

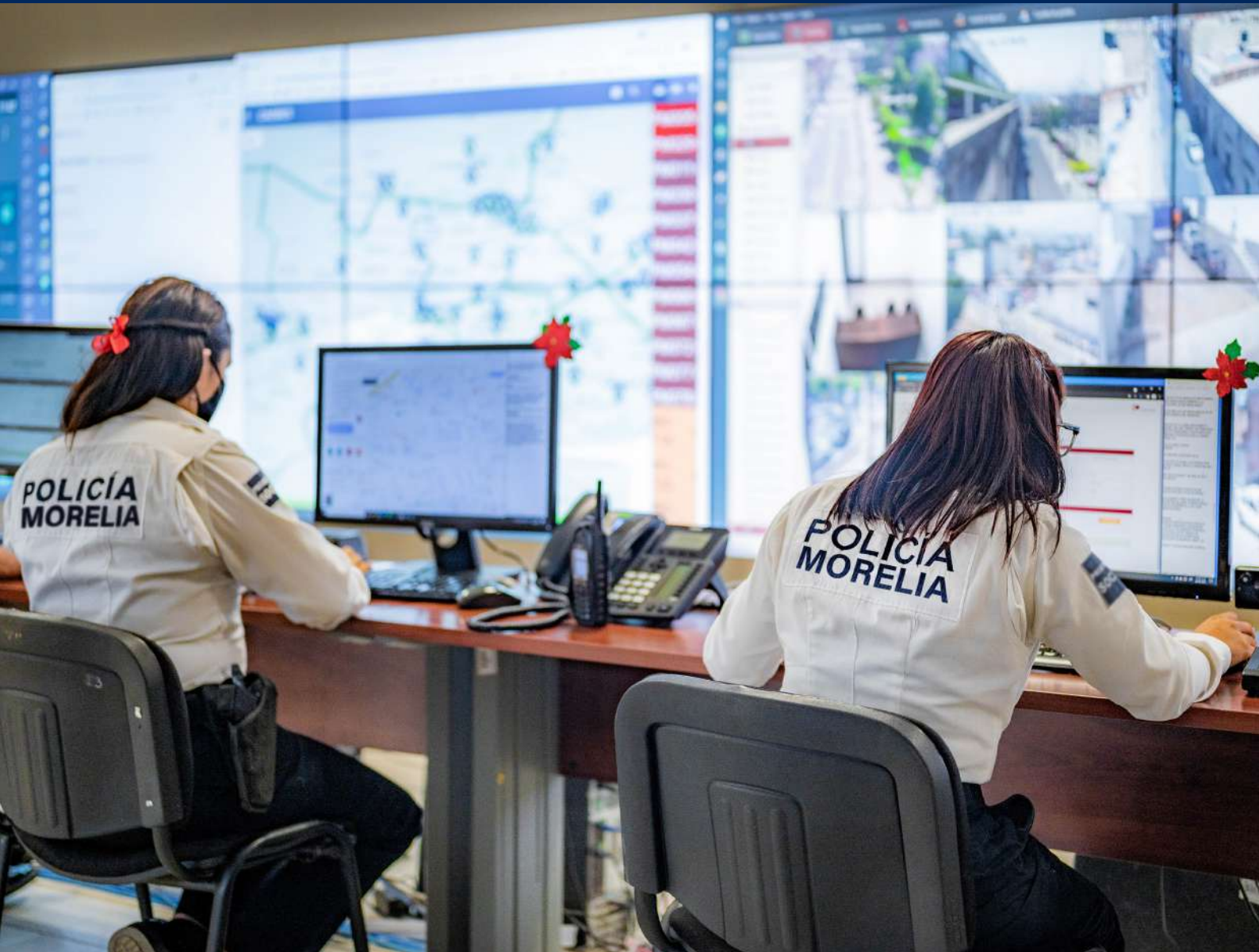
Case Study

Strategy for the Reduction of Vehicle Thefts

applying

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP)

Morelia, Michoacan,
Mexico



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PUBLIC POLICY INNOVATION

MEXICO
July, 2023

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Cover and back cover image: Juárez Municipal Police

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INTRODUCTION

Since its creation in 2015, the Morelia Police Force distinguished itself by incorporating the community policing approach and information analysis as the main pillars of its operation. Following these principles, the Morelia Police developed evidence-based policing strategies that actively involve the community.

In October 2020, the Municipal Commission of Citizen Security (CMSC) of Morelia, Michoacan, began implementing Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), initially with the support of LAB-CO and later with technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In early 2022, the CMSC detected an upward trend in non-violent vehicle theft in the municipality. Based on this finding, the Morelia decided to apply POP to address the issue. To do so, the Morelia Police analyzed crime data from the previous 12 months. They identified that non-violent vehicle theft was the second most prevalent crime in Morelia, only preceded by domestic violence. Additionally, police personnel discovered that this crime was mostly affecting low and middle-income households, as the

phenomenon involved thieves stealing older vehicles from people who did not have secure parking spaces. Based on these findings, the Morelia Police decided to apply POP in the five sectors of the municipality with the highest concentration of crime, with the main objective of reducing incidence.

This case study documents the Strategy for the Reduction of Vehicle Thefts implemented in Morelia using POP. Thanks to the application of the strategy, between December 2021 and May 2022, the Morelia Police achieved a 44% reduction in non-violent vehicle theft throughout the municipality.

The case study is organized into two parts. The first describes the general context of the Morelia Police and the POP methodology. The second part presents the process of applying POP to non-violent vehicle theft in the municipality of Morelia.

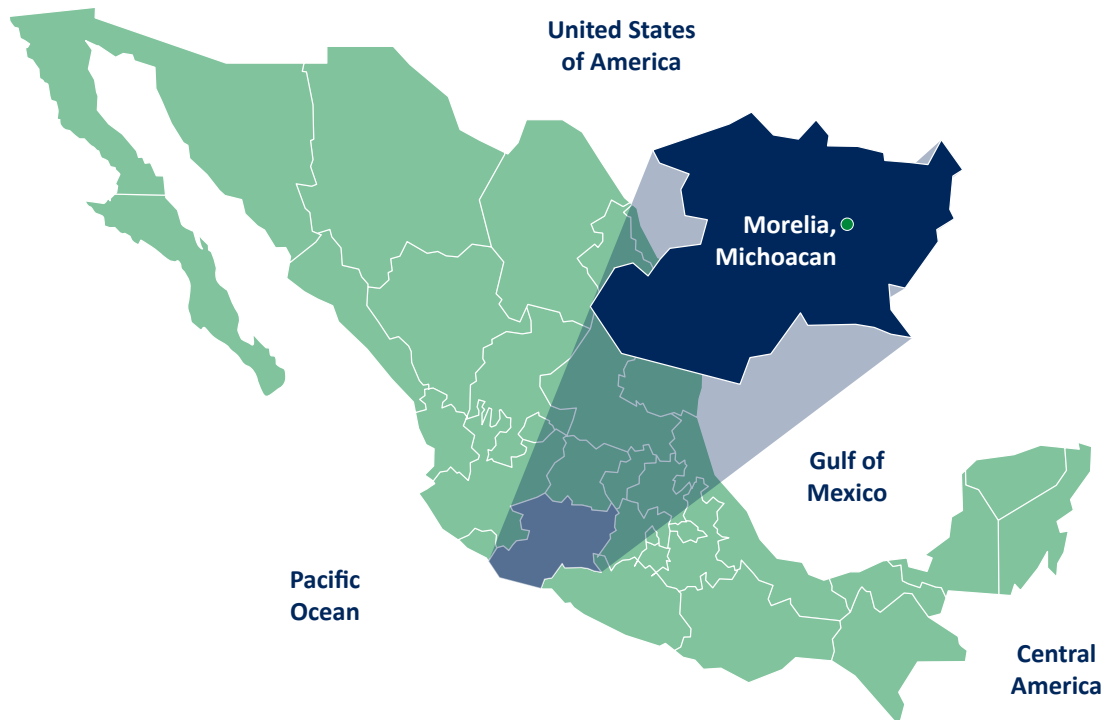


1. GENERAL CONTEXT

1.1 Michoacan and Morelia

The municipality of Morelia is the capital of the state of Michoacan de Ocampo, located in the west of Mexico. Morelia covers 2% of the total area of Michoacan, with an extension of 1,199 square kilometers. It is the largest and most populated of the 113 municipalities in Michoacan, with 849,053 inhabitants, representing 18% of the total population of the state.¹

FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF MICHOCAN IN MEXICO



Source: <https://mr.travelbymexico.com/701-estado-de-michoacan/>

In the last 15 years, Michoacan has been one of the states most affected by violence in Mexico due to the presence of several criminal organizations. Since 2006, the rate of homicides has increased, making Michoacan one of the most violent states in the country. This wave of violence also impacted the municipality of Morelia. In 2021, Michoacan ranked third among the states with the highest homicide rate in the country, with Morelia being one of the municipalities with the highest incidence, recording a homicide rate of 57.5 per 100,000 inhabitants². Domestic violence and vehicle theft are also among the crimes with the highest prevalence in this municipality.

¹ National Institute of Statistics and Geography (2020). *Information by entity*. Available at: <https://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/monografias/in1formacion/mich/default.aspx?tema=me&e=16>

² Executive Secretariat of the National System of Public Security. 2022. "Incidence of Crimes under Common Jurisdiction 2021." Recovered from: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12WDiC-K8Mv5DpAkmChFnM7a2bcy5tmF4u/view>

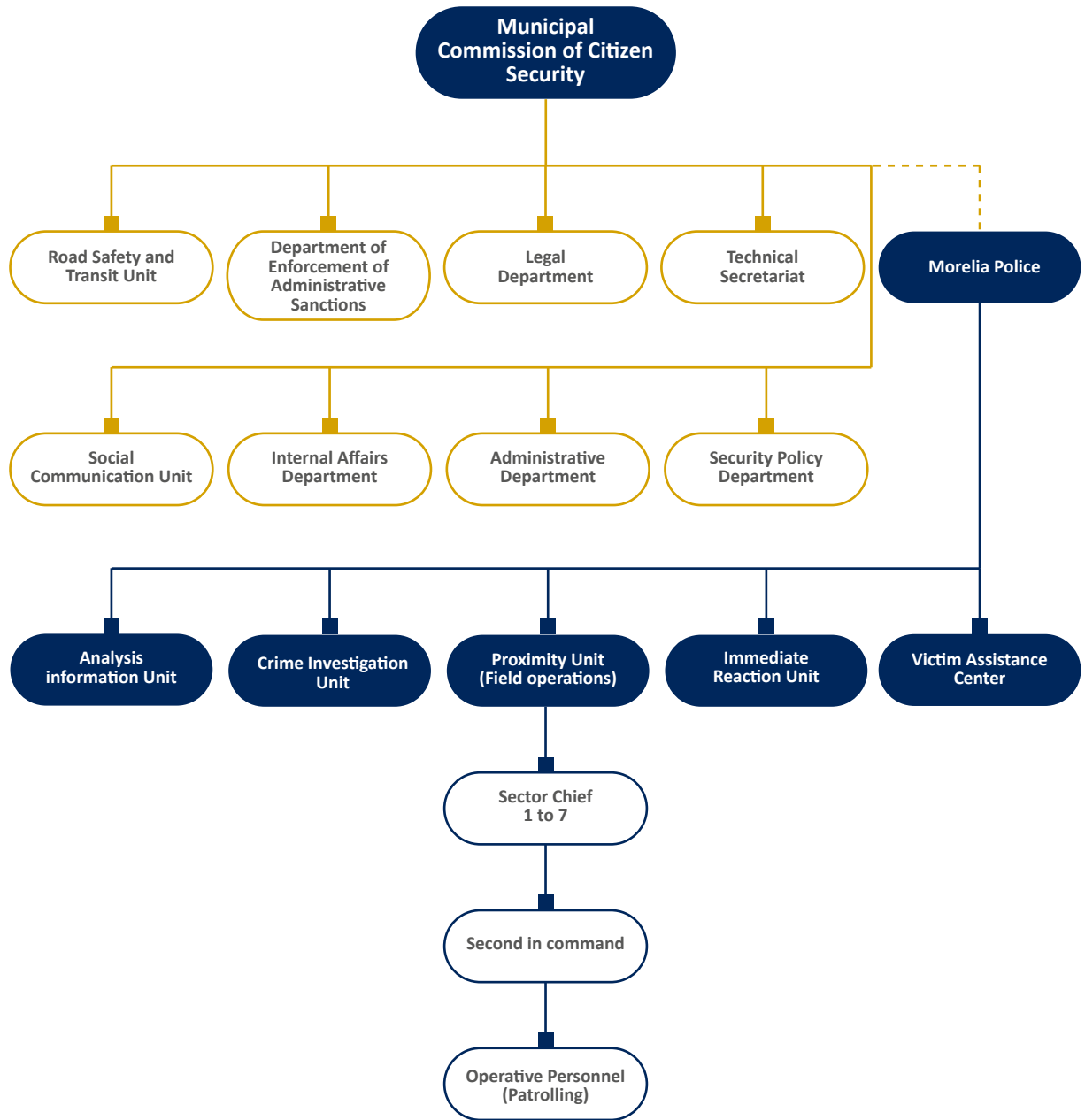
1.2 Morelia Municipal Police

The Morelia Municipal Police is a relatively new law enforcement agency. It was established in 2015 as a decentralized body of the Municipal Public Administration. Previously, law enforcement in the municipality's territories were carried out by the Michoacan State Police, which received support from other federal public security institutions such as the Federal Police, Gendarmerie, and the Military Police.

Initially, the Morelia Municipal Police lacked sufficient personnel, resources, and infrastructure to cover the entire municipality. However, over the years, the agency gained capacity, to the point of being able to assume the surveillance and protection of the entire municipal territory, with auxiliary support from the Michoacan State Police and the National Guard.

The Morelia Municipal Police is part of the Municipal Commission of Citizen Security (CMSC for *Comisión Municipal de Seguridad Ciudadana* in Spanish), which is attached to the Municipal Presidency. The Commission oversees police operations and integrates other administrative units that work in coordination with the agency to ensure public safety in the municipality. The police department is headed by a Commissioner who oversees the different areas of the police force. The structure of the department includes operational units as well as support units that participate in for the development of policing strategies. Most field operations are carried out by the Proximity Unit, where a Proximity Director supervises seven Sector Chiefs. The following figure shows the organizational structure of the CMSC.

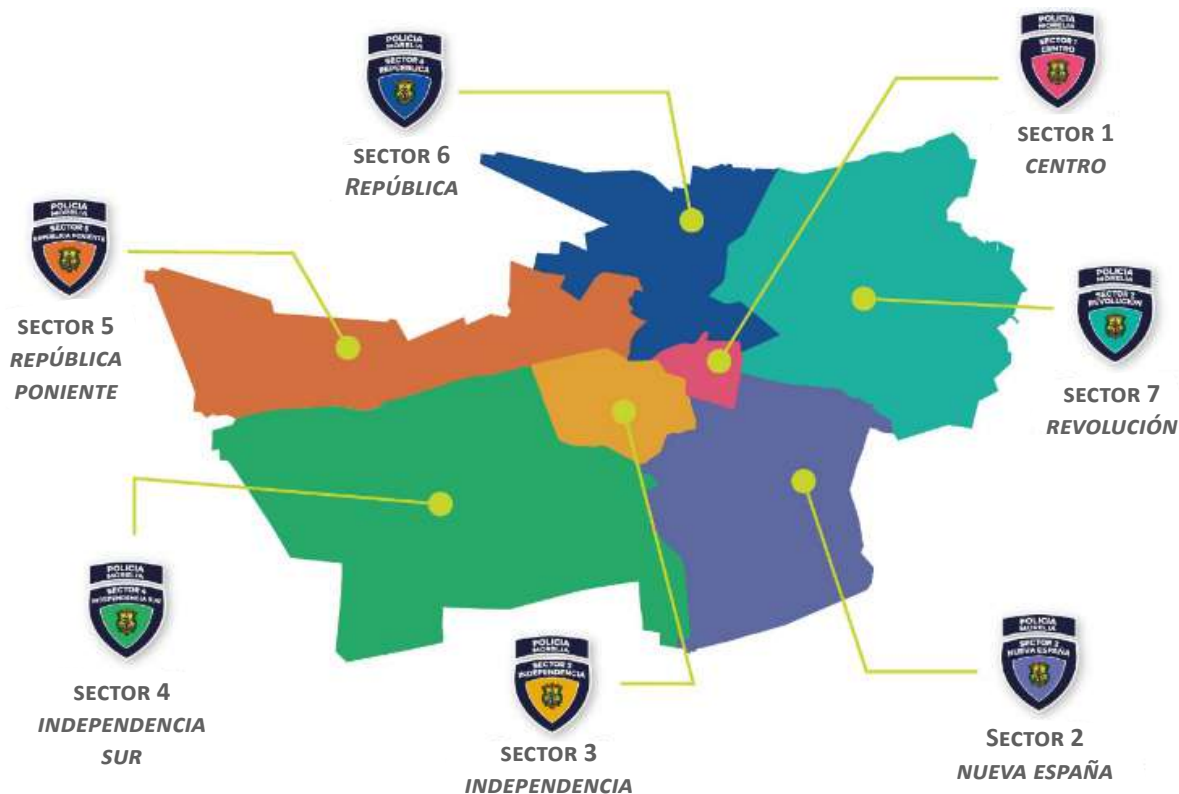
FIGURE 2. STRUCTURE OF THE MUNICIPAL COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SECURITY OF MORELIA



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

In 2022, the Morelia Police had approximately 745 police officers, who mostly worked 12-hour shifts followed by 24 hours of rest. The personnel were distributed across seven geographic sectors, each supervised by a Sector Chief. Additionally, the department had special units and groups performing specialized functions.

FIGURE 3. SECTORS



Source: Map provided by the CMSC

Since its formation in 2015, the Morelia Police has incorporated a community policing approach and information analysis. The operational personnel have been instructed to promote engagement with the community, build trust, and gather information to develop evidence-based policing strategies.

1.3 Problem-Oriented Policing (POP)

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) originated in the United States in the late 1970s when law enforcement agencies in the country repeatedly and inefficiently addressed incidents with similar characteristics without developing actions to address crime prevention and reduction. POP emerged as an alternative for managing and operating police resources, aiming to reduce problems related to violence, crime, and social order by focusing on their underlying causes.

The POP approach was first introduced in the article "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach," published in 1979 by Herman Goldstein. Based on the experience of applying POP in the following years, Goldstein refined its definition and objectives.

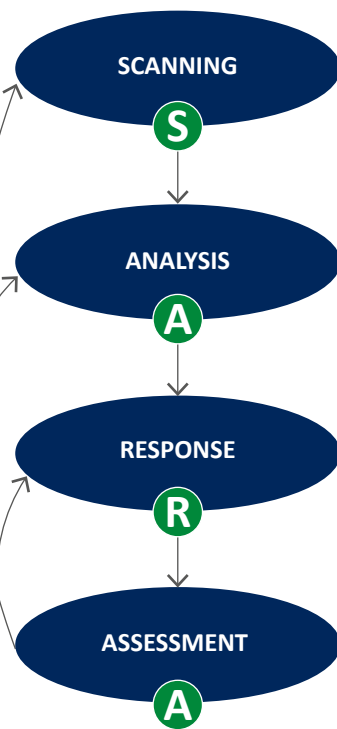
According to Goldstein, Problem-oriented policing is an approach to policing in which discrete pieces of police business (each consisting of a cluster of similar incidents, whether crime or acts of disorder, that the police are expected to handle) are subject to microscopic examination (drawing on the especially honed skills of crime analysts and the accumulated experience of operating field personnel) in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a new and more effective strategy for dealing with it. Problem-oriented policing places a high value on new responses that are preventive in nature, that are not dependent on the use of the criminal justice system, and that engage other public agencies, the community and the private sector when their involvement has the potential for significantly contributing to the reduction of the problem. Problem-oriented Policing carries a commitment to implementing the new strategy, rigorously evaluating its effectiveness, and, subsequently, reporting the results in ways that will benefit other police agencies and that will ultimately contribute to building a body of knowledge that supports the further professionalization of the police.³

POP has been implemented in police agencies of different high-income countries (such as the United States, England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, among others), and its findings have been systematized in multiple publica-

tions⁴. Despite its success and international recognition, in Mexico, to date, it has been little implemented and documented.

Years after the publication of Goldstein's first article, researchers John E. Eck and William Spelman⁵ developed the SARA methodology (see Figure 4) to systematize and facilitate POP implementation, based on the findings from the implementation of POP in the city of Newport News, Virginia, in the United States.

FIGURE 4. SARA CYCLE



Source: Prepared by the authors based on Eck and Spelman (1987).

³ M. Scott, R. Clarke. *Problem-Oriented Policing Successful Case Studies*, (New York: Routledge, 2020), p.3.

⁴ Some of them include: Herman Goldstein, *Problem-Oriented Policing* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990); Michael S. Scott, *Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000); Karen Bullock & Nick Tilley, *Crime Reduction and Problem-oriented Policing* (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2003); Karen Bullock, Rosie Erol & Nick Tilley, *Problem-Oriented Policing and Partnerships* (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2006); Anthony A. Braga, *Problem-Oriented Policing and Crime Prevention* (New York: Criminal Justice Press, 2008).

⁵ J. E. Eck, W. Spelman. *Problem-solving: problem-oriented policing in Newport News*, (Washington D.C.: Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1987). Own translation.

According to the SARA methodology, police personnel should: 1) identify groups of similar incidents or problems affecting a community and the damages they cause; 2) collaborate with police departments to adequately understand the origins of the problem; 3) develop and implement specific responses based on information analysis; and 4) evaluate the effects of the implemented responses.⁶

1.4 Adoption of POP by the Morelia Police

The implementation of the POP Approach in the Morelia Police began in the year 2020. This process was initially supported by LAB-CO and later by technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The initial stages of adopting the approach are systematized in the document "Implementing of Problem-Oriented Policing in Morelia, Michoacan".⁷ It is worth noting that as part of the approach's consolidation within the Morelia Police, a new area was created the "POP Coordination".

The POP Coordination is responsible for providing cross-functional support in the application of Problem-Oriented Policing within the different departments and units of the Morelia Police. Its tasks include convening and facilitating work sessions, circulating information among areas, generating crime analysis products, and providing support and mentoring to police officers for the application of POP in the field. The Coordination also collaborates with other institutions and organizations to establish coordination schemes with actors outside the Morelia Police.

⁶ Sidebottom, A., Bullock, K., Ashby, M., Kirby, S., Armitage, R., Laycock, G. and Tilley, N. (2020). Successful police problem-solving: a practice guide. Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science, University College London.

⁷ Favennec & Montes de Oca. 2021. "Implementing Problem-Oriented Policing in Morelia, Michoacan." LAB-CO. Recovered from: www.lab-co.org and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fsz5jAu5HEH56gagEnD-gEgYAc-IOG-U/view>

2. APPLICATION OF POP TO NON-VIOLENT VEHICLE THEFT

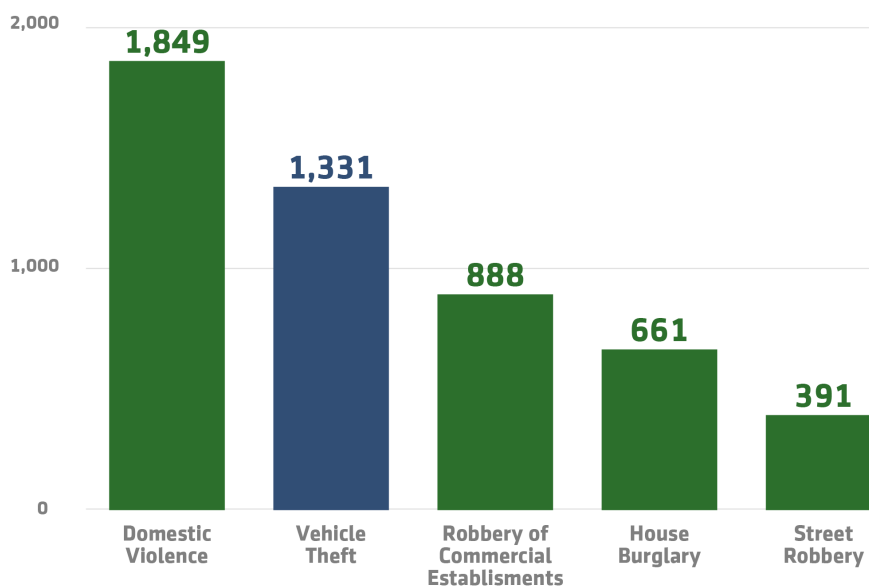
Since the start of the implementation of POP in 2020, the Morelia Police has been using the SARA methodology to address various security issues. They have referred to these exercises as "POP Cycles." Below is the documentation of the application of the SARA methodology to non-violent vehicle theft between December 2021 and May 2022.

2.1 Scanning

i. Review of incidence

At the end of 2021, the Morelia Police analyzed 12 months of crime reports using their "Multi-source" system, which includes emergency calls to 911, Standardized Police Reports, police records, and citizen complaints, among other elements.⁸ Vehicle theft emerged as the second most prevalent crime in the municipality, only below domestic violence.

CRIMES WITH THE HIGHEST INCIDENCE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MORELIA IN 2021

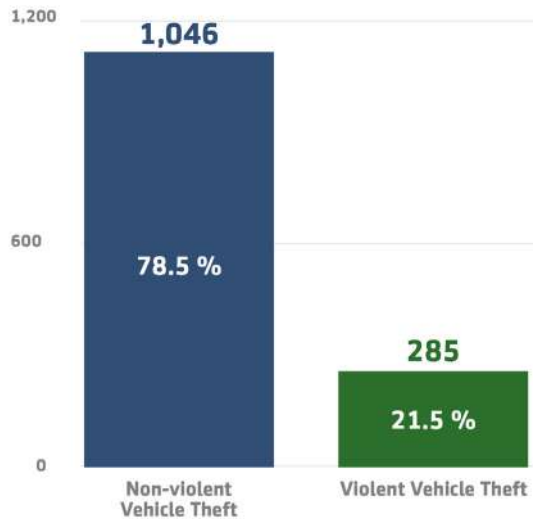


Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

⁸ For more information on multi-source systems for estimating crime incidence oriented towards police intelligence in Mexico, consult: <https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/documentos/-sistema-multi-fuente>

Subsequently, this offense was disaggregated by modality, illustrating that vehicle theft without violence accounted for 79% of the total.

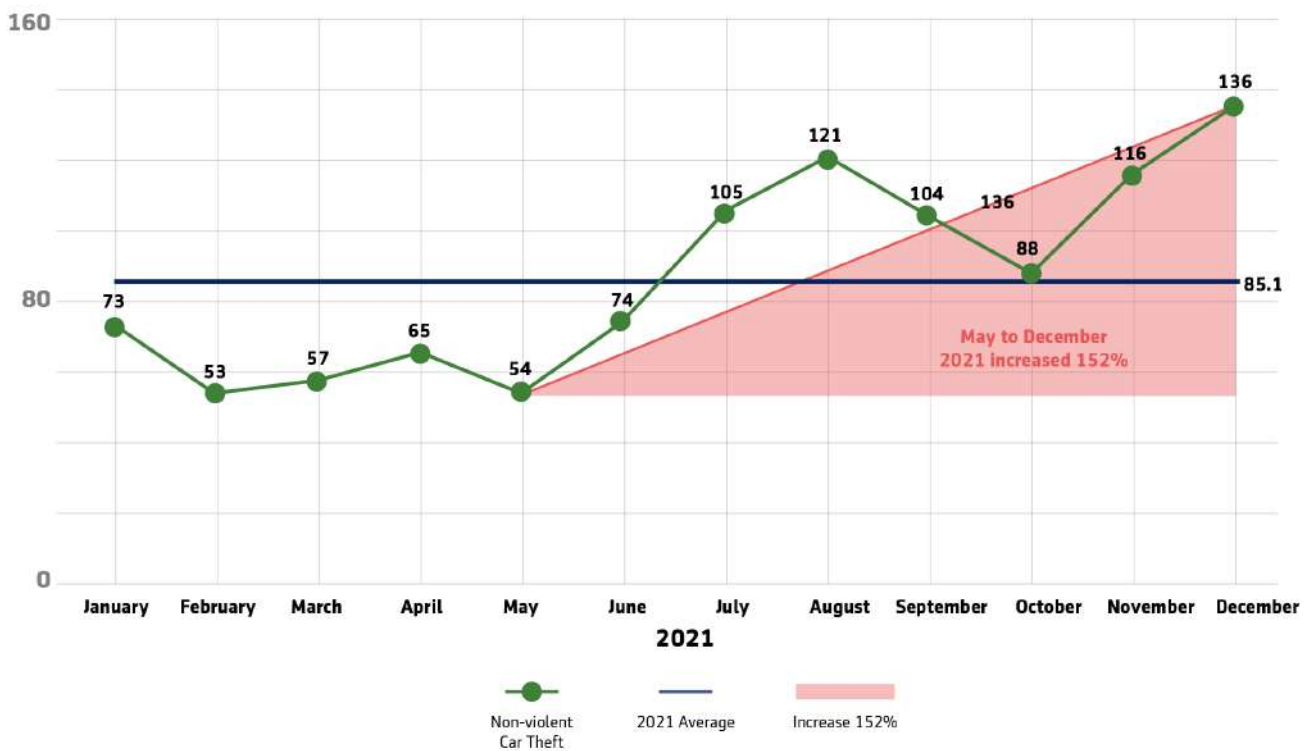
INCIDENCE OF VEHICLE THEFTS BY MODALITY IN 2021



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

Additionally, the police plotted the evolution of the incidence by month, revealing a strong upward trend since May 2021.

EVOLUTION OF NON-VIOLENT VEHICLE THEFT IN 2021



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

ii. Application of the CHEERS Methodology

Once it was identified that non-violent vehicle theft was the crime modality with the highest incidence, the police personnel continued with the application of the "CHEERS"⁹ framework, which helps determine if a problem is suitable for the application of the POP Approach. The results of applying the CHEERS framework are described below:

- **COMMUNITY:** This type of crime negatively impacts low and middle-income households, as evidenced by the theft of older vehicle models taken from insecure parking sites.
- **HARM:** Non-violent vehicle theft in the municipality often affects individuals whose main asset is their car and, due to their income level, do not have insurance, contributing to increasing inequality and poverty in the affected socioeconomic group.
- **EXPECTATION:** The affected community repeatedly expressed the need for Morelia police to intervene and find a solution to the problem.
- **EVENTS:** Non-violent vehicle theft in Morelia usually occurs under two conditions: 1) when victims do not have garages or parking spaces, so they park on open streets near their homes, and 2) when victims leave their vehicles parked in a place away from their place of residence to run errands, go shopping, or visit a hospital.
- **RECURRING:** Non-violent vehicle theft is the second most common crime in Morelia. It has become a chronic problem, with 1,046 thefts in 2021 and an upward trend.
- **SIMILAR:** The Morelia Police also discovered that non-violent vehicle theft seemed to follow a pattern, associating specific areas, times of occurrence, and stolen vehicle models.

It was determined that non-violent vehicle theft passed the CHEERS test. As a consequence, the Morelia Police decided to initiate a POP Cycle to address the crime in five of the seven sectors of the municipality.

⁹ Sidebottom, A., Bullock, K., Ashby, M., Kirby, S., Armitage, R., Laycock, G. and Tilley, N. 2020. *Successful police problem-solving: a practice guide*. Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science, University College London. Available at: https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/successful_police_problem_solving_a_guide.pdf

2.2 Analysis

The Analysis stage was conducted through a detailed study of the Multi-source database and through the analysis of field activities carried out by police officers from the sectors and the POP Coordination. The main conclusions of the Analysis of Non-Violent Vehicle Theft in Morelia are presented below. The analysis conducted in each sector is illustrated with the example of the *Revolución* Sector. Additionally, a section on the methodologies used is included.

The POP Coordination facilitated work sessions with each Sector Chief to generate initial hypotheses, which allowed to characterization the selected crime in the five sectors. The initial information was gathered from the operational staff's knowledge obtained during patrols in each sector. The subsequent steps involved data review, field intelligence, and the generation of evidence-based hypotheses.

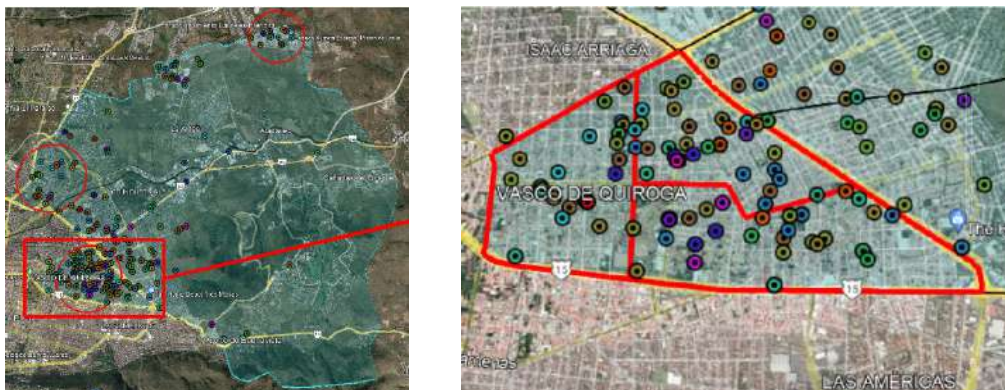
i. Geographic and Time Analysis

The POP Coordination, along with the Sector Chiefs, conducted an initial analysis at three levels using the internal "Multi-source" database of the Police. These included: 1) geographic mapping and identification of hot spots, 2) identification of patterns, and 3) application of the problem analysis triangle within the identified hot spots.

A. Identification of Hot Spots

Based on the "Multi-source" database, a spatial analysis of non-violent vehicle theft incidence in the municipality was conducted. Using Google Earth, the Police mapped one year of crime incidence data. Based on this analysis, the police personnel identified the sectors and quadrants, or neighborhoods, where the incidence concentrated. As a result, it was possible to delineate the hot spots. In each of the five participating "sectors" between two and three hot spots were identified.

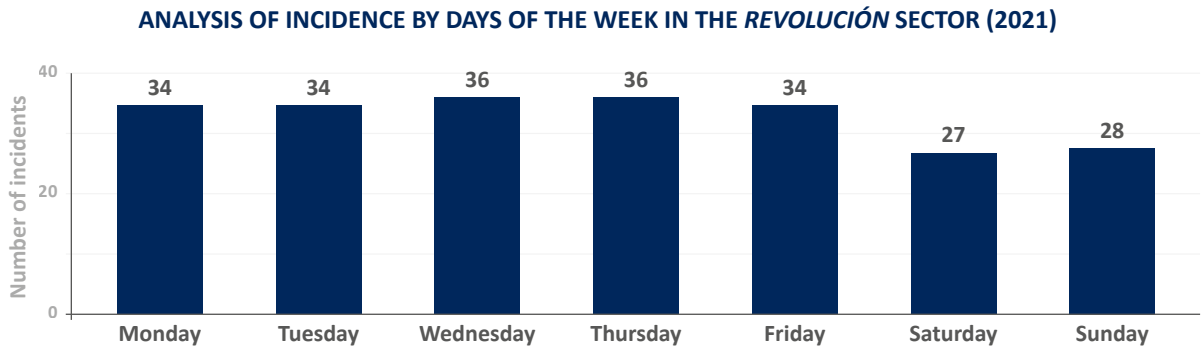
HOT SPOTS IN THE REVOLUCIÓN SECTOR



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

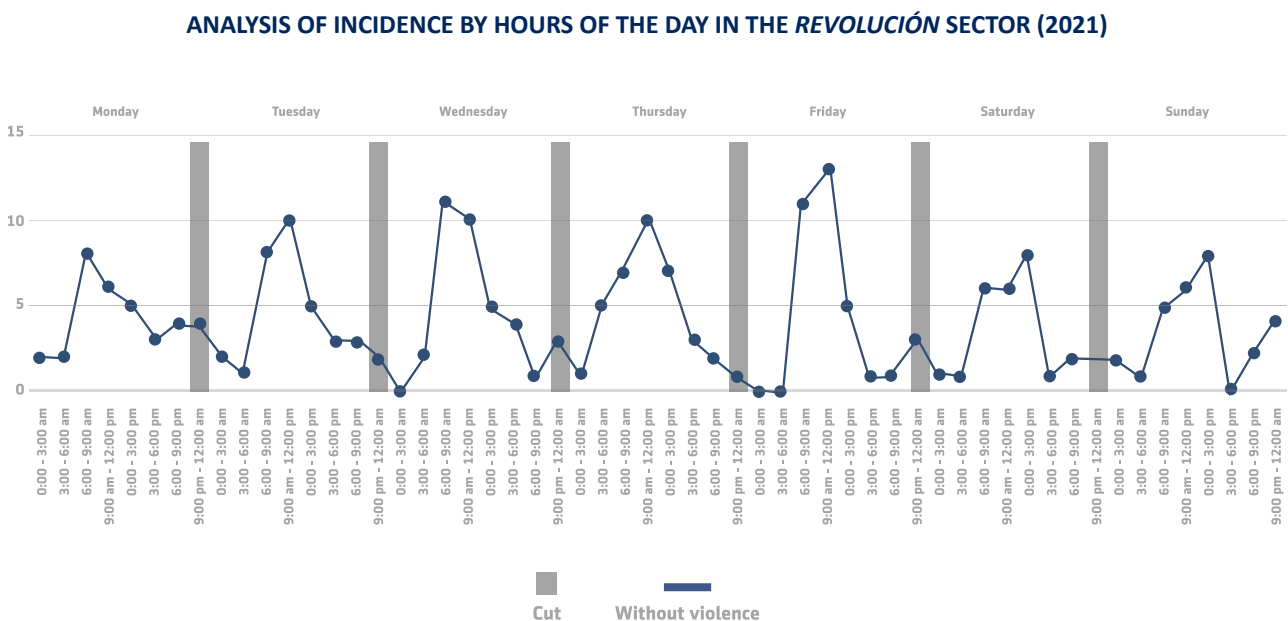
B. Time Analysis in Hot Spots

After identifying 13 hot spots with the highest concentration of non-violent vehicle thefts, a temporal analysis was conducted in each sector. No pattern related to the days of the week could be identified in any of the participating sectors. The example of the *Revolución* Sector is presented below.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

However, the analysis of incidence by hours of the day showed that most of the vehicles were stolen during the night and reported by victims the following morning after the incident. From this analysis, the police also observed that in some sectors, the moments with the highest incidence during the week coincided with weekly markets, where people had to park their vehicles on the street due to a lack of parking spaces.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

ii. Detailed Analysis

A. Problem Analysis Triangle

The Morelia Police applied the Problem Analysis Triangle, allows the identification and characterization of: 1) the victim/target, 2) the place, and 3) the offender/person responsible.

FIGURE 5. PROBLEM ANALYSIS TRIANGLE

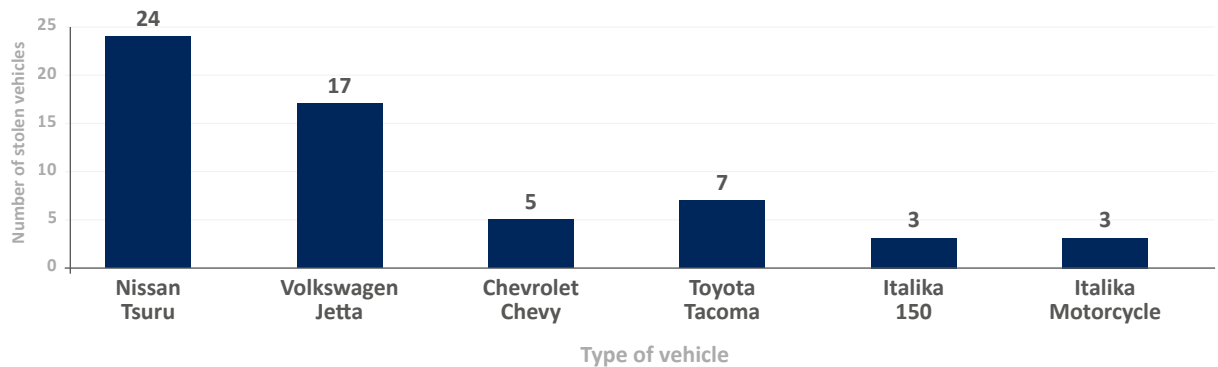


Source: Prepared by the authors based on information from the POP Center ¹⁰

1) Target/Victim

- o Individuals who were absent for extended, continuous, and recurring periods (e.g., resting overnight).
- o The stolen vehicles mainly consisted of older and lower-cost models (e.g., in the *Revolución* Sector, the most stolen models were the Nissan Tsuru and the Volkswagen Jetta).

STOLEN VEHICLE MODELS IN THE *REVOLUCIÓN* SECTOR



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

¹⁰ POP Center. (2021). The Problem Analysis Triangle | ASU Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. Available at: <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/problem-analysis-triangle-0>

2) Place:

- o The hot spots often had main avenues that served as escape routes.
- o The streets where most of the thefts occurred were poorly lit and had many trees affecting visibility.
- o Businesses and/or houses lacked parking lots or garages, causing most vehicles to be parked on the street.

3) Offenders

- o Offenders often worked in pairs, and in most cases, they were repeat offenders.
- o Offenders worked alongside individuals who allegedly monitored the areas and identified the easiest vehicles to steal.
- o Offenders stole the vehicles and took them to scrap yards or street markets. It is presumed that they stole to obtain money for drugs or alcohol.

B. Third-Party Analysis

Once the problem analysis triangle was detailed, the police personnel identified the positive and negative Third Parties, meaning individuals or groups with the capacity to influence the commission of non-violent vehicle theft.

Third-Parties:

• Positives:

- Neighbors with surveillance systems: Police personnel identified neighbors with surveillance systems in several hot spots, who were willing to share videos of the thefts with the police.
- Business owners: Police also identified business owners in some sectors who were willing to share information about possible offenders.
- Community leaders: In Morelia, like in many cities in Mexico, community leaders have official representation in the municipality. They are "responsible" for "collaborating to maintain order, tranquility, public peace, promoting the establishment and conservation of municipal public services, as well as the security and protection of the inhabitants within their jurisdiction." In some high-crime areas, the police identified community leaders with willingness to collaborate.

• Negatives:

- "Lavacoches" (car washers): In some streets, individuals engaged in informal car washing were identified. The police presumed that these informal car washers provided information to offenders about the vehicles.
- Repair workshops: In some sectors, repair workshops were detected that harbor stolen vehicles.

iii. Methods used

The personnel from the POP Coordination and the sectors used various methods to collect and analyze information.

Analysis of the Multi-source Database

As mentioned, the Morelia Police collects information from incidents from multiple sources and consolidates them into a single database. The database contains the following fields:

¹²

- Crime report identification number
- Source of the report
- Date of the report
- Time of the report
- Unit number of the vehicle responding to the report
- Name of officers
- Type of crime
- Motive
- Mode of crime
- Responsible authority
- Registration number
- Street where the crime occurred
- Neighborhood where the incident occurred
- Sector where the incident occurred
- Latitude and longitude
- Vehicle information¹¹ (vehicle brand; model; type of vehicle; model year; vehicle color; license plate number; state where the plate is registered; specific characteristics)
- General data of victim(s)¹² (surnames; first names; age; gender; address)
- General data of the offender(s) (surnames; first names; age; gender; address)
- Observations
- Crime reporter
- Transfer¹³
- Medical attention¹⁴

The Police performed several detailed analyses of the database to attempt to detect patterns of non-violent vehicle theft. It is worth noting that these different analyses were conducted over various periods – the previous 3 months and the previous 12 months – to identify any potential changes in the patterns. Additionally, the analyses were conducted at different geographical levels – municipality-wide, sector-specific, and in hot spots.

The main analyses conducted were the following:

- Geographic analysis, mapping crimes based on their coordinates, and identifying quadrants, neighborhoods, and streets with higher concentrations of crimes.
- Temporal analysis, identifying the occurrence of crimes across different months, days of the month, days of the week, and hours of the day.
- Analysis of the most stolen vehicle types: brand, model, year, and color.

¹¹ Only to be filled if the reported crime is vehicle theft.

¹² It only applies if the offender(s) used weapons.

¹³ In case the offender(s) or victim(s) were transported.

¹⁴ In case medical attention was provided to the offender(s) or victim(s).



Exploratory Walks

The police personnel conducted exploratory walks in each of the identified hot spots in each participating sector. These walks consisted of a structured and thorough observation of each area, systematically identifying vulnerability factors which may facilitate theft, such as:

- Areas with reduced visibility caused by, for example, insufficient lighting or an excessive presence of trees.
- Absence of garages or limited parking spaces, leading to street parking of vehicles.
- Lack of surveillance systems (e.g., cameras or alarm systems) among the residents in the hot spots.
- Potential escape routes after vehicle theft.
- The presence of weekly markets, street markets, or hospitals leading to street parking.

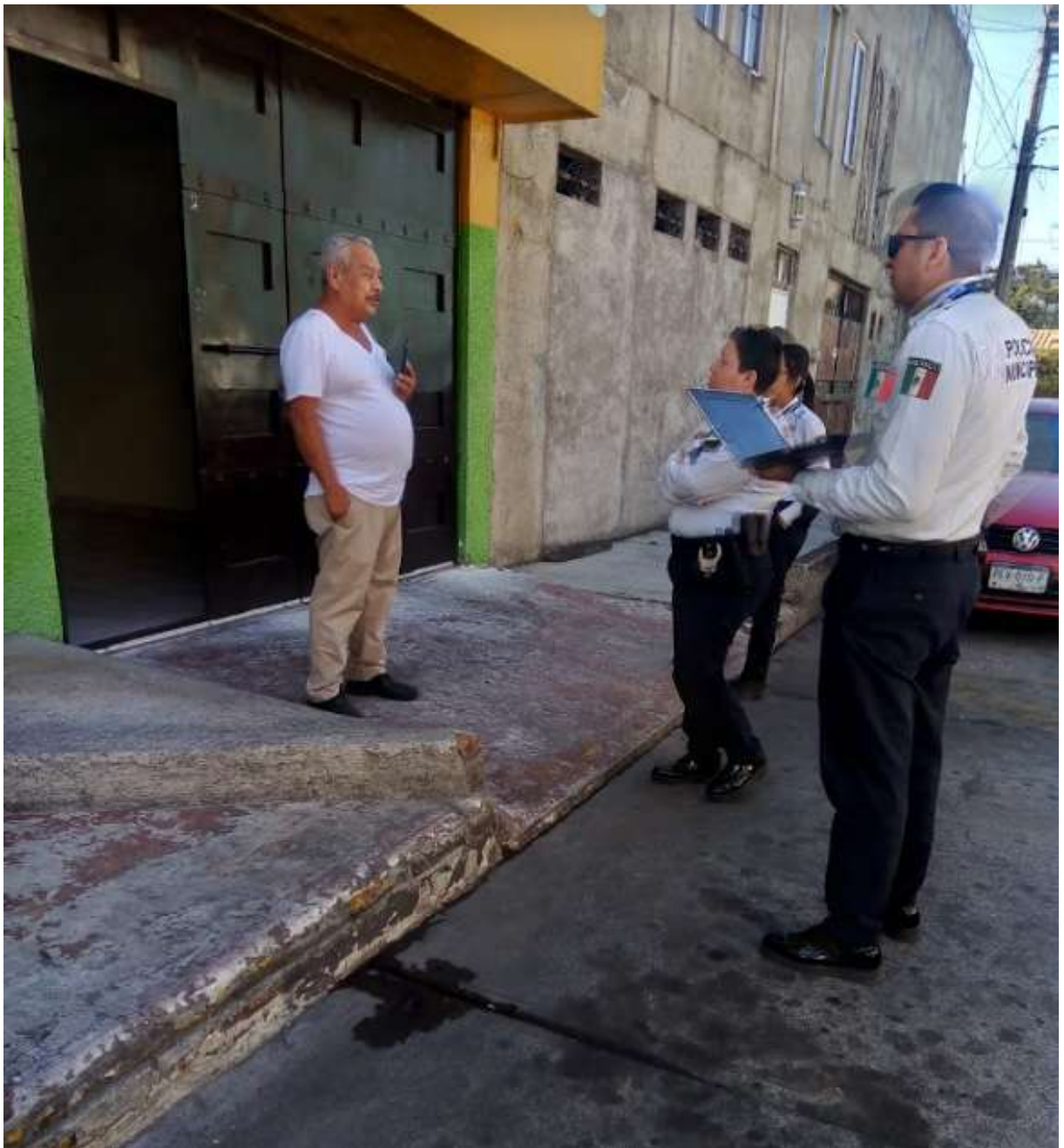
Additionally, these exploratory walks served to determine whether the residents or businesses in the hot spots had surveillance cameras and to map positive and negative Third Parties.



Systematic interviews with victims and neighbors

The police also conducted systematic and in-depth interviews with victims and neighboring individuals to gather information and potentially recover videos related to vehicle thefts. These interviews helped to understand the dynamics associated with the incidents and identify potential offenders. In some cases, the interviews led to the identification of vehicle repair shops where neighbors suspected stolen vehicles were taken after being stolen. In some of the recovered videos, the offenders can be seen selecting, approaching, and eventually stealing the vehicles. The information obtained from these interviews and videos provided valuable insights into the *modus operandi* of the perpetrators.

INTERVIEW WITH A VICTIM



Source: Photograph taken by the police personnel of the Morelia Police (*Revolución Sector*).

Neighborhood Meetings

Following the community policing approach adopted by the Morelia Police, the Sector Chiefs organized neighborhood meetings in the hot spots of non-violent vehicle theft. During these meetings, the police presented the issue, and shared important prevention information. As the police personnel gained the trust of communities, some residents and victims of the crime started providing information about offenders, their *modus operandi*, and the vehicles they used to commit the crimes.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING IN THE REPÚBLICA SECTOR



Source: Photograph taken by the police personnel of the Morelia Police (*República Sector*).

2.3 Response

The definition of responses was carried out in joint working sessions between the POP Coordination and the Sector Chiefs. The police implemented five main responses to reduce and/or prevent non-violent vehicle theft in Morelia:

Response 1. Focused Patrolling

Once a clear pattern of non-violent vehicle thefts in specific locations and timeframes was demonstrated during the analysis phase, the police mobilized patrols to deter potential offenders. The Sector Chiefs gave instructions to police officers to mobilize their units to the hot spots at specific moments, mainly during the early morning, to reduce immediate incidents and to track and identify potential offenders.

Additionally, the police instructed operational personnel to increase their visibility in certain streets or segments with a high risk of occurrence of crime. Police visibility not only acted as a deterrent but also fostered greater trust among residents, who felt safer and more willing to collaborate with the police and to share information about potential offenders.



Response 2. WhatsApp groups among neighbors in hot spots

As mentioned, during the Analysis stage, the police personnel organized specific neighborhood meetings in the hot spots of non-violent vehicle theft, where they addressed the issue with the residents and local businesses. After each of these meetings, the Sector Chief proposed the creation of a WhatsApp group with the participants. In Mexico, the majority of the population uses WhatsApp, even in low-income sectors, as it is free and easy to use.

During each neighborhood meeting, the police explained the rules for using the group, promoting its use solely for reporting crimes or suspicious activities. Each group included the on-duty supervisor, the Sector Chief, and the residents who wished to be included. Once the groups were created, the residents had access to report any crime, problem, or suspicious activity. In turn, the Morelia Police committed to follow up and take action when necessary.

The WhatsApp groups not only helped respond more quickly to the reports from the residents but also became a tool to gather new information, as members started sharing videos and/or photos of committed thefts and potential offenders.

The groups were also used to share information with the residents about crime prevention measures, so they could ensure their vehicles were secure and less likely to be stolen. Among other elements, the police advised people to keep their vehicle doors and windows closed, use additional protection measures (e.g., steering wheel locks), and be cautious about parking their vehicles in well-lit areas.

Response 3. Registration of Potential Offenders

Each Sector Chief systematically identified individuals possibly involved in non-violent vehicle thefts. This process involves capturing a picture of the suspicious person along with their data and all relevant information regarding past or current detentions.

Due to limited resources, the Morelia Police lacks a comprehensive information system for registering and tracking probable offenders. Consequently, the decision was made to utilize WhatsApp, as all police officers frequently and efficiently use it. The police created specific WhatsApp groups to systematically identify, characterize, and register probable offenders. These groups included the Sector Chiefs, and the on-duty supervisors, and served to share suspect records swiftly and cost-effectively. Each Sector Chief regularly updates the information on potential offenders and immediately shares it within the WhatsApp group. Within approximately four months, Police Morelia registered over 30 suspects across the five participating sectors, enabling the development and implementation of focused strategies.

Additionally, work sessions were held between the Intelligence Unit, the POP Coordination, and each Sector Chief. During these sessions, they shared relevant information and details about probable offenders and their *modus operandi*. The Intelligence Unit mobilized vehicles and plainclothes personnel in the hot spots, complementing the information gathered by Sector Chiefs about probable offenders and criminal networks involved in vehicle theft.

Response 4. Focused Surveillance of Potential Offenders

The information from the registrations served to focus police surveillance. Knowing the identity, place of residence, and habits of potential offenders, the Sector Chiefs assigned vehicles and personnel to monitor the offenders and reduce their opportunities to commit crimes. Additionally, this work also helped obtain new information about existing criminal networks.



Response 5. Coordination for Criminal Investigation

The Sector Chiefs also shared the information from the registrations with the Investigation Unit of the Morelia Police, which is the point of contact with the Attorney General's Office of the State of Michoacan (in Mexico, the responsibility for investigating crimes lies with the Attorney General's Office, which have their own detectives. Municipal police forces can act as auxiliaries, under the command and direction of the Attorney General's Office). Additionally, the information was used as input for coordination meetings between the Police and the Attorney General's Office. The provided information contributed to strengthening the lines of investigation concerning certain offenders, and in several cases, the Investigation Unit collaborated with the Attorney General's Office to carry out an investigation and legal process. This led to the arrest and prosecution of several offenders.



2.4 Assessment

The assessment was carried out by the POP Coordination with information from the Sector Chiefs, the Intelligence Unit, and the Investigation Unit. The assessment was divided into two main components. The first consisted of an assessment of the different responses in the hot spots, and the second, in the monitoring of criminal incidents since the beginning of the implementation of the strategy.

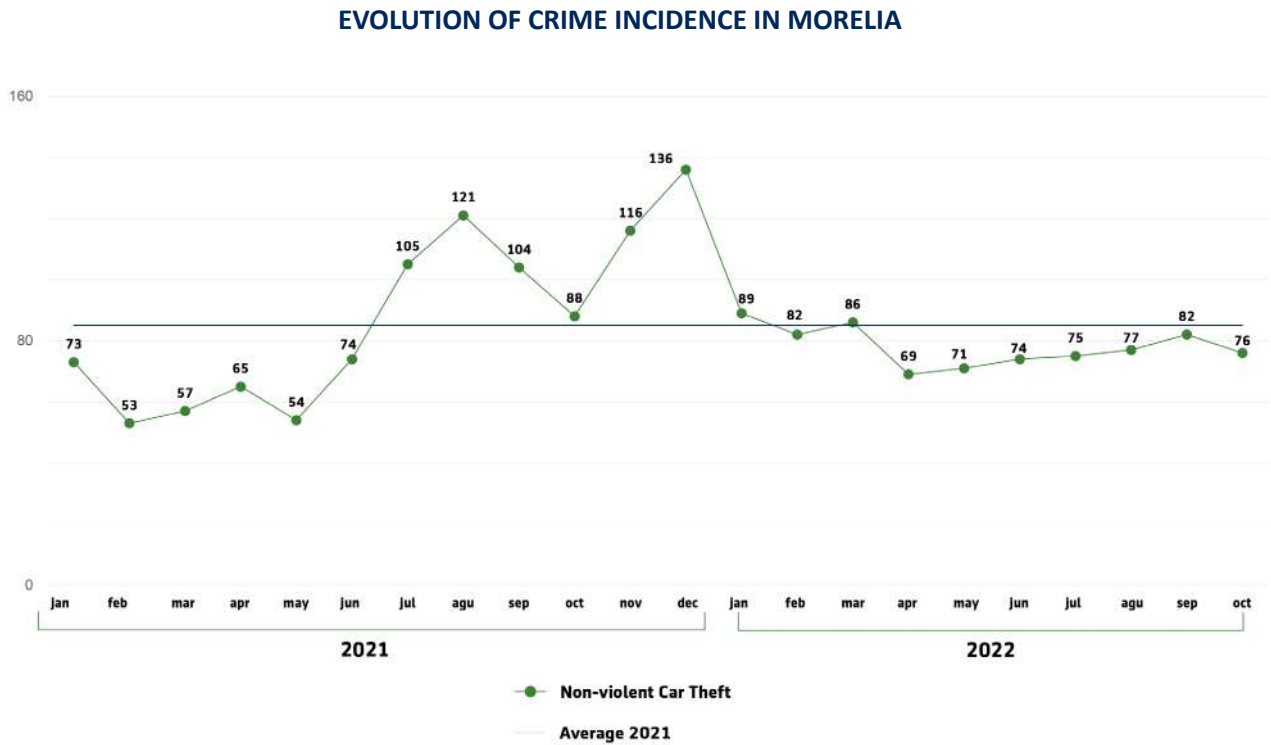
i. Response in Hot Spots

The strategy was implemented in the hot spots of five of the seven sectors. In total, police implemented the responses in 13 areas with a high concentration of non-violent vehicle theft. After five months of execution, between January and May 2022, the police had completed the the following activities:

- 184 neighborhood meetings.
- At the end of each meeting, neighborhood WhatsApp groups were created. By the end of May 2022, there were 209 neighborhood WhatsApp groups throughout the municipality.
- Through neighborhood meetings, WhatsApp groups, and interviews, the police recovered a total of 34 videos.
- 30 offenders related to vehicle theft were identified, registered, and put under surveillance.
- In collaboration with the Attorney General's Office, 4 offenders were arrested.

ii. Crime reduction

Over 11 months, the incidence of non-violent vehicle theft reduced by 44%.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on CMSC internal database.

The graph shows a downward trend in the municipality of Morelia. Since the beginning of the "POP Cycle" implementation, a 44% reduction in non-violent vehicle theft has been observed between December 2021 and October 2022. Furthermore, the incidence has remained below the 2021 average.

3. CONCLUSION

The experience of the Morelia Police in the development and implementation of the Strategy for the Reduction of Vehicle Thefts applying Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) provides valuable insights into innovative evidence-based policing practices in resource-limited contexts. The application of POP created a dynamic environment that promoted proactivity among the members of the police department, fostering the development of innovative strategies focused on achieving results. Additionally, this experience offered valuable lessons about the potential of integrating preventive actions to contribute to crime reduction. The main learnings from this process are described below:

- 1. Strengthening the role of middle management in generating and analyzing information:** The Sector Chiefs who participated in the development and implementation of the strategy started to generate and use specific information about non-violent vehicle theft. This allowed the Sector Chiefs to focus their personnel and resources efficiently, involving them in actions that effectively contributed to the prevention of non-violent vehicle theft.
- 2. Application of an advanced community policing approach:** The implementation of POP allowed police personnel to use community policing as a valuable tool for obtaining information about the problem. By establishing a relationship of trust and collaboration with the community, police personnel were able to gather useful information to identify potential offenders and generate focused preventive responses.
- 3. Use of low-cost technological tools:** Specifically, the use of WhatsApp enabled police personnel to share information quickly among members of the Morelia Police and with the community.

The foundation of POP is the analysis of information for the precise characterization of public security issues. The non-violent vehicle theft reduction strategy of the Morelia Police is an example of how to achieve a robust information analysis that allows for the design of effective preventive actions. The case study demonstrates that the application of POP to reducing non-violent vehicle theft is an efficient methodology to achieve positive results in complex situations. Moreover, it makes significant contributions to the organizational model and internal management of local police forces in resource-constrained contexts.

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