

Hybrid governance, violence, and peace agreement: An analysis of the north triple border area: Colombia, Brazil, and Peru

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to discuss hybrid governance as part of a long-term peace project that began in 2016 and reaches the project of the government of Gustavo Petro, signed in the form of a law, based on the idea of a

pact, or truce, which starts from a specific arrangement called “Paz Total”. Colombia’s border with Peru and Brazil is examined in order to understand the distribution and disputes of the Carolina-Ramírez Front, the First-Front, and the Border-Commandos (BC). Through a review of these groups’

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interests and repertoires of violence, it is possible to distinguish three key clusters in the persistence of the armed conflict where these groups create social orders rivaling the peace objective of the current government. We propose to question how violence is regulated in these municipalities as a result of the established pact and the forms of hybrid governance, the latter understood as the juxtaposition of typical formal state governance, and local governance of a non-state nature. Following this objective, this research combines a geo-referencing of the presence of dissident groups in the Amazonian border and their violence through ArcGIS (Arc Geo-informatic System) software, the findings are supported by a review of secondary sources such as early warnings from the Ombudsman's Office and press reviews. We intend to highlight the importance of understanding these two dimensions of violence regulation: a) in regions where there is a juxtaposition between the presence of ex-combatants and a hybrid governance mode practiced by non-state actors, and; b) the importance of the contextual dimension to discuss the invisible pacts that allow a certain mode of governance and possible peace.

Keywords: Total peace; hybrid governance; borders; violence; Colombia.

Gobernanza híbrida, violencia y Acuerdo de Paz: un análisis del área de la triple frontera norte: Colombia, Brasil y Perú

RESUMEN

En el artículo se discute la gobernanza híbrida como parte de un proyecto de paz de largo plazo que comenzó en 2016 y alcanza al gobierno de Gustavo Petro, firmado en forma de ley, basado en la idea de pacto o tregua, que parte de un arreglo específico denominado "Paz Total". Se examina la frontera de Colombia con Perú y Brasil para comprender la distribución y las disputas del Frente Carolina-Ramírez, el Primer Frente y los Comandos Fronterizos (CF). A través de una revisión de los intereses y repertorios de violencia de estos grupos, es posible distinguir tres grupos clave en la persistencia del conflicto armado, donde estos grupos crean órdenes sociales que rivalizan con el objetivo de paz del gobierno actual. Proponemos cuestionar cómo se regula la violencia en estos municipios como resultado del pacto establecido y las formas de gobernanza híbrida, entendida esta última como la juxtaposición de la típica gobernanza estatal formal, y la gobernanza local de carácter no estatal. Siguiendo este objetivo, esta investigación combina una georreferenciación de la presencia de grupos disidentes en la frontera amazónica y su violencia a través del *software* ArcGIS (Arc Geo-informatic System), los hallazgos

se sustentan en una revisión de fuentes secundarias como alertas tempranas de la Defensoría del Pueblo e informes de prensa. Pretendemos resaltar la importancia de comprender estas dos dimensiones de la regulación de la violencia: a) en regiones donde existe una yuxtaposición entre la presencia de excombatientes y un modo de gobernanza híbrido practicado por actores no estatales; b) la importancia de la dimensión contextual para discutir los pactos invisibles que permiten un determinado modo de gobernanza y una paz posible.

Palabras clave: paz total; gobernanza híbrida; fronteras; violencia; Colombia.

HYBRID GOVERNANCE: BEYOND FORMAL GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNABILITY

Hybrid governance can be understood as: *the presence of different sources of authority in the same space, where violence, rules and moral conduct are managed by both legal and illegal actors.* (Pimenta et al, 2021:7) So, what is the relationship between illegality and violence? Several authors (Snyder and Martínez 2009, Cruz and Martínez 2016, Garzon-Vergara, 2016), discuss that the dynamics of violence are influenced by several variables such as illicit market competition, fragile law enforcement, and corruption, to name a few.

The concept is most used as interest in civil wars (Blumenstein & Wallman, 2006; Eck & Maguire, 2006; Neumayer, 2003; Stamatel, 2009), however, the concept we wish to assume deals with the study of the

arrangement of peace pacts between the formal State and non-state and/or criminal actors (Cruz & Durán-Martinez, 2016; Daly, 2016).

For a more precise analysis of what we intend to discuss, we must go back a few steps to explore the concept of Governance more clearly, and to this end we propose, albeit briefly, to resume the discussion of the concept of Governability. For Dahrendorf (1980), the discussion about effectiveness and legitimacy are fundamental conditions that allow the analysis of governability. This isn't about discussing the ultimate foundation of the State and the process of building the legitimacy and effectiveness of its governability; however, it is important to highlight the definition of each concept.

Dahrendorf defines efficiency as a concept with an almost technical nature, that is, in some quantifiable and measurable way. Therefore, efficiency would be directly related to what the government propose to do and what it manages to do or even about what it is expected to do. In other words, legitimacy constitutes a moral dimension, therefore; A government is legitimate if what it does is right both in the sense of complying with certain fundamental principles, and in that of being in line with prevailing cultural values (Dahrendorf, 1980, p. 397).

As we are not dealing with formal governments in this study, but rather with forms of governability and governance that move through a singular space, that is, transnational organized crime occupies dimensions of state public policies but is not

configured as formal states, so the Dahrendorf concept of efficiency can be translated by ways in which violent non-state actors exercise their governance, more specifically, through the dynamics of their violence. We suggest that the added value of the hybridity approach lies exactly in the blurring of lines between the different actors involved (Colona, 2016; 1).

For our purposes, legitimacy will not necessarily relate to a Weberian dimension, be it legal, rational, or traditional. Legitimacy is an aspect that can be detached from the efficiency of governance. Governability and Governance are concepts that allow an analysis of how political systems are arranged depending on their “ordering”, that is, what will be ordered and in what way, Kooiman (2008).

Governability and Governance exist as a function of the relationship between objective, material, or legal elements that support each other and will define the ability, or not, of a given actor to be efficient in creating rules and ensuring that these are complied with, thus a minimal concept of governance can be understood as follows: “the overall capacity for governance of any society entity or system” (Kooiman, 2008, p. 173).

If, on the one hand, limited governability conditions can generate low governance, on the other hand, high governability can be undermined by inefficient governance. In this sense, the system to be governed through the regulation of violence must be understood not only as the most common criminal activities, such as drug trafficking,

for example, but in addition it should consider other dimensions of social life that escape formal regulation by the State, such as the administration of human life in all its social dimensions.

Hagedorn (2008) names ‘institutionalized gangs’ to describe some minimum characteristics Criminal Organizations have, usually non-state violent actors present to signify their relevance to the State in the security realm.

- Institutionalization to the point that a particular gang continues despite changes in leadership (killed, incarcerated, etc.).
- An organization complex enough to support multiple roles of its members (including roles for women and children).
- Adaptability to changing environments (police repression or civil war).
- Resolving some needs for the community (economy, security, services).
- Enhancing a distinct identity for its members (symbols, rituals, traditions, sometimes called subculture).

The contextual and regional dimension of political choices indicates that crime is defined in the context of the action and perception of the actors who suffer violence, as proposed by Rodgers & Baird (2016). Violence and crime are from a relational perspective and must be considered depending on the new actors involved and the political contexts. The concept of hybrid governance has emerged widely in the literature since

the 2000s as a derivation of findings made from studies on Security Sector Reform (SSR). The analysis of how hybrid governance is structured presents different forms according to the security context in which it emerges:

... hybrid governance arrangements can be defined as arrangements in which non-state actors take on functions classically attributed to the state and, in the process, become entangled with formal state actors and agencies to the extent that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between state and non-state. (Colona, 2016, p. 2)

Addressing the debate on hybrid governance and the different theoretical and empirical approaches related to the topic, we aim to indicate this debate's density. Among the forms of hybrid governance, which can be understood as criminal governance, it involves bringing to light the superpositions of norms. In normative terms, post-Westphalian formal legitimacy originates from the sovereign State, as the power resides in this political entity for providing standards, however, under the logic of hybrid governance we embrace non-state actors as creators of rules.

Globalization has, on the one hand, weakened sovereignty along classical lines (Sassen, 1996; Strange, 1996), and on the other, favored the emergence of subnational actors, and with them, the erosion of state normative structures in the juxtaposition of norms (Beraldo, et al., 2022), that is, we are not only in the universe of the classic state normative debate but beyond this, in

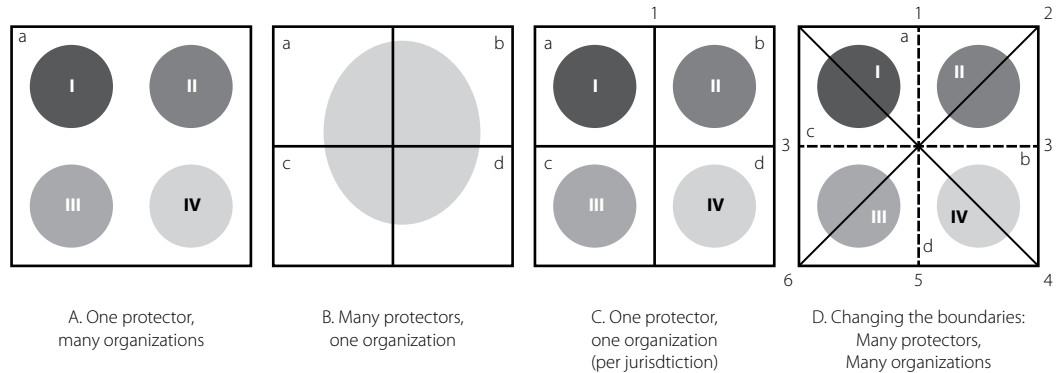
the realm of the debate on the juxtaposition between state and non-state norms and this *intermezzo* space is where we are trying to develop the concept of hybrid governance.

Despite that much of the hybrid governance literature examines empirical cases from urban settings (Arias, 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2018; Fahlberg, 2018; Feltran, 2020; Lessing, 2020; Willis, 2015), other experts have focused on different spots in South America to better understand hybrid governance (Jimenez, 2013; Villa & Pimenta, 2019; Pimenta & Rosero, 2020; Pimenta et al., 2021; Villa et al., 2021).

In many places where violence is concentrated, it's noticed that criminal control coexists symbiotically with state legitimacy (Lessing, 2020; Feltran, 2020). In such an environment [of hybrid governance], the 'State' does not have a privileged position as a political framework that provides security, welfare, and representation; the State has to share authority, legitimacy, and capacity with other structures" (Boege et al., 2008, p. 10; Tilly, 1985).

In analytical terms, we propose the development of the concept of hybrid governance based on three scenarios following the Peace Treaty signed in Colombia in 2016. The concept of hybrid governance allows a shift from the assumption that only the State can create norms and legitimacy in areas under political dispute, in which non-state actors, and more precisely criminal actors, create spaces of coexistence for local populations.

Boege et al., (2008) proposes an approach that rapport with our proposed

FIGURE 1. CONFLICT, SECURITY, AND COMPETITION BETWEEN GROUPS

Source: Snyder & Duran-Martinez (2009).

understanding of the interpenetration of different social spheres and their subsequent normative arrangements: “These hybrid orders are characterized by a plurality of overlapping rule systems which has a profound effect on politics and policies in these societies” (Boege et al, 2008, p. 8).

On the other hand, the approach proposed in this study tries to tackle the difference proposed by Krause & Miliken (2009), between the FARC and Colombian criminal groups before the peace agreement. For the authors, the FARC distanced themselves from other criminal groups because they sought political objectives in their actions, while criminal groups were only interested in expanding their territorial control over the illicit market, looking for economic objectives. This difference in objectives does not seem to make sense to us currently, since the hybrid or criminal governance, explored in the cases studied, intends to bring to light the uniqueness of governance

types according to the contexts in which they occur.

In this study, we suggest that there is no hybrid governance without the participation of state-sponsored protection rackets, understood as informal institutions through which public officials refrain from enforcing the law, or they enforce it selectively against the rivals of a criminal organization, in exchange for a share of the profits generated by the criminal organization (Snyder & Durán-Martinez, 2009, p. 63).

According to Snyder & Durán-Martinez (2009), we must understand how the State and criminal actors relate in geographical terms, both at the local dimension and at the state level, in order to understand the levels of violence that are reached and their differences. In the table above, we can see four possible scenarios in which the potential for conflict can be analyzed, comprising competitive relations due to

two fundamental variables for the transit of illicit goods: a) security; and b) control of the territory.

In these four scenarios (Figure 1), we can examine how these variables relate. In scenario *A* we can understand a direct relationship between those who offer security and actors who demand security but who find themselves in a context of competition from the moment they are under the jurisdiction of a single actor. This characteristic can be found when there is a state actor with jurisdictional control over criminal actors.

In scenario *B* we can find the opposite model to the previous model: we can see, as an example, that the criminal actor develops its activities in different State jurisdictions, in other words, the transnational criminal organization is huge and overlaps different State jurisdictions.

In scenario *C* we find a scenario which its emergence is common in post-peace agreement pacts. Local criminal actors operating in limited jurisdictions emerge, because the State is in the process of reorganizing its law mechanisms' enforcement.

Finally, in scenario *D* we have a decentralization of the state's capacity to impose the law (law enforcement) while criminal actors are on the move. This scenario is also typical in post-peace process contexts, where we have a model outlined in the function of the diversity of state actors, or state agencies, and criminal actors coexisting.

These distinct territorially-defined scenarios have contrasting consequences for the stability of State-sponsored protection networks, and, hence,

for the likelihood of illicit markets producing violence. This can be seen by exploring the preferences of both protectors and criminal organizations over these scenarios. (Snyder & Durán-Martínez, 2009, p. 68)

The protection networks (protection rackets) that the State can offer through hybrid governance are relational and contextual, therefore, the governance model that is established will be a function of geographic spaces, State conditions of law enforcement, and the dynamics of the conflicts between criminal actors. In the cases that will be discussed, this study seeks to explore these dimensions from multiple perspectives: that of geographic space, the development of criminal activities, the presence of criminal actors, and the degree of competition for control of territory, and therefore, for control of the flow of illicit goods.

HYBRID GOVERNANCE IN TRIPLE BORDER AREA: A CLUSTERING ANALYSIS ON VIOLENCE AFTER THE PEACE AGREEMENT

According to Kacowicz et al. (2021), a potential consequence of the coincidence between international peace and cross-border transnational flows may be the rise of variegated security challenges in the borderlands, posed by the presence and proliferation of transnational criminal organizations.

Following the Peace Agreement signed between the Santos' government and the FARC-EP, around 13,000 members of this guerrilla group demobilized and began their political, economic, and social

reincorporation process. However, in the border zone between Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, it is now possible to distinguish three groups of dissidents with different territorial influence and military capacity: the Carolina-Ramírez Front and the First-Front, (both part of the Central General Staff of previous FARC) and the Border Commands (BC) (or *Comandos de Frontera*) part of the Second Marquetalia (See map 1 and map 2).

On the one hand, the Carolina-Ramírez Front and the First-Armando Front derive from the FARC-EP's First Front, which was the first group of dissidents to split from this guerrilla group during the negotiation with the Santos government in 2016. Since that year, its leader was alias Gentil Duarte, until he died in 2022. Currently its leader is alias Ivan Mordisco, who has articulated these armed units and other dissident groups in the country, under a national illegal structure called the Central General Staff (Estado Mayor Central—EMC). The dissidents associated with the EMC had their founding nucleus in the of Guaviare province but have expanded significantly to various points along the Amazonian border (OCHA, 2022).

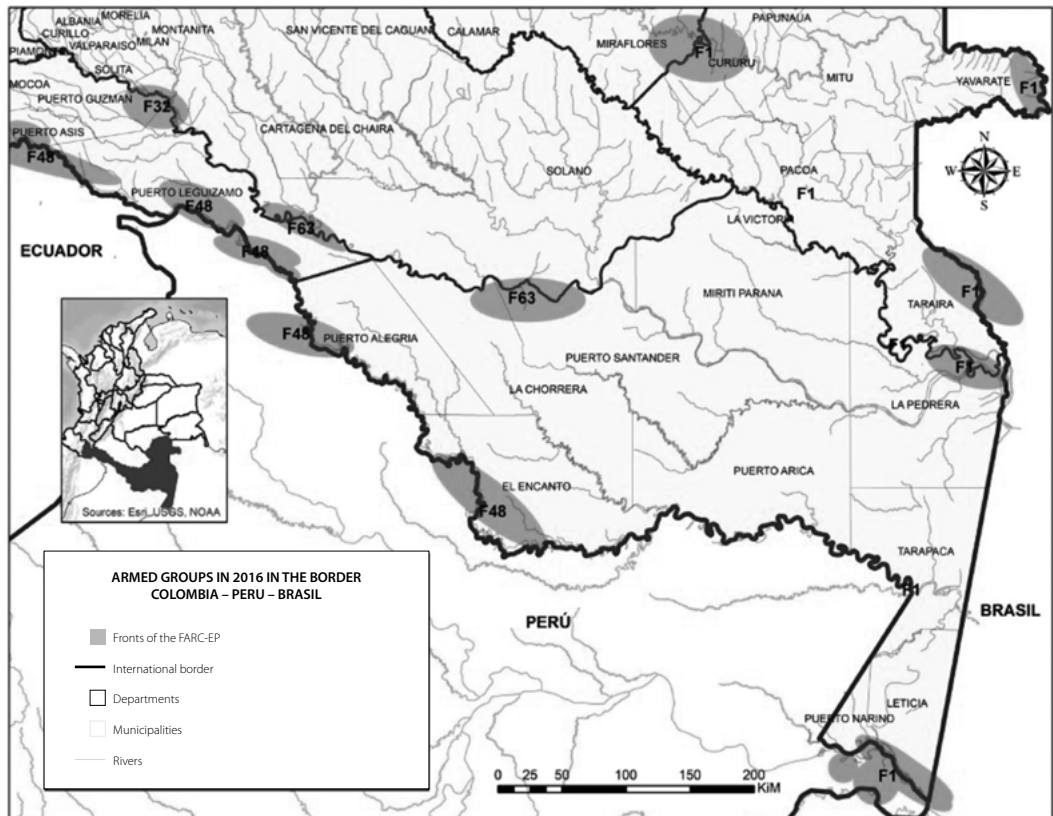
The Carolina-Ramírez Front and the First-Front have sought to extend and strengthen their control zones in the provinces of Guainia, Vaupes, Amazonas and Putumayo to control strategic military and economic zones. In addition, according to the Colombian Ombudsman's Office, these groups have established economic pacts with the Brazilian armed groups

Comando-Vermelho (CV) and the First-Capital-Command (PCC) for drug trafficking and illegal gold mining activities on the Colombia-Brazil border (Ombudsman, 2021).

At the beginning of Petro's government in August 2022, the president's intention to reach a peace agreement with different armed groups was made public. Under this logic, the Colombian government signed Decree 2656 (of December 31 of 2022) establishing a Bilateral and Temporary Ceasefire thought all national territory, as part of the political dialogue with the Estado Mayor Central group- (EMC). The ceasefire had remained in force until December 2023: In parts of the country where the EMC has a presence, the constant violations of international humanitarian law in the Amazon region inclined the government to suspend the ceasefire in May 2023, specifically in the provinces of Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, and Meta. The event that triggered this change was the murder of four indigenous children from the Murui community who were recruited by the Carolina-Ramírez Front in May 2023 in the Putumayo province (El País, 2023 May 22).

The Border-Commandos (BC) was organized in 2017 and brought together former FARC members who belonged to the FARC's 48th Front, 32nd Front, and 36th Front, as well as members of "La Construcción"- a criminal group that operated in Putumayo before the FARC's demobilization (Razón Pública, 2022, April 17). Additionally, this armed group established an alliance with the Second-Marquetalia (SM), a

MAP 1. ARMED GROUPS IN THE BORDER COLOMBIA, PERU, AND BRAZIL IN 2016

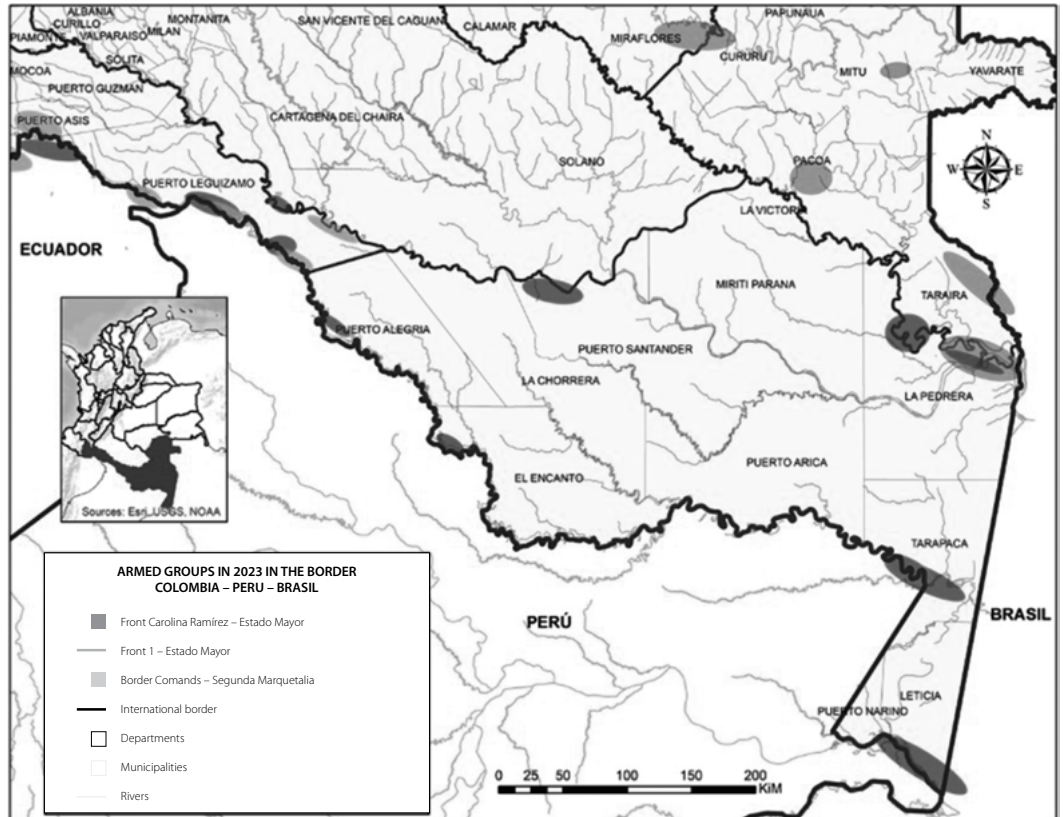


Source: Made by authors based on data of Colombia's Ombudsman Office.

structure with a national scope created by Iván Márquez and other FARC leaders in 2019, who decided to take up arms again under the argument of the government's non-compliance with the Peace Agreement. Although the BC began as a local armed group in Putumayo, the SM has been responsible for supporting its expansion into Caquetá, Amazonas, north Nariño, Cauca, as well as the strengthening of its actions in the northern provinces of Ecuador and Peru (Ombudsman, 2021).

Maps 1 and 2 show that the current distribution of dissidents has a significant correspondence with the former FARC-Fronts. Before its demobilization, the FARC operated in the Amazon region through the Southern-Bloc and achieved significant control of several river basins and border crossings in the provinces of Putumayo, Amazonas, and Vaupés. After the peace agreement, the Carolina-Ramírez Front, the First Front, and the BC-Front have located their structures in areas previously

MAP 2. ARMED GROUPS IN THE BORDER OF COLOMBIA, PERU, AND BRAZIL IN 2023

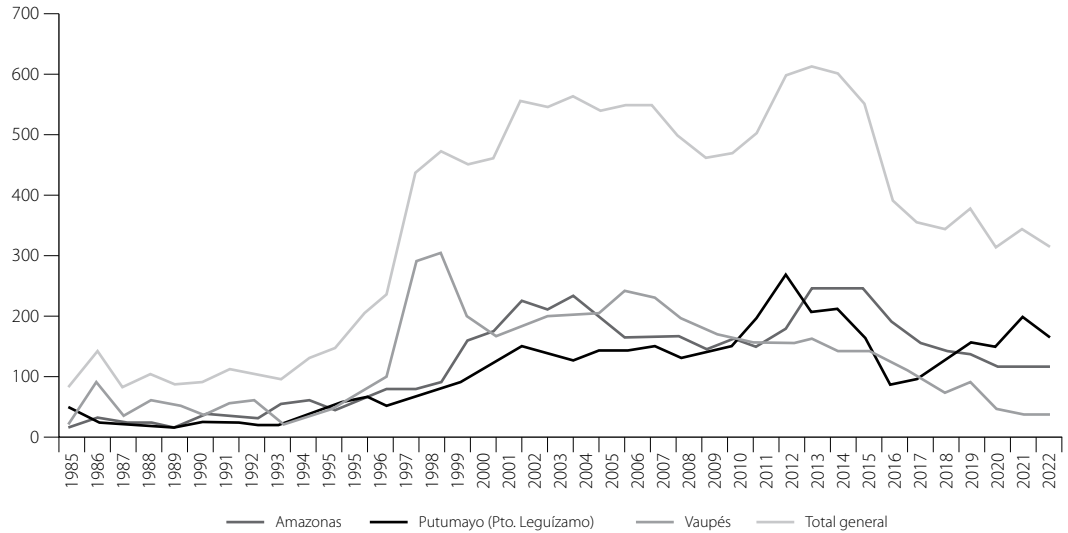


Source: Created by the authors based on data from Colombia's Ombudsman Office.

controlled by the FARC, but their territorial reach is more limited. As shown in map 2, the Carolina-Front would be the most extended one in the Amazon region and has interests in the same areas as the BC Front in lower Putumayo. Meanwhile, the Carolina-Front would have a territorial division and collaboration agreement with the First Front under the coordination of the Central General Staff.

As a result, the BC has had disputes with the Carolina-Front to control key

military corridors and financial activities in Putumayo and Amazonas. Hence, in the first year of Petro's government, events of high humanitarian impact were recorded because of the expansion and dispute of these Fronts in different areas of the Amazon basin. In this context, it is possible to distinguish three critical clusters, or geographic concentrations of conflict and violence, in the border areas between Colombia, Peru, and Brazil: Cluster 1). The corridor along the Putumayo and Caquetá

FIGURE 2. EVOLUTION OF VIOLENT EVENTS IN THE BORDERS BETWEEN COLOMBIA, PERU AND BRAZIL

Source: Created by the authors based on data from the Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims in Colombia.

rivers between the towns of Puerto Leguízamo (Putumayo) and El Encanto (Amazonas), which borders the northern part of Peru's Loreto province; Cluster 2). The area that extends to the extreme south of the Colombian Amazonas from the town of Tarapacá to Leticia, where the triple border between Colombia, Peru, and Brazil is located; Cluster 3). The corridor between Vaupés and the north of the Amazonas province comprises the towns of La Pedrera, Mití Paraná, and Taraira.

In these areas, violence against the civilian population has had a decreasing trend since the peace process with the FARC (see Figure 1). However, in the first cluster, there is a new increase in violence that is mainly linked to the confrontations and coercive actions between the BC and the Carolina-Ramírez Front. As for clusters

2 and 3 the violence that persists is more limited, mainly as a product of how the Carolina-Ramírez Front and the Front 1 interact with each other, and exert influence over the population in these areas, .

As it is evident in maps 3 and 4, in the Amazon region of Colombia before and after the peace agreement was signed, we note that violence has not had a random and generalized behavior at the territorial level. On the contrary, higher levels of violence are registered in specific villages where it is necessary to understand the interests of the Carolina-Front, the BC-Front, and the First-Front, as well as their humanitarian impact on the population, most of which corresponds to indigenous communities who are highly dispersed within this territory. Thus, it is necessary to examine how these violent non-state actors have imposed

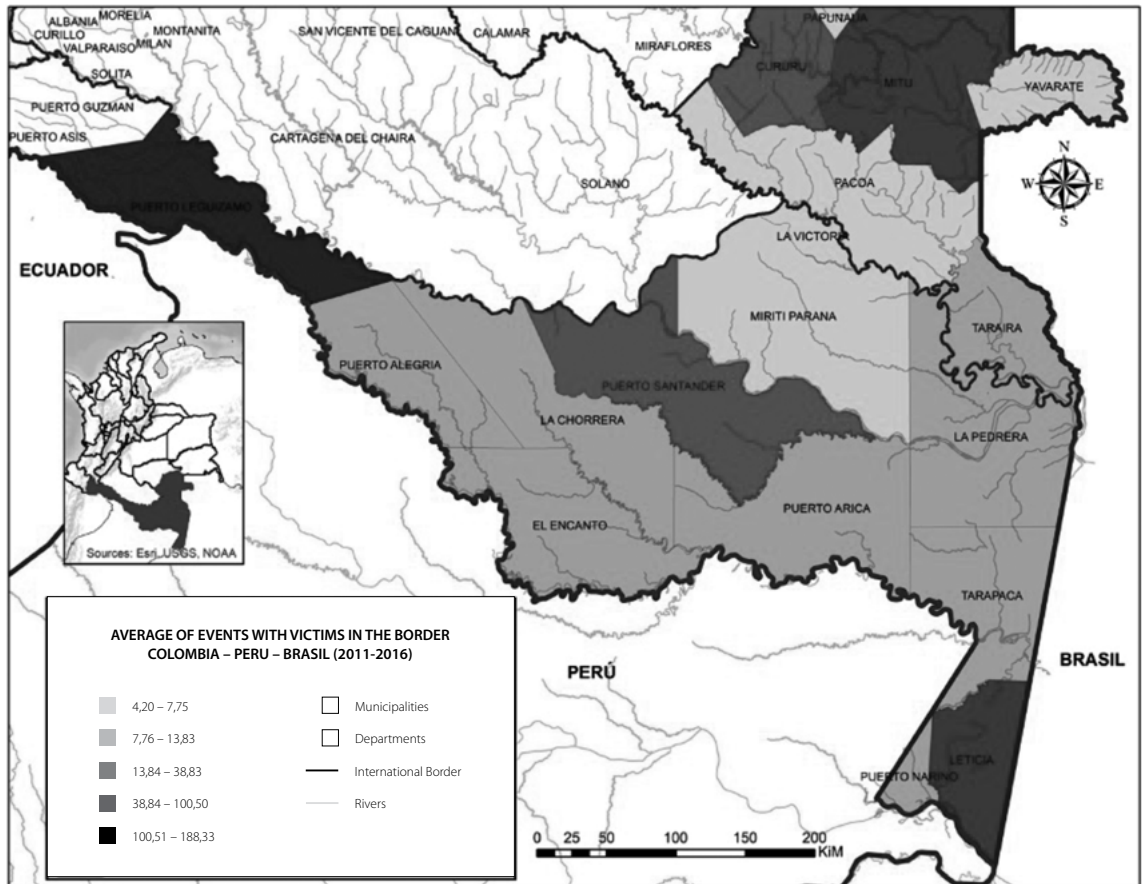
hybrid forms of governance with direct and dissimilar implications for the security of border communities.

Cluster 1 corresponds to the most violent scenario in these border zones. Although all the towns under study have presented a reduction in the average number of violent events after the peace agreement, the town of Puerto Leguizamo registers much higher levels of violence both in the

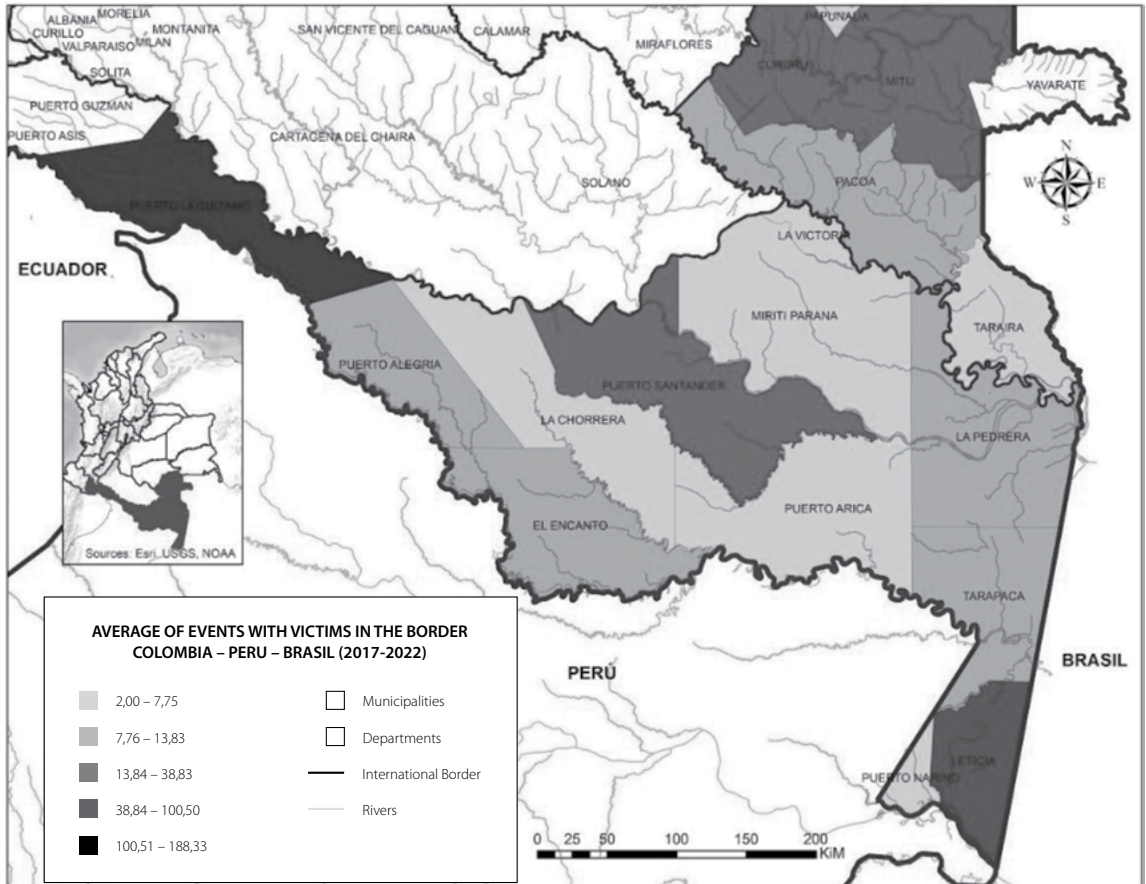
2011-2016 period, and the 2017-2022 period (see Figure 2 as well as maps 3 and 4).

The concentration of violent events in this village is the result of the competition between the BC and the Carolina-Ramírez Front to achieve hegemonic control over this strategic area for the production, processing, and commercialization of cocaine as well as to establish military rearguard areas towards neighbor countries (Cambio,

MAP 3. AVERAGE OF VIOLENT EVENTS IN THE BORDER OF COLOMBIA, PERU AND BRAZIL (2011-2016)



Source: Created by the authors based on data from the Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims in Colombia.

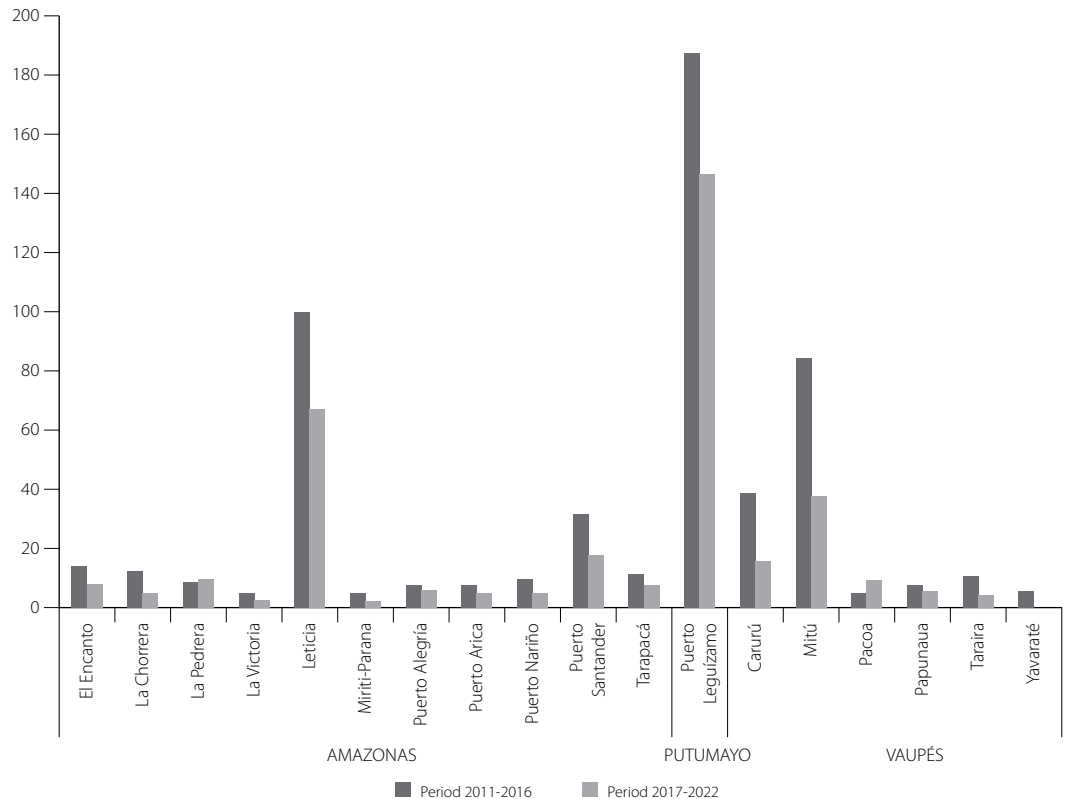
MAP 4. AVERAGE OF VIOLENT EVENTS ON THE BORDER OF COLOMBIA WITH PERU AND BRAZIL (2017-2022)

Source: Created by the authors based on data from the: Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims in Colombia.

2022 February 6). Although between 2018 and 2020 both groups had a fragile pact of territorial division with the Carolina-Ramírez Front taking the north of the town and the BC located in the south, since 2021 the BC has been trying to expand its control over the Caquetá River with the support of the Second Marquetalia Group which increased the coercive actions over the population.

The relevance of Puerto Leguízamo in the drug trafficking chain is not minor. This municipality doubled its coca cultivation area by 2021 (see Figure 3) and this coca expansion is beginning to have a relationship of continuity with the coca nucleus on the Peruvian side in the department of Putumayo (UNDOC, 2023). In addition to its importance as a zone of production, Puerto Leguízamo has geographical conditions

FIGURE 3. COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF EVENTS OF VICTIMS PER MUNICIPALITY BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2016 PEACE AGREEMENT

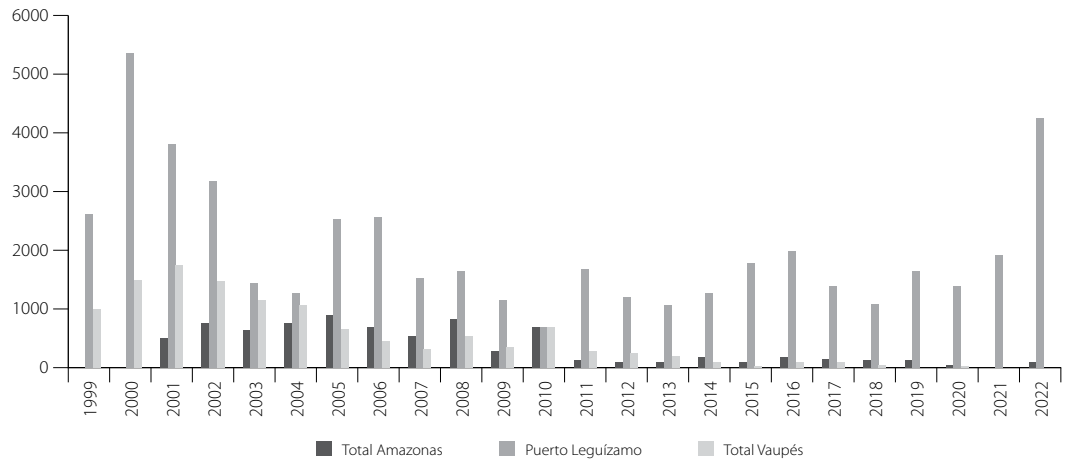


Source: Created by the authors based on data from the Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims in Colombia.

that facilitate the transport of cocaine base and cocaine paste, as well as the marijuana produced in Cauca, to other parts of the country. In particular, the Putumayo and Caquetá rivers that border Puerto Leguízamo serve as corridors for drug trafficking, connecting cultivation centers in Colombia's interior with border areas such as La Pedrera, Tarapacá and Leticia (Ombudsman, 2022). For this reason, control of this municipality is central to moving illicit substances to Peru and Brazil.

During the competition between the Carolina-Front and the BC for control of the drug trafficking activities, both groups have established social control mechanisms. According to the Colombian Ombudsman's Office, the Carolina-Front has disseminated coexistence manuals and summoned social and indigenous community leaders to announce the consequences of not cooperating and helping, or, of having links with the BC. The Carolina-Front has also established mobility restrictions that in some places

FIGURE 4. COCA HECTARES 1999-2022



Source: Created by the authors based on data from the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime.

go from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., limiting the entry of people from outside the communities.

This same group has threatened a socially stigmatized population, including alleged sellers and consumers of psychoactive substances, thieves, and unauthorized coca buyers. In addition, the mechanisms used to control the communities are also aimed at regulating the use, purchase management, and sale of land, including land for oil exploitation, logging, planting, as well as regulating the payment of wages.

Their regulation includes sanctions and punishments for those who participate in fights and allow the entry of people from outside the community without the corresponding permit (Ombudsman 2021). Moreover, the Carolina-Front established military training camps, but not political training, contrary to what happened with the FARC (Ombudsman 2022).

As for the armed group BC, its interest in social control is evident through convening meetings with local leaders to give and disseminate orders. In this regard, their involvement in the Second Marquetalia project in 2021 could be due to a maneuver to gain social legitimacy among the communities, which would strengthen their actions in the territory. It is known that the BC promotes and finances social and recreational activities and offers economic support to meet basic needs in the communities (Ombudsman 2022). At the same time, the BC has used rounds in high-end vans and motorcycles, of high cylinder capacity, as a mechanism to generate fear in the population to show their power. This group would also be responsible for the commission of selective homicides against those who are accused of favoring or belonging to the Carolina-Front (El Espectador, 2022 April 15).

According to the Ombudsman's Office, the BC has increased its threats and forced the displacement of families who don't plant coca-leaf (Ombudsman 2021). In addition, on the Peruvian side, in the Pacora area, this armed group would be responsible for the enormous growth of coca plantations, which is possible by bribing the indigenous authorities and the Peruvian security forces (CeroSetenta, 2022 December 12). Along the Putumayo River, the BC forces transporters to move various illicit goods, including coca grown on both the Colombian and Peruvian sides, and prohibits the transit of people through the river after 3 pm (Mongabay, 2022 September 22).

In the village of Puerto Leguízamo, communities are highly reluctant towards the presence of the State Army because they fear the reprisals by the BC or Carolina-Ramírez Fronts, and also due to Army's security operations in which the civilian population, including local indigenous authorities, are criminalized. As an example of the first case, we can highlight the situation of the Siona indigenous community of the El Hacha reservation, which requested the Army forces not to intervene directly, given that, in their view, their presence would increase the retaliation risks of its inhabitants (Ombudsman, 2022). In the second case, the massacre registered in the area of El Remanso on March 28th of 2022 is still under investigation, due to the fact that the army carried out a military operation in which civilians killed were presented as support members of the BC Front and also, the army identified the population

that witnessed the violent actions as 'narcocaleros' or people who promote the illicit crops (Razón Pública, 2022).

The most recent social support for these structures in Cluster 1 is explained by the possibility of mediating with the dissidents to avoid violence, or to resolve conflicts of coexistence, causing the communities to resort to these groups, and forcing them to recognize them as an authority (Ombudsman, 2022). However, during the disputes between these Fronts, violence against civilians continues to prevail as a form of rule considering that the number of threats, use of antipersonnel mines, forced displacement, forced recruitment of minors and homicides, have increased in this area (OCHA, 2022). In fact, in Puerto Leguízamo alone, 7 massacres were registered out of the 15 that have occurred in the Colombian province of Putumayo between 2020 and 2022 (CeroSetenta, 2022 December 12).

In other municipalities in this cluster, such as Puerto Alegría and El Encanto, the BC Front has been carrying out roadblocks, forced kidnappings, and threats despite the presence of the National Army, which has a base installed at downtown of El Encanto. The roadblocks take place at distant points along the Putumayo River where extortion is carried out against merchants, transporters, and contractors who carry out public infrastructure works. Moreover, the presence of gold mining ponds has increased in these same areas (Ombudsman 2021).

In this area, corruption has been a catalyst for the influence of these armed groups on illicit economies and communities.

Between Puerto Leguizamo and Peru, ineffective State governance and acquiescence of local authorities have favored drug trafficking, and smuggling the expansion of illegal mining activities. The former governor and former congressman of Putumayo was imprisoned for his alleged involvement in illegal mining activities, and the mayor of Puerto Leguizamo was arrested for alleged links to a criminal network of illegal gold mining in the Caquetá and Putumayo rivers (El Tiempo, 2019 September 24).

Based on this evidence in this First Cluster, it is possible to note a deterioration of security, with humanitarian repercussions, from the disputes and forms of control of the dissident groups. For the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the negative effects may be greater in the future in terms of forced displacement, confinement, and the number of deaths and injuries caused by anti-personnel mines that not only impact the local population but also immigrants (OCHA, 2022).

The Cluster 2, of persistent armed conflict and violence, is the southernmost area of Colombia bordering Peru and Brazil, which corresponds to the municipalities of Leticia and Puerto Nariño, as well as the territory of Tarapacá. In this region, the Carolina-Ramírez Front takes advantage of rivers such as the Cotuhé, the Putumayo and the Amazon, to engage in various illicit trafficking activities involving drugs, mining, logging, as well as facilitating the smuggling of immigrants (Ombudsman 2021).

In a high underreporting of Forms-of-violence in this border zone, Leticia is the city with the second highest levels of violence in the region after the peace agreement (see Figure 2 as well as maps 3 and 4). In this municipality, the presence of the Carolina-Ramírez Front is more robust, however, the prevention of BC Front incursion has encouraged the adoption of violent measures. In addition, disputes between the Brazilian armed groups Comando Vermelho (CV) and Los Crías (the latter with support from the First Capital Command) to monopolize the transit of cocaine passing through the triple border has extended violence from Tabatinga, in Brazil, to Leticia (Insight Crime April 4, 2023). In fact, by 2021 Leticia was the 4th most violent province capital for homicides, with a rate of 44 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (La Silla Vacía, 2023 March 29).

Increased controls by public authorities in the urban areas of Leticia, and also in Puerto Nariño and Tabatinga, led the Carolina-Front dissidents to operate through local criminal groups to reduce the likelihood of being captured. As part of the control mechanisms over the population, the Ombudsman's Office has established as a risk, the reporting of people as informants working for the security forces, and the recruitment of children and young people as coca leaf scrapers on the Peruvian Amazon, where most of the illicit crops in this international tri-border zone are located (Ombudsman, 2021).

Outside of urban areas, the difficult and poor infrastructure conditions are used

by non-state violent actors, present in the territory, to rest and supply themselves or as a strategic rearguard zone. The non-village zones of the Department of Amazonas – Puerto Alegria, El Encanto, La Chorrera, Puerto Arica, and Tarapacá, totaling an area of 57,139 km²–, only have the presence of one Administrative Officer, a person sent from Leticia by the Governor of Amazonas, who does not have administrative, technical and fiscal support to adequately fulfill his function (Ombudsman, 2021). This limited State control has facilitated the expansion of the Carolina-Ramírez Front in the Amazon Trapezoid.

For example, in Tarapacá, by the end of 2019, a pamphlet with behavioral guidelines associated with the FARC –presumably the Carolina Front– circulated through social networks and in physical form. This imposition of behavioral norms has had a direct impact on ethnic communities, and generates a risk of abandonment or disuse of economic practices such as fishing and hunting, as well as loss of ancestral knowledge (Ombudsman, 2021; Díaz, 2021). This territory has been a key corridor where rivers and several improvised roads are used for: The transport of arms and combatants, supply areas, production and hauling of inputs derived from drug trafficking, and the extraction of gold and other minerals. However, the presence of the Colombian Navy is very limited given that the nearest checkpoint is 1,400 km away (Trejos, 2015).

In addition, the violence and coercion associated with gold mining and other minerals has become an increasing risk for the

population. Mining is not only a way to launder drug money, but also represents a means of financing Colombian illegal armed groups and transnational organized crime, that compromise biodiversity and the populations living in this territory (Díaz, 2021). Several studies on this area of the Amazon have shown that Colombian groups extort money from miners, in Colombian and Brazilian territory and, with the support of Brazilian and Peruvian criminal structures, stimulate illegal mining through rafts, dredges, tractors, and bulldozers. Moreover, the corruption of authorities in the three neighboring countries is key to the exploitation, transport, and commercialization of gold mining. (InsightCrime, 2023 August 10; FIP, WWF, & ADELFI, 2021; Ebus & Pedroso, 2023).

Despite the continuity and expansion of different illicit activities in which the Carolina-Front participates, Cluster 2 under analysis shows a decreasing trend of violence compared to what occurs in other areas of the Amazon basin. Although in this space the peace agreement was a window of opportunity to strengthen State control, the more recent predominance of the Carolina-Front plays a central role in regulating violence. However, an intensification of disputes between Brazilian groups, as well as an eventual expansion of the BC-Front, may alter the levels of violence in this area.

In Cluster 3, which is the northeastern zone of the Amazon and Vaupes provinces, the Carolina-Ramirez-Front and the First-Front are located on different rivers and trails that connect Colombian and Brazil

(see map 2). To ensure their influence, they have established territorial limits between themselves and are imposing behavioral patterns through various violent repertoires at moderate levels compared to the coercion that occurs in the other clusters (see Figure 2).

As part of the Central General Staff, the First-Front is in charge of securing control of Vaupés, and of coordinating actions with the Carolina Front to obtain military and financial advantages in the northern part of Amazonas. Consequently, the First-Front has been responsible for several intimidating events against the population. In fact, in March 2023 this group kidnapped and tortured members of indigenous communities and announced that it would carry out new violent acts if the communities did not obey its rules. This situation caused the forced displacement of communities from Puerto Cedro and Centro Providencia (in northern Amazonas), and from Bocas de Uga (Vaupés) to Taraira (Ombudsman, 2022).

Additionally, there have been homicides, restrictions on mobility, forced recruitment of children and adolescents, and threats and extortion of residents of Mitú, Cururú, Pacoa, Taraira and La Pedrera. These territories, and in particular the Caquetá and Apaporis rivers near La Pedrera, are key for the movement of troops, drugs, weapons, and different contraband goods to Brazil. For this reason, both Fronts have tried to control the populations in this area, as well as to use and involve the local ethnic population in illegal tasks according to

their interests (El Espectador 2023 August 17).

Regarding mining activities, there is evidence of a significant concentration of alluvial gold mining alerts in the waters of the Cahuinarí National Natural Park along the Caquetá River, these are: La Pedrera and different areas of Vaupés (Ombudsman, 2021) In fact, in the eastern Amazon province several hamlets have grown due to the interest of settlers and indigenous people in the mining boom, between Taraira and La Pedrera. Indeed, post-FARC dissidents have sought to control the miners present in this region and to coordinate the outflow of gold and other minerals across the border (Ardila & Galvis, 2019). Thus, recently the dissidents of the First-Front have established alliances with Brazilian organized crime organizations, such as the Vermelho Command, for the extraction and smuggling of materials for illegal mining (Ombudsman, 2022).

Concerning drug trafficking, La Pedrera has become a key transit point not only for coca paste, but also marijuana. Here dissidents hire indigenous people to transport heavy shipments of marijuana through the jungle to Brazil. According to Brazilian Federal Police seizures, creepy marijuana trafficking increased in 2022, as each kilogram of high-quality marijuana has a price very similar to a kilogram of cocaine (El Espectador, 2023).

Although in the view of several villagers, following the orders of these dissidents and participating in these illegal activities, has become for some their livelihood, these

illegal economies have increased the rate of loss of primary forest, the violence against environmental defenders, and the right to live with security and integrity in their ancestral lands (Palacio & Ureña, 2022).

At record levels of illicit coca cultivation in the country, the provinces of Amazonas and Vaupés have seen a significant reduction in coca cultivation (see Figure 4), which represents an opportunity to promote legal economic activities. However, in Cluster 3 there has been a decisive transit of its inhabitants towards informal and illegal mining activities, which has been catalyzed by the dissidents, as an effect of the government's failure to effectively implement the comprehensive rural reform agreed by the 2016 peace agreement (Díaz, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The study of hybrid governance is a central concept in our argument to analyze: 1) The governance models that were established following the 2016 Colombian peace process, and 2) the different relationships between the state and criminal non-state actors by exploring the violence dynamics revealed in the border zone between Colombia, Peru, and Brazil.

In this area it is possible to distinguish three groups of dissidents with different territorial influence and military capacity: the Carolina-Ramírez-Front and the First Armando-Ríos-Front, both part of The Central General Staff; and also the Border Commands (BC) (*Comandos de Frontera*), part of the Second Marquetalia.

Through an analysis based on geoprocessing, we analyzed the presence of these criminal actors along the triple border between Brazil, Peru, and Colombia. The cartographic and quantitative data regarding the evolution of the presence of illegal armed groups and data on victimization events, after the 2016 peace agreement, showed a reduction in the levels of violence in comparison to the magnitude caused previously by FARC.

However, the reorganization and disputes between the Fronts, that have emerged in the borders of Colombia with Peru and Brazil, allow us to note that the presence of dissidents has had a decisive influence on the recurrence of violence and social orders, which persist in three clusters, or geographic concentrations, of this armed conflict in the lower part of Putumayo, the south of the Amazon province and the area that connects Vaupés and the Amazon.

Furthermore, among the findings of this research, it stands out that the competition between the Carolina-Ramírez-Front and the Border-Commandos explains the highest levels of violence in Cluster 1, while the territorial division between the First-Front and the Carolina-Front has generated lower levels of violence in Clusters 2 and 3.

In these three Clusters, the violent activities and participation of these armed Fronts in illicit markets, occur not only with the support of transnational organized crime structures such as the Vermelho Command and Os Crías. Furthermore, it continues amid complaints of State corruption and military and police actions that are

not only intermittent but also ineffective and even counterproductive, according to the communities that inhabit these borders.

The protection networks that the State provides for organized crime, whether through the corruption of State agents, or the rarefied presence of mechanisms of State coercion, and the combating organized crime; create a space for a hybrid mode of governance, which is nothing more than the concomitant existence of State rules and rules produced in the space of social or non-state interaction. It is worth highlighting that these non-state norms are not informal, given the extent that the non-state actor has the capacity for governability to exercise governance, even though violence; this norm in the specific context, involves a specific formality.

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