



Public Governance and Security in Nuevo León: Construction of a Sectoral Index Based on the World Bank Model

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ABSTRACT: This article constructs and applies a sectoral index to evaluate the governance of public security policy in Nuevo León. The study is based on the six dimensions of the World Bank governance model: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. These dimensions are adapted to the public security field through indicators from official sources, public surveys, and specialized indices. The research adopts an evaluative approach: it normalizes indicators on a 0-to-1 scale, calculates a simple index with equivalent weighting, and then proposes an adjusted index using theoretical weighting inspired by Luis F. Aguilar's concept of public governance. The simple index produced a value of 0.397, while the adjusted index reached 0.425. Both results suggest an intermediate-low level of governance in public security policy in Nuevo León. The main finding is not a complete absence of institutional capacity, but an uneven articulation among government effectiveness, legality, citizen participation, political stability, rule of law, and control of corruption. The article contributes to the debate on subnational governance by proposing a sectoral measurement applied to a specific public policy rather than evaluating governance at an aggregate governmental level.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to evaluate public security policy by designing and applying a sectoral model for measuring governance in Nuevo León. To this end, it takes as its starting point the methodology developed by Valdez Miranda and Gómez Díaz de León in the article "Local Governance in Mexico: The Case of Nuevo León 2015-2021," which proposes a measurement of state governance based on an adaptation of the World Bank's governance index. This model considers six variables: 1) voice and accountability, 2) political stability and absence of violence, 3) government effectiveness, 4) regulatory quality, 5) rule of law, and 6) control of corruption.

Unlike a general evaluation of governance of government, this work focuses its analysis on a specific issue and policy: public security. Although multiple indicators exist regarding security, justice, violence, citizen perception, corruption, the rule of law, and institutional openness, these data are usually analyzed separately and are not necessarily integrated into a sectoral measurement that allows for estimating the

Degree of governance of a specific public policy. In this sense, the article seeks to provide a methodological approach to evaluate governance not only as an added attribute of government, but as a directive capacity applied to a specific field of public action.

This research retains the World Bank's six variables as its basic measurement framework but introduces two key adjustments. The first is to adapt these variables to the field of public security, using indicators related to prevention, violence, perceptions of security, culture of legality, the rule of law, open government, and corruption in security and justice institutions. The second is to propose a

differentiated weighting of the variables based on the concept of public governance developed by Luis F. Aguilar, in order to avoid treating all dimensions as having the same explanatory weight in a sectoral policy.

From this perspective, governance cannot be understood solely as citizen participation, administrative performance, or the absence of corruption. Rather, it is the process through which the government directs society by means of normatively valid, causally feasible, and socially acceptable decisions. Public governance is structured as a regulated, rational, and political action; therefore, its analysis must consider the legitimacy of government action, its effectiveness in producing results, and its social acceptability (Aguilar, 2022). The research is based on two premises. The first is that the World Bank's six variables remain useful for empirically ordering different dimensions of governance, provided they are carefully adapted to the specific sector being analyzed. The second is that public security in Nuevo León can be studied as a public policy comprised of a broad institutional chain, including civil protection, violence prevention, crime response, law enforcement, the administration of justice, and social reintegration. Both premises are debatable and constitute methodological limitations of the study; however, they offer a reasonable starting point for constructing an initial sectoral measurement of governance in security.

Evaluating security governance in Nuevo León is relevant for three reasons. First, it is a state of significant economic, institutional, and political importance within the national context. Second, its recent public agenda has been marked by persistent challenges related to security, perceptions of insecurity, institutional trust, and coordination among authorities. Third, Nuevo León has a complex social and institutional ecosystem, comprised of public, private, academic, and citizen actors, which allows for a clearer observation of the tensions between governmental capacities, social participation, the rule of law, and public outcomes.

This research replicates the methodology of Valdez Miranda and Gómez Díaz de León in three aspects. First, it uses the six World Bank variables as a classification framework; second, it employs indicators from public sources and existing evaluations; and third, it transforms the selected values into a common scale of 0 to 1, where higher values represent better governance conditions. However, this article departs from that precedent in two ways: first, it focuses the measurement on public security policy, and second, in addition to calculating a simple index, it also calculates an index adjusted through theoretical weighting, which is then added to the model.

The key difference in this work lies in the fact that, after calculating a simple governance index with equal weighting among the six variables, it proposes an adjusted index based on the concept of public governance. This second index weights the variables according to Aguilar's theory, which posits that governance should be analyzed in terms of its normative quality, effectiveness, and social acceptability. Thus, the article not only seeks to measure the level of governance in Nuevo León, but also to show how the interpretation of the case changes when the measurement is oriented by a theory of government.

The question guiding this research is: what level of governance does public security policy in Nuevo León exhibit when evaluated using a sectoral index adapted from the World Bank's governance model and weighted according to Luis F. Aguilar's concept of public governance? Additionally, the article explores how the interpretation of the case changes when comparing a simple governance index with an index adjusted using theoretical weighting.

The overall objective is to build and apply a sectoral governance index for public security policy in Nuevo León, based on the six dimensions of the World Bank's governance model, adapted using security and justice indicators, and weighted based on the concept of public governance by Luis F. Aguilar.

The article is organized into six sections. After this introduction, the background of the Nuevo León case and the relevance of public security as a field of analysis are presented. Subsequently, the problem statement and the theoretical framework on public governance are developed. Finally, the measurement and weighting methodology is explained. Finally, the operationalization of the indicators, the analysis of results, and the conclusions of the study are presented.

II. ANTECEDENTS

Public security in Nuevo León can be analyzed as a complex and dynamic institutional chain in which each link strengthens the whole (Chabat & Bailey, 2003). Its configuration involves at least six interdependent components: civil protection, violence prevention, response to crime, law enforcement, administration of justice, and social reintegration.

In the case of Nuevo León, the 2022-2027 Sectoral Program for Security and Justice offers a broad formulation of the problem by establishing as its objectives the reduction of crime rates, effective access to justice, the reduction of crime victims, their protection, and the positive social reintegration of incarcerated individuals, all under a cross-cutting human rights approach (Government of the state of Nuevo León, 2022). This programmatic definition is relevant because it recognizes that public security is not limited to police response, but also involves prevention, justice, victim protection, and social reintegration.

Civil protection

The first component of the security chain is civil protection, understood as the public capacity to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and mitigate risks that can affect life, physical integrity, property, and the continuity of social activities. In Nuevo León, this dimension is especially important due to the state's exposure to hydrometeorological, geological, industrial, and urban phenomena. While no major event has occurred, Tropical Storm Hanna in 2020 and the water crisis between 2021 and 2023 underscore the importance of this issue.

From a governance perspective, civil protection reveals that public security is not limited to controlling crime and administrative offenses. It also involves the government's capacity to organize technical information, coordinate institutions, and mobilize social responses to risk events. In this sense, risk management constitutes a preventive dimension of security, as it seeks to reduce vulnerabilities before major damage occurs.

Violence prevention

Violence prevention is the component of the chain focused on addressing the social, community, family, urban, and institutional conditions that foster violent or criminal behavior (Carrión et al., 2009). In Nuevo León, this dimension is recognized in both sectoral planning instruments and the long-term strategic agenda. It is the Security and Justice pillar of the Strategic Plan for Nuevo León. 2040 aims to promote a social prevention approach so that people can live free from violence and develop in resilient community environments, as well as strengthen the efficient and coordinated response when criminal acts occur (Consejo Nuevo León, n.d.). Violence prevention is particularly important for governance analysis because it can hardly be achieved by a single authority. It requires intersectoral intervention, social co-responsibility, coordination with municipalities, community participation, territorial information, and programmatic continuity. Therefore, prevention is one of the links where it becomes clearest whether security policy operates as a governance system or as a fragmented collection of government actions.

However, according to the 2022 National Urban Public Safety Survey (ENSU), only 27.9% of people living in Nuevo León reported being aware of violence prevention programs in the state; this figure is below the national average of 30.7%. While various prevention programs likely exist, the low level of public awareness reflects a communication problem that could hinder their effectiveness.

Reaction to crime

The response to crime encompasses the institutional capacity to handle emergencies, respond to criminal behavior, deploy law enforcement, make arrests in flagrante delicto, protect victims, and contain acts of violence (Clarke & Eck, 2003). In Nuevo León, this component primarily involves Fuerza Civil, municipal police, emergency services, state security authorities, and, in certain contexts, federal institutions.

An increase in patrols, arrests, or calls answered does not necessarily equate to better governance if it does not translate into a reduction in violence, inter-institutional trust, and respect for human rights. Analytically, this link allows us to observe the state's operational capacity, but also its limitations when it is not properly integrated with regulatory frameworks, information, and political relationships.

In this dimension, the trust people have in their police stands out. According to the 2025 National Survey of Victimization and Public Safety Perception (ENVIPE), 73.3% trust Fuerza Civil ; 70% trust municipal police forces.

Prosecution of justice

This percentage positions the Nuevo León state police as the most trusted state police in the country.

The administration of justice is one of the critical points in the security chain. Its function consists of investigating crimes, compiling case files, identifying those responsible, bringing cases to court, and presenting accusations before the judicial bodies (Ojeda, 1998). In Nuevo León, this function falls primarily to the state Attorney General's Office, whose institutional design is based on a model of autonomy from the Executive Branch.

The main problem with this component is not simply the existence of ministerial institutions, but rather the gap between victimization, reporting, case openings, and effective prosecution. The 2024 National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) estimates that, during 2023, only 9.5% of crimes were reported in Nuevo León; of these, the Public Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation in 85.7% of cases. Consequently, an investigation was opened in only 8.1% of all crimes, while the dark figure of crime reached 91.9% (INEGI, 2024a).

These data are central to the diagnosis because it shows that law enforcement operates on only a small fraction of the criminal universe. From a public governance perspective, the dark figure of crime reveals a problem of trust, accessibility, institutional effectiveness, and legitimacy of the justice system. If citizens do not report crimes, or if their reports do not result in a satisfactory institutional response, the security chain is weakened from its investigative phase.

Administration of justice

The administration of justice represents the point at which the judicial branch intervenes within the security chain. It encompasses the conduct of criminal proceedings, the resolution of disputes, the evaluation of evidence, the imposition of sanctions, the protection of rights, and the oversight of the legality of the actions of authorities. Judges, magistrates, public defenders, prosecutors, legal advisors, victims, and defendants are all involved in this component (Ojeda, 1998).

Its importance lies in the fact that public security is not consolidated solely through arrests or investigations, but through legitimate, impartial, timely, and enforceable judicial decisions. Without the effective administration of justice, security policy tends to focus on the immediate containment of crime, but fails to institutionally close the cycles of criminal accountability. Therefore, this link directly connects security with the rule of law: the capacity to impose sanctions according to rules, respecting rights and generating institutional certainty.

In 2024, Nuevo León resolved 16.24% of its cases through temporary archiving and 3.57% through non-prosecution. Compared to the average for other states, Nuevo León shows a similar use of temporary archiving, 16.24% versus 16.11%.

However, there was a considerably lower use of non-prosecution, 3.57% compared to 12.50%. Together, these two ineffective solutions represent 19.81% of the total number of cases in Nuevo León, a lower proportion than the average for the states, estimated at 28.61% (México Evalúa, 2026).

Social reintegration

Social reintegration is the final component of the security chain and, at the same time, one of the most important for preventing cycles of recidivism. Its function is to prevent the penal system from being limited to punishment and to promote conditions that allow individuals deprived of their liberty or subject to criminal sanctions to reintegrate into society. The Sectoral Program for Security and Justice 2022-2027 expressly incorporates social reintegration as part of its objectives, noting the need to establish mechanisms for the positive reintegration of people deprived of their liberty (Government of the state of Nuevo León, 2022).

In terms of public policy, social reintegration requires education, job training, healthcare, psychosocial support, sports, family ties, respect for human rights, and follow-up after release. In terms of governance, it demands coordination among prison authorities, the judiciary, the public prosecutor's office, educational institutions, the private sector, social organizations, and families. Weaknesses in this component can lead to recidivism, prison overcrowding, and the perpetuation of criminal patterns.

According to the 2024 National Penitentiary Supervision Diagnosis, which evaluates aspects such as material conditions, health, hygiene, among others, Nuevo León obtained a state rating of 7.79, with a penitentiary population of 10,090 people deprived of liberty, which places it above the average of the federal entities, estimated at 6.52 from the reported state ratings (CNDH, 2024).

Crime incidence and perception of security

According to the 2024 National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE), during 2023, 27.8% of households in Nuevo León had at least one victim of crime, equivalent to 507,936 victim households out of an estimated total of 1,826,431 households. The same survey estimated a victimization rate of 23,602 men and 21,441 women per 100,000 inhabitants aged 18 and over (INEGI, 2024).

Regarding estimated crime rates, the ENVIPE reported 1,292,117 crimes in Nuevo León during 2023. In 40.1% of these crimes, the victim was present, and within that subset, 26.9% involved some type of aggression. Fraud also registered a rate of 9,198 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants, demonstrating the prevalence of these offenses.

Patrimonial and economic aspects within the everyday experience of victimization (INEGI, 2024).

In Nuevo León, 70.3% of the population aged 18 and over considered insecurity to be the most important problem in the state, above other relevant public issues. Furthermore, only 36% of the population reported feeling safe walking alone at night in the vicinity of their home (INEGI, 2024).

The 2024 Mexico Peace Index reinforces this interpretation. In the state-level results In 2023, Nuevo León ranked 26th out of 32 states, with a score of 3.621, where higher scores indicate lower levels of peace. However, the same report identifies Nuevo León among the states with the highest levels of positive peace, which presents a relevant paradox: the state possesses favorable structural conditions for building peace, but faces persistent problems of violence, crime, and a perception of insecurity (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2024).

Overall, the diagnosis suggests that Nuevo León possesses significant institutional, economic, and social capacities, but these do not automatically translate into improved security conditions. The security system shows progress in regulations, programs, and administration, but also reveals tensions between planning and results, between police response and public trust, between criminal investigation and the number of unreported crimes, and between structural capacities and effective peace. From a public governance perspective, the problem lies not only in determining whether security institutions exist, but also in evaluating whether these institutions can be coordinated in a regulated, rational, effective, and socially acceptable manner to produce security.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Public security is one of the most complex public problems for any government, not only because of its impact on life, liberty, property, and social welfare, but also because its governance depends on a broad and heterogeneous institutional chain. Violence prevention, civil protection, police response, law enforcement, the administration of justice, and social reintegration are all part of the same field of public policy, but they operate through different institutions, capacities, rules, incentives, and timeframes. Therefore, security outcomes cannot be explained solely by crime rates or the operational presence of police forces, but rather by how the government coordinates normative, administrative, political, and social capacities to create effective security conditions.

In Nuevo León, this issue is particularly relevant. The state boasts economic, institutional, and social capabilities above the national average, as well as a relatively dense social and institutional ecosystem characterized by the presence of business actors, academics, citizens, and civil society organizations. However, the persistence of problems related to violence, the perception of insecurity, the underreporting of crime, distrust of security and justice authorities, and the perception of corruption reveals a strain on producing the results people expect.

This tension relates to governance. In security matters, as in no other area, governing does not simply mean exercising authority, deploying public force, or administering justice institutions; it involves coordinating actors, processing information, generating legitimacy, establishing operational rules, sustaining decisions, and producing socially recognizable results. In this sense, public security can be understood as a privileged field for observing governance.

The central problem addressed in this research is the evaluation of the governance of public security policy in Nuevo León. Multiple sources offer key information on this phenomenon: victimization and perception surveys, peace indices, rule of law measurements, corruption indicators, open government assessments, and administrative records. However, this data is usually analyzed separately and is not necessarily combined into a measurement that allows for estimating the degree of governance of a sectoral public policy. The World Bank's governance model offers a useful measurement framework, organizing the analysis into six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. These dimensions allow for the approximation of different components of governance and have been used as a reference for evaluating governance in Nuevo León in previous studies, particularly through the adaptation by Valdez Miranda and Gómez Díaz de León (2022). However, applying this model to the field of public security requires sectoral adaptation, since the object of analysis is not the general governance of the state government, but rather the governance of a specific public policy.

Thematic or focused adaptation of the model presents two challenges. The first is selecting indicators that effectively correspond to the field of security and justice, avoiding the mechanical transfer of general governance measurements. The second is defining whether the six dimensions should have equal weight within the index. Equivalent weighting may be useful for constructing a simple measurement, but it is limited if it is recognized that the dimensions of governance do not contribute equally to the production of security.

To address the second challenge, the research incorporates Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva's concept of public governance as a weighting criterion. Aguilar's contribution is not used to replace the World Bank model or to redefine the original six variables, but rather to theoretically strengthen how these variables are weighted. In his proposal, Aguilar argues that the contemporary issue of government is not exhausted in the formal legitimacy of authority, but rather shifts towards the effectiveness of its directive action (Aguilar Villanueva, 2022).

The research problem can therefore be formulated under the following hypothesis: Nuevo León has relevant information on security but lacks an integrated sectoral measurement that would allow for the evaluation of the degree of governance of its public security policy. This absence limits the possibility of accurately identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the security system from a governance perspective, as well as distinguishing between formal capabilities, institutional performance, social legitimacy, and public outcomes.

The overall objective is to construct a measurement of the governance of public security policy in Nuevo León through a sectoral index based on the six dimensions of the World Bank model, adapted with specific security and justice indicators, and weighted based on the concept of public governance by Aguilar Villanueva.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research is organized around three concepts: public security, public governance, and the World Bank's governance model. The first defines the sectoral field of analysis; the second provides the conceptual criteria for weighting the index variables; and the third offers the methodological architecture for measurement.

Public security

Public security is a fundamental function of the state and a field of public policy aimed at preserving life, integrity, liberty, property, public order, and social peace. In the Mexican constitutional order, its definition is found primarily in Article 21 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican states, which establishes that public security encompasses the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of crimes, as well as the sanctioning of administrative offenses, within the scope of the powers of the Federation, the federal entities, and the municipalities (Political Constitution of the United Mexican states).

The constitutional definition is the starting point for understanding public security. Chabat and Bailey (2003) provide greater precision by conceptualizing it as an institutional chain that includes prevention, response, investigation, prosecution, justice, and administrative sanctions; these are the macro-processes within the causal logic of security and justice. To this must be added the social reintegration of sentenced individuals, incorporated into the General Law of the National Public Security System as part of public security and the National Public Security System (General Law of the National Public Security System, art. 2).

At the local level, the Political Constitution of the Free and Sovereign state of Nuevo León replicates this logic by recognizing public security as a municipal function under Article 21 of the Constitution, including municipal police and traffic control, under the command of the mayor and in accordance with the state Public Safety Law (Political Constitution of the Free and Sovereign state of Nuevo León, Art. 181). This provision confirms that public security in Nuevo León has a concurrent and multi-level nature: it involves the state, the municipalities, and, in certain contexts, the Federal Government.

From the perspective of specialized literature, public security must be understood as a problem that extends beyond strictly police action. Chabat and Bailey (2003) analyze Mexican public security in relation to transnational crime, which allows us to situate it as

a policy conditioned by criminal dynamics that exceed the traditional capacities of local governments. This perspective is useful for Nuevo León due to its border location, its logistical and industrial importance, and its exposure to illicit markets, criminal flows, and territorial disputes.

Elena Azaola has shown that the prison system and social reintegration are not an appendage of security, but rather a central component of the justice system and the democratic control of punishment. Her work on the Mexican prison system reveals that public security does not end with arrest or sentencing, but also depends on the conditions of confinement, the rights of incarcerated individuals, and the real possibility of social reintegration (Azaola, 2021).

Overall, the concept of public security adopted by this research is broad and institutional. It is not limited to crime reduction or police presence, but rather encompasses a chain of public policy integrated with civil protection, violence prevention, crime response, law enforcement, the administration of justice, and social reintegration. This delimitation allows for the analysis of safety as a field of public governance, where outcomes depend on the interplay between norms, institutional capacities, information, intergovernmental coordination, social legitimacy, and the control of power.

Public governance

The second central concept is that of public governance, understood from the theoretical perspective of Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva. For Aguilar, the contemporary issue of government is not limited to the formal legitimacy of authority, but rather shifts toward the effectiveness of its leadership. In other words, the relevant question is not only whether the government has the legal authority to act, but whether it manages to lead society through normatively valid, causally feasible, and socially acceptable public decisions (Aguilar, 2022).

In Aguilar's theory, public governance can be understood as a regulated, rational, and political action. It is regulated because it requires a legal foundation, clear powers, and congruence with the state's legal order; it is rational because it must be based on information, causal knowledge, diagnosis, calculation of consequences, and technical capacity; and it is political because it must manage relationships between government, citizens, social actors, and groups with diverse interests. Therefore, Aguilar links governance to three evaluable properties: legitimacy, effectiveness, and social acceptability.

From the above, four causal units emerge: the normative order of the state, the knowledge system of society, the political relations between ruler and citizenry, and governmental agency. The first unit determines the legitimacy of governance; the second, its effectiveness or productive suitability; the third, its social acceptability; and the fourth integrates the normative, cognitive, and political elements into a specific governmental decision.

This theory will not be used in the article to replace the World Bank's governance model or to redefine its six variables. Its function will be more specific: to serve as a conceptual criterion for weighting these variables. In other words, this research does not intend to directly measure Aguilar's four causal units, but rather to strengthen a measurement based on the World Bank model through a theoretically justified weighting.

World Bank governance model

The third concept of the theoretical framework is the World Bank's governance model, particularly its operationalization through the Worldwide Governance Indicators. This model defines governance as the set of traditions and institutions through which authority is exercised in a country, including the process of selecting, controlling, and replacing governments; the governmental capacity to formulate and implement policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that regulate their interactions (Kaufmann et al., 1999, cited in Aguilar Villanueva, 2022).

The World Bank operationalizes this notion through six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. The WGI reports aggregate and individual indicators for more than 200 countries and territories, organized precisely into these six dimensions (World Bank, 2025). These six dimensions offer a useful model for measuring governance because they allow for the integration of democratic, institutional, regulatory, legal, administrative, and public integrity elements. In the Mexican case, Valdez Miranda and Gómez Díaz de León (2022) adapt this model to the state of Nuevo León by selecting existing indicators, rescaling them, and aggregating them quantitatively. Their article does not fully replicate the World Bank methodology but rather uses it as a reference for estimating a state governance index.

For this research, the World Bank model serves a different but complementary function. Its six variables will be retained as the basic structure of the index; however, the selected indicators will be adapted to the field of public security. This means that voice and responsibility will be measured based on citizen participation or disposition linked to security; political stability and absence of violence, through peace and violence indicators; government effectiveness, through perception of security or results associated with security policy; regulatory quality, through information on openness, regulation or institutional quality of the sector; rule of law, through measurements of legality and justice; and control of corruption, through perception of corruption in security and justice institutions.

In the World Bank model, the six governance variables are weighted equally within the aggregate measurement. This allows for the construction of a comparable and standardized measure of governance; however, when applying the model to a sectoral public

policy such as security, it is pertinent to ask whether all the variables contribute equally to explaining the government's directive capacity. Therefore, this research proposes maintaining the World Bank's six-dimensional structure but weighting it according to Aguilar's concept of public governance, in order to strengthen the index's explanatory power for the case of security policy in Nuevo León.

In summary, the theoretical framework articulates three levels. Public security defines the sectoral object of analysis; Aguilar's public governance provides the conceptual criteria for distinguishing the relative weight of the variables; and the World Bank model offers the measurement architecture that will be adapted and weighted. With this, the research seeks to construct a sectoral measurement of governance that does not reduce security to crime rates nor governance to an undifferentiated average of indicators.

V. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts an evaluative approach. Its purpose is not to causally explain variation in public security in Nuevo León, but to construct and apply a sectoral governance measurement that makes it possible to estimate the degree to which public security policy presents the normative, institutional, administrative, social, and political conditions needed to produce public outcomes. In this sense, the study falls within the field of governance measurement and public policy evaluation using indicators.

The unit of analysis is public security policy in Nuevo León. This is understood as a broad institutional field composed of six components: civil protection, violence prevention, response to crime, law enforcement, administration of justice, and social reintegration (Chabat & Bailey, 2003; Government of the State of Nuevo León, 2022). This delimitation avoids a restrictive conception of security focused exclusively on police functions or crime rates. Instead, it allows security to be analyzed as a chain of public action whose governance depends on the articulation among norms, institutional capacities, information, social legitimacy, coordination, and results.

The unit of observation consists of publicly available indicators for Nuevo León, primarily from 2023 or the closest available measurement within the 2023-2024 period. The indicators were selected based on three criteria: sectoral relevance, public availability, and standardizability. Sectoral relevance means that the indicator has a direct or indirect relationship with public security, justice, violence, rule of law, citizen perception, corruption, or culture of legality. Public availability requires that the data come from verifiable institutional sources, public surveys, or specialized indices. Standardizability requires that the values can be transformed to a common scale from 0 to 1.

The methodological starting point is the adaptation of the World Bank governance model carried out by Valdez Miranda and Gómez Díaz de León (2022) for the case of Nuevo León. This precedent uses the six dimensions of the Worldwide Governance Indicators as a general measurement framework: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. This research retains that methodological architecture but introduces two modifications. First, it shifts the measurement from the general level of state governance to the specific field of public security policy. Second, in addition to calculating a simple index with equivalent weighting, it proposes an adjusted index using differentiated weights inspired by Luis F. Aguilar's concept of public governance.

The construction of the index followed five stages. First, the six dimensions of the World Bank governance model were preserved as the classification structure. Second, each dimension was adapted to the field of public security using sectorally relevant indicators. Third, the values were normalized on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the lowest level of governance and 1 the highest. Fourth, a simple index was calculated using the arithmetic mean of the six dimensions. Fifth, an adjusted index was calculated based on a theoretical weighting system derived from public governance.

The simple index was calculated using the following formula:

$$IGS = (VR + EPAV + EG + CR + ED + CC) / 6$$

Where: IGS = Security Governance Index; VR = Voice and Accountability; EPAV = Political Stability and Absence of Violence; EG = Government Effectiveness; CR = Regulatory Quality; ED = Rule of Law; CC = Control of Corruption.

This simple index makes it possible to observe the aggregate result when all dimensions receive the same weight. Its usefulness lies in offering an initial, understandable, and comparable measure. However, equal weighting has an important limitation: it assumes that all dimensions contribute in the same proportion to the governance of a sectoral public policy. This decision may be useful for an initial aggregation, but it becomes insufficient if public security is understood as depending differently on certain state and social conditions, especially government effectiveness, the rule of law, and political relations between government and citizens.

For this reason, a second adjusted index was calculated. This index retains the six World Bank dimensions but assigns different weights based on Aguilar's (2022) concept of public governance. In this research, Aguilar's theory is not used to replace the World Bank model or to assert a conceptual equivalence between both approaches. Its function is to provide a theoretical criterion for weighting the index dimensions based on three properties of public governance: normative validity, causal feasibility or effectiveness, and social-political acceptability.

From this perspective, public governance can be understood as regulated, rational, and political action. It is regulated because it requires a legal foundation, clear powers, and respect for the institutional order; rational because it requires information, causal knowledge, technical capacity, and effectiveness in producing results; and political because it depends on social acceptance,

legitimacy, cooperation, and interaction between government and citizens. When this logic is applied to public security, the dimensions related to government effectiveness and rule of law acquire greater weight, without eliminating the importance of citizen participation, stability, regulatory quality, and control of corruption.

The adjusted index was calculated using the following formula:

$$IGSA = (VR \times 0.15) + (EPAV \times 0.15) + (EG \times 0.25) + (CR \times 0.15) + (ED \times 0.20) + (CC \times 0.10)$$

Where: IGSA = Adjusted Public Governance Index in Security; VR = Voice and Accountability; EPAV = Political Stability and Absence of Violence; EG = Government Effectiveness; CR = Regulatory Quality; ED = Rule of Law; CC = Control of Corruption. The weighting assigns 25% to government effectiveness, 20% to rule of law, 15% to voice and accountability, 15% to political stability and absence of violence, 15% to regulatory quality, and 10% to control of corruption. This distribution is based on an analytical decision grounded in the conceptual logic of public governance applied to the field of security. It is not a direct mathematical derivation from Aguilar's theory, but a theoretically oriented weighting that makes it possible to explore how the interpretation of the case changes when the dimensions receive different weights.

Government effectiveness receives the greatest weight because security policy is largely evaluated by the government's capacity to produce verifiable or perceptible conditions of security. Rule of law receives the second highest weight because public security can only be considered governance if it occurs within a framework of legality, justice, and institutional control of power. Voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and regulatory quality receive intermediate weights because they express relevant conditions of social acceptability, public order, and regulatory effectiveness. Finally, control of corruption receives the lowest weight not because it is irrelevant, but because it operates as a cross-cutting element that affects the state public security system and whose content is partially related to other dimensions of the index, particularly rule of law, open government, and institutional legitimacy.

Table 1. Variables, indicators, and weighting of governance for public security policy in Nuevo León

World Bank variable	Indicator used	Source	Methodological treatment	Weight
Voice and Accountability (VR)	Citizen organization to solve security-related problems + interest in community participation	ENVIPE 2023; Survey on Culture of Legality and Citizen Participation 2023	Simple average of both sub-indicators	15%
Political Stability and Absence of Violence (EPAV)	Nuevo León score in the Mexico Peace Index	Mexico Peace Index 2024, with 2023 data	Inverted normalization, because higher values indicate less peace	15%
Government Effectiveness (EG)	Intentional homicide rate score + percentage of people who feel safe in Nuevo León	SESNSP 2023; ENVIPE 2023	Simple average of both sub-indicators	25%
Regulatory Quality (CR)	Percentage of residents of the Monterrey Metropolitan Area who believe that laws are respected in Nuevo León	Survey on Culture of Legality and Citizen Participation 2023	Direct conversion from percentage to 0-1 scale	15%
Rule of Law (ED)	Nuevo León score in the Rule of Law Index in Mexico	Rule of Law Index in Mexico 2023-2024	Original value retained because it is already expressed on a 0-1 scale	20%
Control of Corruption (CC)	Open government + perceived corruption in security and justice authorities, inverted	Open Government Metric 2023; ENVIPE 2023	Average between open government and inverted perception of corruption	10%

The selection of indicators requires additional methodological precision. Since the World Bank dimensions were designed to measure aggregate governance at the national level, adapting them to a sectoral public policy requires the use of proxy indicators. This means that some indicators do not perfectly capture the original definition of each dimension, but function as reasonable empirical approximations within the field of public security. This decision is especially relevant in the regulatory quality variable, where citizen perception of respect for the law is used as an approximation of the social effectiveness of the normative order. The indicator does not measure regulatory quality in the strict sense, but it makes it possible to observe whether citizens perceive that rules are effectively respected, which is pertinent for evaluating governance in a security policy.

A similar situation occurs with control of corruption. This variable is approximated using the Open Government Index and the inverted perception of corruption among authorities related to security and justice. This approach does not directly measure all institutional mechanisms for controlling corruption, but it integrates two relevant dimensions: institutional openness and citizen perception of the integrity of authorities. In a policy area such as public security, the perception of corruption among police, prosecutors' offices, courts, and justice institutions directly affects the legitimacy and social acceptability of government action.

The normalization of the indicators was carried out according to the nature of each source. When the indicator was already expressed on a 0-to-1 scale, the original value was retained. When percentages were involved, the value was converted directly to a decimal scale. When the scale expressed an inverse relationship—for example, when higher values indicated less peace or worse performance—inverse normalization was applied to maintain the overall interpretation of the index: higher values represent better governance conditions. In cases where two sub-indicators were combined within the same dimension, a simple average was used to avoid introducing additional weights not theoretically justified.

The methodology has three main limitations. The first is its reliance on secondary indicators. The study does not generate original data through surveys, interviews, or fieldwork, but uses existing public sources. This allows for transparency and replicability, but restricts the measurement to the available data. The second limitation is the use of proxy indicators, which is unavoidable when adapting general governance dimensions to a specific public policy. The third is the cross-sectional nature of the index: by focusing on 2023 or on close measurements, the study offers a snapshot of the state of security governance, but does not allow for the identification of temporal trends or the establishment of causal relationships.

Despite these limitations, the proposed index organizes scattered information and offers a first integrated estimate of governance in public security policy in Nuevo León. Its value does not lie in presenting a definitive measurement, but in building an initial, transparent, and improvable tool that allows for comparing dimensions, identifying sectoral weaknesses, and opening a subsequent research agenda on governance, public security, and subnational measurement.

VI. RESULTS

The measurement of governance in public security policy in Nuevo León was based on the six dimensions derived from the World Bank governance model: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Each dimension was operationalized through indicators linked to public security, justice, citizen perception, culture of legality, peace, open government, and corruption. All values were expressed on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the lowest level of governance and 1 the highest.

Table 2 presents the normalized results for each dimension. The highest value corresponds to government effectiveness, at 0.721, while the lowest value corresponds to regulatory quality, at 0.050. This distribution shows that governance in public security policy in Nuevo León does not exhibit homogeneous behavior. Instead, it reveals an uneven configuration: relatively favorable results in government effectiveness, average performance in control of corruption, and important weaknesses in regulatory quality, voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and rule of law.

Table 2. Results by variable of the governance index of public security policy in Nuevo León, 2023

Variable	Main indicator	Normalized value
Voice and Accountability	Citizen organization focused on security-related issues + interest in community involvement	0.317
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	Mexico Peace Index 2024	0.345
Government Effectiveness	Normalized intentional homicide rate + perception of security	0.721
Regulatory Quality	Percentage of residents of the Monterrey Metropolitan Area who believe that laws are respected in Nuevo León	0.050
Rule of Law	Rule of Law Index in Mexico 2023-2024	0.430
Control of Corruption	Open government + inverted perception of corruption in security and justice authorities	0.518

In the dimension of voice and accountability, Nuevo León obtained a value of 0.317. This result was constructed from two sub-indicators: the percentage of people who organized themselves to solve problems directly or indirectly related to security, at 30.8%, and the percentage of people interested in participating in their community, at 32.6%. The value suggests that citizen participation linked to public security remains limited. Although a relevant proportion of people organize themselves in response to community problems, collective action is not a majority practice. From a governance perspective, this result points to a still weak relationship between citizens and public security policy, especially if social participation is considered an important condition for the acceptability and sustainability of government action.

The dimension of political stability and absence of violence obtained a value of 0.345. This result derives from Nuevo León's score in the Mexico Peace Index 2024, which was 3.621 using data from 2023. Since higher values in that index indicate lower levels of peace, the value was inverted and normalized on a scale from 0 to 1. The result indicates limited conditions of stability and absence of violence. This reading is consistent with the paradox identified in the case diagnosis: Nuevo León has relevant economic, institutional, and social capacities, but these conditions do not automatically translate into higher levels of effective peace.

In the dimension of government effectiveness, Nuevo León reached the highest value of the index, with 0.721. This dimension combined two sub-indicators: the intentional homicide rate score, normalized using the inverted Min-Max method, with a value of 0.800, and the percentage of people who feel safe in Nuevo León, with a value of 64.1%, equivalent to 0.641. The result suggests a relatively favorable performance in terms of comparative containment of intentional homicide and general perception of security. However, the difference between both sub-indicators shows that objective results do not necessarily translate fully into subjective experiences of security. Therefore, this dimension should be interpreted as a relative strength, not as evidence of consolidated governance.

The dimension of regulatory quality was the most complex to adapt to the model and obtained the lowest result, with 0.050. This indicator was constructed from the percentage of residents of the Monterrey Metropolitan Area who believe that laws are respected in Nuevo León, as reported in the 2023 Survey on Culture of Legality and Citizen Participation. As noted in the methodology, this indicator does not measure regulatory quality in the strict sense of the World Bank, but rather functions as an approximation of the social effectiveness of the normative order in matters of security. Its low value suggests a deep weakness in citizens' perception of effective compliance with the law. In terms of public governance, this result is relevant because it indicates that the formal existence of rules does not necessarily translate into social expectations of compliance, impartial application, or generalized respect for legality.

In the dimension of rule of law, Nuevo León obtained a value of 0.430, corresponding to its score in the Rule of Law Index in Mexico 2023-2024. This result reflects intermediate-low performance in an institutional environment where public security depends on legality, criminal justice, limits on government power, absence of corruption, respect for rights, and regulatory compliance. For public security policy, this result is particularly relevant because it shows that prevention, investigation, punishment, and social reintegration operate within an institutional framework with important constraints in legality, trust, and judicial effectiveness.

Finally, the dimension of control of corruption registered a value of 0.518. This result was constructed using two sub-indicators: the Open Government Index for Nuevo León, with a value of 0.470, and the inverted average of perceived corruption among authorities related to security and justice, with a value of 0.566. The variable shows average performance. It is not one of the weakest dimensions of the index, but it also does not allow for affirming that robust conditions of institutional control of corruption exist. In a policy area such as public security, the perception of corruption among police, public prosecutors, judges, and security agencies directly affects the legitimacy of government action and citizens' willingness to trust, report, and cooperate with authorities.

Based on these results, a Simple Security Governance Index was first calculated, assigning equal weight to the six dimensions. The result was 0.397, with the following formula:

$$IGS = (0.317 + 0.345 + 0.721 + 0.050 + 0.430 + 0.518) / 6 = 0.397$$

The value of 0.397 indicates an intermediate-low level of governance in public security policy in Nuevo León. The general interpretation is that the state presents relevant capacities in some dimensions, especially government effectiveness, but these are offset by significant weaknesses in regulatory quality, voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and rule of law. In other words, the results do not describe a total absence of governance, but rather incomplete and uneven sectoral governance with relevant deficits in key dimensions.

Subsequently, the Adjusted Public Governance Index in Security was calculated by applying the weighting proposed from the concept of public governance. The weights used were: voice and accountability, 15%; political stability and absence of violence, 15%; government effectiveness, 25%; regulatory quality, 15%; rule of law, 20%; and control of corruption, 10%.

Table 3. Calculation of the adjusted public governance index in security

Variable	Value	Weight	Weighted value
Voice and Accountability	0.317	15%	0.048
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	0.345	15%	0.052
Government Effectiveness	0.721	25%	0.180
Regulatory Quality	0.050	15%	0.008
Rule of Law	0.430	20%	0.086
Control of Corruption	0.518	10%	0.052
Adjusted index		100%	0.425

The Adjusted Public Governance Index in Security was 0.425. This value is higher than the simple index of 0.397, mainly because the weighting gives greater weight to government effectiveness and rule of law. However, the increase does not modify the general conclusion: governance in public security policy in Nuevo León falls within an intermediate-low range. The comparison between both indices shows that theoretical weighting partially modifies the interpretation of the case, but does not alter the substantive diagnosis. Even when greater weight is given to the dimensions most closely linked to the government's directive capacity, weaknesses in everyday legality, citizen participation, stability, and rule of law limit the aggregate result.

Taken together, the results show that the main governance problem in security is not the absolute absence of governmental capacities, but their uneven articulation. Uneven articulation means that the capacities, institutions, and components that make up the state public security system do not appear to operate with the same level of solidity or produce equivalent effects across all dimensions of governance. Nuevo León obtains better results when indicators of government effectiveness are observed, but it shows relevant weaknesses in the dimensions that connect security policy with citizenship, everyday legality, effective peace, and institutional trust. This difference suggests that the problem is not limited to having institutions, programs, or resources, but rather concerns how these are coordinated and translated into regulatory compliance, social legitimacy, and sustained security outcomes.

From this perspective, the measurement suggests that public security policy in Nuevo León has institutional foundations to produce governance, but faces significant limitations in converting those capacities into social trust, regulatory compliance, citizen participation, and effective security.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to construct a sectoral measurement of governance in public security policy in Nuevo León, based on an adaptation of the World Bank governance model and a theoretical weighting inspired by Luis F. Aguilar's concept of public governance. Unlike studies that evaluate the general governance of a government, this work focused on a specific field of public policy: security. This decision made it possible to observe that governance in security cannot be reduced to crime rates or police capacity, but must be analyzed as an institutional chain involving prevention, civil protection, response to crime, law enforcement, administration of justice, and social reintegration.

The results show that governance in public security policy in Nuevo León presents uneven development. The simple security governance index obtained a value of 0.397, while the adjusted index, weighted according to the concept of public governance, reached 0.425. The difference between both results shows that the weighting partially modifies the reading of the case, although it does not alter the general diagnosis: security governance in Nuevo León falls within an intermediate-low range. The state presents its best result in government effectiveness and average performance in control of corruption, but faces important weaknesses in regulatory quality, voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and rule of law.

The main finding is that Nuevo León does not lack institutional, social, or administrative capacities to produce security, but these capacities are not articulated robustly enough to generate consolidated sectoral governance. The result suggests a gap between formal capacities and public outcomes: institutions, data, programs, and resources exist, but problems of violence, low perceived respect for the law, limited citizen participation, institutional distrust, and incomplete rule of law persist. In public policy terms, the challenge is not only to increase operational capacities, but to improve the articulation among legality, effectiveness, participation, institutional control, social legitimacy, and the effective production of security.

The research also faced relevant methodological challenges. The first was the need to use proxy indicators for variables originally designed by the World Bank to measure governance broadly and comparatively. When transferring these variables to the sectoral field of security, it was necessary to select available, relevant, and defensible indicators, even if they were not always fully equivalent to the original definition of each dimension. This challenge was particularly visible in the regulatory quality variable, where the perception of respect for the law was used as an approximation of the social effectiveness of the normative order. This decision does not eliminate the limitation, but it makes it explicit and allows for the construction of an initial sectoral measurement.

The second challenge was combining two conceptual frameworks that are not equivalent. The World Bank model measures governance through six aggregate variables; in contrast, Aguilar's public governance refers to the government's directive action and its normative, rational, and political conditions. Therefore, this research did not treat them as interchangeable models. The World Bank provided the measurement architecture; Aguilar offered the conceptual criterion for reweighting the variables. This combination made it possible to avoid treating the six dimensions as if they had the same relevance for evaluating the governance of a sectoral public policy, although the proposed weighting should be understood as an analytical decision, theoretically oriented and subject to subsequent validation.

In summary, the article offers a first approach to measuring governance in public security policy in Nuevo León. Its main contribution lies in adapting a general governance model to a specific field of public policy and showing that theoretical weighting of variables can enrich the interpretation of results. Nevertheless, the index should be understood as an initial, improvable exercise subject to subsequent validation. Future research could incorporate more indicators per variable, compare different years, contrast state governments, include municipal information, conduct qualitative analysis of public policy documents, apply sensitivity tests to the weights, or incorporate interviews with key actors in the security and justice system.

Finally, the proposed measurement suggests that evaluating security from a public governance perspective requires shifting the traditional question. It is not only about knowing whether there are more or fewer crimes, but about analyzing whether the government has sufficient conditions to direct a legally grounded, institutionally effective, socially recognized, and sustainable security policy. From this perspective, Nuevo León presents relevant foundations for building governance in security, but it still faces significant deficits in converting its institutional capacities into peace, trust, legality, citizen participation, and effective security.

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