

# The analytic gradient of “fear of crime”: An emotional structuring of the topic from a Latin American literature review

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The main objective of this study is to propose an analytical organization of how studies on the “fear of crime” are structured in academic production, especially in Latin America. The theme has already been the subject of important literature reviews, but the way authors construct fear as an object of research will be the key element for the new framework presented in this study. This research was performed by a methodological strategy called snowball sampling. Its major result refers to the use of emotion as the analytical resource that can structure studies in disparate contexts under the same organization.

**Keywords:** Fear of crime, Latin America, urban violence, insecurity, emotions

**O gradiente analítico do “medo do crime”:  
Uma estruturação emocional do tópico a partir  
de uma revisão de literatura latino-americana**

O principal objetivo deste trabalho é propor uma organização analítica de como os estudos sobre o “medo do crime” estão estruturados na produção acadêmica, com ênfase na América Latina. O tópico já foi tema de importantes revisões de literatura, mas, aqui, a forma como os autores constroem o medo como objeto de pesquisa será o elemento-chave dessa nova organização. A pesquisa foi realizada por meio de uma estratégia metodológica chamada *bola de neve*. Seu principal resultado é o uso da emoção como recurso analítico capaz de estruturar estudos de contextos díspares na mesma organização.

**Palavras-chave:** Medo do crime, América Latina, violência urbana, insegurança, emoções

## Introduction

**F**ear has a variant condition that complicates the search for the uniqueness of its meaning. The phenomenon is constantly equated with the object of research constructed from it, and this is a common problem in its study. There would be no way to punctuate a single condition for its manifestation nor a singular definition of its meaning due to its susceptibility to change according to space, culture, and time. Therefore, every approach to the study of fear, be it disciplinary or epistemological, ends up mediating the contact between the researcher and the phenomenon.

According to Beck (2010), dangers are a more or less visible and avoidable form of risks, which is a trace of reflexive modernity, in which the solidarity of fear is an imperative that has surpassed that of need, with a change from *class* society to a *risk* society. Risks would have a future orientation centered on unpredictable universal/global threats, whereas dangers would give contours of objectivity to everyday life situations.

With this in mind, when considering its different contents in history, fear had as its main source of danger the threats of nature (TUAN, 2005 [1979]). However, over time, our own actions have come to command this framework (DELUMEAU, 2009). Thus, contemporary cities can be seen as sources of danger (TUAN, 2005 [1979]), they became a meeting point of modern problems (SIMMEL, 1979), having violence as one of the most recurrent ways of men remembering their finitude, which, for Delumeau (2009), is the most elemental content of fear: death. Thus, the *blocks of meaning* (PORTO, 2006) shared about city threats and dangers play a relevant role in the perception of risk (WARR, 2000), which can stimulate the experience of feeling fear (FERRARO, 1995).

Even if individually experienced, the conditions of expression (MAUSS, 1979 [1921]) of fear are socially constructed and culturally shared (REGUILLO, 2002). For some, therefore, fear associated with crime and violence would be a set of actions, emotions, and representations capable of making connections with broader anxieties (DITTON et al., 1999; JACKSON, 2004; SPARKS; GIRLING; LOADER, 2001), and is sometimes described as a feeling of insecurity (ROCHÉ, 1988).

In Anglo-Saxon criminology, “fear of crime”<sup>1</sup> has become a consolidated research topic since the 1970s (HALE, 1996; HENSON; REYNS, 2015), emerging as a scientific object likely to be taken up by public debate (LEE, 1999, 2001). Traditionally quantitative and deductive in their origin (HALE, 1996; HENSON; REYNS, 2015; LEE, 1999, 2001, 2008), these studies, for at least two decades, treated this emotion as a substance<sup>2</sup> (LE BRETON, 2019; ZARIAS; LE BRETON, 2019) that reacted to the external world through the body and summarized in it. During the 1980s, this configuration began to change effectively, when: the phenomenon of the “fear of crime” starts to be contested in its methodology and theoretical construction (DITTON et al., 1999; FARRALL et al., 1997; HALE, 1996); criminology itself coexists with the questionings of the realist and feminist movements (FARRALL; LEE, 2008); and emotions become an established socio-anthropological field (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990). There is then a broadening of possibilities in their research (FARRALL; LEE, 2008; PAIN, 2000).

In time, it would be fundamental to reflect on the consequences of these changes in the production of knowledge on the subject. The incentive to qualitative studies and, as an effect, its progressive increase, make the context in which these works are inserted an unavoidable observation point to think about the advances, the criticisms, and the theoretical and methodological possibilities to think about the “fear of crime” (CECCATO, 2012). In each place, fear acquires a possible figuration (ELIAS, 1970) given its multidimensionality and diverse conformation from different realities (FRATTARI, 2013). Thus, it is necessary to understand how other places in the

world outside the Anglo-Saxon context—where the theme has been consolidated as a research topic—have understood and reflected on the phenomenon.

Therefore, in this study, my main aim is to outline a proposal for the organization of studies on the “fear of crime” that encompasses the discussions present in Latin America. A series of questions led to this purpose, namely: how have Latin American researchers thought about the theme challenged by the degree of violence and the incidence of high crime rates? In this sense, the central question of this research is: how have Latin American authors approached the “fear of crime” and what does this mean in terms of analytical possibilities? To what extent have these studies been influenced by the scientific discussion of the subject coming from the Anglo-Saxon context? If so, how would they have apprehended, reflected, and modified these discussions? Would it be possible to think of a key element that could analytically organize the seminal and Latin American works in the same model?

To answer these questions, this study is structured, in addition to this introduction, in five other sections. Next, it is discussed how this organization of studies differs from previous consolidated proposals. In the methodological section, it will be explained how the discussion material was collected and how this work is part of an ongoing project. Next, the relation between fear, crime, and urban violence in the Latin American context will be detailed. Then, finally, the *analytic gradient of “fear of crime”* will be presented and discussed. To conclude, final considerations.

### **How the “fear of crime” has been (and will be) revised**

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate what the differences are between the *analytic gradient of “fear of crime”* and other reviews of the topic in both Latin American and Anglo-Saxon contexts.

Some Latin American authors have thought about how to structure the debate on the “fear of crime.” Morquecho and Vizcarra (2008), for example, present three major areas to study the topic in the world: criminal policies in the face of delinquency; statistics of public perception about crime; and studies that capture people’s thoughts about crime and how they experience urban insecurity. Kessler (2009), one of the most widespread works on the subject in the region, considers the existence of studies that would deal with the cognitive, emotional, and political aspects of the “fear of crime” and others that focus on the historical-situated aspect and its respective social consequences of the “feeling of insecurity.” For Dammert (2012), there are two perspectives of studying “insecurity,” one related to late modernity and another that understands the phenomenon from an emotional point of view, involving individuals and the corresponding social.

Other works have thought out frameworks looking exclusively at fear studies in Latin America. For Dammert and Salazar (2017), the topic could be organized in this context by approaching: crime and violence (especially in urban areas); the criminal justice system; and, finally, penal populism.

In the Anglo-Saxon context, Hale (1996) created one of the most respected literature reviews on the subject, using the large volume of empirical work since the 1960s. The author proposes to view the topic through four explanatory lines that are not causally mutually exclusive but have distinct focuses. Such perspectives would vary between the individual and contextual pole, as also pointed out by Henson and Reyns (2015). According to Hale (1996), they can be identified by deepening the discussion on: the vulnerability of people, the psychological factors involved in the individual construction of fear, the experience one has of victimization, as well as the environmental aspects and their cues of danger. Most explanatory models end up using more than one of these paths, varying the emphasis on them (HALE, 1996).

Still in the Anglo-Saxon context, Rader (2004) tenses the common understanding that perceived risk and avoidance behaviors are causes of “fear of crime.” The author prefers to understand “fear of crime” as part of a larger “threat of victimization,” in which these other factors are actually part of a whole involved in a complex and reciprocal causal relationship. Thus, the focus of studies should be, according to Rader (2004), the “threat of victimization,” which would have three components: the emotional (the “fear of crime”), the cognitive (the perception of risk), and the behavioral (the avoidance behaviors). For Gabriel and Greve (2003), from a psychological perspective, these three components constitute the “state of fear” and are indicators of a disposition to “feel fear.” In this sense, there would be a temporal separation and causal feedback between situationally felt fear (with the co-occurrence of its three components) and ontogenetic developmental processes influenced by individual conditions, attributes, and experiences. According to Jackson and Gouseti (2012), the separation of the three components of the “threat of victimization” proposed by Rader (2004), which Gabriel and Greve (2003) attribute to the “state of fear,” aligns with the consensual aspects used to analyze the “fear of crime” in the literature on the phenomenon. From a critical perspective on the field<sup>3</sup> of “fear of crime,” Farrall, Jackson and Gray (2009) reinforce that fear is not a single thing but takes many forms. Thus, the authors prefer to note moments in which fear is experienced (moments of terror) and others in which fear is expressed (used as a metaphor to address other issues, not necessarily related to crime).

This study wishes to place itself with those in which fear is an element with different forms of manifestation and intends to reinforce the tendency to see the “fear of crime” in Latin America, in

close relationship with crime and violence, the latter mostly related to urban areas (DAMMERT; SALAZAR, 2017). However, in the proposed organization of this text, the elements consensually established in the composition of “fear of crime” (JACKSON; GOUSETI, 2012) are an integral part of a socio-anthropological definition for emotions/feelings (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990), that is, the affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects are within the forms that an emotion can take in reality when being studied, the difference between the works would be in the emphasis placed on the construction of their respective research objects. Thus, the notion of the diversity of forms assumed by “fear” is enhanced since, for the proposed *analytic gradient of “fear of crime,”* the range of analytical possibilities of the emotion “fear” is investigated from, mainly but not exclusively, Latin American studies.

One of the main advantages of thinking from the *analytic gradient* is to transform the psychological separation between “state of fear” and disposition to “feel fear” (GABRIEL; GREVE, 2003) into an accumulative and cyclical causal sociological process that has the social representations of the “fear of crime” as the link between the poles of this separation. Thus, a key element of this work is the use of the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999) as the basis of fear that is related to crime and especially to urban violence in Latin America. From this theoretical position, it does not make sense to oppose “fear of crime” to “feeling of insecurity” (KESSLER, 2009) since it is possible to offer historicity and to situate fear and its respective consequences when invoking the *ghost of urban violence* (MISSE, 1999).

Therefore, the use of the term “fear of crime” has a particular interpretation in this study. Thus, although most of the time I am referring to urban violence and also make use of works that think about “insecurity,” the term is kept to encourage the sociological use of fear and to avoid the conceptual dispersion of the research topic in which one aims to add an analytical organizing proposal. This, allows studies from disparate contexts to be allocated in the same structuring of the field.

Then, beyond experience and expression (FARRALL; JACKSON; GRAY, 2009) and from the social construction of the relationship between feelings, cognition, and behaviors<sup>4</sup> necessary for the occurrence of the “fear of crime” (JACKSON; GOUSETI, 2012), the *analytic gradient* attributes to emotions/feelings the possibility to contextually situate a social interaction and conform social representations imbricated between fear and urban violence.

## Methodology

This study is part of an ongoing project whose objective is to conduct a quantitative and qualitative review of the “fear of crime” studied in Latin America.<sup>5</sup> This study presents a qualitative

interpretation that took as a starting point a quantitative material gathered for network analysis of the literature on the subject rooted in this part of the world.

In this section, it will be explained how the quantitative processing of articles about the “fear of crime” in the region contributed methodologically to the reflexive proposition of a framework of interpretation of the field based on how the authors constructed the phenomenon as a research object. Thus, it will be necessary to present the parameters of the systematic literature review conducted to obtain the set of studies that served as a starting point for a traditional literature review, undertaken by what is known as the snowball technique. The traditional review is presented in this study, whereas the systematic review will be the subject of a future study.

Given the impossibility of qualitatively processing all the available studies, some criteria were established to visualize how the Latin American discussion would be structured. At first, it was necessary to establish which indexer would be able to provide the publications whose main content was the Latin American continent. In the selection of the collection, the existence of high quality criteria for indexing, digital availability, and multidisciplinary were taken into consideration. In total, three indexers deserve to be highlighted in these requirements: Latindex, Redalyc, and SciELO.

Latindex has, as its main mission, to present bibliographic information about Latin American journals. Redalyc and SciELO, in turn, have the purpose of creating conditions so that the production of knowledge in this region of the world can increasingly meet international standards of visibility and impact. Both are vanguards in the activism for open access and the geopolitical reorganization of scientific knowledge. SciELO, as a matter of fact, is the pioneer in this. Its journey began in Brazil but thanks to the creation of a standardized and decentralized indexing model, it has consolidated national collections in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Mexico; Paraguay; Peru; Uruguay; Ecuador), other developing collections (Ecuador and Venezuela), and some others in countries with academic production called “peripheral” (Portugal, Spain, and South Africa). SciELO has an online portal in which it is possible to access all these collections in a single search. Its collection is considerably larger than that of Redalyc in terms of full texts. Hence, although both share a very similar level of quality and correlated objectives, SciELO was chosen for the search of articles (BABINI, 2011; GUÉDON, 2011; PACKER, 2014).

The amorphous characteristic of “fear of crime” as a category that aspires to be a concept demands a series of precautions when searching on the theme. The use of fear in scientific research has never reached a degree of uniformity in its definition, even more so if we consider its use in the social sciences. Thus, it is problematic to perform simple searches using the term “fear” as a descriptor. In fact, sometimes other words are seen as equivalent, such as insecurity, panic,

perception, fear, and anxiety. This also happens, with some degree of similarity with the term “crime,” and can be expressed through different words such as criminality, criminalization, and criminal dynamics. By only using the term “fear of crime,” the parallel possibilities of identifying studies on the theme built without mentioning any of these words exactly would be lost, demarcating once more its conceptual nebulosity (HALE, 1996).

In this sense, after some tests, a set of descriptors was achieved that were capable of exploring the richness of the results. They were used in pairs and searched for the terms in the title, abstract, and keywords of the articles in all the collections of the SciELO platform. As the search was performed, the results from the previous pairs of descriptors were subtracted from the search at the time, so repeated articles were hidden, and only new results were presented. All pairs of descriptors were searched in Portuguese and Spanish, they were: medo e<sup>6</sup> crim\*;<sup>7</sup> miedo e crim\*; medo e violência; miedo e violencia; percepção e crim\*; percepción e crim\*; percepção e violência; percepción e violencia; insegurança e crim\*; inseguridad e crim\*; insegurança e violência; inseguridad e violencia.

The selection of articles happened through the analysis of the abstracts considering if the article: dealt specifically with fear (or insecurity, as the expressed fear is usually named [JACKSON, 2004]), having Latin American countries as a reflection point; if they were the central theme of the article and not an independent variable among others; if the article was published from 2001 to 2020; if the representation of violence referred to urban, domestic, and school violence, whose results were expressive, were not considered. There was no disciplinary restriction at first in view of the interdisciplinary nature of the theme.

Thus, the search for descriptors resulted in about 1000 articles, 96 of which were selected based on the listed criteria. This set of articles served as a starting point for a literature review that, at this moment, was neither intended to be systematic nor exhaustive, but based on a critical perspective of the traditional way of the reviews, aimed to offer a new analytical framework for the “fear of crime” (JESSON; MATHESON; LACEY, 2011). The key studies within the Latin American context were chosen based on the construction of a bibliographic citation database that was intended to perform a scientific network analysis<sup>8</sup> (WHITE, 2017). The manual work of building this database allowed me to identify both some works and some authors who were a constant presence in the bibliographies. Thus, the *snowball strategy* was followed, and for each central text, other works that were directly or indirectly related were identified. In this way, books and book chapters became part of the reading set, which before would have been only articles. The same strategy was used to select the articles from the Anglo-Saxon context, especially considering their exemplarity and centrality in the main issues of the topic, with the review by Hale (1996) as the starting point.

In this way, the search for studies took place until the saturation of what came to be structured as the *analytic gradient of "fear of crime,"* whose construction aims to understand how studies design fear as an object of research. This will be done from a continuum of fear from the emotional response to social representations, in this case, expressed in conjunction with what has been conventionally called urban violence. In this respect, we will justify why Latin America is a relevant research universe to think about this kind of fear.

### **Social accumulation of violence (and fear) in Latin America**

In this section, the relation between fear and urban violence is explored in the Latin American context. Violence can be understood, among other possibilities, as a category to be studied from the multiple practical manifestations of its social representations<sup>9</sup> (MACHADO DA SILVA, 2004; MISSE, 1999; PORTO, 2006). For those who understand urban violence in this way, it is not possible to find an objective definition for it, but actions *classifiable* as violent (WERNECK, 2012). In this sense, Misse (1999) suggests that there is a cumulative and cyclical incorporation of violence in social representations, which, over time, sediments signs of a diffuse danger. In this way, the author provides us with two concepts to relate fear and urban violence: *the social accumulation of violence* and *the ghost of urban violence*, respectively.

In this text, the concept of the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999) provides the basis for addressing relevant moments of violence on the continent, as recent appropriations have shown (MISSE, 2019b), which, in my view, make it possible to turn the process described by this analytical tool into a specificity of fear in this region of the world.<sup>10</sup> At the level of representation, fear would not be a consequence of so-called urban violence but a constituent part of what makes it a substantive, an active social actor for the conformation of imaginaries about people and places. Fear and violence, at this level of analysis, are mixed in the figure of a single haunting.

Thus, for the most part, I prefer to refer only to violence because it has a broader meaning than crime (MISSE, 1999). In this sense, the complex condition of violence in Latin American cities becomes relevant when trying to understand the fears associated with it. For Kruijt and Koonings (2002), violence is a fundamental historical condition in the development of Latin American societies. They periodize it into three moments, *traditional violence*, experienced in the 19th and early 20th centuries, whose use was aimed at conforming the traditional, rural, oligarchic order; *political violence*, marked by the populism and authoritarianism of the 20th century, which was aimed at conserving power; and *post-authoritarian violence*, whose legacy of terror from

the previous period did not allow democracy to ameliorate violence, instead, it “democratized” its use in everyday life.

Some authors in recent years have offered elements to advance the understanding of this *post-authoritarian violence* (KRUIJT; KOONINGS, 2002) in Latin America. For Briceño-León (2007), for example, there are three levels of analysis to understand its multifaceted aspect: the macro, the meso, and the micro-social. In the more structural dimension, there is profound social inequality; the homogeneous expectations and the heterogeneous possibilities of achieving them; and the loss of importance of the religious institution, as well as the changing roles of the family. At the meso-social level, the author addresses the dizzying growth of Latin American cities in the 20th century, increasing the density of poor areas and urban segregation; the culture of masculinity; and the changes in the drug market, especially in the ways retailers act. And finally, on a situational level, as facilitators of violence, the author points to the increase in firearms; alcohol consumption; and the difficulties of verbal expression of feelings. Misse (2019a, 2019b), in turn, believes that Latin America experiences, from the analysis of violence, a more extensive issue between state and society: a disjunction. Although among the countries there are specificities, there is in common among them an inability of the states and their institutions of repression and justice in the control and legal processing of crime. The source of this disjunction would be the high levels of social inequality and poverty, also pointed out by Briceño-León (2007), responsible for putting in jeopardy the state sovereignty and legitimacy through, among others, the advantageous acquisitive alternatives of illegal markets.

An issue that cuts across these perspectives is citizenship or the vacuum of it. The big Latin American cities were considered before the 1950/60 decades as the place of rights, where people would not be subjected to others as in the countryside, but only to the law (BRICEÑO-LEÓN, 2007). The continuity of inequality and violence contributes to the erosion of these expectations (BRICEÑO-LEÓN, 2007) and the weakening of democracy itself, which can even be characterized as “without citizenship” (HOWARD; HUME; OSLENDER, 2007). Thus, contrary to expectations, these Latin American cities have become a place of vulnerability and danger, in which such violence rewrites the conditions of citizenship by creating *potential victims*<sup>11</sup> and new subjectivities out of fear (ROTKER, 2002). Instead of attesting to its complete absence, Venezuelan Susana Rotker (2002) replaces that imaginary whose laws would be trusted with what she calls *the citizenship of fear* because, according to her, the latter is one of the most believable elements of everyday life in cities.

It is well known that Euro-American studies of the topic have long ruled out a simple and direct correlation between violent crime and fear. However, knowledge about it in terms

of *crime talk* (CALDEIRA, 2000), the *grammar of violence* (MACHADO DA SILVA, 2010; WERNECK; TALONE, 2019), or the *ghost of urban violence* (MISSE, 1999) makes Latin America a region in which this relationship could be nuanced from every day as well as a socio-historical point of view. According to Téllez (2015), the countries with the highest homicide rates are the same ones that perceive insecurity as their main problem. In this way, Latin American figures give indications that the imbrication between urban violence and fear would need a differentiated comprehensive approach because of its high degree.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in a 2013 report entitled *Citizen Security with a Human Face* that aimed to address fear, insecurity, and violence in Latin America, while other regions of the world from 2000 to 2010 decreased or stabilized homicide rates, in Latin America, this crime rose 12%. In this decade, more than a million people lost their lives in this context; 65% of the people reported that they stopped going out at night because of insecurity and 13% felt the need to move. This 13% are equivalent to 74.8 million people, or the entire population of Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay combined. Among the 18 countries analyzed by UNDP (PNUD, 2013), 11 showed a homicide rate higher than 10 per 100,000 inhabitants, which is considered an epidemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). And robbery, in the last 25 years, has become the most common offense in Latin America, one in five residents of the region said they had been victims of this type of crime in the year preceding the survey. It is worth noting that six out of 10 robberies are violent.

Therefore, common crime is considered the main threat, ahead of organized crime and gangs (PNUD, 2013); insecurity, in line, is considered the biggest public problem faced by residents in the region (DAMMERT; SALAZAR, 2017; FOCÁS; KESSLER, 2015). However, UNDP (PNUD, 2013) reaffirms other studies in the sense that violence is unevenly distributed across the Latin American territory, increasing the importance of local analyses. And even though it is often a specifically situated problem, violence, fear, and insecurity transcend these spaces and become an element of urban life in general, the urban narrative itself makes things less deterministic, but still related when we think about maps and strategies for navigating and using Latin American cities (AVENDAÑO, 2017; NIÑO, 2002), which are known to be “divided” even with the territorial coexistence of distinct social classes (GLEBBEEK; KOONINGS, 2016). Therefore, at least in the last three decades, Latin American urbanization has become synonymous with violence and fear (GLEBBEEK; KOONINGS, 2016).

Thus, it would be relevant to think about how to consider how fear associated with violence is studied without underestimating all these processes common to the daily lives of most Latin

Americans. In other words, it seems fruitful to structure an organization of literature that encompasses the specificities of the studies located in Latin America. With this purpose, I propose an interpretation of the studies on the “fear of crime” from what I have been presenting as a spectrum of fear, which should, in the Latin American context, be attentive to its distinctive content: the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999).

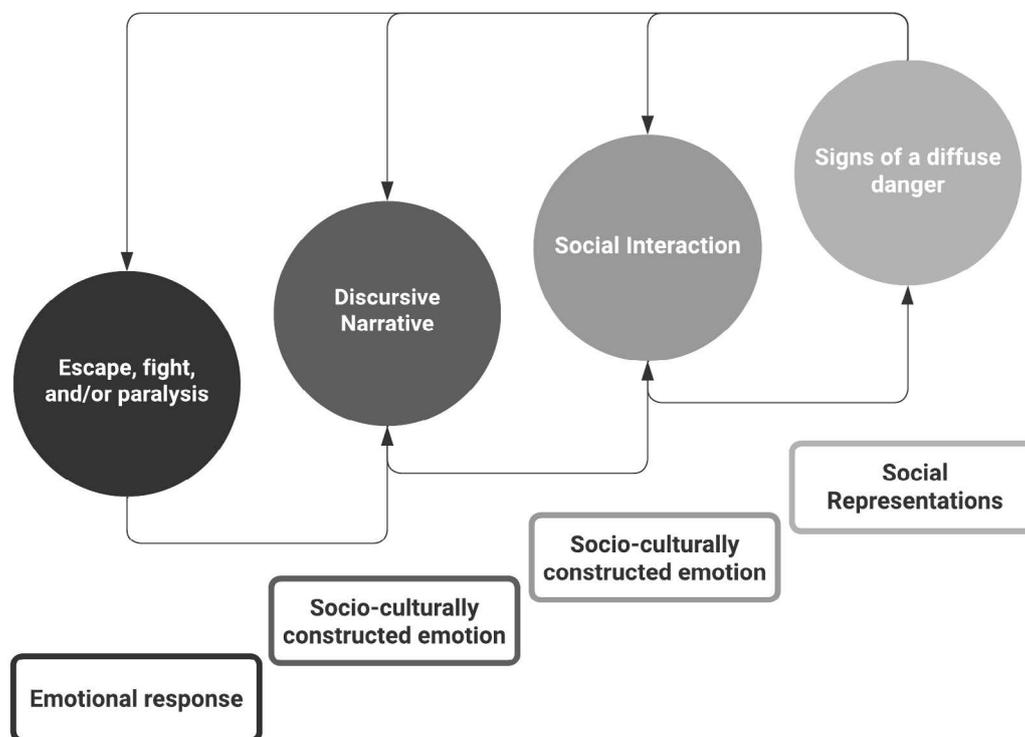
### **The analytic gradient of “fear of crime”**

Fear will be seen within a *continuum* whose social actors are inserted in spaces in which they share and accumulate information about violence. Thus, fear would be changeable in analytical terms, sometimes being an emotional response, sometimes a socioculturally constructed emotion in which it is allowed to establish discourses and interact with other actors, until, finally, it can be seen as social representation, that is, signs of a diffuse danger that makes it a constitutive aspect of violence itself and not a mere consequence as is commonly thought. The flowchart 1 summarizes these ideas in a diagram, and its explanation below allows us to expand on its intentions.

Gradient could be the gradual variation in the shades of color, from the most intense to the least intense. Following this logic for fear associated with crime and violence, it is possible to understand that the same substance (fear) assumes different forms according to the level of analysis of the phenomenon. As there is a wide range of definitions for the term fear, it is more productive to think of it within this continuum. For some studies, fear would be a negative reaction to environmental stimuli (FERRARO, 1995), which, even admitting the social character of the phenomenon, would not extend these notions to emotions, analyzing fear from the point of view of an emotional response, emphasizing, most of the time, its natural aspect. By understanding emotions as sociocultural constructs (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990; LE BRETON, 2019), it is possible to access fear either through its discursive expression when ordering the world after a criminal event (vicarious or otherwise) (KESSLER, 2009), as well as in social interaction, in negotiation and conflict, when actors act according to the expectations of others in defined situations (KOURY, 2002; LE BRETON, 2019; LIBERATORI, 2019). These concrete experimentations, expressions, and actions reverberate in the production of a set of signs and beliefs about people and spaces as dangerous (BARBERO, 2003; DAMMERT, 2004; ROTKER, 2002), making the urban a place of distrust (TALONE, 2015), in which cities, as active social actors, are confused with truthful *ghosts of urban violence* (MISSE, 1999), responsible for constituting the subjectivities of those who experience them daily. The very constitution of these representations of fear contributes to a vicious cycle, which in the Latin American context, brings profound consequences for institutions (KRUIJT;

KOONINGS, 2002; MISSE, 1999), city sociability (DAMMERT, 2004; SEGURA, 2009), citizenship (PNUD, 2013; ROTKER, 2002; RUIZ, 2007), and the quality of public space (CALDEIRA, 2000).

Flowchart 1 – The analytic gradient of “fear of crime”



Source: Author's.

Thus, while other organizations on the topic of “fear of crime” have started from theoretical (DAMMERT, 2012; FARRALL; JACKSON; GRAY, 2009; HALE, 1996; HENSON; REYNS; 2015; JACKSON; GOUSETI, 2012; KESSLER, 2009; RADER, 2004), methodological (DITTON et al., 1999; FARRAL et al., 1997), political (FARRALL; LEE, 2008; LEE, 1999), analytical (MORQUECHO; VIZCARRA, 2008), psychological (GABRIEL; GREVE, 2003), or specifically on criminological issues in Latin America (DAMMERT; SALAZAR, 2017) aspects, this study took as a cornerstone how the analyzed studies has constructed emotion as a research object. It is from this key element that the studies were positioned on the *analytic gradient*.

In the following, each “tone” of this *analytic gradient* will be discussed. Works from the Anglo-Saxon and Latin American contexts will be used to support the argumentation of the proposal. These studies do not exhaust the production of either context used but make it possible to reflect the structure of “fear of crime” as a research topic.

### *Escape, fight, and/or paralysis*

The point entitled *emotional response* (Flowchart 1) had as its main characteristic the shared understanding that fear is an emotional *reaction*. This made it possible to group virtually all traditional studies of this topic whose strong criminological tendency approximates such emotion to its psychological manifestation (BOX; HALE; ANDREWS, 1988; FERRARO; LAGRANGE, 1987; GAROFALO, 1981; LAGRANGE; FERRARO; SUPANCIC, 1992; SKOGAN, 2012; WARR, 2000). From this point of view, it is interesting to note that, even in studies in which the conditions of fear construction contemplate multivariate aspects such as ecology, culture, and society, fear, in the condition of emotion, is seen primarily by its corporal bias even if its consequences for the social fabric are considered (BORGES, 2011; CAMINHAS, 2010; FERRARO, 1995; SILVA; BEATO, 2013; VILLARREAL; SILVA, 2006). That is, it is the unfolding of the individual experimentation of emotion that can affect the quality of public space and community life, this power is not in the emotion itself, as we will see is possible from its sociocultural construction in the next section (SOARES, 2021).

Admittedly, this is a generalized interpretation. I use it here to organize the *analytic gradient of “fear of crime”* and, as is true for any model, it does not faithfully represent the reality in which studies can move more fluidly across divisions. This understanding is important to demarcate that the characterization of fear as an emotional response does not cover all the studies in this section but does justice to the selected body of studies.

Furthermore, it was thought that the way the documents are arranged could answer these questions in the introduction about the relation between the already traditional production on the subject in the Anglo-Saxon context and the Latin American one. It is therefore relevant to note how Latin American works have joined these discussions. A characteristic of these seminal (Anglo-Saxon) studies is their quantitative methodology, something that does not have the same strength in Latin American studies. Moreover, most Latin American studies share a broader understanding of this phenomenon, which is not only related to criminal dynamics but to insecurities that are part of modernization (BECK, 2010; CASTEL, 2004). The bottom line is that the Latin American studies processed in this study tend to incorporate the critical view that Farrall and Lee (2008) have called the qualitative turn (SOARES, 2021). In accordance with the proposal of this study, it is possible to identify certain characteristic features that authors from this region bring to the discussions on the topic.

In total, four considerations could be made with this in mind: two on the explanations for the occurrence of the phenomenon, one on the proposals for political strategies of reduction, and another of a technical nature, resuming the methodological tendencies of the region.

Backward, it would be possible to say that, although it is more common for the theme of fear to be treated in a qualitative and even theoretical way in Latin America, this does not mean that there are no quantitative studies based on surveys (SOARES, 2021). They do not have the same hegemony of the Euro-American context but they are an expressive number, despite difficulties (SOARES, 2021). However, unlike the traditional national surveys in this other part of the world, few Latin American countries have these standardized instruments with constant periodicity. Studies sometimes use smaller samples such as cities or neighborhoods to support the application of questionnaires and it is not uncommon to have mixed studies, as recommended by Hale (1996) (SOARES, 2021).

Taking these difficulties into consideration, Quinteros et al. (2019) becomes fruitful for pointing out the continuity of vices long criticized in other contexts (DITTON et al., 1999; FARRALL et al., 1997) in one of the most consolidated victimization surveys in the region, ENUSC, in Chile. An extra complicating factor is brought about by the Brazilian reality: the existence of institutional difficulties for the construction of a national, methodologically standardized, periodic survey (BORGES, 2011; CATÃO, 2008; ZILLI; MARINHO; SILVA, 2014); something that can be extended to other Latin American countries. Chile, even with all the problems pointed out by Quinteros et al. (2019), would thus be one of the few exceptions in this Latin American picture.

Following the path in reverse, these discussions allow addressing the dimension of fear reduction, which differs from crime and violence reduction. The widespread disbelief in the institutions of justice and control, in fact, a disjunction between society and state (MISSE, 2019a, 2019b), tends to sediment long-lasting social processes that settle an increasingly broad social legitimacy to illegal conflict resolution alternatives, unlike in the Euro-American context, in which these claims are always related to the most conservative wings (FOCÁS; KESSLER, 2015). Because of this, Dammert and Malone's (2006) assertion that community policing strategies are more effective in ameliorating the "fear of crime"—even though police action on the urban fringes of Chilean cities is marked by the coexistence of ambivalent policies that contrast welfare and the excessive use of force (LUNEKE; DAMMERT; ZUÑIGA, 2022)—is substantial to demarcate that the stance of the *mano dura* of governments ends up being not only a driver of violence (MISSE, 2019a)—by fighting it with more violence, hitting mainly the poorest (MORELLATO; SANTOS, 2020)—but also a driver of fear.

Continuing the regression, now turning to the explanatory notes, the vicious cycle between co-opting knowledge about "fear of crime" for purposes of governmentality (LEE, 1999, 2001) and Latin American punitivism finds in media sensationalism an ally. The media, in general,

tend to be sensationalist (showing news in a decontextualized manner), conservative (making associations between poverty and criminality), and bloodthirsty, in the sense of reporting and/or showing cruel and visceral details of crimes (FOCÁS; KESSLER, 2015; FOCÁS; ZUNINO, 2019). Focás and Kessler (2015) say that, in Latin America, it is common for the entire country to be seen as dangerous. This particular statement throws light on a trait that can also be better explored in future studies: the vicarious role played by television (BARBERO, 2003). There are many countries in this region in which this medium has centrality and is also concentrated in the hands of a few families or groups. Programs known for televising police operations and criminal occurrences are part of the daily life of many Latin Americans, which can facilitate the creation of images that all the national territory is dangerous. Similar to the perception that the whole city is dangerous because of shootings (CAVALCANTI, 2008), these sensations of insecurity end up depending on how people relate these events to their realities and identities (CAVALCANTI, 2008; FOCÁS; KESSLER, 2015; PAIN, 2000; SMITH; PAIN, 2008;). Thus, there is in Latin America the same difficulty as in other contexts to affirm the real role played by the media (FOCÁS; KESSLER, 2015); although this does not exclude its participation in the vicious cycle mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph.

The last theoretical note ties all these points addressed in the comparison between Latin American and Anglo-Saxon studies that deal with traditional discussions of the theme. The common perspective of understanding fear as a phenomenon socially constructed by varied social processes, in addition to the incorporation of the critiques made to the criminological mode of knowledge production on the subject, allows us to understand, in the Latin American perspective, the classic risk-fear paradox.<sup>12</sup> Take the paradigmatic Chilean case, which has the lowest crime rates but one of the highest levels of “fear of crime” in Latin America (DAMMERT; SALAZAR, 2017). By drawing on Dammert and Malone’s (2006) explanation that other insecurities that refer to social, economic, political, and civil well-being are as important as social cohesion, the physical environment, the media, and personal vulnerability in the construction of this type of fear, a condition is created that I have conventionally called, in light of the personal vulnerabilities common in explanations of the risk-fear paradoxes, *civil vulnerability*, which could also be seen in the key of *civil rights deficit* (CALDEIRA, 1991). In other words, it is possible to think, from the Chilean case, that even decreasing crime rates would require social and civil guarantees to feel safe. Also from Chile, Layera, Otero, and Perret (2020) support the idea that generalized “fear of crime” would be attenuated with social protections by the State. The full exercise of citizenship could contribute in this sense, but this is

negatively marked at the level of social representations by the Latin American authoritarian legacy (KRUIJT; KOONINGS, 2002) and/or by the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999). In any case, this issue of *civil vulnerability* should not be ignored by studies that aim to address the fear associated with crime and violence in this region of the world, whether quantitative or qualitative.

### *Discursive narrative and social interaction*

The second and third points in the diagram (Flowchart 1), in which fear is viewed from its sociocultural construction, are the core of the idea of the *analytic gradient of "fear of crime."* A series of events in terms of knowledge production made possible substantive changes in the way the problem of fear was posed. The criminological discipline itself actively participated in these changes, especially with the feminist movement (PAIN, 2000). Critical studies on the methodologies employed in measuring the "fear of crime" and on the very need to measure such a phenomenon have fined political elements inseparable from its production into it (DITTON et al., 1999; FARRALL et al., 1997; FARRALL; LEE, 2008; LEE, 1999, 2001; QUINTEROS et al., 2019). "Fear," moreover, becomes an umbrella concept, coming to symbolize all other emotions related to crime and violence, such as anger, rage, and others that refer to a hierarchical reorganization of the world shaken by criminal events, such as compassion and contempt (COELHO, 2010; DITTON et al., 1999; FARRALL; LEE, 2008). Fear, on the other hand, could be seen as the solidarity content of post-industrial society (BECK, 2010) or a chronic condition caused by the discrepancy between expectations of security and the actual conditions of providing it in contemporary society, in which case it is called insecurity (CASTEL, 2004).

In terms of organization, this research chose to position insecurity within the dimension of the expression of fear, especially from the work of Kessler (2009) and his characterization that such a concept would be a second-order fear, an accessible object of research as opposed to the emotional response. Nevertheless, this text reinforces the understanding that fear itself is, in addition to a discursive ordering, a social relation. Hence, whenever insecurity has been triggered has referred to the expression of fear in discourses or social interaction but never to a concept complementary to the notion of fear as a *psychological substance* (LE BRETON, 2019). Additionally, to this aspect of emotion, there is the possibility of even discussing the relation between power and knowledge in the appropriateness of the concept. The social sciences rename the phenomenon of fear as insecurity (FERNANDES; RÊGO, 2011) in an attempt to move it away from common sense but end up compacting it when it does not problematize the possibility of fear itself in the condition of emotion having a social and cultural agency relevant to

the functioning of society. The idea of the *analytic gradient* reinforces the sociological potency of fear and it is hoped that this may encourage future studies to draw upon it as an analytical category in the sociology of violence.

In any case, fear would be a characteristic trait of modernization. Thus, for some, “fear” continues to lead the concept because it is already established in the literature and to avoid even more theoretical dispersion (FARRALL; LEE, 2008). But with the *analytic gradient of “fear of crime,”* it is possible to say that its “phantasmagorical” condition, when related to the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999), privileges it, at least analytically, for its possibility to foster subjectivities at the level of representations through dread, which will be discussed further below.

Rather, I re-emphasize the cornerstone of the interpretation of this *analytic gradient*: the sociocultural construction of emotions. Starting in the 1980s, in which there is the organization of the field of studies of a founding theme of the social sciences such as emotions (HALBWACHS, 2009 [1947]; MAUSS, 1979 [1921]; VÍCTORA; COELHO, 2019; ZARIAS; LE BRETON, 2019), the essentialist definitions of the latter began to be contested either by naming these perspectives *substances* (LE BRETON, 2019) or as part of a Euro-American *ethnopsychology* (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990). Regardless, emotions are accepted as sociocultural constructs. This is qualitatively different from claiming that fear, as an emotion, would require social, environmental, and cognitive processes to be felt in the body. It would refer to imputing to the emotion itself an ability to also act in the world, whether through discourse or social interaction, through its ability to “define situations” in the face of the expectation of other social actors (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990; LE BRETON, 2019) or even, by being an action program (REGUILLO, 2002). In this way, it was possible to position the studies in which the “fear of crime” is expressed considering its ability to mobilize social discourses and practices.

In this case, among the Latin American studies addressed at this point of the *analytic gradient* and its relation to the degree of violence in this region, it is possible to make some notes. In social environments marked by deep inequality, as is the case of Latin America, two companions of fear, within the set of emotions aroused by violence, gain notoriety: compassion and anger.

In Brazil, Coelho (2010) demonstrates how the discourse of compassion mobilizes a specific emotional grammar that attempts to reestablish social hierarchies. Robbers, in his study, are seen by their interlocutors as inferior people either because of their ignorance about the “value” of the goods they steal or because of their fragile position in society, thus worthy of pity. This picture points to a separation between us and them, which is the driving force behind a series of justifications that allows the creation of physical and symbolic walls (CALDEIRA, 2000). The public space

is emptied, and the private space is valued, the quality of social life is affected, especially in terms of citizenship (CALDEIRA, 2000). A configuration that strengthens the notion of *civil vulnerability*, as will be expanded on in the considerations on the last point of the *analytic gradient*.

In Argentina, there are economic and political crises, as well as media events on criminal dynamics that offer distinct contours to insecurity and fear (FOCÁS; ZUNINO, 2019; SEGURA, 2009). Some authors from that country, moreover, relate these themes to neoliberal policies (PEGORARO, 2000; RANGUGNI, 2010). In another way, the Argentinian Liberatori (2019) sees the other face of the process presented by Coelho (2010) in Brazil by understanding that emotions can also be a social relationship. When it is understood how these young people seen “from the top down” react, anger becomes an emotion felt “from the bottom up” by demonstrating dissatisfaction with social injustices and structural disadvantages of this portion of the population recurrently stigmatized either by ethnicity or territory; a situation that, in some cases, can lead to delight in transgressing the norm (PRADO, 2020). Thus, the possibility opens up for fear to be performed with the purpose of resistance, of power reversal in this social interaction (LIBERATORI, 2019).

This double face of fear, the verification of a relationship between fearful subjects and objects of fear in some Latin American cities, can highlight, on the one hand, the need to have practical strategies to reduce the risks of committing crimes based on social norms (GRILLO; MARTINS, 2020) or psychological violence (CAMINHAS; BEATO FILHO, 2020) and, on the other hand, the internalization of conflicts in everyday life, a subject I will address next. In Rio de Janeiro, based on the ethnographies of Cavalcanti (2008) and Talone (2015), fear would not be a paralyzing element of social life but something that already has a grammar to continue the course of actions. Whether by the “reading of the climate of the slum” and the imminence of the shooting (CAVALCANTI, 2008) or by the devices, among them avoidance, that distrust about certain social categories provides to social actors in interaction (TALONE, 2015). Both possibilities are influenced by a sense that danger is pervasive, that there is a *ghost of urban violence* (MISSE, 1999) capable of erupting conflict at any instant. This situation leads us to discuss the last point of the *analytic gradient* in which there is an intertwining between Latin American cities, violence, fear, and citizenship. The combination of these elements is crossed by the understanding that cities are not mere frames for manifestations of urban violence and fear but part of specific urbanization processes that constitute such manifestations and give them historicity (PAVONI; TULUMELLO, 2020), allowing us to think about how entire cities are seen as violent, that is, haunted by *ghosts of urban violence* (MISSE, 1999) or immersed in “atmospheres” of fear (PAVONI; TULUMELLO, 2020).

In the first place, it is worth pointing out the analytical capacity that ethnographies have acquired with the possibilities opened up by the valorization of the understanding and interpretation of fear at the local level, contextualized spatially and temporally. This is perhaps one more feature of Latin American studies in the face of the difficulties and criticisms to the use of surveys in the region, which can be positive in terms of theoretical creativity for the theme. In any case, future studies cannot devalue the ethnographic potency of fear in this region, as has been attested in others (PAIN, 2000), which also makes it possible to reflect on how fear associated with violence can contribute to an anthropology of abolition (ALVES, 2022), considering the complex relationships between fearful subjects and objects of fear in some contexts.

### *Signs of a diffuse danger*

In the last point of the *analytic gradient*, finally, the roots of the condition of *civil vulnerability* will be discussed with the notion of violence as a social representation that becomes a diffuse social subject, a *ghost* (MISSE, 1999). One of the many attributions of a *ghost* would be precisely its capacity to haunt, which brought fear to this same analytical level.

From the way this body of work analytically designs fear, it is possible to clarify how the previous steps of the *gradient* are at the same time conditions and realizations of the *imaginaries of fear*<sup>13</sup> (CARRIÓN; NÚÑEZ, 2006). The *blocks of meaning* (PORTO, 2006) shared about violence are fruits of long-lasting social processes, which in the Latin American context end up devaluing the democratic rule of law and its precious notion of citizenship. The cycles of violence, in other words, suffer metamorphoses and are cumulative (MISSE, 1999). In this way, state violence and its authoritarian legacy are one of the defining features of the representation of fear in the region (KRUIJT; KOONINGS, 2002). The aspect of devaluing the life of a portion of the population accompanies these social processes, legitimizing torture<sup>14</sup> (JESUS; GOMES, 2021) and death of some subjects (MISSE, 1999; 2010) through normative frameworks, which in some territories can mix elements of crime, the state, and religion (BERALDO, 2021). Thus, beliefs about the danger (BATISTA, 2003; BORGES, 2011) of these subjects and the spaces which they inhabit are gestated (AVENDAÑO, 2017; CARRIÓN; NÚÑEZ, 2006; NIÑO, 2002), that is, the social elements necessary for the experience of fear in the body, as a reaction to socioculturally constructed external stimuli, as well as for its expression through discourses and social practices. On the other hand, it is at this microsocial pole that the actualizations of dread take place, mainly because of the metamorphoses experienced by violence that accumulate socially.

In this sense, Latin American cities, especially large metropolises, acquire the capacity to be the meeting point of this cycle of the *analytic gradient*. They concentrate the central elements of these processes: inequality, poverty, and social exclusion (BRICEÑO-LEÓN, 2007). At the same time, they are fragmented and force close coexistence between social classes (GLEBBEEK; KOONINGS, 2016). A coexistence that is contaminated by fear and the fear of encounters between those who are different. Thus, one of the most vivid characteristics of cities (SIMMEL, 1979) is constantly denied and, along with it, the notion of citizenship (CALDEIRA, 2000; DAMMERT, 2004; ROTKER, 2002; SEGURA, 2009).

This segregation has both physical aspects, with *fortified enclaves* (CALDEIRA, 2000) and symbolic aspects, with the negative valuation of public spaces as *labyrinths of fear* (DAMMERT, 2004). There would be a *topology of fear* (SEGURA, 2009) responsible for attributing insecurity to places as people move away from home. This whole set becomes even more complex when this massive devaluation of public space, justified through fear, is related to the consolidation of democracy and the guarantee of civil rights (CALDEIRA, 2000; DAMMERT, 2004). In this way, the denial of the city is also the denial of citizenship (CALDEIRA, 2000; DAMMERT, 2004). According to Beato (2019), Latin American cities share a *Hobbesian fear*, in this case, it is as if there is no longer “the pact” for the safety and well-being of all. The advancement of the privatization of spaces and security itself seems to reinforce this notion, especially when social homogeneity is the justification used in these exclusionary processes (CALDEIRA, 2000; DAMMERT, 2004; PNUD, 2013). Currently, what we share, as Latin Americans, would be *citizenship of fear* (ROTKER, 2002).

In Latin America, the trajectory of fear related to violence is marked by a complex articulation based on historical sedimentation. The State acquires singular importance because of its exacerbated use of force, whether in the distant past, the recent past, or even the present (KRUIJT; KOONINGS, 2002). The social processes responsible for the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999) reinforce the idea that this path of fear has its political part, but also the social one given the progressive devaluation of state institutions of social control and justice and the lives of *criminal subjects* (MISSE, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2019b). Barrios (2017) is the one who argues that these two trajectories, the authoritarian legacy and the social processes, which could, in my view, be described through the *social accumulation of violence* (MISSE, 1999), compete for the fear of the population. The arbitrariness and geopolitical interests (RODRIGUES, 2021)<sup>15</sup> of both the states and armed groups—although the latter are a heterogeneous category, with political and economic differences in criminal governance (BRICEÑO-LEÓN; BARREIRA; AQUINO, 2022), which make it difficult to divide state and

non-state actors (GLEBBEEK; KOONINGS, 2016)—would be contemporary ways of amplifying Latin American fear. This is in general, but each place has its specificities in the constitution of the shared figures of fear given the contingent condition of this emotion.

This last section, then, concatenated an approach to the city, violence, and fear. And citizenship was put into the discussion to think about how the aspect of social representations attributes to fear a cyclical (or spiral) character in social life. This would be a reflexive passage from a look at how studies analytically access fear, used to build the structure of the *analytic gradient*, to a discussion about the results of these studies responsible for thinking about the very analytical potential latent in this proposal. The social representation of fear would be, thus, the last stage of the idea of this *analytic gradient*, but not the endpoint, because in this stage subjectivities are also constituted and individuation processes occur and we return to the starting point, to the body and its physiological reaction whose identification of imminent or imagined danger makes fear be *felt on the skin*.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, all this configuration could be described as another specific feature of “fear of crime” in Latin America, that is, its capacity of articulation among distinct social processes that reinforce the very endemic condition (KRUIJT; KOONINGS, 2002) of violence in the region, mainly because of the fostering of subjectivities that undermine the citizen culture.

### **Concluding remarks**

By way of conclusion, I must say that my initial research motivation, prior to writing this study, was a flawed task in itself: understanding how “fear of crime” is conceptually worked out in Latin America. Understanding, with Le Breton (2019), the idea that all affective translations from one time or society to another is dangerous and tends toward ethnocentrism, there is no way to say that this goal could be successfully achieved, seeing the variability of meanings that fear assumes in space and time and in each region of the world, be it countries, cities, or neighborhoods. This search for conceptual clarification has proved analytically fruitless, as once had been signaled as the ultimate goal of research (HALE, 1996). Although fear still seems to be strongly related to its psychological explanation, both by common sense and by scientific research, there is a multiplicity of theoretical syntheses of its social and cultural meaning, as we have been able to observe throughout this work. So, better than trying to reach a common point is to try to respect how each place can make use of this category in social practices and how each researcher approaches the object, with its potential and limits.

Thus, this study did not aim to conduct an exhaustive systematic review of the literature (JESSON; MATHESON; LACEY, 2011); in fact, the idea was to offer an analytical organization

rather than a conceptual or methodological one, as well as to bring the discussion of fear to the sociological field. The *analytic gradient of “fear crime,”* consequently, should be seen as a framework for reviewing and organizing studies, with emphasis on the Latin American context, of this specific type of fear associated with crime and violence.

Moreover, the *analytic gradient* is a way to reinforce the polysemic character of fear not only in language but mainly in the analytical dimension of sociology; being it in the body, in expression, in interaction, or social representations. Its main goal, therefore, is to serve as a basis for future studies on the topic to acquire greater clarity of where their respective analyses are positioned among the varied possibilities for explaining, understanding, and interpreting fear. This goal will be achieved if only this work serves to potentiate fear itself as a useful category for studying both micro and macro sociological aspects of crime and violence, especially in Latin America.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Fear of crime” is used in quotation marks throughout the text because it is seen as a social construction. A concept that sometimes extrapolates both fear itself, when other emotions become important depending on the context, and crime, when violence also serves as input for the phenomenon through varied social and cultural processes.

<sup>2</sup> A constant that is not mutable in space and time, occurring in the same way for every human species (LE BRETON, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> In the meaning of Bourdieu (1989).

<sup>4</sup> According to Gabriel and Greve (2003, p. 604): “The question of what to subsume under the term “behavior” might be answered by assuming the visible behavior to reflect a motive (action tendency)”.

<sup>5</sup> The aforementioned project is a personal research agenda for building a reflective view of “fear of crime” studies in Latin America capable of providing theoretical and analytical organization propositions (as this text aims to do) and quantitative parameters related to co-citation, countries of empirical analysis and publication, level of analysis (neighborhood, city, country), adopted theoretical and methodological perspectives, and used research techniques, something that a future study will expose.

<sup>6</sup> The “e” corresponds to “AND” in the SciELO search field.

<sup>7</sup> The asterisk allows you to find terms with different suffixes. In the case of crime, it is possible to also find criminality, criminal, and criminalization, for example.

<sup>8</sup> In future research, these networks will be exposed and discussed.

<sup>9</sup> Social representations are understood as *blocks of meaning* (PORTO, 2006), in which it is possible to act, give meaning, and understand social actions.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to point out that the concept was constructed to deal specifically with the city of Rio de Janeiro. However, it is possible to use it as an analytical tool to discuss other contexts, something that has recently been done in some Latin American countries with high rates of violence, such as Mexico and Colombia (MISSE, 2019b).

<sup>11</sup> Potential victims are from all social classes. They are all those who go out and feel that something might happen because they no longer believe or trust anything; everything is out of control (ROTKER, 2002, pp. 16-17).

<sup>12</sup> Regarding the risk-fear paradox in “fear of crime” studies, usually in quantitative ones, the disparity between the “objective” probability of being victimized and the population’s level of fear is discussed.

<sup>13</sup> A type of social representation of fear. They “are the product of a social dialectic that synthesizes, in reality, the perceptions of insecurity with urban policies oriented to the organization of the city space” (CARRIÓN; NÚÑEZ, 2006, p. 8, author’s translation).

<sup>14</sup> According to Jesus and Gomes (2021), the social expectations resulting from this process can paradoxically cause the organs of justice and social control to perpetuate anti-democratic elements, such as torture against certain people: young black males

living in peripheral areas such as favelas, which is recognized as the Brazilian profile that suffers most from violence (RIBEIRO; CANO, 2016; WAISELFISZ, 2012; ZILLI; VARGAS, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> These interests based on differential control, mainly by the state, of favela territories, attribute contingent meanings to political commodities (MISSE, 2007) involved in illegalism, which puts tension in the common use of the term “necropolitics” to address the deaths of criminal subjects in these contexts (RODRIGUES, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> This interpretation simultaneously attributes to the studies in this part of the analytical gradient the indication that social representations of fear affect people’s subjectivities and recognizes that this possibility is central to expanding the analytical proposal of this article to a way of observing empirical reality.

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