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Home is where the harm is: Investigating the effectiveness of criminal domestic violence legislation in developing countries.

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Home is where the harm is: Investigating the effectiveness of criminal domestic violence legislation in developing countries.

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Abstract: Intimate partner violence is a major public health issue worldwide. New Latin American democracies in search of legitimacy attempted to tackle it through aspirational laws confronting gender norms, but studies on their empirical impact are lacking. Strategies focused on the criminal justice system to protect and empower women have been criticized by critical feminists for entrenching the patriarchal status quo. The findings of this paper back their concerns as criminal code reforms in Mexico are not associated with lower levels of intimate partner violence. Both the inappropriate design of the law and its lack of enforcement contribute to making the law a dead letter. I use the array of adoption of criminal code reforms in Mexican states to conduct a difference-in-differences statistical analysis. I then compare two states through a qualitative analysis to investigate causes behind the law's lack of impact.

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1. Introduction

From sex-selective abortion to early marriages or femicides, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is globally pervasive (WHO, 2018). It leads to more deaths than malaria and car accidents combined (Richards & Haglund, 2015, p. 1). In most cases, violence is committed by a relative of the victim. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of VAWG: almost a third of women have been subjected to IPV in their lifetime¹ (WHO, 2018). It constitutes a major public health issue as it is one of the principal causes of female injury (HRW, 1998) and has direct and indirect implications for women's health (Koenig et al., 2003; Bhatt, 1998). The consequences can be physical injuries (e.g., burns; miscarriage), psychosomatic complaints (e.g., gastrointestinal disorders; menstruation perturbation) or psychological issues (e.g., depression; anxiety; posttraumatic stress disorder) (Flury & Nyberg, 2010).

IPV often goes unacknowledged because it is still considered purely private. Yet, literature shows that DV is structural in societies shaped by patriarchal norms in the public and private spheres (Ghosh, 2015; Ashrafun, 2018). IPV is a violation of women's human rights (HR) so it falls under governments' responsibility (Richards & Haglund, 2015). Domestic violence (DV) legislation can both protect women and punish perpetrators. Wide variation in the adoption of such legislation appears at national and subnational levels, as in Mexico.

However, although common sense suggests that adopting DV legislation is better than not, the specificities of DV and its embeddedness in social norms require research to be nuanced. It is not clear whether DV legislation can decrease levels of IPV. Criminal law in particular raises concerns: Do women want their partner jailed when they have no other source of income? Do they trust a justice system engrained with victim-blaming attitudes? Can temporary imprisonment lead to a violence backlash? In Mexico most detentions, when they do happen, last only a few days either because the perpetrator pays a bond or because women are pressured to forgive (Falcon, 1998, p. 351). Back home, the abusive partner might retaliate as a punishment for denunciation or increase his controlling behavior to discourage reporting in the first place.

Although global, IPV is more prevalent in developing countries where the presence of DV legislation is recent and not systematic. Hence, no consensus has yet been reached about its effectiveness. A study on the impact of DV legislation has academic relevance as it both complements scarce literature on it and contributes to a broader body of research on the

effectiveness of formal legislation in developing countries. It has strong policy relevance: if findings show that the presence of criminal DV legislation does not reduce IPV, then policymakers should rethink their strategies. Thus, the purpose of this paper is not to merely ask whether DV should be labelled a crime or not, but rather to debate whether tackling DV through the criminal justice system is effective.

I will therefore investigate: *does criminalizing domestic violence reduce levels of intimate partner violence in developing countries?* This thesis focuses on Mexico where criminal law differs across subnational entities. Through a difference-in-differences statistical analysis and a comparative analysis of two states I find that criminal code reforms establishing DV as a crime have no impact on IPV levels.

2. Concepts

2.1. Intimate partner violence

What is understood by IPV varies across cultures and political stances (Fernandez, 2006). A discussion of the concept and its measurement is therefore needed. Some authors like Johnson (1995) have tried to classify forms of DV: while some occasional outbursts of violence during conflicts are considered “common couple violence”, other families are terrorized by male violence. Only the latter is coined “abusive”. This classification can be problematic as its oversimplification hides complex violence patterns. Insults or slaps are a form of violence, whether they happen during a “normal” fight or systematically. Unacknowledging these instances of abuse reinforces the idea that some violence in the household is acceptable and the reasons for it, like anger mismanagement, pertain only to the partners. Hence, I include all forms of abuse without distinction of “why” they occur in my conceptualization of IPV.

DV refers to violence perpetrated by one de jure or de facto family member onto another (Flury & Nyberg, 2010). Although the term is used interchangeably with IPV, the latter is more specific. IPV is defined as (threat of) violence by a partner, whether in cohabitation or not. “Partner” refers to current or ex-intimate relationship like spouse, concubine, or boyfriend. Although in this paper I investigate the prevalence of IPV, most theoretical claims apply to DV too. In sum, intimate partner violence is regarded as a subset of domestic violence, itself a subset of violence against women.

The WHO (2018) defines IPV as a “behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm” (p. 89). Most research in prevalence studies indeed define it as a pattern of abuse that goes beyond physical acts of violence (“wife beating”) to include emotional and sexual abuse (Richards & Haglund, 2015; Breiding et al., 2015; Saltzman et al., 1999).

Emotional and psychological violence are often used interchangeably and relate to patterns of social isolation, humiliation, and intimidation that can happen for instance through threats, destruction of property, or surveillance (Hegarty & Roberts, 1998). Sexual abuse is defined as any nonconsensual sexual activity not necessarily including physical contact (Brownmiller, 1975). It includes the use of emotional or physical force for sexual intercourse, forced nakedness, or unwanted sexual acts (Flury & Niberg, 2010; Nguyen & Le, 2022). Marital rape is not systematically included as a form of IPV in the law especially where sexual relations are considered a duty in marriage, as in Mexico. Physical abuse is generally referred to as an act where the perpetrator purposely alters the physical integrity of someone else with a risk of harming them, regardless of whether this results in injuries (Flury & Niger, 2010, p. 2). A growing body of research started to include economic violence (Stylianou, 2018; Wisner et al., 1999). Alkan, Ozar and Unver (2021) define it as "controlling a woman's ability to gain, use and sustain economic resources, thereby threatening her economic security and potential of self-sufficiency" (p. 2) such as the prohibition to work, to study, to access the household's financial resources, or creating debt on her part (Flury & Niberg, 2010).

Although there is no consensus on what exactly falls into each category, they all relate to abusive, coercive, manipulative behaviors that damage the moral and/or physical integrity and freedom of the victim. Abuses are often combined and repeated (Richards & Haglund, 2015, p. 12).

2.2. DV legislation

According to Frias (2007) there are three different sites where DV legislation can be adopted. First, administrative laws aim at establishing the responsibility of state agencies. They prevent DV and protect victims through damage claims and facilitated access to justice (p. 226). Second, civil law regulates matters between private entities including family relations. Courts that deal with DV can have competence in civil law matters like child custody or divorce when

appropriate. Civil law can protect women with protection orders in instances where the necessary proof for criminal cases is unlikely to be obtained (Nancarrow, p.14; p. 237). Finally, criminal law is the body of rules that lists and defines criminal offences and specifies the punishment for the perpetrator and compensation for the victim (Clarkson, 2005, p. 1). Hence, criminal law refers to articles in the penal code that establish DV as a punishable crime. Mentions that only increase penalties for general crimes if committed in the family are usually not considered DV legislation (Women, Business, and the Law, 2022, p. 104). By DV legislation, I thus refer to administrative, civil, and criminal laws that target domestic violence.

3. Theory

3.1. Feminist theory

Feminist scholars have criticized the bulk of DV literature for focusing on its so-called "causes". Most research uses a socio-ecological model that investigates explanations at the individual, relationship, community, and society-levels, bypassing the feminist theory that these factors fundamentally reflect unequal gender power relations (Hunnicut, 2009; Dutt, 2018). The *essential* risk factor for gender-based violence is to be a woman in a patriarchal society (Michau et al., 2015, p. 1674). The power relationship by which men dominate women is the patriarchy (Millett, 1969). The subordinated position of women is reflected within the nuclear heterosexual family, seen by feminists as the most patriarchal institution and center of gender inequalities. The perception of male dominance over female shapes and is shaped by political and legal structures. Indeed, the traditional public-private distinction in the law as a way to hierarchize between public (male) and private (female) roles has been one of the main concerns of feminist thinking (Falcon, 1998, p. 343). DV, therefore, is not only *caused* by patriarchy but is "one of [its] most brutal and explicit expressions" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, p. ix). Hunnicutt (2009) calls for using patriarchy as the main analytical concept when theorizing VAWG in order to place the issue not in individual attributes but in social hierarchies, power relations, and dominance. While liberal feminists argue for formal equal rights and perseverance with the current legal system, radical feminists criticize the view that the law could be a site for women's empowerment (Douglas and Godden, 2002; Hunter, 2006). Indeed, any attempt to protect women through a male-centric justice system that measures them against a male standard reinforces inequality (Nancarrow, 2019, p. 3). There has been extensive critique about the criminal law's response to DV (Zorza, 1992; Douglas, 2008; Goodmark, 2017; Johnson, 2008; paragraph hereafter) but

empirical research on its impact is scarce. In short, because the state is the locus of patriarchy, strategies of criminalization of DV only entrench the status quo. As Brown (1995) explains, “to be ‘protected’ by the same power whose violation one fears perpetuates the very modality of dependence and powerlessness marking much of women’s experience” (pp. 169-170). This becomes obvious in the humiliating attitudes of police officers or court staff who are unwilling to help abused women despite the law (Beninger, 2014; Agoff, 2006). Therefore, such strategies appear like cheaper political solutions for governments to show interest in gender equality rather than undertaking necessary structural change (Nancarrow, 2019, p.4; Nazneed, Hickey & Sifaki, 2019).

3.2. Law’s instrumental and symbolic powers

Yet, legislation could at least alleviate IPV. All else equal, no DV legislation means impunity and political reluctance to condemn it. Civil and administrative laws focus on victims’ protection and include prevention and treatment policies, protection orders, and institutional capacity building (Luciano et al., 2005). Through the implementation of services like counseling, shelters, or therapy, administrative laws can provide a way out of violence (Hawkins & Humes, 2002). Yet, they leave the perpetrator free to abuse someone else. Criminal DV law seeks instead to hold offenders accountable to stop recidivism. Hence, civil or criminal DV legislation could reduce DV in two ways. First, it increases the costs of abuse to deter latent violence (through jailing, fines, separation from children and partner, etc.). Second, conveying the message that DV is illegal can change social norms. Where DV is tolerated by customary and social norms, criminalizing DV may change the standards of acceptable behavior (Beninger, 2014). Indeed, Ammar (2000) finds that because of its patriarchal interpretation of the Qur’an the Egyptian criminal justice system legitimates DV. Rani et al. (2004) observe in Sub-Saharan Africa that cultural norms legitimate the use of violence to enforce gender roles. By undermining its acceptability, legislation can increase reporting of DV by allowing survivors to speak out. The symbolic power of the law in shaping identities and acceptable behaviors has been highlighted in several studies (Cotterrell, 1992; Silbey, 1992). Agoff (2018) demonstrates how in Mexico the recent DV legislation redefined for survivors the meaning of violence from traditionally normalized to unjust (p. 186). Thus, either would-be perpetrators reconsider their actions, or women get separated from offenders (Himabindu, Arora & Prashanth, 2013). Heise (2011)

argues that the reform process itself raises awareness and can challenge patriarchal norms (p. 74). Similarly in Mexico Htun and Jensenius (2022) find that even weakly enforced anti-violence laws change attitudes through their expressive power and can reduce VAWG. In sum, the law could act in two main ways to reduce levels of DV: first, its instrumental power of coercion and protection grants new rights to the victims, and second, its symbolic power redefines reality and cultural meanings (Merry, 1995).

3.3. Obstacles

However, other theories highlight barriers impeding the efforts to reduce DV. Indeed, the *presence* of DV legislation does not guarantee that it is appropriate, implemented, nor enforced. First, laws seem to be inappropriately designed when considering the low rates of DV reporting. Most survivors are unaware of its existence and of protective schemes in place. Furthermore, studies report that extremely high proportions of women find DV justified and would not report something they consider normal (Koenig et al., 2003; Beninger, 2014). For instance, Abeya et al. (2012) report that the main reason women in Ethiopia keep silent about violence is due to the community's attitude towards IPV: in turn, they find it normal or are ashamed of it. Even when women are willing to report, they face high barriers to exercising their rights. Malik et al. (2017) find that in Iraq, although women are aware of the legislation, they do not report because of low trust in doctors and authorities. Additionally, many report not knowing *how* to get to the police station. They find that less than five percent of abused women reported IPV because of risks of divorce, stigmatization, and of increases in violence when their partner finds out. The presence of the law does not ensure women's ability nor willingness to call upon it.

Moreover, legislators need to consider that intersectionality with other discriminations like class, disabilities, or race makes experiences of DV heterogeneous (Michau et al., 2015). Through an ethnographic analysis of DV in Mumbai, Ghosh (2015) calls for programs to “account for the role that systemic violence plays in the production of domestic violence in marginal spaces, such as slums” (p. 176). A law designed through a monolithic understanding of DV might be unhelpful for parts of the population. Finally, ill-designed laws can have negative externalities. Research highlights the unintended consequences of requiring reconciliation attempts for women who are trying to divorce an abusive spouse (Bott, Morrison, Ellsberg, 2005, p. 4) or for those reporting DV (Falcon, 1999, p. 350). Conciliation processes as alternatives to

criminal procedures revictimize women as it forces them to choose between family unity over their safety (Frias, 2008, pp. 233-234). Mandatory arrest policies in the United States (US) led to a disproportionate increase in women being arrested for DV (Chesney-Lind, 2002). Indeed, most female arrests were justified on trivial grounds (or in cases of self-defense) and had a racial bias: the policy designed to protect them instead reproduces gendered and racial domination.

Second, implementation and enforcement problems can arise because of corruption or a lack of training (of police staff, healthcare workers, judicial authorities, etc.). Schroeder and Webber (1998) find that health professionals' attitudes and lack of knowledge on DV prevent them from identifying battered women (p. 14). Especially in developing countries, the lack of budget allocated to DV leaves institutions underfunded and unable to enforce the law (Makinde, 2005). The unwillingness of judges and police officers to apply a law they consider irrelevant is another obstacle. Agoff et al. (2006) find that in Mexico, women are discouraged from reporting due to the burdensome process, the staff's attempts to dissuade them from denouncing, and the humiliation they receive. In addition, because criminal procedures are lengthy and require high standards of proof, they cannot protect in the short term (Nancarrow, 2019, p. 68). These problems (design, implementation, enforcement) are exacerbated by the hidden nature of DV, making it complicated for the state apparatus to enter the private realm. Finally, the theory of male backlash states that where men's egos feel threatened by the loss of their privileges (through new laws or social norms), they might retaliate with more violence. That can be to punish their partner for reporting or threatening to leave, or to reassert their dominance in the face of changing traditional gender roles (Whaley, 2001, 2013; Bueno & Henderson, 2017).

3.4. Studies in Latin America

In addition, research assessing the effectiveness of DV legislation in developing countries is scarce. Studies in developed countries show that it reduces the occurrence of DV (Dugan, 2003). UN Women find a correlation both between the presence of DV legislation and both a lower prevalence and social acceptability of DV (2011). The results do not indicate causation and might be driven by developed countries with more state capacity or where norms are less tolerant of DV. In a cross-national study of developing countries, Nguyen and Le (2022) have found that the presence of legislation decreases levels of DV. Yet, they ignore economic

IPV, and it is unknown whether the effect is driven by a certain type of legislation (like criminal law). Moreover, it hides variation at the subnational level.

Studies on IPV in Mexico have led to different conclusions. Garcia-Ramos (2021) finds that laws on unilateral divorce led to a large IPV reduction in the long term (6-8 years after reform). This suggests that reform improves women's bargaining power to threaten to divorce an abusive spouse. One can theorize that criminal law reforms would also increase women's bargaining power through threats of denouncing IPV. Beleche (2017) finds that although the criminalization of DV at the state level led to a decrease in female suicide rates, policies allowing divorce on grounds of DV and prevention programs had no impact on suicide rates. This suggests that the causal mechanism could be a reduction in DV. Finally, Lachenal, Toledo, and Bakker (2016) question the appropriateness of the criminalization of DV in Mexico as they observe that including assistance to DV survivors in the criminal procedures ignores women's protection needs and victimizes them (p. 31). The narrow conception of DV in the criminal code combined with the inefficiency of judicial proceedings in Mexico greatly limits its usefulness (Falcon, 1999, p. 352). The vague language is subject to misinterpretation driven by beliefs that women are responsible for men's violence (Lopez, 2003, p. 9).

I, therefore, test theories stating that the symbolic and instrumental powers of the law lead to a reduction in IPV. Criminal law fits the theory best. It might reduce DV through social norms: calling DV a crime is symbolic, so it can deter violence and empower women to denounce it. Through the jailing of perpetrators, it can reduce violence. However, it is also the most likely to suffer from the limitations and backlashes outlined hereabove. This contradiction makes it an interesting case for testing the theory. Correspondingly with most previous empirical findings, I expect the presence of DV legislation to decrease IPV prevalence.

4. Research design

4.1. Case selection: Mexico

4.1.1. Domestic violence

Mexico, a federal republic with 32 states, is appropriate for testing my hypothesis for the reasons outlined hereafter. In Mexico, the sacredness of family above women's rights is reflected by the normalizing norms surrounding IPV (Quilodran, 2004; Harris, Firestone & Vega, 2005). In the 1990s, the normative ideal of a feminine ideal of a suffering, self-abnegating wife left

space for women as individuals worthy of rights (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010; Oliveira, 2000). Yet, in 2018 Agoff still argues that in Mexico the language of love hides subordination within the family, and restricts justice claims (p. 191). The situation is still problematic although IPV has dropped from 44.2% (2003) to 25.8% (2020, INEGI). Mexican women in public and private spheres are widely discriminated and abused: two femicides a day are committed in Mexico (US Department of State, 2021, p. 27). Mexico is fitted to test the theory as there has been an overall drop in IPV and a change in its social acceptability, but it is unclear whether this can be attributed to the reform of the criminal code.

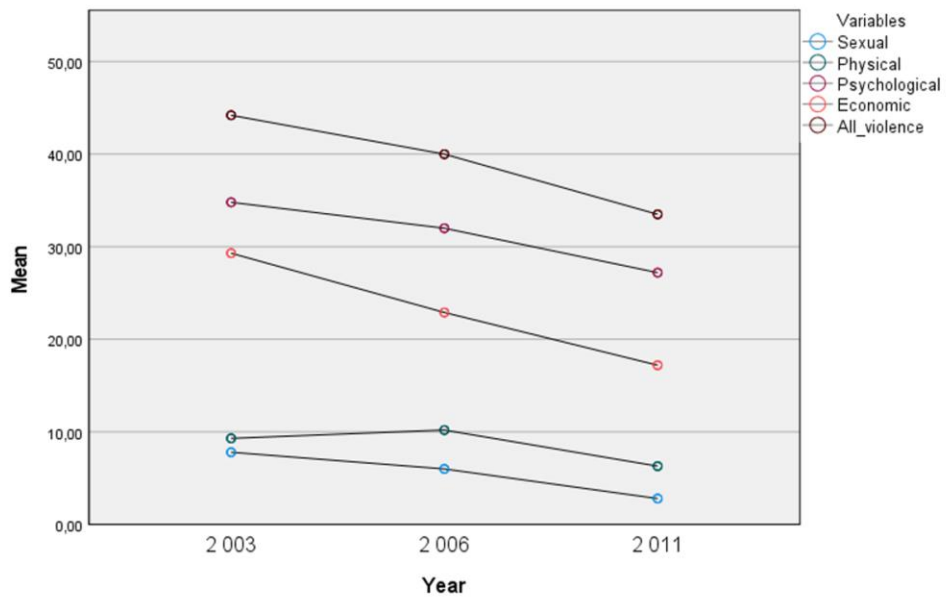
Mexico is representative of Latin America where IPV prevalence stands around 25% and the rest of the developing world (between 18% and 33%) (WHO, 2018). Besides DV, Mexico ranks amongst the top countries in the world for violent crimes: it accounts for 6% of global homicides (Muggah & Aguirre Tobon, 2018, pp. 4-5). This systematic violence is intertwined with traditional “machista” attitudes impacting women disproportionately (Lopez, 2003, p. 6). In addition, Mexico fits the theory because of its focus on the criminalization of DV and a lack of trust in law-enforcement institutions (Zepeda Lecuona, 2004). Indeed, its efforts to tackle DV mimic the US model focused on holding the perpetrator accountable rather than on protecting the victim (Heise, 2011, p. 70; Lachenal, Toledo & Bakker, 2016). However, its inefficiency in reducing IPV in the US was demonstrated (Peterson, 2008). Thus, it appears relevant to observe whether its exportation to developing countries led to similar outcomes (Heise, 2011, p. xi), as the broader scholarly debate on the adoption of western HR ideals without regard for local contexts suggests (Cobbah, 1987).

4.1.2. Criminal justice system

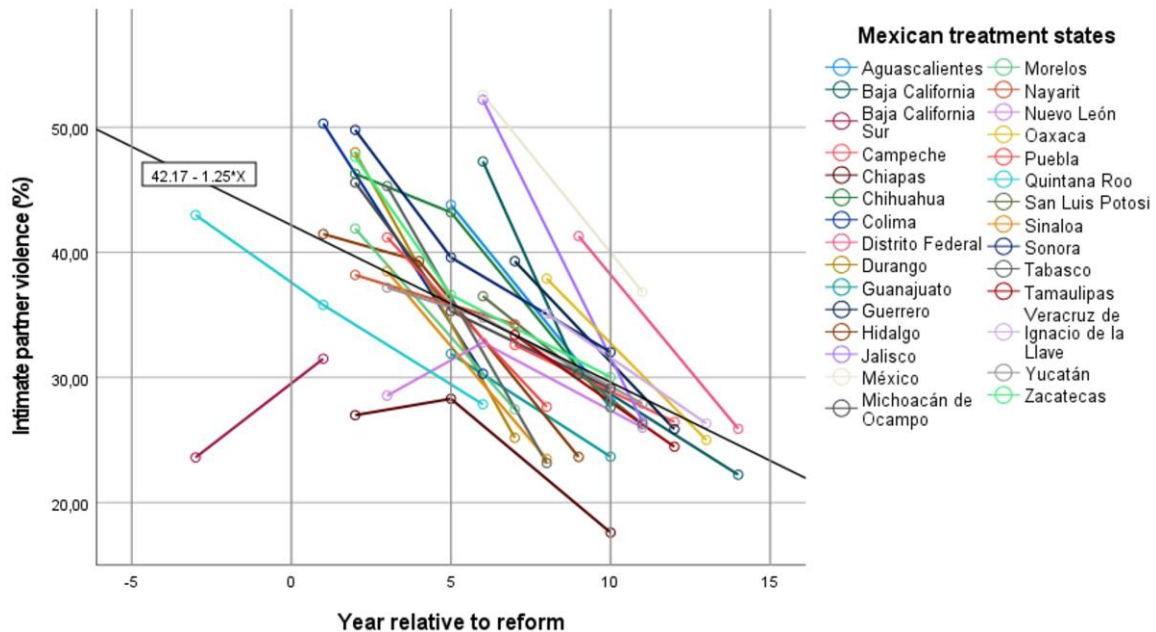
In the late 20th century, in line with second-wave feminism, states started considering DV as a public problem in which intervention was needed². This global shift was pronounced in the Americas where almost all members of the Organization of American States ratified the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women. Before ratifying it in 1998, the Federal District in Mexico adopted a set of administrative, civil, and criminal laws (“La Ley de Violencia Intrafamiliar”) to respond to domestic pressures. The reforms spread to other Mexican states and by 2006, all had adopted at least one of its components (Appendix B). In Mexico, the Federal Criminal Code outlines crimes

and their punishments (Ingram & Shirk, 2010, p. 6). It only applies to subjects in Mexico City and serves as the blueprint for states' criminal codes which cannot supersede nor contradict it. DV can only be punished at the state level. Hence, there are 32 criminal codes in Mexico.

States criminalized DV between 1997 and 2012 which provides variation in the explanatory variable. In a state that has not criminalized DV, no specific legislation applies: IPV is punishable like any other crime: survivors must provide witnessed evidence of the motive and wounds need to heal in over fifteen days (Olivarrieta & Sotelo, 1996, p. 1939). After reform, sanctions for DV vary between six months to six years in jail and can include loss of alimony or custody rights, fines, or psychological counseling (Frias, 2007, p. 232). The Federal criminal code uses a narrow definition of DV: violence must occur more than once, be emotional or physical, in a couple living together. Later reforms included economic, moral, psychological, patrimonial, sexual, and physical violence.



Graph 1: Proportion of ever-partnered women (age 15 and older) who have experienced IPV in Mexico, by year and type of IPV



Graph 2: IPV decline in treatment states relative to the year of reform

Both graphs describe the clear decline in IPV after criminal code reforms. Based on graph 3 one could sensibly assume that criminalizing DV decreased IPV, yet it is necessary to test whether the relationship is causal.

4.2. Method

4.2.1. Difference-in-differences

To investigate whether the presence of legislation leads to reduced IPV, I use the array of adoption of criminal code reforms across Mexican states and across time in a difference-in-differences analysis (DiD). Indeed, 30 out of 32 Mexican states had criminalized DV by 2011. This quasi-experimental context is useful to analyze whether states that reformed their penal code reduced IPV *more* than states who did not. DiD is often used in public health research for investigating the effects of society-level changes on individuals' health outcomes. It compares the differences in the outcomes of two groups (treatment and control) despite their initial differences. It subtracts the pre-treatment from the post-treatment difference between groups, and the regression estimates the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A DiD model, therefore, controls for all (un)observed factors that are time-invariant within states. To claim a causal effect, we need to ensure that exposure to change is unconfounded (Oakes & Kaufman, 2017, p. 345). Treatment assignment here is only the state's

reaction time to harmonize its code with the federal one which can be held as random as it depends on numerous factors (e.g., state capacity, civil society). To account for factors that differ across states, the DiD includes state-fixed effects to compare changes over time in the same state: the states act as their own controls (p. 350). It includes time-fixed effects to control for changes that are constant across entities but occur over time, hence removing bias from (inter)national level aggregate shocks. In sum, the DiD estimate is the differential change in states over time. The manipulation of the independent variable in quasi-experiments removes the problem of the direction of causation (Price et al., 2017).

Selecting cases within a country mitigates the effects of selection bias and omitted variables. Indeed, diversity among Mexican states is much smaller than among different countries as in a cross-national study. This within-country research design already controls for potential confounders like national adoption of international treaties, historical legacies, geographic and geopolitical context, national institutions, etc. Importantly, it controls for historical effects happening at the national level because all states undergo the same event (Price et al., 2017), as with the 2007 Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. This type of event limits the comparability of my study to other countries where such laws do not exist. Time-invariant variables (e.g., geography, population, urbanization) are not a concern as DiD compares changes in existing differences over time. Risks of time-variant omitted variables exist and I control for them to make a causal claim.

This DiD is similar to other methods. As in interrupted time series (ITS) with multiple baseline design, the treatment time is staggered across states. Hence, I compare the *trends* in outcomes which is more robust than a simple before/after study (Ewusie et al., 2020) or cross-sectional designs (Barnighausen et al., 2017). Furthermore, comparing pre-reform to post-reform levels is stronger than only comparing with control states, as everything that explains IPV cannot be controlled for (Gorman and Huber, 2007, p. 161). The two states that have not reformed before 2011 serve as an additional control series and increase internal validity (Clair, Hallberg & Cook, 2016). An ITS with a control series is one of the strongest quasi-experimental designs (Ewusie et al., 2020). Although my results might be limited as IPV was scarcely measured before reform, this design is appropriate to answer my research question. A lack of data points can lead to imprecision but does not prevent noticing a trend (Fretheim et al., 2015, p. 329).

4.2.2. Controls

To establish a causal claim, I control for alternative explanations based on findings from existing literature: gender equality, education, income, and party ideology.

Higher gender equality can reflect a more progressive society where women have more political power and therefore more likely to pass DV legislation. On the other hand, higher levels of gender equality can also impact the levels of IPV (Jewkes, 2002, p. 1427). I measure it with the Gender Development Index, the ratio between female and male Human Development indexes. It is the most complete measure of gender inequality available at the subnational level, encompassing health, education, and income.

A poorer society might prioritize DV less than seemingly more pressing issues, and poverty is an IPV risk factor (p. 1424). Poverty is measured with the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita which captures all income earned by citizens regardless of where it was produced, in contrast with the gross national product.

Public awareness and demand to tackle DV through legal reforms likely stem from education, and higher education is correlated with lower levels of IPV (p. 1425). Education is measured by the mean years of education among people 20 and older. This measure was selected because it captures the education level of the interviewees and their aggressors, not a younger cohort.

The ideology of the governing party in each state could both affect the adoption of DV legislation and IPV through changing social norms, women's opportunities, and trust in law-enforcement institutions. Therefore, based on Goodman Bacon (2021) the equation for the linear regression is as followed for model (1):

$$IPV_{s,t} = \delta Reform_{s,t} + \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \gamma Education_{s,t} + \gamma Income_{s,t} + \gamma GenderEquality_{s,t} + \varepsilon_{s,t}$$

$IPV_{s,t}$ is the prevalence of IPV in state s at time t . $Reform_{s,t}$ is a dummy variable taking the value 1 if state s had reformed its penal code at time t , and 0 otherwise. The coefficient on the treatment indicator, δ , is the treatment effect of the reform: it represents the change in IPV prevalence between the treatment and control groups. According to my hypothesis, we expect $\delta < 0$, i.e., the reform led to a faster IPV decline compared to the control group.

$\gamma Education_{s,t}$; $\gamma Income_{s,t}$; $\gamma GenderEquality_{s,t}$ are continuous control variables. $\varepsilon_{s,t}$ is the error term. α_s is the state-fixed effect that controls for time-invariant variables so it can compare changes over time in the same state. α_t is the time-fixed effect that controls for any trend in either legislation or IPV that occurs in all states.

I then control for the presence of administrative law on DV protection and prevention and reforms of the civil code establishing DV as a valid cause for divorce. Literature has found that they affect levels of IPV (Beleche, 2017; Michau et al., 2015). It is probable that states that have already adopted administrative and civil DV laws are more likely to then pass the more politically divisive criminal code reforms. Model (2) provides insight into this claim:

$$IPV_{s,t} = \delta Reform_{s,t} + \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \gamma Education_{s,t} + \gamma Income_{s,t} + \gamma GenderEquality_{s,t} + \gamma AdmLaw_{s,t} + \gamma Divorce_{s,t} + \gamma PartyIdeology_{s,t} + \varepsilon_{s,t}$$

$\gamma AdmLaw_{s,t}$ equals 1 if the state has passed DV administrative law; $\gamma Divorce_{s,t}$ equals 1 if divorce on grounds of DV is authorized; $\gamma PartyIdeology_{s,t}$ is the ideology of the party in government, measured on a scale from 0 (socially liberal in favor of expanded personal freedoms) to 10 (socially conservative in favor of tradition).

Finally, to make a more accurate claim, I conducted a short qualitative comparative analysis between a control and a treatment state to investigate *how* criminalizing DV could (not) impact IPV. I aimed at distinguishing similarities and differences between Quintana Roo and Tlaxcala that could explain the (in)efficacy of the reform. I ran a systematic search in Factiva for newspaper articles issued between 2004 and 2012 on the topic of domestic violence in both states. Similarly, I examined the US Department of State's Mexico reports on HR and articles from Justice in Mexico, a US-based research organization.

4.3. Data collection

The data on IPV was collected by Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) through their surveys on relationships within the household (ENDIREH). During face-to-face interviews, it collected information on self-reported male-to-female IPV. The dwellings were selected randomly and allow for representation at the national and sub-national levels. Respectively, 54230, 127944, and 128000 women were surveyed in 2003, 2006, and 2011. To ensure comparability between the surveys, I excluded those from 2016 and 2020 as measures of

IPV were constructed differently. The chosen indicator is the proportion of the female population (ever partnered; 15 or older) who has suffered from at least one type of IPV in the *past year* (i.e., has answered yes to at least one of these questions). To capture the law's precise impact this was preferred over occurrence "throughout life". I also analyze each type of abuse as separate dependent variables to seize differences.

I used Beleche's Appendix (2017) for dates of legislative reform. I researched the official journals of federal entities and their penal and civil codes for missing dates. Data for gender equality, education, and income was collected from the Global Data Lab, a database that provides development indicators at subnational level. The variables are computed by aggregating household surveys such as the Demographic and Health Surveys. For the ideology of the party in government, I constructed a dataset matching information on election dates and results from rulers.org and parties' social ideology ranking from the Global Party Survey (Harvard).

Category of IPV	Questions asked: In the past 12 months, has your partner...
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - embarrassed, belittled or humiliated you? - ignored, disregarded, or neglected you or showed you no affection? - told you that you are cheating on him? - made you feel afraid? - threatened to leave, harm you, take away your children or children or run you out of the house? - locked you up, forbidden you to go out or to visit others? - made your children or relatives turn against you? - watched or spied on you? - threatened you with a weapon (knife, razor, pistol, or rifle)? - threatened to kill you, kill himself or the children? - destroyed, thrown away or hidden things belonging to you or the household? - stopped talking to you? - has become very angry because the chores are not ready, because the food is not the way he wants <u>it</u> or he thinks that you didn't fulfil your obligations?
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pushed you or pulled your hair? - tied you up? - kicked you? - thrown an object at you? - hit you with his or her hands or with an object? - tried to hang you or suffocate you? - assaulted you with a knife or razor? - shot you with a gun?
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demanded that you have sex, even if you don't want to have sex? - when you have <u>sex</u> he has forced you to do things that you don't like? - used physical force to force you to have sex?
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complained to you about how you spend your money? - even if he has <u>money</u> he has been lazy or stingy with household expenses? - failed to honor the expense or have threatened not to give it? - spent the money needed for the household? - has taken or taken money or goods (land, property, etc.) from you? - has forbidden you to work or study?

Table 1. Source: INEGI Marco conceptual, 2011.

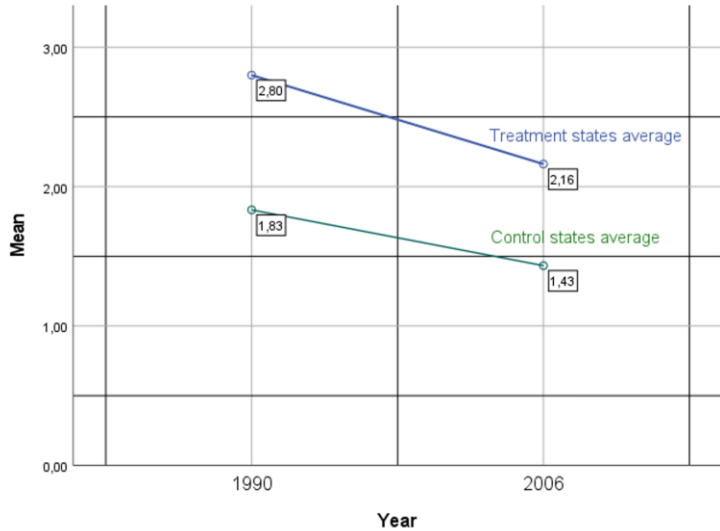
4.4. Assumptions

All assumptions for linear regression were verified, except for multicollinearity as some VIF values were too high (Casson & Farmer, 2014; Appendix A). Multicollinearity widens the

confidence interval but does not impact the prediction. To deal with this, one can obtain more data points or exclude the problematic variable(s). In my case neither was feasible because excluding a relevant variable can bias the results even more, so I used this data nevertheless.

The crucial assumption of a DiD is that the trends of both groups would have been parallel had the treatment not happened. This is the counterfactual which is unprovable (Barnighausen et al., 2017). To test this, one can run a placebo regression for the periods before the start of the treatment to notice any difference in trends between groups. In my case, this is not feasible because pre-treatment data is not available. Alternatively, I run the same analysis with another dependent variable. This variable should not have been influenced by the penal code reform on DV but should, like IPV, depend on state-level contextual factors. If no effect is found, then the credibility of the treatment effect is increased. I selected the subnational homicide death rate per 100,000 inhabitants (INEGI), from 1990 to 2006, and found no significant effect ($B=1.176$, $p=0.335$) (Appendix A).

I also estimate the parallel trend assumption by using a proxy variable that is closely related to IPV, and for which I have data from before 2003. I use the female homicide death rate (per 100,000 inhabitants) as a proxy given that it captures, among others, women who died because of domestic abuse and it reflects VAWG to some extent. Although this is not a perfect proxy for DV, it is the closest one for which data is available at the subnational level. I consider as controls the states that criminalized DV after the analysis period 1990-2006, (i.e., Coahuila, Querétaro, and Tlaxcala).



Graph 3: Gross annual female death rate by homicide, treatment v. control states

The trends between control and treatment groups are almost parallel, which supports the hypothesis that trends of IPV prevalence between treatment and control groups would be similar. The treatment group average is falling slightly faster: even without reform, the change in treatment states' IPV rates would have been faster than in control states which could bias positively the size of the coefficient. All this suggests that the global trend in Mexico towards the reduction of violence is very similar in all states regardless of the criminalization of DV, which supports the parallel trends assumption.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Statistical analysis

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	All IPV	All IPV	Emotional	Physical	Sexual	Economic
(Constant)	227,589 (154,191)	465,937** (191,514)	448,846** (181,516)	29,888 (54,583)	49,770 (37,496)	287,754** (116,983)
Penal Code	1,904 (3,404)	7,033 (4,426)	6,870 (4,195)	0,386 (1,262)	1,470 (0,867)	4,195 (2,704)
Income	-12,675 (12,203)	-33,654* (14,754)	-31,811** (13,984)	-0,015 (4,205)	-2,281 (2,889)	-22,655** (9,012)
Education	-7,013 (9,846)	-11,474 (11,896)	-12,284 (11,275)	-2,754 (3,391)	-2,626 (2,329)	-4,941 (7,267)
Admin. law		16,326** (5,952)	14,834** (5,641)	1,762 (1,696)	2,274* (1,165)	10,914*** (3,636)
Divorce law		-3,998 (2,667)	-3,936 (2,528)	-0,298 (0,760)	-0,845 (0,522)	-2,948* (1,629)
Party		0,643	0,715	0,027	0,000	0,166
Ideology		(0,557)	(0,547)	(0,165)	(0,113)	(0,353)
R ²	0,871	0,908	0,877	0,928	0,944	0,946
Adj. R ²	0,749	0,784	0,711	0,832	0,868	0,874
N	38	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	33,81	33,81	27,57	18,37	7,49	4,48

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1; standard error in brackets.

Table 2: Linear regression of penal code reform on levels of IPV, with state- and year-fixed effects

All else equal, the criminal code reform coefficient indicates that despite this downward trend, the treatment as a one-time effect increases total IPV levels (not trends) by 7.033% points. This is a huge effect as it means that 1.007 million women aged 15 and over could have avoided IPV if they lived in a state that had not criminalized DV (INEGI, 2010)³. Respectively, a state that criminalizes DV expects a 6.870, 0.386, 1.470, and 4.195% points increase in emotional,

physical, sexual, and economic IPV. Although reforming the criminal code seems to increase all types of IPV, the coefficients indistinguishable from zero.

The IPV levels of state s in year t cannot be predicted by whether the criminal code had been reformed at that time. There is no significant IPV difference between control and treatment states other than the initial one. This goes against my theoretical expectations of a negative and significant result. I cannot reject the null hypothesis, i.e., the criminalization of DV has no impact on IPV. All the coefficients for reform are positive: this suggests that IPV levels decreased more slowly in states that criminalized DV. This could support the male backlash theory: where gender norms are challenged, men feel threatened and increase VAWG. Future research should investigate this further. While testing the parallel trends assumption I observed a possible upwards bias making the effect larger than it should be. Here no effect is detected suggesting that reform had no effect despite faster pre-reform trending in treatment states. Across all models, high R^2 values indicate that between 87,1% and 94,6% of the variance in IPV can be explained by the independent variables: the data fit the models well.

Additionally, the presence of administrative laws has a similar increasing effect on all models except for physical IPV. This is concerning: the only evidence here provides support to the hypothesis that some laws slow down the decrease in IPV. It is however in line with Beleche (2017) who finds no effect of DV administrative laws nor divorce laws in Mexico on female suicide rates, and Frias (2008) who shows that administrative DV laws led to no reduction in IPV prevalence. The lack of statistical significance for the effect of criminal code reform on IPV other than sexual reflects at most an effect too small to be detected, or no effect. It does not provide any support for my initial hypothesis but instead suggests the limited efficacy of DV criminalization. Only the effect of divorce laws on economic IPV is negative and significant at the 10% level: a state that passes divorce laws is expected to experience a decline in economic IPV of 2,948% points. This corresponds to the literature that found that allowing DV as grounds for divorce or allowing unilateral divorce reduces DV (Garcia-Ramos, 2021; Brassiolo, 2016; Stevenson and Wolfers, 2006).

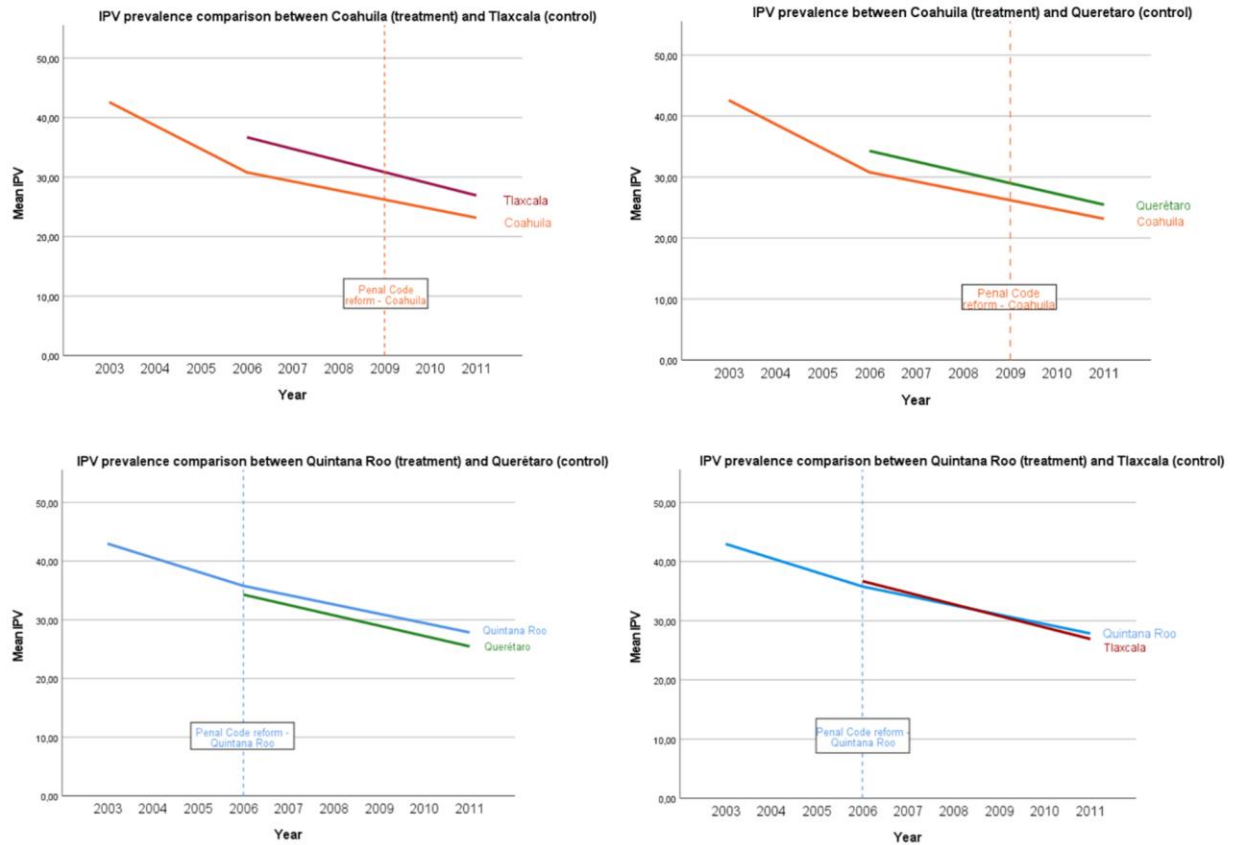
Finally, both education (insignificant) and income appear as risk factors for IPV, in line with most literature (Jewkes, 2002). A higher income is correlated with lower levels of total, emotional and economic IPV (at the 5% level). A higher household income can be due to

women's paid labor and their economic empowerment, which decreases the likelihood of violence. Yet, the direction of causality between income and IPV is debated (Capaldi et al., 2012). The ideology of the party in government is insignificant but always positive, suggesting that a more conservative ideology increases the IPV decline rate. Although counterintuitive, this would be in line with my findings. If a socially liberal government elected on a platform of gender equality reforms the criminal code, then it might take resources away from more impactful but less esteemed policies.

There is a decline in all types of IPV in Mexico but no evidence supports criminal DV law as a driver of this trend. Results indicate that the effect might be null or too small to be detected. I find no backing for theories emphasizing the powers of the law on IPV. Instead, results support theories highlighting the limits of criminal law (no or small negative effect) or the male backlash theory (small positive effect).

5.2. Comparative cases

The comparative study investigates why, at similar IPV rates, a treatment state experiences a decline in IPV similar to a control one. The following graphs show the combinations of treatment states for which data is available before reform, important to capture a change in states' trends (Quintana Roo; Coahuila), and control states (Queretaro; Tlaxcala). They highlight the results of the quantitative analysis: there is barely any difference between trends, and control states even show a faster decline in IPV.

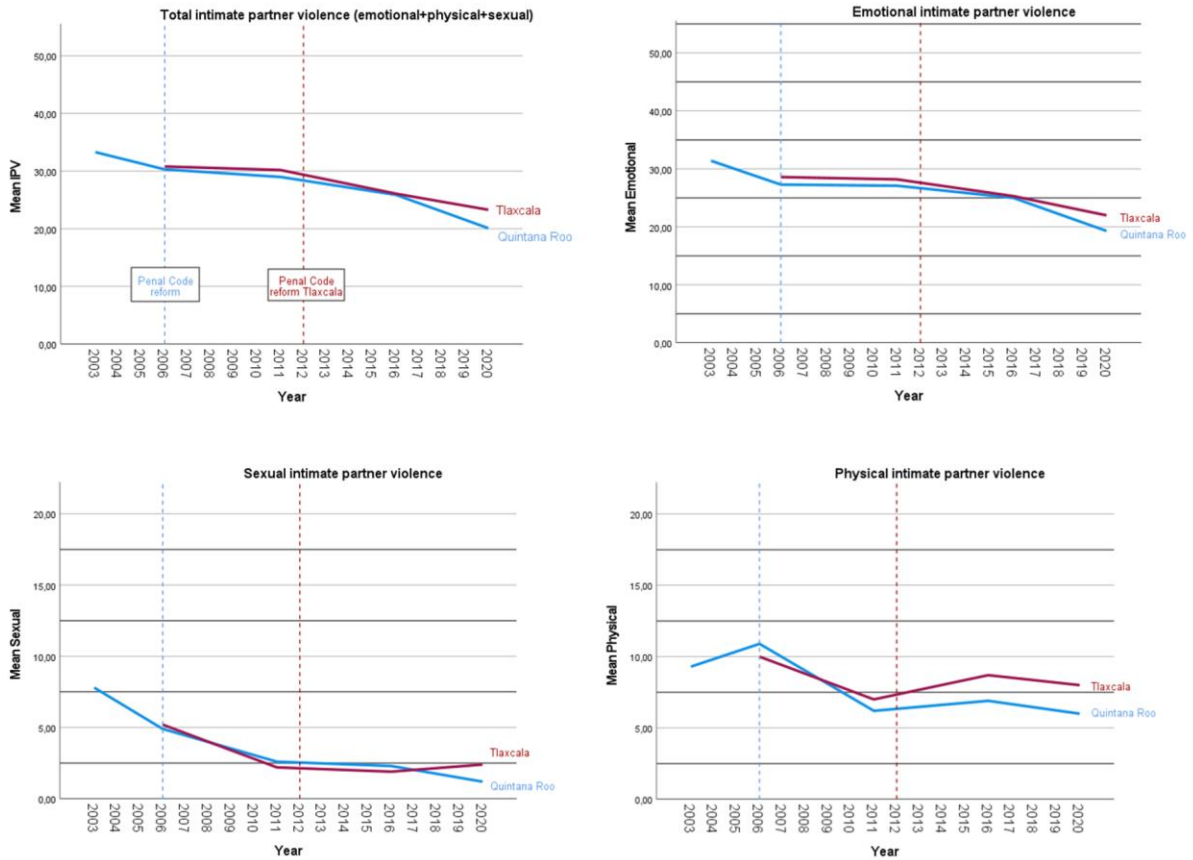


Graph 4: Comparison of IPV between control states and Coahuila & Quintana Roo

The comparison of Quintana Roo and Tlaxcala is the most insightful as the reform in Quintana Roo did not lead to a drop in IPV, their IPV levels are almost identical, and despite geographical differences, they have the most similar sociodemographic context for variables of interest (table 2).

Context	Indicator	Quintana Roo	Tlaxcala	Year
Demographic	Population (million)	1.14	1.1	2005
		1.88	1.34	2015
Health	Life expectancy at birth (years)	74.7	74.1	2005
		76.3	76.5	2020
Sexual and reproductive health	Prenatal visits (count)	7.4	7.9	2009
		8.2	10	2018
	Use of modern contraception among women (prevalence)	67.4	60.7	2009
		68	70.5	2018
Gender inequality	Rate of women's participation in the labor market	49.4	40.2	2005
		50.6	48.2	2019
	Gender Development Index	0.949	0.941	2005
		0.964	0.966	2019
Violence	Crime incidence rate (for 100 000 inhabitants)	37.7	22.4	2011
		33.3	27.1	2020
Economic development	Youth unemployment rate	5.8	8.9	2005
		6.3	7.5	2019
	Income (log GNI per capita)	9.766	9.706	2005
		9.659	9.542	2019
Education	Average years of schooling 15 years and older – women	8.2	8.1	2005
		10.1	9.8	2020
	Average years of schooling 15 years and older – men	8.8	8.5	2005
		10.4	9.9	2020
Development	Human Development Index	0.748	0.733	2005
		0.780	0.770	2019

Table 3: Source: INEGI. Retrieved from: <https://sc.inegi.org.mx/SIESVIMI/paginas/consultas/inicio.jsf>



Graph 5: Comparison of IPV between Quintana Roo and Tlaxcala. Note: a different measurement of IPV is used to compare trends over a longer period. Graphs show the survey years 2003, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2020. Economic IPV is excluded from this measure.

Analysis of qualitative sources revealed similarities between Quintana Roo and Tlaxcala regarding factors that can impede the impact of criminal law. In both states (and nationwide) the misogynistic legal culture stayed untouched despite reforms. Examples comprise oral trials for DV compared to pantomimes, given judges’ sexism, legislators and attorneys arguing that the law goes against family values or that women are raped because of their outfits (“Violencia machista”, 2009). The UN coordinator for Mexico highlighted that survivors lack trust in the

justice administration that devalues their claims (“ONU alarmada”, 2007). In neither state did scarce funds or low state capacity appear as obstacles.



Figure 1: Administrative map of Mexico. Source: own elaboration.

Major factors arose which can explain criminal law’s inefficacy in Quintana Roo. First, the analysis of US Country reports on HR revealed numerous scandals involving police staff, politicians, and judicial authorities in criminal activities (Appendix B). This can contribute to mistrust in authorities and discourage reporting. Police were systematically described as violent and arbitrary. Even in the highly mediatized story of journalist Lydia Cacho, arrested and tortured after revealing a ring of prostitution involving high-ranking officials, impunity was granted to her tormentors for 15 years. Many women reported wondering what they could expect from justice if this happened even to Cacho (“Ex fiscal Mexicana”, 2007). By contrast in Tlaxcala very few public discredits of officials were revealed, and articles justified police violence because of scarce resources.

Second, concerns stemming from a misogynistic legal culture, lack of interest from authorities, and lack of formal structures are much larger in Quintana Roo than in Tlaxcala (Chavez Maya, 2007). Although the climate of impunity and illegality is present nationwide, its

extent in Quintana Roo seems to reflect and encourage IPV. For instance, in 2009 the state prosecutor declared that women's attackers were not dangerous enough to be jailed, given that prisons were already filled with "real" criminals ("Violencia Machista", 2009). Cancun's public prison was at the time controlled by a drug cartel with links to the local police, that sent death threats to the only civil society shelter in the region ("Presunto "Zeta"", 2008). Quintana Roo's law-enforcement institutions thus appear both saturated by high levels of criminality and closely related to these criminal groups. The shelter was later attacked by police officers themselves and closed due to massive cuts in funding (Justice in Mexico, 2010). The police's disinterestedness even in a locally renowned shelter despite their calls is representative of what happens to women who complain daily. Necessary initiatives are undermined by authorities who, instead, focus rhetorically on criminal law without enforcing it. This rhetoric is clear when state officials praise the efficacy of severe punishments in the criminal code for the decline in reported DV ("Crece cultura", 2007). Others stated that women's demand for protection services had doubled, proving their trust in authorities ("Promueven cultura", 2009). On the contrary, this might reveal that instead of starting burdensome criminal procedures, women prioritize short-term assistance services. Indeed, in 2009 in Quintana Roo none of the 579 femicides was punished because of inefficiency and lack of interest (Reveles, 2010). Similarly, all the men accused of DV in the state's capital remained out of jail after pardon from their partners ("Quintana Roo", 2010). Impunity makes the law a dead letter. Such findings relate to research on the gap between formal rules and practice. Although enforcement deficits are often put on the account of low capacity, Amengual and Dargent (2020) explain how institutional weakness is also perpetuated because of political *decisions* not to enforce. The adoption of formal DV legislation, typical of new democracies in search of legitimacy, brings political gain but its enforcement does not (Htun & Jensenius, 2020). In Quintana Roo, the main obstacle to the law's efficacy seems to be attributable to noncompliance by local-level state officials given their condoning attitudes toward IPV. This is in line with Frias (2010): highly masculinized Mexican law-enforcement institutions and the judicial "pilgrimage" women have to undertake revictimize them and discourages them from seeking help.

Finally, in 2008 the Mexican Congress passed a constitutional reform (NCJS) to radically transform the criminal justice system (Ferreira & Shirk, 2013). By 2013, Tlaxcala had adopted laws regulating mediation and conciliation practices and had training in place (p. 127). In

contrast, Quintana Roo was one of the only three states without any step toward reform (p. 141). Given that the NCJS quickly proved efficient in all states that had adopted it (World Justice Project, 2018) and that conciliation practices are amongst the most problematic ones in DV trials, the lag of Quintana Roo compared to Tlaxcala is significant. In sum, although DV in Tlaxcala is not a specific crime, women can still report violence as such which is more able to be prosecuted thanks to the progress made on the implementation of the NCJS. In Quintana Roo, major obstacles along with reluctance to implement the necessary NCJS impede any investigation/prosecution. Hence, establishing DV as a crime is not instrumental in the reduction of IPV. The overall decline might be better explained by other strategies like massive information campaigns (“Arranco en Quintana”, 2010), women's care centers, and programs tackling gender violence (“Promueven cultura”, 2009; “Destaca Indesol”, 2011). Hence, local-level officials’ noncompliance with the law, conciliation practices, and underreporting make its impact indistinguishable from states without similar reforms.

6. Limitations

The limited comparability between ENDIREH surveys led to having little data on IPV for the quantitative analysis. This does not bias the results but makes them imprecise. It prevented directly verifying the parallel trends assumption. Surveys on sensitive topics encounter problems of under-reporting: the level of trust must be high to speak of abuse. ENDIREH reduces such risks as the interviewees were guaranteed full confidentiality and anonymity and the interview was conducted in a secure place (INEGI, 2004). All interviewers were females and highly trained on reacting empathetically. Moreover, the questions were factual and did not include words like “abuse” or “violence”. Hence, regardless of whether women considered an act normal or not, they could report it.

If the mechanism behind the reform’s powerlessness is indeed its inappropriate design and non-enforcement, then results can be generalized to all Mexican states given the national impunity climate. My results seem to apply to other federal developing countries as they are in line both with Franceschet (2010) who found that the policy response to DV in Argentina failed due to a lack of resources and coordination, and Gattegno, Wilkins, and Evans (2016) who cannot find any clear impact of a major IPV law in Brazil. Indeed, similar concerns regarding enforcement, misogynistic norms, and impunity arise in Latin America so we can expect

criminal code reforms to have little impact. It would be wise not to extend such results to centralized states as the local nature of the law could explain much of its inefficacy.

7. Conclusion

Is the criminalization of DV the way to tackle it? The quantitative study could not capture any impact of criminalizing DV on IPV decline. Administrative legislation does not appear to be effective either, while divorce laws reduce only economic IPV. Although the lack of significant results can arise from the scarcity of the data, it does indicate that the impact is at best small. This provides no backing to my initial hypothesis and instead supports critical feminist and male backlash theories. Hence, such null results raise policy-making concerns. A law is always broken, and this does not imply that it should not be adopted at all. Yet here, the comparative analysis demonstrated that the lack of enforcement and a focus on perpetrators' punishment regardless of women's needs are major reasons behind the inefficacy of criminal law. Specifically, two mechanisms explain gaps between formal legislation and implementation: a lack of enforcement due to a sticky misogynistic legal culture, and lack of reporting due to high costs (revictimization; inadequacy; burden). These impede the law's instrumental power (no deterrence nor protection). Not only is the law weakly enforced but its design perpetuates the sexist status-quo through conciliation practices.

Moreover, in contexts of high impunity criminal law could still reduce IPV through its symbolic power. Yet, my findings suggest that it does not undermine its social acceptability among state officials and perpetrators enough to reduce its occurrence, and that it might even lead to violence backlashes. Further qualitative research is needed to assess the limits of criminal law in dealing with DV through women's experiences with the criminal justice system. It should also investigate its differentiated impact on men's and women's acceptability of IPV and evaluate the impact of other strategies (education, protection). In sum, the adoption of DV legislation might be more reflective of a government's willingness to satisfy public demand without committing itself to undertake the deeper structural changes necessary for tackling violence against women.

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¹ This paper focuses on violence perpetrated against women. Violence against men exists but represents a minority of cases and is not systematically driven by the patriarchal nature of society (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 1999; Dobash & Dobash, 1992). To avoid essentializing the experiences of women, one needs to keep in mind that structural patriarchy is about yielding power to some over others: who oppresses and who is oppressed also depends on the interaction with other types of hierarchies like race or class (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 555; Alder, 1991; Stubbs, 1994).

² Major international treaties include the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All forms of discriminations against women and the 1993 UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women, the first to recognize VAWG as the reflection of structural patriarchy.

³ Female population in Mexico, 2010: 57 481 307. Percentage female population above 15 years old in 2010: 64.4%. Mean IPV prevalence in Mexico between 2010 and 2011: 33.8103%. Source: Sistema Integrado de Estadísticas sobre Violencia contra las Mujeres, INEGI 2010.

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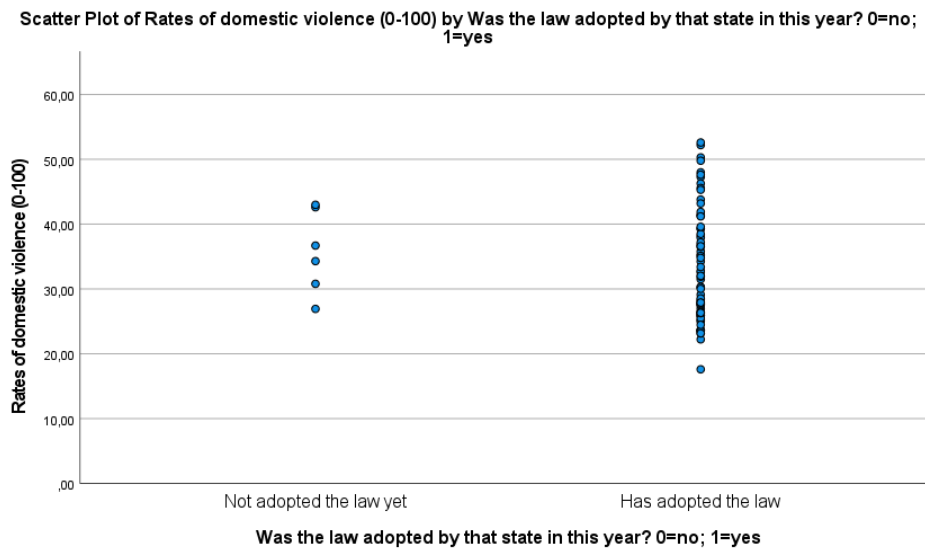
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Appendix A: Statistical analysis

I. Assumptions

1. Linearity

As the independent variable is binary, the model fits the assumption of linearity by definition. Indeed, the scatterplot of the relationship between a dependent and a binary independent variable creates two points which define a straight line.



2. Autocorrelation

Model Summary^b

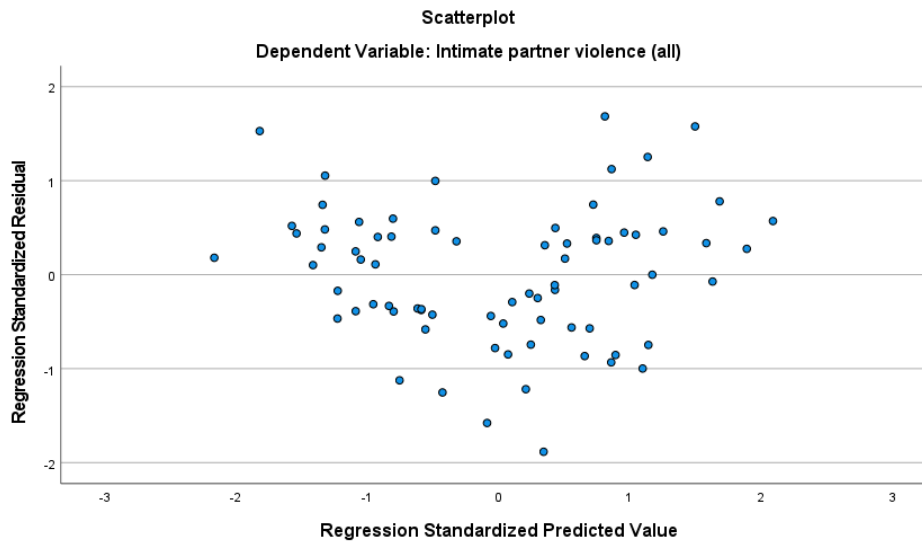
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,953 ^a	,908	,784	3,90574	2,775

a. Predictors: (Constant), ideology of the governor's party, Year=2003.0, State=Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave, State=Tamaulipas, State=Tabasco, State=Nayarit, State=México, State=Durango, State=Colima, State=Campeche, State=Baja California Sur, State=Chiapas, State=Quintana Roo, State=Tlaxcala, State=Coahuila de Zaragoza, State=Querétaro Arteaga, State=Guanajuato, State=Sinaloa, State=Hidalgo, State=San Luis Potosí, State=Chihuahua, State=Puebla, State=Oaxaca, State=Sonora, State=Nuevo León, State=Morelos, Year=2011.0, State=Guerrero, State=Yucatán, State=Distrito Federal, State=Jalisco, State=Zacatecas, State=Baja California, Divorce law : Had the state reformed its civil code : DV is a reason for divorce in this year?, State=Michoacán de Ocampo, Was the law adopted by that state in this year? 0=no; 1=yes, Administrative law: Had the state adopted administrative DV law in this year?, log_GNI_pc, Education

b. Dependent Variable: Rates of domestic violence (0-100)

Durbin-Watson value is between 1 and 3 so the residuals are not likely to be autocorrelated.

3. Heteroskedasticity



There is no funnel shape, i.e., the variance of the residuals is about the same at each value of the independent variable, so the assumption is verified.

4. No significant outliers

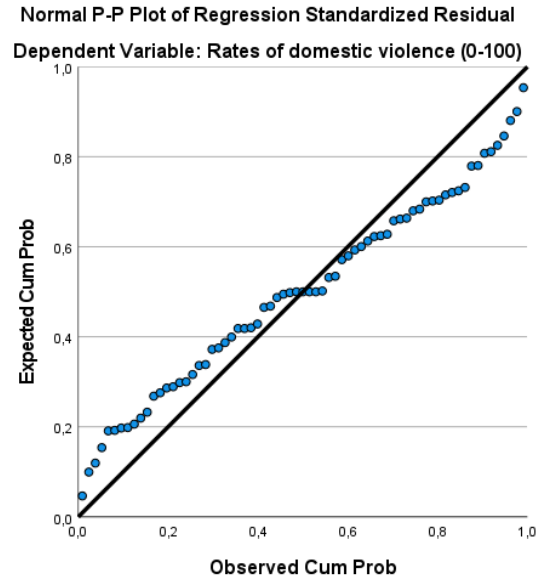
The case wise listing of residuals did not show any outlier outside 2 standard deviations from the mean, so the assumption is verified.

5. Multicollinearity

Some of the VIF values were above 10, which indicates multicollinearity. A way to deal with this is to obtain more data points or exclude the problematic variables. In my case none of these options was feasible because excluding a relevant variable would bias my results.

Multicollinearity makes the results less significant because it widens the confidence interval but does not change the prediction itself.

6. Normality



The residuals are not perfectly normal as explained by the relatively small sample size. This distribution is almost normal and is not a cause for concern.

II. Dates of legislative reforms

State	Domestic violence as a crime (penal code reform)	Domestic violence as cause for divorce	Administrative Law for assistance, prevention, and sanction of family violence
Aguascalientes	02/2001	11/2001	
Baja California	06/1998	09/2004	07/2003
Baja California Sur	03/2005	01/2002	03/2005
Campeche	05/1999	06/1999	06/2002
Chiapas	08/2001	11/2004	07/1998
Chihuahua	02/2001	09/2001	
Coahuila	01/2009	06/2007	10/2002
Colima	11/2005	03/2000	02/1998
Distrito Federal	12/1997	12/1997	07/1996
Durango	04/2004	05/1998	12/1999
Guanajuato	11/2001		02/2000
Guerrero	04/1999	11/1999	04/1999
Hidalgo	01/2002		
Jalisco	09/2000	11/2007	12/2003
Mexico	03/2000	01/2007	12/2002

Michoacan	04/2001	04/2001	02/2002
Morelos	06/2004	09/2006	01/1999
Nayarit	12/2004	05/2007	12/2004
Nuevo Leon	01/2000	01/2000	02/2006
Oaxaca	02/1998	02/1998	09/2001
Puebla	09/2003	11/2007	04/2001
Queretaro Arteaga	2012		12/1996
Quintana Roo	06/2006	07/2004	07/2000
San Luis Potosi	09/2000	10/1998	07/1998
Sinaloa	03/2003	10/1998	12/2001
Sonora	05/2001	05/2001	03/2001
Tabasco	05/2003	05/2003	04/1999
Tamaulipas	06/1999	06/1999	09/1998
Tlaxcala	03/2012	01/2006	05/2001
Veracruz	09/1998	09/1998	09/1998
Yucatan	03/2000		09/1999
Zacatecas	08/2001	02/2003	02/2003

Dates of law adoption and civil and criminal code reforms as of 2012. Source: Beleche (2017) ; INEGI *Mujeres y Hombres en Mexico 2008* ; Frias (2007) ; own analysis of criminal and civil codes through Official Gazettes of each state (“Diario Oficial”). Blanks indicate that the date could not be found either because the law has not been passed yet or because the information was not available.

III. Female homicide death rate – results

<hr/>	
	All IPV
<hr/>	
(Constant)	-258,135*** (49,553)
Penal Code	1,176 (0,335)
Income	-24,358*** (4,252)
Education	-3,395 (4,120)
Admin. law	0,315 (1,196)
Divorce law	-2,601*

	(1,169)
Party Ideology	-0,322
	(0,289)
<hr/>	
R ²	0,678
Adj. R ²	0,637
N	399
Mean	12,7725
<hr/>	

***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.5; standard error in brackets.

Table 3: Linear regression of penal code reform on female homicide death rate, per Mexican state, per year.

Appendix B. Qualitative comparative analysis

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II. US Department Country Report on Human Rights, Mexico

	Quintana Roo	Tlaxcala
2004	<p>Press reports that charged Immigration officials in Chetumal were helping a network to traffic persons into the southern part of the country</p> <p>Quintana Roo is one of the only state that has customs laws regarding the rights of indigenous people to govern themselves (resolve disputes, choose local officials). These usages tend to exclude women (not always right to vote or be elected). Often infringe on broader women’s rights</p> <p>Traffick of women from Cancun to the US for sexual exploitation</p> <p>Cancun as sexual tourism place with reported incidents of sexual exploitation of minors</p>	<p>Tlaxcala (+ state of Mexico+ Federal District) account for 50 % of torture complaints. Police and prosecutors often use arbitrary arrest, poorly trained police, and inadequate equipment to resolve crimes lead to torture to extract confessions</p>
2005	<p>Violent police detain 500 people at demonstration, violent clash, 2 women in hospital in critical condition.</p> <p>Complaints of ill treatment torture and arbitrary detention – impunity for police</p>	
2006	<p>Female independent journalist author of a book denouncing child pornography and prostitution involving public officials and businessmen was arbitrarily arrested and detained.</p> <p>Supreme court investigated her case as potential human rights violation still investigating</p>	

	Newspaper investigating drug trafficking in Quintana Roo was attacked in Cancun.	
2007		Enacted antitrafficking legislation (not Quintana Roo)
2008	7 officials from National Migration Institute were indicted on charges stemming from extortion of Cuban nationals	
2009		Tlaxcala and 12 other states (not Quintana Roo) experienced high rates of alleged gender-driven homicide 5 individuals from Tlaxcala were convicted by federal judge for sexual exploitation – first convictions under the 2007 Trafficking in persons Law.
2010	Mayor of Cancun charged for money laundering drug trafficking and cooperation with drug traffickers – officials at Cancun’s municipal jail have been connected repeatedly with TCOs; jail director Rojas Garcia dismissed for providing assistance to perpetrators of the bombing of a night club in Cancun	Tlaxcala and 12 other states (not Quintana Roo) experienced high rates of alleged gender-driven homicide.
2011	Charges on Mayor from 2010 were dropped; he was then arrested again for smuggling Cuban citizens into the country and drug traffic but released.	
2012	CNDH: prisons in Quintana Roo & 8 other states (not Tlaxcala) with the worst prison conditions; controlled by organized crime	
2013	CNDH: prisons in Quintana Roo & 8 other states (not Tlaxcala) with the worst prison conditions; controlled by organized crime	Director of an online news site arrested for “defamation” against a senior government official from Tlaxcala.
2014	Reports of cloning: government replacing news content with criticism of the government by praise, with similar layout of the original publication	
2015	Independent journalist imprisoned on charges of sabotage then released after almost a year in prison	

2016	Former governor of Quintana Roo under investigation for corruption	
2017	<p>Quintana Roo's attorney general apologized to a man tortured and convicted of multiple counts of homicide in 2013; they liberated him in 2017</p> <p>Cases of sexual abuse of inmates in prison reported; worse conditions for female prisoners</p> <p>Government of QR apologized publicly to a journalist falsely accused by state authorities of sabotage & detained for 9 months</p> <p>Government seeking the extradition from Panama of the former QR governor</p> <p>Federal court in QR recognized that a journalist (the one who exposed pedophile ring in Cancun) had been tortured in retaliation for reporting</p>	<p>Among the states furthest along in implementing a new system to track the status of detainees and their location.</p> <p>LGBTI activist (male) beaten to death with signs of tortures.</p>
2018	<p>Cases of sexual torture / rape documented by NGO Centro Prodh.</p> <p>Cases of sexual abuse/exploitation of inmates.</p> <p>Police officer and former judge were detained for arbitrarily arresting a journalist.</p> <p>2 journalists arrested, threatened and killed by municipal police in QR</p> <p>Former governor extradited from Panama and detained pending trial on money-laundering charges.</p>	
2019	Journalist beaten shot and killed after exposing corruption of local authorities; had been threatened by the local police.	Mandatory for states to have search committees for missing persons but in Tlaxcala only 5 staff on it: lack human and financial resources.
2021	<p>Unlawful / arbitrary killings by police: The Quintana Roo prosecutor general confirmed police officers used disproportionate force during the arrest. Authorities arrested four police officers and charged them with femicide (killing a woman because of her gender).</p>	

	<p>In February the Attorney General's Office arrested former Puebla governor Mario Marin and charged him with torturing journalist Lydia Cacho, who exposed Marin and several business leaders' involvement in a child sex trafficking ring in 2005. As of August 23, Marin was awaiting trial. In June authorities sentenced Quintana Roo police officer Miguel Mora Olvera to five years in prison for his role in torturing Cacho.</p>	
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Sources: Reports 2004-2015 retrieved from: [Human Rights Reports \(state.gov\)](#); Reports 2015-2021 retrieved from: [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - United States Department of State](#)