Mando único: Centralizing Public Insecurity: An analysis of Mexico’s Police Reforms

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Friday, September 26, 2014: a group of nearly one hundred students from a rural teachers' college in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, traveled ninety miles to Iguala where they were viciously attacked by police. Oddly enough, the students had traveled to Iguala to raise money for a trip to Mexico City, to attend a demonstration in memory of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, in which hundreds of unarmed students were killed or wounded by both the military and police.\(^1\) After nightfall municipal police attacked three groups of the students at three different local events. Amnesty International (AI) reports “State and federal police, as well as the military, witness the attacks without protecting the students.”\(^2\) The municipal police then began to fire on the students, which resulted in the extrajudicial execution of six people with twenty-five others injured and the arrest and forced disappearance of forty-three others. Emiliano Navarrete, the father of a victim recited the phone call he had with his son during the incident, and after inquiring what was happening, his son replied, “Dad, we're being attacked by the police. They already shot my friend. He's lying on the floor. He was shot in the head.”\(^3\)

Later it was alleged that the Mayor directly ordered the attack to prevent the students from further interfering with a political event downtown. On his orders, municipal police arrested and turned over the victims to the Guerreros Unidos, a ruthless criminal organization affiliated with the Mayor and his wife. The State Attorney General announced that the students were likely killed and incinerated by the Guerreros Unidos and their remains scattered.\(^4\) In looking for the remains of the forty-three missing, authorities uncovered over 60 mass graves with over 300 unidentified victims in Guerrero.\(^5\) Furthermore, video captured by cell phone reveals a few scenes from this tragic event reveals some of the aftermath including: clear sounds of screaming and gunfire as well as wounded and deceased victims lying near Municipal Police trucks.\(^6\)

This tragic provoked massive unrest in the country and the event continues to make international headlines, leading to enormous protests, strikes and acts of civil disobedience throughout the country. On October 13, 2014 members from the teachers union blocked entry to an airport and seized the State Capital building in Chilpancingo and briefly held hundreds of state employees and civilians hostage. After releasing the hostages, they set part of the state assembly building on fire.\(^7\) One year later, President Peña Nieto is still facing the political fallout for this event and public disapproval has risen. It is no coincidence that directly following this event, President Peña Nieto, unveiled an ambitious series of Police reforms aimed to improve public security and reduce corruption through a centralization of law enforcement.

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\(^7\) Wills, Ken. "Protesters over Missing Students in Mexico Burn State Assembly." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, 13 Nov. 2014. Tue. 01 Dec. 201
The principal feature of the administration’s proposed reform is to centralize the country’s law enforcement apparatus through by creating a new state level model that has been widely dubbed a mando único, or single command. Peña Nieto’s plan assumes that the problem with police stems from a lack of coordination and control among the country’s estimated 1,800 municipal police departments and more than 165,000 local police officers. Mando Único requires a total centralization of state law enforcement, effectively folding municipal police departments into the country’s state-level police agencies. The administration’s justification for this centralization strategy is that a single chain of command at the state level will improve communication and performance, while also helping to reduce corruption. As of the midpoint of the sixth year in his term, the President has aimed to achieve enough political support for the proposal of mando único to make it mandatory. However, the federal government has encouraged municipalities and states to still adopt the mando único and implement this model on their own. During a November 9, 2015 speech in Michoacán, Secretary of the Interior Ministry, Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong, stated that while the federal government will still support all states, those that do not “commit and comply (to implement mando único) will no longer have financial backing.” Alluding to a possible reference to the subsidies that fund many of the state and municipal public security programs.

The research question posed in this paper examines the possible factors that reduce or improve police effectiveness and considers possible consequences of the application of mando único in Mexico. I will first consider several prevailing theories on how to improve police performance and efficiency in Mexico. After evaluating statistics on crime and policing, surveys on public safety, scholarly articles and books from regional experts, these data suggest that the real problem of police is not structural but one of institutional process. If Mexico wants to improve the performance and image of law enforcement, the government should consider transitioning from an emphasis on structural organization and instead focus solely on addressing institutional processes and procedures. I will analyze institutional variables that include: police pay, recruitment, promotion, and hours worked and compare them to the most recent statistics of crime for each of the thirty-one states and federal district. My aim with this task is to determine whether there is any correlation between enhancing these institutional factors and better policing.

Following the statistical analysis of various institutional variables, this paper will analyze Mexico’s current law enforcement system in light of current reform proposals and the underlying assumption that disorganization is the primary defect of Mexican policing. In order to analyze this claim, I will preform two case studies: the first is a qualitative case study that examines potential consequences of centralization in mando único and the second study will assess two Mexican entities that have already centralized their law enforcement, Morelos and Mexico City. Mando único assumes that the problem with police is structural in nature, and that the ineffectiveness and corruption of law enforcement results from a lack of centralization and coordination. To examine this claim I will consider three questions regarding mando único’s

10 “La Federación Retirá Respaldo a Estados Que No Tengan Mando único: Segob.” La Federación Retirá Respaldo a Estados Que No Tengan Mando único: Segob. CNN Mexico, 09 Nov. 2015. Tue. 01 Dec. 2015
justification for implementation: 1) Does centralization really improve coordination/or communication? 2) Does centralization really improve efficiency or performance? And 3) Does centralization really help limit abuses and corruption? I will outline them and then provide case study samples of police in Mexico City and Morelos in which departments have been centralized.

If there is any doubt that addressing law enforcement at an institutional level is worth pursuing, recent data compiled by the Mexican government reinforces the urgency. In 2014, 89.7% of citizens in a national poll identified law enforcement as the most corrupt institution in Mexico."¹¹ In 2015, the World Justice Project “ranked Mexico’s criminal justice system 93 out of 102 countries in its annual Rule of Law Index.”¹² A 2013 ENVIPE survey revealed that only 9.9% of crimes are reported.¹³ Furthermore, based on survey data from 2013, Mexico’s National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) estimates claim that 93.8% of all crimes committed in Mexico are never investigated."¹⁴ The most staggering statistic is that between December 2006 and August 2015, over 151,233 people have been killed and another 26,000 are missing as a result of enforced disappearances."¹⁵ Considering the public backlash against the events in Iguala as well as recent data suggesting that public security remains ineffective, President Peña Nieto is eager to reform law enforcement throughout Mexico. However, Mexico has an opportunity to improve its law enforcement by concentrating on bolstering local and state institutional variables, and can achieve better policing without having to centralize its command structure. If Mexico does not address these issues immediately, citizen’s confidence in the police and public security institutions will further decline and Mexico and the public will continue to feel unsafe.

**Evaluating Mando Único:**

*Mando único* literally translates to “Single Command” in English and of the current federal police reforms taking part in Mexico; it is the most significant and ambitious. *Mando único* is an attempt by the federal government to centralize the chain of command within Mexico’s law enforcement, and will transfer authority from the municipal to the state level. This is an enormous undertaking and will require extensive planning and funding to execute. The current administration asserts that implementing *mando único* is the best way to fight corruption at the municipal level while also improving the communication and coordination between various levels of law enforcement.

In order to carry out this reform, Mexico’s President, Enrique Peña Nieto has recommended making seven constitutional amendments to articles 21,73,104,105, 115,116 and

President Peña Nieto has attempted to rally support in the Congress bus thus far has failed to gain enough traction to make this a federal requirement. After a recent failed attempt to nationalize this program, the administration has recommended that all states implement it as soon as possible. When policy fails to be adopted through the Legislative branch, Mexico has in the past used threat of removing funding as a way to coerce implementation; Daniel Sabet notes, “the main tool to ensure compliance has been the threat of “turning off the tap of funds.” In recent months, the administration has made it clear that all states must adopt these reforms or they risk losing federal funding.

According to the Según Información del Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (SESNSP), as of May 2015, sixteen states had total (100%) municipal support along with signed contracts with SNSP to begin to implement mando único, ten states have municipal support ranging from 50-99% and in six states, fewer than 10% of municipalities have sign an agreement to implement mando único. The important outliers are: Baja California Sur with 0%, Hidalgo with 2%, Sonora, Guerrero, Veracruz with 10% each, Guanajuato with 30% and Oaxaca with 54%. This information is a bit misleading in that, just because they have signed onto this commitment does not mean that mando único has been implemented. In Guerrero for example, only 8 out of the 81 municipalities have signed the agreement and it is unclear how the state will proceed. In Morelos on the other hand, mando único has been implemented in close to 92% of its territory. Morelos is serving as the pilot program for this initiative and will serve as a good case study on how centralization might affect a state law enforcement and crime statistics.

Immediately after taking office the administration gave their first “hint” about their desire to centralize law enforcement, by “taking the immediate step of centralizing security decision-making power into the Interior Ministry. Coordination is a central element here: the National Program for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime is based on close coordination between the ministries of the Interior, Social Development, Health, Education, Economy, Employment, Communications and Transport, Agrarian Development and Finance.”

In his speech to congress promoting mando único, President Peña Nieto reiterated that Mexico needs a structural change in order to compensate for rising levels of violence and public insecurity. He writes that a major component of insecurity in Mexico is related to these structural issues, stating “at this time the structural causes that have diminished the capacity of the state to guarantee the effectiveness of the citizen’s liberty at the same time they have generated debilitating institutional in the subjects of policing which reigns in many municipalities of the country.”

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16 CNN MEXICO, Mando Unico policial y otras 10 claves del nuevo plan de seguridad de Peña. December 3, 2014  
and states that the transition would not be overly difficult because, many of the municipalities have below one hundred employees, which only account for 32% of the police force. However, the statistics presented seem to be misleading, as Mexico’s municipal police accounts for over 50.45% of the total police force according to Causa en Comun, and that of the municipalities that receive federal funding, they represent over 64% of Mexico’s total population.22

The president also alluded to the need to increase professionalization throughout Mexico’s law enforcement agencies. As part of mando único he has mentioned that the states must improve development of: minimum wage, gender inclusion, recruitment discipline, equipment and minimum standards of education. However, he did not offer any details or strategies on how to fund or implement this major task and instead, he stated that it is up to the state to offer police a good life and benefits.23 In fact, according to the most recent federal budget for 2016, the federal government has drastically cut the state allotted budget for public security at every level: municipal, state and federal. A recent article in AnimalPolitico reveals “for the first time in five years, the federal government cut resources that grants support to security to the states. In September 2015 The Director of Treasury sent the Mexican congress a 2016, decreasing almost $2.9 billion pesos of funds (about $175 million USD) and subsidiaries for public security in states.24 The government also cut $600 million pesos ($36 million USD) for the National Program of Crime Prevention, while also cutting the Attorney General’s resources by 92%. The majority of his speech is a pitch for mando único and it is clear with these budget cuts that his immediate intention is to reform the structural level, if the administration really wanted to create professionalism then they would invest in it.

As testament to the success of mando único, the administration continues to cite the drastic improvements witnessed in Morelos since the 2013 implementation of the policy. As of August of this year, the state reported to have been implemented in 91.5% of the state territory. Furthermore, on the official Morelos government website, they claim that since the implementation of mando único, the state has seen a reduction of crime, including: 20% reduction in armed robbery, kidnapping -21.5%, cattle rustling -57.7%, intentional homicide down 33.4%, violent auto theft -37.8%, violent armed robbery -34.6%.25

Mando único is not Mexico’s first attempt at centralizing state law enforcement. According to WOLA, “agencies have been created, disbanded, and rebranded; hundreds of thousands of agents have been trained and vetted; equipment has been upgraded and expanded. Yet Mexico’s police forces are still riddled with corruption, abuse, and ineffectiveness.”26 During the height of the Drug War in 2010, President Felipe Calderon centralized and militarized Mexico’s law enforcement by mobilizing the national army to police municipalities, a tactic still

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in use today. Calderon saw an opportunity to implement drastic new policy that would centralize law enforcement and as he argued, would reduce influence of the drug cartels. In 2010 Calderon attempted to implement *mando único*, citing the same arguments as Peña Nieto, and he too failed to convince the country and the congress of the policy’s merit.\(^{27}\) In regards to Calderon’s attempt at centralization, Dr. Sabet wrote, “While it is argued that the proposal will allow for improved coordination and facilitate reform implementation, it is hard not to see the proposal as just another restructuring without confronting the real challenges of police reform. The proposal would likely change “who” provides policing services rather than alter “how” those services are provided.”\(^{28}\) It’s hard to imagine that if *mando único* failed to garnish support during the bloodiest years of Mexican history, that it would hold enough support when the situation is normalizing.

**Current State of Police:**

In big production Hollywood movies like *Traffic*, Mexican law enforcement is often portrayed as colluding with organized crime and not afraid of abuse their power to get what they want. But unlike the movies, there is nothing fictional about the extent of corruption and abuse within the Public Security sector of Mexico. Public Safety Secretary General García Luna stated that “Organized crime pays some 1.27 billion pesos a month to municipal police, because that’s the portion of the salary the government does not pay the officers so they can live with dignity.”\(^{29}\) Mexico has the fifth largest police force in the world, while it is the eleventh most populous country in the world.\(^{30}\) There is estimated to be over 330,000 police officers in Mexico, divided into federal, state and municipal levels.\(^{31}\) Mexican police are currently divided into: two federal police departments, state police and nearly 1,800 municipal police departments, which are further divided by function. A decentralized, limited discretion model characterizes the current system, which “include constant rotation of personal (to prevent police from developing unhealthy commitments), deployment in large groups (to make it harder to arrange corrupt deals), restricted access to information, and reductions in authority. Ironically, these policies have not only failed to reduce corruption and abuse, they have had the unfortunate impact of turning the police into ineffective and reactive security guards.”\(^{32}\)

Federal police are in charge of investigations and any federal crime or act against the government, including drug trafficking and are under the direction of the Interior Ministry. Ministerial police, or state police, are in charge of investigating crimes and carrying out warrants under the direction of the state governor as well as state and judicial ministries. Municipal police are under the direction of the municipal Mayor and receive a large amount of their funding through the city budget, as well as federal subsidies in some cases. They are chiefly in charge of handling minor civic disturbances and traffic violations.

\(^{27}\) “Calderón Impulsa La Petición Para Crear Una Policía De Mando único.” CNN 06 Oct. 2010: n. pag.


\(^{29}\) "Mexico: Cartels Pay Corrupt Cops $100 Million a Month." *Latin American Herald Tribune* [Puerto Vallarta]


\(^{31}\) Meyer, Maureen, and Hannah Smith. "Mexico Must Prioritize Quality over Quantity in Judicial Reform Process." *Mexico Must Prioritize Quality over Quantity in Judicial Reform Process.* WOLA Advocay for Human RIghts in the Americas, 4 Sept. 2015. Web. 01 Dec. 2015. NOTE: Causa en Comun estimate the total number of police as 270,000, not 330,000 as listed in this report, might be due to private security being included as police.

According to *Causa en Comun*, in 2015 a state police officer in Mexico will earn on average $10,864 pesos per month, which is equivalent to about $655 USD per month. The vast majority of departments still require officers to work 24-hour shifts and have little opportunities for promotion within the department. As a point of reference, the average base teachers salary in Mexico was $25,153 pesos per month in 2014.

Finally, in 2015 there is an estimated: 132,715 federal and state police and 135,138 municipal police in Mexico. With a population estimated above 125,000,000 in 2015, this results in a total of 2.23 police per every 1,000 inhabitants in Mexico. According to the United Nations figures, “among advanced nations, there are on average 2.8 agents per every thousand resident.” Current police reforms seek to purge tens of thousands of more officers who were deemed unfit for duty, which would exacerbate this already low police to citizen ratio. The current state of law enforcement in Mexico has been improving through the last decade, but is still plagued with systemic and institutional shortcomings that have prevented meaningful police reform.

**Alternative Approaches to Reform:**

President Peña Nieto’s administration asserts that centralization of law enforcement under *mando Único* is necessary to improve efficiency and coordination and in an effort to reduce corruption. In order to better understand the implications of this strategy it is imperative to develop a clear understanding of theories of good policing and centralized policing around the world. The Canadian Department of Justice has defined centralized police service as “one which is characterized by close control exerted by headquarters over all policing activities within that agency's jurisdiction. A centralized service may have several geographic divisions within its region; however, they are not autonomous, and all operations, policy, procedure, and programming are closely controlled by the central administration.”

There are many theories on centralization that can be applied to improve the performance and image of law enforcement. Kurtz examined how Taiwan has successfully reformed its law enforcement structure to account for a rise in organized crime. The author concludes that in order to combat this new illicit activity, Taiwan will benefit from a centralized police structure that will provide better uniformity and order to the community. However, he wrote, “a centralized police service makes sense, so long as the police are well-educated and officers are viewed as professional specialists. The weight of the research shows that college education has the desirable effects: higher aspirations, decreased dogmatism, decreased disciplinary problems, fewer community complaints, better treatment of minorities, more use of discretion, and greater

33 google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zoeT5Wa55RsY.kWTj3UKcBxZQ  Source: Causa en Comun
willingness to accept new techniques and procedures." (Kurtz, 1995). While Mexico is in a similar situation in terms of development and a rise of organized crime, data shows that the federal government continues to underinvest in developing the capacity of its recruits across most fields of law enforcement, until they address all institutional shortcomings, not just education, then centralization will not work.

In the United States, a resurgence of literature advocating for centralization of law enforcement has been written since the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Dr. Sunil Dutta, a seventeen-year veteran police officer from Los Angeles California, contends that the events in Ferguson are evidence that fragmented and decentralized law enforcement is not efficient or effective. He writes: “the real problem with law enforcement is far more systemic. Issues of unprofessional and inefficient policing are rooted in our decentralized approach to policing, allowing some local departments to get away with subpar officer training, shoddy practices and corruption. This fossilized and inefficient system needs to be thrown out. Instead, policing should be managed at the state level, which would provide for higher-quality law enforcement and more oversight.”

Dr. Dutta claims a decentralized system encourages bad policing and advocates giving the state control of law enforcement agencies, which will provide uniformity and oversight. However, while Dr. Dutta advocates for state control, he fails to recognize that historically many states (including Missouri) have perpetuated, not alleviated, problems for ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged citizens. Therefore, giving the state final control in the delegation of public security might lead to further marginalization for these communities. Additionally, polling suggests that the citizenry of Mexico does not trust their state government anymore than their municipal government and there is no indication that centralized state police are more efficient or less corrupt then local police, in fact, my data will demonstrate that there is little difference.

Similarly, a report entitled Police Centralization and Public Security in Mexico, Diego Esparza (2012) argues essentially for a mando único reform of police structure. He contends that Mexico should consider centralizing its law enforcement because the current decentralized system has perpetuated inefficiency and corruption. Esparza acknowledges that institutional reforms are important to any police department but that ultimately centralization is more important than other reform. Esparza provided data suggesting that centralized police are more “effective” than decentralized police. Diego Esparza compares public polling data between Columbia and Mexico and along Mexican police lines, he uses empirical evidence to assert that centralization of law enforcement leads to a higher citizen confidence in law enforcement, which correlates to performance and therefore, Mexico should consider centralizing command. He includes data from various years, including a 2009 confidence test which revealed that federal police have higher confidence rates (43%) among the public than state and municipal (25%), and

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40 Esparza, Diego. POLICE CENTRALIZATION AND PUBLIC SECURITY IN MEXICO, University of California – Riverside. 2012.
that therefore, since they are centralized, state and municipal agencies will experience a similar increase in confidence from the public.

While these theories contribute much to the discussion on implementation of a centralized police system and its potential benefits and consequences, none focus on the broad range of institutional factors that all must be addressed in order to improve performance and legitimize Mexican law enforcement. Instead of reforming the processes within the institutions, these theorists have sought to address the shortcomings of law enforcement through a structural lens and have thus failed to achieve meaningful police reforms in Mexico. My data suggests that reforming institutional variables that address: poor working conditions, as well as opportunities for promotion, will have a more significant impact on the performance and perception of police than will strictly addressing centralization, pay or total numbers.

Methodology:

For this analysis I have compiled both quantitative and qualitative data regarding structural and institutional variables in an attempt to analyze the effectiveness of the proposed mando único policy. I have looked at sources from both Mexico and the United States, in English and Spanish, including government reports, congressional reports, non-profit organizations, regional experts analysis and also newspaper media from both countries. Specifically, my analysis will rely on empirical data gathered from: SNSP, Washington Office on Latin America, INEGI, Causa en Comun, Justice in Mexico, ENVIPE,41 the Mexican Interior Ministry and the Global Peace Index.42 Finding reliable raw data about crime in Mexico is often difficult to come by. The federal and state governments have an incentive to manipulate these numbers to protect themselves politically. For example, a recent report by Animal Politico reveals that between 2013 and 2014, at least two-thirds of Mexico’s 32 entities had manipulated or omitted some crime data, which was further altered upon submission to the National Public Security agency (SNSP).43

While the majority of states have had all of their municipalities sign the agreement for mando único, very few have fully implemented it. Therefore, in order to better develop my argument, I will rely heavily on data compiled from two federal entities that have already (almost completely) implemented mando único, Mexico City and the state of Morelos. These two entities will serve as a case study and to demonstrate how these two states with centralized law enforcement compare to the rest of the country. Mexico City has had a centralized law enforcement agency organized under the Secretariat of Public Security of the Federal District (SSP) and has 0 municipal police.44 Alejandro Hope recently noted that Mexico City could serve as a good case study of mando único because they centralized their police and they have some of the lowest rated police in the country. Morelos provides a good case study for the efficiency of mando único. According to the police website for the state of Morelos, 95.3% of the population

42http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/mexico-peace-index
and 91.5% of the state territory is under command of mando único which they claim has achieved a -7.7% reduction in crime. The state implemented this policy in 2013 and has self-reported stunning reductions in crime.

I compiled data on variables such as police pay and department numbers, from reports published by Casua en Común, specifically the Radiografía Policial (2015). Casua en Común is a non-profit organization that focuses on community development and establishing confident relationships between citizens and their institutions. They seek to enhance democracy through developing mechanisms for transparency and accountability of the government. They also sit on government boards and are considered one of the most reputable organizations facilitating transparency in Mexico. Their Radiografía Policial of 2015 has been one of the most widely cited reports I have come across in my research. Along with compiling their own research, they compile and disseminate statistics from numerous governmental, media and NGO sources, specifically regarding public security within Mexico.

For this analysis I have also relied on data compiled by Justice in Mexico. Justice in Mexico is an organization that “works to improve citizen security, strengthen the rule of law, and protect human rights in Mexico. Through careful research, rigorous data gathering, and impartial analysis, Justice in Mexico serves as a reliable and authoritative source to help inform and shape the public’s understanding of major challenges.” This organization is widely cited by both government and non-government organizations in the U.S. and Mexico and regularly shares recommendations and findings with major organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations as well as federal departments in Mexico and the U.S. Congress. Specifically, in this analysis, I will include data from the Justice in Mexico’s most recent police survey, which interviewed 9,631 police officers from municipal police departments of Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez and Guadalajara. This is one of the most extensive and current polls of police officers and this information is valuable to the investigation because these are the people most familiar with public security on the local level. These are three of the most diverse and important municipal police departments in the country. They come from different geographic areas with different ailments and they also have adequate difference in institutional factors such as pay and hours worked. Therefore, it gives a good representation of what municipal police believe and will be valuable data to consider for this analysis.

Finally, for qualitative information and data on previous police reforms, I relied largely on information from the Wilson Institute and the Washington Office on Latin America. Within these pieces I utilized a lot of information provided by Dr. Daniel Sabet. Dr. Sabet is one of the most leading experts on police reform in Mexico. He is a visiting professor at Georgetown University and is a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Institute. Specifically, I used data Dr. Sabet published in an article entitled, “Police Reform in Mexico: Advances and Persistent Obstacles”

45 http://www.cesmorelos.gob.mx/index.php/mando-unico/
46 http://causaencomun.org.mx/quienes-somos/#sthash.SXTeWjWW.dpuf
47 https://justiceinmexico.org/about/
In the first section, I will analyze data on institutional incentives such as police pay, hours worked and federal funding and compare it against the most recent crime data to determine if investing in institutional career building incentives has any correlation to quality of law enforcement. To accomplish this I will check for correlation using Pearson’s R and will analyze statistics from a number of institutional variables and compare them against state level crime data. I believe that measuring the level of peace on a state-by-state basis is useful because it presents a more holistic portrait of the state of Mexico’s public insecurity. The goal is to see if there is correlation between institutional factors like vetting or hours worked and overall police effectiveness and perceived performance.

The second part of this paper will present two case studies and will examine whether the restructuring and centralization of law enforcement, in the form of mando único will actually facilitate improved coordination and performance while also limiting corruption. To accomplish this I will first present a case study revealing potential consequences of mando único and police centralization in Mexico. This largely qualitative study will assess President Nieto’s claims that centralization leads to: more effective communication and performance and reduced corruption. The final section will present a case study on two federal entities that have already centralized their command. Both Mexico City and Morelos will serve as good examples that might reveal some of the shortcomings associated with implementing mando único.

**PART I: Analyzing Police Performance Indicator Variables:**

For this analysis I have gathered data on thirty-two different variables relating to: social, economic, crime related fields for each of the thirty-two federal entities. I will consider certain variables such as: state police pay for 2015, training hours, federal funding, recruit pay, shift length, and compare them against variables such as: police-citizen ratio, homicide per 100,000 inhabitants, crimes committed with a weapon percentage, GPI, extortion per 100,000 and perception of insecurity. I intend to assess if there is any significant statistical correlation between these variables and the most recently available crime data. My goal is to evaluate if any of these variables have a positive or negative correlation to police performance. This data can help steer the Administration into investing resources into the areas that will most improve the performance of the departments.

The variables that were tested contribute to the level of professionalism within law enforcement and may have a positive impact on policing. According to survey data, some of the biggest factors plaguing law enforcement in Mexico today are administrative, and involve poor: recruitment, pay and promotion. The poor institutional incentives have an affect on the quality of policing and contribute to the low prestige of the job. For example, 51% of municipal police surveyed in Tijuana suggest that there job is not valued. My data suggests that improving

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50 Justice in Mexico. Cruces. Tijuana
institutional factors relating to career development and accountability will ultimately benefit the quality of law enforcement throughout Mexico.

Causa en Comun’s 2015 report entitled ¿Tenemos la Policía que merecemos? Una Radiografía de las Polícias de las Entidades Federativas, identifies the best and worst performing states in terms of institutional incentives for their officers. The report included data on: best and worst states for career, training, certification, discipline and vetting tests. Overall, the worst performing states were: Baja California Sur, Nayarit and Campeche, with Durango, Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi also making the list. On the other hand, the best performing states were: Baja California, Distrito Federal, Nuevo Leon and Querétaro, with Vera Cruz and Puebla also making the list. Some of the pertinent results from this study include:

- **Best** opportunities for police career: Baja California, DF, Nuevo Leon and Queretaro
- **Best** schools for recruits: Hidalgo, Distrito Federal, Nuevo León, Puebla
- **Best** states for discipline development: Baja California, Distrito Federal, Morelos, Oaxaca and Veracruz
- **Best** states at: evaluating, certifying and clear ways to measure performance: Baja California, Distrito Federal, Guanajuato, Nuevo León, Querétaro, and Veracruz.
- **Worst** state for police career: Campeche, Baja California Sur, and Nayarit
- **Worst** schools for recruits: Campeche, Tlaxcala and Nayarit
- **Worst** states for discipline advancement: Baja California Sur, Hidalgo, Zacatecas and Nayarit.

In order to assess the correlation between the variables, I used the Pearson correlation function in Microsoft Excel. The Pearson correlation demonstrates the linear relationship between two variables (x, y) and ranks the strength of that relationship on a scale of -1 to 1 scale, with 0 being no correlation. A perfect correlation between two variables is represented by a -1 or a 1, with the negative meaning that there is a perfect inverse relationship between the variables (when one goes up the other goes down). The range of what is considered a relevant strength of relationship will vary depending on the type of science used. Social science for example generally focuses on relationships outside of the -0.1 to 0.1 range as these relationships are too close to 0 and thus is not considered significant.

**Part I: Results:**

**Police Pay:**

Increasing police pay is perhaps one of the most common ‘remedies’ implemented in an attempt to improve police performance. This seems to be intuitive, if you pay a person more they will perform better at their job. This section undoubtedly contained the most surprising results. The data revealed that there was some correlation between police pay going up and peace going down. Furthermore, there were substantial positive statistical correlations between an increase in monthly salary and an increase in the total number of victims and total number of homicides.

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This is troubling because it seems to suggest that states that have higher average police pay also have higher number of victims and murders. However, this can possibly be explained by looking at the reasons behind this data. States that are more violent tend to have slightly above average police salaries so that they can attract enough candidates, and this can be seen largely as a reactionary move by the states. It should also be noted that the salaries used in this test reflected the monthly pay of state police officers. State police officers typically make more money than municipal officers and it would be interesting in the future to test the differences between these two groups.

As Dr. Sabet contends, “improvements to salaries and benefits are perhaps the most visible and often cited reforms needed to professionalize Mexican policing. It is argued that if police cannot meet their basic needs from their official salary, then they will make up for monetary shortfalls through bribes and extortion. Moreover, if policing is to be viewed as a profession and attract higher quality applicants, then it has to offer incentives accordingly.” Survey data on police pay suggests that in Ciudad Juarez, police thought their salary should be raised by 41% on average, and similarly in Guadalajara they would raise salary by 40% on average. While low police pay must be addressed and corrected, improving this variable alone will not lead to better policing and a more secure public. Furthermore, the states and municipalities lack the resources to increase the pay benefits, equipment training, especially considering the recent federal budget slashes.

### Police Pay: (2015)

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### Shift Length:

Testing shift length against crime data is an interesting assessment that I have not encountered in any research relating to improving police performance in Mexico. There are two valuable correlations within this test; the data suggests that as shift hours increase, so does extortion and perception of insecurity. Professionalism of law enforcement will require that states improve working conditions for police, when police are forced to work extra hours, their quality of work drops. Furthermore, Justice in Mexico data from the Guadalajara Municipal

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52 Sabet 52 police reform
53 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 8.1
54 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Guadalajara, Q: P8A
55 Causa en Comun: www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zoeT5Wa55RsY.kWTj3UKeBxZQ Note: Michoacán, Quinta Roo and Zacatecas were not included in this test as they did not have reliable data on state police pay.
56 Note: Global Peace Index rates states on a 1-5 scale (1.60-1.70 most peaceful, 1.80-2.10 is second most peaceful, 2.2-2.6 is average, 2.6-2.8 is bad. And 3 worst)
police confirms this as 61% of men and 54% of women, “strongly disagree” with the sentence “When I work at night and have a double shift, I have the same performance.” It should be noted that fourteen states have shifts of 24 hours on duty and then 24 hours of rest, 11 have shifts of 12 hours and only three states had shifts of 8 hours, with “only in Baja California, Baja California Sur and Querétaro do police officers work regular eight-hour shifts, in accordance to human rights.” An officers judgment and performance will undoubtedly diminish after a certain number of hours worked and this is reflected in the data with a strong correlation between shift hours rising and public insecurity rising.

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**Federal District Security Funds allocated to each state:**

There was a negative correlation between funding and perception of insecurity. Federal funding is measured on a 1-5 scale with 1 being significant federal funding with subsidies of police and 5 being poor federal funding. The data in this report suggests that as less funding is going to the states, people are actually feeling more secure, but this of course can be due to a number of factors like differences in population and police-citizen ratio. It should be noted that of the top six states that receive the highest funding from the federal subsidies, all of them (Mexico, Mexico City, Puebla, Guanajuato, Vera Cruz and Jalisco) also have the highest number of total officers (municipal and state police combined), which would certainly account for more money from the federal government. Survey data from Justice in Mexico reveals that 69% of the municipal police in Ciudad Juarez agree that police do not have enough resources to combat crime. With the current state security budget vastly reduced this year, future research can examine how the reduced budget will affect public perception of security in the next few years. While there are is a myriad of other factors, it would be interesting to assess if the public feels more secure with less police in their area.

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57 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Guadalajara, Q: P6Q
59 http://causaencomun.org.mx/radiografia-policial/ Note: Guerrero, Michoacan, Quinta Roo, Vera Cruz not included. Info from state profile within radiografia.
60 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 61GG
Federal District Security Fund allocated to each state: (2014)\textsuperscript{61}

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<td>GPI (2014)</td>
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\textbf{Recruit Training Hours:}

There was almost no correlation between how many hours trained and crime and this was by far the least statistically significant measurement in this report. It should be noted that thirteen states were not included in this test as there was no reliable data on the amount of training hours needed to be sworn in. Police officers in Ciudad Juarez listed training as the best way to improve the image of the police, with 36% agreeing with this,\textsuperscript{62} and 50% of them believed that they did not get enough training.\textsuperscript{63} In fact, Mexico’s judicial reforms also require police to handle new responsibilities and become forensic experts, preserving crime scene evidence, which will require more extensive training. It will also require coordination between the judiciary and the police departments. However, 95% of police have not been trained to do this and Pena Nieto’s judicial reforms are supposed to be totally completed by 2016. With an increase in transparency, perhaps more data on the type and amount of training will be provided, allowing future research to compare state effectiveness in a specific area with the amount of training those officers got. For example, in the survey data, one of the most frequent complaints was not enough weapons training, with the vast majority of police claiming that they receive virtually no opportunity to shoot at the gun range. It would be interesting to examine how many incidents are reported with police discharging their weapons and missing the target or inadvertently hitting an innocent target. If these incidents are lower in a state that provides more weapons training, then there would be reason to believe that this training should become a police standard.

\textbf{Recruit training hours: (2015)\textsuperscript{64}}

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\textsuperscript{61}MPI Indicator Scores
http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Mexico%20Peace%20Index%20Report%202015_1.pdf
\textsuperscript{62}Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 16
\textsuperscript{63}Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 6M
\textsuperscript{64}http://causaencomun.org.mx/radiografia-policial/ Note: not included: Aguascalientes, Baja California, Colima, Coahuila, Durango, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Morelos, Nuevo Leon, Queretaro, Quinta Roo.
Police to citizen ratio per 1,000 inhabitants:

Perhaps the second most common cited assumption is that increasing the total number of police will help to reduce crime. This is reminiscent of the adage, ‘the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.’ Logically this makes sense, the more police in uniform that are patrolling the streets, the more law enforcement will serve as a deterrent to criminals. Unfortunately as is sometimes the case in Mexico, police collude with organized crime and participate in illicit activity. Data suggests that as the police-citizen ratio increases (police per 1,000 in habitants) there are more victims of crimes. However, I must note that it is possible that the inverse could be true and that the reason there is correlation is because a rise in crime has prompted a rise in the number of police. The data also suggests that there is little-to-no correlation between the ratio of officers and the total number of intentional homicides, which is surprising because one would hope that more officers per citizen would result in less cases of homicide. Finally, data reveals that as the ratio of police to citizen increases, so do incidents of extortion and crimes involving weapons. According to Causa en Común, in 2015 there are: 132,715 federal and state police and 135,138 municipal police in Mexico. With a population estimated above 125,000,000 in 2015, this results in a total of 2.23 police per every 1,000 inhabitants in Mexico. According to the United Nations figures, “among advanced nations, there are on average 2.8 agents per every thousand resident.” Part of mando único requires that states preform vetting tests and hold a massive purge of unfit officers. However, this would exacerbate the already low national ratio between police and citizen, potentially creating an even less secure society. Effects of the purge can be seen in several states: in Tamaulipas there is 0.89 officers per 1,000 inhabitants, in Vera Cruz 1.04, in Coahuila there is 1.1 officers per 1,000 inhabitants.

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<td>GPI (2014)</td>
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**Percent of Municipal Police Past Due for Vetting Exam:**

Data reveals that there is significant correlation between the amount of outstanding Confidence tests and various indicators of illicit activity. The vetting process is ultimately an indicator of the level of professionalism within law enforcement. States that do not abide by national requirements of periodic reviews demonstrate a less professionalism then states that preform these tests more frequently. Several states do not have an internal affairs office; some do not comply with minimum standards for employment and only Baja California, Distrito Federal, Guanajuato, Querétaro and Nuevo León require that their officers be are checked by 3 processes of certification.68 “Overall, corruption and violent behavior permeates Mexican law enforcement because of a widespread culture of impunity that allows police officers and soldiers to act without consequence. I think what’s really needed in Mexico is looking at the institutions themselves: things like weak internal affairs units, and a culture within agencies that allows for pervasive abuses. They need to get to the structural problems.”69

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<td>GPI (2014)</td>
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**Promotion:**

There is no consistent data made public on the rate of promotion within any level of Mexican law enforcement. What is available is survey and qualitative data suggesting the importance of this institutional incentive. For example, survey data provided by Justice in Mexico regarding Ciudad Juarez reveals that: only 44% of officers believe the process for who gets promoted is fair, 57% believe that promotion is based on personal connections while only 48% believe that they are made based on personal merit.71 Survey data from the municipal police in Guadalajara reveals similar notions as: only 28% agree that the process of deciding promotions is fair, only 32% believe the process for deciding promotion is clear and 60% believe that promotion is based on personal connections.72 Ability to be promoted is also important in recruitment and retention is paramount in attracting good cops Furthermore, a report by Causa en Comun stated that only in nine states does the state provide information that documents the process of periodic evaluations: Baja California, Distrito Federal, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Nuevo

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71 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 63, 6I and 6J
72 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Guadalajara, Q: P6E, P6F, P6I
León, Querétaro, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and Yucatán. Opportunity for promotion is perhaps the hardest variable to measure but might be the single most important factor in improving law enforcement in Mexico. There would be little incentive for the smartest and most qualified candidates to choose a career where they will, on average, barely make above the national income level, will be given subpar training and equipment and will not have a difficult time getting promoted in a merit-based system. Furthermore, the vast majority of police officers do not know the criteria for promotion and very few states have outlined the internal process for advancement.

**Testing the Variables Against the number of State and Municipal Police:**

This data takes many of the variables tested above and replaces the “x” from an institutional variable to either state police or municipal police, so that we can test it against the same “y” crime statistics. In other words, for this test we will be examining the correlation between the dependent variable, crime statistics, specifically: total victims, homicides, crimes with a weapon, extortion, GPI and federal funding against the independent variables of the number of both state municipal police. This test further demonstrates the argument that state and municipal police are actually quite similar and that folding municipal police into state departments will not change the status quo or improve law enforcement.

For example, when measuring the correlation between public insecurity against the number of state police, there was a positive correlation of .32 when number of state police rises, so does insecurity. When testing insecurity against the number of municipal police, the correlation was .26. This suggests that, although the difference in correlation between state and municipal police is small, an increase in state police (like mando único) will lead to an increase in public insecurity.

Similarly, when testing the difference between state and municipal police with the amount of extortion incident per 100,000, state police had a higher correlation to incidents of extortion. The data reveals that while municipal police have a .277 correlation to extortion, state police have a .31 correlation. Although this difference is minimal, it does suggest a higher correlation between extortion and centralized police command. Furthermore, data correlating “crime with a weapon” and municipal police showed a .53 correlation, while this same indicator measured against state police gave a .57 correlation. This suggests that as more state police are present the incidents of crime with a weapon increases marginally, as compared against municipal police.

There were also two categories in which municipal police rated below state police: total victims and GPI. The correlation between total victims in a state and municipal police is .51, compared to a correlation of .41 with state police. This suggests a very high correlation between the amount of municipal police and the lessened amount of perceived peace in a state. The Global Peace Index was also correlated against municipal police revealing a correlation of .24 compared state police that correlated at .15. These numbers also fall onto the brink of being

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statistically insignificant but are important to include. Data on homicide fell between the statistically insignificant mark with a .126 correlation between homicide and municipal police compared to a -0.06 correlation between homicide and state police.

The final analysis focused on the correlation between federal funding to states and the amount of state vs. municipal officers. The data revealed that there is a negative correlation between both departments as measured against federal funding. The reason is because the GPI measurement of federal funding rates funding on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being excellent funding from the federal government and 5 being the lowest possible funding from the federal government. When measuring this against the number of state police there was a -0.38 correlation, compared to a -0.54 correlation between it and municipal police numbers. This demonstrates that with an increase of municipal officers comes an increase of federal funds through subsidies. This may reveal a serious rationale for wanting to unify command; it will mean that the federal government does not have to distribute as many subsidies for paying municipal officers.

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**Findings Part II: Case Studies**

In this section I will present results from two case studies and analyze *mando único* in terms of its supposed structural advantages, improved coordination, improved performance and reduced corruption.

1) Does Centralization Improve Coordination/or Communication?

Improved coordination and communication within law enforcement is one of the three main reasons for trying to institute *mando único*. Theories that promote police centralization often claim that a shorter command structure improves communication and coordination within
the departments because there is less jurisdictional overlap, less bureaucracy and less physical
people to pass and receive information from.

In an attempt to answer the question on if centralization will lead to improved
coordination and communication, we must first examine the level of coordination and
communication that exists today both within the municipal departments as well as across
different agencies. Data on this is limited but police survey data available that will shed some
light on this. Because it is difficult to find data on inter-departmental communication and
coordination between police departments, this argument will largely rely on qualitative data.

The attempt at structural police reforms in Mexico seems to be in accordance to
Organizational Institutional theory. This theory asserts, “organizations change in response to
their institutional (or symbolic) environment, but not due to their rational/ technical environment.
This institutional environment is composed of powerful external constituents (called sovereigns),
such as politicians, the media, community groups, and other police agencies. These powerful
sovereigns create expectations about how ”good” police agencies are structured and how they
behave, and organizations in turn attempt to meet these expectations in order to receive
legitimacy from their institutional environment.” These reforms have been accused of being
superficial at most and may have been initiated as a quick response to the forty-three missing
students and not as much with legitimately trying to initiate reform, they are a product of this
tragic event and not comprehensive measures to improve law enforcement.

Before we evaluate coordination across departments, it is important to understand the
levels of communication police officers perceive within their own department. For this section I
will use data compiled by Justice in Mexico to demonstrate that municipal police feel confident
in their departments current level on inter-communication. In Tijuana for example, the survey
asked the officers about different types of communication within the municipal department. The
officers reported that there exists good communication within the department, specifically,
53.9% say that they have good or very good communication with the boss, while 63% say that
they have good or very good communication with their direct boss, and 69% say they have good
or very good communication with their subordinates. Furthermore, survey data in Guadalajara
suggests that 49% of municipal police feel that there is good communication within the different
public security agencies. This internal communications data can be compared to responses
about external communication from police in Ciudad Juarez, in which police officers were asked
to what degree they agree with the statement: “there exists real coordination between municipal,
state and federal police.” 16% of police completely agree with this statement, while 43% of
police completely disagree with this statement, suggesting that there is currently little
coordination between different departments now. While, this data is from a small sample and
there is no data on state internal communication, it demonstrates that there already exist strong
lines of communication within the municipal department. Furthermore, these results suggest that
there is better communication within the municipal department than with external departments.
This is significant because under mando único, this communication will break down as these

75 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Tijuana, Q: TJ083B
76 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Guadalajara, Q: p6u
77 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez, Q: 6U
relationships are dissolved into larger state departments, which may actually hinder communication.

While this is to be somewhat expected that there exists better internal than external communication and coordination, real coordination will have to be comprehensively addressed in this new system if the 135,000 municipal police are going to merge into state departments, they will all come from different backgrounds, cultures and have different standards, making communication and coordination more difficult. Therefore, if police officers are reluctant to leave their departments for a centralized state system, one could assume that their disinterest in consolidating would create a hindrance to better communication and coordination. When police officers in Ciudad Juarez were asked if they wanted to participate in mando único, only 21% said yes, while 73% stated that they preferred to preserve and improve municipal police. Improved coordination will be difficult to accomplish if police do not want to merge. Each attempt at centralization requires that more and more people, all with different experience, form a massive cohesive unit, which is possible but will take time.

Another way to determine if coordination and communication are enhanced by centralization is to look at other instances of centralization reforms that Mexico has implemented. From this we can gauge whether the reform had its intended impact and thus observe if communication and coordination have been achieved. One “successful” reform that was actually implemented was specifically designed to improve coordination and communication across law enforcement. The National Registry of Law Enforcement Personnel was one of the largest and most expensive attempts at centralization. This program was created under the Zedillo administration and was “a massive centralization of nationwide, secure communications network, databases for improved information sharing, and a national registry of law enforcement personnel. These were to be important mechanisms to ensure coordination and prevent departments from unknowingly rehiring corrupt officers that had been fired from another agency.” This program has largely been unsuccessful because different departments had different standards of calculating crimes. Ironically, it has taken years for different jurisdictions to coordinate and uniformly adopt the same criteria and classification for data. Furthermore, in this attempt to coordinate and communicate better, the government has discovered that different departments have been “resistant to systematically tracking and sharing information. Over ten years later and after millions of dollars in investments, officials are still working to put national crime data- bases and the police registry to effective use.”

It is logical to conclude that logistically, a shorter chain of command would more likely produce improved communication and coordination of a department, simply because there are less layers of bureaucracy to sift through. Centralization allows those in charge a manner to facilitate implementing their favored policy outcomes. However, as decentralization advocates would posit, with centralization programs like mando único, law enforcement becomes further removed from the local communities. In turn, the community is less likely to interact with police and less likely to provide information on what is going on illicit activity in the neighborhood. “The reform model was used to reduce corruption within the departments and politicians. Yet

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78 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Ciudad Juarez. Q: b22
information that police used to solve crimes began to dry up as the police lost contact with the community and its eyes and ears to criminal activity (Chappell & Kaduce, 2004). According to survey data in Guadalajara, 40% of municipal police officers agree that the community helps them solve crimes. Furthermore, 68% of municipal police in Tijuana believe that the relationship between the police and the community is ‘close or very close.’ Furthermore, when asked what the most effective way to combat insecurity, 36% of police said better community participation. In this sense, mando único might structurally improve coordination and facilitate communication through the chain of command, but it might also have the unintended consequence of being less accessible to information from the community, which would have a negative impact on communication and coordination.

2) Does Centralization Improve Efficiency or Performance?

In order to address this question I will rely on both qualitative and quantitative data. For this analysis I will analyze the structural arguments from Diego Esparza’s “public confidence theory” and then present my own arguments to demonstrate that centralization could possibly hinder police efficiency and performance. I will then analyze data, using similar polling data as Esparza on citizen confidence as well crime data and data from the Global Peace Index, in an attempt to determine if centralization creates better preforming police.

Diego Esparza contends that Mexico should centralize its police force, examining the relationship between centralization and citizen confidence in police. He is essentially arguing for a platform like mando único and directly challenges other theorists who contend that smaller, local police forces are better and more responsive to community policing and that they are rated as higher preforming then their big city counterparts. Where Ostrom used the dependent variable of “citizen satisfaction in police,” no data is available on this so Esparza uses “citizen confidence” in police as the proxy and as his dependent variable. And the independent variable being tested will be either a centralized or decentralized police department. Esparza then tests confidence tests of municipal, state and federal police over a period of time and asserts that federal (centralized) police consistently have higher public confidence then state and municipal police departments. Using his own indicators of confidence reflecting performance, I intend to refute Esparza’s argument that centralized police forces preform better than decentralized police.

The 2014 ENVIPE report states that 10% of the public rate municipal forces as very effective while 14% think that of state forces. The difference in these numbers are by no means staggering and I do not believe that a difference of 4% proves that centralized police perform better justifies a total restructuring of state law enforcement. Comparing data from ENVIPE 2014 and 2015 reports, public confidence in preventative municipal police was at 36% and had dropped -1.5% between 2014-15. During this same time, confidence in state police 42.5% and had dropped -1.6%. Similarly confidence in federal police also dropped 1.5% in this

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82 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Guadalajara, Q: P40
83 Justice in Mexico, Cruces, Tijuana Q: TJ108
84 Esparza, Diego, p 11
The results over the last ten years bore similar results and fluctuated fairly consistently. Esparza would argue that the difference in confidence level between the municipal police and the federal police is evidence that police perform better in a centralized system. While I concede that federal police have consistently had higher confidence ratings, I argue that federal police receive higher confidence ratings because of institutional components within federal departments that are not available or required of state or municipal agencies. For example, Federal Police have better: salaries, vetting processes, training, equipment, educational requirements and clearer promotion criteria. The two are not mutually exclusive, in other words, it is possible to improve the institutional factors without changing the structure. Federal agencies receive higher confidence ratings, not because of their centralization, but because they have more funding and thus better institutional incentives to attract and retain the best and brightest cadets.

In addition to using survey data on confidence, for this test I will also use vetting control de confianza “confidence tests” as a proxy. These tests are designed by the federal government and test four components of the person: a polygraph test, a medical and toxicological examination, a psychological evaluation, and a background check. These elements are what the federal government uses to determine if an officer is fit for duty and or if they have any ties to criminal organizations. I believe that this proxy is justified because it too deals with confidence in police, but from the perspective of the state, whereas Esparza used confidence tests solely from the public. Data from Causa en Comun suggests, that of the 42,214 agents who did not pass the confidence test: 3,516 came from federal departments, 20,521 came from state and 18,177 came from municipalities. There are roughly 165,000 municipal police, far more municipal police than state police. Yet 48.6% of those who failed the confidence exam were state police failed the confidence exam, while 43% of those that failed were from the municipal department. Using the government’s own criteria for their confidence in their law enforcement officials, this data demonstrates that state police are failing confidence exams at a higher rate than municipal police, and for a reform that is aimed at tackling corruption, it seems counter intuitive to transition towards a department that has officers with lower confidence ratings.

After viewing the 2015 ENVIPE report, which listed his state as having the most incidents of crime, the mayor elect of Cuernavaca, Cauhtémoc Blanco announced that when he “takes office on January 1st that [I] will terminate the current agreement between the city and the state regarding mando único, stating “Unfortunately, we [Cuernavaca] are ranked first in crimes, mando único does not work.” Morelos was intended to be the “poster-child” of successful police reform and the federal government doubled down efforts to improve the security of that state, however, they were unsuccessful because they have a barely above average pay, still use 24 hour shifts, have no fired unfit officers and 27% of the force needs to retake the mandated confidence exam as of May 2015.

One way to tell if there is efficiency or improving performance is to look at Global Peace Index data from when mando único was first implemented and compares it to the most recent data. The GPI measures peace at a state-level and is composed of the following indicators:

87 Vicenteno, David. "Reprueban Control De Confianza 42 Mil Agentes En El Pais." Excelsior 25 Nov. 2014:
Homicide, violent crime, weapons crime, incarceration, police funding, organized crime, efficiency of justice system.\textsuperscript{89} This will allow us to determine the relative state of peace within the country and a specific state itself. I have compiled raw data from the 2013 MPI report and compared it to the 2015 MPI report in Table 1, [Appendix I]. The results suggest that in these two years of \textit{mando único}, police funding has gone up but organized crime has gone up, weapons crime has gone up, while justice efficiency has stayed the same (at the highest/worst ranking). One major success that must be acknowledged was their drastic drop in homicide rates, however, these numbers reflect national trends in reduction of violence and analysts suggest that the violence is merely relocating to the south in states like Guerrero. A recent article in \textit{InsightCrime} revealed that “Mexico saw a 28 percent drop in homicides through the first 11 months of 2014 in comparison to the same period in 2012, according to the country's Secretary of Public Security (SNSP).”\textsuperscript{90} The only “positive” trend was that they went from a 1-1.1 on incarceration rate. These are not very impressive numbers and Morelos remains below the national average in the majority of categories. Perhaps what is more revealing is that even after this major reduction in homicide rates, Morelos is still above the national average of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

Mexico City has had a centralized its police department under the \textit{Secretaria de Seguridad Publico} force since the 1940s. According to the 2015 National Victimization survey by the National Statistics and Geography Institute, over 87% of Mexico City residents believe their police force is corrupt, compared to the national average of 64%. Furthermore, 66% of Mexico City residents have little to no trust in their state police, compared to 51% national average. The most striking statistic cited was that only 1.6% of respondents considered the police highly effective, compared to 10% nationally. In a recent article Alejandro Hope wrote, “There is fear because there is loathing. Making people feel safe is contingent on people trusting their authorities, particularly the police forces. So there’s the agenda: if the government wants to improve perceptions of personal safety, it should work hard on transforming law enforcement institutions.”\textsuperscript{91}

Another possible indicator for measuring performance in a centralized system is to compare a state that has implemented \textit{mando único}, like Morelos, to a decentralized state that has not implemented the policy, like Oaxaca. Both of these countries have similar populations, similar state education rankings, similar state GDP and similar unemployment numbers. However, Morelos has centralized their municipal police force while Oaxaca has not. According to 2014 data, Morelos has a population of 1.9 million while Oaxaca has a population of 2.35 million, while INEGI’s unemployment rate index lists both countries below the national average for unemployment. In order to compare the efficiencies of these two states, I will use data compiled from ENVIPE 2014 and compare it to data found in ENVIPE 2015. The data reveals that not only has crime risen dramatically over the last year (13.4%), but, Morelos feels “less safe” than the rest of the country, with 63.8% of the state saying insecurity was the biggest problem, compared to 58% of the nation. Also between 2014-15, Morelos lost 1.43% of

\textsuperscript{89}http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Mexico%20Peace%20Index%20Report%202015_1.pdf *Note: the most recent MPI and GPI surveys reflect data on illicit activity from the year prior to publishing.
perceived security according to public polls. The overall rates of crime are stunning and according to data found through ENVIPE, Oaxaca has about 29,000 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants, while Morelos has 43,500 incidents of crime per 100,000 [Appendix 2]. According to Esparza’s theory, a centralized police department should garnish more public confidence than a decentralized agency. However, when examining data from the ENVIPE 2015 survey, Morelos actually has less confidence in their law enforcement in general, and rate federal state and municipal police, far below the national averages. [Appendix 3] Therefore, if Esparza’s theory were correct, then we should be able to see higher than average levels of confidence in Morelos for both the federal and state police agencies.

Similarly, if we look at multiple crime indicators from Causa en Común’s Radiographia Policial, we find that both the centralized states perform worse on most indices then the 2015 national average, despite receiving more money from the federal government and having a higher police-citizen ratio.²⁴

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<tr>
<th>States:</th>
<th>Intentional homicide</th>
<th>Kidnapping</th>
<th>Extortion</th>
<th>Violent auto theft</th>
<th>Non-violent auto theft</th>
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3) Does Centralization Help Reduce Abuses and Corruption?

The massacre in Iguala was just an extreme example of abuses and corruption by law enforcement. Other recent examples of corruption, abuses and inefficiency can be seen in the recent jailbreak of Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán from Altiplano federal maxim security prison.⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch released a report in October 2015 alleging that their participation in two cases “January 6 in Apatzingán and the other on May 22 in Tanhuato. The report indicates that HRW believes the evidence reflects extrajudicial killings by the police officers.”⁹⁶ These two events resulted in fifty unarmed civilian causalities and were comprised of protestors and alleged gang members. In June 2014, the an officer and seven soldiers of the Mexican army were accused and tried for the extrajudicial killing of 21 gang members in Tlatlaya who had surrendered and then were lined up and murdered execution style, including a fifteen year old

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⁹⁴Note: all of these statistics are per 100,000 inhabitants
These examples demonstrate that there is widespread abuse and corruption among all levels of law enforcement in Mexico and that it is urgent for the country consider new reform policies.

One of the central justifications for implementing mando único is the necessity to eliminate corruption at the municipal level. According to data by Dr. Sabet, transit police within the municipal police in Mexico are most accused of soliciting bribes; ministerial police (which are state or federal) are most often accused of threats to elicit a confession, physical harm or to charge on false grounds. This reveals that while transit police are more likely to solicit a monetary bribe, state and federal police are more likely to use threats, physical harm and imprisonment on false grounds. Neither of these options is very enticing, but there is certainly corruption across all levels of law enforcement. Recent ENVIPE 2014 survey data reveals that: 66% of the public perceives municipal forces as corrupt, with 62% perceive state agencies as corrupt. After accounting for the survey’s inaccuracy, this is a very marginal difference and demonstrates that municipal and state police are both corrupt.

One of the primary concerns with centralizing the structure of a police force to limit corruption is that law enforcement is corrupt on all levels. If you incorporate corrupt municipal police officers into larger state run departments, they will continue to be corrupt just within a new and bigger jurisdiction. The problem lies in the fact that if you purge all of the officers unfit for duty, then, if unable to find other work, they might have a higher propensity to actually join organized crime. Centralization will not make a person less likely to be corrupt, more institutional changes to encourage good behavior like pay and promotions will help satisfy officers, while accountability factors like vetting and internal affairs will deter officers from participating in corruption. Vetting tests alone will not resolve the problem, earlier this month, on November 26, 2015, three police mando único police in Morelos were caught on camera robbing an ATM. According to data that I compiled, the most recent data presented by Causa en Comun’s May 2015 Control de Confianza Estatal Municipal, reveals that 27.36% of the officers in Morelos still need to retake the confidence test and that same month 13.1% did not pass the vetting test.

Some police experts agree that centralization can encourage an environment for corruption. From the perspective of organized crime, a decentralized system would mean that one would have to corrupt numerous different departments across a given territory, however, in a centralized system this is reduced and one might only have to bribe one police chief throughout the entire state. Alejandro Hope writes, “a second advantage of fragmentation is the dispersion of risk. If the Iguala police department becomes corrupt, the (rather significant) problems are

contained in Iguala. If the Guerrero police force becomes corrupt, the whole state has a problem.”

According to data unveiled in a recent speech by the President of the Human Rights Commission of the State of Morelos (CDHEM) *mando único* has “marked a negative reference in the country for it has contributed to the growth of cases of torture and illegal detaintments.” Reported cases of torture totaled 14 by this time in 2014, however this year there are already 17 reported cases from January to August, a nearly 30% increase. Furthermore, so far this year there have already been over 259 complaints for violations of individual rights [by officers] compared to only 160 for all of last year.

The data suggests that while coordination and communication may be improved, the quality of information might be diminished. Furthermore, it suggests that different performance indicators reveal that there is not a major difference between performance and confidence at the municipal and state police, and organizational structure does not seem to determine perceived performance. Finally, the data suggests that law enforcement across all levels and jurisdiction in Mexico are plagued by corruption. Shifting corrupt police officers from one department to another will not eradicate corruption from law enforcement or society.

**Conclusion:**

This report has examined Mexico’s proposed police reform policy of *mando único*. It has analyzed some of the potential benefits and pitfalls of implementing this policy. Ultimately, structural reforms focused on centralization will fail because they do not correct the institutional shortcomings lacking within police agencies in Mexico. Although this report is only the preliminary step, the data presented has demonstrated that there is not a correlation between centralization and improved coordination, performance and reduced corruption. Furthermore, this analysis has demonstrated that there are some positive correlations between improving institutional variables within departments and better policing. It is urgent that President Peña Nieto addresses the country’s poor public perception of public security through meaningful and comprehensive reforms that tackle institutional shortcomings. In order to improve its public security, Mexico should not implement *mando único* and should consider investing further into its municipal governments and agencies. Future research should examine the role of women within law enforcement. Current data on policing suggests that more women on the force leads to less corruption and better behavior, an interesting research question would be to determine the number of women within law enforcement for each state in Mexico and determine if there is any correlation with better overall performance.

Ultimately, addressing a single variable for improvement (pay, numbers, etc) will not resolve the great challenges of reforming law enforcement and improving public confidence. A comprehensive development of all these institutions however will have a positive impact on policing in Mexico. Ultimately improving professional standards specifically involving working conditions and promotion seem to have the greatest impact on police performance. Unlike many

developed countries, children in Mexico do not aspire to become police officers when they grow up. In Mexico, there is not the same sense of pride and prestige associated with law enforcement in the United States. The country must professionalize the job and focus on community level policing in order to restore their image with the public.

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APPENDIX 1:

APPENDIX 2:
Supplemental:

Works Cited:


