

Documentation

Dataset C1. War-Affected Communities in Colombia, a survey in conflict and non-conflict communities, 2021

Dataset resulting from two surveys carried out with 2645 respondents in 108 communities in Colombia on people's experiences of violence during the war and after the signing of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). It also covers current security conditions, socioeconomic indicators, political behaviour, social relations, state presence, public goods provision in communities as well as sources and perceptions of local authority.

The survey was carried out in 64 communities which experienced some form of non-state armed group presence at some point between the 1960s and 2012; as well as 44 communities without the presence of armed groups (as control). By comparing conflict and non-conflict communities, the study identifies some of the distinct challenges and opportunities that former warzones face as they navigate the difficult transition from war to peace.

The survey forms part of a longitudinal study of individuals and communities both during and after civil war. Previous waves of data collection took place in 2012, collecting evidence on the presence and activities of armed groups throughout the war and the responses of local communities; and in 2016, a few months before the demobilization of FARC.

Within the context of the Drugs and (Dis)Order project, aim was to investigate the distinct experiences of communities with coca crops, drug trafficking, or both, and how these illicit economies can influence communities' trajectories after the signing of the peace agreement.

Dataset owner: Universidad de los Andes

Context

Colombia has endured numerous periods of armed conflict. The most recent is often dated as beginning in the 1960s, when various armed insurgent groups were formed, including the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). In the 1970s and 1980s an illicit drug economy, centred on cocaine exports, emerged. Around the same time, a number of anti-subversive paramilitary groups were proliferating across the country. Coca cultivations expanded across Colombia, especially in southern 'colonisation zones' where people had settled, pushed out of other areas of the country by violence and/or land concentration.

The Colombian conflict has been a protracted, irregular civil war between the Colombian state, left-wing insurgent groups (most notably FARC), and right-wing paramilitaries. For over five decades, individuals and communities have been impacted not only by violence but also by profound transformations brought up by the presence of armed organizations, the responses of state actors, and the ways in which different sectors of the population reacted to the dynamics of war.

In 2016, the Colombian state and the primary insurgent group of the conflict, FARC, negotiated a peace agreement that resulted in the disarmament and demobilization of

FARC's members. The wide-reaching and comprehensive peace agreement is one of the most extensive peace agreements authored worldwide and includes provisions to achieve rural reform, robust democratic political participation, the end of the violent conflict between FARC and the Colombian state, curbing trafficking of illicit drugs and their influence on Colombian society, and appeals for justice and reparations for victims of the conflict.

Progress toward the stated benchmarks of the agreement has been modest. Violence is extremely high in certain regions of the country; attacks against civic leaders have risen to unprecedented levels, with more than seven hundred assassinations since the signing of the agreement. Additionally, another guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN) as well as several criminal groups continue to operate in various regions of the country. Nonetheless, violence has decreased in most regions of the country and the number of new reported victims of conflict-related violence has diminished in recent years.

Methodology

A questionnaire instrument was developed for the survey, with questions on people's lives and aspects of their community and municipality. The survey instruments contains questions on:

- Demographics
- Experiences of violence during the war
- Security conditions and basic rights after the peace agreement
- Current socioeconomic situation
- Service provision
- Political behavior and state-society relations
- Social relations
- Local power and authority
- Reconciliation and Peace

The survey was carried out by enumerators of survey company Cifras y Conceptos using questionnaire forms. The survey in conflict communities was carried out with a total of 1,517 people. The survey in non-conflict communities was conducted with 1,128 people and was slightly shorter as some questions on the presence of armed groups and community responses to such presence were not included.

Location

Colombia

Time period

November – December 2021

Sample selection

The sample selection is described in detail in the survey methods documentation file.

Anonymisation steps

The dataset has been anonymised.

Additional documentation files:

Survey Instrument in Spanish and English; Consent Procedure in Spanish and English; Survey methodology documentation; Report of general trends found in the survey data from conflict communities; Report of comparisons between communities in the total survey sample.