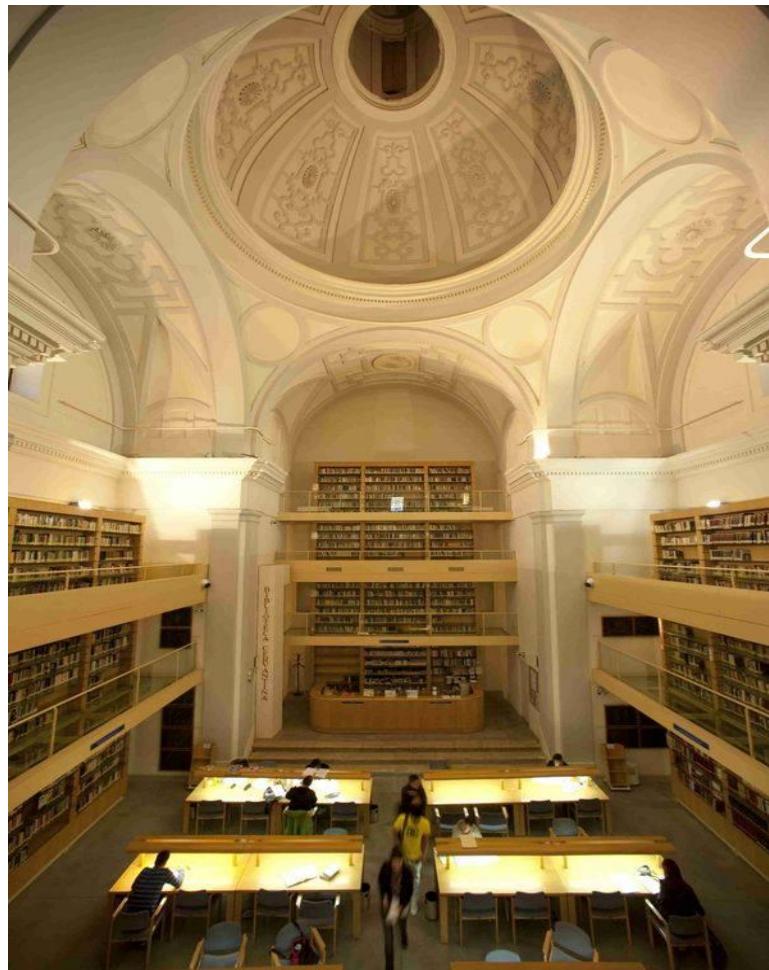


**THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT (2011-2021)  
Why do Colombian districts experience different intensities  
of violence?**



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# THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT (2011-2021) Why do Colombian districts experience different intensities of violence?

# EL CONFLICTO COLOMBIANO (2011-2021) ¿Por qué los distritos colombianos experimentan diferentes intensidades de violencia?

Anna Bertolotti<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The present research aims to investigate the Colombian conflict which, despite formally ending in 2016 with the signing of the Peace Agreements by the Republic of Colombia and the FARC-EP, one of the largest *guerrilleros* groups active in the country, has not yet seen the end of violence. The research therefore wants to answer the question that asks what the reasons why Colombian districts are continuing to experience violence that is expressed through different forms and intensities.

Why does the violence, which has been going on for over half a century in Colombia, present itself in a different way in the different regions of the country? Is it caused by the presence and actions of illegal armed groups or other factors?

**Keywords:** Colombia, Conflict, Violence.

## Resumen

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo investigar el conflicto colombiano que, a pesar de haber terminado formalmente en 2016 con la firma de los Acuerdos de Paz por parte de la República de Colombia y las FARC-EP, uno de los grupos *guerrilleros* más grandes activos en el país, aún no ha visto el fin de la violencia. Por lo tanto, la investigación quiere responder a la pregunta que se pregunta cuáles son las razones por

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las que los distritos colombianos continúan experimentando violencia que se expresa a través de diferentes formas e intensidades.

¿Por qué la violencia, que se viene produciendo desde hace más de medio siglo en Colombia, se presenta de manera diferente en las distintas regiones del país? ¿Es causada por la presencia y las acciones de grupos armados ilegales u otros factores?

**Palabras clave:** Colombia, Conflicto, Violencia.

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## 1. Introduction

It is now known that in almost all Colombian territory numerous illegal armed groups proliferate but that the levels of violence differ in the various districts; the present research aims, therefore, to investigate what are the causes focusing on the period 2011-2021 which coincides with the five years preceding the Peace Agreements of 2016 and the following luster. The choice of this specific time frame is because, even though the Agreements were signed in 2016 and that negotiations officially began in 2012, the level of violence has not suffered the expected decrease.

The analysis proposes a first introductory part of the geographical, historical, social, and economic context that ends with a presentation of the current context and the last ten years, the focus of the research. A second part will be dedicated to the description of the data collected and the variables built and used to measure and catalog violence and its causes, to read the comparison between the selected districts and the focus on the case of Bogotá D.C. by all the means necessary to fully understand it.

The study, based on a comparison between the departments in which the levels of violence are still high and those in which they are very low, after an examination of the context data taken from the literature, will proceed to the use of the comparative method. In fact, numerous variables will be considered, some extracted from Weinstein's research (quantity and quality of lootable resources; presence of external actors financing the conflict; quantity and quality of security forces; etc.), others instead from that of Collier (schooling; demography; geography; income; proximity to countries in conflict, e.g. Venezuela, or of geostrategic interest, e.g. Panama; ethnic and religious divisions; etc.), which will then be measured for the different areas and finally compared to establish what the causes of Colombian violence actually are.

Among the main sources will be included the official reports of the Colombian Government, the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, the *Observatorio de Memoria y Conflicto*, the *Fundación Paz y Reconciliación* (PARES), the *Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales* (IEPRI) of the National University of Colombia, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the United Nations. At the theoretical level, the theories,



and analyses of several political scientists, including Jeremy Weinstein, Paul Collier, Stathis Kalywas and Charles Tilly, will be considered.

## 2. The context

Colombia has always been marked by violence and injustice, by struggles for power and territory, both in the colonial period and during the construction of the independent state. There is therefore talk of "chronic violence", of the use of violence as a regular means of the holders of power – legitimate or not – to achieve their goals (Vargas, 2019). It is therefore necessary to retrace the main stages of Colombian history to fully understand the reasons for the violence that is still rampant in the country today. In fact, there are a series of "unresolved knots" that continue to recur constantly over time, creating a sense of continuity (Wills in *Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*, 2015); obviously approach new events that instead create discontinuity between the past and the present (Vargas, 2019). Among the first, the unresolved knots, we can underline the peculiar form of democracy that governs in Colombia: it is in fact a democracy only a façade that does not really reflect the wishes of the people. It is a type of democracy that is called *democracia restringida* (Fals Borda, 1986), where only a few have the power to express their thoughts and govern directly, and where those who declare themselves against the government are systematically excluded from political competition. Then there are inequality, poverty, marginalization and discrimination, all elements that remain central characteristics of Colombian society throughout its history. These are also the necessary and sufficient ingredients to create what is called "structural violence" (Vargas, 2019). Finally, it is necessary to highlight the lack of economic development and the interference of international powers, the United States of America in the first place. As for the events of the new generation, we must recognize the importance of paramilitarism – born only at the end of the 40s – and of drug trafficking – a source of primary (informal) income for many citizens in conditions of extreme poverty and willing to do anything to survive.

### 2.1. The geographical context

Colombia is part of Latin America; its geographical location is of particular geostrategic interest for several reasons. Firstly, it is the only country in the region to have direct



access to the two largest oceans in the world, the Pacific and the Atlantic, thanks to the connection with the Caribbean Sea; secondly, it is the only Latin American state directly connected to Central America.

The configuration of the territory is important because it helps to understand the formation of illegal armed groups, facilitated precisely by the geography of the country where 47.8% of the territory is wooded, 4.4% arable, 39.4% grassland and 8.4% remains uncultivated (Global Geography, 2022).



Figure 1: Geographical map of Colombia.



Figure 2: Political map of Colombia.

## 2.2. The economic context

The Colombian economy, which in 1996 was the most thriving in Latin America – with an annual growth rate of 4% and a constant inflation of about 20-25% per year – is now in third place in the regional ranking and fortieth in the world ranking (World Population Review, 2022) with a GDP per capita of 5,332.77 USD in 2020. Moreover, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Colombia was the country with the highest level of military spending, as a percentage of GDP, in Latin America: in 2009 spending accounted for 3.7% of Colombian GDP; a similar level had reached it only in 1996, under the guidance of Ernesto Samper (Orozco & Suárez, 2013). Finally, there are many resources that it has and can rely on: nickel, gold, silver, platinum, coal,

oil, and emeralds. It is the world's second largest exporter of both flowers, after the Netherlands, and coffee, at the tail end of Brazil (Piccoli, 1996).

Even the drug – cocaine, marijuana, and poppy – contributes to the livelihood of the Colombian economy: in 1996 this represented about 10% of the total, cocaine alone made over 5 billion USD a year. Drug trafficking has an important role as an actor able to insert itself deeply into the economic, political, and social structure of the context in which it is rooted (Medina Gallego, 2012).

### 2.3. The historical context

In 1849 we saw the birth of the two main political parties, the conservative and the liberal that subsequently led to the emergence of numerous political conflicts. For the following period, the levels of violence detected were sufficiently in line with the rest of the region not to be considered significant; however, the situation changed after 1930 when, the dominance of the Conservative Party ended and, the government passed into the hands of Enrique Olaya Herrera, leader of the Liberal Party. Between 1930 and 1946, a period of liberal government, the controversies – which increased again – were mainly caused by fragmentation within the ruling party and by social discontent which, later, led to the birth of the first workers' and trade union movements. Precisely because of this nervousness, in 1946, the Liberals lost support and the government returned to the hands of the Conservative Party and, just two years later, the situation experienced a new turning point. During the electoral campaign for the 1950 elections, on April 9, 1948, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, candidate in the presidential elections, was killed – probably – because of his ideas: Gaitán's speech was precisely based on the need to fight corruption and to restore – or rather, to give for the first time – dignity to the poor, to the peasants, the workers and also the indigenous people (Vargas, 2019). The assassination of candidate Gaitán thus led to an unprecedented popular uprising in Colombia, known as *el Bogotazo* or *el 9 de abril*<sup>2</sup> which, according to Hobsbawm, was the largest armed mobilization of peasants – to which some members of the armed forces were also added – in the contemporary history of the entire Western Hemisphere

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<sup>2</sup> Period of riots and unrest within Bogotá D.C., then always followed by violent repressions. The dual denomination derives from the fact that according to some scholars, such as Bushnell (Bushnell, 2012), use the term "*Bogotazo*" would be incorrect given the magnitude of the consequences that were in fact on a national scale.



(Hobsbawm, 1974). It is the beginning of the period known as *La Violencia* and, although no agreement has ever been reached on what may have been the causes of this generalized violence, most theorists find their roots both in the behavior of conservatives, accused of exploiting the police force, and in that of liberals, accused of conducting a rebellious attitude against the elected government (Henderson, 1984). In the following decades, after a first moment of elected conservative government, two military governments followed, the first led by Lieutenant General Rojas Pinilla and the second by General Gabriel París Gordillo. Social discontent had reached unprecedented levels and pro-conservative paramilitary groups had also been formed that acted violently in traditionally liberal regions, among the best known are *Los Chulavitas* and *Los Pájaros*<sup>3</sup>. According to some authors, these groups arose as a response to the failure of the state to control the challenges imposed by violent left-wing groups in rural areas. At the same time as the second military government, the *Frente Nacional* was already being formed: a political agreement between the Liberal and Conservative Parties that established a continuous alternation of the President, who precisely changed every mandate, and a fair division of all other political offices for 16 years, a total period of four presidential terms. Such a system, officially begun in 1958, had been built in the hope of restoring national politics without violence. The result was to obtain, until 1962, a – at least momentary and apparent – stop to violence and hostilities. Today, however, it can be argued that the agreement did not have the real basis for leading to a peace that was truly lasting for two main reasons: on the one hand, some important players such as the most radical sectors of the two majority parties had been excluded; on the other hand, the problem of land ownership, a great knot of Colombian violence, had not even been lost in consideration.

In Colombian history, guerrilla groups have played, and continue to play, a fundamental role. These are about 20 but, among the most important, both in number of active members, and in presence on the territory, there are certainly the FARC-EP<sup>4</sup> (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo*), the EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*), the ENL and the M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*); moreover,

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<sup>3</sup> Illegal armed paramilitary groups of conservative inspiration. The goal of these militias was to intimidate and/or kill opponents of the government in exchange for monetary compensation, paid by some conservative representatives. The former operated mainly in the area of *Altiplano Cundiboyacense* while the seconds in the *Cauca Valley*.

<sup>4</sup> In the original denomination it did not appear *Ejército del Pueblo* (EP) which was added only in 1982 during the VII Guerillera Conference held in Guayabero, in the department of Meta.



within each of these there have been splits that have led to the birth of subgroups that over time have become independents following their own ideology, such as the *Ricardo Franco Frente Sur Command* (CRF) founded in 1982 by José Fedor Rey and Hernando Pizarro Leongómez from a militia separated from the FARC-EP. The context in which these groups were formed is that of the 60s, 70s and 80s, characterized by the neoliberal model, an inflation tax of 30%, interest at 50% and unemployment that reaches peaks of 14% (Kalmanovitz, 2003). The big difference between the majority groups is the ideology on which they founded their roots: although they were all left-wing groups, the FARC-EP were born as a simple group of peasants who needed to arm themselves to procure justice and security (Bushnell, 2012); the ELN, on the other hand, founded its own ideology of Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution; the *Movimiento 19 de Abril*, finally, was born as an urban guerrilla group (Ríos Sierra, 2020).

In the 80s, with the presidency of Belisario Betancur Cuartas, a right-wing man and extremely attentive to the theme of violence, work began to reach some *agreements with the guerrillas*, the most important were those with the FARC – *Acuerdo de la Uribe*<sup>5</sup> – and with the M-19 – *Acuerdo de Corinto*<sup>6</sup> which, however, did not achieve the desired results. In 1986, moreover, due to the presence of Narcos, paramilitaries and military forces opposed to peace with guerrilla groups, Colombia obtained the primacy of being the most violent country and Medellín the most violent city in the world and the new president, Gaviria, no longer must fight guerrilla groups, but to fight cartels of drugs and drug trafficking. Cocaine accounted for up to 2-3% of Colombia's GDP and, even after the death of Pablo Escobar in 1993, violence did not decrease, indeed it is estimated that in that period there were about 80 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (Ríos Sierra, 2020).

The twentieth century ended with the formal start of a peace process<sup>7</sup>, better known as *Diálogo del Caguán*, between the government of President Andrés Pastrana Arango and the FARC-EP. Particular about this process is the attitude of the government which, on

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<sup>5</sup> The *Acuerdo de la Uribe* it was signed on March 28, 1984, in the city of Uribe, in the department of Meta, by the Government Peace Commission and representatives of the FARC, M. Marulanda, R. Reyes, A. Cano, J. Arenas and J. Guaracas.

<sup>6</sup> The *Acuerdo de Corinto* it was signed on August 24, 1984, in the city of Corinth, in the department of Cauca, by the Negotiating and Dialogue Commission and representatives of M-19, I. Ospina, A. Fayad, C. Pizarro, A. Navarro, L. Cifuentes, G. Londoño, G. Niño, O. Patiño and M. Chalita.

<sup>7</sup> The peace process officially began in January 1999; it ended in February 2002.



the one hand, shows itself willing to negotiate a negotiation, while on the other hand increases security expenditure by more than 22%<sup>8</sup> (Giha Tobar, Riveros Reyes, & Soto Velasco, 1999); modernizes the apparatus of the army and police; generates a plan to facilitate coordination between the different security agencies; creates a tax on war and finally, in August 2000, signed the *Plan Colombia*<sup>9</sup> with the government of Bill Clinton (Ríos Sierra, 2020). It is therefore easy to understand why even the FARC-EP have not actually dedicated themselves completely to the peace process but have instead started what will be one of the major stages of growth of their organization: they incorporate new fighters to reach a total of about 18,000 on over 80 active fronts in about 350 municipalities; they also carried out about 1,254 guerrilla actions in the period between January 1999 and December 2001 alone (Ríos Sierra, 2017).

Although the first years of the new millennium were the most profitable for the FARC-EP<sup>10</sup>, from 2002 onwards, the levels of violence began to decrease; the violence, however, had only moved to the most peripheral areas of the country, those less easily accessible and less populated, it had not disappeared completely. However, during the first decade of the new millennium, the Colombian conflict had matured sufficiently to be able to try again a dialogue of peace, for both sides a continuation of the same began to be unfavorable<sup>11</sup>. Since 2011, therefore, President Manuel Santos has appointed Sergio Jaramillo Caro, as *Alto Asesor Presidencial de Seguridad Nacional*, to open a

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<sup>8</sup> Public defense expenditure was 3.6% in 1997; 2.4% in 1998; 3.8% in 1999 and 2000; 4.2% in 2001; 4.4% in 2002.

<sup>9</sup> The *Plan Colombia* provided for diplomatic and military collaboration between the Republic of Colombia and the United States of America. The agreement with the US had an initial planned duration of two years and aimed to end the Colombian conflict, eliminate drug trafficking and, ultimately, help social and economic development (Vallette, 2005). As President Clinton declared, on January 11, 2000, the United States pledged US\$1.6 billion in support of peace, democracy, and the fight against drug trafficking. (Clinton, 2000). The Plan, however, over 15 years, provided for An American economic aid of 9.6 billion dollars (Vargas, 2019).

<sup>10</sup> The year 2000 is the year in which the land dedicated to the cultivation of coca reaches its maximum extension: 163,289 hectares (Ríos Sierra, 2020). Violent homicides reached 65.76 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000, 69.62 in 2002 and 1998 were only 58.92. In addition, between 1998 and 2002 there were a total of 113,043 cases of violence out of about 138,615 people: of which 29.6% only in the Department of Antioquia. In 46.7% of the cases, they were murders and in 20.2% of enforced disappearances. Due to the scarcity of data, there is no precise information on 61.2% of the victims, but at least 6.56% of the total were farmers. 2002 is the worst year ever and the number of victims reached the highest levels: in a single year there were 30,117 violent actions that affected a total of 37,223 people; also in this case there is a lack of information on the majority (63.4%) of the individuals involved but, even in this case, the group most affected is certainly that of the peasants, who represent 5.1% of the total (sources: SIEVCAC, WTO and CNMH).

<sup>11</sup> Between 2002 and 2012 the FARC-EP had reduced its presence on the territory to only 190 municipalities, from 346 that were; the fighters halved and fell to only 9,000. At the same time, the state also proved debilitated as it was unable to further reduce the figures of guerrilla groups. (Ríos Sierra, 2020).



dialogue – secret – with the FARC-EP in Venezuela, beyond the reach of the Colombian media. This first dialogue lasted more than a year and ended with the official start of the dialogues on September 4, 2012, when the Government and the FARC-EP decided to sit down at the negotiating table in Havana – Cuba – to discuss an end to hostilities and violence.

#### **2.4. The Havana Peace Agreement**

After 4 years of negotiations, in the autumn of 2016, the Agreement was finally ready. However, President Manuel Santos decided to hold a popular referendum – despite the official signing of the plebiscite by a week. The result was not what was hoped for: the "NO" wins with 50.22% of the votes. One of the many reasons why the referendum did not have the expected existence was that President Santos had lost support during his tenure and the Peace Agreement was easily associated directly with his figure. It should be noted that Manuel Santos declared himself a supporter of the agreement but Álvaro Uribe and Andrés Pastrana, both former presidents, declared themselves against it, as did the evangelical and Pentecostal churches<sup>12</sup> (Vargas, 2019). Moreover, most of the Colombian population lived in urban centers, where the guerrilla warfare had now disappeared, the few who still lived in rural areas, those where the conflict had never stopped, were not enough to win the referendum alone (Vargas, 2019). It is interesting the case of Bogotá D.C. where – despite the violence linked to the guerrillas had not been there for several years – 56.07% of the votes were in favor of the referendum. Although the popular referendum had not passed, the Peace Agreement was ratified, and the implementation process began (Consejo Nacional Electoral Colombia, 2016).

In the first years, those in which Manuel Santos persisted in the presidency, the objectives achieved were many, it is estimated a 22-24% but, five years after the signing of the Agreement, we can still not speak of peace achieved, of "positive peace". As Johan Galtung said, peace is not the absence of violence but the lack of conditions that support the violence itself and, in Colombia, the reasons that several decades earlier had led to the rise of the conflict have not yet been resolved.

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<sup>12</sup> The fear of the two churches was that this agreement would lead to the introduction of "gender ideology" and an excessive openness towards LGBT communities.



### **3. Indicators of violence: the Colombian case**

Colombia continues to experience the aftermath of a violence that has continued for decades despite the largest of the guerrilla groups, the FARC-EP, signed a peace agreement with the government of Manuel Santos in September 2016. One of the few differences between the conflict of the past century and the current one is that, to date, violence is concentrated in a very narrow geographical area compared to, reduced almost exclusively in the rural areas of the country, farther from the cities, where only a limited number of people live due to both internal and international migration typical of globalization and urbanization. We are therefore concerned with sizing Colombia, within the global scenario, in terms of the quality of peace and the quality of democracy based on some already existing indicators. In particular, to assess the quality of peace, the analyses of the *Global Peace Index* and the *Uppsala Conflict Data Program* are proposed; then, for the quality of democracy instead, *Polity5* and *Freedom in the World* are used. The concept of legitimacy is then presented, indispensable for understanding the position of state institutions within the Colombian scenario, in particular their relations with the population and with illegal armed groups, as the weakness of one is the strength of the other. Finally, thanks to the theoretical studies of Weinstein and Collier, some of the indicators – then analyzed in the following section – possibly responsible for violence are introduced. These indicators, selected specifically for the present research, therefore seek to establish what are the reasons for so much inequality between levels of violence in different areas on Colombian territory.

#### **3.1. Indicators of peace and conflict: GPI and UCDP**

##### **3.1.1. Global Peace Index (GPI)**

The *Global Peace Index*, which deals with producing a ranking of countries in the world based on their state of "negative peace", a concept coined by Galtung (1996). This index measures the presence and absence of direct violence by basing the analysis on 23 indicators: six measure the possible presence of violent conflict, both domestic and international, through, for example, the number of victims caused; ten measure social security, such as the number of refugees and internally displaced persons; seven finally measure the militarization of the country, hence the level of military spending (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2014). The score is awarded on a scale of 1 to 5, where the



higher the value of a country, the worse the peace situation. As for Colombia, in the period 2010-2021, in figure 3 it is possible to see both the score assigned to it year after year and its position within the world ranking; remained substantially unchanged over time. One of the indicators that most influence this score is the number of refugees and internally displaced persons, due respectively to the Venezuelan conflict and the Colombian internal conflict. Other relevant factors concern the impact of terrorism, the crime rate and political instability. However, after 2016 the data relating to mass demonstrations, increasingly frequent since the health crisis of 2021, becomes influential. On the other hand, the incarceration rate and the homicide rate are improving (34,184 per 100 thousand inhabitants in 2012; 25,3 in 2018) (The World Bank Group).

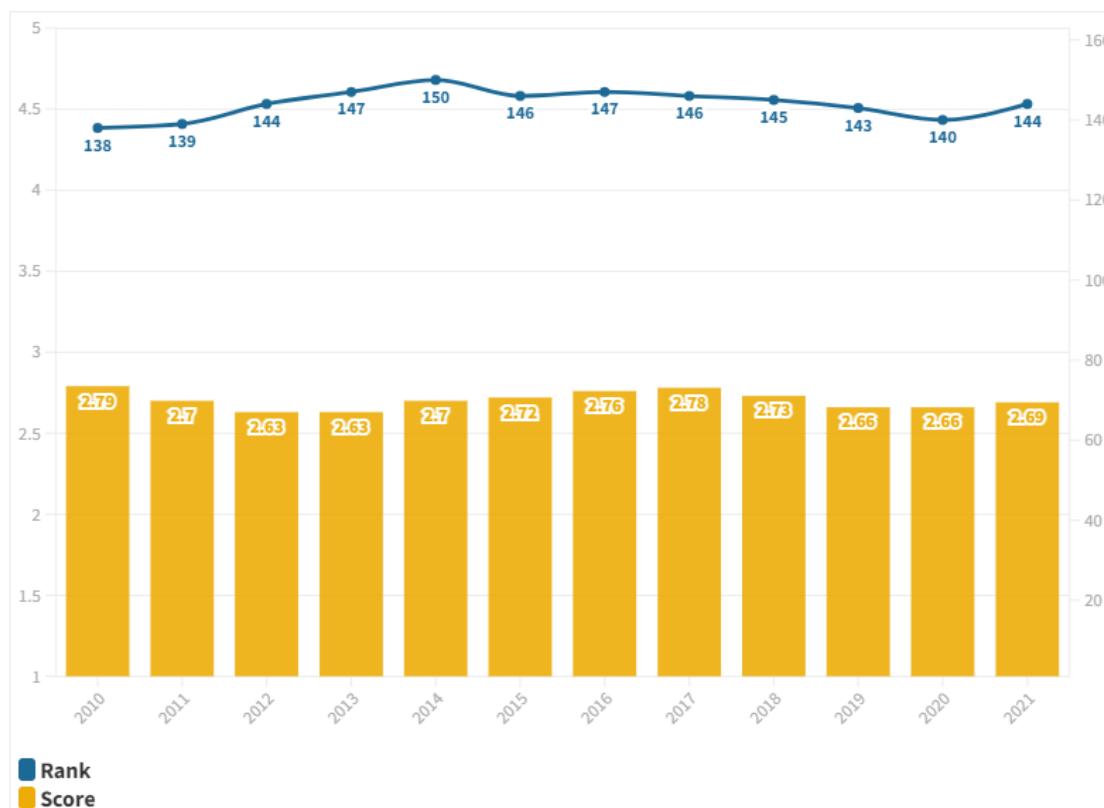


Figure 1: GPI Colombia (2010-2021) – score and global rank in comparison.  
(Own processing).

### 3.1.2. Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)

The *Uppsala Conflict Data Program* collects data on organized violence and armed conflict around the world. An armed confrontation resulting in at least 25 violent deaths

per year is considered a conflict. As for the Colombian case, it is easy to see [figure 4] how with the beginning of the new millennium, and especially since 2005, violent deaths per year have been significantly reduced compared to previous decades. From 2011 to 2020 the UCDP counted a total of 1550 deaths over the entire period of which not even a fifth, in fact just 333, would have been caused by *one-sided violence*, and the remaining 1217 by *state-based violence* (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, 2021). Although the overall number of violent deaths is still high for a country that claims to be democratic, this value demonstrates a decreasing trend of considerable importance compared to previous decades.

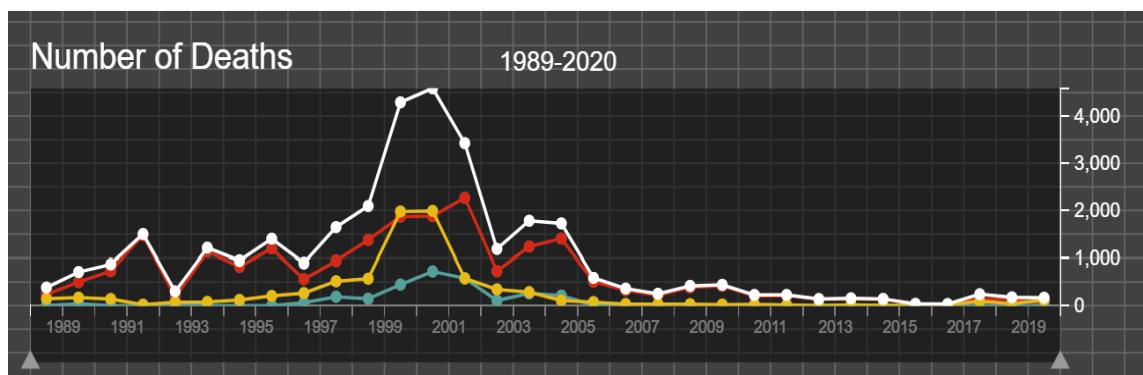


Figure 2: UCPD Colombia 1989-2020.  
(UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, 2021).

### 3.2. Indicators of the quality of the political regime: Polity5 and Freedom in the World

#### 3.2.1. Polity5

Thanks to Polity, developed in the 60s by the *Center for Systemic Peace*, all countries with a population equal to or greater than 500 thousand inhabitants, have been categorized to define the quality of democracy based on three macro-dimensions: 1) formation of the executive; 2) level of political competition; 3) limits to the executive.

Colombia, according to the fifth version of the *Polity* index, was analyzed from 1832 until 2018 [figure 6] (Center for Systemic Peace), and it is noted that, since 1930, despite being the year in which violence began to increase rapidly, the country has almost always reached a sufficient score to enter the category of "democratic regime". From 1930 to 1947, under liberal rule, Colombia was considered a hybrid regime, yet

very close to the democratic extreme; from 1948 to 1956, however, the country, led first by the conservative party and then by General Pinilla, while remaining in the category of hybrid regimes, saw its score move towards the authoritarian extreme. This significant score gap – it is in fact 11 points – can be attributed to the significant increase in violence that has been seen since *el 9 de abril* of 1948. From 1957 onwards, Colombia was finally categorized as a democratic regime with scores that reached 9 between 1991 and 1994, during the presidential term of César Gaviria. The status of democratic regime is assigned to the historical period that coincides with the formation of the *Frente Nacional*, which effectively reflects the formal characteristics of a democracy: division of powers and elections for the government with political competition; the score, however, does not consider that all this is only the image that the government wants to give of itself and not the reality of the facts. Indeed, as can be seen from the number of victims, internal refugees, emigrants and immigrants, the economic system, and many other factors, it is evident that citizenship was not living in the best of democratic regimes. The state was – and still is – in fact absent in much of Colombian territory, controlled instead by guerrilla and paramilitary groups (Vargas, 2019).

### 3.2.2. Freedom in the World

The *Freedom in the World* is an index, built in 1973 and produced by Freedom House every year, which measures the quality of regimes by calculating the political rights and civil liberties of the country under consideration. This – built on 25 indicators – evaluates the political rights and civil liberties of each country (even with a population of less than 500 thousand inhabitants) and analyzes, regarding political rights, the electoral process, participation, political pluralism, and the functioning of the government. As for civil liberties: freedom of expression and belief, freedom of association and organization, the rule of law, personal autonomy, and individual rights (Freedom House, 2022).

Colombia has always been categorized as a *Partly Free* country, that is, neither democratic nor authoritarian. However, there is an improvement from 2017 to 2020 and a new worsening in 2021 and 2022: this trend is linked to the Peace Agreements signed in September 2016 and to the new popular uprisings that broke out in 2020.



### **3.3. The legitimacy of the State**

Legitimacy, for a state, has been described as the attitude of citizens towards the state itself, whether or not they recognize the right to govern to those who act in the name of the state (Holsti, 2004); as a result of justice and effectiveness, two fundamental pillars of the state (Lemay-Hébert, 2009) ; again, as a product of the right of those who govern to govern and of effectiveness and equity in the distribution of public goods and services (Rotberg, 2004).

In the Colombian case, the issue of the distribution of public goods and services is central, especially when it comes to providing security. Such a service should be the responsibility of the state in all its forms and is "easily" measurable thanks to the objective analysis of data regarding crimes and violence (Feldmann, 2012). A 2012 survey, produced by the Latin American Public Opinion Project, found that perceived security in Colombia has improved slightly compared to previous years but that about 23% of the population is still strongly concerned about their personal safety and that, in addition, internal conflict continues to directly affect at least one in five people (Latin American Public Opinion Project, 2012). The same survey also found that levels of trust in the political system and state authorities remained stable between the turn of the millennium and 2012: only 40% of the population has confidence in the government and more than 50% think that corruption is the order of the day within the country and state institutions (Latin American Public Opinion Project, 2012).

Moreover, the actors of any context, to act without creating an opposition front, must be legitimized by the other actors present in the territory. To obtain legitimacy, that is, popular consent and support, they must be able to provide goods and services to the population. The main Colombian guerrilla groups have gained legitimacy – at least at the beginning of their activity – precisely thanks to the ability to respond to the needs of the population.

### **3.4. The possibility of rebellion: what are the useful factors for the analysis of violence in Colombia**

Weinstein (2006), in fact, identifies three factors that would be capable of fueling or suffocating a rebellion: the first is the presence of resources, especially if lootable, or resources that guarantee maximum yield with minimum effort; then considers the



presence of external sponsors, or actors willing to finance the conflict and therefore make popular support superfluous; finally, the quality of the police forces that the more they are equipped and trained the more popular support will be needed to fight them. A rebellion is therefore easy to carry out when all three elements are favorable: wealth of lootable resources, the presence of external sponsors and poor preparation of state security forces. In this case, being a rebel is particularly easy and is therefore full of opportunists who see in the conflict the possibility of enriching themselves.

In a general sense, the situation in Colombia can be easily analyzed through Weinstein's model: as has been pointed out above, there are several lootable resources present in the territory – such as gold, coca crops, emeralds, etc. – and the security forces are not particularly prepared and equipped, by virtue of a level of public expenditure that is not sufficient to guarantee their capacity, as is then demonstrated in the third chapter. However, there does not seem to be any feedback on the last element – the presence of external sponsors.

To the analysis built based on Weinstein's scheme it is possible to add the one based on the work of Paul Collier (2009), who studies the relationship between some factors and the probability of a civil war occurring. The author divides the factors into five main macro-categories (economic, historical, social, geographical, and political factors) and for each element he identifies establishes whether the correlation with the onset of the civil war is direct, inverse, or non-existent<sup>13</sup> [table 1].

<b>Economic factors</b>	
Low income and low economic growth	Direct correlation
Presence (and dependence) on natural resources	Direct and inverse correlation <sup>14</sup>
<b>Historical factors</b>	
Colonial experience	Correlation does not exist
Cold war	Correlation does not exist

<sup>13</sup> For the study of the Colombian case, only the factors for which a direct relationship with the outbreak of the conflict has been detected will be used.

<sup>14</sup> It is necessary to emphasize that the correlation can be both direct and inverse when analyzing the dependence on natural resources because it depends on the quantity of the same: it is direct if the level of available natural resources remains below a certain standard but becomes inverse if this is exceeded (Collier, 2009).



Past civil wars	Direct correlation
<b>Social factors</b>	
Ethnic and religious divisions	Direct correlation
Percentage of young males (15-29 years)	Direct correlation
Country size (by population)	Direct correlation
<b>Geographical factors</b>	
Forests	Correlation does not exist
Mountains	Direct correlation
<b>Political factors</b>	
Quality of the political regime	Direct and inverse correlation <sup>15</sup>

**Table 1: Correlation between factors analyzed and the outbreak of civil wars.**  
 (Collier, 2009).

In conclusion, other factors are presented that could increase the risk of violence arising. Among the most important are the oil fields; the cultivation of coca and its processing into cocaine; the proximity to other unstable countries – such as Venezuela – or of significant international interest – such as Panama.

#### **4. The geography of violence in comparison with the factors that support it**

##### **4.1. The geography of the factors considered**

###### **1. Lootable resources and security forces: Weinstein's model (2006)**

Lootable resources and quality of security forces are two of the three indicators provided by Weinstein (2006) to assess the possibility of conflict.

Colombia is a country very rich in lootable resources, that is, resources that can offer the maximum economic yield with the least possible effort. The Colombian government estimates that about 80% of mining is illegal and that it allegedly finances illicit activities such as those of non-state armed groups (Correa, 2017). One aspect to

<sup>15</sup> The quality of the political regime can also generate two different results: in low-income societies the existence of a democratic regime is a risk factor for violence to break out; in high-income societies, however, it is the authoritarian regime that becomes a risk factor (Collier, 2009).



underline is that these resources do not undergo changes at the geographical level of particular importance in short periods such as the time frame selected for the study, 2011-2021. Among the most important mineral resources in Colombia are emeralds, gold, coal, copper, and nickel. The last two, however, are less relevant, because geographically more limited, than the first. Copper is in fact found mainly in the western region of the country, in particular in the department of Chocó, which produces about 9 thousand tons of it every year. Then there are the departments of Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, 2021). Nickel, on the other hand, can be found in only six deposits, half in the department of Córdoba and half in that of Antioquia (Unidad de Planeación Minero Energética, 2009).

Emeralds, on the other hand, which have caused conflicts since the 60s with the first of the *guerras verdes*, are concentrated in only two of its 32 departments: that of Cundinamarca and that of Boyacá. These two areas are in fact known as *cinturones esmeraldíferos oriental y occidental* and extend in a north-east and south-west direction in the central part of the east slope of the Eastern Cordillera. Among the main municipalities of extraction stand out those of Muzo, San Pablo de Borbur, Maripí, Quípama and Gachalá (Agencia Nacional de Minería, 2015).

Gold is an additional natural resource, definable lootable, of which Colombia is particularly rich. In 2019, it was shown that over 98 thousand hectares were exploited for the extraction of alluvial gold, 77% of these territories were located in the departments of Antioquia and Chocó alone, respectively 40,201 and 35,105 hectares (Cardona, 2020). Other departments particularly affected by this phenomenon are Córdoba, Bolívar, Nariño, Cauca and Caldas (Gobernación de Antioquia, 2016). However, it has arisen that 66% of this activity is illegal and that the Chocó Department is the one with a higher percentage of illegal activities: 70% of the department's alluvial gold mining turns out to be illicit.

Moreover, coal is a raw material whose mining industry in Colombia has generated several scandals over time. One of the most known is that of the American multinational Drummond accused of supporting the paramilitary group AUC. It is precisely the Department of Cesar – the one in which the Colombian headquarters of Drummond is located – that has the highest concentration of coal, followed by other departments of



the central-northern region of the country, including Córdoba, Cundinamarca, La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Santander, Boyacá, Antioquia, and Valle del Cauca (Unidad de Planeación Minero Energética, 2021).

A further factor to be evaluated is the quality of the state security forces. However, being sensitive data, therefore often incomplete, it is difficult to create a real map that represents the armed forces of the Colombian army. However, it remains possible to observe what has been the military capacity of the State during the decade at the turn of the Peace Accords from a general point of view: in 2012 military spending in Colombia did not reach 8,500 million USD. In the following years, despite the peace dialogues taking place, military spending embarked on a slightly growing trend until 2017 when public spending dedicated to the military sector grew by 6.7% compared to an average of the previous period (2012-2016) of only 1.65%. Then, despite a decrease of -1.7% in 2018, in 2019, military spending exceeded 10,000 million USD with a growth of 7.5%. In 2022, the defense budget reached one of the highest figures ever, 10,969 million USD, 12.16% of total Colombian public spending (EFE, 2021). However, some Colombian politicians, including María José Pizarro Rodríguez, representative in the Chamber for the *Lista de la Decencia*, argue that the continuous growth of military spending is not justified: in addition to the many other problems that the country faces – such as the serious conditions of poverty of the population, the increase in unemployment, and in recent years also the health crisis that has hit the whole world – and to which it would be useful to allocate more economic funds, there are not even evident results in terms of security that can justify that 12.16% of total public spending is dedicated to defense alone (Caracol Radio, 2021).

#### **4.1.2. GDP, raw materials, population, and geography: Collier's model (2009)**

Colombia's economy, on a national scale, has always been at levels below the world average. As can be read in Figure 5, in fact, since 2012 the average Colombian salary has moved far away from the general one, despite having always maintained a trend of growth and decrease in line with the same (World Bank, 2022a). Similarly, annual percentage GDP growth [Figure 6] in Colombia also remained below the global average, but in 2021 it reached and exceeded it (World Bank, 2022b).)





Figure 3: GDP per capita in million USD, Colombia 2011-2021.  
 (World Bank, 2022a).

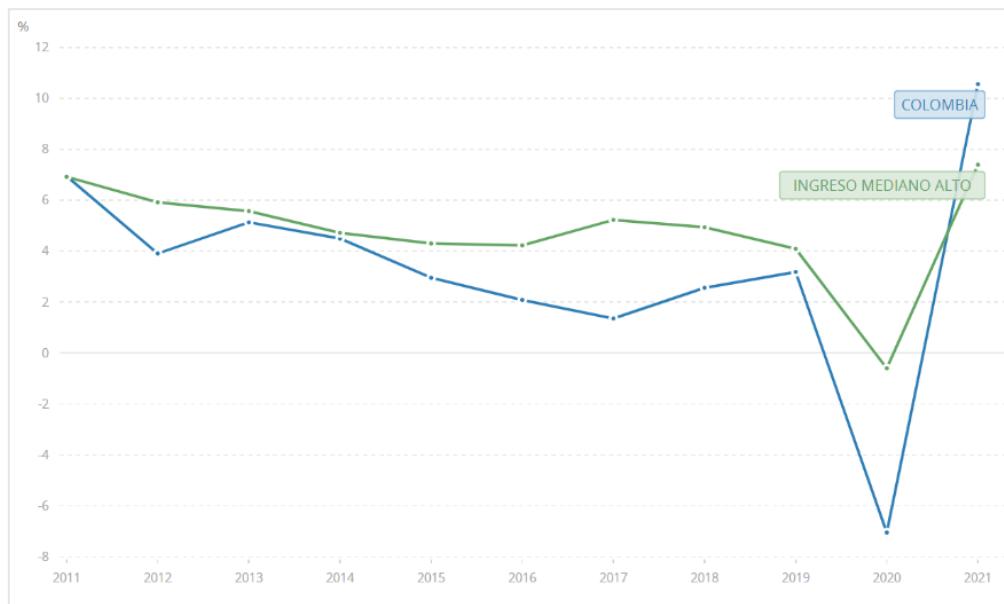


Figure 4: GDP growth (% per annum), Colombia, 2011-2021.  
 (World Bank, 2022b).

It is also possible to observe the change in GDP per head per department during the decade of interest in this research, in 2011, 2015 and 2021. It is immediately evident that over time the geography of wealth has not changed substantially: the rich departments – including Casanare and Meta – have remained so and so have the poorest ones – in particular all those of the southeastern region and many of the central and coastal regions, including the departments of Nariño, Norte de Santander, Sucre, Córdoba and Tolima (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2022).

Dependence on natural resources is an additional factor that has been shown to have a direct correlation with the outbreak of violence. Some of the natural resources that Colombia is particularly rich in and that significantly affect the country's economy are coffee, bananas, and cocoa.

Coffee production is particularly important because Colombia is the world's second largest exporter. The departments involved are those that involve the Andes Mountain range, starting from the north-west: Norte de Santander, Santander, Antioquia, Boyacá, Cundinamarca, Caldas, Tolima, Risaralda, Quindío, Bogotá D.C., Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Huila and Nariño. To a lesser extent, the departments of La Guajira, Magdalena, Cesar, Meta and Caquetá are also involved (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 2022).

The cultivation of bananas, with almost 600 thousand hectares, is divided into four zones: *zona de uraba y noreste de Antioquia*, *zona sur del Cauca*, *zona Centro* and *zona llanos orientales*. the first two dedicated to both the export market and the national one, the last two mainly to the national and agro-industrial market. About 14% of the territories dedicated to the cultivation of bananas, over 61 thousand hectares, are located in the department of Antioquia alone; the second most important department is that of Valle del Cauca which slightly exceeds 29 thousand hectares, about half compared to the first. However, for the year 2018 it was the Meta department that achieved the highest performance. Other affected departments are Quindío (16,667 hectares in 2018), Arauca (29,775), Córdoba (31,153) and Caldas (18,922) (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, 2019).

Colombia is in tenth place in the world among the producers of cocoa that exports to more than 70 countries and for which it dedicates almost 200 thousand hectares. Although almost all departments are involved, 28 out of 32, 79% of production is concentrated in the departments of Santander, Antioquia, Arauca, Huila, Tolima, and Nariño alone.

It is therefore possible to conclude that the departments most affected by the presence of natural resources are those of the Andean region [figure 7]: Antioquia and Tolima in which all three crops can be found; then follow the departments of Arauca, Caldas, Cauca, Huila, Nariño, Quindío, Risaralda, Santander and Valle del Cauca where there



are two; finally, among those in which there is one stand out those of Bogotá, Boyacá, Casanare, Chocó, Cundinamarca, Meta, Norte de Santander.

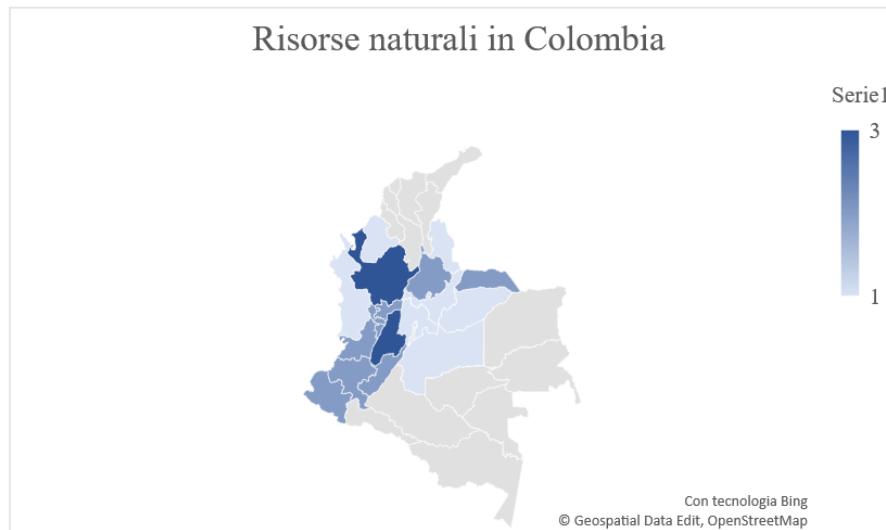


Figure 5: Geography of natural resources in Colombia.  
(Own workmanship).

As far as indigenous communities are concerned, Colombia is divided into three regions [figure 8]: the south-eastern region which is almost completely covered by indigenous reserves; the central region which is almost totally devoid of them; and the border areas in which these reserves, although present, cover the minority of the territory. Therefore, the departments at greatest risk of violence according to the factor of ethnic division are those of Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo, Antioquia, Córdoba, Cesar, and Arauca.



Figure 6: Indigenous territories in Colombia, 2021.  
(Human rights everywhere, 2021).



The size of the country, for this study the size of the departments is evaluated, in terms of population is another important factor to consider. As can be seen from the census of 30 June 2005 and that of 30 October 2018 [Figure 9], the population grew evenly throughout the country; and it is equally evident the presence of regions that are much more populous than others, such as those of Cundinamarca, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca that have a population almost three times higher than that of regions such as Vaupes and Guainía (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2018).

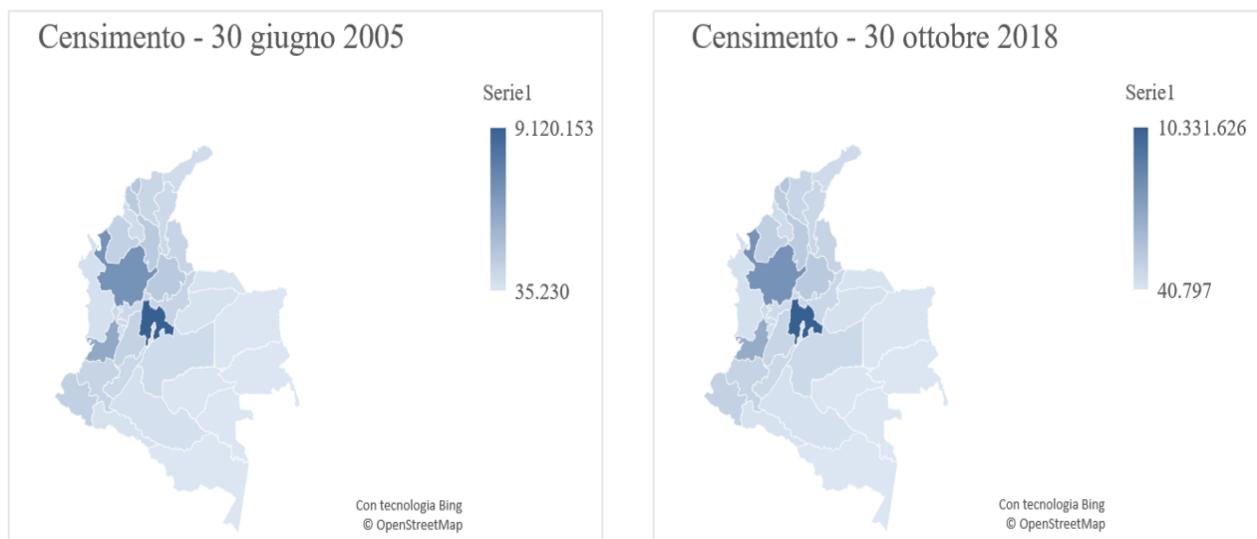


Figure 7: Census by department, June 30, 2005, and October 30, 2018.  
(Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2018).

The portion of the population that is of most interest in this study is that of young males, those aged between 14 and 29 years, the subjects theoretically most predisposed to the use of violence. However, it is difficult to find reliable data regarding the distinction of sex by age and by department and, moreover, at the national level the difference between the number of young women and that of young men is almost imperceptible: in 2018, in fact, 50.4% of young people were men and 49.6% women (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2018). To construct the geographical analysis, young people are therefore considered in a broad sense, without distinction of sex. If in 2005 the departments with the highest percentage of young people were Arauca and Nariño; in 2018 they were Amazonas, Putumayo, Guainía, Vichada, Guaviare, and Arauca (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2018).

Of fundamental importance is the geography of the country, especially that of the departments. In fact, as has already been said above, the main illegal armed groups present in the Colombian scenario were born and raised in regions very similar to each other from a morphological point of view: rural areas, mountain areas and far from large urban centers. It is therefore necessary to highlight those that are the predominantly mountainous regions of the country: the only departments with an average altitude of more than 1500 meters above sea level are those of the Andean region: Cundinamarca (3341 m a.s.l.), Caldas (3190 m a.s.l.), Bogotá (2582 m a.s.l.), Boyacá (2427 m a.s.l.) Norte de Santander (2283 m a.s.l.), Antioquia (2099 m a.s.l.), Cauca (1693 m a.s.l.), Valle del Cauca (1561 m a.s.l.) and Risaralda (1516 m a.s.l.).

Finally, forests – a further factor that should influence violence, even though no tangible evidence has been found (Collier, 2009) – are found only in the so-called *forest zone*, that is, the one between 3200 and 4000 m a.s.l. However, in Colombia there are almost 54 million hectares of natural forests and another 46 million between forests in transition and forests planted, however able to offer a safe haven to armed groups and the departments that are most covered by it are those of the Amazon region, the Pacific and the Caribbean: Caquetá, Putumayo, Amazonas, Vaupés, Guaviare, Guainía, Meta, Vichada, Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Antioquia, Cordoba, Sucre, La Guajira and Magdalena.

## **1. Oil, coca, and borders: other factors that could influence the onset of violence**

There are other factors that can be considered as independent variables – and therefore could affect the outbreak of violence and its intensity – within this study. These are the presence and extraction of oil, the cultivation of coca, the proximity to unstable countries or countries of international interest and, finally, the presence of armed actors (the latter factor is however analyzed in the next paragraph through the geographical analysis of violence).

The oil production of 2013 clearly shows how some departments are more involved than others: those most affected by the extraction are Santander, Arauca, Casanare, and Meta; immediately followed by Antioquia, Boyacá, Tolima, Huila, and Putumayo (Oficina Gestión de Información, 2014).



A further factor that affects the presence or absence of violence in the different Colombian departments is the cultivation of coca that affects areas that are located at altitudes ranging from 500 m a.s.l. ai 2000 m a.s.l. approximately. Land regions affected, in fact, by the phenomenon are not few, only those deeply involved are Norte de Santander, Nariño, Putumayo, Bolívar, Antioquia, Córdoba and Guaviare; many other departments are less obviously involved.

Finally, geographical proximity to unstable countries or countries of international interest is a last independent variable needed to be analyzed. Colombia, which boasts a strategic geographical position, thanks to its two outlets to the sea and its proximity to Panama, must not forget that such luck can also be a source of instability. The border between Panama and Colombia, known as Darién, is the only overland connection that connects Latin America with Central America and, consequently, with the United States. This is in fact a transit area for many migrants who, fleeing from their countries of origin (for the year 2021 mainly Haiti, Cuba, Chile, Brazil, and Venezuela) are looking for a way to North America. Estimates speak of almost 118 thousand migrants who crossed and then left Colombia, from 2010 to 2020, to cross the border and reach Panama; in 2021, however, there were about 134 thousand (Medicos sin fronteras Mexico, 2022). This therefore facilitates the emergence of criminal gangs which, in addition to profiting from the flow of migrants to whom they sell accompanying services across the border, commit theft, physical and sexual violence making the area insecure and with a high crime rate (Medicos sin fronteras Argentina, 2022).

In addition, due to violence, insecurity, threats, lack of food, medicine, and many other essential services, more than 6 million Venezuelans are currently living outside their country; of these, more than 2.2 million live in Colombia (UNHCR, 2022). Therefore, even the proximity to this country can harm the stability of Colombia. The Venezuelan migration crisis has its origin at the beginning of the new millennium when, due to the oil crisis experienced by the country, many families moved to Colombia where the oil market was growing. In 2015, then, about 2.3% of the population left Venezuela due to the harsh economic crisis, in the following years the number of migrants continued to increase making Venezuela one of the countries with the largest number of emigrants in the world, second only to Syria (World Population Review, 2022).



## 5. The distribution of armed groups on Colombian territory

During this study, the analysis of violence – between 2011 and 2021 – is divided into responsible actors: on the one hand the guerrilla groups, where possible it will be indicated which among them specifically, and on the other hand the State. In general, in the selected time frame, the violence events recorded in Colombia were 23,658 and affected 20,497 people, most of whom were concentrated in the first period. In addition, of the almost 24 thousand events, almost 45% occurred in only four departments: Antioquia (13,9%), Cauca (12,7%), Nariño (10,1%) and Norte de Santander (8,2%) (Observatorio de Memoria Histórica, 2021).

### 5.1. FARC-EP, ELN: the violence exercised by the major non-state groups

Between 2011 and 2021, 12,655 violent acts were linked to guerrilla warfare for a total of 9,358 people affected. 43.80% of these attacks were war actions; 15.10% instead affected public buildings, such as hospitals, schools, sports centers, etc.; 10.40% mine explosions; 8.60% were sexual violence. The remaining 20% contains violence of different kinds: targeted killings (7.30%), kidnappings (6.50%), recruitment of minors (4.6%), enforced disappearances (2.90%), terrorist attacks (0.40%) and massacres (0.20%).

In 2012 Land FARC-EP implemented a total of 824 armed actions of which over 72% – or 595 actions – concentrated in just seven departments, which however represent only 25% of Colombian territory. In the same year, a similar geography can also be noted for the violent actions of the ELN: out of a total of 71 actions, 81.7% was concentrated in only 13.5% of the country, or five departments<sup>16</sup><sup>17</sup> (Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario, 2021).

For 2015<sup>18</sup>, on the other hand, the year before the signing of the agreements, the actions implemented by the FARC-EP [figure 31] were 94 of which almost all, 90%, in the

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<sup>16</sup> Cauca (161), Antioquia (96), Norte de Santander (74), Nariño (73), Putumayo (70), Caquetá (64) and Arauca (57).

<sup>17</sup> Arauca (26), Norte de Santander (11), Nariño (9), Chocó (8) and Cauca (4).

<sup>18</sup> The year 2015 was chosen because, statistically, the year before a political election is a period characterized by a lower level of violence (Collier, 2009) and, therefore, in analogy with this type of



same seven departments in which they were concentrated in 2012<sup>19</sup>; as for the actions implemented by the ELN, in total 28, they all occurred in only four of the five departments involved in 2012<sup>20</sup> with the addition of that of Bolívar; the department of Chocó has therefore freed from the violence inflicted by the ELN (Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario, 2021).

Finally, in 2021, although the data have not been categorized by distinguishing between the guerrilla groups alleged to be responsible, it remains evident that the geographical distribution of violence is substantially unchanged compared to the previous period: taking into account only the 130 violent actions committed by all the guerrilla groups, the vast majority, 33.1%, was concentrated in the department of Cauca alone; other departments with relevant levels are Antioquia (10.8%), Chocó (7.7%), Norte de Santander (6.9%), Nariño (6.2%), Caquetá (5.4%) and Arauca (5.4%) (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2021).

It is therefore clear that the violence imparted by the guerrilla groups has shifted and consolidated mainly in the areas of the northeast and southwest, those bordering Panama, the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and Venezuela. Moreover, it is above all evident that from 2012 – the year in which the negotiations for the Peace Agreements between the government and the FARC-EP officially began – to date, there have been no significant changes in the geography of violence.

## **5.2. Violence imparted by minor actors: guerrillas, organized crime, paramilitaries, and others**

Excluding the most important illegal armed groups – FARC-EP and ELN – in Colombia there are many other non-state actors that have always imparted violence. In the period 2011-2021, 10,616 violent actions were carried out, affecting a total of 10,923 people. Unlike the larger guerrilla groups, only 11.50% of the violence imparted represents war actions; the majority, 35.60%, represent targeted killings; 16.60% enforced disappearances; 10.90% were mine explosions; 10.70% sexual violence; 6.30% damage

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conclusion it can be assumed that the year before the signing of a peace agreement also has similar characteristics.

<sup>19</sup> Antioquia (22), Cauca (20), Nariño (15), Norte de Santander (12), Arauca (8), Putumayo (6) and Caquetá (2).

<sup>20</sup> Arauca (10), Norte de Santander (9), Bolívar (5), Cauca (2) and Nariño (2).



to public goods; 6.10% seizures. However, 48% of the violence imparted by them remains without a culprit; 30.7% is instead attributed to the groups that have taken up arms after the official demobilization process; and, finally, among others there are also organized crime and paramilitaries. The departments affected by the violence of these actors are Antioquia, where 19.10% of the violence is concentrated, Nariño (10.20%), Valle del Cauca (8.60%), Cauca (8.30%), Norte de Santander (8.00%), Córdoba (4.20%) and Chocó (4.10%). The other departments all have values below 4.00%.

### 5.3. State-borne violence

State agents are also part of the dynamics of the violence that occurred in the period between 2011 and 2021, even if they are responsible for a smaller share of victims than the total number of illegal armed actors. For a total of 6,900 actions, 92.30% were acts of war, then there are targeted killings – which represented 3.60% of the violence imparted by the state – and damage to public goods (2.80%). Although to a much lesser extent there were also sexual violence (0.50%) and enforced disappearances (0.20%).

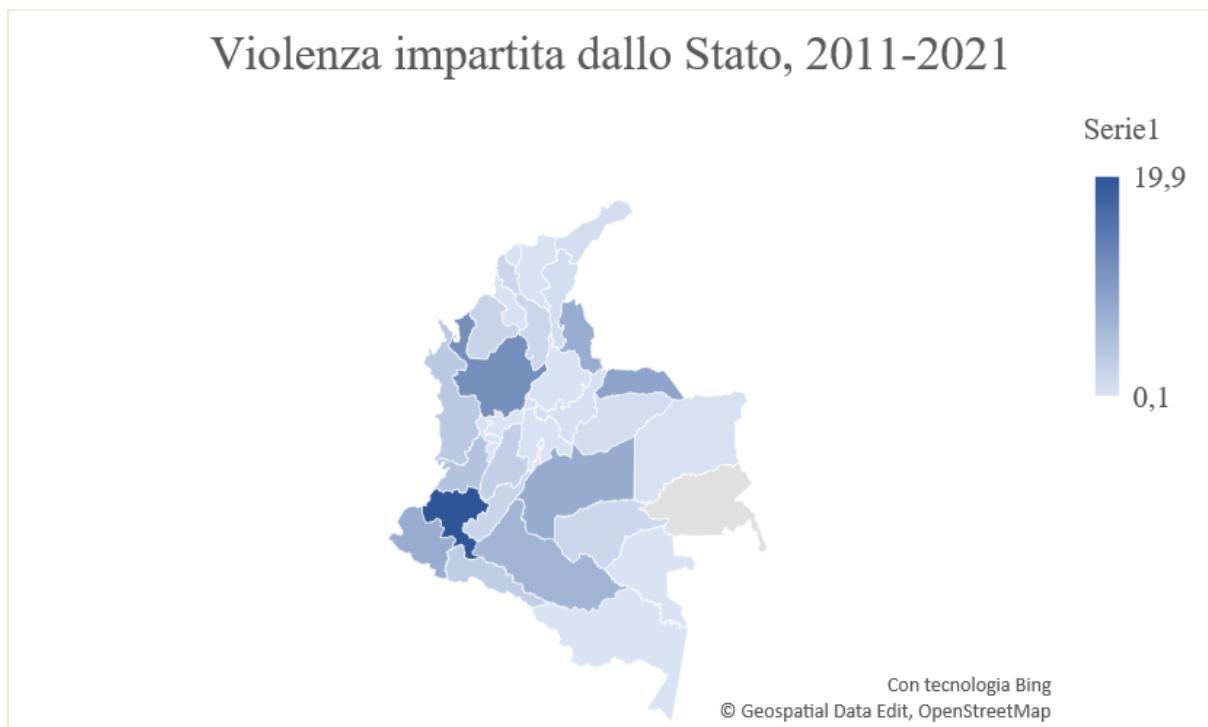


Figure 8: State violence divided as a percentage between departments (2011-2021).  
(Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2021).

## 6. The comparison between the geography of violence and the factors considered

Therefore, by crossing the geography of violence – dependent variable – with that of the numerous factors considered – independent variables – one can deduce what are the reasons that continue to fuel violence in Colombia. Starting from the assumption that violence exists but that not all departments experience it in the same way, it is now necessary to investigate what are the factors most present in the most affected departments – Antioquia, Cauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Arauca. Table 4 [in the appendix] presents in the horizontal axis the 21 factors considered by the analysis: lootable resources (in total five), the nine independent variables of Collier, the three extra factors selected specifically for the Colombian case and, finally, the presence of violent actors (FARC-EP, ELN, state agents and the set of all other armed groups). The vertical axis lists the departments of Colombia in alphabetical order.

The department of Antioquia is the one that demonstrates the presence of the largest number of variables, 17 in total; then follows the department of Nariño with twelve; ten factors are instead present in the departments of Arauca, Norte de Santander and Valle del Cauca; Cauca, Chocó and Córdoba present nine. Departments with fewer variables are Putumayo, with eight; Tolima with seven; Cundinamarca and Boyacá with six; five are identified in Bolívar, Caldas, Caquetá, Cesar, Guaviare, Huila, Meta and Santander; three in Bogotá D.C., Casanare, Guainía, La Guajira, Quindío, Risaralda, Sucre and Vichada; two in Amazonas and Magdalena; one in Vaupés; zero in the Atlantic and in the archipelago of San Andrés.

Antioquia, Cauca, Nariño, Arauca and Norte de Santander, in addition to being among the departments with the largest number of independent variables, are also those with the highest levels of violence in the period 2011-2021. Although most of the factors are common to all five departments, only violent actors – all those considered: FARC-EP, ELN, state agents and other armed actors – are present in all. Other variables found in most departments with high levels of violence are the ones that consider ethnic divisions, whose presence is not detected only in the department of Norte de Santander, and those regarding lootable resources – absent only in Arauca – and natural resources –



absent only in Cauca. Antioquia, in particular, is the department that presents both most of the lootable resources (four out of five) and natural resources (three out of three).

It can therefore be concluded that violence – although it did not arise solely and exclusively from these "material" factors but that problems have arisen at the root of Colombian society – is distributed in a different way on the territory because it is facilitated and increased, firstly, by the co-presence of different armed actors and, secondly, by the presence of lootable and natural resources. The departments where only one or two of the actors considered are located have significantly lower values of violence and this may be due precisely to the fact that, where there is a multitude of actors, they resort to violence to grab the resources necessary to maintain their militia by subtracting them from other armed groups. In addition, the presence of woods, forests and mountains is also an important factor: all departments with high levels of violence are mountainous or wooded. Arauca, among the particularly violent departments, is the only one with a prevalence of flat oil, but has large quantities of oil and is on the border with Venezuela, a particularly unstable country. Finally, the cultivation of coca and therefore the production of cocaine significantly affects the levels of violence experienced: in 2015 about 70% of the total production was concentrated in just three departments: Nariño (29,755 hectares), Putumayo (20,068 hectares) and Norte de Santander (11,527 hectares) (Ríos Sierra, Bula-Galiano, & Morales, 2019).

## 7. Conclusions

In the study conducted, the measurements referred to the selected districts were elaborated according to the method of comparison so as to produce the expected result: the residual violence in Colombia is not equally distributed throughout the Colombian territory but is concentrated instead in certain areas of the country – rural and predominantly mountainous areas; far from the economic and political center of the country; border with Venezuela and with the two oceans that bathe Colombia; in which coca remains one of the first products grown and traded – and is mainly caused by the presence of illegal armed groups that did not take part in the Peace Agreement or from which they subsequently distanced themselves.



Over time, as has already been said above, the geography of violence has changed, peripheralized, but in the time frame analyzed by this research (2011-2021) the differences, at the level of departments, are not so evident: the departments involved are in fact always the same, but we can still notice some difference on the intensity of the violence put into practice that has decreased on average over the decade considered.

The research carried out has therefore shown that Colombian departments, those with higher levels of violence, have several aspects in common: the presence of different armed groups, both legal and illegal; the territory with a prevalence of mountains, woods and rich in natural resources, including lootable; and, finally, many indigenous communities that make the population ethnically and culturally fragmented.



## Appendix

Table 2: Variable count.

	Risorse Lootable	Poveri	Risorse Naturali	Divisioni Etniche	Dimensione Popolazione	Giovani	Montagne	Foreste	Petrolio	Coca	Vicinanze altri paesi
Amazonas						1		1			
Antioquia	4		3	1	1		1	1	1	1	
Arauca			2	1		1				1	
Arcipelago di San Andrés											
Atlántico											
Bogotá D.C.			1					1			
Bolívar	1										1
Boyacá	2		1				1		1		
Caldas	1		2				1				
Caquetá									1		
Casanare			1							1	
Cauca	2			1			1	1			
Cesar	1			1							
Chocó	2		1	1					1		
Córdoba	3	1		1					1		1
Cundinamarca	2		1		1			1			
Guainía							1		1		
Guaviare							1		1		1
Huila			2							1	
La Guajira		1									
Magdalena									1		
Meta			1						1	1	
Nariño	2	1	2	1					1		1
Norte de Santander	1	1	1					1			1
Putumayo					1		1		1	1	1
Quindío			2								
Risaralda			2					1			
Santander	1		2							1	
Sucre		1							1		
Tolima		1	3							1	
Valle del Cauca	2		2	1	1		1	1			
Vaupés										1	
Vichada							1		1		



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## Gestión y política editorial de *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT

### Declaración de objetivos, público y cobertura temática

*Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT es una publicación con periodicidad mensual y proyección internacional que edita el Instituto Universitario de Investigación en Estudios Latinoamericanos (IELAT). Su propósito principal es fomentar el conocimiento y el intercambio de ideas a través de la divulgación de la investigación académica y científica de calidad.

La publicación se dirige fundamentalmente a investigadores e instituciones académicas interesados en el debate académico, y comprometidos con los problemas reales de las sociedades contemporáneas. Igualmente, se dirige a un amplio espectro de lectores potenciales interesados en las Humanidades y las Ciencias Sociales.

Su cobertura temática abarca esencialmente temas enmarcados de una manera general en seis líneas principales de investigación: Ciencia Política y Pensamiento Político; Derecho; Economía; Historia; Relaciones Internacionales, Integración Regional y Derechos Humanos, y Relaciones Laborales y Protección Social. No obstante, cualquier tema objeto de especial interés y atención en el mundo académico puede ser publicado en la Serie. *DT* del IELAT es especialmente sensible a los trabajos con planteamientos comparativos y la inclusión de América Latina en sus contenidos.

Todos los trabajos publicados en la Serie de los DT son de acceso abierto y gratuito a texto completo, estando disponibles en la web del IELAT <https://ielat.com/>, de acuerdo con la Iniciativa de Acceso Abierto de Budapest (*Budapest Open Access Initiative BOAI*). Se autoriza, por tanto, su reproducción y difusión, siempre que se cite la fuente y al autor/a, y se realice sin ánimo de lucro. La publicación cuenta una edición impresa idéntica a la digital.

La política editorial de los DT se basa en aspectos que se consideran cruciales como son los relativos a la ética de la investigación y publicación, al proceso de evaluación y a una buena gestión editorial.

### Gestión editorial

La gestión de la Serie *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT es uno de los elementos esenciales de la política editorial. Descansa en la Dirección y la Secretaría Técnica así como en dos órganos: el Consejo Editorial y el Comité de Redacción/Evaluación.

La Dirección, apoyada en la Secretaría Técnica, se encarga de la relación con los autores y todos los demás órganos de gestión editorial y es responsable del buen funcionamiento de los procesos de selección de los textos a publicar, de su evaluación, así como de la publicación final de los trabajos, tanto en la edición digital como en la versión impresa. Los miembros del Consejo Editorial se han seleccionado de acuerdo con principios de excelencia académica y capacidad investigadora. Finalmente, el Comité de Redacción/Evaluación tiene la función fundamental de llevar a cabo la tarea de evaluación de las propuestas de textos para su posible publicación como DT.

La elección de los textos se guía por el criterio de relevancia en su doble acepción de importancia y pertinencia. La originalidad, claridad y calidad del trabajo constituyen las bases para la selección de los textos a publicar. Igualmente, serán factores sobre los que se fundamentará la decisión de aceptación o rechazo de los trabajos la actualidad y novedad académica de los trabajos, su fiabilidad y la calidad de la metodología aplicada. Finalmente, la redacción excelente, la estructura y coherencia lógica y buena presentación formal también se tendrán en cuenta.

### Declaración ética sobre publicación y buenas prácticas

La publicación *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT está comprometida con la comunidad académica y científica para garantizar la ética y calidad de los trabajos publicados. Tiene como referencia los estándares del Código de conducta y buenas prácticas definido por el Comité de Ética en Publicaciones (Committee On Publications Ethics-COPE) para editores de revistas científicas: [http://publicationethics.org/files/Code\\_of\\_conduct\\_for\\_journal\\_editors.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/Code_of_conduct_for_journal_editors.pdf). A su vez, se garantiza la calidad de lo publicado, protegiendo y respetando el contenido de los textos así como la integridad de los mismos, y comprometiéndose a publicar las correcciones, aclaraciones, retracciones y disculpas si fuera necesario.

Para el cumplimiento de estas buenas prácticas, la publicación garantiza en todo momento la confidencialidad del proceso de evaluación, el anonimato de los evaluadores y el informe fundamentado



emitido por los evaluadores. De la misma manera, *Documentos de Trabajo DT* declara su compromiso por el respeto e integridad de los trabajos ya publicados.

Por esta razón, el plagio está estrictamente prohibido y los textos que se identifiquen como plagio o su contenido sea fraudulento no se publicarán o serán eliminados de la publicación con la mayor celeridad posible.

## Proceso de evaluación preceptiva

La Serie *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT tiene establecido un procedimiento de evaluación que consta de las siguientes fases: 1) Tras la recepción del trabajo, se remite acuse de recibo a la dirección de correo electrónico indicada por el/la autor/a; 2) La Dirección decide rechazar o iniciar el proceso de evaluación, con base en los criterios de relevancia y pertinencia del texto, comunicando a la Secretaría Técnica el comienzo del proceso de evaluación en su caso; 3) revisión por pares por el procedimiento de par doble ciego (*Double-Blind Peer Review-DBPR*), supervisado el proceso por la Secretaría Técnica, que informa al Director. Este sistema supone que tanto los revisores como los autores son anónimos. Con este enfoque se busca preservar el anonimato, asegurando así que la revisión se haga de forma objetiva y justa. Además, es un procedimiento abierto, de tal modo que el autor conoce los comentarios de los revisores, haciéndole llegar a los autores los informes de evaluación, aunque sin identificar a los evaluadores; 4) dictamen final del informe de evaluación de “aceptación del texto en su estado actual”; “aceptación con sugerencias”; “revisión” o “rechazo” del texto; 5) notificación al autor/a del resultado del proceso de evaluación.

Todos los pasos del proceso de evaluación se intentan realizar lo más ágilmente posible. No obstante, el proceso puede prolongarse durante un período de más de dos meses. En todo caso, este proceso tiene una duración máxima de tres meses a partir de la recepción del texto.

La publicación cuenta con un grupo de evaluadores acreditados, que participan en evaluaciones de otras publicaciones, y de diversas especialidades. Asimismo, para facilitar la evaluación, se dispone de un modelo de *Informe de evaluación* propio, que está disponible para los autores mediante solicitud al correo electrónico del IELAT ([ielat@uah.es](mailto:ielat@uah.es)).

A lo largo del proceso de evaluación, la Dirección y la Secretaría Técnica supervisan las sucesivas versiones del texto e informan al autor de la situación de su trabajo. Para cualquier información sobre el proceso editorial, los autores pueden contactar con la Secretaría Técnica de la publicación en el correo: [ivan.gonzalezs@edu.uah.es](mailto:ivan.gonzalezs@edu.uah.es).

En caso de que el original sea aceptado para su publicación, el/la autor/a se compromete a atender las sugerencias, recomendaciones o prescripciones de los informes de evaluación y presentar una versión mejorada.

## Instrucciones para los autores

Todos los autores que deseen colaborar con los *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT deberán enviar sus trabajos al Instituto Universitario de Investigación en Estudios Latinoamericanos (IELAT) por correo electrónico a: [ielat@uah.es](mailto:ielat@uah.es)

Los trabajos deberán ser originales, no pudiendo haber sido publicados ni en proceso de publicación en cualquiera otra publicación, ni nacional ni extranjera (en una versión similar traducida) y ya sea de edición impresa o electrónica. El duplicado exacto de un artículo así como la publicación de, esencialmente, la misma información y análisis, así como formar parte de un libro del autor/a o colectivo se entienden como prácticas de publicación repetitiva, que nunca se publicarán como DT.

El/la autor/a deberá acompañar junto con el original del trabajo una carta-declaración de que el texto se ha enviado solamente a *Documentos de Trabajo DT* del IELAT y no se ha enviado simultáneamente a ninguna otra publicación.

En los trabajos colectivos, se entenderá que todos los/las autores/as han participado en los textos indistintamente, salvo una declaración expresa sobre la contribución específica de cada uno de ellos.

Los/las autores/as deberán cuidar el estilo y la claridad de la escritura. Respetarán escrupulosamente las normas gramaticales y evitarán expresiones redundantes e innecesarias, así como un uso sexista del lenguaje. A fin de asegurar la corrección gramatical y la adecuación al estilo académico, se podrán hacer



modificaciones menores de redacción en los textos, como la eliminación de errores gramaticales y tipográficos, expresiones poco afortunadas, giros vulgares o enrevesados, frases ambiguas o afirmaciones dudosas, entre otras. Obviamente, nunca se introducirán cambios en el contenido sustancial del texto.

Los trabajos son responsabilidad de los autores y su contenido no tiene por qué reflejar necesariamente la opinión del IELAT.

### Normas de presentación formal de los textos originales

1. Los textos originales podrán estar escritos en español, inglés, portugués o francés y deberán ser enviados en formato Word® o compatible.
2. La Secretaría Técnica de la publicación acusará recibo de los originales y notificará al autor la situación en todo momento de la fase de evaluación así como el dictamen final. Para cualquier información sobre el proceso editorial, los autores pueden contactar con la Secretaría Técnica en el correo: [ivan.gonzalezs@edu.uah.es](mailto:ivan.gonzalezs@edu.uah.es)
3. En la primera página del texto se incluirá el título del trabajo, en español e inglés. Igualmente, se deberá constar el nombre del autor o autores junto con la institución a la que pertenezcan. En el pie de página se incluirá un breve resumen del CV del autor/a (entre 30-50 palabras como máximo) así como la dirección de correo electrónico.

Los agradecimientos y cualquier otra información que pudiera incorporarse figurarán referenciados mediante un asterismo asociado al título del artículo o al nombre del autor o autores, según corresponda.

4. Cada texto original incluirá un resumen / abstract del trabajo de no más de 200 palabras en español y en inglés y una lista de palabras clave / keywords también en español e inglés (al menos dos y no más de cinco).
5. El texto correspondiente al contenido del trabajo deberá comenzar en una nueva página. Los distintos apartados o secciones en que se estructure el trabajo han de numerarse de forma correlativa siguiendo la numeración arábiga (incluyendo como 1 el apartado de “Introducción”). Consecutivamente, los apartados de cada sección se numerarán con dos dígitos (por ejemplo: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, etc.).
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10. Las referencias a la literatura académica-científica invocadas en el trabajo figurarán trasel último apartado del trabajo y bajo la rúbrica Referencias bibliográficas. Se detallarán por orden alfabético de autores (no numerada). Su correcta verificación es responsabilidad del autor. Las citas aparecerán en el texto según el formato "autor-fecha", distinguiendo mediante letras minúsculas consecutivas si existen coincidencias de autor y año. Las referencias en el texto que incluyan hasta dos autores deben ser completas, usándose la fórmula et al., en caso de un mayor número de autores.

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Ejemplo:

Laval, Christian y Dardot, Pierre. *La nueva razón del mundo*, 2ª edición, Barcelona: Gedisa, 2015.

- Capítulo de libro:

Apellido(s), Nombre (segundos y terceros autores Nombre Apellidos). «Título de capítulo», en Nombre y Apellidos del editor (ed(s).), *Título del libro*, números de páginas que ocupa el capítulo. Lugar de edición: Editorial, Año de publicación.

Ejemplo:

Castro Orellana, Rodrigo. «Neoliberalismo y gobierno de la vida», en Sonia Arribas *et al.* (Coords.), *Hacer vivir, dejar morir. Biopolítica y capitalismo*, pp. 63-84. Madrid: CSIC, 2010.

- Artículo de revista:

Apellido(s), Nombre (segundos y terceros autores Nombre Apellidos). «Título del artículo», *Nombre de la revista*, volumen, número (año de publicación): páginas.

Ejemplo:

Pérez Herrero, Pedro. «Chile y México en perspectiva comparada (1988-2006)», *Quórum: revista de pensamiento iberoamericano*, número 16 (2006): 169-180.

- Páginas web:

Autor/a (si lo hay) o institución. «Título», año. Disponible en: URL, fecha de última consulta: fecha.

Ejemplo:

Gobierno de Chile. «Informe Rettig». Disponible en, <http://www.gob.cl/informe-rettig/>, fecha de última consulta: 15-02-2016.

- Tesis y tesinas:

Apellido(s), Nombre. «Título». Universidad, Departamento, Año.

Ejemplo:

González Sarro, Iván. «Neoliberalismo y polarización social: México, Estados Unidos, Francia y España (1973-2013), en perspectiva comparada». Universidad de Alcalá, Departamento de Historia y Filosofía, Instituto Universitario de Investigación en Estudios Latinoamericanos (IELAT), 2018.



- Manuscritos, ponencias o conferencias no publicadas:

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Ejemplo:

Escribano Roca, Rodrigo y Yurena González Ayuso. «Utilización de bases de datos: clave para la iniciación investigadora y la recopilación bibliográfica». Seminario presentado en Seminarios del IELAT, Universidad de Alcalá, 9 de diciembre de 2015.



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