Abstract

Crime and citizen security have become in the past decades one of the most important problems in the public and governmental agendas of Latin American nations, and in particular in Argentina, especially concerning urban areas. This issue underlies the essence of all democratic regimes, and in this sense, of the respect of civic-political and socioeconomic rights, and of the rule of law. Being the construction of a peace and citizen security culture one of the essential pillars for the effective existence of a democratic regime, the issues of citizen security and crime become fundamental, especially with regards to the construction of social capital.

Nonetheless, despite the increasing interest in the subject on behalf of governmental, academic and media sectors, and despite the numerous projects currently being implemented, it is still imperative to deepen the comprehension of certain fundamental aspects in order to obtain a more rigorous conceptualisation of this issue and, thus, be able to elaborate more effective public policies.

This research focuses on the articulation between the debates on trust and fear of crime in order to incorporate to the debate on citizen insecurity a deeper understanding. In this sense, we intend to comprehend the subjective dynamics of the different types of trust currently verifiable among the resident population of the City of Buenos Aires in those aspects related to fear of crime. In particular, the dimensions analysed (and from which we outlined the trust profiles of our object population) are: neighbour trust, citizen trust, police trust and institutional trust. The contribution of this research is thus double: on the one hand, it opens a new theoretical approach for public policy studies from a perspective that incorporates both the subjective and the foundations of public and civic life; on the other hand, it offers an unprecedented set of empirical information on the current situation of our object population related to the issue of fear of crime.

In sum, we intend to respond to the question of what types of trust profiles do we currently find in the City of Buenos Aires in the dimensions related to fear of crime.

This research combines a set of quantitative and qualitative methods, which are triangulated at the end. The first uses a victim survey of 23,958 cases, of a random and stratified sample with sex and age quotas, carried out in the City of Buenos Aires during the period under study; the second entails the field work and analysis of semi-structured interviews with theoretical sampling.