

# Level of Reliability and Validity of the Instruments which are used to Measure the Fear of Crime and Delinquency in the Elderly who have been Victims

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## Abstract

Public Health, especially mental health, is the backbone of the discussion about human and local development. In this way, delinquency not only jeopardizes civilian security, but also has an impact on the development of dementia in the elderly. The present study is meant to show the level of reliability and validity of an instrument used to establish a multi-dimensional construct of fear of crime and a discussion of the role of the State in matters of the emotional wellbeing of the citizens. A cross-sectional, correlation study was carried out with a non-probabilistic sample of 208 elderly people. The results showed that the factors of perception of risk and control account for 63% of the variance while 37% can be accounted for by the attitude towards the corruption, negligence and opacity of authorities. The perception of control (0.81) was the dominant indicator in the model of reflexive relations of dependence [ $\chi^2 = 14, 12$  (15 gl)  $p < 0,000$ ; GFI = 0,975; CFI = 0,970; RMSEA = 0,001].

**Keywords:** public security, perception of risk, perception of control, attitude, fear of crime.

## Introduction

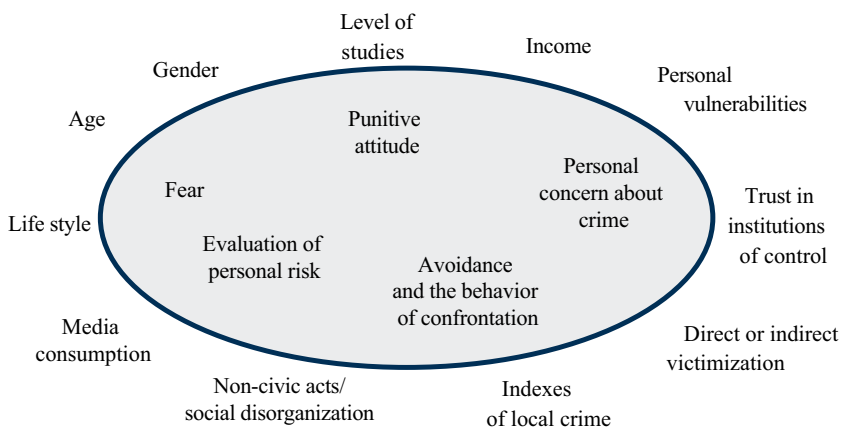
The objective of the present study is to prove a theoretical conceptual model for establishing the determinants of fear in a sample of elderly people with Alzheimer's who were victims of delinquency and crime at some point in their lives. Within the framework of public security, understood

as a context of uncertainty and risk, in which fear (Alvarado and Davis, 2001), assessment (Bilen, Askym, Buyuklu, Okten and Gur, 2013), avoidance (Cashmore, 2014), confrontation (Fiaz, 2012) and attitude (Gómez, Gómez and Durán, 2013) are psycho-social factors which reflect the

levels of vulnerability (Hughey, 2010), faith (Sutton and Hudson, 2013), victimization (Redondo and Frerich, 2014), crime (San Martín, 2013), incivility and corruption (Lorenc, Petticrew, Whitehead, Neary, Clayton, Wrigth, Thompson, Cummins, Sowden and Renton, 2012), the study of the victims is established from the psycho-social and socio-political representations (see Figure 1).

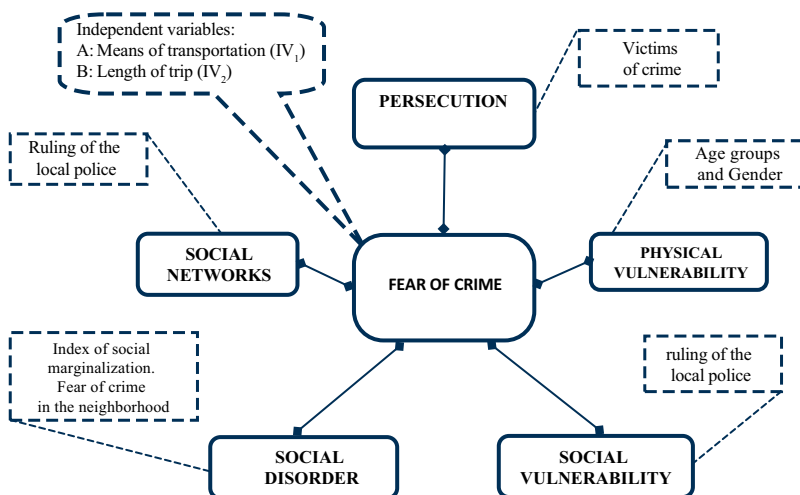
Thus there are five determinants of fear of crime: 1) the victimization of delinquency, 2) physical vulnerability prevalent in the elderly, 3) the social vulnerability indicated by the levels of schooling, income or unemployment, 4) social disorder indicated in the index of marginality and delinquency in a neighborhood and 5) the social networks in relation to the opinions about police (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1** Representation of Public Security



Source: Carreón and García (2013).

**Figure 2** Context of fear of crime

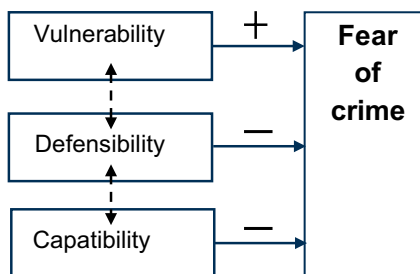


Source: Carreón and García (2013).

Therefore, the fear of crime is determined by an increase in social vulnerability centered on the elderly, a decrease in the defense networks, and a decrease in the support of reference or peer groups (see Figure 3). That is to say, as public policies and institutional programs and strategies focus on the process of powerlessness, they aim their study at the individual and ignore the surrounding social context around which the social representation of delinquency, the self-concept of the victim and feelings towards crime is built (Lorenc et al., 2013; Radda and Nnameziri, 2013).

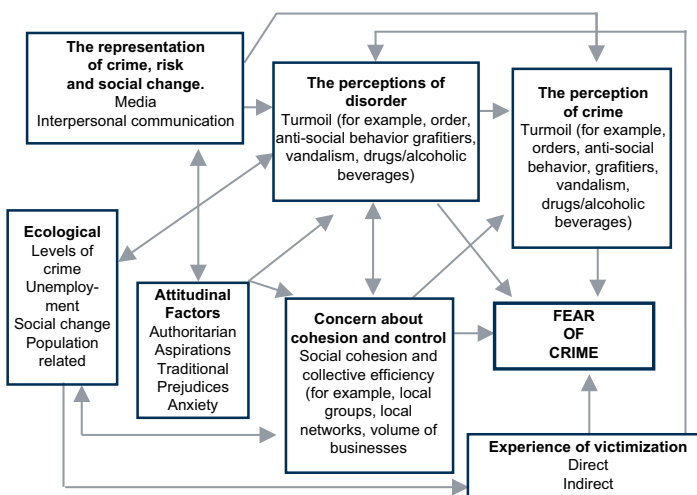
The multidisciplinary study of the victims involves the relationships of dependency among the factors: the social representation of crime broadcast by the media; the levels of hardship and unemployment; the degree of prejudice, anxiety and attitude towards authority figures; perceptions of disorder (vandalism, graffiti, drug addiction); cohesion (efficiency, networks); perceptions of risk (incommensurability and unpredictability) and the experience of victimization as determiners of fear of crime (see Figure 4).

**Figure 3** Model of terror of crime



Source: Carreón, Hernández, Morales and García (2013).

**Figure 4** Model of determinants of fear of crime



Source: Carreón, Hernández, Morales and García (2013)

## **Change begins with language**

The automatic acceptance of the term victim in all professional areas, mainly in law, has a negative effect for precisely those people who have been victimized. This is due to the fact that it is necessary for the person who has been the target of some kind of crime to escape from this typecasting. In other words, it is necessary for the terms to be transitory and not permanent. This is why in Victimology the precise term used is a person in the condition of victim.

Meanwhile, another term used is vulnerable groups but it must be emphasized that no person per se is vulnerable, but rather what happens is that a third party violates this person. Based on this, we may begin to talk about vulnerable groups.

In the same way, it is necessary to point out that the designation, "the elderly" is a legal, biological and social term. Mexican law considers anyone older than 70 to be elderly. At this age biological, cognitive and motor skills begin to deteriorate (which is not always true). Socially, when the label "the elderly" is used and the "elderly person" gets used to the label, and then becomes institutionalized, finally the person begins to act in keeping with what society expects.

## **Victims of crime**

For over two centuries lawmakers have focused solely on the people who commit crimes and have forgotten about the people who are in the condition of victims. In this sense, Victimology is a young, autonomous science which is attempting to change this mistaken vision which appears

in the criminal justice system, in which the victim is seen as a neutral, passive or static person; that is to say, the contribution of Victimology is to attribute to the victim the state of active subject, able to contribute to making sense of and balancing the social system.

The above not only happens in law; it is also seen on a day to day basis. Such is the case of television series and programs in which the interest and emotion is seeing how criminals live and operate, how they murder that victims, for example. However, the question of what happened to the victim, what physical, social and psychological consequences there were for him/her, what stigmas he/she suffers from after undergoing the criminal act, among other questions are rarely asked. The truth is that the person who is in the condition of victim is still of no or very little importance. The same happens in literature and films where we only find books and movies about serial killers who have become famous, without our wondering those people who these crimes were committed against.

Thus, it can be observed that the term "victim" has changed over time. In Mexico, for example, the General Law of Victims (2014) refers to them as:

Direct victims, those people who have undergone some economic, physical, mental, emotional harm or detriment or in general any act which has put his/her legal goods or rights in danger or harmed them as a consequence of the committing of a crime or violation of his/her human rights which are set down in the Constitution and in

International Treaties to which the Mexican State adheres.

In the same way it must be remembered that the victims may be individuals or groups, as long as their collective rights, interests or legal goods have been affected by the committing of a crime or violation of their rights (General Law of Victims, 2014).

Within this category of collective victims may be found groups of Indigenous people, people with disabilities, the elderly, women, boys, girls, adolescents, migrants among others.

In general, it may be observed that the group of elderly people as victims draws more attention. However, even though this group is less often the target of crimes, if crimes do occur, they tend to cause greater physical and psychological harm and over time prove to be more damaging. The main crimes committed against elderly persons, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2012), are violent break-ins to their houses, fraud, extortion and violent robberies in the street.

While the figures published by INEGI prove alarming, it is important to take into account that according to various statistics, the greatest degree of violence perceived by the elderly comes from within their own families. Thus, it is not surprising that for this group it is not easy to denounce mistreatment against one of the family members or caregivers. In this sense it is interesting to see how roles have changed. That is to say, in the past violence was carried out by parents against their children and now violence is carried out by children against their parents.

It is known that the majority of elderly people who have been the victim of some kind of crime seek acknowledgement and emotional support (family as well as institutional), information about how to find prompt, efficient and expeditious justice; the aid of medical and social services and personal security if the case goes to court, to participate in the process and finally to receive integral reparation.

Violence, abuse and mistreatment towards elderly people in Mexico are problems which have increased over the past years. Special attention must be paid to this matter because it must not be forgotten that according to the National Council of Population (CONAPO, 2012), by the year 2050 it is estimated that Mexico will be the country with the largest proportion of elderly people in all Latin America. There will be 33.8 million people over sixty years old.

### **National Survey on Victimization, data on crime**

According to the National Survey on Victimization and the Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE, 2014), over recent years crime has increased. In 2011 there was a percentage of 30.4%, in 2012 32.4% and in 2013 33.9%. The main crimes are the following: car theft, burglary of houses, street assault and robbery or robbery in public transportation, fraud, extortion, verbal threats, personal injuries, kidnapping and sex crimes.

It is important to pinpoint that certain crimes such as: drug trafficking, organized crime and human trafficking of undocumented people are not measured in the survey of victimization which are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** Main Results of ENVIPE, 2014

Households with at least one victim of crime in 2013	Absolut	10,700,000
	Percentage	33.9
Victimization in 2013 (population 18 years and over)	Absolut	22,500,000
	Tasa (por cada 100 mil habitantes)	28.224
Crimes in 2013	Absolut	33,100,000
	Tasa (por cada 100 mil habitantes)	41.563
Black Figure in 2013 (crimes in which investigations were not begun)	Absolut	31,000,000
	Percentage	93.8
Perception of insecurity March and April 2014 (% population 18 years and over who perceive insecurity)	Percentage	73.3
Estimated national cost as a consequence of insecurity		213,100,000,000 pesos (1.27% of GNP)

Source: Inegi, 2014.

Moreover, with respect to unrecorded crimes, only 9.9% of crimes are denounced while 62.7% of these reported crimes undergo a preliminary enquiry by the Public Prosecutor. Thus according to these figures 93.8% of crimes committed are not reported or do not reach the stage of enquiry. Among the main reasons given for victims not reporting crimes to authorities are 31.4% waste of time and 21% distrust in authorities.

Many people who are victimized, according to various studies, point out the fact that they do not seek out the Public Prosecutor in order to report a crime because of mistreatment by those people who operate the legal system and are supposed to give them attention. Thus, they suffer secondary cases of victimization in the hands of the authorities.

In the specific case of the elderly, violence towards these people is, in a way, common. For example, in Mexico City 160 crimes against this vulnerable segment of the population, the elderly, are reported a

day, as is found in data of the General Office of Criminal Politics and Statistics of the Attorney General of the Federal District (PGJDF, 2014).

The main types of violence detected by the PGJDF are: segregation from the family group, dispossession of their property, physical intimidation, and emotional violence. Added to this, it is estimated that a goodly number of cases of these groups do not have access to healthcare; suffer from poverty, exploitation and discrimination.

There is something terribly alarming which may be seen within the family and social systems where there is no support for this; in the family sphere they are seen as a burden; they are beaten and even left in the street. In the social sphere there is discrimination since members of this group are refused public services. There are no spaces for their recreation and the programs for their retirement are not dignified. The accumulative impact of the elderly not reporting crimes is much more complex

than is believed. It must be understood that it is not easy to accuse a family member or caregiver who has mistreated them or committed a crime against them.

To sum up, the statistics are alarming but these are based solely on numbers without faces, suffering and stories. All that they provide are a feeling of distance which makes it hard for society to feel a commitment to solving this problem.

### **Rights of Persons in the Condition of Victims**

On May 3, 2013 in the Official Gazette of the Federation the General Law of Victims was published, mainly with the purpose of providing a response to the innumerable victims of crimes which occur in Mexico. The law also came into being as a result of the constant, widespread social demand that compensation should be made, and these should be under the care of the State, considering the State to be co-responsible for the conditions of violence within society, and for not assuring the minimum conditions of wellbeing at a time in national life when organized crime is becoming more widespread. Moreover, it is stated that the State, as well as society, are responsible for preventing crimes. In order to enforce the law efficiently, mechanisms are established for specific protection for victims of crime and violations of human rights.

It should be acknowledged that this law has been useful in providing the country with a period of relative peace in terms of security. However, three years after its enactment it can be seen that even this ambitious law does not cover the objectives which it proposes. In the same way, the

creation of the General Law of Victims, with all the legal terms it wields, should not be considered unblemished progress. In fact, the aforementioned law, while this seems contradictory, should be followed cautiously, because it in and of itself establishes the serious problem faced by Mexico in the matter of violence.

What is true is that there are certain inalienable rights which people who are victims of crimes should receive. This is especially true for elderly people according to the Law of the Rights of Elderly People (2011) which states the right to:

1. Not be discriminated against due to age and their rights shall be enforced without any distinction whatever.
2. Enjoy the opportunities which facilitate exercising their rights with equality.
3. Receive support from institutions created to provide them with attention related to exercising and respecting their rights.
4. Be protected and defended against all forms of exploitation and physical and mental mistreatment; therefore their lives should be free of violence.
5. Receive attention and protection which they require by the family and society.
6. Keep up relations with their family, if they are separated from them, unless this relationship affects the health and interests of the elderly person.
7. Live in a safe, dignified and decent place where they can satisfy their needs and requirements.
8. Express their opinions freely and participate in the family and social sphere, as well as in all administrative and legal procedures which affect their person or family.

9. Have healthcare available to them.
10. Have education and work.

Meanwhile, according to Irvin Waller (2013), there are six essential rights which correspond to victims of violence: 1) Recognition of the victim as a person, 2) Access to information, 3) Receive psychological, medical and social attention, 4) Full compensation, 5) Have a voice in participation and representation and 6) Effective measures to reduce victimization.

The first of these is acknowledging the victims as people; this is, they must not be taken into account merely as part of the criminal duo, as objects, with indifference or simply as witnesses. He/she should be recognized as a person who is suffering, who has been violated; but at the same time an effort should be made for the person to actively participate in the legal process, adjusting measures and presenting his/her opinions for optimum attention by those who carry out justice.

The second right is to have access to information. In this sense it is for the person in the condition of victim to be provided with all of the necessary information within the process, beginning by reading him/her his rights, information on how the procedures of the authorities work and their follow-up, information on other institutions which may provide them with complementary support such as medical, social and legal services.

In the third place is the right to receive psychological, medical and social attention. In this case, it is believed that persons in conditions of victims should have access to this attention. It is necessary to point out that this attention may evolve over time

with the possible need of directing these people to other institutions.

The fourth right of people in conditions of victims is full compensation. That is to say that they not only receive social, medical, legal and psychological attention following the criminal offence. Here in Mexico, for example, the General Law of Victims conceives full compensation as the measures of restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, satisfaction and above all assurance of non-repetition.

The fifth right is for the victim to have a voice in the participation and representation during the whole process. In this case, the person in the condition of victim may demand full compensation before the Public Prosecutor, as well as participation in the process as may be required and when pertinent.

The sixth right is the right to have effective measures available which will reduce victimization. The person in condition of victim has the right to not be the object of crime against his human rights again by public officials who provide attention to them. In order to comply with this right it is necessary that medical, social, legal, psychological and other personnel exercise ethical behavior to this vulnerable group.

Besides the previous rights it is equally important that social services provided by various institutions be provided in comfortable private places so that the people in condition of victims (the elderly) are relaxed and empathy can be created. In the same way, another important point is that public servants speak to them in a clear and inclusive way, with dignified treatment in order to avoid double victimization.





Foto: Ana Luisa Gómez Tagle Navarro

With all these elements it becomes evident that socio-political studies of crime and delinquency point out that victimization is a result of a negligent State policy which involves vertical, unilateral, lineal administration, centered on the criminal or delinquent, bypassing the victim (Lorenc, et al., 2014). Undoubtedly bringing up certain situations proves illustrative. Next some allusive circumstances will be reviewed.

It is convenient to quote how Jackson (2009) sees the degrees of vulnerability, marginality and exclusion that finally determine the emotions allusive to delinquency and crime. As these factors become greater, the differences in relation to the victimization of men and women appear to increase. In a situation of crime men tend to estimate the probabilities of control

which shall determine their preventive behavior. In contrast, women develop a stigma towards the groups or scenes of risk which will be involved in their behavior of prevention.

We are talking about a socio-political focus which involves the incidence of a socio-economic structure of local development, life quality, personal well-being, social cognition and psychic structure. In this sense Gómez, Gómez and Durán (2013) point out that socio-political violence generates delinquent behavior and victimization. That is to say, the fear of a crime would be indicative of the degree of underlying violence and the loss of rectory of the State in matters of public security.

However, the predominant psycho-social perspective points out fear of a crime as generated by a structure of cognition

(Weaver, 2014). Psycho-social studies on the determinants of fear of crime show that the *secondary deviation*, referring to an excessive concern with the consequences of a crime on the well-being of the family, is indicative of the fear of crime (Parra, 2000).

Nonetheless, Herrero, Oróñez, Salas and Colom (2002) established important differences between sociopaths (deficient socialization by a negligent tutor) and psychopaths (traits which are unresponsive to socialization), with respect to impulsive risk behavior.

Thus, secondary deviation with reference to sociopathic and psychopathic profiles involves the emergence of perceptions of insecurity and emotions related to crime and delinquency which will affect subjective well-being, life quality and local development.

Meanwhile, San Martin (2013) points out that sociopathic and psychopathic profiles, as well as secondary deviation, emerge from the social representations of delinquency and crime. In this sense, the *central nucleus* would be made up of the naturalization of those groups near to the individual, who are perceived as vulnerable to violence. In this way the family, friends, school and town are entities which the individual perceives as victims of government action in matters of the prevention or combat of crime. In contrast, the *peripheral nucleus* involves abstract processes of objectivation of delinquency and crime such as: helplessness, prevention, participation, indifference, incapacity, justice and security. Of course, both nuclei would be influenced by the social representation of political

corruption in matters of civil security. Thus, fear of crime or delinquency would be defined as a degree of anxiety relative to an event perceived as uncertain, unsafe, immeasurable, unpredictable and uncontrollable (Bradley, Rowe and Sedgwick, 2010; Mishra and Bhai, 2013).

*Formulation:* What are the indicators of the fear of delinquency and crime which may be seen in a group of elderly people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease?

*Null Hypothesis:* From the psychosocial point of view, anxiety related to events of crime and delinquency is indicated by degrees of perception of the *immeasurability, unpredictability and uncontrollability* of the elderly person with respect to the experiences of victimization.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* From the socio-political approach, anxiety related to crime and delinquency is indicated by attitudes towards *corruption, opacity and negligence*, attributed to the authorities with respect to the prevention of crime, combating delinquency and administering justice.

## Method

*Design.* A cross-sectional, explanatory study was carried out.

*Sample.* A non-probabilistic selection was made up of 208 elderly people who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in a stage indicated as having a loss of procedural memory, but with the constant memory of an event of victimization.

*Sex.* 45% of the sample were men and 55 women.

*Age.* 34% of the elderly people were between 60 and 64 years old, 49% between 65 and 70 and 17% were over 70.

*Schooling.* 58% had studied high school, 34% had an undergraduate degree and 6% had graduate studies.

*Income.* 34% said they have an income of over 9,000 pesos/month (Average=500 USD with a standard deviation = 24.37 USD), 56% had an average monthly income of between 6,000 and 9,000 pesos (M=346 USD with SD=24.1 USD) and 10% had an income lower than 6000 pesos per month (M=241 USD with SD= 12.14).

*Group.* 49% said they lived with their families (M=269 USD with SD=32.15 USD average monthly income); 26% said they lived with a partner (M=378.89 USD with SD=71.29 USD); 20% said they lived alone (M=582.15 with SD=39.49); and 5% did not answer (M=691.28 with SD=40.29 USD).

*Instrument.* A Scale of Fear of Crime and Delinquency was built that included six factors: three were psychosocial [incommensurability ( $\alpha=0.786$ ), unpredictability (0.841) and uncontrollability (0.716)] and three were socio-political [corruption (0.718), negligence (0.897) and opacity (0.798)]. Each of the psycho-social subscales included ten options of answers ranging from 0="not frequently" to 10="very frequently." It is important to point out that each socio-political scale included five options of answers which range from 0="do not agree at all" to 4 "totally agree."

*Procedure.* A review of literature from the period of 2000 to 2015 was carried out, related to measuring and predicting fear of crime. The model was specified taking into account the findings reported in the state of knowledge. The hypotheses were established based on the psycho-

social approach and socio-political point of view. The sample was contacted through the Alzheimer's Association. The members of the sample which was selected were surveyed during their stay at a healthcare center. The information was processed using SPSS and AMOS programs, versions 212.0.

*Analysis.* The reliability of the scale was estimated based on Cronbach's Alpha, considering an inter-item correlation sub-scale greater than 0.80 while the validity was established with a calculus of sphericity and adequacy of Bartlett, Kaiser, Meyer and Olkin as well as the inter-item correlation factor over 0.6000 considering a percentage of explained variance above 40%. Finally, the parameters of adjustment and residuals were estimated in order to contrast the null hypothesis.

## Results

Adequacy and sphericity are prerequisites for exploratory factorial analysis of main components using Varimax rotation. Their values indicated that there is a convergence of factors in relation to the construct of fear of delinquency and crime [ $X^2 = 12,35$  (24gl)  $p = 0,000$ ; KMO = 0,601]. The validity of the construct yielded 6 factors relative to the immeasurability, unpredictability and uncontrollability. When these correlated they make up a construct allusive to fear of delinquency and crime as experiences in which those surveyed see themselves as victims. These three factors explain 63% of the total variance. With respect to the remaining 37% variance, this may be explained by the attitudinal factors towards corruption, negligence and opacity. That is

**Table** Operationalization of Variables

Indicator	Definition	Item	Example	Options
Percentage of in-commensurability	Degree of remembering about an event attributed to crime or delinquency which	ICM2 ICM2 ICM3 ICM4	I have been a victim of delinquency and crime	0=inrequently 10=very frequently
Perception of unpredictability	Degree of memory with respect to the prevention of delinquency and crime and its effects on life	IMP1 IMP2 IMP3 IMP4	I have been the victim of economic conceit	0 = infrequently 10 = very frequently
Perception of uncontrollability	Degree of memory with respect to confronting a crime and its effects	ICT1 ICT2 ICT3 ICT4	I have been a victim of criminal reporting	0 = infrequently 10 = very frequently
Attitude towards corruption	Degree of opinion with respect to corruption of the State	ACR1 ACR2 ACR3 ACR4	I have been the victim of collusion among authorities	0=I do not agree at all 4=I totally agree
Attitude towards negligence	Degree of opinion with respect to negligence of	ANG1 ANG2 ANG3	I have been a victim of the police	0=I do not agree at all 4=I totally agree
Attitude towards opacity	Degree of opinion with respect to the opacity of the State	AOP1 AOP2 AOP3	I have been the victim of social conformism	0=I do not agree at all 4=I totally agree

Source: My own elaboration

to say, the construct of fear of delinquency and crime is indicated by psycho-social factors more than by socio-political factors. The biased perception of victimization is hegemonic with respect to the attitude derived from the government action in matters of security.

With respect to the reliability of the sub-scales, the values which correspond to the excluded item indicated that the instrument has enough consistency when measuring the psychosocial and socio-political traits related to the experiences of

victimization in the face of crime and delinquency (general  $\alpha=0.817$ ).

Finally, the null hypothesis was accepted. This is in virtue of the fact that the adjusting parameters indicated that the model of hypothetical relations adjusts to the weighted model (see Figure 5).

However, the construct of fear of delinquency and crime is an emotional construct. In contrast, attitudes are a rational construct that presuppose calculating the probabilities of preventing delinquency or demanding justice. Both factors, emotional

**Tabla 2** Descriptivos y propiedades psicométricas del instrumento

Code	Item	M	DE	'	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
PIM 1	I have been	8,13	0,19	0,81	0,615					
PIM 2	I have been robbed	8,20	0,28	0,83	0,724					
PIM 3	I have been	7,38	0,47	0,88	0,736					
PIM 4	I have been attacked	8,41	0,49	0,83	0,670					
PIP 1	I have been presumptuous	8,26	0,92	0,79		0,614				
PIP 2	I have been	8,26	0,57	0,84		0,628				
PIP 3	I have been trusting	7,40	0,81	0,85		0,635				
PIP 4	I have been flexible	8,25	0,46	0,81		0,761				
PIT 1	I have been penalized	7,90	0,36	0,88			0,632			
PIT 2	I have been	8,21	0,58	0,81			0,622			
PIT 3	I have been committed	8,03	0,46	0,79			0,711			
PIT 4	I have been ignored	8,36	0,14	0,83			0,600			
ACR 1	I have been a witness	3,20	0,51	0,83				0,643		
ACR 2	I have been	3,16	0,76	0,89				0,646		
ACR 3	I have been	3,27	0,58	0,79				0,681		
ACR 4	I have been	3,28	0,15	0,80				0,721		
ANG 1	I have been	3,47	0,68	0,83					0,721	
ANG 2	I have been militant	3,05	0,59	0,81					0,601	
ANG 3	I have been critical	3,16	0,91	0,80					0,625	
ANG 4	I have been ideological	3,26	0,47	0,78					0,661	
AOP 1	I have been submissive	3,41	0,36	0,84						0,713
AOP 2	I have been	3,36	0,26	0,86						0,715
AOP 3	I have been	3,40	0,38	0,81						0,629
AOP 4	I have been quiet	3,01	0,41	0,87						0,643

General Curtosis = 2,26; Bootstrap = 0,000; KMO = 0,601; X<sup>2</sup> = 12,35 (24gl) p = 0,000; F1 = Perception of incommensurability (22% of the explained variance), F2 = Perception of unpredictability (20% of the explained variance). F3 = Perception of uncontrollability (21% of the explained variance), F4 = Attitude towards corruption (15% of the explained variance). F5 = Attitude towards negligence (13% of the explained variance). F6 = Attitude towards opacity (9% of the explained variance), Psycho-social items have as options the answers 0=infrequently to 10=very frequently. Socio-political items : 0 = I do not agree at all to 4 = I totally agree.

Source: elaborated with data from the study

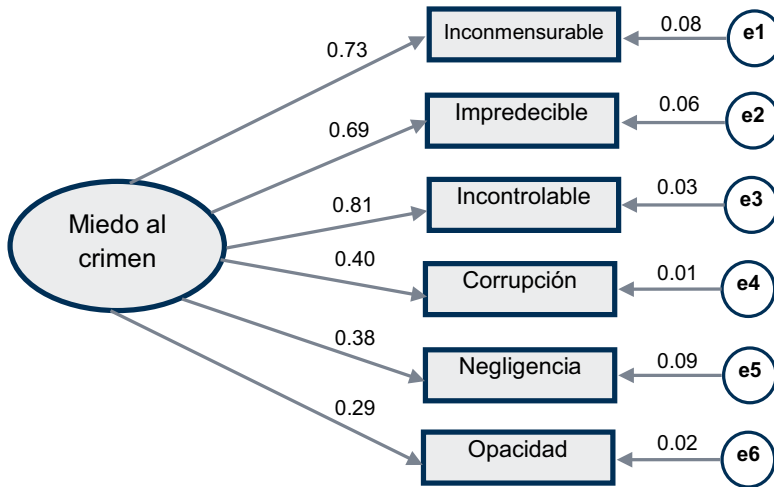
psychosocial and rational socio-political, reflect expectations and evaluations related to delinquency and crime, but they are influenced by a social structure which confines the elderly person to the role of

victim, even when the experience may have taken place in his/her youth.

In this way, the relation between the government and the governed not only appears to be emotional or rational, but



**Figure 5** Model of relations of reflexive dependence



[ $\chi^2 = 14,12$  (15gl)  $p < 0,000$ ; GFI = 0,975; CFI = 0,970; RMSEA = 0,001]

Source: Elaborated with data from the study.

also ambivalent. As citizens age, they seem to rationalize the remembered experiences as feelings of fear, of crime and delinquency, but attributable to the corruption, negligence and opacity of the authorities. That is, the sample of citizens surveyed seems to approach ambivalence, since on the one hand they feel fear of delinquency and crime, but on the other they also feel they are victims of the corruption, negligence and opacity of their authorities.

### Support and assistance for persons in the condition of victims through Social Work

Upon scrutinizing from the federal perspective the Law of the Rights of Elderly People (*Daily Gazette of the Federation*, June 25, 2002), we are confronted with notorious surprises. In said law principles are set forth for the elderly, such as the following: autonomy and self-fulfillment, participation, equity, co-responsibility and preferential attention. Moreover, in this

legal precept the following rights of the elderly are contemplated: a quality life; full enjoyment; a life free of violence; respect for their physical, psycho-emotional and sexual integrity; right to receive protection from the community, family and society; to live in safe, dignified and decorous surroundings; all of these certainly very praiseworthy and advanced.

In order to show the concept of progress, the Government of the Federal District published in the *Official Gazette of D.F.* on March 7, 2000 (two years before the federal government), the Law of the Rights of Elderly People in the D.F. In said law assistance is considered together with actions which tend to modify and improve the social circumstance which hinder a person from reaching full integral development, as well as assuring the physical, mental and social protection of people in conditions of physical and mental need, vulnerability or disadvantage.



Foto: Natureworldnewscom

Nevertheless, throughout this paper and research we have seen that the elderly receive services in general institutions for attention to victims, forgetting that this group has specific needs such as the availability of ramps and elevators, among others. Moreover, this group experiences stigmas stemming from stereotypes of society, which many times the authorities-lacking in training and vocation-reaffirm, thus producing new victimization. While this series of criticisms referring to the policies for the elderly is not the central theme of the present project, it cannot be ignored.

Added to this, we must keep in mind the importance of the fact that the assistance provided by various institutions prioritizes the legal aspect, ignoring the social aspect which may present a disadvantage for achieving resilience of the person who is the victim of a crime. If the victimized person has a strong social tie, it is very probable that he/she will soon be able to overcome this state and return to his/her normal life. Here lies the importance that

the support and assistance is not only given to the victimized person, but also to his/her family.

Now then, the existence of laws favoring this group is not enough. There must be a commitment to comply with other alternatives. In this sense, social work may participate together with other academic areas in the prevention of victimization. In fact, this multi-disciplinary work should begin with agreement on the aims for achieving conceptual articulation and finally applying methods and procedures which favor vulnerable groups (the elderly) with the purpose of not only intervening in the integral atonement of the victim, but also trying to tackle the causes which trigger this worrisome problem.

In the same way, it is necessary for social work to empower the elderly. That is, they should be given tools so that they may escape that typecasting of victims and take the place of a person with a voice, who appeals for his rights, who participates and brings about social changes based on his/her experience, so

that in this way, not only an individual, but also a collective healing is achieved. This empowerment may arise using various mechanisms which help the person in conditions of victim transcend in keeping with his specific needs and desires; for example, through theater, writing, painting or performance.

There are matters in the public agenda which are pending: in the first place, drawing attention to other factors which infringe on the elderly, such as social abandonment, lack of public shelters, as well as the situation of the elderly who are homeless. In second place, making statistical studies which measure the perception of the beneficiaries of each program, as well as of the services provided by public workers in charge of attention to victims of delinquency and of the violation of human rights.

## Discussion

The present study has established the reliability and validity of an instrument which measures six different factors indicative of perceived victimization and attitudes towards delinquency and crime.

With reference to the study made by García, Carreón, Hernández and Méndez (2013) in which they found favorable attitudes to the State's campaign on matters of civilian security, referring to individual responsibility which complements the prevention of crime, combating crime or the doling out of justice, the present paper has shown that there is ambivalence since the perception of risk/control and the attitude towards government actions are indicators of victimized fear in the face of delinquency and crime. In this sense, the perception

of control, explicative variable of the trust in private security, in the sample of elderly people seems to indicate a negative feeling towards public action with respect to delinquency and crime.

In this way, the perception of risk and of control are factors which are indicative of a generalized fear of the sample of delinquency, but the unfavorable attitude towards authorities does not seem to show an anxiety of demand for public care, but is rather related to anxiety derived from old age with respect to youth.

Thus, García (2009; 2012) warns that lack of confidence in local police is motivated by the media more than by experiences of victimization, but he points out that in scenarios of vulnerability, marginality and exclusion, the influence of the media is reduced to a minimum, while the perceptions of control and effectiveness of prevention grow.

In the present study it was found that the elderly seem to contradict the hypothesis which says that the State doles out justice beginning with prevention, which, is ultimately the responsibility of the citizen, but in the case of the elderly it is not only necessary to protect their integrity, but to also rectify the experiences which cause their fear of crime.

In matters of public health, the State should not only prevent crime, but should also, in matters of mental health, attend to the negative feelings which the elderly associate with the corruption, negligence and opacity of the authorities. In this sense, we recommend a study on the effects of the levels of crime and delinquency on the mental health of the elderly, since this sector not only has to deal with physical



limitations, but also with their emotions and perceptions of risk, uncertainty and insecurity.

### **Conclusions**

The main contribution of the present study and paper, without a doubt, is towards a state of knowledge which stems from reliability and validity of an instrument which measures the fear of the elderly of crime

and delinquency. The relationship between the above-mentioned construct and the fear of crime, with respect to mental illnesses such as Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease, could be used to discuss the role of the State in the prevention of delinquency, the fight against crime or imparting justice, since the effects of these government instruments might determine mental health or the development of dementia.

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# Annex

**Table 3** Estado del conocimiento

Year	Author	Concept	Sample	Instruments	Results
2000	Parra	<i>Secondary Deviation</i> . "Plays an important role because it becomes a mechanism for justifying and defending in the face of disapproving attitudes of the collectivity" (p. 120).	NPress releases from 1985-1996 of the papers <i>el Panorama y La Colmena</i>	Matrix of content analysis	Criminals fear for the safety of their relatives as hostages of their adversaries and enemies. Their own security when imprisoned is reduced to its minimum expression; they avoid telling their experiences and only present the cases to other prisoners. They attribute as causes of their acts their socio-economic condition or family violence, but there is no introspection.
2010	Hughey	<i>Emotional Capital</i> . "Assists in distinguishing between groups and helping to solidify identity. That is, emotional consciousness frames particular features of life in ways that continue to represent the depth of emotion of that feature of life, as well as the relation of the feature to established cultural context" (p. 1302).	36 sources	Matrix of discourse analysis	Racist beliefs and xenophobia transcend the political ideology with respect to the purity of the white race in relation to the inferiority or subjugation of other cultures.
2010	Bradley, Rowley Sedgwick	<i>Fear of crime</i> . "Has become an important policy and policing concern that is only partly related to the objective risk of victimization" (p. 2).	1,400 residents of New Zealand	Questionnaire on crime and the seriousness of the crime	The interviews point out that the meanings of the place are associated with the daily dynamics of the place in narrative forms of identity in which public matters are linked to private life.
2013	Mishra y Bhai	<i>Fear of Crime</i> . "Is an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime that a person associates with crime? (...) Can be in the form of public feelings, thought, personal risk and criminal victimization" (p. 14).	170 press releases	Matrix of content analysis	Murder (44.7%) was the crime most reported committed against people between 61 and 65 years old. 42.94% of the crimes against the elderly were carried out by strangers, but 22.35% were carried out by relatives. Night was the favored time for crimes (29.41%).
2013	San Martín	<i>Social representations</i> "allows for accessing the knowledge of common sense (experiences, interactions, meanings, representations of citizen security) without greater prerogatives in the measure in which the discourse on insecurity is presented as an guide for social conduct of the subjects." (p. 79)	98 participants in the community of Melpilla, Chile	Matrix of analysis from founded theory	Delinquency, insecurity and fear are the nuclei of social representations. The concentric ring revolves around the family, friends, municipality, police and schools. The peripheral ring includes abandonment, prevention, participation, indifference, inability, justice, security. The field of representation is structured based on a before and an after political corruption.

Year	Author	Concept	Sample	Instruments	Results
2002	Herrero, Salas y Colom	<i>Sociopath</i> . "exposed to deficient socialization as a consequence of negligent family practice" (p. 340) <i>Psychopath</i> . "a person who since birth has expressed a high level of temperamental characteristics. He may be insensitive to attempts at normal socialization and growing up without developing a conscience" (p. 340) <i>Temperamental characteristics</i> . "search for sensations, impulsiveness and absence of fear." (p. 340)	186 prisoners	Cantoblanco Scale of Difficulties of Temperament	Reliability of sub-scales of were established: sensation (0.91), impulsiveness (0.87), absence of fear (0.89), impulsiveness correlated with fear (0.650)
2013	Gómez, Gómez y Durán	<i>Violence</i> . "Having been the object of intentional actions to cause damage of another person. These actions refer to being followed, beaten, robbed, fired at, knifed or any other assault." (p. 1007)	615 students	Questionnaire on exposure to insecurity and violence	Establishing reliability and validity of six factors which explained 39% of the total variance, with which significant differences were established
2009	Jackson	<i>Vulnerability</i> . "Defined here as differential perception of likelihood, control and consequence, operates alongside process of social perception. (...) as a belief that one is susceptible to future negative outcomes an unprotected from danger or misfortune. Accompanying this cognition is an affective component, consisting of feelings of anxiety, fear and apprehension" (p. 4).	1,800 residents	Sub-scale of concern, perception of personal and relative risk	The study contrasts two models in function of gender. The concern about personal crime was determined by the perceived probability in men while for women it was determined by the relative judgment of risk to groups or socio-economic status of women. That is, the condition of gender seems to be involved in the concern form security.

Fuente: elaboración propia.

## SCALE OF TERROR OF DELINQUENCY AND CRIME

Dear Citizen:

The National University of Mexico, via its National School of Social Work, is carrying out an opinion study on confidence in government officials and authorities. The results of the study will have no influence on your economic situation and so we ask you to honestly answer the following assertions taking into account:

0=not at all frequent, up to 10=very frequent.

For example: *People are defenseless in the face of the government.* If you believe this to be very frequent, you should check cell number 10.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
										X

Now, please answer the following statements:

Code	Item	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PIP 1	I have been a victim because I have been kidnapped.											
PIP 2	I have been a victim because I have been attacked.											
PIP 3	I have been a victim because I have been extorted.											
PIP 4	I have been a victim because I have been assaulted.											
PIP 1	I have been a victim because I have been a show off.											
PIP 2	I have been a victim because I have been an exhibitionist.											
PIP 3	I have been a victim because I have been trusting.											
PIP 4	I have been a victim because I have been flexible.											
PIT 1	I have been a victim because I have been punished.											
PIT 2	I have been a victim because I have been threatened.											
PIT 3	I have been a victim because I have been corrupt.											
PIT 4	I have been a victim because I have been ignored.											

0=Disagree completely

1=Disagree

2=Neither agree or disagree

3=Agree

4=Totally agree

For Example: *People deserve the government they have.* If you agree you should check the cell corresponding to number 1.

0	1	2	3	4
	X			

Please answer the following statements:

Code	Item	0	1	2	3	4
ACR 1	I have been a victim because I have been a witness					
ACR 2	I have been a victim because I have denounced					
ACR 3	I have been a victim because I have participated					
ACR 4	I have been a victim because I have been a demonstrator					
ANG 1	I have been a victim because I have been a beneficiary					
ANG 2	I have been a victim because I have been a militant					
ANG 3	I have been a victim because I have been a critic					
ANG 4	I have been a victim because I have been an ideologist					
AOP 1	I have been a victim because I have been submissive					
AOP 2	I have been a victim because I have been a conformist					
AOP 3	I have been a victim because I have been dependent					
AOP 4	I have been a victim because I have remained silent					

#### General Information

1.- Sex      a) Male (   )      b) Female (   )

2.- Age \_\_\_\_\_

3.- Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

4.- Schooling \_\_\_\_\_

5.- Occupation \_\_\_\_\_



Foto: Reuters