

Increasing Intergovernmental Coordination to Fight Crime: Evidence from Mexico

Marco Alcocer^{1*}

¹The Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies

Abstract

Latin America is the most violent region in the world, with many countries also suffering from high levels of criminality and the presence of powerful criminal organizations. Identifying government responses that improve citizen security is imperative. Existing research argues that improving intergovernmental coordination helps the state combat criminality, but has limited its analysis to political factors that affect coordination. I study the impact of increasing intergovernmental coordination between law enforcement agencies. Using the generalized synthetic control method, original data on the staggered implementation of a police reform that increased intergovernmental police coordination and detailed data on criminal organizations and criminality in Guanajuato, Mexico, I find that the reform weakened criminal organizations and reduced violent crime, but increased violence.

Keywords: Intergovernmental coordination, police, crime, violence, organized crime, Mexico

*I thank Megan Erickson, Hannah Barron, Omar García-Ponce, and the participants of the 2023 Public Choice Society conference panel on Crime, Conflict, and Policing.

1 Introduction

Latin America is the most violent region in the world (Roser and Ritchie 2022) and suffers from high levels of crime, in large part driven by powerful criminal organizations (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime 2021). In response, governments across the region are increasingly turning to tough-on-crime enforcement policies (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). Yet, these policies have generally backfired and exacerbated violence, displaced crime, and triggered criminal wars (Dell 2015; Lessing 2017; Osorio 2015; Calderón et al. 2015; Ríos 2013; Durán-Martínez 2015; Alcocer 2022; Blair and Weintraub 2023). Identifying government responses that improve citizen security is therefore imperative.

A leading argument is that increasing intergovernmental coordination helps the state combat violence, crime, and criminal organizations. These scholars generally argue that intergovernmental coordination on security issues improves with vertical political alignment, which results in better security outcomes in politically aligned municipalities (Rios 2015; Durán-Martínez 2015, 2017; Trejo and Ley 2016; González and Cáceres 2019; Alberti et al. 2022). Alternatively, other scholars have found that this vertical alignment and coordination on security policy can *increase* violence (Dell 2015).

Yet, existing studies have limited their focus to party politics and overlooked other factors that improve intergovernmental coordination on security issues. Moreover, due to data constraints, they have yet to empirically test whether and how it impacts organized crime. This article contributes to the literature by analyzing whether improving intergovernmental coordination through policies that increase coordination between enforcement agencies also helps the state combat criminality and organized crime. This article follows the theoretical insights of Durán-Martínez (2015, 2017), who argues that a state’s “[e]nforcement efficacy depends on the ability to coordinate enforcement actions and thus should increase as power within the security apparatus is more cohesive” (Durán-Martínez 2015, 1382). However, while Durán-Martínez (2015, 2017) focuses on a multi-pronged concept of state coordination that includes enforcement and political factors, this study focuses specifically on the role of coordination between enforcement agencies.

Empirically, this study looks at Mexico, a country where levels of criminality are particularly high and where powerful criminal organizations operate. I leverage original data on the staggered implementation of a police reform that increased coordination between local and state police agencies in order to counteract organized crime and reduce high-impact crimes in the state of Guanajuato, detailed panel data on cartel activity in the state between 2000 and 2021, and monthly crime and violence data. Using the generalized synthetic control (GSC) method (Xu 2017), I find that increasing intergovernmental police coordination weakens cartel presence, reduces the number of cartels, and curtails cartel wars. I also find that it reduces violent theft rates, but simultaneously increases both overall homicide rates and cartel-related homicide rates.

This paper makes three main contributions. Substantively, it extends the argument that intergovernmental coordination can help address criminality by moving beyond political alignment and investigating coordination between enforcement agencies. Methodologically, this is the first study investigating the effect of intergovernmental coordination using quantitative data on organized crime and the GSC method. Finally, it provides important nuance to the conventional wisdom that government enforcement efforts against criminal organizations are ineffective and counterproductive. This article shows that while government enforcement can increase violence, it can also simultaneously combat criminal organizations and crime. In doing so, it highlights the successful implementation of an operational police reform in Latin America (González 2023).

2 Context

Mexico is a federal system with three levels of government (federal, state, and municipal), each with its own police forces. Through the early 2000s, violence by criminal organizations, known as “cartels” in Mexico, began to rise. In response, the newly-elected president declared war against cartels in December 2006 and deployed thousands of federal troops throughout the country, which significantly increased crime, violence, and cartel wars (e.g., Ríos 2013; Osorio 2015; Lessing 2017; Trejo and Ley 2020; Calderón et al. 2015; Dell

2015; Castillo and Kronick 2020; Alcocer 2022).

This raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of local police, heterogeneity of local policing practices, and poor intergovernmental coordination between police departments (Domínguez Ramos 2018). To address these shortcomings, two police reforms, called Unique Command (Mando Unico) and Mixed Police Command (Mando Policial Mixto), were proposed in congress between 2010 and 2014. These reforms aimed to increase coordination between local and state police to counteract organized crime and reduce high-impact crimes by, among other actions, giving state police operational command over local police (Instituto Belisario Domínguez 2015).¹ Despite them gaining much public attention, both proposals failed to make it out of their congressional committees.

Nevertheless, they served as a template for various states and municipalities that independently decided to implement them. By the 2018, 71.5% of Mexico’s 2,457 municipalities had implemented some version of the police reform (López 2018). However, the lack of a federal mandate means that its implementation has been decentralized and uneven geographically, temporally, and in kind, and consequently, no dataset exists identifying where, when, or how the police reform has been implemented.

3 Case and data

This paper focuses on the state of Guanajuato, a state in central Mexico with historically low levels of criminality and no significant cartel presence. Starting in 2008, however, cartels began entering the state, causing crime and violence to increase substantially. Starting in 2014, some municipalities began to adopt police reforms to increase intergovernmental police coordination hoping to counteract cartels.² Since then, 21 of its 46 municipalities adopted some form of the reform.³ Six municipalities implemented Unique State Command (Mando Unico Estatal or MUE), where local police were disbanded and the state police took over local policing and are therefore excluded from the analysis.

The reform analyzed here is named Unique Police Command (Mando Unico Policial

¹See the Appendix for a detailed discussion on the proposed reforms.

²See Appendix for detailed discussion on the adoption of the reform.

³A map of these municipalities is shown in Appendix 2.

or MUP) and was explicitly intended to improve coordination between state and local police forces. The reform entails local governments continuing to hold administrative and financial power over local police but handing operational command to state police through the appointment of a member of the state police as police chief. This allows these organizations to better coordinate because, as the governor stated in 2014, “[the new police chief’s] principal function will be to coordinate the operations of the local corporation [with the state police]” (EsloCotidiano 2014). Moreover, MUP formally establishes guidelines, protocols, and provisions to integrate and coordinate work and operations by, among others, sharing information, processes, responses, resources, and equipment. For example, under MUP, state and municipal police departments merge radio frequencies, consolidate Emergency Communications Centers, and receive training on coordination. When describing the implementation process, a local mayor stated that “[t]here was a meeting between local police, transit police, state police, the Red Cross, and firefighters precisely to talk about the topic of coordination... this has allowed us to ensure that MUP has optimal communication and coordination to attend reports together with the emergency agencies” (Redacción 2022).⁴

Below I introduce the data used in the analysis. Descriptive statistics for all variables are shown in Appendix Table A2.

3.1 Treatment: police reform increasing intergovernmental coordination

Intergovernmental coordination on security issues can take various forms, but systematic data on these efforts in Mexico is non-existent. Thus, existing studies rely on co-partisanship as a measure of coordination. I overcome this limitation by focusing on formal agreements between municipal and state governments to improve coordination between police agencies.

Data on which municipalities have implemented the reform, how, and the timing of its adoption does not exist. Due to this data constraint, this article focuses on the central

⁴Further details on the reform and its implementation are provided in Appendix 2

state of Guanajuato. Through in-depth qualitative research on each of Guanajuato's 46 municipalities, I create a hand-coded dataset identifying the municipalities that adopted MUP and the timing of the implementation. I draw on data from municipal and state government official documents, statements by government officials reported in media outlets, journalistic reports, and news articles. For each municipality, I identify (1) whether they adopted MUP or MUE at any point, (2) if they did, the month and year that they implemented them, (3) if they rescinded MUP or MUE, the month and year they did so, (4) if they re-implemented MUP or MUE, the month and year they did so, and (5) if they changed from MUP to MUE or the inverse, the month and year they did so. The resulting data is a municipality-month panel dataset identifying the months, if any, that each municipality had MUP or MUE. In this study I focus on MUP and exclude the municipalities that implemented MUE since it does not entail intergovernmental coordination. For the analysis on the effect of MUP on cartel activity, which is measured at the municipality-year level, this dataset is also aggregated to the municipality-year level.⁵

3.2 Dependent variable: criminal governance

To analyze whether MUP impacted cartels, I use detailed data on the population of cartels in Guanajuato by Alcocer (2023). This dataset collects detailed information on the population of cartels operating in Guanajuato between January 2000 and December 2021, and was created using extensive qualitative research and fieldwork.⁶

For this study, I rely on three measures from this dataset: (1) how well established cartels are in a municipality (or cartel strength), (2) the number of cartels operating in a municipality, and (3) whether two or more cartels are actively contesting a municipality. For the first variable, I use the measure of how well established each cartel is in a given municipality per year (no presence < cell presence < weak presence < strong presence) to identify the strongest presence in each municipality-year. For the second variable, I use a

⁵To determine the start year, I adopt the following procedure: (1) if MUP was implemented by July in year t , the start year is set as t , (2) if MUP was implemented in August or later in year t , the start year is set to $t + 1$.

⁶A map of cartel presence is shown in Appendix 6.

simple count of the total number of cartels operating in a municipality per year. Finally, using the group-dyad and geographic presence data, I identify municipality-years where cartels are actively fighting over a municipality.⁷

3.3 Dependent variable: crime and violence

To analyze the effect of MUP on crime, I use official data on two of the most prevalent types of crimes in Mexico: theft and homicides. First, I use data on the monthly incidences of crime per municipality from the National Public Security System (SESNSP) and on population from the 2010 census (INEGI) to create two variables: (1) monthly rates of violent theft per 100,000 inhabitants, and (2) monthly rates of nonviolent theft per 100,000 inhabitants. Data for these crimes is available from January 2011 to December 2021.

Second, I use monthly mortality data from Mexico's Statistical Agency (INEGI) to measure homicide prevalence in two ways. First, I use all homicides to calculate the monthly homicide rate for each municipality from January 2000 to December 2020. Second, Calderón et al. (2015) show that homicides of young men (males between the ages of 15-39) correlate highly, temporally and geographically, with homicides perpetrated by cartels. I therefore use the homicide rate of young men for each municipality from January 2000 to December 2020 to measure cartel-related homicides.

3.4 Controls

To control for intergovernmental coordination due to party politics, I use local and state level election data from Magar (2018) and create three dummy variables: whether the mayor shares political affiliation with (1) only the governor, (2) only the president, and (3) both the governor and the president.

Implementing MUP may affect the capacity of police, so I control for the number of individuals at the municipal level assigned to public security. The data comes from federal censuses of local governments conducted in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021

⁷The data from Alcocer (2023) shows various cases where cartels operate in the same territories without conflict, either as neutrals or allies.

(INEGI) and imputed values for the missing years. Election cycles have been shown to be critical for cartel activity (Buonanno et al. 2016; De Feo and De Luca 2017; Daniele and Dipoppa 2017; Albarracín 2018; Alesina et al. 2019; Trejo and Ley 2020), so I control for election years. Finally, cartels in Guanajuato primarily fight over the illicit oil theft market (Alcocer 2022), so I control for municipalities with oil pipelines.

For the models estimating the effect of the police reform on crime and violence, I also use the data on cartels from Alcocer (2023) as control variables since cartel dynamics tend to drive criminality. I use four control variables: (1) the number of cartel cells operating in a municipality, (2) the number of cartels with weak presence in the municipality, (3) the number of cartels with strong presence in the municipality, and (4) a dummy variable denoting whether two or more cartels were actively fighting over the municipality.

4 Research design

Estimating the effect of the police reform on public security outcomes is not straightforward given that criminality likely plays a role in whether and when some municipalities chose to adopt the reform, so the difference-in-differences' (DID) parallel trends assumption is unlikely to hold.⁸

To address this concern, this study uses the GSC method (Xu 2017), which builds on the synthetic control method (Abadie et al. 2010, 2015) and the interactive two-way fixed effects model (Bai 2009). GSC allows the estimation of the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of a staggered treatment on an outcome. In essence, the GSC method creates counterfactuals for treated units by using pre-treatment observations to weight control units so they look similar to the treated units and pre-treatment outcome trends approximate each other. Appendix 3 and 4 discuss in more detail how the treated and control groups were selected and shows the timing that each treated unit received treatment. Figure A2 shows the treatment status of the units in the sample across time for the annual data. GSC has clear advantages over other approaches in this case. First,

⁸Appendix 7 shows that municipalities that adopted MUP had, on average, better established cartel presence, more cartels, more cartel wars, but lower levels of violent and non-violent theft, and similar levels of homicides. Appendix 2 also discusses why treatment anticipation is unlikely to be present.

it allows for non-random interventions with staggered adoption, relaxes the parallel trends assumption required by DID, generalizes the synthetic controls method to allow multiple treated units, works well when there is a small number of treated units, and allows for treatment effect heterogeneity across units.

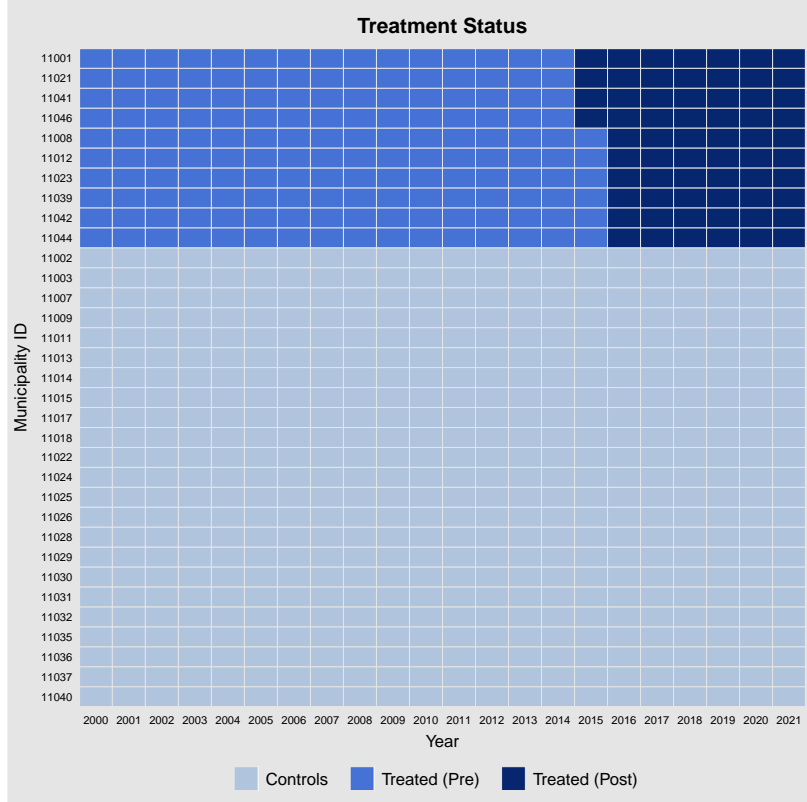


Figure 1: Treatment assignment by municipality for municipality-year analysis.

I estimate two separate models since the data on cartel presence is at the municipality-year level, while the data on crime is at the municipality-month level. All models are estimated using the following specification:

$$Y_{it} = \delta_{it}D_{it} + X'_{it}\beta + \lambda'_i f_t + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where Y_{it} denotes the outcome of interest in municipality i at time t , D_{it} is the treatment indicator that takes on the value of 1 for municipalities that adopted the police reform once they implemented the reform and 0 otherwise, δ_{it} estimates the heterogeneous treatment effect on municipality i at time t , X'_{it} is a vector of observed covariates, λ'_i is a vector of unknown factor loadings, f_t denotes a vector of unobserved common factors, and

ϵ_{it} are the error terms for municipality i at time t . The interactive two-way fixed effects also control for any additional common shocks and unobserved time-invariant and time-varying covariates. The number of factors are selected using a cross-validation procedure that minimizes the mean square prediction error (MSPE). Standard errors are estimated using bootstrapping with 1,000 runs. All models are estimated using Expectation Maximization algorithm.

For the analysis estimating the effect on cartels, t denotes years, Y_{it} denotes different measures of cartel presence, and X'_{it} includes controls for sociodemographic characteristics, illicit markets, local police capacity, and political factors.

For the models estimating the effect on crime and violence, Y_{it} denotes different measures theft and homicides, t denotes months for Y_{it} and D_{it} , and X'_{it} includes municipality-specific controls for cartel presence, sociodemographic characteristics, illicit markets, local police capacity, and political factors.

5 Results

Tables 1 and 2 show the average ATT over all time periods for increased intergovernmental coordination on different measures of cartel presence and crime and violence, respectively. Figures 2 and 3 plot both the average outcomes of the treatment and synthetic control units before and after the implementation of MUP to show parallel trends (first column), and the ATT per period with 95% confidence intervals to visualize the effect over time (second column).⁹

Table 1 shows that the effect of MUP on the strength of cartel presence is negative but not statistically significant. However, MUP does decrease the number of cartels operating in municipalities by almost three quarters of a cartel, which is a 0.65 standard deviation (SD) decrease. Moreover, MUP also decreased the prevalence of cartels wars by 37%.

Looking at the effects over time in Figure 2, I find that MUP decreases the strength of cartel presence, though these results are only statistically significant the third and fourth years after its implementation, the number of cartels by the second year and

⁹Regression tables are included in Appendix 8 and 9.

Table 1: Average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of increased intergovernmental coordination on cartels averaged across treatment period.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Cartel strength	Cartel number	Cartel war
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Police Reform	-0.346 (0.239)	-0.730*** (0.207)	-0.370*** (0.105)
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unobserved factors	1	1	1
Period	2000-2021	2000-2021	2000-2021
Observations	726	726	726
Treated Muns	10	10	10
Control Muns	23	23	23

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

cartel wars within a year. Yet, while the effect on cartel wars appears to hold after five years, the effects on cartel strength and number of cartels is lost after five and six years, respectively. There appears to be a small decline at $t = 0$ though it is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, it may be a function of: anticipation in municipalities that adopted the reform in 2015, spillover effects from the first treated cohort, or treated units being affected more than control units by the withdrawal of the Knights Templar Cartel from Guanajuato in February of 2015, which Appendix Figure A5 seems to indicate.

Turning to the effects on crime and violence, Table 2 shows that MUP decreased violent theft rate by -1.88 per 100,000, which corresponds to a reduction of 0.66 SDs. Second, estimates suggest that MUP increases both overall homicide rates and cartel-related homicide rates by 0.94 and 0.5 per 100,000 (an increase of 0.22 SDs), respectively, and these results are statistically significant at the 0.1 level.

Looking at the temporal effects in Figure 3, I find that MUP has an almost immediate negative—by the third month—and lasting effect on violent theft. However, MUP only reduces non-violent theft after three years and revert back to no effect after four years. The effects on homicides and cartel-related homicides are also quick, with a positive statistically significant effect after two months. Yet, this effect mostly disappears after

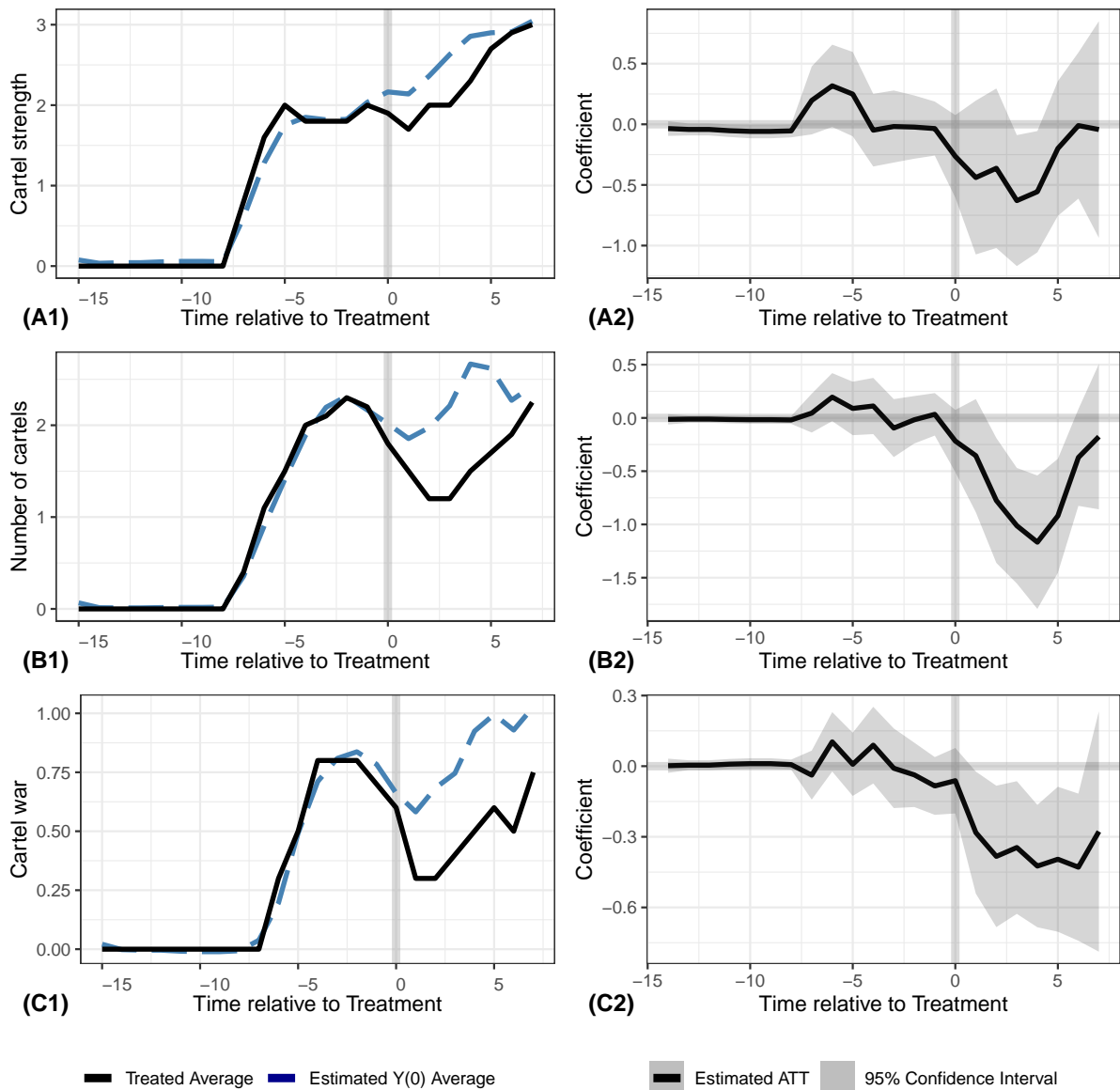


Figure 2: Average outcome trends for treated and synthetic control groups (left column) and average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of police reform increasing intergovernmental coordination on cartels with 95% confidence intervals (right column). (A1-A2) Cartel strength, (B1-B2) number of cartels, (C1-C2) cartel war.

about 3.5 years.

Two key results stand out. First, the effects fade after 3-4 years. Some experts claim that adopting MUP drove municipalities to invest less in municipal police, reducing their capacity over time. Simultaneously, cartels likely gradually learned to circumvent MUP. Lastly, the 3-4 year period coincides with the 2018 election where a new governor and mayors took office, which may have impacted MUP. Second, MUP decreased cartel presence and violent theft, but increased homicides. MUP entailed increasing coordinated

Table 2: Average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of increased intergovernmental coordination on crime rates averaged averaged across treatment period. Crimes measured per 100,000 inhabitants.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Violent theft rate	Non-violent theft rate	Homicide rate	Young men homicide rate
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Police Reform	-1.883** (0.782)	-1.387 (1.019)	0.941* (0.528)	0.498* (0.276)
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unobserved factors	0	1	2	1
Period	1/2011-12/2021	1/2011-12/2021	1/2000-12/2020	1/2000-12/2020
Observations	4356	4356	8316	8316
Treated Muns	11	11	10	10
Control Muns	22	22	23	23

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

police operations against high-impact crimes that targeted hotspots and cartel members. This seems to have successfully reduced cartels' ability to operate and perpetrate violent crimes. Yet, like other enforcement efforts, MUP triggered a violent response. This may be due to increased violence against the state, intensified (though fewer) cartel wars, and magnified pressures to extract rents from citizens.

6 Discussion

The motivation behind increasing intergovernmental police coordination in Mexico was to combat organized crime and reduce high-impact crimes. I find that this police reform accomplished most of its goals (at least within the first five years of its implementation): it weakened cartel presence, reduced the number of cartels, decreased the incidence of cartels wars, and lowered violent crime. However, the reform also failed in one of its main aims: it increased violence and cartel-related violence. These mixed results may explain why some advocates defend the reform while opponents deem it a failure.

The findings provide important nuances to ongoing debates. On the one hand, they run counter to most studies arguing that better intergovernmental coordination reduces

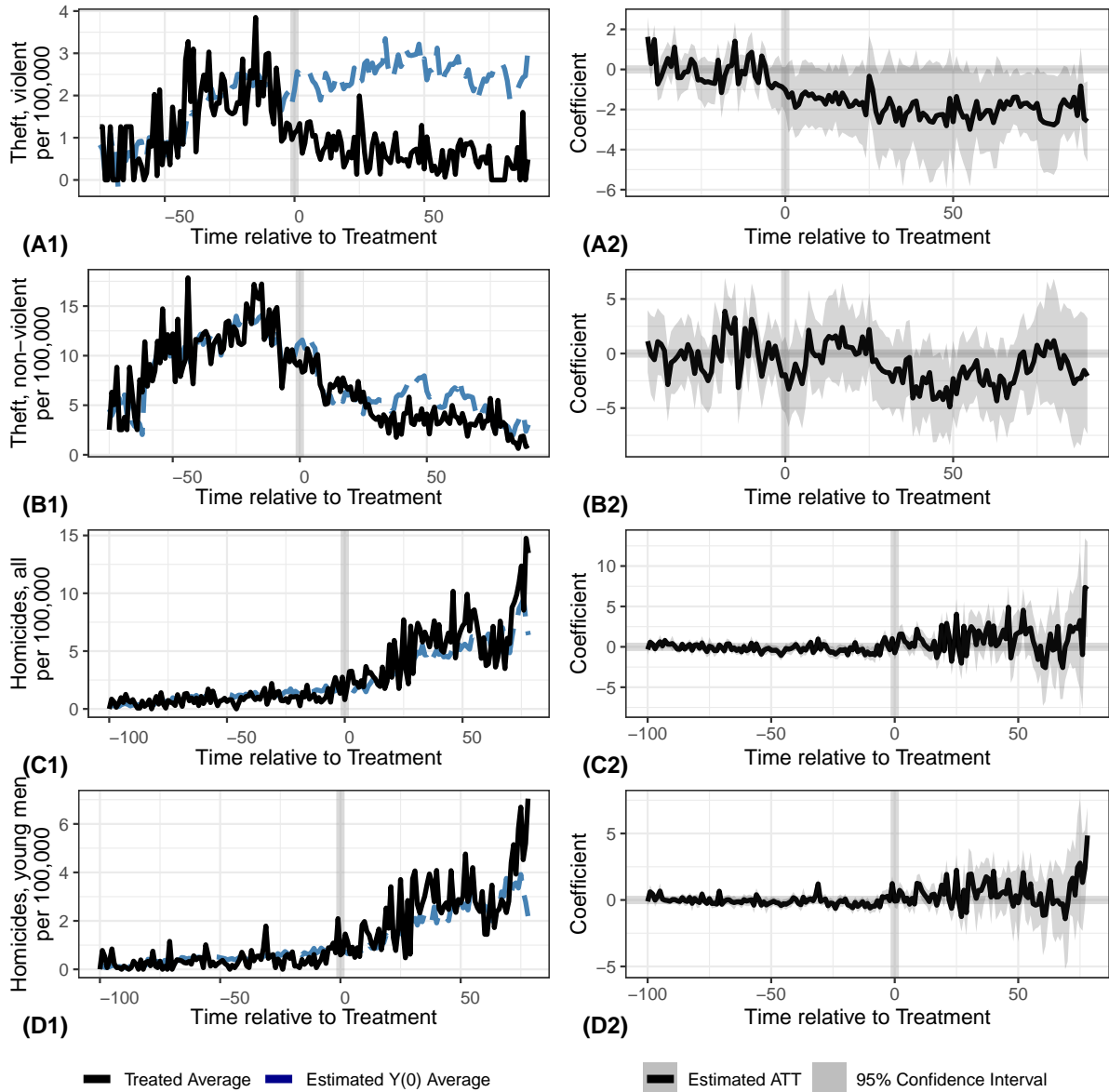


Figure 3: Average outcome trends for treated and synthetic control groups (left column) and average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of police reform increasing intergovernmental coordination on crime and violence with 95% confidence intervals (right column). (A1-A2) Violent theft rate, (B1-B2) non-violent theft rate, (C1-C2) homicide rate, (D1-D2) cartel-related homicide rate.

violence, and are instead consistent with findings that government enforcement policies targeting criminal organizations generally increase violence. Yet, they do show that intergovernmental coordination on security issues can help the state combat violent crime and criminal governance. On the other hand, the results confirm the conventional wisdom that government enforcement against criminal organizations increases violence, but adds nuance by showing that they can simultaneously reduce criminal governance and certain

types of crime. More broadly, the results suggest that intergovernmental coordination may be one important aspect of improving governance and citizen security in violent contexts, though it is clearly not a panacea.

References

- Abadie, A., Diamond, A., and Hainmueller, J. (2010). Synthetic control methods for comparative case studies: Estimating the effect of california’s tobacco control program. *Journal of the American statistical Association*, 105(490):493–505.
- Abadie, A., Diamond, A., and Hainmueller, J. (2015). Comparative politics and the synthetic control method. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(2):495–510.
- Albarracín, J. (2018). Criminalized electoral politics in brazilian urban peripheries. *Crime, law and social change*, 69(4):553–575.
- Alberti, C., Díaz-Rioseco, D., and Visconti, G. (2022). Can political alignment reduce crime? evidence from chile. *Political Science Research and Methods*, pages 1–14.
- Alcocer, M. (2022). Drug wars, organized crime expansion, and state capture: Evidence from mexico. *Working paper*, pages 1–45.
- Alcocer, M. (2023). Mapping criminal organizations in guanajuato. *Harvard Dataverse*.
- Alesina, A., Piccolo, S., and Pinotti, P. (2019). Organized crime, violence, and politics. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(2):457–499.
- Bai, J. (2009). Panel data models with interactive fixed effects. *Econometrica*, 77(4):1229–1279.
- Blair, R. A. and Weintraub, M. (2023). Little evidence that military policing reduces crime or improves human security. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7:1–13.
- Bravo, J. (2022). Reconoce diego sinhue que el mando Único debilitó a policías de guanajuato. <https://periodicocorreo.com.mx/reconoce-diego-sinhue-que-el-mando-unico-debilito-a-policias-de-guanajuato/>.
- Buonanno, P., Prarolo, G., and Vanin, P. (2016). Organized crime and electoral outcomes. evidence from sicily at the turn of the xxi century. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 41:61–74.
- Calderón, G., Robles, G., Díaz-Cayeros, A., and Magaloni, B. (2015). The beheading of criminal organizations and the dynamics of violence in mexico. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(8):1455–1485.
- Castillo, J. C. and Kronick, D. (2020). The logic of violence in drug war. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3):874–887.
- Contreras, S. (2014). Impulsan mando Único en la frontera con michoacán. <https://www.milenio.com/estados/impulsan-mando-unico-en-la-frontera-con-michoacan>.
- Daniele, G. and Dipoppa, G. (2017). Mafia, elections and violence against politicians. *Journal of Public Economics*, 154:10–33.
- Davis, D. E. (2006). Undermining the rule of law: Democratization and the dark side of police reform in mexico. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48(1):55–86.

- De Feo, G. and De Luca, G. D. (2017). Mafia in the ballot box. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 9(3):134–67.
- Dell, M. (2015). Trafficking networks and the mexican drug war. *American Economic Review*, 105(6):1738–1779.
- Domínguez Ramos, L. A. (2018). Análisis situacional de los modelos policiales de mando Único en México. *Criminalidades, violencias, opresiones y seguridad pública*, 8(1):401–416.
- Durán-Martínez, A. (2015). To kill and tell? state power, criminal competition, and drug violence. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 59(8):1377–1402.
- Durán-Martínez, A. (2017). *The politics of drug violence : criminals, cops and politicians in Colombia and Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, United States of America.
- EsloCotidiano (2014). Instalan mando único policial municipios del sur de guanajuato. <https://www.eslocotidiano.com/articulo/sociedad/instalan-mando-unico-policial-municipios-sur-guanajuato/20140731064734011589.html>.
- Flores-Macías, G. A. and Zarkin, J. (2021). The militarization of law enforcement: Evidence from latin america. *Perspectives on politics*, 19(2):519–538.
- Fuentes, C. (2005). *Contesting the Iron Fist: Advocacy Networks and Police Violence in Democratic Argentina and Chile*. Routledge.
- Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (2021). *Global Organized Crime Index 2021*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.
- González, L. and Cáceres, M. B. (2019). Federal distributive politics and the unequal distribution of violence: Argentine provinces in comparative perspective. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 11(1):49–70.
- González, Y. M. (2023). Reforming to avoid reform: Strategic policy substitution and the reform gap in policing. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(1):59–77.
- Instituto Belisario Domínguez (2015). *La figura del Mando Único en la seguridad pública*. Instituto Belisario Domínguez, Senado de la República.
- Lessing, B. (2017). *Making peace in drug wars: Crackdowns and cartels in Latin America*. Cambridge studies in comparative politics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- López, L. (2018). Con mando único, siete de cada 10 municipios del país. <https://www.milenio.com/policia/con-mando-unico-siete-de-cada-10-municipios-del-pais>.
- Magar, E. (2018). Recent mexican election vote returns repository. <https://github.com/emagar/elecReturns>.

- NTX (2010). Con mando único, una sola ley para todas las policías. <https://www.informador.mx/Mexico/Con-mando-unico-una-sola-Ley-para-todas-las-policias-20101029-0121.html>.
- Osorio, J. (2015). The contagion of drug violence: spatiotemporal dynamics of the mexican war on drugs. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(8):1403–1432.
- Redacción (2022). Mando único sí funciona en manuel doblado. <https://notus.com.mx/mando-unico-si-funciona-en-manuel-doblado/>.
- Ríos, V. (2015). How government coordination controlled organized crime: The case of mexico’s cocaine markets. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(8):1433–1454.
- Roser, M. and Ritchie, H. (2022). Homicides. *Our World in Data*. <https://ourworldindata.org/homicides>.
- Ríos, V. (2013). Why did mexico become so violent? a self-reinforcing violent equilibrium caused by competition and enforcement. *Trends in organized crime*, 16:138–155.
- SSPEG (2016). Presentan propuesta de mando Único a municipio de san luis de la paz. *Comunicado de Prensa*.
- Trejo, G. and Ley, S. (2016). Federalism, drugs, and violence. why intergovernmental partisan conflict stimulated inter-cartel violence in mexico. *Política y gobierno*, 23(1):11–56.
- Trejo, G. and Ley, S. (2020). *Votes, drugs, and violence: The political logic of criminal wars in Mexico*. Cambridge University Press.
- Xu, Y. (2017). Generalized synthetic control method: Causal inference with interactive fixed effects models. *Political Analysis*, 25(1):57–76.