime and fear of "white collar crime" "(in Morquecho and Vizcarra, 2008: 6). Another group of authors have mentioned different kinds of fear of crime based on the anxieties noted by Ferraro: cognitive (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012; Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987), which includes the personal assessment of

<sup>3</sup> A review of the vast literature on fear of crime can be found in Doran and Burgess (2012).

the actual risk of becoming victim of a crime (Ferraro, 1995; Hough, 1995; Hale, 1996); affective, when referring exclusively to the feeling of fear (Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987); and behavioural (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012; Madriz, 1997), as it can generate protective behaviour (Ruiz, 2007). This was the approach adopted by the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS), possibly the most far-reaching and reputed victimisation survey. The CIS has followed this model repeatedly for criminological studies. The last one of these was the Crime and Victimisation Survey in the Region of Madrid 2007 (Study 2,702) (*Delincuencia y victimización en la Comunidad de Madrid*).

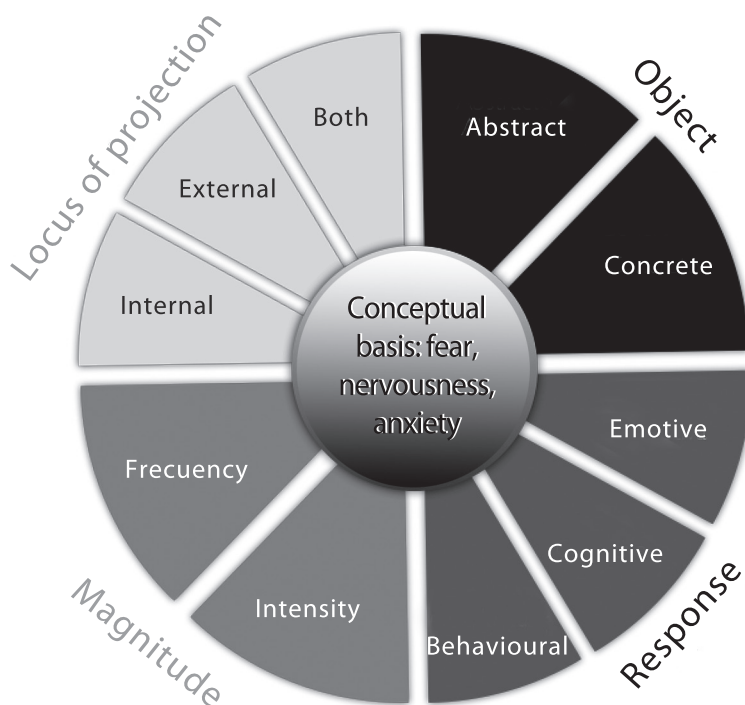
A third group of authors conceptualised fear of crime by anchoring it in specific crimes of varying gravity (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008) to take into account the seriousness of the feared offence (Skogan, 1984). Farrall *et al.* (2009) called the fear of these specific types of crimes *experiential fear* (cited in Hirtenlehner and Farrall 2013: 6). Others referred to an abstract and generic level of fear, likening it to an indefinite sense of unease about crime that some of the literature has come to associate even with the “sense of ontological insecurity” spoken of by Giddens” (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012: 12). Farrall *et al.* (2009) coined the concept of *expressive fear* to refer to the fear of an abstract notion of crime (cited in Hirtenlehner and Farrall 2013: 6). In short, it has been considered that the measurement of the fear of crime should include, in addition to a general and indeterminate type, a specific one related to specific offences.

Although measurements of the fear of crime based on a single item are still used (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008), in addition to its conceptual complexity, this term is accompanied by an increasingly multidimensional operationalisation. Ferraro (1995) believed that a good measurement should include the emotional state of fear and insecurity, make explicit reference to specific crimes and real-

istic —not hypothetical— situations and contain a wide range of offences (cited in Medina 2003: 5). Other authors argued that one of the major problems of the classic measurements of fear of crime is that they focus solely on how much fear is felt, that is, on its intensity (Hough, 2004). These measurements overestimate fear, since surveys could be answered on the basis of “attitudes and concerns about social change and crime and not based on concrete experiences” (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7.). To avoid this overestimation, not only should the intensity of the emotion be considered, but also the frequency with which it is felt, for example, through a scale with three possible answers as used in the ICVS: usually, sometimes, never (Farrall, 2004; Farrall *et al.*, 2009; Jackson, 2004; Vozmediano and San Juan, 2006).

On the basis of these recommendations, Vozmediano *et al.* (2008) proposed to measure the fear of crime by the use of three items. They captured the frequency of episodes of fear of various crimes in the home, on the street, and on the Internet. Machado and Manita (2009) used an indicator of fear of crime that consisted of up to eight dimensions: perception of how crime rates have varied in recent years, the level of fear of crime in general, the most feared crimes, location of fear in time and space, description of the self-protection behaviour due to fear, description of the most feared crime-related situation, views on the causes of crime and the degree of tolerance of certain crimes. One of the most recent and perhaps more sophisticated measurements of fear of crime was that proposed by Fernández and Grijalva (2012), who suggested an index composed of a measurement of fear of crime in the abstract, three measurements of the cognitive dimension of fear, and two measurements of behavioural responses to fear.

A final group of authors have explored the fact that fear can be *altruistic* if people feel fear for others, usually those closest to them (Madriz, 1997; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000).

**CHART 1.** *Dimensions of the concept of fear of crime*

Source: Authors' figure.

Based on qualitative data, Snedker (2006) suggested that fear projected onto other people does not have to be always altruistic. He introduced the concept of *vicarious fear* to refer to fear that has positive consequences for those who feel it, whereas *altruistic fear* is that felt for someone else with some personal cost involved, as it requires actions involving uncompensated efforts. Therefore, it can be considered that fear of crime has a *locus of projection*<sup>4</sup>, that is, a space to which it is directed. People have an *internal locus of projection* when they feel fear of crime for

themselves —if they live in a dangerous neighbourhood, feel very vulnerable to danger, etc.—, but not for others. People have an *external locus of projection* when they fear for others and not for themselves if, for example, they live in an area with low crime rates or have taken action against it. A *dual locus of projection* is said to occur when people feel fear of crime in both spaces.

Therefore, although the basis of the concept of fear of crime remains the same —a certain feeling of insecurity, anxiety, worry and distress about crime—, the concept has been shaped in multiple interrelated dimensions which are also considered analytically distinct and therefore receive specific attention in the way they are operationalised. Depending on the type of response that fear of crime results in, the concept has an emotional dimension, a cognitive dimension and lastly, a behavioural dimension; depending

<sup>4</sup> This concept is inspired by the concept of *locus of control*, which refers to the internal or external space towards which the individual projects control of what happens to him/her. People who have an *internal locus of control* understand that their life is controlled by them, while those who have an *external locus of control* believe that their life is driven by events beyond their control (Rotter, 1966).

on the object of fear, the concept has a general dimension —fear of crime in the abstract— and a specific dimension —fear of specific crimes with different levels of seriousness—; depending on the magnitude, that is, on whether the focus is placed either on intensity or on the frequency with which fear is felt, fear of crime has aspects of intensity and frequency; and depending on how fear is projected inwards, towards acquaintances or in both directions, fear has an internal, external and dual locus of projection (see Chart 1).

In sum fear of crime could be defined as a feeling of anxiety or worry caused by crime in the abstract, or by specific crimes, which can be expressed in an emotional, cognitive and / or behavioural manner, with greater or lesser intensity and with more or less frequency, and may be projected towards the individual or towards people close to them (or in both directions).

## **THE CONCEPT OF PROBLEMATISATION OF CRIME ACCORDING TO CIS BAROMETERS**

The higher the number of dimensions included in any measurement of fear of crime, the greater its validity. Thus, the *problematization of crime* by the use of the barometers is a better indicator of *fear of crime* to the extent that it can measure a greater number of dimensions. And although this form of measurement differs from that used in victimisation surveys, they are the most commonly used measuring instruments for the study of this problem.

This section assesses the theoretical validity of the measurement of fear of crime through the barometers. The aim is to answer the question of whether the *problematization of crime* measured by the barometers is in fact synonymous with what is known in the international criminological literature as *fear of crime*, or is at least a concept contained

within it. The similarities between some of the dimensions of both concepts will be analysed, followed by a discussion of the new theoretical, methodological and empirical developments involved in using these measurements instead of those from victimisation surveys.

With respect to what is meant by the concept of the *problematization of crime*, it is understood that the measurements used by the CIS refer to anxiety and concern about crime, that is, the conceptual seed for *fear of crime* according to the conceptualisation made by Ferraro (1995). This happens when the respondent answers “drugs”, “citizen insecurity”, “violence against women”, “ETA terrorism”, “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” or “tax fraud” to the questions “what is, in your view, the main problem that currently exists in Spain? And the second? And the third?” Or “what is the problem that personally affects you most? And the second? And the third?”

Being worried about something is neither an emotion nor a type of behaviour in itself; rather it is a sign of reflection about crime that somewhat makes the individual involved anxious. The measurement of *problematizing crime* fits perfectly among the cognitive reactions mentioned in the literature and referred to above. Therefore, the measurement through the barometers covers one of the three types of reactions of which this concept is comprised.

With respect to the object of fear, it can be argued that some of who were unsettled by crime spoke of it in abstract terms, and mentioned their concern about what the CIS has codified as “citizen insecurity”. According to the CIS, this category includes spontaneous responses such as “crime, citizen insecurity, street crime, street violence, insecurity, organised crime, murder, robbery, graffiti, vandalism, gang crime, hooliganism and violence.” However, another part of the survey population referred to specific crimes

such as “drugs,” “violence against women”, “ETA terrorism”, “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” and “tax fraud.” This fact means that the CIS measurement can include both objects of fear: the abstract, understood as “citizen insecurity”, and the concrete, referred to specific crimes such as those mentioned above.

**Validity of the concept of problematisation of crime**

Although the objective of this paper is not to develop a composite index of problematisa-

tion of crime, its purpose is to test the empirical basis for the theoretical construction of the concept in both its personal and social dimensions. To do so, some of the analysis techniques recommended by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission will be used (OECD and JRC, 2008).

By analysing the correlations (Table 1) between different answers to personal problems and the country’s problems, it is possible to check whether they can be considered measurements of personal and social problematisation. In both cases, the analysis shows that

**TABLE 1.** Correlations between crime-related problems on a personal and on a country basis

		Correlations between crime-related personal problems						
		Drugs	Citizens' insecurity	ETA Terrorism	Violence against women	Corruption and fraud	International terrorism	Tax fraud
Correlations between Spain's crime-related problems	Drugs	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.641**	0.830**	0.566**	-0.443**	0.360**	0.092
			0	0	0	0	0.006	0.656
	Citizens' insecurity	0.664**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.542**	0.674**	-0.703**	0.064	-0.046
		0		0	0	0	0.637	0.804
	ETA Terrorism	0.877**	0.707**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.655**	-0.470**	0.736**	0.069
		0	0		0	0	0	0.732
	Violence against women	0.426**	0.584**	0.638**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.520**	0.315*	0.466*
		0	0	0		0	0.017	0.011
	Corruption and fraud	-0.490**	-0.708**	-0.633**	-0.511**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.069	-0.247
		0	0	0	0		0.609	0.18
	International terrorism	0.002	-0.283*	0.152	0.182	0.24	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.318
		0.987	0.028	0.247	0.164	0.065		0.184
	Tax fraud	0.132	-0.005	-0.007	0.061	-0.333	-0.211	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N
		0.471	0.977	0.97	0.736	0.058	0.469	
		32	33	33	33	33	14	

\*\* The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral)

\* The correlation is significant at level 0.05 (bilateral)

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

neither “corruption and fraud” nor “international terrorism” nor “fiscal fraud” should be part of the theoretical construct we have called *problematization of crime* at a social level and a personal level. The direction of the sign (positive or negative) and the levels of significance between each of the variables lead to the conclusion that the construct would be more robust when considering “drugs”, “citizen insecurity”, “ETA terrorism” and “violence against women.”

In a second analysis that supports the above decision, the factorial models of personal and social problematization were compared with seven and four variables (Table 2). Again, in both cases, the 4-variable models are better than the 7-variable models, both regarding commonalities, KMO measures, Bartlett’s sphericity test and the percentage of explained variance. In addition, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for four variables

were higher than those for seven, which shows the improvement of the models, as they gain in reliability by leaving out “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” and “tax fraud”.

The next step was to check that the personal and social problematization of crime can be considered to be part of the same problematization concept. This is proven by the correlations, factorial and Cronbach’s alpha analyses shown in Table 3.

Based on the analyses presented, it can be said that the concept of the problematization of crime should be considered to consist of a social and a personal dimension, each of which incorporates variables of problematization of drugs, citizen insecurity, ETA terrorism and violence against women. This construct of problematization of crime is discussed below.

**TABLE 2.** *Factorial models of personal and social problematization of crime*

	Country's problems		Personal problems	
	Model 7 var.	Model 4 var.	Model 7 var.	Model 4 var.
<b>Commonalities</b>				
Drugs	0.665	0.769	0.351	0.789
Citizens' insecurity	0.029	0.737	0.001	0.657
ETA Terrorism	0.665	0.891	0.126	0.779
Violence against women	0.287	0.564	0.798	0.686
Corruption and fraud	0.49		0.351	
International terrorism	0.04		0.565	
Tax fraud	0.115		0.54	
<b>Explained Variance</b>				
% Explained Variance	32.751	74.003	39.002	72.78
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement sample adequacy</b>				
KMO test	0.515	0.673	0.427	0.653
<b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>				
Approx. Chi-squared	17.893	464.789	30.644	366.367
Degrees of freedom	21	6	21	6
Nivel signific.	0.656	0	0.08	0
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>				
Alpha	0.051	0.656	0.073	0.68

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).



**TABLE 3.** Analysis of the validity of the problematisation of crime as a social and personal problem

	Country's problems				Personal and country problems	
	Drugs	Citizens' insecurity	ETA Terrorism	Violence against women	Commonalities	
<b>Drugs</b>	0.976**	0.670**	0.866**	0.411**	Drugs (Country)	0.770
	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0	0	0	Citizens' insecurity (Country)	0.679
<b>Citizens' insecurity</b>	156	157	157	157	ETA Terrorism (Country)	0.889
	0.631**	0.974**	0.723**	0.584**	Violence against women (Country)	0.497
<b>ETA Terrorism</b>	0	0	0	0	Drugs (Personal)	0.778
	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	162	162	162	Citizens' insecurity (Personal)	0.674
<b>Violence against women</b>	161	162	162	162	ETA Terrorism (Personal)	0.761
	0.842**	0.534**	0.947**	0.587**	Violence against women (Personal)	0.665
<b>Personal problems</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>Explained Variance</b>	
	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	157	157	157	%	71.415
	156	157	157	157	KMO test	0.78
	0.571**	0.665**	0.720**	0.878**	<b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>	
	0	0	0	0	Approx. Chi-squared	1,923.143
	159	160	160	160	Degrees of freedom	28
					Nivel signific.	0.000
					<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	
					Alpha	0.787

\*\* The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).  
Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**The magnitude of fear of crime in the CIS barometers: aggregate, preference-based, and relative intensity**

As the CIS barometers ask about whether or not there is concern about crime, the magnitude of fear cannot be measured by its frequency, but its intensity can be measured in three different ways. The most common measurements of social and personal problems (see, for example, Soto, 2005; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007) are structured as a percentage of the population who understand crime in the abstract or certain crimes as problems, so the higher the percentage of the population that considers crime to be a worrying, the more intense the problematisation of crime. This way of measuring intensity we will call *aggregate intensity*, since it is based on the number of respondents who identified the same phenomenon as a problem without paying attention to its position in the ranking.

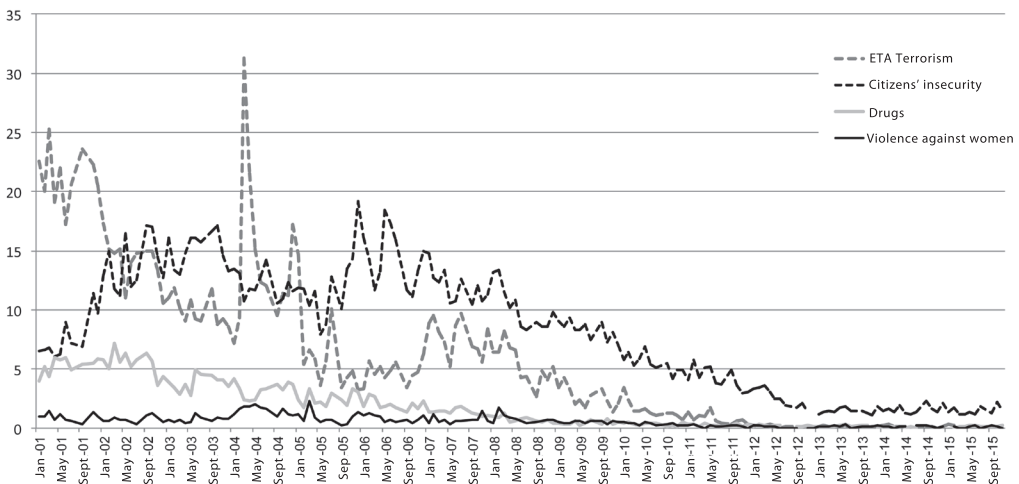
As shown in Figure 2, from the four crime-related personal problems that were part of the concept of the problematisation of crime, the abstract object of fear concerning citizen insecurity was of the greatest concern to the

Spanish population, except between 2001 and 2002 and during 2004, periods when ETA terrorism became the main personal concern.

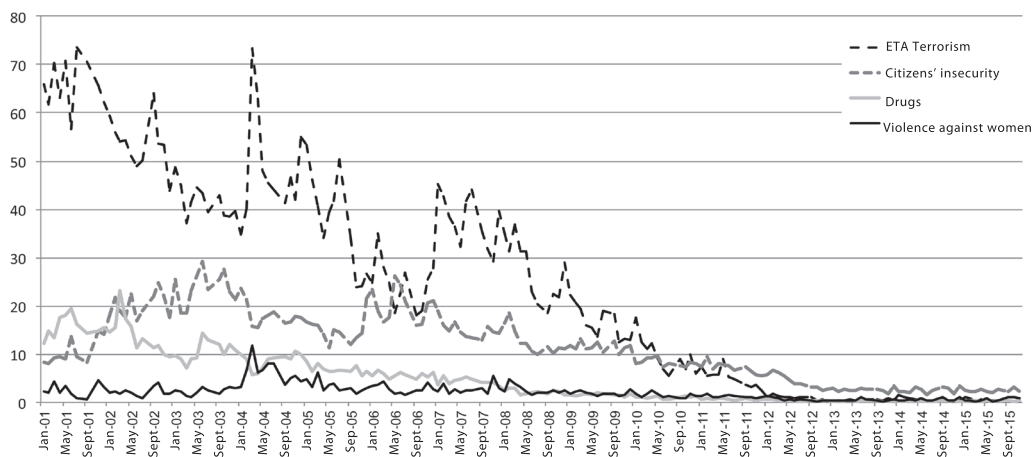
Something similar, although with some qualifications, can be seen among the crimes considered as a social problem (see Figure 3). A downward trend can also be identified of specific crimes such as ETA terrorism, violence against women and even citizen insecurity. Even though the latter is the indicator with the greatest stability over in time, it also decreased from its highest levels in 2003 and 2006, to its lowest level in 2015. Unlike personal problems, the most important crime-related concern throughout the entire period was not fear of crime in the abstract, but ETA terrorism, except in mid-2006 and since 2011, when citizen insecurity surpasses it until the end of the series.

In conclusion, while crime in the abstract seems to be the biggest crime-related problem of the Spanish population on a personal level, it is a specific crime (ETA terrorism) that generated the most concern at a social level, at least until the announcement of the latest ceasefire and the subsequent cessation of

**FIGURE 2.** *Aggregate intensity of the problematisation of crime at a personal level, 2001-2015*



Source: Authors' figure based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**FIGURE 3.** *Aggregate intensity of the problematisation of crime at country level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculation from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

armed activities announced by the terrorist group in October 2011.

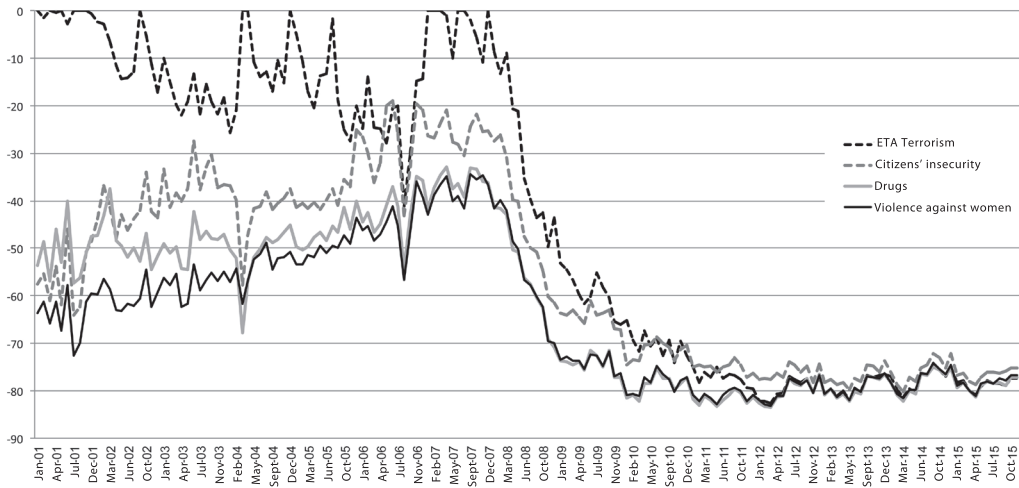
By comparing the percentages of citizens who are concerned about crime with their concern about other problems, a relative way of measuring the intensity of the problematisation of crime is used that is called *relative intensity*. Although it could be measured by merely comparing the aggregate intensities of crimes with other non-crime related problems, the most commonly used measure is a ranking of concerns (Serrano and Vázquez, 2007). This indicator suffers from a fundamental problem: it transforms a numerical measurement, (aggregate intensity) into an ordinal measurement. This is problematic because it only allows for the comparison of positions among which there may not be differences of the same magnitude (Pozo Cuevas *et al.* 2013: 61). A more recommendable indicator could be the difference between the aggregate intensity of the problem in question, and that of the phenomenon with the highest aggregate intensity at the time of the measurement. This measurement of relative intensity ( $RI_x$ ) represents the gap between the aggregate intensity of the problem to be

studied ( $AI_x$ ) and the aggregate intensity of that which generates the most concern among citizens at the time of the measurement ( $AI_1$ ).

$$RI_x = AI_x - AI_1$$

This measurement would range between 0 and -100 percentage points. A relative intensity of 0 would mean that it was the problem of most concern to citizens; a relative intensity of -100 would mean that no one considered the phenomenon under study to be a problem, while the entire population interviewed chose another phenomenon as a problem (always the same). Between these two points, the lower the figure of relative intensity, the greater the distance separating the aggregate intensities of the problem under study and of the greatest concern to citizens. The negative sign facilitates graphic interpretation: an index with a positive sign generates line graphs in which the least important problems would be placed above the most important problems, which would be counter-intuitive.

Figure 4 shows the relative intensity indicators of crime-related phenomena at a so-

**FIGURE 4.** *Relative intensity of crime-related problems at a social level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

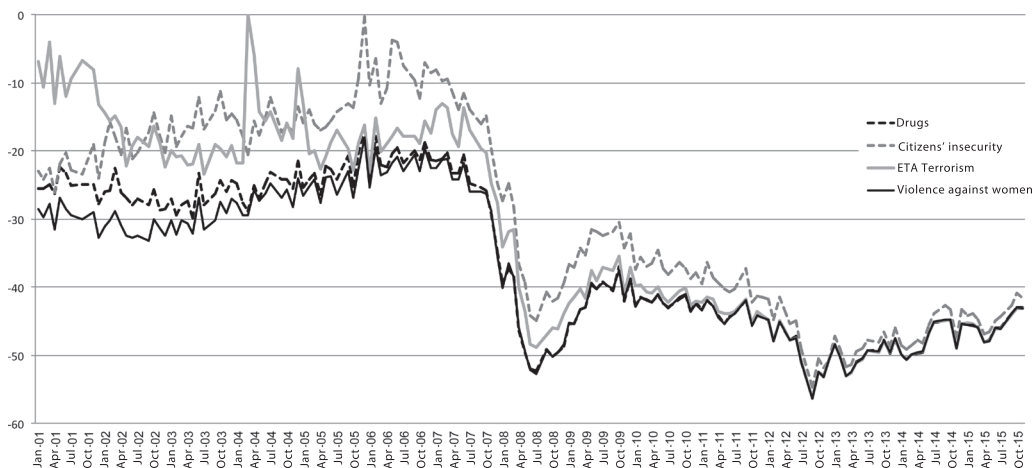
cial level. Two distinct periods can be seen: 2001-2007 (a period of economic boom) and 2008-2015 (a period of economic crisis). In the first period, the RIs of all crime-related problems tended to increase, except ETA terrorism, which ranged from 0 to -41.2 over several years. In the second period (2008 and 2015), all crimes, including ETA terrorism, began to form a compact group of problems with RI values ranging between -40 to -85 percentage points. This means that, from 2009, between 60% and 85% of the population were less worried about crime than about the phenomena that they considered most problematic: basically, unemployment and economic problems.

Something similar can be seen in the analysis of the problematisation of crime on a personal level (see Figure 5). Between 2001 and 2006 the distance between the main personal problem in the majority of the barometers and crime-related problems declined. From this date, crime-related problems began to have a downward trajectory that ended in 2008. Between 2008 and 2009, the differences between crime-related problems and the main problem (unemployment)

started to become smaller, and then increased again until 2012 and then decreased from 2012 to 2015. Between 2008 and 2015, the RI levels of crimes ranged between -30 and -55 percentage points.

Both the measurements of aggregate intensity and those of relative intensity suggest that the economic crisis caused the population to problematise crime less, as they were increasingly concerned about unemployment and economic problems, —the two main social and personal problems since 2007. This clearly separate types of problematisation might have to do with the fact that criminals became the scapegoat for intangible anxieties typical of risk and uncertainty societies (Doran and Burgess, 2012: 32; Ewald, 2000; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Lupton and Tulloch, 1999). Therefore, as the data of the CIS barometers shows, when the economy is performing reasonably well both at a social and personal level, people tend to turn their concerns towards crime, as suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2000: 260).

But the intensity of concern about crime is measured in a third way: it will be greater

**FIGURE 5.** *Relative Intensity of crime-related problems at personal level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

the higher the position crime has in the respondent's ranking when asked about their top three main personal problems and Spain's main problems. We call this type of measurement of intensity *preference-based intensity*. Table 4 shows the percentage of people worried about crime as first, second or third option at a social and personal level. It can be seen that there is no consistent pattern in the preference-based intensity of these problematisations. Based on the data from June 2004 on the total problematisation (the total sum of the percentages of the population worried about a crime-related problem), crime appeared to be the main personal and social concern. As noted, in March 2008 crime was the second option at a personal level, but the first at social level, and in December 2012 it was the second on a personal level and the third at social level.

Relative and preference-based intensities are contextualizing measures, and therefore show whether there are higher or lower levels of worry about crime than about other problems, something that is extremely useful mainly for two reasons. The first is that it avoids over-estimating fear of crime,

which is one of the major problems identified in measurements of the magnitude of fear of crime based solely on intensity (Hough, 2004; Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7.). That is, preference-based and relative intensity measurements serve as a counterpoint to aggregate intensity, preventing its overestimation by placing it within the context of other issues problematised by the public. The second reason is that it makes it possible to explore the problematisation of crime in context: on the one hand, the so-called *society of fear* (Furedi, 1997; Glassner, 1999) and, on the other hand, that of *risk society* (Beck, 1992). Following a similar proposal made by Tudor (2008), Hollway and Jefferson (1997) explained that, although the specific way each person uses the discourse of fear of crime has to do with their own life experience, all those uses have something in common: they are carried out in a social context of fears, insecurities and lack of certainties. Therefore, decontextualising the problematisation of crime from other issues would be a huge misconception which, unlike the CIS measurements, victimisation surveys fall prone to.

**TABLE 4.** *Percentage of people who identify crime as the main problem at both personal and national level by order of preference*

		Personal			Country		
		1	2	3	1	2	3
Drugs	Jun.-04	1.41	0.97	1.73	3.27	3.43	2.42
	Mar.-08	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.73	1.09	1.09
	Dec.-12	0.04	0	0.04	0.04	0.16	0.32
Citizens' insecurity	Jun.-04	5.49	4.68	2.62	4.68	6.62	6.78
	Mar.-08	4.32	4.41	2.75	4.24	4.89	5.74
	Dec.-12	0.32	0.89	0.56	0.28	1.41	1.09
ETA Terrorism	Jun.-04	7.26	3.47	1.53	23.15	16.18	6.05
	Mar.-08	2.55	3.31	2.3	15.44	13.3	8.16
	Dec.-12	0	0	0	0.04	0.04	0.12
Violence against women	Jun.-04	0.73	0.52	0.4	2.22	2.82	2.94
	Mar.-08	7.64	8.53	5.86	0.81	1.74	1.29
	Dec.-12	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.36
Total	Jun.-04	14.89	9.64	6.29	33.32	29.04	18.19
	Mar.-08	14.96	16.69	11.36	21.22	21.02	16.29
	Dec.-12	0.36	0.89	0.6	0.36	1.65	1.9

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers, June 2004, March 2008 and December 2012.

To sum up, while the magnitude of the problematisation of crime cannot be measured through the CIS barometers by the frequency with which worry is felt, they provide three different measurements of the magnitude of this concern — preference-based, aggregate and relative intensity. These make it possible to conduct analyses that are impossible using victimisation survey data.

#### **Internal, external and dual locus of projection in the CIS Barometers**

As discussed above, the dimension of fear called the locus of projection can be explored through the barometers. This concept offers the possibility of understanding how the fear of crime can be felt not only for oneself but also for others. However, the concept of locus of projection emerging from the international literature is somewhat different from

that of the barometers. Whereas in the former the external locus is the fear felt for people close to them (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000), in the latter, this notion is understood more broadly: concern that is felt for the country in general.

In Spain, the social and personal dimensions of fear of crime have been explored on various occasions (Soto, 2005; Rechea *et al.*, 2004; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007) in a way that poses a fundamental problem. By using the concept of citizen insecurity to refer to both fear of crime in the abstract, and to the social concern about it, the idea that people can project their fear towards society has been mixed with the idea that this fear refers to crime in the abstract. In other words, they have confused the concept of object of fear with that of locus of projection.

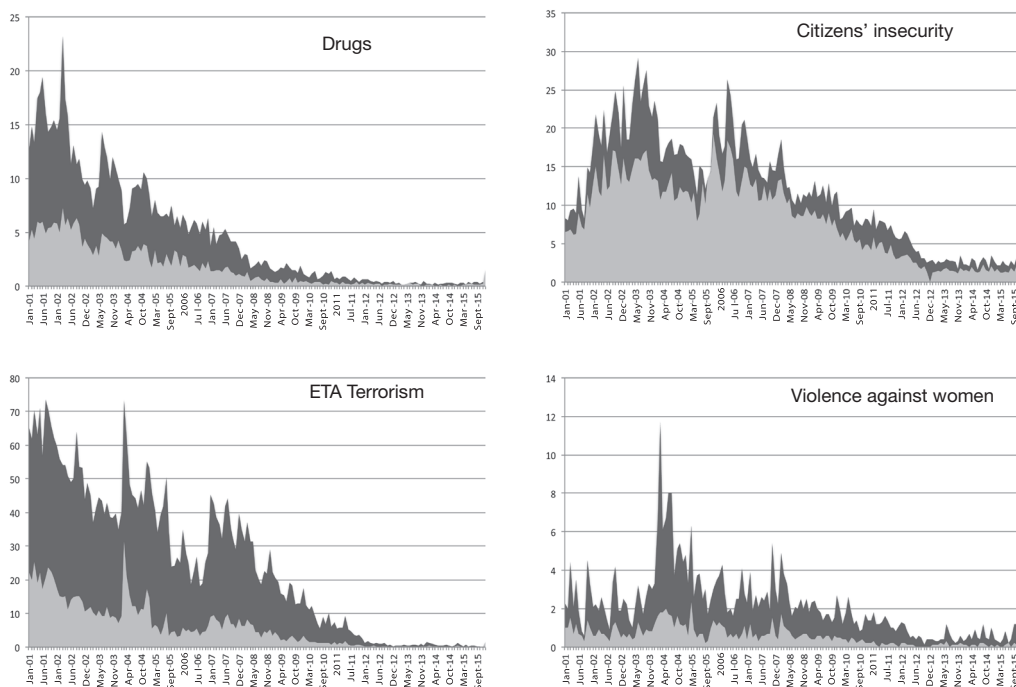
To avoid this problem, the dual personal-social aspects can be explored empirically in two ways. The first is to compare the time series of the same crime-related problematisation at a personal and social level. As evidenced in Figure 6, it needs to be particularly noted that the problematisation of crime as a social problem is greater than its consideration as a personal problem, regardless of the object of problematisation used.

The means of the differences between the aggregate intensity of social and personal problems from 2001 to 2015 range between 18.77 percentage points for ETA terrorism and 1.58 points for violence against women (Table 5). These data seem to suggest that when identifying crime as a problem, it seems easier to project it socially than personally. If, as noted by Serrano and Vázquez (2007: 25), the indicator of crime as a personal problem is based on an assessment of the probability

of being a victim of a crime, it is clear that the public understands that the probability of being personally a victim of crime is lower than that of it happening to other people.

The second way to explore the personal-social duality is to analyse whether people who consider crime a personal problem also consider it to be a social problem or whether, on the contrary, this dual effect occurs only at the aggregate level. This can be done by separating the responses of those who consider crime to be a problem at the social level from those who do not, and cross-referencing them with those who consider crime as a problem at the personal level and those who do not. Table 6 shows those who project their concern towards the three possible loci: internal, external and dual. In the three barometers used by way of example, in June 2004 —when the problematisation level was high—, in March 2008 —when it was

**FIGURE 6.** *Problematisation of crime at a personal and social level, 2001-2005*



Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**TABLE 5.** *Percentage difference of the social-personal problem, 2001-2015*

	Maximum difference	Minimum difference	Average difference (2001-2015)
Drugs	16.00	-0.10	3.07
Citizens' insecurity	13.00	-0.10	3.49
ETA Terrorism	52.90	0.00	18.77
Violence against women	9.90	0.00	1.58

Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**TABLE 6.** *Contingency table of responses on crime as a personal and / or social problem %*

	External locus	Internal locus	Dual locus
June 2004	22.6	5.9	5.2
March 2008	17.1	4.9	3
December 2012	1.2	0.5	0.1

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers, June 2004, March 2008 and December 2012.

medium—, and in December 2012 — when it was low, the data confirmed that it was more common to project the concern for crime towards society than towards oneself in both directions.

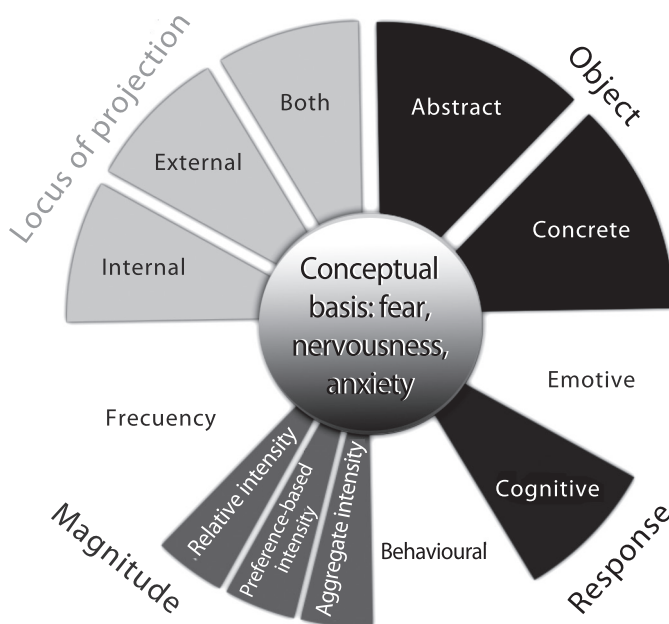
### **Problematisation of crime as an indicator of fear of crime**

In conclusion, the concept of *problematisation of crime* is composed of four dimensions: object, response, magnitude, and locus of projection (see Figure 7). According to this, the problematisation of crime as extracted from the CIS barometers can be defined as a feeling of nervousness or worry caused by crime in the abstract or by specific crimes, susceptible of being expressed cognitively, with greater or lesser intensity, and projecting towards the personal, the social or both.

Although the questions of the CIS barometers do not seem to resemble those in the commonly used victimisation surveys or in those created ad hoc to solve problems concerning the operationalisation of the concept that remain unresolved (Machado and Manita, 2009), they do include many of the con-

siderations included in the literature. The *problematisation of crime* proposed in this paper is based on the same conceptual foundations as the fear of crime. As noted above, it includes measurements of the two objects — crime in the abstract (citizen insecurity) and three specific offences (drugs, ETA terrorism, and violence against women)—; it refers to one of three types of responses that the literature identifies with the concept — cognitive—, and takes into account three measurements of one of the two dimensions of the magnitude of fear considered to be the most important: its intensity. It can therefore be argued that the *problematisation of crime*, while it may not be *fear of crime* per se, is a good indicator of that concept. It also includes measurements for the dimension of fear called the locus of projection, which allow the exploration of the differences between the fear of crime projected toward the individual, fear of crime projected towards the social and fear of crime projected towards both loci. Given what Vozmediano *et al.* (2008: 8) argued after reviewing the literature between 2004 and 2006, when they found that the most common studies still use measurements of a single item, it can be



**FIGURE 7.** *Dimensions of the concept of problematisation of crime*

Source: Authors' figure.

stated that the problematisation of crime is a more multidimensional indicator of fear of crime than many of those still used in criminological research.

## CONCLUSION

The conceptualisation and measurement of fear of crime are topics of major interest to the scientific community. Spain has contributed little to this dialogue from an empirical point of view. With some exceptions, little data from victimisation surveys are available that are more or less current and comparable over time. This paper proposes the use of the concept of problematisation of crime emerging from the CIS barometers as an indicator of fear of crime. After a series of validity and reliability tests, this concept was found to be made up of two dimensions, personal and social problematisation, both based on four

concerns: three specific concerns (drugs, ETA terrorism, and violence against women) and one considered in the abstract (citizen insecurity).

It has been argued in this paper that using problematisation of crime as a measure of fear of crime is conceptually relevant because the barometers (1) capture the essence of the concept of fear of crime, (2) do not measure the emotional and attitudinal responses, but rather the cognitive response, (3) treat the abstract and specific objects of fear and (4) despite not measuring the frequency, they measure the magnitude of fear of crime through three measurements: aggregate, preference-based and relative intensity. In addition, the CIS measurements have two additional advantages that render them more useful than victimisation of crime surveys: (5) they allow the exploration of what has been called locus of projection of fear,

that is, the space — internal (personal), external (social) or dual— towards which fear of crime is projected and, (6) they make it possible to contextualise fear of crime within other personal and country-wide concerns, and therefore the weight of fear of crime with respect to other fears and anxieties of the Spanish population can be ascertained.

This theoretical relevance also has an important practical and topical usefulness. Thanks to the development of the concept of problematisation of crime, very interesting questions about fear of crime that have been unknown in Spain due to lack of data can be explored. Specifically, that there are more people concerned about crime at a social level than at personal level, and that the economic crisis has caused concern for crime to drop substantially.

However, as noted by Hollway and Jefferson (1997), in the data from the barometers this transfer of concerns may be due to the fact that, when the economy is performing reasonably well both at a social and a personal level, people tend to turn their concerns towards crime. It should also be noted that the respondents were asked about the three main problems, so when some of them became important, those which are no longer relevant disappeared from the list. The limited number of possible spontaneous responses requested in the survey —three— may overestimate the transfer of concerns on which this hypothesis is based. Assessing these methodological issues requires more detailed studies that compare crime-related, social and economic problems, among others, which will have to be addressed by research in the future.

A substantive issue raised in the analysis has to do with the order of the questions. It should be considered to what extent the question posed by the CIS about Spain's problems before asking about personal problems could influence responses. If this is thought to be so, this would be another of the

study's limitations. This is to be explored further.

A future analysis could also be made of the external validity of the concept of problematisation of crime. According to Doran and Burgess (2012: 25-50), there are three main types of explanations for the fear of crime: macro-sociological (*social*) theories, *environmental* theories (that relate the fear of crime to characteristics of social space), and *demographic* theories (that consider that fear of crime is affected by the characteristics of people, such as whether they have been victimised either directly or indirectly (Clark, 2003; Crank *et al.*, 2003; Hanson *et al.*, 2000; Killias and Clerici, 2000; Mesch, 2000; Romer *et al.*, 2003; and Weitzer and Kubrin, 2004) and their levels of vulnerability (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981), associated with variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc. The CIS barometers typically include variables associated with this third paradigm, and therefore it would be interesting to assess how measures of fear of crime behave according to these variables.

In the same vein, the barometers allow the study of whether the vulnerability identified by Skogan and Maxfield (1981) has an impact on the locus of projection of fear of crime. It would be interesting to see, for example, if people who feel most vulnerable tend to project more frequently concern about crime towards themselves or towards society, which would contribute very significantly to studies of locus of projection (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000).

Finally, it would be interesting to analyse the difference between the three levels of preference-based intensity of fear of crime, that is, problematisation of crime in first, second and / or third place. All these analyses would also benefit from the grouping of these measurements into a synthetic index to provide (in a single measure) the levels of fear of crime in Spain in a contextualized manner,

that is, compared to other concerns that citizens may have.

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# La medición del miedo al delito a través de los barómetros del CIS

*Measuring Fear of Crime by the Use of the CIS Barometers*

Manuel Caro Cabrera y Luis Navarro Ardoy

## Palabras clave

- Delincuencia
- Opinión pública
- Percepción social
- Problemas sociales
- Seguridad ciudadana

## Key words

- Crime
- Public Opinion
- Social Perception
- Social Problems
- Citizen Security

## Resumen

En este trabajo se explora si la preocupación por el delito que manifiesta la población española como problema del país y personal en los barómetros del CIS es una buena medida del concepto de miedo al delito. Primero, se muestran las dimensiones del miedo al delito y se presentan las bases conceptuales y empíricas de la preocupación que denominamos problematización del delito. Segundo, se evalúa la pertinencia teórica de adoptar dicho concepto como indicador de miedo al delito. Tercero, se presentan datos que demuestran su utilidad empírica. El análisis concluye que la problematización del delito, construida a partir de los barómetros del CIS, es una buena medida de miedo al delito que además incluye ventajas frente a las utilizadas por las encuestas de victimización.

## Abstract

This paper explores whether the concern shown by the Spanish population about crime as being a problem for the country as a whole and a personal problem in the CIS barometers is a good measurement of the concept of fear of crime. Firstly, the dimensions of fear of crime are shown, and the conceptual and empirical basis for the concern that we have called the problematisation of crime is presented. Secondly, the theoretical relevance of adopting this concept as an indicator of fear of crime is evaluated. Thirdly, empirical data are provided to demonstrate its usefulness. The analysis concludes that the problematisation of crime, constructed on the basis of the barometers of the CIS, is a good measurement of fear of crime, in addition to having some advantages over those used by victimisation surveys.

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## INTRODUCCIÓN<sup>1</sup>

El concepto *miedo al delito* —y su homólogo *inseguridad ciudadana*— se ha estudiado en España utilizando dos fuentes de datos diferentes. Por un lado, las encuestas de victimización realizadas por el Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) entre 1978 y 2007. Son estudios específicos con poca periodicidad y comparabilidad (García España *et al.*, 2010: 1) porque se realizaron con técnicas y medidas distintas y en ámbitos territoriales diferentes (Madrid, Cataluña, España...). El Observatorio de la Delincuencia de Andalucía (ODA) también ha realizado encuestas de este tipo en capitales andaluzas (García España *et al.*, 2007) y en todo el territorio nacional (Díez Ripollés y García España, 2009). Por otro lado, están los barómetros del CIS<sup>2</sup>, que incluyen una pregunta de cuáles son los tres principales problemas del país y, desde octubre de 1997, también de los tres principales problemas personales. El análisis de las respuestas a estas preguntas ha permitido medir en España el nivel de preocupación que la ciudadanía tiene acerca del delito (Soto, 2005; Serrano y Vázquez, 2007). Frente a la primera, la principal ventaja de los barómetros es su regularidad y disponibilidad, algo que no es baladí considerando la escasez y opacidad de datos criminológicos en nuestro país (Díez Ripollés y Giménez-Salinas, 2010).

En este trabajo se propone la pertinencia de usar los barómetros para medir el miedo

al delito en España. Además de por la mencionada regularidad, disponibilidad y actualidad de los datos, porque integran varias de las consideraciones teóricas que sobre el concepto de miedo al delito recoge la literatura especializada; porque los barómetros desdoblán la medida del miedo al delito en una dimensión personal y otra social; y porque permiten medir tres dimensiones de la magnitud del miedo —intensidad agregada, preferente y relativa—, algo que no pueden hacer las medidas propias de las encuestas de victimización tradicionales.

El desarrollo argumental del artículo se estructura en tres partes. En primer lugar, se exponen las necesarias consideraciones metodológicas de los datos utilizados. En segundo lugar, se analizan las dimensiones teóricas del concepto de miedo al delito. En tercer lugar, se explican las razones que llevan a pensar que *la problematización del delito* es tanto una buena medida del concepto de *miedo al delito* como empíricamente útil.

## CONSIDERACIONES METODOLÓGICAS

En este apartado se detallan los aspectos metodológicos que sostienen científicamente los argumentos teóricos que se defienden en el artículo. Tratamos así de señalar aspectos como la validez y la fiabilidad de *la problematización del delito* que nos permiten dar cuenta de los constructos teóricos que después desarrollamos.

Los barómetros son encuestas mensuales. A partir de octubre de 1997 incluyen dos preguntas de respuesta abierta sobre los tres principales problemas del país y los tres principales problemas personales. De manera recurrente, desde aquella fecha a la actualidad, un porcentaje variable de población española responde «la inseguridad ciudadana», «las drogas», «la violencia contra la mujer», «el terrorismo de ETA», «el terrorismo internacional», «la corrupción y el fraude» y/o «el fraude fiscal». Al concepto que denota la

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<sup>2</sup> A partir de este momento, cuando hablemos de barómetros se sobreentiende que son los realizados por el CIS.



consideración de estas cuestiones como problemas sociales y/o personales lo denominamos *problematización del delito*. Su validez y fiabilidad como concepto se presentan en la página 30, realizando análisis factoriales, de correlaciones y alfas de Cronbach, por separado y conjuntamente, en dos series temporales del CIS: las dos preguntas abiertas sobre los principales problemas personales y del país desde enero de 2001 — fecha en que los barómetros se realizan todos los meses, excepto en agosto — a noviembre de 2015 — último barómetro disponible cuando se escribe este artículo.

Dichas series también se utilizan en la página 32 para estudiar dos de los procedimientos para medir lo que denominamos magnitud de la problematización del delito: las intensidades agregada y relativa. Estos conceptos se miden respectivamente mediante porcentajes de población preocupada por el delito que presenta el CIS y un indicador de intensidad relativa, el IR, creado *ex profeso*, que mide la distancia entre la preocupación por el delito y por aquella cuestión que más preocupa a la ciudadanía. De esta forma, conocemos qué volumen de población problematiza el delito junto al porcentaje que lo hace en relación a la problematización de otras cuestiones como el paro, la política, etc.

Al final de la página 35 se explora el tercer tipo de medida de la magnitud de la problematización del delito: la preferente. Para estudiarla se utilizan tres barómetros seleccionados por ser casos típicos (Seawright y Gerring, 2008). El primero, de junio de 2004, representa al periodo 2001-2008, cuando el porcentaje de personas preocupadas por el delito crece con respecto a los problemas más importantes para la ciudadanía. El segundo, de marzo de 2008, está enmarcado en el periodo 2008-2009, cuando esta tendencia se invierte. El tercero, de diciembre de 2012, pertenece al periodo 2010-2015, cuando la problematización del delito se sitúa en uno de sus niveles más bajos de toda

la serie del CIS. En base a estos mismos tres barómetros, en la página 37 profundizamos en otra de las dimensiones del miedo al delito: la que llamamos locus de proyección. A partir de esta idea, exploramos la dirección hacia la que las personas proyectan su preocupación por el delito: concretamente, hacia sí mismas, hacia otras personas o en ambas direcciones.

## EL CONCEPTO DE MIEDO AL DELITO

La literatura del miedo al delito tiene una larga tradición en criminología y se ha convertido prácticamente en casi una subdisciplina (Hale, 1996)<sup>3</sup>. El concepto de miedo al delito surge adoleciendo de problemas que varios autores identificaron en los años noventa (Hollway y Jefferson, 1997; Hough, 1995; Sparks, 1992). El más importante es su poca claridad semántica y el poco acuerdo metodológico que existe en cómo medirlo (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 9-10). A esta situación ha contribuido que la definición más citada del concepto sea la de Ferraro, quien argumenta de manera poco operacionalizable que el miedo al delito es «una reacción emocional de temor o ansiedad hacia el delito o hacia aquellos símbolos que la persona asocia con él» (Ferraro, 1995: 8). Por lo tanto, el concepto de miedo al delito es un concepto paraguas que viene a significar «un amplio abanico de ansiedades y preocupaciones relacionadas con el delito» (Hough, 1995: 1), entre las que se pueden mencionar el miedo, la ansiedad o la falta de confianza (Walklate, 1998).

Más allá de la falta de claridad conceptual, del miedo al delito se han ido desgranando diversas dimensiones que lo complejizan. Fishman y Mesch (1996) reconocen que tiene varios *referentes*: «miedo de la victimización

<sup>3</sup> Un repaso a tal volumen de literatura se puede encontrar en Doran y Burgess (2012).

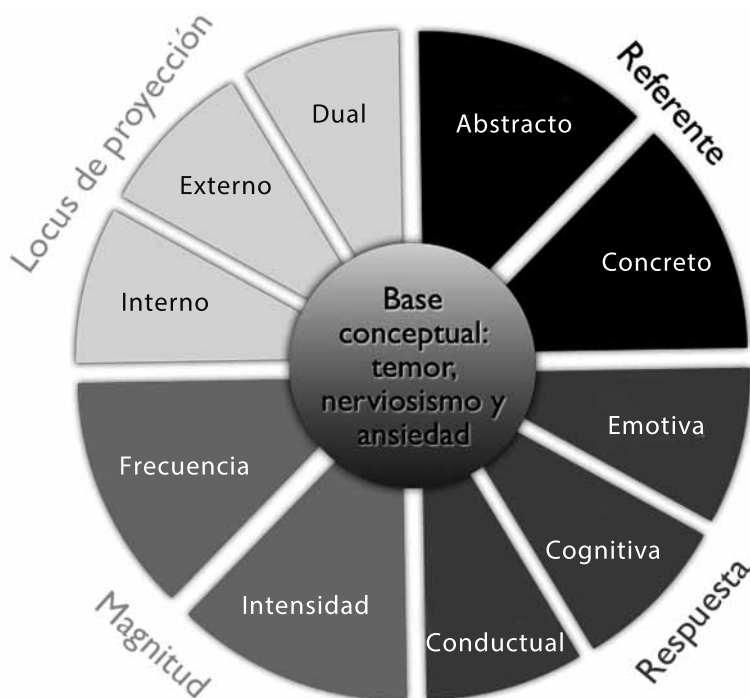
familiar, miedo de la victimización personal, miedo al crimen con violencia y miedo al “delito de cuello blanco”» (en Morquecho y Vizcarra, 2008: 6). Otro grupo de autores mencionan diferentes tipos de miedo al delito en función de las ansiedades de las que hablaba Ferraro: de tipo cognitivo (Fernández y Grijalva, 2012; Ferraro y LaGrange, 1987) —que incluye la evaluación personal del riesgo real de convertirse en víctima de un delito (Ferraro, 1995; Hough, 1995; Hale, 1996)—; afectivo, cuando se refiere exclusivamente al sentimiento de miedo (Ferraro y LaGrange, 1987); y de tipo conductual (Fernández y Grijalva, 2012; Madriz, 1997), pues puede generar conductas de protección (Ruiz, 2007). Este es el enfoque que mantiene la *International Crime Victims Survey* (ICVS), posiblemente la encuesta de victimización de mayor alcance y reputación. El CIS ha seguido este modelo en varias ocasiones para realizar estudios criminológicos. El último es la encuesta *Delincuencia y victimización en la Comunidad de Madrid* del año 2007 (Estudio 2702).

Un tercer grupo de autores conceptualizan el miedo al delito anclándolo en delitos específicos de diversa gravedad (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008) para tener en cuenta la seriedad de la ofensa temida (Skogan, 1984). Farrall *et al.* (2009) denominan al miedo que se siente por este tipo de referentes específicos *miedo experiencial* (citado en Hirtenlehner y Farrall, 2013: 6). Otros hacen referencia a un nivel abstracto y genérico de miedo, asimilándolo a una sensación indefinida de inquietud por el delito que parte de la literatura ha llegado a relacionar incluso con la «sensación de “inseguridad ontológica” de la que habla Giddens» (Fernández y Grijalva, 2012: 12). Farrall *et al.* (2009) denominan al miedo que se siente por este tipo de referentes abstractos *miedo expresivo* (citado en Hirtenlehner y Farrall, 2013: 6). En resumen, se ha considerado que la medida del miedo al delito debe incluir, además de un referente generalista e indeterminado, uno específico relacionado con delitos concretos.

A pesar de que se siguen utilizando las medidas de miedo al delito a partir de un único ítem (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008), la complejidad conceptual expuesta es acompañada por una operacionalización cada vez más multidimensional. Ferraro (1995) cree que una buena medida debe incluir el estado emocional de miedo e inseguridad, hacer referencia explícita a delitos concretos y a situaciones realistas —no hipotéticas— y contener un amplio abanico de delitos (citado en Medina, 2003: 5). Otros autores argumentan que uno de los grandes problemas de las medidas clásicas del miedo al delito es que se centran exclusivamente en cuánto miedo se siente, es decir, en su intensidad (Hough, 2004). Estas medidas sobreestiman el miedo puesto que se podrían estar contestando desde «actitudes e inquietudes sobre los cambios sociales y el delito y no desde experiencias concretas» (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7). Para evitar esta sobreestimación se debe considerar no solo la intensidad de la emoción sino la frecuencia con la que se siente, por ejemplo, mediante una escala de tres opciones de respuesta como hace la ICVS: habitualmente, algunas veces, nunca (Farrall, 2004; Farrall *et al.*, 2009; Jackson, 2004; Vozmediano y San Juan, 2006).

Siguiendo estas recomendaciones, Vozmediano y colaboradores (2008) proponen medir el miedo al delito a partir de tres ítems. Recogen la frecuencia de episodios de miedo en el hogar, en la calle y en Internet a varios delitos. Machado y Manita (2009) utilizan un indicador del miedo al delito compuesto de hasta ocho dimensiones: percepción de cómo han variado las tasas de criminalidad en los últimos años, nivel de miedo al delito en general, delitos más temidos, localización del miedo en el tiempo y en el espacio, descripción de los comportamientos de autoprotección debidos al miedo, descripción de la situación más temida relacionada con el delito, opiniones acerca de las causas del delito y grado de tolerancia frente a ciertos delitos. Una de las me-

GRÁFICO 1. Dimensiones del concepto de miedo al delito



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

didas más recientes y quizás más sofisticadas para medir el miedo al delito es la propuesta por Fernández y Grijalva (2012). Proponen un índice compuesto por una medida de miedo al delito en abstracto, tres medidas de la dimensión cognitiva del miedo, y dos medidas de las respuestas conductuales al miedo.

Un último grupo de autores ha explorado el hecho de que el miedo puede ser *altruista* si se siente por otras personas, normalmente cercanas (Madriz, 1997; Warr, 1992; Warr y Ellison, 2000). Basándose en datos cualitativos, Snedker (2006) propone que el miedo proyectado hacia otras personas no tiene por qué ser siempre altruista. Introduce así el concepto de *miedo vicario* para referirse a aquel que tiene consecuencias positivas para quien lo siente, reservando el de *miedo altruista* para el que se siente por otra persona con cierto coste personal, pues requiere

actuaciones que suponen esfuerzos no compensados. Por ello, podemos considerar que el miedo al delito tiene un *locus de proyección*<sup>4</sup>, es decir, un espacio hacia el que se dirige. Una persona tendrá un *locus de proyección interno* cuando sienta miedo por el delito por ella misma —por vivir en un barrio peligroso, por sentirse muy vulnerable a cualquier peligro, etc.—, pero no por otras personas. Una persona tendrá un *locus de proyección externo* cuando tenga miedo por otras personas y no por ella misma porque, por ejemplo, resida en una zona de bajas ta-

<sup>4</sup> Este concepto está inspirado en el de *locus de control* que se refiere al espacio interno o externo hacia el que la persona proyecta el control de lo que le ocurre. Una persona tiene un locus de control interno cuando entiende que su vida es controlada por ella misma, mientras que quien tiene un locus de control externo considera que su vida está dirigida por acontecimientos que escapan a su intervención (Rotter, 1966).

sas de criminalidad o haya tomado medidas al respecto. Una persona tendrá un *locus de proyección dual* cuando teme al delito en ambos espacios.

Por lo tanto, aunque las bases del concepto de miedo al delito sigan siendo las mismas —un cierto sentimiento de inseguridad, nerviosismo, preocupación y temor por el delito—, el concepto se ha ido configurando en múltiples dimensiones que, aunque relacionadas, se consideran analíticamente distintas y, por tanto, reciben atención específica en su operacionalización. Según el tipo de respuesta en la que se encarne esa preocupación por el delito, el concepto tiene una dimensión emocional, otra cognitiva y una última conductual; según el referente que tiene el miedo, el concepto tiene una dimensión general —hacia el delito en abstracto— y otra específica —hacia delitos concretos de distintos niveles de gravedad—; según la magnitud, es decir, según nos centremos o bien en la intensidad o en la periodicidad con la que se sienta, el miedo al delito tiene vertientes de intensidad y frecuencia; y según se proyecte el miedo hacia la propia persona, hacia personas conocidas o en ambas direcciones, el miedo tiene un locus de proyección interno, externo o dual (véase el gráfico 1 en página anterior).

En suma, el *miedo al delito* podríamos definirlo como una sensación de nerviosismo o preocupación provocada por el delito en abstracto o por delitos particulares, pudiéndose expresar de manera emotiva, cognitiva y/o conductual, tanto con mayor o menor intensidad como con mayor o menor frecuencia, y proyectándose tanto hacia la propia persona como hacia personas cercanas.

## **EL CONCEPTO PROBLEMATIZACIÓN DEL DELITO SEGÚN LOS BARÓMETROS DEL CIS**

Cualquier medida de miedo al delito sería tanto más válida cuanto mayor número de

dimensiones citadas incluyese. Así, la *problematización del delito* a través de los barómetros sería tanto mejor indicador de *miedo al delito* cuanto mayor número de esas dimensiones fuera capaz de medir. Y ello aunque la forma de medición difiera de la utilizada en las encuestas de victimización que, como ya se ha dicho, son los instrumentos de medida más utilizados para el estudio de dicho problema.

En este epígrafe se evalúa la validez teórica de la medida del miedo al delito a partir de los barómetros. El objetivo es responder a la pregunta de si la *problematización del delito* medida a través de los barómetros es en realidad un concepto, si no sinónimo, sí al menos contenido en el que se viene conociendo en la literatura criminológica internacional como *miedo al delito*. En primer lugar, se analizan las similitudes entre algunas de las dimensiones de ambos conceptos y, en segundo lugar, se exponen las novedades teóricas, metodológicas y empíricas que supone utilizarlos frente a las medidas procedentes de las encuestas de victimización.

Respecto al significado del concepto *problematización del delito*, se entiende que la medida del CIS hace referencia al nerviosismo y a la preocupación por el delito, es decir, el germen conceptual del *miedo al delito* según la conceptualización de Ferraro (1995). Lo hace cuando la persona encuestada responde «las drogas», «la inseguridad ciudadana», «la violencia contra la mujer», «el terrorismo de ETA», «el terrorismo internacional», «la corrupción y el fraude» o «el fraude fiscal» a las preguntas «¿cuál es, a su juicio, el principal problema que existe actualmente en España? ¿Y el segundo? ¿Y el tercero?» o «¿cuál es el problema que a Ud., personalmente, le afecta más? ¿Y el segundo? ¿Y el tercero?».

En cuanto al tipo de reacción se refiere, se puede decir que la preocupación por algo no es ni una emoción ni una conducta propiamente dicha; más bien es una muestra de

reflexión acerca del delito que deja a la persona que la hace con cierto grado de inquietud. La medida de la problematización del delito encaja perfectamente entre las reacciones de tipo cognitivo de las que habla la literatura y antes se han comentado. Por ello, la medida de los barómetros consigue llegar a uno de los tres tipos de reacciones de las que consta este concepto.

Por último, se puede argüir, con respecto al referente del miedo, que parte de la ciudadanía intranquila por el delito habla de él en términos abstractos, mencionando su preocu-

pación por lo que el CIS ha codificado como «inseguridad ciudadana», una categoría que, según la propia institución, recoge respuestas espontáneas como «delincuencia, inseguridad ciudadana, delincuencia callejera, violencia callejera, inseguridad, delincuencia organizada, asesinatos, robos, pintadas de fachadas, vandalismo, delincuencia de bandas, gamberrismo y violencia». Sin embargo, otra parte de la población encuestada se refiere a delitos concretos como las «drogas», la «violencia contra la mujer», el «terrorismo de ETA», el «terrorismo internacional», la «co-

**TABLA 1.** Correlaciones entre problemas delictivos a nivel personal y del país

		Correlaciones entre problemas delictivos personales						
		Drogas	Inseguridad ciudadana	Terrorismo ETA	Violencia contra mujer	Corrupción y fraude	Terrorismo internacional	Fraude fiscal
Correlaciones entre problemas delictivos del país	Drogas	Corr. Pearson	0,641**	0,830**	0,566**	-0,443**	0,360**	0,092
		Nivel signif.	0	0	0	0	0,006	0,656
		N	156	151	155	149	57	26
	Inseguridad ciudadana	0,664**	Corr. Pearson	0,542**	0,674**	-0,703**	0,064	-0,046
		0	Nivel signif.	0	0	0	0,637	0,804
		162	N	157	159	154	57	31
	Terrorismo ETA	0,877**	0,707**	Corr. Pearson	0,655**	-0,470**	0,736**	0,069
		0	0	Nivel signif.	0	0	0	0,732
		162	163	N	155	149	52	27
	Violencia contra mujer	0,426**	0,584**	0,638**	Corr. Pearson	-0,520**	0,315*	0,466*
		0	0	0	Nivel signif.	0	0,017	0,011
		162	163	163	N	152	57	29
	Corrupción y fraude	-0,490**	-0,708**	-0,633**	-0,511**	Corr. Pearson	-0,069	-0,247
		0	0	0	0	Nivel signif.	0,609	0,18
		155	156	156	156	N	57	31
	Terrorismo internacional	0,002	-0,283*	0,152	0,182	0,24	Corr. Pearson	-0,318
0,987		0,028	0,247	0,164	0,065	Nivel signif.	0,184	
60		60	60	60	60	N	19	
Fraude fiscal	0,132	-0,005	-0,007	0,061	-0,333	-0,211	Corr. Pearson	
	0,471	0,977	0,97	0,736	0,058	0,469	Nivel signif.	
	32	33	33	33	33	14	N	

\*\* La correlación es significativa en el nivel 0,01 (bilateral).

\* La correlación es significativa en el nivel 0,05 (bilateral).

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

rrupción y el fraude» o «el fraude fiscal». Este hecho supone que la medida del CIS es capaz de incluir ambos referentes del miedo: el abstracto, entendido como «inseguridad ciudadana», y el concreto, referido a delitos específicos como los mencionados.

### Validez del concepto de problematización del delito

Aunque el objetivo del artículo no es elaborar un índice compuesto de problematización del delito, sí lo es comprobar la base empírica que tiene la construcción teórica de dicho concepto en sus dos dimensiones social y personal. Para hacerlo, utilizaremos algunas de las técnicas de análisis siguiendo las recomendaciones del Joint Research Center de la Comisión Europea (OCDE y JRC, 2008).

El análisis de correlaciones (tabla 1) entre las distintas respuestas a los problemas personales y del país nos permite comprobar si

pueden ser consideradas medidas de la problematización personal y social. Tanto en un caso como en otro, el análisis pone de manifiesto que ni la «corrupción y el fraude» ni el «terrorismo internacional» ni el «fraude fiscal» deberían formar parte del constructo teórico que hemos llamado *problematización del delito* a nivel social y a nivel personal. La dirección del signo (positiva o negativa) y los niveles de significatividad entre cada una de las variables nos permiten concluir que el mencionado constructo sería más robusto excluyendo las anteriores y considerando exclusivamente las «drogas», «inseguridad ciudadana», «terrorismo de ETA» y «violencia contra la mujer».

Un segundo análisis que avala la decisión anterior compara modelos factoriales de la problematización personal y social con siete y cuatro variables (tabla 2). De nuevo, tanto en un caso como en otro, los modelos de cuatro variables son mejores que al incluir las siete

**TABLA 2.** Modelos factoriales de las problematizaciones de delito a nivel personal y social

	Problemas del país		Problemas personales	
	Modelo 7 var.	Modelo 4 var.	Modelo 7 var.	Modelo 4 var.
<b>Comunalidades</b>				
Drogas	0,665	0,769	0,351	0,789
Inseguridad ciudadana	0,029	0,737	0,001	0,657
Terrorismo. ETA	0,665	0,891	0,126	0,779
Violencia contra la mujer	0,287	0,564	0,798	0,686
Corrupción y fraude	0,49		0,351	
Terrorismo internacional	0,04		0,565	
Fraude fiscal	0,115		0,54	
<b>Varianza explicada</b>				
% varianza explicada	32,751	74,003	39,002	72,78
<b>Medida Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin adecuación muestreo</b>				
Medida KMO	0,515	0,673	0,427	0,653
<b>Test de esfericidad de Bartlett</b>				
Aprox. Chi-cuadrado	17,893	464,789	30,644	366,367
Grados de libertad	21	6	21	6
Nivel signific.	0,656	0	0,08	0
<b>Alfa de Cronbach</b>				
Alfa	0,051	0,656	0,073	0,68

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

**TABLA 3.** Análisis de la validez de la problematización del delito como problema social y personal

		Problemas del país			
		Drogas	Inseguridad ciudadana	Terrorismo ETA	Violencia contra mujer
<b>Drogas</b>	Corr.	0,976**	0,670**	0,866**	0,411**
	Pearson	0	0	0	0
	Nivel signif.	156	157	157	157
	N	0,631**	0,974**	0,723**	0,584**
<b>Inseguridad ciudadana</b>	Corr.	0	0	0	0
	Pearson	161	162	162	162
	Nivel signif.	0,842**	0,534**	0,947**	0,587**
	N	0	0	0	0
<b>Terrorismo ETA</b>	Corr.	156	157	157	157
	Pearson	0,571**	0,665**	0,720**	0,878**
	Nivel signif.	0	0	0	0
	N	159	160	160	160
<b>Violencia contra mujer</b>	Corr.				
	Pearson				
	Nivel signif.				
	N				

		Modelo personal + país
<b>Comunalidades</b>		
Drogas (PAIS)		0,770
Inseguridad ciudadana (PAIS)		0,679
Terrorismo. ETA (PAIS)		0,889
Violencia contra mujer (PAIS)		0,497
Drogas (PERSONAL)		0,778
Inseguridad ciudadana (PERSONAL)		0,674
Terrorismo. ETA (PERSONAL)		0,761
Violencia contra mujer (PERSONAL)		0,665
<b>Varianza explicada</b>		
%		71,415
Medida KMO		0,78
<b>Test de esfericidad de Bartlett</b>		
Aprox. Chi-cuadrado		1.923,143
Grados de libertad		28
Nivel signif.		0,000
<b>Alfa de Cronbach</b>		
Alfa		0,787

\*\* La correlación es significativa en el nivel 0,01 (bilateral).  
Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

variables, tanto en lo que se refiere a las comunalidades, a las medidas KMO, al test de esfericidad de Bartlett y al porcentaje de varianza explicada. Además, que los coeficientes alfa de Cronbach con cuatro variables sean mayores que con siete prueban la mejora de los modelos, pues ganan en fiabilidad al dejar fuera al «terrorismo internacional», a la «corrupción y el fraude» y al «fraude fiscal».

El siguiente paso es comprobar que las problematizaciones personal y social del delito pueden considerarse parte del mismo concepto problematización. Así se demuestra a partir del análisis de correlaciones, factorial y alfa de Cronbach que mostramos en la tabla 3.

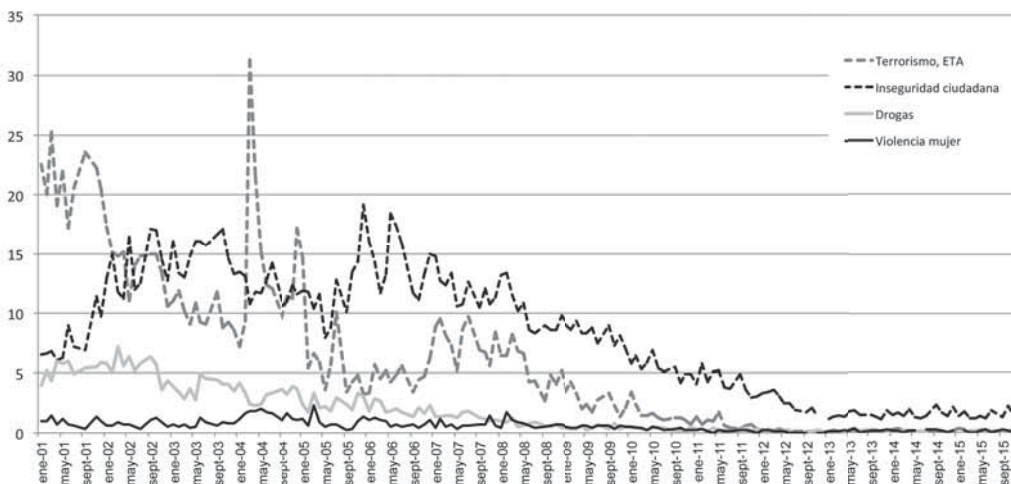
En resumen, en función de los análisis presentados, podemos decir que el concepto de problematización del delito ha de considerarse constituido por dos dimensiones, una social y otra personal, cada una de las cuales incorpora las variables de problematización de las drogas, la inseguridad ciudadana, el terrorismo de ETA y la violencia contra la mujer. Es a este constructo de problematización del delito al que nos referimos en las disquisiciones que siguen.

### La magnitud del miedo al delito en los barómetros del CIS: intensidad agregada, preferente y relativa

Al preguntar por la existencia o no de preocupación, los barómetros del CIS no permiten medir la magnitud del miedo a través de la frecuencia, pero sí a través de la intensidad de dicha preocupación de tres maneras distintas. Las medidas más comunes de problemas sociales y personales (véanse, por ejemplo, Soto, 2005; Serrano y Vázquez, 2007) se estructuran como porcentajes de población que entienden el delito en abstracto o ciertos delitos como problemas, por lo que la problematización del delito será tanto más intensa cuanto mayor sea el porcentaje de población que considere el delito como preocupante. A esta forma de medir la intensidad la llamaremos *intensidad agregada*, pues se basa en el número de personas encuestadas que identifican un mismo fenómeno como problema sin prestar atención al *ranking* en que lo disponen.

Como se observa en el gráfico 2, de los cuatro problemas delictivos personales que forman parte del concepto de problematización del delito, el referente abstracto la inse-

**GRÁFICO 2.** Intensidad agregada de la problematización del delito a nivel personal, 2001-2015



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).



guridad ciudadana es el que más preocupa a los españoles excepto entre 2001 y 2002 y durante 2004, fechas en las que el terrorismo de ETA se convertía en la principal preocupación personal.

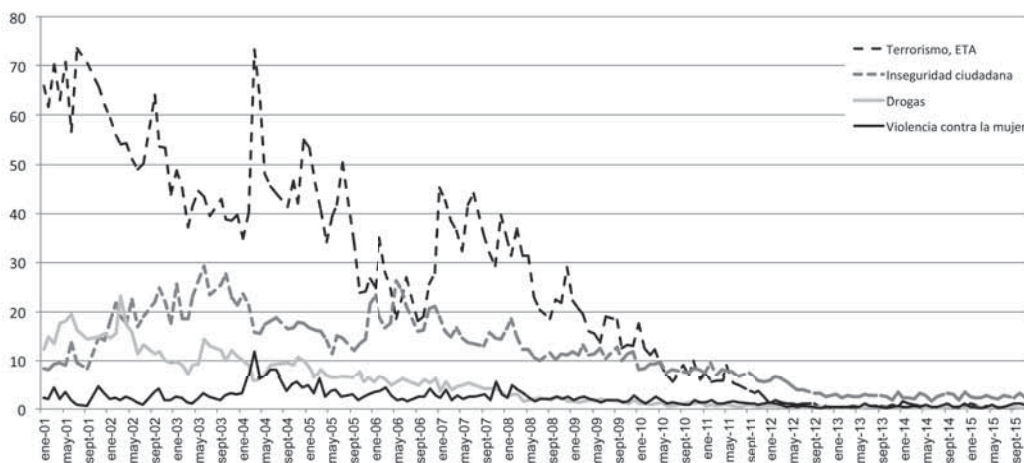
Algo parecido, aunque con matices, puede observarse entre los delitos considerados como problema social (gráfico 3). También se aprecia la tendencia a la baja de algunos delitos específicos como el terrorismo de ETA, la violencia contra la mujer e incluso de la inseguridad ciudadana que, aunque es el indicador que mayor estabilidad refleja en el tiempo, también disminuye desde sus niveles más altos en 2003 y 2006 hasta su mínimo en 2015. A diferencia de los problemas personales, la preocupación delictiva más importante en todo el periodo no es el referente abstracto sino el terrorismo de ETA, excepto a mediados de 2006 y desde 2011, cuando la inseguridad ciudadana la supera hasta el final de la serie en 2015.

En conclusión, mientras que el delito en abstracto parece ser el mayor problema delictivo de la población española a nivel personal, es uno de los delitos concretos, el terrorismo de ETA, el que más preocupación

genera a nivel social, al menos hasta la última tregua y el posterior cese de las actividades armadas anunciados por la banda en octubre de 2011.

Al comparar los porcentajes de ciudadanía que está preocupada por el delito con la preocupación de otros problemas estaríamos utilizando una manera relativa de medir la intensidad de la problematización del delito a la que denominamos *intensidad relativa*. Aunque para medirla no tendríamos más que comparar las intensidades agregadas de los delitos con las de otros problemas no delictivos, la medida más usada es la de un *ranking* de preocupaciones (Serrano y Vázquez, 2007). Este tipo de indicador adolece de un problema fundamental: transforma una medida numérica, como es la intensidad agregada, en una medida ordinal, lo que es problemático porque solo permite comparar posiciones entre las que no tiene por qué existir diferencias de la misma magnitud (Pozo Cuevas *et al.*, 2013: 61). Un indicador más recomendable podría ser la diferencia entre la intensidad agregada del problema en cuestión y la de aquel fenómeno que mayor intensidad agregada tenga en el momento

**GRÁFICO 3.** Intensidad agregada de la problematización del delito a nivel de país, 2001-2015



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

de la medición. Esta medida de intensidad relativa ( $IR_x$ ) representaría la distancia que existe entre la intensidad agregada del problema que interesa estudiar ( $IA_x$ ) y la intensidad agregada de aquel que mayor preocupación genere en la ciudadanía en el momento de la medición ( $IA_1$ ).

$$IR_x = IA_x - IA_1$$

Esta medida oscilaría entre 0 y -100 puntos porcentuales. Una intensidad relativa de 0 implicaría que dicho problema es el que más preocupa a la ciudadanía; una intensidad relativa de -100 implicaría que nadie entendió que el fenómeno de estudio fuera un problema, mientras que toda la población entrevistada eligió otro fenómeno, y siempre el mismo, como problema. Entre ambos puntos, cuanto menor sea la cifra de intensidad relativa, mayor será la distancia que separe las intensidades agregadas del problema que se quiere estudiar y de la mayor preocupación de la ciudadanía. El signo negativo facilita su interpretación gráfica: un índice con signo positivo generaría gráficos de líneas en los que los problemas menos importantes estarían dispuestos encima de los

más importantes, lo que resultaría poco intuitivo.

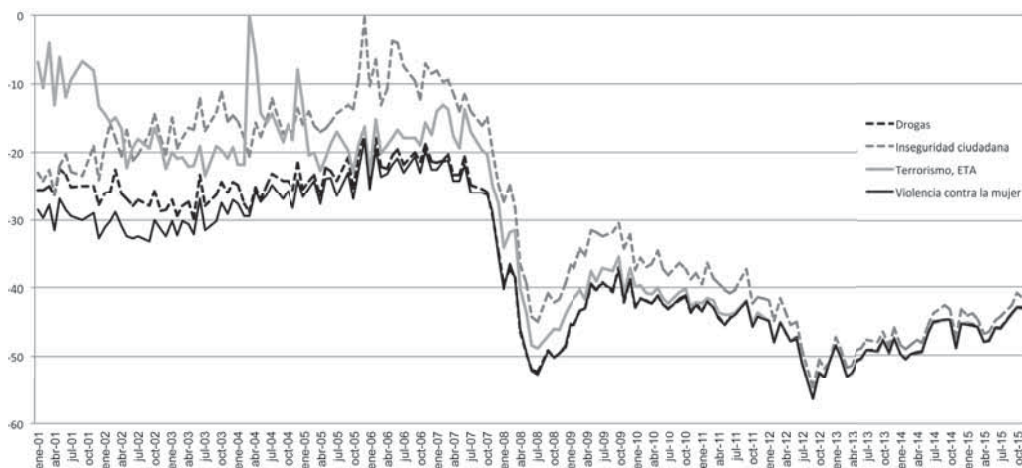
El gráfico 4 refleja los indicadores de intensidad relativa de los fenómenos delictivos a nivel social. En él se pueden observar dos periodos claramente diferenciados: 2001-2007 —un periodo de bonanza económica— y 2008-2015 —un periodo de crisis económica—. En el primero, las IRs de todos los problemas delictivos tienden al alza, excepto el terrorismo de ETA que oscila entre 0 y -41,2 en diversos años. Durante el segundo periodo, entre 2008 y 2015, todos los delitos, incluido el terrorismo de ETA, comienzan a formar un grupo compacto de problemas que se mueven en unos valores de IR de entre -40 y -85 puntos porcentuales. Esto quiere decir que, a partir de 2009, entre un 60 y un 85% menos de población se preocupa por el delito que por los fenómenos que la población considera más problemáticos: el paro y los problemas económicos fundamentalmente.

Algo similar ocurre con el análisis de la problematización del delito a nivel personal (gráfico 5). Entre 2001 y 2006 la distancia en-

**GRÁFICO 4.** Intensidad relativa de los problemas delictivos a nivel social, 2001-2015



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

**GRÁFICO 5.** Intensidad relativa de los problemas delictivos a nivel personal, 2001-2015

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

tre el principal problema personal en la mayoría de los barómetros y los problemas delictivos fue disminuyendo. A partir de esta fecha, los problemas delictivos comienzan una trayectoria descendente que termina en 2008. Entre 2008 y 2009, los problemas delictivos acortan sus diferencias con respecto al problema principal (el paro), para volver a aumentarlas hasta 2012 y disminuirlas desde 2012 a 2015. Entre 2008 y 2015, los delitos se mueven en niveles de IR de entre -30 y -55 puntos porcentuales.

Tanto las medidas de intensidad agregada como las de intensidad relativa parecen indicar que la crisis económica ha hecho que, preocupada por el paro y los problemas económicos —los dos principales problemas sociales y personales a partir de 2007—, la ciudadanía problematice cada vez menos el delito. Esta separación clara de problematizaciones podría tener que ver con que las personas delincuentes ponen cara a las ansiedades intangibles propias de las sociedades del riesgo y la incertidumbre (Doran y Burgess, 2012: 32; Ewald, 2000; Hollway y Jefferson, 2000; Lupton y Tulloch, 1999). Por eso, como indican los datos de los baróme-

tros del CIS, cuando las cuestiones económicas tanto a nivel social como personal van razonablemente bien en una sociedad, las personas tienden a tornar sus preocupaciones hacia lo delictivo, tal y como sugieren Hollway y Jefferson (2000: 260).

Pero la intensidad de la preocupación por un delito se mide de una tercera manera: será tanto mayor cuanto mayor sea el puesto de ese delito en el *ranking* de la persona encuestada cuando se le pregunta por sus tres problemas personales más importantes o por los tres problemas principales del país. A este tipo de medición de la intensidad la llamaremos *intensidad preferente*. La tabla 4 presenta el porcentaje de población preocupada por el delito como primera, segunda o tercera opción a nivel social y personal. En ella se puede apreciar que no existe un patrón constante en la intensidad preferente de dichas problematizaciones. Si nos fijamos en los datos de junio de 2004 de problematización total —la suma de los porcentajes de población preocupada por algún referente delictivo—, el delito parecía ser la primera preocupación personal y social. Como se observa, en marzo de 2008 el delito era la segunda opción a nivel

**TABLA 4.** Porcentaje de personas que identifican el delito como principal problema personal y del país por orden de preferencia

		Personales			País		
		1	2	3	1	2	3
Drogas	Jun.-04	1,41	0,97	1,73	3,27	3,43	2,42
	Mar.-08	0,44	0,44	0,44	0,73	1,09	1,09
	Dic.-12	0,04	0	0,04	0,04	0,16	0,32
Inseguridad ciudadana	Jun.-04	5,49	4,68	2,62	4,68	6,62	6,78
	Mar.-08	4,32	4,41	2,75	4,24	4,89	5,74
	Dic.-12	0,32	0,89	0,56	0,28	1,41	1,09
Terrorismo, ETA	Jun.-04	7,26	3,47	1,53	23,15	16,18	6,05
	Mar.-08	2,55	3,31	2,3	15,44	13,3	8,16
	Dic.-12	0	0	0	0,04	0,04	0,12
Violencia contra la mujer	Jun.-04	0,73	0,52	0,4	2,22	2,82	2,94
	Mar.-08	7,64	8,53	5,86	0,81	1,74	1,29
	Dic.-12	0	0	0	0	0,04	0,36
Total	Jun.-04	14,89	9,64	6,29	33,32	29,04	18,19
	Mar.-08	14,96	16,69	11,36	21,22	21,02	16,29
	Dic.-12	0,36	0,89	0,6	0,36	1,65	1,9

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS de junio de 2004, de marzo de 2008 y de diciembre de 2012.

personal, pero la primera a nivel social, y en diciembre de 2012 era la segunda a nivel personal y la tercera a nivel social.

Al ser las intensidades relativa y preferente medidas contextualizadoras, permiten conocer si la preocupación por el delito es mayor o menor que la inquietud por otro tipo de problemas, algo de enorme utilidad por dos razones fundamentalmente. La primera, es que evita uno de los grandes problemas de las medidas de la magnitud del miedo al delito basadas exclusivamente en la intensidad: su sobrevaloración (Hough, 2004; Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7). Es decir, las medidas de la intensidad preferente y relativa servirían como contrapunto a la de intensidad agregada, impidiendo que esta se sobrevalore al ponerla en el contexto del resto de las problematizaciones de la ciudadanía. La segunda razón es que permite explorar la problematización del delito en el

contexto: por un lado, de la llamada *sociedad del miedo* (Furedi, 1997; Glassner, 1999) y, por otro lado, de la *sociedad del riesgo* (Beck, 1992). Siguiendo un esquema similar al planteado por Tudor (2008), Hollway y Jefferson (1997) explican que, aunque la manera específica en que cada persona usa el discurso del miedo al delito tiene que ver con su propia experiencia vital, todos esos usos tienen algo en común: se llevan a cabo en un contexto social de miedos, inseguridades y falta de certezas. Por lo tanto, descontextualizar la problematización del delito de las demás problemáticas sería un error conceptual enorme. Un error en el que, a diferencia de las medidas del CIS, caen las encuestas de victimización.

En suma, aunque los barómetros del CIS no permiten medir la magnitud de la problematización del delito a través de la frecuencia con que se siente tal inquietud, propor-

cionan tres medidas distintas de la magnitud de dicha preocupación —la intensidad preferente, agregada y relativa— que permiten análisis imposibles con datos de encuestas de victimización.

### El locus de proyección en los barómetros del CIS: interno, externo y dual

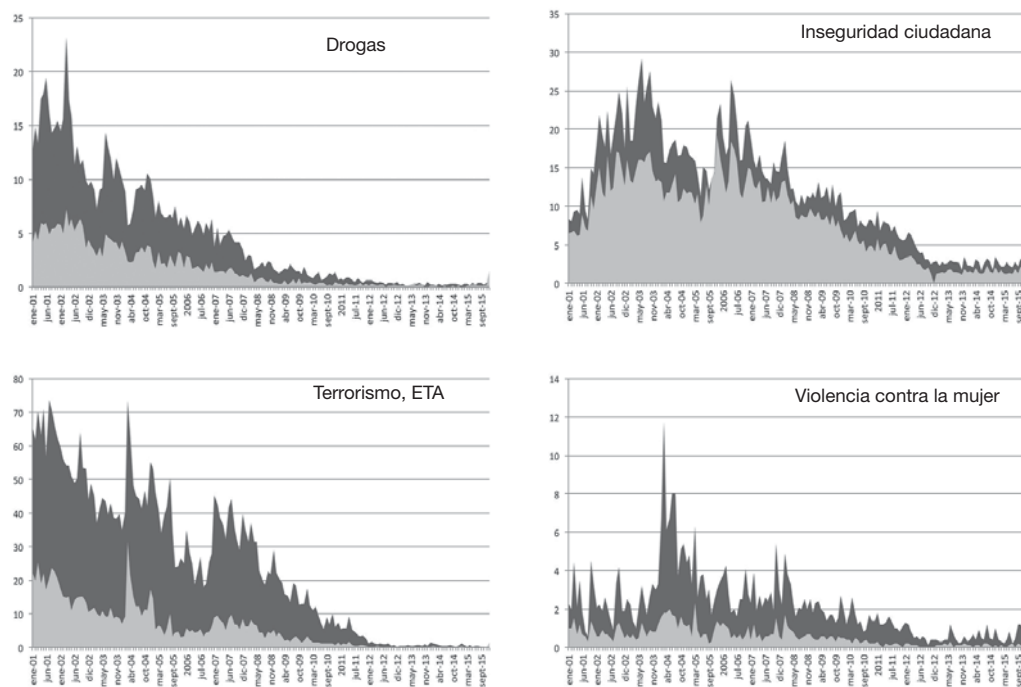
Como se ha expuesto anteriormente, los barómetros permiten explorar la dimensión del miedo que aquí se ha denominado *locus de proyección*. Este concepto abre la posibilidad de entender cómo el miedo al delito se puede sentir por otras personas y no solo por uno mismo. Sin embargo, el concepto de locus de proyección que emerge de la literatura internacional es algo diferente al de los barómetros. Si en la primera el locus externo es el miedo que se siente por personas cercanas (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr,

1992; Warr y Ellison, 2000), en los segundos esta noción se entiende de manera más amplia: la preocupación que se siente por el país en general.

En España se han explorado en diversas ocasiones las dimensiones social y personal del miedo al delito (Soto, 2005; Rechea *et al.*, 2004; Serrano y Vázquez, 2007). Estos estudios adolecen de un problema fundamental. Al usar el concepto de inseguridad ciudadana para referirse tanto al referente abstracto del delito como a la preocupación social por el mismo, mezclan la idea de que las personas puedan proyectar su miedo hacia la sociedad con que dicho miedo tenga como referente el delito en abstracto, es decir, confunden los conceptos de referente y locus de proyección.

Para evitar dicho problema, esta dualidad personal-social puede explorarse empíricamente de dos maneras. La primera consiste

**GRÁFICO 6.** *Problematización delictiva a nivel personal y social, 2001-2015*



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

en comparar las series temporales de la problematización del mismo referente delictivo a nivel personal y social. Como pone de manifiesto el gráfico 6, lo primero que llama la atención es que la problematización del delito como problema social es mayor que la considerada como problema personal, independientemente del referente de problematización que usemos.

Las medias de estas diferencias entre la intensidad agregada de los problemas sociales y personales desde 2001 a 2015 oscilan entre los 18,77 puntos porcentuales para el terrorismo de ETA y los 1,58 puntos de la violencia contra la mujer (tabla 5). Estos datos parecen sugerir que cuando se trata de identificar al delito como problema, parece más fácil hacerlo con proyección hacia lo social que hacia lo personal. Si, como apuntan Serrano y Vázquez (2007: 25), el indicador de problemática personal del delito muestra una evaluación de la probabilidad de ser víctima del delito, queda claro que la ciudadanía entiende que la probabilidad de ser personalmente víctima de un delito es menor que la que otras personas tienen de serlo.

La segunda manera de explorar la dualidad social-personal es analizar si las personas que consideran el delito un problema personal también lo consideran como problema social o si, por el contrario, ese efecto dual se produce solo a nivel agregado. Esto puede hacerse separando las respuestas de quienes consideran el delito como problema de aquellas de quienes no, a nivel social, y cruzándolas con las de quienes consideran el delito como problema y con las de quienes no, a nivel personal. Así, la tabla 6 nos permite identificar a quienes proyectan su preocupación hacia los tres posibles locus: el interno, el externo y el dual. En los tres barómetros utilizados a modo de ejemplo, en junio de 2004 —cuando la problematización era alta—, en el de marzo de 2008 —cuando era media— y en el de diciembre de 2012 —cuando era baja—, los datos corroboran que es más común proyectar la preocupación por el delito hacia la sociedad que hacia uno mismo y/o hacia ambos espacios.

#### **Problematización del delito como indicador de miedo al delito**

En conclusión, el concepto de *problematización del delito* quedaría integrado por cuatro

**TABLA 5.** *Diferencias porcentuales problema social-personal, 2001-2015*

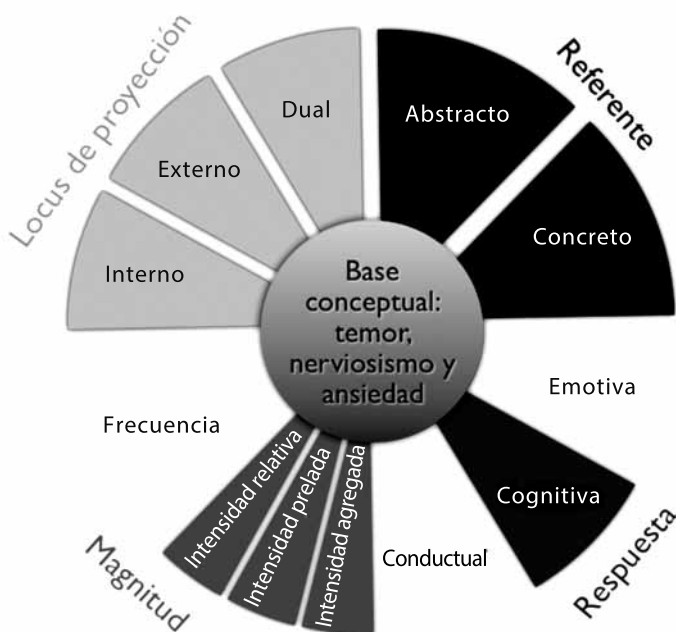
	Diferencia máxima	Diferencia mínima	Diferencia media (2001-2015)
Drogas	16,00	-0,10	3,07
Inseguridad ciudadana	13,00	-0,10	3,49
Terrorismo ETA	52,90	0,00	18,77
Violencia contra la mujer	9,90	0,00	1,58

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS (2001-2015).

**TABLA 6.** *Tabla de contingencia respuestas sobre delito como problema personal y/o social (%)*

	Locus externo	Locus interno	Locus dual
Junio 2004	22,6	5,9	5,2
Marzo 2008	17,1	4,9	3
Diciembre 2012	1,2	0,5	0,1

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los barómetros del CIS de junio de 2004, de marzo de 2008 y de diciembre de 2012.

**GRÁFICO 7.** Dimensiones del concepto de problematización del delito

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

dimensiones: referente, respuesta, magnitud y locus de proyección (gráfico 7). Tal propuesta significaría definir la *problematización del delito*, extraída de los barómetros del CIS, como una sensación de nerviosismo o preocupación provocada por el delito en abstracto o por delitos particulares, pudiéndose expresar de manera cognitiva, con mayor o menor intensidad, y proyectándose hacia lo personal, lo social o ambos.

Por todo ello, aunque las preguntas de los barómetros del CIS no se parezcan a las habitualmente utilizadas en las encuestas de victimización más contrastadas o aquellas creadas *ad hoc* para solucionar algunos problemas de operacionalización del concepto que aún quedan por resolver (Machado y Manita, 2009), sí recogen gran parte de las consideraciones de la literatura especializada. La *problematización del delito* propuesta en este artículo se basa en los mismos cimientos con-

ceptuales que la del miedo al delito. Como se ha expuesto, incluye medidas de sus dos referentes —el delito en abstracto (la inseguridad ciudadana) y tres delitos específicos (las drogas, el terrorismo de ETA y la violencia contra la mujer)—; se refiere a uno de los tres tipos de respuestas que la literatura identifica en el concepto —la cognitiva—, y tiene en cuenta tres medidas de una de las dos dimensiones de la magnitud del miedo consideradas más importantes: la intensidad. Se puede así argumentar que la *problematización del delito*, si no es *miedo al delito per se*, sí es un buen indicador de dicho concepto. Incluye, además, medidas para la dimensión del miedo denominada *locus de proyección* que permiten explorar las diferencias entre el miedo al delito proyectado hacia la persona, el proyectado hacia lo social y el proyectado hacia ambos locus. Teniendo en cuenta lo que Vozmediano *et al.* (2008: 8) argumentan tras repasar la literatura especializada entre 2004 y 2006 y

encontrar que los estudios más comunes aún utilizan medidas de un solo ítem, es posible afirmar que la problematización del delito es un indicador más multidimensional de miedo al delito que muchos de los que todavía se utilizan en investigación criminológica.

## CONCLUSIÓN

La conceptualización y la medida del miedo al delito son temas candentes entre la comunidad científica. Desde un punto de vista empírico, en España se ha contribuido poco a este diálogo. Salvo excepciones, disponemos de escasos datos de encuestas de victimización que sean más o menos actuales y comparables en el tiempo. Ante esta situación, el artículo propone el uso del concepto *problematización del delito* que emerge de los barómetros del CIS como indicador del miedo al delito. Tras los análisis de validez y fiabilidad realizados, este concepto queda constituido por dos dimensiones, la problematización personal y la social, ambas en base a cuatro preocupaciones: tres preocupaciones concretas (drogas, terrorismo de ETA y violencia contra la mujer) y una considerada en abstracto (inseguridad ciudadana).

En este trabajo se defiende que usar la problematización del delito como medida de miedo al delito es conceptualmente pertinente porque los barómetros: 1) capturan la esencia del concepto de miedo al delito, 2) no miden las respuestas emotivas y actitudinales pero sí la respuesta más cognitiva, 3) tratan los referentes abstracto y específico del miedo y 4) a pesar de no medir la frecuencia, miden la magnitud del miedo al delito a través de tres medidas de intensidad —agregada, preferente y relativa—. Pero, además, las medidas del CIS presentan dos ventajas adicionales que las hace más útiles que las de las encuestas de victimización: 5) permiten explorar lo que se ha denominado *locus de proyección* del miedo, es decir, el espacio —interno (perso-

nal), externo (social) o dual (ambos)— hacia el que se proyecta el temor que produce el delito y 6) permiten contextualizar el miedo al delito dentro de otras preocupaciones personales y de España, es decir, permite conocer el peso del miedo al delito con respecto a otros miedos y ansiedades de la población española.

Esta pertinencia teórica viene acompañada además de una importante utilidad práctica y de actualidad. Gracias al desarrollo del concepto de problematización del delito apreciamos cuestiones muy interesantes del miedo al delito desconocidas en España por falta de datos. Concretamente, que hay más población preocupada por el delito a nivel social que a nivel personal y que la crisis económica ha provocado que la preocupación por el delito disminuya considerablemente.

No obstante, en los datos de los barómetros este trasvase de preocupaciones puede ser debido, como apuntan Hollway y Jefferson (1997), a que cuando las cuestiones económicas tanto a nivel social como personal van razonablemente bien en una sociedad, las personas tienden a tornar sus preocupaciones hacia lo delictivo. También debe considerarse que a las personas encuestadas por el CIS se les pregunta por tres problemas principales, de manera que cuando unos se hacen importantes los que dejan de tener importancia desaparecen de la lista. El limitado número de posibles respuestas espontáneas que se pide en la encuesta —tres— podría sobreestimar el trasvase de preocupaciones sobre el que se basa dicha hipótesis. Despejar estas dudas metodológicas requiere de estudios de comparación más pormenorizados entre problemas delictivos, sociales, económicos, etc. que han de ser pospuestos para próximas investigaciones.

Una cuestión de fondo en el análisis planteado tiene que ver con el orden de las preguntas. Habría que reflexionar hasta qué punto la pregunta que hace el CIS de los problemas del país previa a los personales puede influir en las respuestas de los en-



cuestados. Si pensamos que es así, esta sería otra de las limitaciones del estudio presentado. En cualquier caso, es justo hacerla notar aquí y proponerla para exploraciones posteriores.

Igualmente, cabría para el futuro plantear análisis de la validez externa del concepto de problematización del delito. De acuerdo con Doran y Burgess (2012: 25-50), existen tres tipos principales de explicaciones del miedo al delito: las *teorías sociales*, de carácter macro-sociológico, las *teorías ambientales*, que relacionan el miedo al delito con características del espacio social, y las *teorías demográficas*, que consideran que el miedo al delito se ve afectado por características de las personas, como son su victimización directa o indirecta (Clark, 2003; Crank *et al.*, 2003; Hanson *et al.*, 2000; Killias y Clerici, 2000; Mesch, 2000; Romer *et al.*, 2003; Weitzer y Kubrin, 2004) y sus niveles de vulnerabilidad (Skogan y Maxfield, 1981), asociados a variables como la edad, la etnia, el género, la discapacidad, etc. Pues bien, los barómetros del CIS suelen incluir variables asociadas sobre todo con este tercer paradigma, por lo que sería interesante evaluar cómo se comportan las medidas de miedo al delito en función de las mencionadas variables.

En esta misma dirección, los barómetros permitirían estudiar si la vulnerabilidad de la que hablan Skogan y Maxfield (1981) tiene impacto sobre el locus de proyección del miedo al delito. Sería interesante comprobar, por ejemplo, si las personas que se sienten más vulnerables tienden a proyectar con más asiduidad su preocupación por el delito hacia sí mismas o hacia la sociedad, lo que contribuiría muy significativamente a los estudios del locus de proyección (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992; Warr y Ellison, 2000).

Por último, sería interesante plantear análisis sobre la diferencia entre los tres niveles de intensidad preferente del miedo al delito,

es decir, la problematización del delito en primer, segundo y/o tercer lugar. Todos estos análisis se beneficiarían además de la agrupación de estas medidas en un índice sintético que facilitase, en una sola medida, conocer los niveles de miedo al delito que existen en nuestro país y de forma contextualizada, es decir, comparada con las demás preocupaciones de la ciudadanía.

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# Measuring Fear of Crime by the Use of the CIS Barometers

*La medición del miedo al delito a través de los barómetros del CIS*

**Manuel Caro Cabrera and Luis Navarro Ardoy**

## Key words

- Crime
- Public Opinion
- Social Perception
- Social Problems
- Citizen Security

## Palabras clave

- Delincuencia
- Opinión pública
- Percepción social
- Problemas sociales
- Seguridad ciudadana

## Abstract

This paper explores whether the concern shown by the Spanish population about crime as being a problem for the country as a whole and a personal problem in the CIS barometers is a good measurement of the concept of fear of crime. Firstly, the dimensions of fear of crime are shown, and the conceptual and empirical basis for the concern that we have called the problematisation of crime is presented. Secondly, the theoretical relevance of adopting this concept as an indicator of fear of crime is evaluated. Thirdly, empirical data are provided to demonstrate its usefulness. The analysis concludes that the problematisation of crime, constructed on the basis of the barometers of the CIS, is a good measurement of fear of crime, in addition to having some advantages over those used by victimisation surveys.

## Resumen

En este trabajo se explora si la preocupación por el delito que manifiesta la población española como problema del país y personal en los barómetros del CIS es una buena medida del concepto de miedo al delito. Primero, se muestran las dimensiones del miedo al delito y se presentan las bases conceptuales y empíricas de la preocupación que denominamos problematización del delito. Segundo, se evalúa la pertinencia teórica de adoptar dicho concepto como indicador de miedo al delito. Tercero, se presentan datos que demuestran su utilidad empírica. El análisis concluye que la problematización del delito, construida a partir de los barómetros del CIS, es una buena medida de miedo al delito que además incluye ventajas frente a las utilizadas por las encuestas de victimización.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The concept of fear of crime —and its counterpart citizen insecurity— has been studied in Spain using two different data sources. These include, on the one hand, the victimisation surveys conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) between 1978 and 2007. They were specific periodic studies lacking regularity and comparability (García España *et al.*, 2010: 1), as they were conducted through the use of different techniques and measurements, and in different geographical areas (Madrid, Catalonia, Spain, etc.). The Crime Observatory of Andalusia (ODA) has also conducted this type of survey in Andalusian capitals (García España *et al.*, 2007) and throughout Spain (Díez Ripollés and García España, 2009). These sources also include, on the other hand, the CIS barometers<sup>2</sup> that contained one question concerning the country's three main problems and, since October 1997, another question concerning the three main personal problems experienced. The analysis of the answers to these questions has led to measuring the level of the Spanish public's concern about crime (Soto, 2005; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007). When compared with the victimisation surveys, the main advantage of the barometers is its regularity and availability, something that is not to be taken lightly considering the scarcity and opacity of criminological data in Spain (Díez Ripollés and Giménez-Salinas, 2010).

This paper proposes the relevance of using these barometers to measure the fear of

crime in Spain. In addition to the regularity, availability and timeliness of the data indicated above, the reasons for this choice are: that these barometers include several theoretical considerations on the concept of the fear of crime described in the literature; that they provide a twofold measure of the fear of crime in terms of a personal dimension and a social dimension; and that, unlike traditional victimisation surveys, the barometers make it possible to measure three dimensions of the magnitude of fear: aggregate, preference-based and relative intensity.

The paper is structured into three parts. Firstly, the necessary methodological considerations of the data used are discussed. Secondly, the theoretical dimensions of the concept of fear of crime are analysed. And thirdly, an explanation is provided of the reasons which suggest that problematising crime is both empirically useful and a good measure of the concept of fear of crime.

## METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section discusses the methodological aspects that sustain the scientific arguments used in this paper. It deals with aspects such as the validity and reliability of the *problematisation of crime*, which inform the theoretical constructs to be developed further in subsequent sections.

Barometers are monthly surveys. From October 1997, they included two open-ended questions on Spain's three main problems and the three main personal problems. From 1997 until the present, a variable percentage of the Spanish population have repeatedly answered these questions with "citizen insecurity", "drugs", "violence against women", "ETA terrorism", "international terrorism", "corruption and fraud" and/or "tax fraud". Considering these issues as being a social and/or personal problem is called *problematising crime*. Its validity and reliability as a concept are presented on

<sup>1</sup> This study has been made possible partly thanks to the funding given by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness to the research project entitled 'Social quality in Europe. Design and construction of composite indices for measuring and monitoring the quality of European societies', PAI Group: SEJ029, a non-oriented Fundamental Research Project in the 2012 open call for submissions; and also by the PAI Group SEJ 474 of sociological analysis of social trends.

<sup>2</sup> "Barometers" will hereafter be understood to refer to those carried out by the CIS.

page 30, by the use of factor analysis of correlations and Cronbach's alphas, separately and together, of two CIS time series: the two open-ended questions about the main personal problems and the country's main problems from January 2001 — the date when the barometers were conducted every month, except in August — to November 2015 — the last barometer available when this paper was written.

These series are also used on page 32 to study two of the procedures used to measure what we call the magnitude of problematising crime: aggregate and relative intensities. These concepts are measured respectively by the percentages of the population concerned about crime presented by the CIS, and a specifically-designed indicator of relative intensity (RI), which measures the distance between concern for crime and the issue of most concern to the public. This makes it possible to know the volume of the population that problematises crime, together with the percentage that does so in relation to other questions being problematised, such as unemployment, politics, etc.

At the end of the page 32 the third type of measurement of the magnitude of problematising crime: preference-based intensity is examined. Three barometers were selected and analyzed as typical cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). The first one, from June 2004, represented the 2001-2008 period, when the percentage of people concerned about crime increased compared with the most important issue for the public. The second one, from March 2008, covered the 2008-2009 period, when this trend reversed. The third one, from December 2012, belongs to the period 2010-2015, when the problematisation of crime was at one of its lowest levels in the CIS series. Based on these three barometers, is examined on p. 37 another dimension of the fear of crime: what we call locus of projection. This idea leads to exploring the direction towards which the public's concern for crime is projected towards:

namely, towards themselves, towards others or in both directions.

## THE CONCEPT OF FEAR OF CRIME

The literature on fear of crime has a long tradition in criminology and has become almost a sub-discipline (Hale, 1996)<sup>3</sup>. The concept of the fear of crime was problematic from the onset, as several authors noted in the 1990s (Hollway and Jefferson, 1997; Hough, 1995; Sparks, 1992). The most important problem was its poor semantic clarity and the low level of methodological consensus on how to measure it (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 9-10). This situation has been partly caused by the fact that the most frequently quoted definition of the concept is that by Ferraro, who argued that fear of crime is an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime (Ferraro, 1995: 8). This definition made it difficult to operationalise the concept, which is an umbrella term that means something along the lines of “a range of anxieties and worries about crime” (Hough, 1995: 1), including fear, anxiety and lack of confidence (Walklate, 1998).

Above and beyond the lack of conceptual clarity, different dimensions have been identified that make fear of crime an increasingly complex notion. Fishman and Mesch (1996) acknowledged that it refers to several types: “fear of family victimisation, fear of personal victimisation, fear of violent crime and fear of “white collar crime” “(in Morquecho and Vizcarra, 2008: 6). Another group of authors have mentioned different kinds of fear of crime based on the anxieties noted by Ferraro: cognitive (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012; Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987), which includes the personal assessment of

<sup>3</sup> A review of the vast literature on fear of crime can be found in Doran and Burgess (2012).

the actual risk of becoming victim of a crime (Ferraro, 1995; Hough, 1995; Hale, 1996); affective, when referring exclusively to the feeling of fear (Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987); and behavioural (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012; Madriz, 1997), as it can generate protective behaviour (Ruiz, 2007). This was the approach adopted by the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS), possibly the most far-reaching and reputed victimisation survey. The CIS has followed this model repeatedly for criminological studies. The last one of these was the Crime and Victimisation Survey in the Region of Madrid 2007 (Study 2,702) (*Delincuencia y victimización en la Comunidad de Madrid*).

A third group of authors conceptualised fear of crime by anchoring it in specific crimes of varying gravity (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008) to take into account the seriousness of the feared offence (Skogan, 1984). Farrall *et al.* (2009) called the fear of these specific types of crimes *experiential fear* (cited in Hirtenlehner and Farrall 2013: 6). Others referred to an abstract and generic level of fear, likening it to an indefinite sense of unease about crime that some of the literature has come to associate even with the “sense of ontological insecurity” spoken of by Giddens” (Fernández and Grijalva, 2012: 12). Farrall *et al.* (2009) coined the concept of *expressive fear* to refer to the fear of an abstract notion of crime (cited in Hirtenlehner and Farrall 2013: 6). In short, it has been considered that the measurement of the fear of crime should include, in addition to a general and indeterminate type, a specific one related to specific offences.

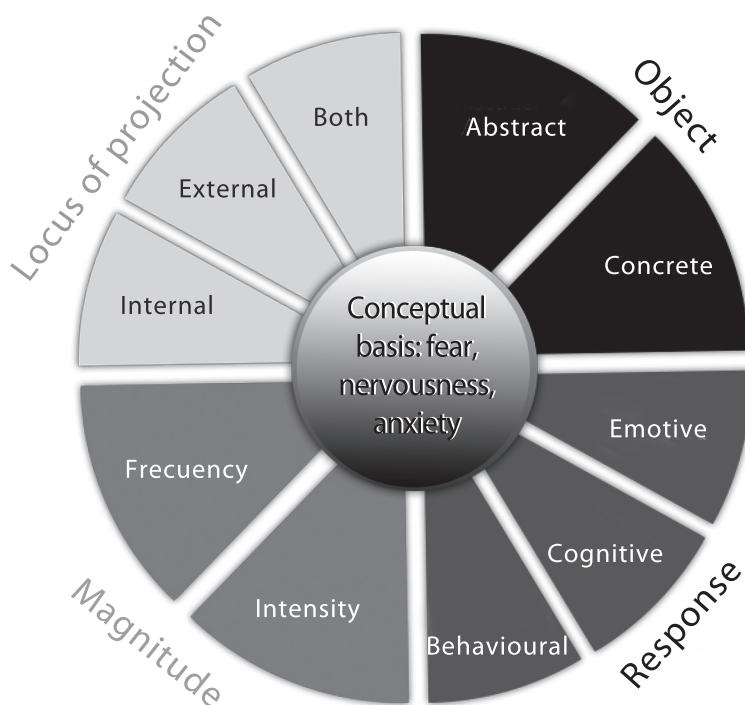
Although measurements of the fear of crime based on a single item are still used (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008), in addition to its conceptual complexity, this term is accompanied by an increasingly multidimensional operationalisation. Ferraro (1995) believed that a good measurement should include the emotional state of fear and insecurity, make explicit reference to specific crimes and real-

istic —not hypothetical— situations and contain a wide range of offences (cited in Medina 2003: 5). Other authors argued that one of the major problems of the classic measurements of fear of crime is that they focus solely on how much fear is felt, that is, on its intensity (Hough, 2004). These measurements overestimate fear, since surveys could be answered on the basis of “attitudes and concerns about social change and crime and not based on concrete experiences” (Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7.). To avoid this overestimation, not only should the intensity of the emotion be considered, but also the frequency with which it is felt, for example, through a scale with three possible answers as used in the ICVS: usually, sometimes, never (Farrall, 2004; Farrall *et al.*, 2009; Jackson, 2004; Vozmediano and San Juan, 2006).

On the basis of these recommendations, Vozmediano *et al.* (2008) proposed to measure the fear of crime by the use of three items. They captured the frequency of episodes of fear of various crimes in the home, on the street, and on the Internet. Machado and Manita (2009) used an indicator of fear of crime that consisted of up to eight dimensions: perception of how crime rates have varied in recent years, the level of fear of crime in general, the most feared crimes, location of fear in time and space, description of the self-protection behaviour due to fear, description of the most feared crime-related situation, views on the causes of crime and the degree of tolerance of certain crimes. One of the most recent and perhaps more sophisticated measurements of fear of crime was that proposed by Fernández and Grijalva (2012), who suggested an index composed of a measurement of fear of crime in the abstract, three measurements of the cognitive dimension of fear, and two measurements of behavioural responses to fear.

A final group of authors have explored the fact that fear can be *altruistic* if people feel fear for others, usually those closest to them (Madriz, 1997; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000).



**CHART 1.** *Dimensions of the concept of fear of crime*

Source: Authors' figure.

Based on qualitative data, Snedker (2006) suggested that fear projected onto other people does not have to be always altruistic. He introduced the concept of *vicarious fear* to refer to fear that has positive consequences for those who feel it, whereas *altruistic fear* is that felt for someone else with some personal cost involved, as it requires actions involving uncompensated efforts. Therefore, it can be considered that fear of crime has a *locus of projection*<sup>4</sup>, that is, a space to which it is directed. People have an *internal locus of projection* when they feel fear of crime for

themselves —if they live in a dangerous neighbourhood, feel very vulnerable to danger, etc.—, but not for others. People have an *external locus of projection* when they fear for others and not for themselves if, for example, they live in an area with low crime rates or have taken action against it. A *dual locus of projection* is said to occur when people feel fear of crime in both spaces.

Therefore, although the basis of the concept of fear of crime remains the same —a certain feeling of insecurity, anxiety, worry and distress about crime—, the concept has been shaped in multiple interrelated dimensions which are also considered analytically distinct and therefore receive specific attention in the way they are operationalised. Depending on the type of response that fear of crime results in, the concept has an emotional dimension, a cognitive dimension and lastly, a behavioural dimension; depending

<sup>4</sup> This concept is inspired by the concept of *locus of control*, which refers to the internal or external space towards which the individual projects control of what happens to him/her. People who have an *internal locus of control* understand that their life is controlled by them, while those who have an *external locus of control* believe that their life is driven by events beyond their control (Rotter, 1966).

on the object of fear, the concept has a general dimension —fear of crime in the abstract— and a specific dimension —fear of specific crimes with different levels of seriousness—; depending on the magnitude, that is, on whether the focus is placed either on intensity or on the frequency with which fear is felt, fear of crime has aspects of intensity and frequency; and depending on how fear is projected inwards, towards acquaintances or in both directions, fear has an internal, external and dual locus of projection (see Chart 1).

In sum fear of crime could be defined as a feeling of anxiety or worry caused by crime in the abstract, or by specific crimes, which can be expressed in an emotional, cognitive and / or behavioural manner, with greater or lesser intensity and with more or less frequency, and may be projected towards the individual or towards people close to them (or in both directions).

## THE CONCEPT OF PROBLEMATISATION OF CRIME ACCORDING TO CIS BAROMETERS

The higher the number of dimensions included in any measurement of fear of crime, the greater its validity. Thus, the *problematization of crime* by the use of the barometers is a better indicator of *fear of crime* to the extent that it can measure a greater number of dimensions. And although this form of measurement differs from that used in victimisation surveys, they are the most commonly used measuring instruments for the study of this problem.

This section assesses the theoretical validity of the measurement of fear of crime through the barometers. The aim is to answer the question of whether the *problematization of crime* measured by the barometers is in fact synonymous with what is known in the international criminological literature as *fear of crime*, or is at least a concept contained

within it. The similarities between some of the dimensions of both concepts will be analysed, followed by a discussion of the new theoretical, methodological and empirical developments involved in using these measurements instead of those from victimisation surveys.

With respect to what is meant by the concept of the *problematization of crime*, it is understood that the measurements used by the CIS refer to anxiety and concern about crime, that is, the conceptual seed for *fear of crime* according to the conceptualisation made by Ferraro (1995). This happens when the respondent answers “drugs”, “citizen insecurity”, “violence against women”, “ETA terrorism”, “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” or “tax fraud” to the questions “what is, in your view, the main problem that currently exists in Spain? And the second? And the third?” Or “what is the problem that personally affects you most? And the second? And the third?”

Being worried about something is neither an emotion nor a type of behaviour in itself; rather it is a sign of reflection about crime that somewhat makes the individual involved anxious. The measurement of *problematizing crime* fits perfectly among the cognitive reactions mentioned in the literature and referred to above. Therefore, the measurement through the barometers covers one of the three types of reactions of which this concept is comprised.

With respect to the object of fear, it can be argued that some of who were unsettled by crime spoke of it in abstract terms, and mentioned their concern about what the CIS has codified as “citizen insecurity”. According to the CIS, this category includes spontaneous responses such as “crime, citizen insecurity, street crime, street violence, insecurity, organised crime, murder, robbery, graffiti, vandalism, gang crime, hooliganism and violence.” However, another part of the survey population referred to specific crimes

such as “drugs,” “violence against women”, “ETA terrorism”, “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” and “tax fraud.” This fact means that the CIS measurement can include both objects of fear: the abstract, understood as “citizen insecurity”, and the concrete, referred to specific crimes such as those mentioned above.

**Validity of the concept of problematisation of crime**

Although the objective of this paper is not to develop a composite index of problematisa-

tion of crime, its purpose is to test the empirical basis for the theoretical construction of the concept in both its personal and social dimensions. To do so, some of the analysis techniques recommended by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission will be used (OECD and JRC, 2008).

By analysing the correlations (Table 1) between different answers to personal problems and the country’s problems, it is possible to check whether they can be considered measurements of personal and social problematisation. In both cases, the analysis shows that

**TABLE 1.** Correlations between crime-related problems on a personal and on a country basis

		Correlations between crime-related personal problems						
		Drugs	Citizens' insecurity	ETA Terrorism	Violence against women	Corruption and fraud	International terrorism	Tax fraud
Correlations between Spain's crime-related problems	Drugs	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.641**	0.830**	0.566**	-0.443**	0.360**	0.092
			0	0	0	0	0.006	0.656
	Citizens' insecurity	0.664**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.542**	0.674**	-0.703**	0.064	-0.046
		0		0	0	0	0.637	0.804
	ETA Terrorism	0.877**	0.707**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	0.655**	-0.470**	0.736**	0.069
		0	0		0	0	0	0.732
	Violence against women	0.426**	0.584**	0.638**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.520**	0.315*	0.466*
		0	0	0		0	0.017	0.011
	Corruption and fraud	-0.490**	-0.708**	-0.633**	-0.511**	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.069	-0.247
		0	0	0	0		0.609	0.18
	International terrorism	0.002	-0.283*	0.152	0.182	0.24	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N	-0.318
		0.987	0.028	0.247	0.164	0.065		0.184
	Tax fraud	0.132	-0.005	-0.007	0.061	-0.333	-0.211	N = Pearson corr. sig. level N
		0.471	0.977	0.97	0.736	0.058	0.469	
		32	33	33	33	33	14	

\*\* The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral)

\* The correlation is significant at level 0.05 (bilateral)

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

neither “corruption and fraud” nor “international terrorism” nor “fiscal fraud” should be part of the theoretical construct we have called *problematization of crime* at a social level and a personal level. The direction of the sign (positive or negative) and the levels of significance between each of the variables lead to the conclusion that the construct would be more robust when considering “drugs”, “citizen insecurity”, “ETA terrorism” and “violence against women.”

In a second analysis that supports the above decision, the factorial models of personal and social problematization were compared with seven and four variables (Table 2). Again, in both cases, the 4-variable models are better than the 7-variable models, both regarding commonalities, KMO measures, Bartlett’s sphericity test and the percentage of explained variance. In addition, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for four variables

were higher than those for seven, which shows the improvement of the models, as they gain in reliability by leaving out “international terrorism”, “corruption and fraud” and “tax fraud”.

The next step was to check that the personal and social problematization of crime can be considered to be part of the same problematization concept. This is proven by the correlations, factorial and Cronbach’s alpha analyses shown in Table 3.

Based on the analyses presented, it can be said that the concept of the problematization of crime should be considered to consist of a social and a personal dimension, each of which incorporates variables of problematization of drugs, citizen insecurity, ETA terrorism and violence against women. This construct of problematization of crime is discussed below.

**TABLE 2.** *Factorial models of personal and social problematization of crime*

	Country's problems		Personal problems	
	Model 7 var.	Model 4 var.	Model 7 var.	Model 4 var.
<b>Commonalities</b>				
Drugs	0.665	0.769	0.351	0.789
Citizens' insecurity	0.029	0.737	0.001	0.657
ETA Terrorism	0.665	0.891	0.126	0.779
Violence against women	0.287	0.564	0.798	0.686
Corruption and fraud	0.49		0.351	
International terrorism	0.04		0.565	
Tax fraud	0.115		0.54	
<b>Explained Variance</b>				
% Explained Variance	32.751	74.003	39.002	72.78
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement sample adequacy</b>				
KMO test	0.515	0.673	0.427	0.653
<b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>				
Approx. Chi-squared	17.893	464.789	30.644	366.367
Degrees of freedom	21	6	21	6
Nivel signific.	0.656	0	0.08	0
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>				
Alpha	0.051	0.656	0.073	0.68

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**TABLE 3.** Analysis of the validity of the problematisation of crime as a social and personal problem

		Country's problems			
		Drugs	Citizens' insecurity	ETA Terrorism	Violence against women
<b>Drugs</b>	N = Pearson	0.976**	0.670**	0.866**	0.411**
	corr. sig. level	0	0	0	0
	N	156	157	157	157
<b>Citizens' insecurity</b>	N = Pearson	0.631**	0.974**	0.723**	0.584**
	corr. sig. level	0	0	0	0
	N	161	162	162	162
<b>ETA Terrorism</b>	N = Pearson	0.842**	0.534**	0.947**	0.587**
	corr. sig. level	0	0	0	0
	N	156	157	157	157
<b>Violence against women</b>	N = Pearson	0.571**	0.665**	0.720**	0.878**
	corr. sig. level	0	0	0	0
	N	159	160	160	160

Personal and country problems	
<b>Commonalities</b>	
Drugs (Country)	0.770
Citizens' insecurity (Country)	0.679
ETA Terrorism (Country)	0.889
Violence against women (Country)	0.497
Drugs (Personal)	0.778
Citizens' insecurity (Personal)	0.674
ETA Terrorism (Personal)	0.761
Violence against women (Personal)	0.665
<b>Explained Variance</b>	
%	71.415
KMO test	0.78
<b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>	
Approx. Chi-squared	1,923.143
Degrees of freedom	28
Nivel signific.	0.000
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	
Alpha	0.787

\*\* The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**The magnitude of fear of crime in the CIS barometers: aggregate, preference-based, and relative intensity**

As the CIS barometers ask about whether or not there is concern about crime, the magnitude of fear cannot be measured by its frequency, but its intensity can be measured in three different ways. The most common measurements of social and personal problems (see, for example, Soto, 2005; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007) are structured as a percentage of the population who understand crime in the abstract or certain crimes as problems, so the higher the percentage of the population that considers crime to be a worrying, the more intense the problematisation of crime. This way of measuring intensity we will call *aggregate intensity*, since it is based on the number of respondents who identified the same phenomenon as a problem without paying attention to its position in the ranking.

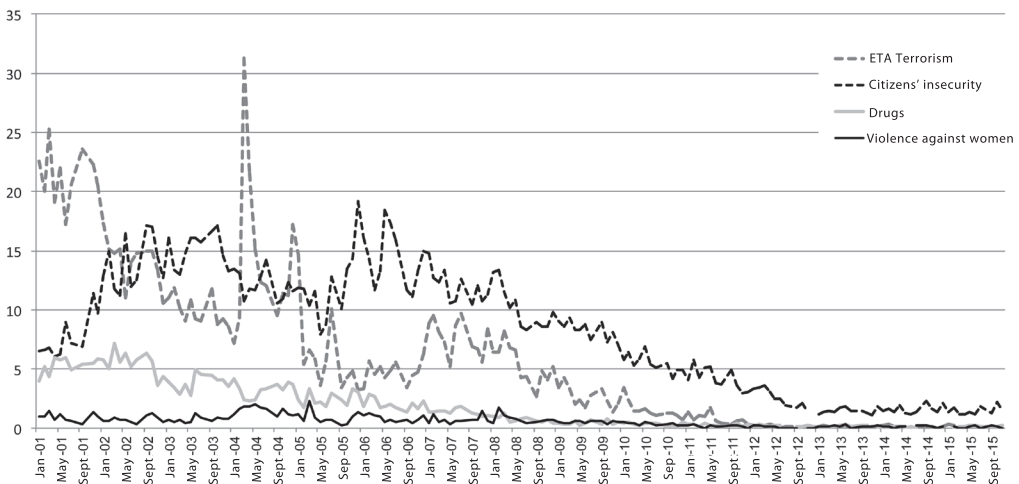
As shown in Figure 2, from the four crime-related personal problems that were part of the concept of the problematisation of crime, the abstract object of fear concerning citizen insecurity was of the greatest concern to the

Spanish population, except between 2001 and 2002 and during 2004, periods when ETA terrorism became the main personal concern.

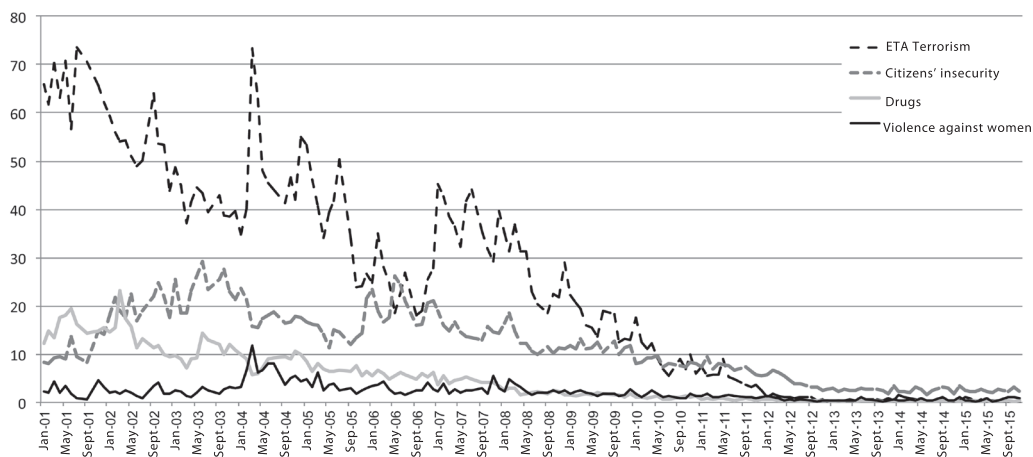
Something similar, although with some qualifications, can be seen among the crimes considered as a social problem (see Figure 3). A downward trend can also be identified of specific crimes such as ETA terrorism, violence against women and even citizen insecurity. Even though the latter is the indicator with the greatest stability over in time, it also decreased from its highest levels in 2003 and 2006, to its lowest level in 2015. Unlike personal problems, the most important crime-related concern throughout the entire period was not fear of crime in the abstract, but ETA terrorism, except in mid-2006 and since 2011, when citizen insecurity surpasses it until the end of the series.

In conclusion, while crime in the abstract seems to be the biggest crime-related problem of the Spanish population on a personal level, it is a specific crime (ETA terrorism) that generated the most concern at a social level, at least until the announcement of the latest ceasefire and the subsequent cessation of

**FIGURE 2.** *Aggregate intensity of the problematisation of crime at a personal level, 2001-2015*



Source: Authors' figure based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**FIGURE 3.** *Aggregate intensity of the problematisation of crime at country level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculation from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

armed activities announced by the terrorist group in October 2011.

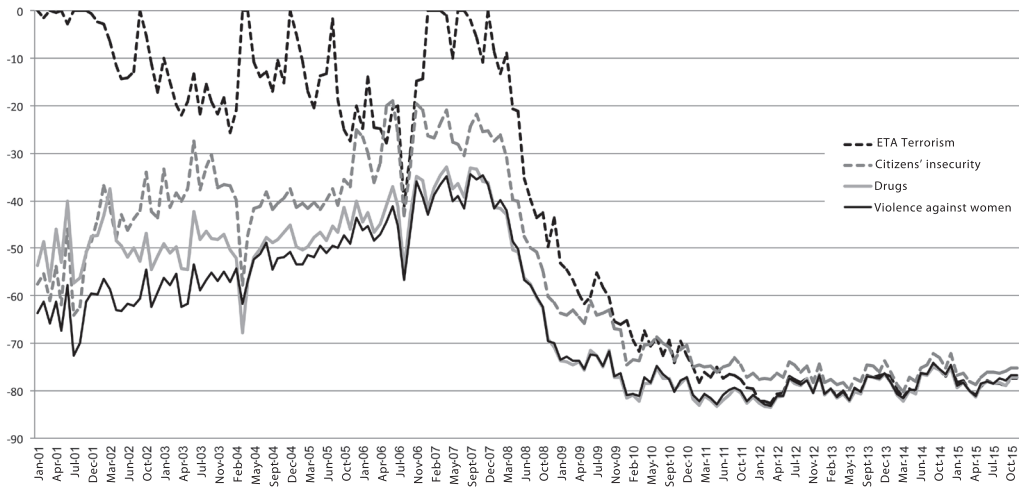
By comparing the percentages of citizens who are concerned about crime with their concern about other problems, a relative way of measuring the intensity of the problematisation of crime is used that is called *relative intensity*. Although it could be measured by merely comparing the aggregate intensities of crimes with other non-crime related problems, the most commonly used measure is a ranking of concerns (Serrano and Vázquez, 2007). This indicator suffers from a fundamental problem: it transforms a numerical measurement, (aggregate intensity) into an ordinal measurement. This is problematic because it only allows for the comparison of positions among which there may not be differences of the same magnitude (Pozo Cuevas *et al.* 2013: 61). A more recommendable indicator could be the difference between the aggregate intensity of the problem in question, and that of the phenomenon with the highest aggregate intensity at the time of the measurement. This measurement of relative intensity ( $RI_x$ ) represents the gap between the aggregate intensity of the problem to be

studied ( $AI_x$ ) and the aggregate intensity of that which generates the most concern among citizens at the time of the measurement ( $AI_1$ ).

$$RI_x = AI_x - AI_1$$

This measurement would range between 0 and -100 percentage points. A relative intensity of 0 would mean that it was the problem of most concern to citizens; a relative intensity of -100 would mean that no one considered the phenomenon under study to be a problem, while the entire population interviewed chose another phenomenon as a problem (always the same). Between these two points, the lower the figure of relative intensity, the greater the distance separating the aggregate intensities of the problem under study and of the greatest concern to citizens. The negative sign facilitates graphic interpretation: an index with a positive sign generates line graphs in which the least important problems would be placed above the most important problems, which would be counter-intuitive.

Figure 4 shows the relative intensity indicators of crime-related phenomena at a so-

**FIGURE 4.** *Relative intensity of crime-related problems at a social level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

cial level. Two distinct periods can be seen: 2001-2007 (a period of economic boom) and 2008-2015 (a period of economic crisis). In the first period, the RIs of all crime-related problems tended to increase, except ETA terrorism, which ranged from 0 to -41.2 over several years. In the second period (2008 and 2015), all crimes, including ETA terrorism, began to form a compact group of problems with RI values ranging between -40 to -85 percentage points. This means that, from 2009, between 60% and 85% of the population were less worried about crime than about the phenomena that they considered most problematic: basically, unemployment and economic problems.

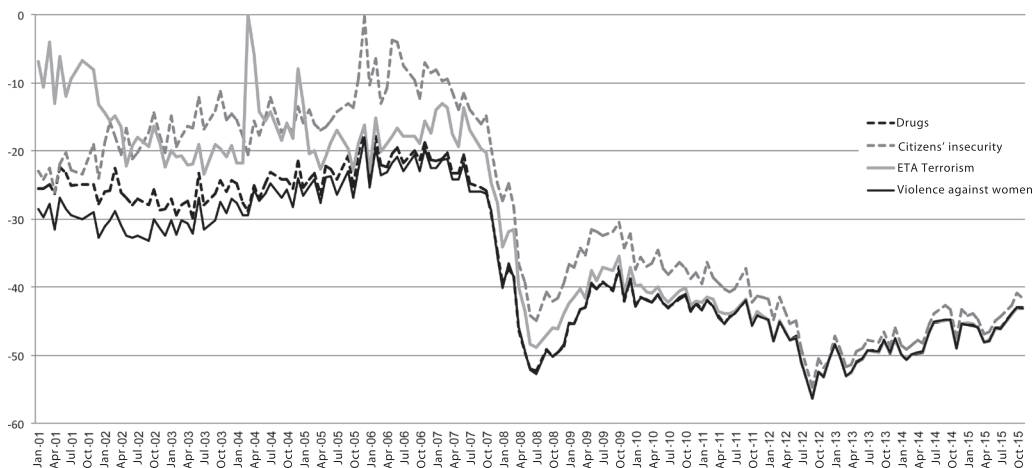
Something similar can be seen in the analysis of the problematisation of crime on a personal level (see Figure 5). Between 2001 and 2006 the distance between the main personal problem in the majority of the barometers and crime-related problems declined. From this date, crime-related problems began to have a downward trajectory that ended in 2008. Between 2008 and 2009, the differences between crime-related problems and the main problem (unemployment)

started to become smaller, and then increased again until 2012 and then decreased from 2012 to 2015. Between 2008 and 2015, the RI levels of crimes ranged between -30 and -55 percentage points.

Both the measurements of aggregate intensity and those of relative intensity suggest that the economic crisis caused the population to problematise crime less, as they were increasingly concerned about unemployment and economic problems, —the two main social and personal problems since 2007. This clearly separate types of problematisation might have to do with the fact that criminals became the scapegoat for intangible anxieties typical of risk and uncertainty societies (Doran and Burgess, 2012: 32; Ewald, 2000; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Lupton and Tulloch, 1999). Therefore, as the data of the CIS barometers shows, when the economy is performing reasonably well both at a social and personal level, people tend to turn their concerns towards crime, as suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2000: 260).

But the intensity of concern about crime is measured in a third way: it will be greater



**FIGURE 5.** *Relative Intensity of crime-related problems at personal level, 2001-2015*

Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

the higher the position crime has in the respondent's ranking when asked about their top three main personal problems and Spain's main problems. We call this type of measurement of intensity *preference-based intensity*. Table 4 shows the percentage of people worried about crime as first, second or third option at a social and personal level. It can be seen that there is no consistent pattern in the preference-based intensity of these problematisations. Based on the data from June 2004 on the total problematisation (the total sum of the percentages of the population worried about a crime-related problem), crime appeared to be the main personal and social concern. As noted, in March 2008 crime was the second option at a personal level, but the first at social level, and in December 2012 it was the second on a personal level and the third at social level.

Relative and preference-based intensities are contextualizing measures, and therefore show whether there are higher or lower levels of worry about crime than about other problems, something that is extremely useful mainly for two reasons. The first is that it avoids over-estimating fear of crime,

which is one of the major problems identified in measurements of the magnitude of fear of crime based solely on intensity (Hough, 2004; Vozmediano *et al.*, 2008: 7.). That is, preference-based and relative intensity measurements serve as a counterpoint to aggregate intensity, preventing its overestimation by placing it within the context of other issues problematised by the public. The second reason is that it makes it possible to explore the problematisation of crime in context: on the one hand, the so-called *society of fear* (Furedi, 1997; Glassner, 1999) and, on the other hand, that of *risk society* (Beck, 1992). Following a similar proposal made by Tudor (2008), Hollway and Jefferson (1997) explained that, although the specific way each person uses the discourse of fear of crime has to do with their own life experience, all those uses have something in common: they are carried out in a social context of fears, insecurities and lack of certainties. Therefore, decontextualising the problematisation of crime from other issues would be a huge misconception which, unlike the CIS measurements, victimisation surveys fall prone to.

**TABLE 4.** *Percentage of people who identify crime as the main problem at both personal and national level by order of preference*

		Personal			Country		
		1	2	3	1	2	3
Drugs	Jun.-04	1.41	0.97	1.73	3.27	3.43	2.42
	Mar.-08	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.73	1.09	1.09
	Dec.-12	0.04	0	0.04	0.04	0.16	0.32
Citizens' insecurity	Jun.-04	5.49	4.68	2.62	4.68	6.62	6.78
	Mar.-08	4.32	4.41	2.75	4.24	4.89	5.74
	Dec.-12	0.32	0.89	0.56	0.28	1.41	1.09
ETA Terrorism	Jun.-04	7.26	3.47	1.53	23.15	16.18	6.05
	Mar.-08	2.55	3.31	2.3	15.44	13.3	8.16
	Dec.-12	0	0	0	0.04	0.04	0.12
Violence against women	Jun.-04	0.73	0.52	0.4	2.22	2.82	2.94
	Mar.-08	7.64	8.53	5.86	0.81	1.74	1.29
	Dec.-12	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.36
Total	Jun.-04	14.89	9.64	6.29	33.32	29.04	18.19
	Mar.-08	14.96	16.69	11.36	21.22	21.02	16.29
	Dec.-12	0.36	0.89	0.6	0.36	1.65	1.9

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers, June 2004, March 2008 and December 2012.

To sum up, while the magnitude of the problematisation of crime cannot be measured through the CIS barometers by the frequency with which worry is felt, they provide three different measurements of the magnitude of this concern — preference-based, aggregate and relative intensity. These make it possible to conduct analyses that are impossible using victimisation survey data.

#### **Internal, external and dual locus of projection in the CIS Barometers**

As discussed above, the dimension of fear called the locus of projection can be explored through the barometers. This concept offers the possibility of understanding how the fear of crime can be felt not only for oneself but also for others. However, the concept of locus of projection emerging from the international literature is somewhat different from

that of the barometers. Whereas in the former the external locus is the fear felt for people close to them (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000), in the latter, this notion is understood more broadly: concern that is felt for the country in general.

In Spain, the social and personal dimensions of fear of crime have been explored on various occasions (Soto, 2005; Rechea *et al.*, 2004; Serrano and Vázquez, 2007) in a way that poses a fundamental problem. By using the concept of citizen insecurity to refer to both fear of crime in the abstract, and to the social concern about it, the idea that people can project their fear towards society has been mixed with the idea that this fear refers to crime in the abstract. In other words, they have confused the concept of object of fear with that of locus of projection.

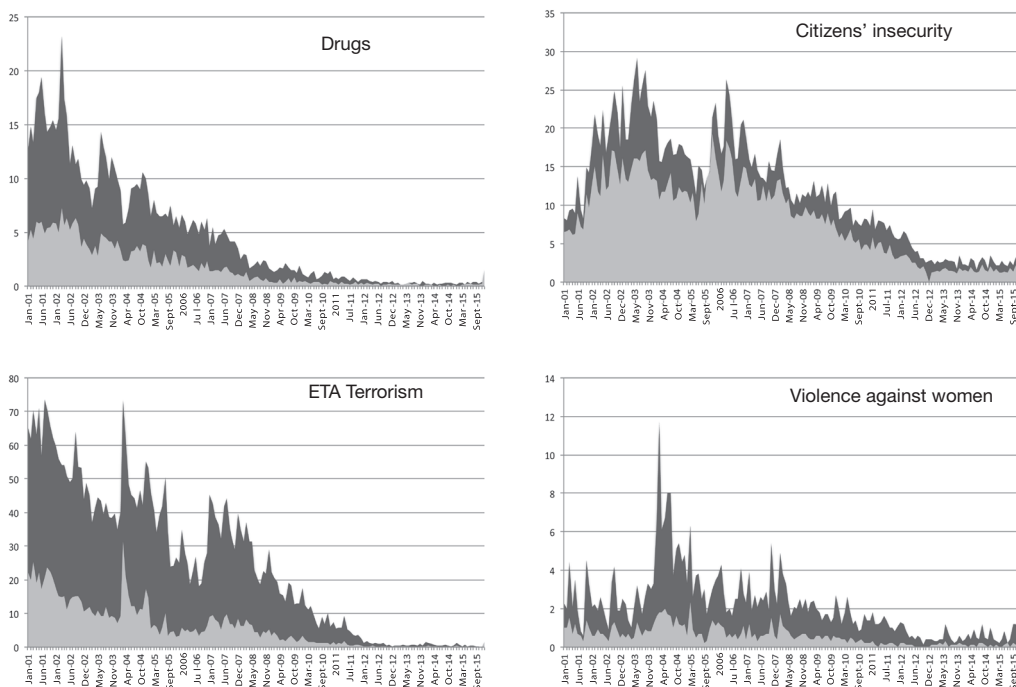
To avoid this problem, the dual personal-social aspects can be explored empirically in two ways. The first is to compare the time series of the same crime-related problematisation at a personal and social level. As evidenced in Figure 6, it needs to be particularly noted that the problematisation of crime as a social problem is greater than its consideration as a personal problem, regardless of the object of problematisation used.

The means of the differences between the aggregate intensity of social and personal problems from 2001 to 2015 range between 18.77 percentage points for ETA terrorism and 1.58 points for violence against women (Table 5). These data seem to suggest that when identifying crime as a problem, it seems easier to project it socially than personally. If, as noted by Serrano and Vázquez (2007: 25), the indicator of crime as a personal problem is based on an assessment of the probability

of being a victim of a crime, it is clear that the public understands that the probability of being personally a victim of crime is lower than that of it happening to other people.

The second way to explore the personal-social duality is to analyse whether people who consider crime a personal problem also consider it to be a social problem or whether, on the contrary, this dual effect occurs only at the aggregate level. This can be done by separating the responses of those who consider crime to be a problem at the social level from those who do not, and cross-referencing them with those who consider crime as a problem at the personal level and those who do not. Table 6 shows those who project their concern towards the three possible loci: internal, external and dual. In the three barometers used by way of example, in June 2004 —when the problematisation level was high—, in March 2008 —when it was

**FIGURE 6.** *Problematisation of crime at a personal and social level, 2001-2005*



Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**TABLE 5.** *Percentage difference of the social-personal problem, 2001-2015*

	Maximum difference	Minimum difference	Average difference (2001-2015)
Drugs	16.00	-0.10	3.07
Citizens' insecurity	13.00	-0.10	3.49
ETA Terrorism	52.90	0.00	18.77
Violence against women	9.90	0.00	1.58

Source: Authors' calculations from the CIS Barometers (2001-2015).

**TABLE 6.** *Contingency table of responses on crime as a personal and / or social problem %*

	External locus	Internal locus	Dual locus
June 2004	22.6	5.9	5.2
March 2008	17.1	4.9	3
December 2012	1.2	0.5	0.1

Source: Authors' calculations based on the CIS Barometers, June 2004, March 2008 and December 2012.

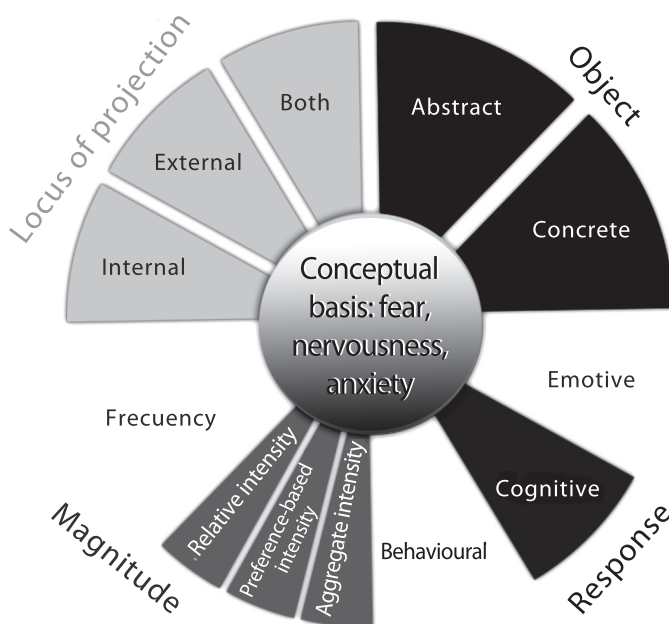
medium—, and in December 2012 — when it was low, the data confirmed that it was more common to project the concern for crime towards society than towards oneself in both directions.

### **Problematisation of crime as an indicator of fear of crime**

In conclusion, the concept of *problematisation of crime* is composed of four dimensions: object, response, magnitude, and locus of projection (see Figure 7). According to this, the problematisation of crime as extracted from the CIS barometers can be defined as a feeling of nervousness or worry caused by crime in the abstract or by specific crimes, susceptible of being expressed cognitively, with greater or lesser intensity, and projecting towards the personal, the social or both.

Although the questions of the CIS barometers do not seem to resemble those in the commonly used victimisation surveys or in those created ad hoc to solve problems concerning the operationalisation of the concept that remain unresolved (Machado and Manita, 2009), they do include many of the con-

siderations included in the literature. The *problematisation of crime* proposed in this paper is based on the same conceptual foundations as the fear of crime. As noted above, it includes measurements of the two objects — crime in the abstract (citizen insecurity) and three specific offences (drugs, ETA terrorism, and violence against women)—; it refers to one of three types of responses that the literature identifies with the concept — cognitive—, and takes into account three measurements of one of the two dimensions of the magnitude of fear considered to be the most important: its intensity. It can therefore be argued that the *problematisation of crime*, while it may not be *fear of crime* per se, is a good indicator of that concept. It also includes measurements for the dimension of fear called the locus of projection, which allow the exploration of the differences between the fear of crime projected toward the individual, fear of crime projected towards the social and fear of crime projected towards both loci. Given what Vozmediano *et al.* (2008: 8) argued after reviewing the literature between 2004 and 2006, when they found that the most common studies still use measurements of a single item, it can be

**FIGURE 7.** *Dimensions of the concept of problematisation of crime*

Source: Authors' figure.

stated that the problematisation of crime is a more multidimensional indicator of fear of crime than many of those still used in criminological research.

## CONCLUSION

The conceptualisation and measurement of fear of crime are topics of major interest to the scientific community. Spain has contributed little to this dialogue from an empirical point of view. With some exceptions, little data from victimisation surveys are available that are more or less current and comparable over time. This paper proposes the use of the concept of problematisation of crime emerging from the CIS barometers as an indicator of fear of crime. After a series of validity and reliability tests, this concept was found to be made up of two dimensions, personal and social problematisation, both based on four

concerns: three specific concerns (drugs, ETA terrorism, and violence against women) and one considered in the abstract (citizen insecurity).

It has been argued in this paper that using problematisation of crime as a measure of fear of crime is conceptually relevant because the barometers (1) capture the essence of the concept of fear of crime, (2) do not measure the emotional and attitudinal responses, but rather the cognitive response, (3) treat the abstract and specific objects of fear and (4) despite not measuring the frequency, they measure the magnitude of fear of crime through three measurements: aggregate, preference-based and relative intensity. In addition, the CIS measurements have two additional advantages that render them more useful than victimisation of crime surveys: (5) they allow the exploration of what has been called locus of projection of fear,

that is, the space — internal (personal), external (social) or dual— towards which fear of crime is projected and, (6) they make it possible to contextualise fear of crime within other personal and country-wide concerns, and therefore the weight of fear of crime with respect to other fears and anxieties of the Spanish population can be ascertained.

This theoretical relevance also has an important practical and topical usefulness. Thanks to the development of the concept of problematisation of crime, very interesting questions about fear of crime that have been unknown in Spain due to lack of data can be explored. Specifically, that there are more people concerned about crime at a social level than at personal level, and that the economic crisis has caused concern for crime to drop substantially.

However, as noted by Hollway and Jefferson (1997), in the data from the barometers this transfer of concerns may be due to the fact that, when the economy is performing reasonably well both at a social and a personal level, people tend to turn their concerns towards crime. It should also be noted that the respondents were asked about the three main problems, so when some of them became important, those which are no longer relevant disappeared from the list. The limited number of possible spontaneous responses requested in the survey —three— may overestimate the transfer of concerns on which this hypothesis is based. Assessing these methodological issues requires more detailed studies that compare crime-related, social and economic problems, among others, which will have to be addressed by research in the future.

A substantive issue raised in the analysis has to do with the order of the questions. It should be considered to what extent the question posed by the CIS about Spain's problems before asking about personal problems could influence responses. If this is thought to be so, this would be another of the

study's limitations. This is to be explored further.

A future analysis could also be made of the external validity of the concept of problematisation of crime. According to Doran and Burgess (2012: 25-50), there are three main types of explanations for the fear of crime: macro-sociological (*social*) theories, *environmental* theories (that relate the fear of crime to characteristics of social space), and *demographic* theories (that consider that fear of crime is affected by the characteristics of people, such as whether they have been victimised either directly or indirectly (Clark, 2003; Crank *et al.*, 2003; Hanson *et al.*, 2000; Killias and Clerici, 2000; Mesch, 2000; Romer *et al.*, 2003; and Weitzer and Kubrin, 2004) and their levels of vulnerability (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981), associated with variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc. The CIS barometers typically include variables associated with this third paradigm, and therefore it would be interesting to assess how measures of fear of crime behave according to these variables.

In the same vein, the barometers allow the study of whether the vulnerability identified by Skogan and Maxfield (1981) has an impact on the locus of projection of fear of crime. It would be interesting to see, for example, if people who feel most vulnerable tend to project more frequently concern about crime towards themselves or towards society, which would contribute very significantly to studies of locus of projection (Madriz, 1997; Snedker, 2006; Warr, 1992; Warr and Ellison, 2000).

Finally, it would be interesting to analyse the difference between the three levels of preference-based intensity of fear of crime, that is, problematisation of crime in first, second and / or third place. All these analyses would also benefit from the grouping of these measurements into a synthetic index to provide (in a single measure) the levels of fear of crime in Spain in a contextualized manner,

that is, compared to other concerns that citizens may have.

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