

Administrative Macrocephaly and Inequality. Public Goods and Access Problems: The Case of Security in Guatemala

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Abstract Nowadays, Guatemala faces a huge political opportunity resulting from the mobilizations that took place between the months of April and September 2015. Despite the civic commitment that these demonstrations have shown, the country continues to suffer numerous problems. One of them, certainly amongst the most important, is the social exclusion caused by unequal access to certain public goods. For many Guatemalans, security is one of the major national problems. Since the signing of the Peace Accords, the nation has suffered high rates of non-political violence that have prevented a firm consolidation of the political system as well as an advance towards the long-awaited democratic quality. This research paper presents a study of the Guatemalan National Civil Police (PNC). The study reveals that there is no relation between violent areas and police presence. The most violent departments are not the ones with more access to public security. Moreover, we confirm that the institution clearly suffers from administrative macrocephaly. In the Department of Guatemala, which holds approximately 20% of the country's population, there are more than 70% of the total existing police dependencies. The article ends with a reflection on the causes of such macrocephaly.

Keywords Guatemala, Inequality, Macrocephaly, National Civil Police

1. Introduction

Guatemala is suffering a civic, legal and political transformation. After the discovery of a series of corruption cases in the highest bureaucratic ranks, the Guatemalan political system is readjusting. The Central American country has its former President, General Otto Perez Molina, and former Vice President, Mrs. Roxana Baldetti Elías, in jail

facing charges for co-opting the state during the *Partido Patriota* administration. But corruption has not only reached the President and Vice President. Today, more than fifty people are in custody, including former public officials, renowned businessmen and members of very important financial groups.

This fight against corruption could not be explained without recognizing the role of a key player in Guatemala's current political arena: the *Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala – CICIG* – (the UN's International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala). Undoubtedly, the CICIG, along with its Commissioner, the Colombian Judge Iván Velásquez, is doing what many Guatemalans have been expecting for years. For the first time in the country's recent history corruption charges have been followed through and, apparently, impunity is beginning to decrease. At the same time, the Guatemalan Public Ministry - the Guatemalan State's Attorney Office - has been strengthened, and Thelma Aldana, the Attorney General, has played an essential role in this process. The joint efforts of these two institutions and its leaders have begun to cause deep changes within the Guatemalan political system.

After the political turmoil of last year, the citizens had to face the consequences of the power vacuum caused by the resignation and subsequent imprisonment of its heads of state. And in the 2015 elections, against all odds, former comedian Jimmy Morales came out winner. Guatemalans voted for the outsider, for someone with no political career or experience. For his voters, he represented something rarely seen in the Guatemalan political scene: change. The great civic activism seen in the last year, that brought thousands of citizens to the streets, has developed a new policy agenda that is being followed by the three branches of state. This new agenda addresses security issues, electoral reform, civil service reform, reform of the judiciary system and of the perverse dynamic that exists between the public and private sectors in

terms of procurement and contracting, the famous *licitaciones*.

As noted before, security is one of the key issues in the Guatemalan political agenda; it has been for most of its recent history. Guatemala is one of the most insecure countries in Latin America - the fifth most violent in 2015 [1]. In addition to this, the PNC, the institution in charge of providing security, is one of the worst civil police forces in Latin America [2]. Guatemalans have no trust in the institution and, consequently, it is in deep need of substantial change. It is no coincidence that the former President, now in jail, came to power in big part thanks to the slogan *Mano Dura* (Firm Hand), emphasizing the importance of security for the citizens of this country.

Security is something Guatemalans deeply long for, and the PNC is a key player in this quest. Unfortunately, it is evident for anyone who sets foot in this Central American country that mentioned institution is failing to fulfill its duty. For this reason, this research paper focuses on one of the most important problems the PNC has: the inefficient and ineffective administration of its human and material resources throughout the national territory. It intends to do so from an Austrian Public Choice perspective. The PNC is the responsible for providing public security to the entire country. In our effort to explore this one problem, our analysis has found two key issues that prevent Guatemalans from having the safe country they desire.

On the one hand, we observe a phenomenon called administrative macrocephaly, a concept maybe not familiar for the English-speaking world. However it is the key to understand how PNC – and other governmental institutions – have been managed for years in Latin America, and especially in Guatemala. Administrative macrocephaly is a phenomenon in which the center and periphery of a country are subject of great inequality between each other. The center, representing the country's head, concentrates a disproportionate majority of the human and material resources, with no regard of population distribution throughout the entirety of the national territory. In the Guatemalan case, Guatemala City and its vicinities within the Department of Guatemala hold the great majority of governmental institutional presence. This leaves the rest of the country, the periphery, with few resources and problems of access to services provided by the state. This is the real meaning and consequence of macrocephaly.

This disproportionate relationship between the center and the periphery results in second of our discoveries: unequal access to public security. Guatemalan citizens are not equal when it comes to their access to the public good of security.

When security is recognized as a public good, but, at the same time, it cannot be accessed equally by all the Guatemalan people, diverse problems arise concerning the legitimacy of the PNC directly and of the state in general. At first, citizens become frustrated with the inefficiency of the government to provide the services it is constitutionally

obliged to. Then, political disaffection appears, and along with it, the risk of a populist leader taking advantage of this whole situation. And, as has been seen in Latin America before, this can cause the erosion or complete destruction of the liberal democratic system as we know it.

The data used in this paper has come mainly from official sources. The authors had access to information provided directly by the PNC via email, and also consulted the PNC's official webpage for more information. Besides this, more data came from research by Carlos Mendoza, a Guatemalan political scientist specializing in the study of violence in the country. His work has been crucial to evaluate the evolution of violence in post-conflict Guatemala. The collected data was sufficient to diagnose administrative macrocephaly and also to highlight the unequal access to public security Guatemalan citizens have to endure.

This paper has the following structure and organization. The first part will be devoted to presenting the approach and basic concepts that will be used throughout the research. The Austrian Public Choice approach is discussed and the status of security as a public good is explored.

Once all the conceptual apparatus is developed, the second part of this research focuses on the origin and nature of the PNC as an institution. After this, the paper elaborates a diagnosis of the current situation police forces. The final phase of this second part aims to open a debate on the necessary reforms this institution so desperately needs. And last but not least, there is a space dedicated to conclusions for the sole purpose of recapitulating everything we have seen during work.

2. Austrian Public Choice and Public Goods. Towards a New Theory of Interventionism

The origin of the Public Choice approach to political science first appeared between the 50s and 60s in the United States. This approach sought and still, to this day, aims to develop an analysis of political phenomena using the tools and concepts developed by Economics. The founding fathers of Public Choice were economists Gordon Tullock and James Buchanan - Nobel Prize Laureate -. They wrote *The Calculus of Consent* in 1962 and presented the fundamental ideas of this new way to look at politics. Following the same approach, new research has been written over the years on the perverse incentives within the bureaucracy - the work of William Niskanen -, on efficiency problems with the implementation of public policies, and the disproportionate power of certain lobbies to establish the political agenda, amongst other variables. Some of this papers and books are very relevant to Political Science as a discipline. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957) by Anthony Downs or Mancur Olson and his magnificent book *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965)

fit perfectly into the doctrinal principles of Public Choice. What elements are in the core of this academic approach? According to the work of Peter Boettke and Edward Lopez (2002), the central elements are:

- 1) Methodological individualism
- 2) Rational choice
- 3) The perception of politics as an exercise of trade and exchange

Thanks to these theoretical pillars, Public Choice has provided the academic world with extremely interesting and useful concepts. These new concepts include, but are not limited to (Mitchell, 2001): rent seeking (Gordon Tullock), free-rider (Olson Stigler and Becker), and the famous Capture Theory (Olson, and Stigler Peltzman).

Even though the authors of Public Choice have made enormous contributions to the analysis of the political affairs, they still face serious limitations. One of their major argumentative flaws is found in the fact that Public Choice Theory is basing itself on the premise that individuals make decisions rationally and have access to perfect information. The real world works differently, with individuals often making decisions irrationally and with limited information. But despite the limitations of this model and the critique it has faced, the contribution of Public Choice to social sciences in general has been remarkable and needs to be acknowledged.

One of the main questions underlying the Public Choice Theory is: Do politicians, bureaucrats and lobbyists say what they really think? The answer, from their point of view, is that they definitely not. Undoubtedly, there is a serious divergence between stated intention and desired intention [3] (Ikeda, 2003, p. 65). These questions and statements about politicians' behavior, along with the recognition of subjectivity when internalizing preferences, motivated the merge of Public Choice with the approach of the Austrian School.

The Austrian School of economics was born in the nineteenth century with the Viennese professor of Polish origin Carl Menger as its founding father. Through his book *Principles of Economy* (1871), this new school of thought flourished during the twentieth century with people like Eugene von Böhm Bawerk, Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich August von Hayek, and present teachers as Hans-Hermann Hoppe. The basic sets of principles that define the Austrian School of economics are:

- 1) Methodological individualism
- 2) Subjectivity in preferences and values
- 3) Dispersed knowledge
- 4) Rational decisions with imperfect information
- 5) Impossibility of economic calculation under socialism

Following Sandford Ikeda's argument, the Austrian School sees the political error not as a problem -or divergence- between intention announced and desired, but as a problem of knowledge. The authors of the Austrian School

did not doubt the intentions of politicians, but their level of knowledge about economy and policy efficacy [4]. Therefore, it seems that taking advantage of the positive elements of both approaches could help develop a useful tool to understand the perverse incentives in public intervention.

The merged approach has the following characteristics:

- 1) Methodological individualism
- 2) Policy as an exchange exercise
- 3) Subjectivity in preferences
- 4) Scattered knowledge and imperfect information

Above all, this new approach can be used to understand the ineffectiveness of the political authorities in resolving problems associated with the provision of public goods.

Once the theoretical framework used to develop this analysis was presented, another problem arises. What is a public good? And, more specifically pertinent to this research, is security mandatorily a public good?

2.1. Public Goods. Definition and Analysis of the Phenomenon

The concept of public good is complicated, diverse and definitely subject to a process of political competition. The issue of public goods can be analyzed from different angles. The first and more traditional focus has been the economic one. Economists, especially those that are of more importance for this research paper, have contributed to this issue. Their research has evidenced problems concerning policy management caused by different incentive structures.

James Buchanan, the father of the Public Choice approach, Paul Samuelson (1983) or Elinor Ostrom (1990), all Nobel laureates in economics, worked the concept of public good in great depth. They all agree that a public good is one that meets two central criteria:

- a Non-exclusive.
- b Unlimited individual consumption.

Therefore, a good can only be categorized as public when it is available for anyone who wants to consume it and when the consumption of this good by one person does not limit or affect the consumption of the same good by another.

Before beginning the concrete analysis of security as a public good, another distinction should be made: the difference between a public good and a free good. The public good is an economic good; the free good is not. In other words, the public good is not free; it is a service or a product that has tangible economic value. Security is a good example of this, because the provision of such good or service has an economic cost and citizens pay for it with their taxes. On the other hand, a good example of a free good is air, which has no economic value (for now). It is important to note that free goods can potentially become public good depending on scarcity and demand.

With respect to public goods, Elinor Ostrom and others have analyzed the provision of such goods and have come to

the conclusion that such goods are more efficiently provided by private entities than by public ones. Even though, traditionally, it has been widely accepted that the best manager of public goods is the state (Simmons, 2011), the contributions of public choice researchers have shown that the private sector is more than capable to provide public goods with quality and excellence.

That is where another dimension of public goods appears: the strictly political dimension. This vision encompasses the idea that even though it is widely accepted that public goods exist for a reason, the state is not the only one capable of providing them. For the anarcho-capitalist political and economic theorists, it should not be assumed that because a good is deemed as public, it must be provided by the state. In fact, for them, all provision of public goods could (and should) be private. The fact that in most cases the state is in charge of providing public goods is only the result of a political competition between bureaucracy agencies and lobbies. What is considered a public good is nothing... According to this vision, the public goods people accept as such nowadays are nothing more than the result of a consensus between certain lobbies and the imposition of the state itself to justify its existence *ad eternum*.

In that sense, it is very important to analyze the work of Edward Stringham (2007), Hans-Hermann Hoppe (1989; 2007), Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, and Don LaVoi (2007), amongst many others. They considered that the existence of a public good could be better managed by the private sector. Hans-Hermann Hoppe once said that the statist desire to provide "nationalized" public goods is a denial of history. In one of his works he states that:

(...) historical evidence show us all of the so-called public goods that states provides have at some time in the past actually been provided by private entrepreneurs or even today are so provided in one country or another. For example, the postal service was once private almost everywhere. Streets where privately finance and still are sometimes; even the beloved lighthouses were originally the result of private enterprise; private police forces, detectives, and arbitrators exit; and help for the sick, the poor, the elderly, orphans, and widows has been a traditional concern of private charity organizations. To say, then, that such things cannot be produced by a pure market system y falsified by experience a hundredfold [5].

As mentioned before, the existence of a public good does not mean that it cannot be produced privately. However, when security is brought into question, few people doubt that the state should play an important role in providing this essential service.

2.2. Security as a Public Good

Security has traditionally been considered a public good.

That is to say, it is generally accepted, and demanded, that the provision of security should not exclude any member of the community despite the cost it may represent. At the same time, the security enjoyed by one person, should not affect or limit the security enjoyed by the rest of the population. More importantly, when every member of a community has the same access to security, the community is regarded as a whole benefits.

The reason why security is so strongly defended as a public good is because it is certainly one of the central elements of the modern state. This political form, since its birth in the seventeenth century, considered security, alongside with the provision of justice, a main reason for its existence. Therefore, security is part of the modern state's DNA, and its provision has been regarded as responsibility of the state and strategically linked to the concept of sovereignty. In the case of Guatemala, the legal framework of the PNC clearly states, in its first article, that public security is an essential service, its provision must be exclusively in the hands of the state, and this is the reason the PNC was created [6].

Still, in recent years there have been many scholars who have investigated the existence of private security companies that, for many years now, have been coexisting with the state security forces. Elke Krahmman (2008) thinks that the incursion of private companies is destroying the concept of security as a public good. But there are also scholars who defend the work of these private security companies and their contribution in creating safer environments in weak states with ineffective police forces, such as Guatemala (Trujillo, 2008-2009). The subject is still controversial and should be discussed further.

In weak states, such as the ones unfortunately found in Central America, private security companies have been playing a key role in providing this supposedly public good. In Guatemala, according to its own General Direction of Private Security Services, there were 148 authorized private security companies in 2014 [7]. Furthermore, InSight Crime published, in the same year, that only 1% of all private security guards works legally in the country (Yagoub, 2014). This means that there is actually no way of quantifying the real impact of this sector in Guatemala. It is evident that these security companies have great influence in the public perception of safety. For example, according to surveys Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), individuals feel secure at home and on private property environment, but feel extremely unsafe in public spaces (Trujillo, 2010). This is probably due to the fact that these private properties normally have private security guards.

But what do people understand by being secure? What is security? What should we understand when we try to analyze this concept? Wolfer defines it as "the absence of threats to acquire values". With the intention of clarifying this notion, the following is noted:

Since there is ambiguity in the phrase “absence of threats”, Wolfers’ phraseology will be reformulated as ‘a low probability of damage to acquired values’. This does not significantly change Wolfers’ meaning and it allows for inclusion of events such as earthquakes, which Ullman has argued should be considered ‘threats’ to security. The advantages of this reformulation can be illustrated as follows: In response to threats of military attack, states develop deterrence policies. Such policies are intended to provide security by lowering the probability that the attack will occur. (...) With this reformulation, security in its most general sense can be defined in terms of two specifications: Security for whom? And security is for which values? [9].

What can be concluded from this quote by David Baldwin is that security involves an objective. It involves values and needs; security responds to objectives that serve as pillars for society, such as individual freedom and protection of private property.

Now that security has been defined, this paper proceeds to present the situation of Guatemala regarding this complex subject. Violence rates will be presented, and the PNC’s human and material resource allocation will be evaluated.

3. Guatemala and Security: The State of PNC

There is no doubt Guatemala is a convulsed country with various problems of social and political nature. As a young democracy with its Constitution dating back to 1985, the country has been politically stable since 1996, year when the Peace Accords were signed. These agreements marked the end of an armed conflict that lasted thirty-six years and left the country socially devastated.

It must be noted that this conflict left a large part of the Guatemalan population with deep distrust of the state’s authority. This happened either because of direct aggressions by the Army, or for the state’s failure to protect the population from the guerrilla’s abuses. Either way, this lack of trust in the government’s capacity to protect the Guatemalan people had serious consequences that affect the country to this day.

The mythical Peace Accords, although questioned by many, undoubtedly represented the culmination and end of the military conflict between the Army and guerrilla. Once this violent confrontation ended, political violence decreased, but the country suffered a significant increase in non-political violence. This increase in non-political violence and the creation of the PNC happened hand in hand.

The violence figures have ever since soared to make Guatemala one of the most dangerous countries in Latin America. Figure 1 shows that at the beginning of this year,

Guatemala found itself as the fifth most violent country in the entire region.

Table 1. Homicides per 100,000 populations

COUNTRY	HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION
El Salvador	103
Venezuela	90
Honduras	57
Jamaica	45
Guatemala	30
Brazil	26
Colombia	25
Dominican Republic	17
Puerto Rico	16
Mexico	13
Costa Rica	11
Panama	11
Argentina	9
Nicaragua	8
Paraguay	8

Source: *El Periódico* with data from Insight Crime. For more information see: <http://elperiodico.com.gt/2016/01/25/pais/guatemala-es-la-quinta-nacion-mas-violenta-de-america-latina/>

Figure 1 shows the homicide rates according to different governmental agencies. This shows the lack of control the State has over such an important figure. Three different public institutions report three different homicide rates. The INE is the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (National Statistics Institute), the INACIF is the *Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses* (National Institute of Forensic Sciences), and the PNC, as stated before, is the *Policía Nacional Civil* (National Civil Police). Variations, despite being important, still allow the calculation of a homicide rate around 34 deaths per 100,000 populations in 2015.

Data from the INACIF is presented separately because “INACIF (1)” includes necropsies of deaths caused both by firearms and knives, and “INACIF (2)” includes asphyxiations and, since 2012, body dismemberment [10].

The data show a decline in homicide rates in the last six years, reaching a rate of 31 deaths per 100,000 populations, still a very high rate compared to global standards. Even though the numbers have slightly fallen in the last few years, violence rates are still worryingly high. Guatemalans have to live their everyday life with fear. Going to work, driving a car, using public transportation, going to the market, and most normal daily activities are stained with homicides, violent assaults, rape, robbery, and violence in general.

The downside of the evident drop in homicide rates in recent years, is that it apparently bears no correlation whatsoever with decisive action by the authorities. The

source of this decrease is yet unknown and, even though the numbers speak for themselves; Guatemalans find it hard to explain what they are showing. The numbers have been simply data to be observed, and not even the government can concretely explain what has caused this drop in homicide rates. Specialists such as Carlos Mendoza have been very vocal when saying that, as citizens, we must be aware that the recent dramatic decline is unrelated to any concrete public policy.

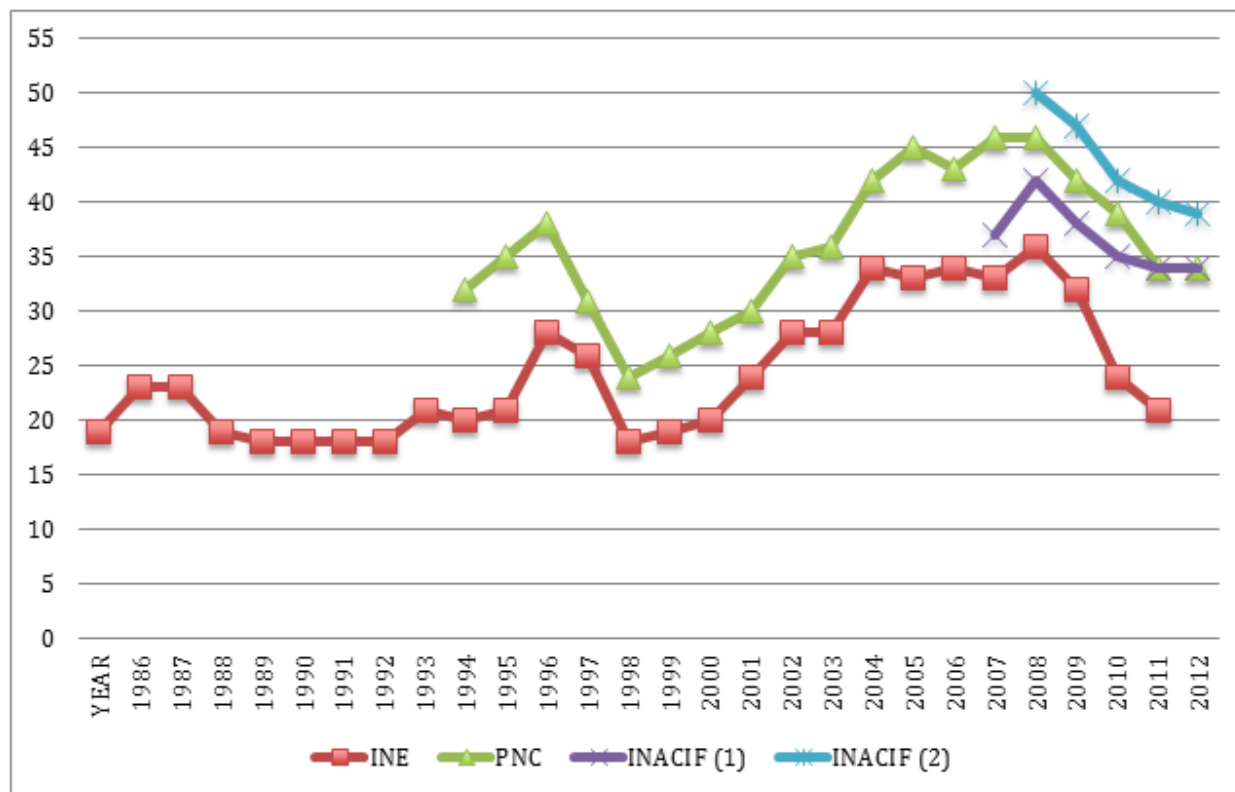
There is no doubt that the National Civil Police (PNC) has to be a central tool in the fight against crime. As the civil police force of the country, this institution is meant to be the main responsible in dealing with violence, but also preventing it. The Executive branch has to do a much better job at managing the resources it has at its disposal, and make the PNC more efficient. The *Ministerio de Gobernación*, the ministry in charge of the police forces, needs to ensure all Guatemalans with equal access to public security. In order for this to happen, human and material resources of the PNC have to be within the reach of every Guatemalan. According to Article 2 of the law governing the PNC, this institution has the obligation of providing security 24 hours a day and throughout the entire national territory [11]. This is definitely not the case right now.

The creation of the PNC in 1997 was a direct consequence

of the Peace Accords, which emphasized the importance of a civil force in charge of providing public security to the Guatemalan society. The key word here is “civil” because, these agreements decreased the power, scope and presence of the Army as its main objective. However, the PNC to this day still hasn’t been able to fulfill its role within Guatemala’s political system.

This institution has been subject to many studies that seek to analyze the problems that hinder the PNC’s performance and the reforms it so urgently needs. Javier Calderón (2011), a researcher from the CIEN, *Centro de Investigaciones Económicas Nacionales* (National Economic Research Center) considers that the PNC has the following challenges [12]:

1. Stabilizing police management
2. Improving the elaboration of annual work plans
3. Facilitating procurement processes
4. Improving accountability
5. Modernizing training and promotion systems
6. Creating a real professional police career
7. Strengthening the control of disciplinary proceedings
8. Evaluating the wage system
9. Reassess educational contents of the Police Academy
10. Improving police infrastructure



Data Source: Self-elaborated with information from Carlos Mendoza (2014). “¿Cuál es la relación entre violencia homicida y narcoactividad en Guatemala?”, *Plaza Pública*, July 28th.

Figure 1. Annual rate of violent deaths, homicides, and necropsis in Guatemala (1986 – 2013), according to INE (National Statistics Institute), PNC (National Civil Police) and INACIF (Guatemalan National Institute of Forensic Sciences).

Four years after Calderón made his remarks, another CIEN researcher, Walter Menchú [13] said that the PNC had not been able to tackle these challenges. The researcher wrote:

1. They have carried out reforms in the PNC, but they have not been coordinated as part of a strategic plan.
2. The absence of quantifiable and measurable goals makes it difficult to assess the progress of police reform, since there are no evaluation parameters.
3. The National Commission for Police Reform should play the role of a technical body that promotes and monitors proposed police reform instead of using most of its resources in activities for the police officers.
4. The reform proposals and the creation of strategic plans are not being accompanied by a quantification of the financial resources required to achieve these objectives.

As is evident, the main problem within the PNC is the lack of strategic plans to provide security to every Guatemalan. Police reform is imperative, and it needs to be carried through based on deep technical analyses. The PNC bureaucrats are not providing the Guatemalan people with an efficient police force. This institution is not even making sure every Guatemalan has equal access to this public good. The next two figures illustrate the extent to which this is true.

Guatemala has 22 departments (administrative divisions) and 21% of approximately 16 million inhabitants live in the department of Guatemala. This department alone is the Central District, one of the seven districts into which the PNC is divided. The other six districts are comprised as follows:

- North-East District: Jalapa, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, and El Progreso.
- South District: Escuintla, Santa Rosa, Mazatenango, and Retalhuleu.
- North-West District: Quiché, Sololá, Chimaltenango, and Sacatepéquez.
- East District: Jutiapa, Chiquimula, Zacapa, and Izabal.
- West District: Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, and Totonicapán.
- North District: Petén

The macrocephaly is evident when the 21% in population that lives in the department of Guatemala is contrasted with 30% of active officers in police stations and more than 70% of institutional presence. Figure 2 illustrates these disproportionate percentages.

“Institutional presence” makes reference to the different PNC police stations, administrative offices and dependencies that specialize in more specific crimes. The problem with this particular variable is that more than 70% of police stations, offices, and dependencies are concentrated in the department of Guatemala. These include important institutional services such as the executive office, police academy, police hospital, and police records. Other specific services found solely in the

department of Guatemala are the ones regarding strategic planning, police complaints, transit, car robbery, gang violence, crime prevention, community police (*serenazgos*), logistics, and police substations. The same is true with specific divisions specialized on adolescence and childhood violence, and drug trafficking [14].

This is more evident in Figure 3, which shows the extent to which macrocephaly affects the PNC on an institutional level.

We find the same problem we evaluate when the number of police officers relative to each department’s population. Because it was impossible to find a logical relation between population and police presence, this paper then proceeded to try to find a relation between police presence and homicide rates.

Figure 4 shows the relation between the total of violent deaths reported by the *Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad* (Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council) and the number of active police officers in stations provided by the PNC directly.

Macrocephaly is evident when comparing these two figures. The department of Guatemala has 5,733 active police officers with a total of 1,550 violent deaths in 2015. The department that follows in police presence, Escuintla, has only 1,299 police officers with a total of 600 violent deaths in the same year. That is to say that the ratio of number of police officers to number of homicides in 2015 is of 3.7 for Guatemala, and 2.2 for Escuintla.

In order to analyze more deeply these two variables, it was considered that in some countries, the technical criterion used to distribute police resources is the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants. After stating that nowadays Guatemala as a country suffers 31 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, the authors of this research decided to compare the homicide rate of each department with the number of active police officers per 100,000 inhabitants. Figure 5 shows these two rates and clearly illustrates that this criterion was not used efficiently.

As seen in the previous graph, the ten departments with highest homicide rates are not necessarily the ones with the highest rates of police officers in stations. Even departments that score higher in both rates still show great discrepancies. The following table ranks both rates in order to further clarify this fact.

This table depicts that even though these figures have some coincidences, they have more discrepancies. The only two departments that occupy the same place in both rankings are Zacapa and Santa Rosa. The rest demonstrate that both rates bear practically no relation. Izabal, Petén, and Jalapa are amongst the 10 departments with highest homicide rate, but do not even appear on the ranking for police presence. El Progreso, for example, ranks as the tenth department with highest homicide rate, but first in the ranking for rate of police officers.

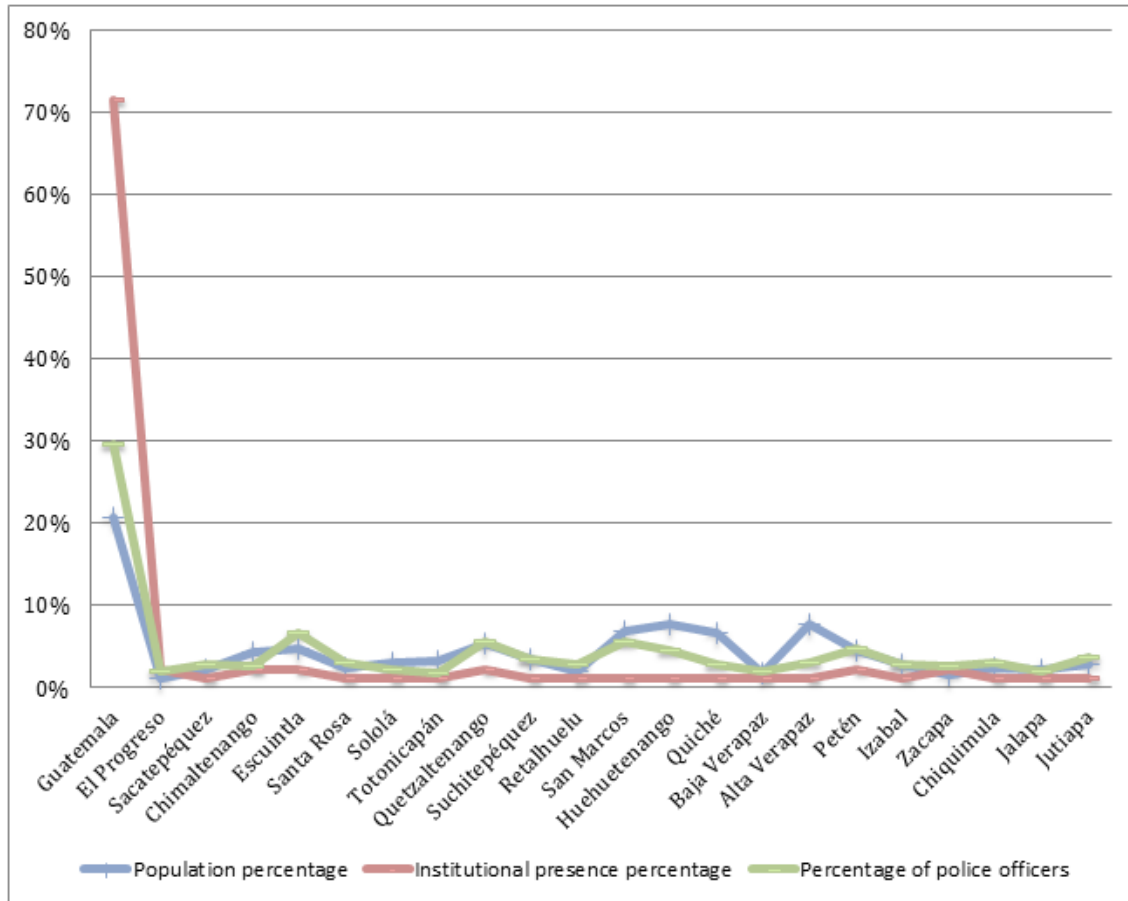
It was impossible to find a technical explanation for the way in which PNC’s human and material resources are distributed throughout the Guatemalan territory.

Administrative disorganization and mismanagement are evident, and the desire to keep almost all specialized forces in the capital city seems to be a priority. This leaves the rest of the country with practically no access to public security. There is no way the PNC can fulfill its due role with the current administrative structure. It is imperative that the institution allocates the available resources more equitably between the different departments.

The absence of good management creates a terrible inequality of access to such an essential public good.

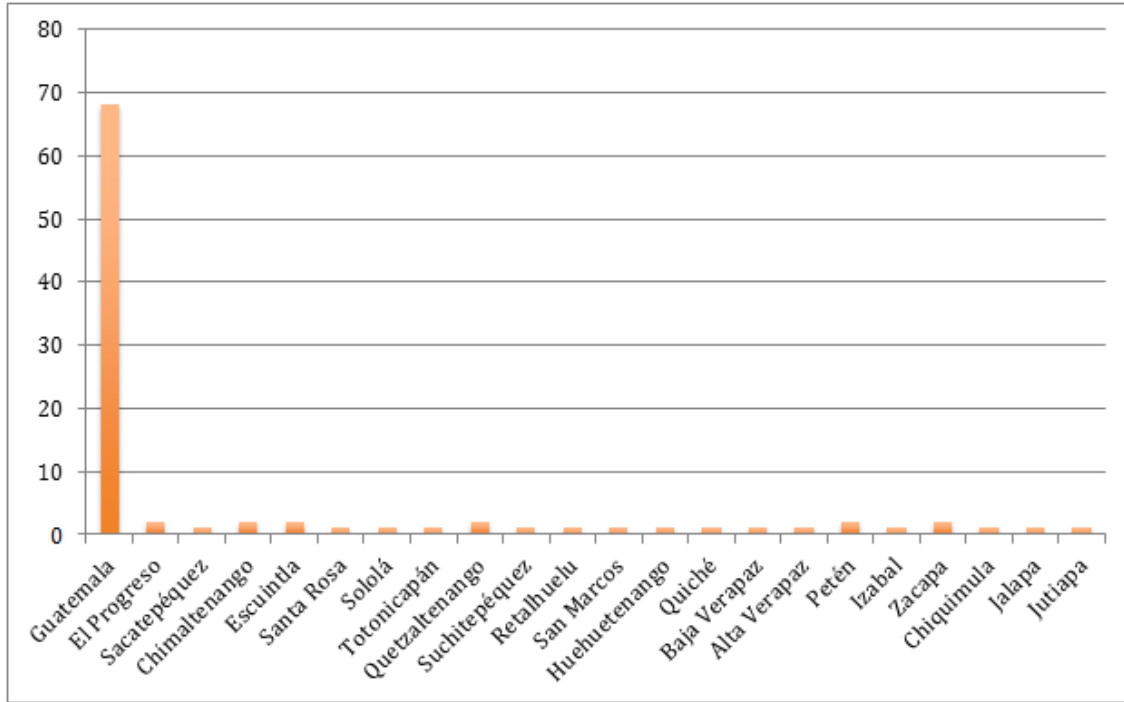
Frustration and sense of abandonment may even have a serious impact on democratic stability of the country, because in one way or another, the fact of not enjoying basic services with equal access, may promote more political disaffection, and with it, the rise of a populist leader.

The purpose of this paper was simply to make a diagnosis. The challenge for the new government is to modify this dramatic situation to improve the performance of the Guatemalan civil political force and to guarantee the Guatemalan people a life without fear.



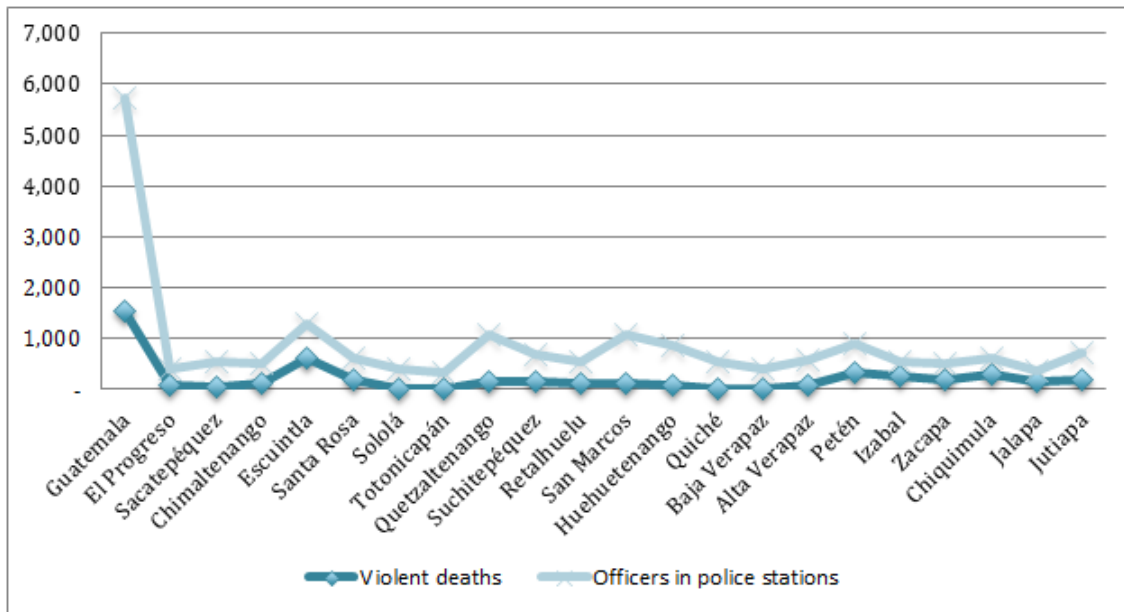
Data Source: Self-elaborated with data from the INE, the PNC’s official webpage, and information provided by the *Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad*’s (Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council) Statistical Report of January-December 2015.

Figure 2. Percentages of population, institutional presence and officers in Police Stations per Department



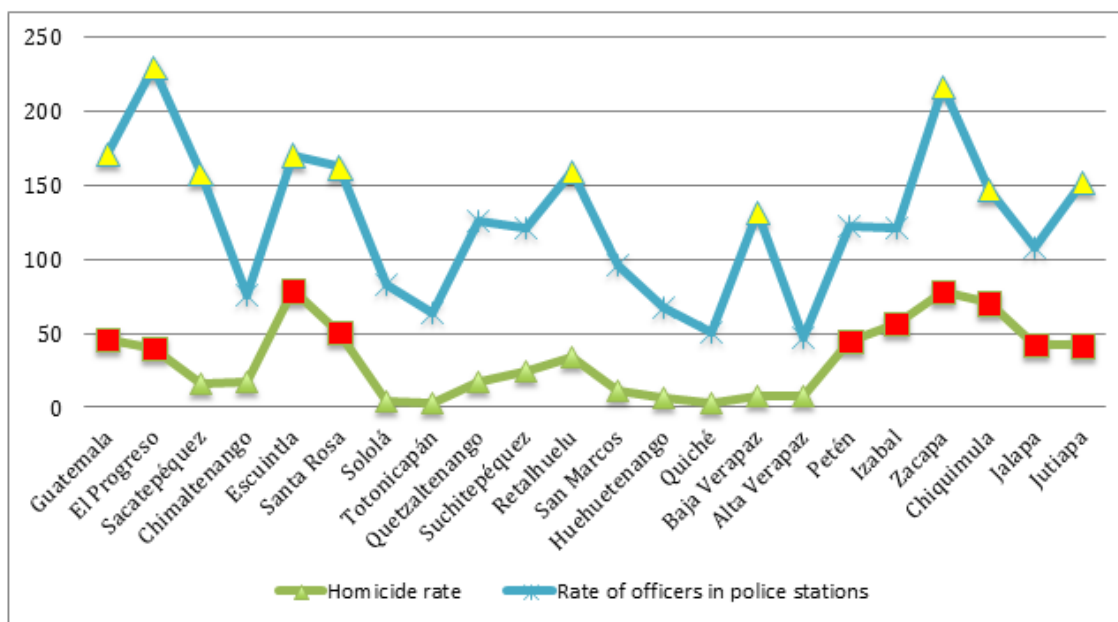
Data Source: *Source: Self-elaborated with data from the PNC’s official webpage.

Figure 3. Number of police stations, district offices and other Police dependencies per Department



Data Source: Self-elaborated with data from the PNC and the *Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad*'s (Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council) Statistical Report of January-December 2015.

Figure 4. Number of violent deaths and officers in Police Stations per Departments (2015)



*Source: Self-elaborated with data from Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad. Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad (2015). Reporte Estadístico Enero-Diciembre 2015. En la *Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad*. Guatemala.

Figure 5. Homicide rate and rate of officers in Police Stations per 100,000 populations per Department (2015)

Table 2. Ratio between homicides per 100,000 inhabitants and political presence per 100,000 inhabitants

	10 DEPARTMENTS WITH HIGHEST HOMICIDE RATE	10 DEPARTMENTS WITH HIGHEST RATE OF POLICE OFFICERS IN STATIONS
1	Escuintla: 78.83	El Progreso: 229.78
2	Zacapa: 77.77	Zacapa: 216.83
3	Chiquimula: 70.37	Guatemala: 170.93
4	Izabal: 56.8	Escuintla: 170.68
5	Santa Rosa: 50.4	Santa Rosa: 162.40
6	Guatemala: 46.21	Retalhuleu: 159.25
7	Petén: 44.29	Sacatepéquez: 158.49
8	Jalapa: 42.47	Jutiapa: 152.02
9	Jutiapa: 41.71	Chiquimula: 147.38
10	El Progreso: 39.58	Baja Verapaz: 131.58

Data Source: Self-elaborated with data from Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad. Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad (2015). Reporte Estadístico Enero-Diciembre 2015. En la *Secretaría Técnica del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad*. Guatemala.

4. Conclusions

This research paper shows that the Guatemalan PNC suffers from administrative macrocephaly and this hinders the equal access to public security for every Guatemalan.

To explain the previous statement, we dedicated the first part of the text to our analytical framework. We presented the elements of the Austrian Public Choice approach. This theoretical and analytical framework aimed to explain not

only the relevant actors in public policy, but also the shortcomings and perverse incentives that exist within the state’s action. The basic elements of that notion are:

- 1) Methodological individualism
- 2) Policy as an exchange exercise
- 3) Subjectivity in preferences
- 4) Disperse knowledge and imperfect information

With these notions as a basis, the second part of the research was dedicated to the analysis of the current situation of the PNC, a body of civil security emanating from the peace agreements signed in Guatemala in 1996.

What is evident is that the PNC has no technical arguments for the way in which its resources are allocated. This causes not only a series of administrative problems, but also a clear inequality in access to public security. Basically, the current PNC organization is not capable of providing public security to Guatemalans, and this will continue to be the case with its current distribution in the national territory.

The territorial distribution of the PNC is evidently unrelated to population distribution or to homicide rates in the country. The number of police officers and police dependencies is concentrated unaccountably in the center of the republic, the department of Guatemala.

The reason for this disproportionate distribution is still unknown. The two possible reasons this paper proposes are:

- 1) The police bureaucrats and most of the staff prefer to be in the capital city to have more access to a wider and better range of services.
- 2) The authorities are actually unaware of the existence of this important issue.

Whatever the reason, what is clear is that the information shown throughout this paper results in unequal access to public security for Guatemalans.

It is imperative that the Guatemalan civil society demands its government with a deep restructuring of the PNC. This problem needs to be fixed as soon as possible, because human lives are at stake here. Every person, regardless of ethnicity or geographical location, has to be able to have equal access to this fundamental public good called security.

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