

Postgraduate training needed in Colombia to strengthen governability, democracy and human rights

Cómo citar este artículo:

Lozano, M., Moreno, C., Rodríguez, V., Ibarra, J. (2025). Postgraduate training needed in Colombia to strengthen governability, democracy and human rights. Revista Encuentros, Vol. 23 (02). 93-109. DOI: 10.15665/encuent.v23i02.3755.

Mayra Alejandra Lozano Rodríguez
Universidad Autónoma del Caribe
vmayralozanorod@gmail.com
Carlos Moreno Tamayo
cmoreno@oei.org.co
Victoria Rodríguez Arévalo
Universidad Autónoma del Caribe
victoria.rodriguez@uac.edu.co
Jairo Ibarra Lozano
Universidad Autónoma del Caribe
jairo.ibarra@uac.edu.co

Recibido: marzo 27, 2025 / Aceptado: noviembre 30, 2025

Abstract

This research employs a mixed methodology that integrates theoretical and statistical analyses to examine the challenges associated with reducing inequalities in access to postgraduate education in governance, democracy, and human rights in Colombia. The study begins with a comprehensive review of various epistemological and theoretical perspectives to establish a conceptual framework that facilitates an understanding of the role of postgraduate education in strengthening governance and democratic innovation. Subsequently, the specific context of the country is analyzed, highlighting the importance of postgraduate education in meeting research demands and legitimizing knowledge, particularly in rural areas. Finally, the statistical analysis of the existing postgraduate education offerings reveals that they are insufficient, with an even wider gap in rural areas. These findings underscore the urgent need to implement educational policies aimed at expanding access and coverage in the most marginalized territories.

Keywords: Postgraduate Education, Governance, Governability, Democratic Innovation and Human Rights.

Formación de posgrado necesaria en Colombia para fortalecer la gobernabilidad, la democracia y los derechos humanos

Resumen

Esta investigación emplea una metodología mixta que integra análisis teóricos y estadísticos para examinar los desafíos en la reducción de las desigualdades en el acceso a la educación de posgrado en gobernabilidad, democracia y derechos humanos en Colombia. El estudio comienza con una revisión exhaustiva de diversas perspectivas epistemológicas y teóricas, con el fin de establecer un marco conceptual que permita comprender el papel de la educación de posgrado en el fortalecimiento de la gobernabilidad y la innovación democrática. Posteriormente, se analiza la situación específica del país, resaltando la importancia de la educación de posgrado en la satisfacción de

las demandas de investigación y en la legitimación del conocimiento, especialmente en las zonas rurales. Finalmente, el análisis estadístico de la oferta educativa posgradual existente revela que esta es insuficiente, evidenciando una brecha aún mayor en las zonas rurales. Estos hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de implementar políticas educativas que amplíen el acceso y la cobertura en los territorios más marginados.

Palabras clave: Educación Posgradual, Gobernabilidad, Gobernanza, Innovación Democrática y Derechos Humanos.

Formação de pós-graduação necessária na Colômbia para fortalecer a governabilidade, a democracia e os direitos humanos

Resumo

Esta pesquisa utiliza uma metodologia mista que integra análises teóricas e estatísticas para examinar os desafios relacionados à redução das desigualdades no acesso à educação de pós-graduação em governança, democracia e direitos humanos na Colômbia. O estudo começa com uma revisão abrangente de diversas perspectivas epistemológicas e teóricas para estabelecer um marco conceitual que permita compreender o papel da educação de pós-graduação no fortalecimento da governança e da inovação democrática. Em seguida, analisa-se o contexto específico do país, destacando a importância da formação de pós-graduação para responder às demandas de pesquisa e legitimar o conhecimento, especialmente nas áreas rurais. Por fim, a análise estatística da oferta existente de programas de pós-graduação revela que ela é insuficiente, com uma lacuna ainda maior nas zonas rurais. Esses achados evidenciam a necessidade urgente de implementar políticas educacionais voltadas à ampliação do acesso e da cobertura nos territórios mais marginalizados.

Palavras-chave: educação de pós-graduação, governança, governabilidade, inovação democrática e direitos humanos.

Introduction

Postgraduate education in governance, democratic innovation, and human rights in Colombia is crucial for the country's social and political development. Governance is understood as a process that involves the exercise of authority by social groups, which directly relates to the quality of public policies and citizen participation (Barraza et al., 2023; Samaniego et al., 2024). Postgraduate education provides professionals with the necessary tools to understand and engage in these processes, fostering an active and critical citizenry that can contribute to the stability and legitimacy of the political system (Barraza et al., 2023).

Moreover, training in democratic innovation is essential in a context where institutions must adapt to the evolving demands of society. Postgraduate education enables individuals to acquire competencies that equip them to implement innovative strategies that promote citizen participation and transparency in public management (Carine et al., 2023). In this regard, the formation of leaders with managerial and governance skills is crucial to addressing contemporary governance challenges (Carine et al., 2023).

On the other hand, human rights constitute a fundamental pillar of democratic governance. Postgraduate education in this field not only raises awareness among professionals about the importance of these rights but also provides them with the necessary tools to defend them and design

policies that guarantee their protection (Dávila, 2018). Education in human rights fosters a culture of respect and protection of fundamental rights, which is essential for social cohesion and sustainable development in Colombia (Dávila, 2018).

Despite the importance of postgraduate education in these areas, significant inequalities persist in access to such programs, particularly in rural regions of the country. Educational offerings remain limited and are concentrated in urban centers, preventing professionals in remote areas from accessing advanced training that would enable them to influence governance and local development processes. In this context, it is essential to analyze the challenges Colombia faces in reducing these disparities and expanding postgraduate education coverage.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates theoretical and statistical analyses to examine inequalities in access to postgraduate education in governance, democracy, and human rights in Colombia. The data collection process is based on two complementary strategies: a review of secondary sources and a statistical analysis of the educational offerings.

First, an extensive review of various epistemological and theoretical perspectives on these topics is conducted to understand the conceptual frameworks that underpin the consolidation of peaceful territorial spaces in the country. This review includes previous studies, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature, providing a solid theoretical foundation for analyzing educational offerings.

Subsequently, the study examines Colombia's specific needs that justify the expansion of postgraduate education in these fields. This involves identifying and assessing existing research demands and the critical role that advanced education plays in the legitimization of knowledge within the Colombian context.

For the analysis of educational offerings, the primary source is the "Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior (SNIES)", an official database that centralizes information on academic programs in the country. Postgraduate programs in governance, democratic innovation, and human rights are reviewed, identifying their geographic distribution, delivery modalities, and admission requirements. This process reveals existing gaps in the coverage of these programs and their availability in both rural and urban contexts.

Once the SNIES data is collected, a descriptive analysis is conducted to identify trends in educational offerings and compare them with the country's training needs. This analysis assesses the effectiveness of educational policies in promoting equitable access to postgraduate education in these fields.

Results

Analysis of theoretical perspectives

Governability and Governance Perspectives

The concept of "governability" originated in the 1970s when states were experiencing problems in coping with social demands; The Keynesian policy of that time entered an economic, political and ideological crisis. This caused instability and fluctuations in the world economy, and the theoretic-

cal and practical tools of that time did not propose an effective way out of said crisis. This led to the relative loss of both economic and political power of nation states.

For the World Bank, the notion of “Governance” was initially related in the report called “Sub-Saharan Africa : From Crisis to Sustainable Growth” (1989) and in subsequent documents such as “Governance and Development”, thus highlighting three elements linked to the definition of governance : 1) form of the political regime, 2) process of exercising authority in the administration of economic resources and social for the development of a country and 3) capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and fulfill their functions. More recently, the World Bank defined governability as the ability of freely elected rulers to act effectively in pursuit of the well-being of the governed as a whole, and in this sense, the elements of governability would be legitimacy and effectiveness.

Now Jan Kooiman defines governance as the structure that arises in a sociopolitical system, the common result of interactive interventions by all the actors involved, so that governance cannot be reduced to one actor or a single group of actors, considering that none of them has all the knowledge and information required for the solution of complex, dynamic and plural problems (Kooiman, cited in Rhodes, 1996). The concept of interactive governance is then introduced, which, according to Kooiman (2005), focuses on the resolution of social conflicts and the generation of social opportunities through interactions between civil, public and private actors.

“The interactive governance approach suggests relating governability to the qualities of the governance object (the system to be governed), its subject (the governing system) and the relationship between the two (Kooiman, 2008:3); governors, governed, and nature of interactions between governors and governed all contribute to governability. Therefore, governability can be defined as: the general governance capacity of any entity or social system.

The interactive approach assumes that the governability condition of any system is continually changing in response to external and internal factors. What may be high governability at one point in time, may be low governability at another. Similarly, what may be effective governance in one place may be ineffective in another. Government acts can influence governability as a whole or any of its components.

Many external factors also influence governability, some of which cannot be managed by the governance system, or only incompletely. This often increases uncertainty regarding the governability of a social system or entity. The starting point for developing the concept of governability is to consider three sets of variables contributing to the governability of social entities and the natural resources on which they depend. These entities are called: “system to be governed”, the governance system and governance interactions taken together. (Kooiman, 2008:3.)

Likewise, considers that governability consists of three main components, a system to be governed, a governance system and the interactions between these two, the basis for conceptualizing a system to be governed are the primary processes in which that the social sectors specialize. These processes present characteristics by which they can be analyzed, such as their diversity, dynamics and complexity. The system to be governed can be operationalized according to the aspects of governance activities: governance elements, modes and orders, and in the three main institutions of social governance: state, market, civil society and increasingly hybrid forms between them. It is also possible to analyze participatory interactions, and forms of interaction driven by policies and management. Together, these important components of governability form a conceptual basis for analyzing and eventually evaluating the governability of a particular social sector (Kooiman, 2008).

In the same way, governability implies the search for political stability to achieve well-being and human development, which is achieved when the rulers are capable of meeting citizen demands; then governability becomes a necessary condition for the development of societies. In this sense, it is important to highlight what was expressed by Jaime Torres Melo, in the compilation made by Carlos Zorro Sánchez, called “Development: perspectives and dimensions” (2007:517), when stating: “So, if governance is understood as a set of capabilities of social actors, these are determined in terms of opportunities and constraints by the institutional arrangement in question. Therefore, it includes evaluations of institutional capacity, organizational and administrative capacity, territorial control, citizen participation, legitimacy and leadership, trust in institutions, and cooperation and coordination strategies.”

Democratic Innovation

The democracy has to do with much more than just exercising the right to vote, a democracy must promote the use of other means that allow a more effective participation in a democratic model, in that order, citizen participation constitutes a necessary mechanism for the consolidation of a democracy and is completely aligned with the so-called “democratic innovation”.

Democratic innovation describes the existence of institutions specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process:

In the first place, it is not obvious why the term should be reserved only for participatory institutions. In the last three decades, many established democracies have seen a proliferation of new instances of citizen participation, characterized by greater popular participation in political decision-making beyond the institutions of electoral democracy. In fact, it is mainly in the realm of non-electoral institutions that we are seeing the invention of new public processes and of citizen participation: in governance, policy implementation, and public administration. The advent of these new opportunities for citizen participation marked an important “institutional turn” (Smith 2019) in democratic theory in an attempt to strengthen the normative basis of democracy. This is crucial, especially in the context of declining citizen participation in elections, which is often seen as reflecting a growing disenchantment with conventional modes of political participation (Blais and Rubenson 2013; Dalton 2008, Cited by Woo and Kübler:338)

Electoral democratic innovations, for example, aim to improve the situation of declining voter turnout by experimenting with new forms of voter participation at various levels of elections, such as postal voting, electronic voting, etc. Consultative innovations, primarily to elicit citizens’ opinions and preferences, may not be considered truly innovative in their processes, but new and unusual platforms such as participatory theater and permanent citizen panels that facilitate consultations can certainly give an air of innovation.

Participatory democracy seeks to stimulate popular power, expanding the interference of citizens in public decision-making and favoring inclusion based on the premise that it is the citizens who best know their problems and will make more efficient collective decisions, which respond to reality. (pp. 25-26), on 4 assumptions: participation has educational functions and transforms the subject in the process, making him more active and committed to civic values, increases citizen control over political activity, generates greater equality. (Aedo, 2014: 25-26)

Deliberative innovations offer a deeper form of participation that emphasizes the quality and form of interaction between participating citizens compared to consultative innovations. From more institutionalized forms, such as citizen juries, to more informal ones, such as democratic cafés,

deliberative innovations contain a discursive element that focuses on rational and respectful discussion and debate of policy issues.

To empower citizens to exert a semblance of popular control, cogovernance innovations that take the form of community councils or even participatory budgeting practices have enabled the participation of citizens and public officials, where the former can exercise some influence over political decisions or at least contribute opinions to set the agenda. As an even deeper form of citizen participation, innovations of the direct democratic type involve practices and processes that potentially invest citizens with much more decision-making power through public meetings, referendums, initiatives or recalls. (Woo and Kübler:339)

In this sense, new instruments and mechanisms for citizen participation are generated, such as participatory budgets, public policy management councils, citizen councils, city councils, consultation tables, accountability spaces, monitoring, etc. (Dagnino, Olvera & Panfichi: 38).

Democratic innovation strengthens the democratic culture in an environment of freedoms and access to rights, demands the ability to know and participate in decision-making and overcome the crisis of representation of current politics, allows the configuration of states of citizens, guarantee for the full exercise of rights and freedoms, becoming a political tool for public debate on ways to resolve social needs, emergencies and priorities.

In this sense, the Latin American peoples and communities, and particularly in Colombia, have longed and sought to become active subjects of rights through the mobilization of different social movements, it has been possible for the social sciences to incorporate innovative concepts into the debate on democracy to improve, expand and consolidate the democratic culture, these conceptual innovations allow the creation of institutional and legal conditions for active participation in the design and taking of decisions in the management of public goods and affairs.

Human rights

Human rights are recognized both individually and collectively and are expressed in various instruments such as the University Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 217 A (III), of December 10, 1948, the American Convention on Human Rights, signed in San José, Costa Rica on November 22, 1969, at the Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2200 A (XXI), of December 16, 1966, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2200 a (XXI), of December 16, 1966. Thus, a relationship is established between democracy and human rights, the protection and materialization of human rights in a participatory democracy are conditioned to achieve harmony and in a democratic society since they are elements of a Rule of Law and share the premise of "allowing the governed to live with dignity".

The establishment of a democracy must be linked to the protection of human rights, such as:

- 1. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (University Declaration of Human Rights, art. 18): it is a fundamental right in any democracy, the ability to think freely in any belief must be recognized.*
- 2. Freedom of expression (University Declaration of Human Rights, art. 19): not only free thought must be recognized, but also the possibility of expressing said thought and opinions.*

3. *Freedom of assembly and peaceful associations* (Declaration of the University of Human Rights, art. 20): this right allows the integration of interest or pressure groups to discuss or strengthen ideas, as well as to protest against decisions with which one does not agree.

This is how human rights and governance strengthen each other, the work of governments and other political and social actors is governed by the set of values provided by the principles of human rights. Good governance must ensure the effective application of human rights, this involves the creation of entities and relevant legal frameworks, responsible management processes, among others, that allow satisfying the rights and needs of citizens.

Human Rights, Coexistence and Security, an Inherent Relationship.

Coexistence, security and Human Rights are essential concepts for the consolidation of a society in which relationships between people are developed in a harmonious framework based on respect for rules, differences and freedoms.

Coexistence is nothing more than shared life between the members of a certain social group in a specific space and in peaceful conditions. Security, on the other hand, refers to the set of processes and procedures aimed at protecting and strengthening civil order to eliminate risks and threats that have the potential to affect coexistence. On the other hand, Human Rights are those rights inherent to people by the simple fact of existing. Rights whose universality is reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which, in its 30 articles, includes those that are considered basic, such as the right to life; and those that give value to life, such as the right to health, education, work, among others.

Starting from such concepts, allows us to understand the similarities and differences between them in order to establish the relationship between them. For example, if the notion of security is limited to that of a public good whose objective is to reduce actions that violate rights, its indissoluble relationship with coexistence would be ignored, since, although one of the differences between security and coexistence, lies in the fact that the first aims to reduce crime and the second does not, the truth is that another of the purposes of security –perhaps the most relevant– is the materialization of peaceful coexistence. Likewise, for this type of coexistence to materialize, it is necessary to establish some essential rules that are instituted as principles of coexistence. Rules inherent to the human being regardless of their origin, their ethnicity, their gender, their language, their creed or any other condition. Rules that converge in the so-called Human Rights, in a framework of interdependence aimed at providing security to the person for the ideal development of their life in coexistence. This is how the approximation of these three dimensions is specified. Security as a public good that entails the protection of Human Rights for the materialization of peaceful coexistence. Three dimensions that intertwine as three forces capable of preventing conflicts and conjuring them up when they occur.

The codification of Human Rights and the establishment of legal and political institutions that strengthen their defense and protection, form a favorable space for the human being. A space of coexistence that, in addition to being formed, must be sustained through mechanisms, strategies, actions and bodies that guarantee the security of the components of society. Such codification, from the international perspective that refers to the relationship between countries, is associated with the friendly relationship between nations, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, on international cooperation, on the respect for the rights of individuals and fundamental freedoms and the importance of dealing with international disputes through peaceful mechanisms. All aimed at preventing security and coexistence from suffering

damage that affects peace; and always, aimed at the protection of people against the violation of their rights within the framework of a vision that places the human being as a priority and as inspiration and basis for obligations and specific limits at the head of the States, which have the duty to guarantee Human Security in three dimensions: that relating to the rights of individuals with special emphasis on minorities and vulnerable groups; that related to International Humanitarian Law in relation to the duty to protect the civilian population in the event of conflict; and that concerning the duty to intervene in problematic socioeconomic phenomena that generate violence or conflict in order to guarantee their non-recurrence (Charles, 2008. *La Guerra y la Paz*).

Country needs that justify the need to expand access to postgraduate academic programs in Governability, Democracy and Human Rights

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there is a fragility in democratic processes, exemplified in cases such as the coup in Honduras in 2009 to defeat the “democratic resistance” and the results of the governments of Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua and more recently Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, where authoritarianism and dictatorship prevailed or still predominate.

These situations, which the different countries of Latin America have gone through, have led to a lack of credibility in democracy on the part of the citizens, and as a consequence they perceive a lack of support for it; this can be seen reflected in the marked electoral abstentionism, in the negative opinions about policies and politicians, which appear to a great extent in opinion polls. Citizens’ distrust of political systems is increasing, with repercussions on the legitimacy of the political process with the decrease or lack of citizen participation (Smith 2009).

For this reason, the need arises to train upright citizens, with values and principles, but above all with high knowledge in governability, democracy and respect for human rights, as has been resonating since the reform of the Political Constitution in the year 1991, in which citizen participation mechanisms together with human rights are conceived as a fundamental pillar to sustain an active democracy and, at the same time, solid governability in the country.

In this way, in Latin America, according to the statistics officially published on its website up to the year 2020, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR, demonstrates how dictatorships and different armed conflicts have triggered systematic violations of these rights, a situation that it has put the democracy of nations at imminent risk. Protecting human rights is a task that involves governments, but it also requires citizen participation so that this, in turn, can contribute to policies aimed at respecting civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including, there is a greater possibility that the policies that emanate from participatory processes can be perceived by citizens as legitimate.

In this sense, governance does not refer only to the good practices of administrative management, but also implies a conception of a participatory society with more active citizens.

“... governability is the quality of relations between government and society. The task of governing consists in building hegemony, making private interests converge towards a collective interest that, being defined by the one who governs, confers ascendancy and political control to those who are governed”. (Guzman, 2003)

Consequently, the governability of a democracy is based on the fact that the organs of power and the political actors that participate in decision-making and the generation of policies are conside-

red by the citizens as their legitimate representatives. In this context, governability in Colombia presents great challenges, especially in rural areas, where not only the presence of the State is weaker, but also its absence is reflected in the levels of inequality and development, in relation to urban areas.

...it has been found that the detriment of the country's rural areas is largely explained by the political and economic processes that have been driven by urban elites for their benefit and the development of cities. The results show low levels in the provision of public services for rural populations, compared to the high levels registered in urban areas (López, 2019).

In turn, this scenario of inequality has contributed to the development of problems such as violence and insecurity, which shows the need for the territories to strengthen a political culture that, through commitment and participation, generates a climate of peace, dialogue and rational deliberation, which feed the exercise of the government for the design of comprehensive public policies that meet the priority demands of citizens and their rights.

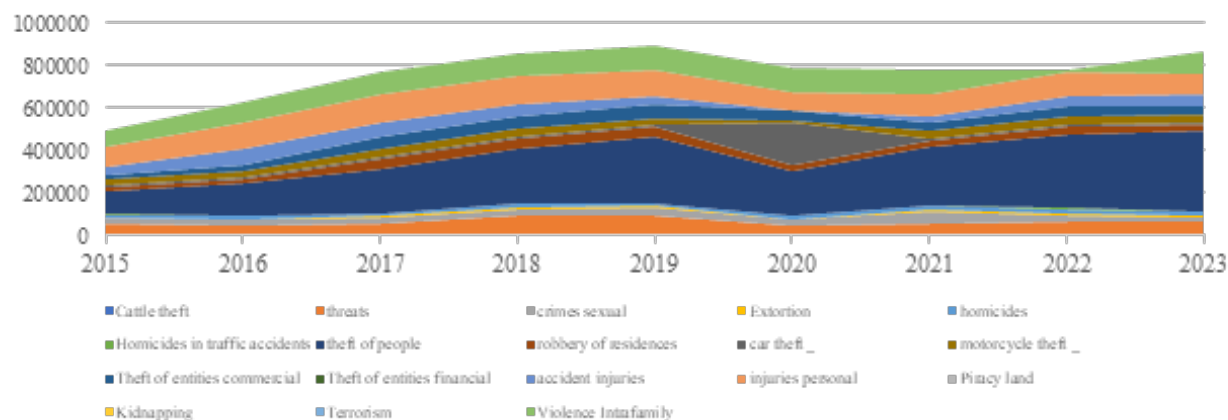
As evidence of the above, there is the report of crimes between the period 2015-2023, adding all the forms of acts related in the following table, an increase of 77% can be indicated (table 1):

Table 1. Crime statistics in Colombia for the period 2015-2023

Type of crime	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cattle theft	2155	3006	5135	3919	3329	2240	2167	2551	1484
Threats	54271	44737	48587	84377	85747	39740	52688	65135	58896
Sexual crimes	21920	23934	28350	36791	38096	28626	59570	27666	23366
Extortion	5480	4903	5532	7048	8207	6902	7807	9791	10961
Homicides	12460	12164	12079	12667	12656	12018	13709	13537	13515
Homicides in traffic accidents	5344	5609	5261	6017	6054	4937	6910	7538	7469
Theft of people	101449	146867	209781	257071	306831	203532	272512	351370	372813
Robbery of residences	21164	24190	46550	47373	46457	32324	31533	34503	33785
Car theft	7759	8049	9750	9848	10496	203532	10061	11151	11026
Motorcycle theft	27296	31393	32010	32733	35704	9002	31553	38516	39763
Theft of entities commercial	22466	23060	60311	65579	61644	41618	38524	46408	37937
Theft of entities financial	120	128	163	192	141	91	99	138	81
Accident injuries	42588	77037	67281	48988	40151	1696	32191	45747	48833
Injuries personal	86963	127226	132655	138306	119281	82597	99658	110410	95409
Piracy land	295	324	443	404	318	260	136	185	132
Kidnapping	213	207	195	176	92	88	130	223	343
Terrorism	391	221	142	164	248	368	195	578	189
Violence Intrafamily	75699	97139	100527	99906	116505	113567	117132	11762	106947
Total	488033	630194	764752	851559	891957	783138	776575	779231	864972

Source: Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Interpol, crime information group, Information extracted from the Statistical, Misdemeanor and Operational Information System of the National Police – SIEDCO

Figure 1. Number of registered crimes period 2015-2023



Source: Elaboration based on data from the Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Interpol, crime information group, Information extracted from the Statistical Information System, Contraventional Delinquency and Operations of the National Police - SIEDCO.

In addition to crime statistics, there are reports of human rights violations, such as the Human Rights report Watch regarding the year 2021, which mentions:

FARC dissidents and other armed groups, including the ELN and paramilitary successor groups, have committed multiple “massacres,” defined in Colombia as the killing of three or more civilians in a single incident. The OHCHR Office documented 76 massacres during 2020 – the highest number since 2014 – and received information on another 82 between January and September 2021 (p. 180.)

Likewise, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2021) reported,

Increases in displacement caused by violence and in confinements or restrictions on the mobility of the population caused by non-state armed groups and criminal organizations. OCHA indicates that, between January and November 2021, 72.388 people (12.848 boys and girls) have been displaced, while in all of 2020, 26.291 were displaced. In addition, 57.787 people have been confined between January and November 2021. OCHA points out that 69% of the displaced population and 96% of the population whose mobility has been unduly restricted are indigenous and Afro-descendant people (p. 6).

In this sense, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2021) recommended that the Colombian State give priority to the situation in the territories most affected by violence, reinforce the presence of civil authorities, and the provision of basic services for prevent and contain violence and protect the civilian population and community, social, indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders in these areas.

The global context, not unrelated to these realities, poses challenges described in the Sustainable Development Goals, associated with the reduction of conflicts, insecurity, murders, forced disappearances, violent acts, and the need to guarantee the protection of human rights. From there, SDG 16 “Peace, justice, and solid institutions” is established, which seeks to: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, facilitate access to justice for all and create effective, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels.

In response to the above, the current National Development Plan (2018-2022), formulated the “Pact for legality, security, authority and order for freedom” based on an internal diagnosis based

on figures of deaths of social leaders, cases of homicide, interpersonal violence, theft of people, among other indicators, which reveal the concern to strengthen respect for human rights, promote democracy and consequently support true governability in Colombia. The pact aims to prevent and punish high-impact crimes by improving the reaction capacity of Police authorities, and guaranteeing the protection of threatened social leaders. Likewise, it tends, among other objectives, to strengthen the culture of legality so that citizens exercise their rights in accordance with the law.

In the same way, the Defense and Security Policy (PDS) for Legality, Entrepreneurship and Equity and the Framework Policy for Coexistence and Citizen Security emerged, whose objective is to “set objectives and guide the action of the institutions, the authorities of police and administrative”; This policy is the basis for the design and implementation of comprehensive citizen security and coexistence plans by local authorities. It bases coexistence and citizen security on five (5) strategic axes: 1) Culture of legality for coexistence, rights and peace, 2) Disruption of crime, 3) Innovation, science and technology, 4) Active citizenship, co-responsibility and 5) institutional projection; all of them inherent to the exercise and application of Human Rights.

Likewise, strategies have been defined such as the adoption of a policy for the prevention and protection of people and communities at risk, particularly victims, social leaders and human rights defenders; and the formulation of a citizen security and coexistence policy to prevent crime and improve the capacities of police authorities (law 2197 of 2022 the citizen security law).

This is how, although Colombia has advanced in the generation of public policies aimed at peaceful coexistence and citizen security, the permanent transformations of society require the generation of new or more mechanisms that allow the path to continue to establish social relations in the communities that allow coexistence in harmony and the free development of their rights, especially, as already mentioned, in rural areas. (Dcto 1581 2017 public policy to prevent the violation of the rights to life, liberty and security of individuals, groups and communities)

Hence, the consolidation of processes of coexistence and security must be the result of the joint action of government institutions and the administration of justice, as well as the active participation of citizens and civil society organizations; For this reason, democratic innovation is highly relevant, as it generates a sense of co-responsibility in the actors that co-inhabit the national territory.

Institutional and justice strengthening, as well as the transformation of environments, the promotion of civic participation, and health, are aspects that must be worked on in a coordinated way to achieve peaceful coexistence, as well as so that the organization of cities and municipalities is based on compliance with the laws and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The Role of Higher Education

As stated (Ramírez, 2018), education, conceived as a human right and a process, is multidimensional to the extent that it responds to historical, ideological, political, social and economic connotations. Likewise, it is complex because it obeys and responds to culture, a human sphere that presents high levels of difficulty in its analysis and understanding (p. 26).

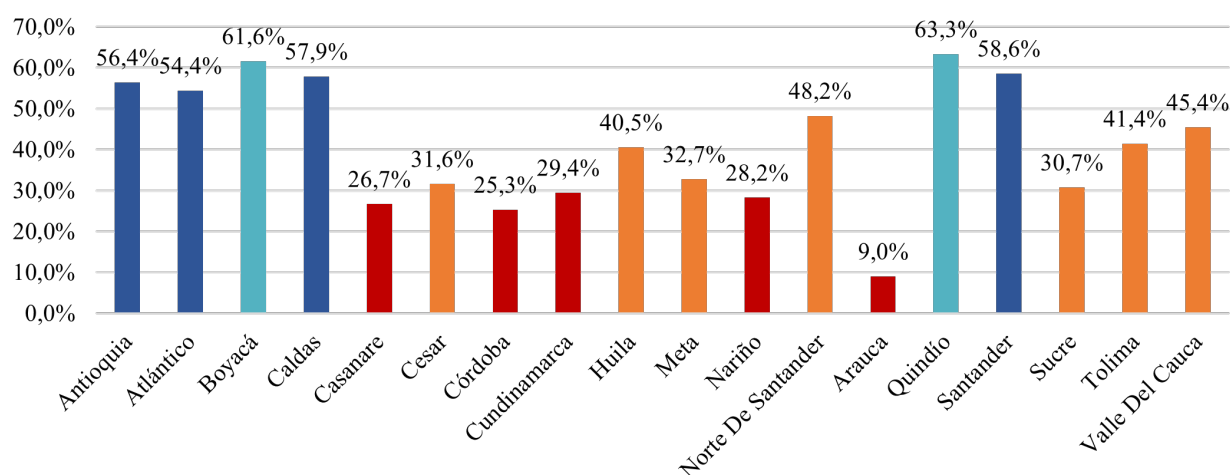
In this sense, it is essential to attribute the incidence of education in the development of the different contexts, as well as its contribution in the consolidation of democratic, safe and peaceful environments. The 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter establishes that education plays a primary role in strengthening democratic institutions, democratic values, and participation in civil society (Sacavino, 2012).

In particular, with regard to human rights education, the need to mainstream training and accumulate investigative knowledge is recognized (Magendzo, 1998). To date, these needs have been ratified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 “Quality Education”, in which goals such as:

- Ensure equal access for all men and women to quality technical, vocational and higher education, including university education
- Ensuring that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, world citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.
- Strengthen the links between research, policy and practice with a view to fostering effective, accountable and transparent participation of institutions and civil society in policy dialogue at all levels by bridging cultures and empowering youth.

Based on the foregoing, it is first important to mention the challenges that Colombia faces in terms of reducing gaps in access to higher education. In 2019, the Science and Technology Observatory indicated that coverage in the country is still very low compared to other countries; Likewise, the statistics of the National System of Higher Education (2019) show the problem, especially attenuated in rural areas:

Figure 2. Coverage Rate in Higher Education by Department



Source: SNIES, 2019

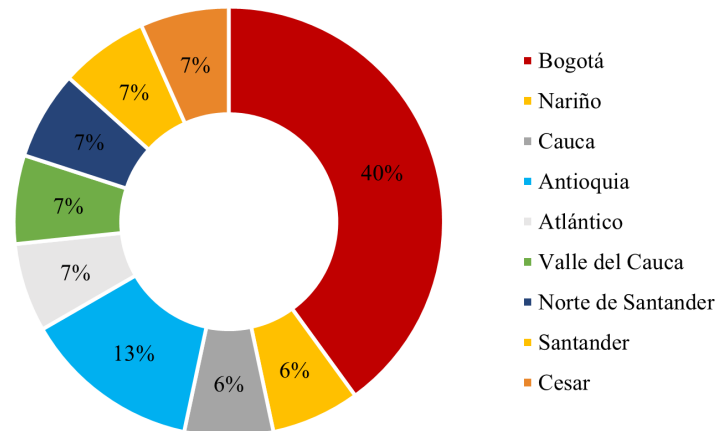
The gross coverage rate in higher education in Colombia (51%) is similar to the average for Latin America, but is 23 percentage points below the average for OECD economies (Consejo Privado de Competitividad, 2021: 18). Higher education enrollment is highly concentrated in large cities, and there has been little progress in terms of decentralization in the last decade.

However, with regard to access to postgraduate training for master's degrees, that is, the level of training that allows the generation of skills for research itself and applied research, and through

which the generation and transfer of knowledge to the communities, company and State, the gap seems to be getting worse.

At the national level there are 15 master's programs in government, governance and governability, located in 13 universities in the country, of which 14 are offered in face-to-face mode and 1 in virtual mode, as follows:

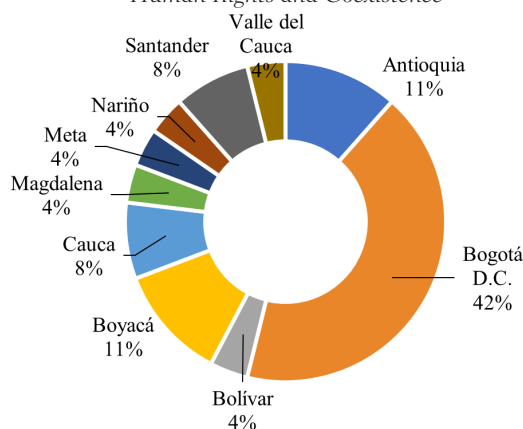
Figure 3. Distribution of Master's programs related to Government, governance and governability



Source: Elaboration from SNIES data. 2023.

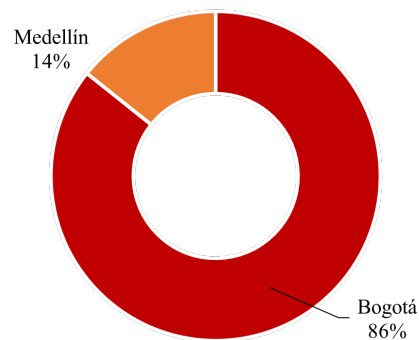
There are 2 academic programs in coexistence (Master's in Human Rights and Public Policies for Coexistence; and Master's in Reconciliation and Coexistence), and 24 Programs in Human Rights. Of these, only one is offered in traditional distance moduele. In relation to security training programs, there are 7 face-to-face programs, distributed in 2 cities.

Figure 4. Distribution of Master's Programs related to Human Rights and Coexistence



Source: Elaboration from SNIES data. 2023.

Figure 5. Distribution of Master's Programs related to Security



In this way, it was identified that the master's programs developed around the study objects of governability, democracy and human rights, are concentrated in the main cities of the country; in turn, most of them are offered in person. The foregoing accounts for the need to generate strategies that minimize the gaps in access to postgraduate education in these areas in the territories, such as the implementation of virtual training proposals.

Access to postgraduate education can be one of the routes to generate processes of democratic innovation, identify and analyze social problems, and build territorial proposals that contribute to the strengthening of governability, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the construction of citizenship; that is, postgraduate education must become a national commitment, to the extent that it contributes to the development of skills in applied research so that real proposals for knowledge transfer to the territories are designed and implemented.

The above, bases the pertinence of the creation of Master's programs that study governability, Democracy and Human Rights, since it is required, from an integral formation, the understanding of the social phenomena that impact the public function, as well as the appropriation of the relationship that exists between the promotion of human rights, their respect and protection and the impact on the conditions of coexistence and citizen security; that is, an articulation between the participation of the state, political actors, social actors and the citizenry, which results in the design and formulation of policies, mechanisms and strategies aimed at strengthening democracy and governability.

In this sense, postgraduate training constitutes an intrinsic strategy for the legitimation of knowledge and the development of research that can contribute to strengthening governability, democratic innovation and human rights.

Discussion

Governance, democratic innovation, and human rights are fundamental pillars for the development of societies and political stability, as they enable the consolidation of legitimate institutions, citizen participation, and the creation of effective public policies (Zorro, 2017). In this regard, postgraduate education in these areas plays a crucial role, as it trains professionals with the necessary competencies to design and implement strategies that strengthen governance and promote transparent and participatory public management (Barraza et al., 2023).

However, access to these programs remains deeply unequal in Colombia. Educational offerings in governance, democratic innovation, and human rights are concentrated in major cities, putting rural regions at a disadvantage, where the lack of educational opportunities prevents the formation of local leaders capable of influencing territorial development processes (Private Council on Competitiveness, 2021). This gap not only limits institutional strengthening in these territories but also perpetuates structural issues such as violence, insecurity, and the violation of fundamental rights.

Education, conceived as a human right and a multidimensional process, has a direct impact on the consolidation of democratic, secure, and peaceful environments (Ramírez, 2018). In this sense, ensuring equitable access to postgraduate programs in these areas becomes a key strategy for territorial transformation, especially in regions most affected by violence and weak institutions. Training in human rights not only raises awareness among professionals about their importance but also provides them with tools for their protection and promotion, contributing to the construction of more cohesive and just societies (Dávila, 2018).

Moreover, democratic innovation is particularly relevant in this context, as it allows for the implementation of new mechanisms for citizen participation, such as participatory budgets, public policy councils, and accountability spaces. These tools strengthen co-responsibility between the state and civil society, promoting more inclusive and efficient governance. Likewise, security cannot be understood solely as crime control but rather as the creation of conditions that enable peaceful coexistence and the full exercise of human rights (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021).

Within this framework, postgraduate education must become a national commitment. Its strengthening and expansion, particularly through virtual and decentralized training models, is essential to ensuring equity in access to advanced education and closing territorial gaps. As Magendzo (1998) points out, it is crucial to mainstream human rights education and accumulate research-based knowledge for its application in different territories. The consolidation of a more accessible academic offering in these areas will not only improve the state's management capacities but also foster the development of more democratic, secure, and cohesive communities.

Ultimately, ensuring accessible and relevant postgraduate education in governance, democratic innovation, and human rights is a necessary step toward transforming Colombia's political and social landscape. Implementing strategies to reduce access barriers will enable the formation of leaders with a critical and proactive vision, capable of contributing to institutional strengthening, citizen participation, and the effective guarantee of human rights—key elements for building a more just and equitable society.

References

- Aedo Vallejos (2014) *Innovación democrática y empoderamiento: Estudio comparado de Ocho Experiencias de presupuesto participativo en Chile*, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Doctorado en Ciencia Política (Consulta en https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/tesis/2015/hdl_10803_285354/cav1de1.pdf)
- Aguilar, Luis (2007), "El aporte de la política pública y de la nueva gestión pública a la gobernanza", *Revista del CLAD Reforma y Democracia*. N 39 en [tp://www.bibliotecaib.org/Portals/0/docs/Maestrias/Alta_Direccion_Publical2.%20La%20Nueva%20Gestion%20Publica%20628Luis%20Aguilar%29.pdf](http://www.bibliotecaib.org/Portals/0/docs/Maestrias/Alta_Direccion_Publical2.%20La%20Nueva%20Gestion%20Publica%20628Luis%20Aguilar%29.pdf) (5 de marzo de 2015)
- Aguilar, Luis (2010), *Gobernanza: El Nuevo proceso de gobernar Ciudad de México*, Fundación Friedrich-Nau- mann-Stifung für die Freiheit
- Asamblea General de la Organización de Naciones Unidas. (2006). Resolución 60/147. Principios y directrices básicos sobre el derecho de las víctimas de violaciones manifiestas de las normas internacionales de derechos humanos y de violaciones graves del derecho internacional humanitario a interponer recursos y obtener reparaciones. Aprobada el 16 de diciembre de 2005. (A/RES/60/147). 21 de marzo de 2006.
- Asamblea General de la Organización de Naciones Unidas (2012). Promoción de la verdad, la justicia, la reparación y las garantías de no repetición. A/67/368. 13 de septiembre de 2012.
- Ballesteros, J. "Sicurezza umana e indivisibilità dei diritti", *Ragion Pratica*. 2008.
- Banco Mundial (1989), "El África Subsahariana De la Crisis al Desarrollo sustentable. Una perspectiva de largo plazo", D.C. BM/Oxford, University Press.
- Banco Mundial (1997), *Informe sobre desarrollo humano 1997. El Estado en un mundo en transformación*, Washington, D.C. BM/Oxford, University Press.
- Barraza, J., Román, A., Cabrera, P., González, G., & Pure, W. (2023). Gobernabilidad y elecciones: una revisión sistemática. *Regunt Gestión Y Gobernabilidad*, 2(1), 9-16. <https://doi.org/10.18050/regunt.v2i1.01>
- Barrueto, F y Navia, P (2013). Tipologías de democracia representativa en América Latina. Consultado en: <http://www.scielo.org.mx/pdf/pyg/v20n2/v20n2a2.pdf>
- Bellamy, A. J. 'Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: The Exception and the Norm', *Ethics & International Affairs*. 2011.
- Beuchot, M. (2004.). *Filosofía y derechos humanos*. Siglo XXI editores.
- Blais, A. & Rubenson, D. (2013). The source of turnout decline new values or new contexts? *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(1), 95-117

- Brower, Jorge (2008), "Implicancias epistemológicas del pensamiento complejo para la articulación de la una semiótica de la cultura", *Revista Estudios de Filosofía* N°37, pp. 31-61.
- Brower, Jorge (2010), "El valor semiótico y Dialógico de las nuevas epistemologías. En *Revista Observaciones Filosóficas*. N°10. En: <http://www.observacionesfilosoficas.net/elvalorsemiotico.htm> dirección electrónica (22 de marzo de 2015)
- Browe Jorge (2011) *Convergencias epistemológicas para la producción de conocimiento en el ámbito de las Ciencias Sociales: hacia la delimitación del valor semiótico dialógico de las nuevas epistemologías*, *Revista Representaciones. Periodismo, Comunicación y Sociedad*, Año IV, N°8, pp 13-40
- Carine, L., Gutiérrez, M., Fong, F., & Guzmán, A. (2023). *La formación de competencias directivas: pilar fundamental en el desarrollo de líderes universitarios*.
- Camargo, Pedro Pablo. 'Derecho Internacional Humanitario'. Ediciones Leyes. Bogotá, Colombia, 2002.
- Charles-Philippe David, 'La Guerra y la Paz: Enfoque contemporáneo sobre la seguridad y la estrategia'. Editorial Icaria. Montreal, Canadá. 2008.
- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (2021). *Estadísticas de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos sobre peticiones, casos y medidas cautelares*. (oas.org). Consultado en: <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/multimedia/estadisticas/estadisticas.html>
- Crozier, M (1972). *La sociedad bloqueada*, Amorrortu Editores, Buenos Aires. Jan Kooiman
- Crozier, M; Huntington y Watanuki (1975). *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*. New York, University Press.
- Dahl, R (1998), *Democracy*. Yale University Press.
- Daughters, R y Harper L (2007), "Fiscal and Political Decentralization Reforms". Eduardo Lora (ed.), *The State of State reform in Latin America*. Washington, D.C., BID/BM, Stanford University Press.
- Dávila, F. (2018). *Políticas educativas en Colombia: en busca de la calidad*. *Actualidades Pedagógicas*, (71), 193-213. <https://doi.org/10.19052/ap.4430>
- De Souza, B. (2004), *Democratizar la Democracia: Los caminos de la democracia participativa*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Durkheim, E (1937), *Les regles de la méthode sociologique*, Paris, PUF.
- Evelina, d., Olvera, A., Panfichi, A. (2006), *Innovación democrática en América Latina: una primera mirada al proyecto democrático-participativo*. *La Disputa por la Construcción Democrática en América Latina* (Dagnino, Olvera, Panfichi: 2006). Este documento fue presentado en el Seminario *Democratic Innovation in the South*, San José, Costa Rica, Marzo 5-6 de 2007. Consultar en: <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/sursur/democra/05dag.pdf>
- García, R. (2006) *Sistemas complejos. Conceptos, métodos y fundamentación epistemológica de la investigación interdisciplinaria*, Barcelona, Gedisa.
- Gaudin, J. (2002), *Pourquoi la gouvernance?*. Paris, Presses de Sciences Po.
- Guzmán, V (2003). *Gobernabilidad democrática y género, una articulación posible*, *Serie Mujer y Desarrollo* N° 48, CEPAL , pp. 11-12; 15.
- Huntington, S (1972), *El orden político en las sociedades en cambio*. Buenos Aires, Paidós.
- Huntington, S. (1991). *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman.
- Jessop, B (1998). "The Rise of Governance and the Risks of Failure: The Case of Economic Development", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 50. n°155, pp. 29-45.
- Kooiman, J., M. Bavinck, S. Jentoft y R. Pullin (eds.) (2005): *Pescado de por vida*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Kooiman, J.; Bavinck, M.; Chuenpagdee, R.; Mahon, R.; Pullin, R. (2008). *Interactive Governance and Governability: An Introduction*, *The Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental*

- Studies vol. 7, no. 1, 2008. *The Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Studies*, ISSN 1602-2297 <http://www.journal-tes.dk/>
- Korstanje, M. (2007). La democracia y sus supuestos: una perspectiva comparativa entre los conceptos de democracia Procedimental y Estructural. *Estudios sociales* (Hermosillo, Son.), 15(30), 46-78. Recuperado en 25 de enero de 2021, de http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0188-45572007000200002&lng=es&tlng=es
- Lester, E. (2010). Socio-economic rights, human security and survival migrants: Whose rights? Whose security?, in Edwards Alice & Ferstman Carla (eds.), *Human Security and Non-Citizens. Law, Policy and International Affairs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- Lunay, C. (2005), La Gobernanza: estado, ciudadanía y renovación de lo político, en <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/Colombia/cinep/20100925104922/lagobernanzaControversia185.pdf>
- Marchesi, A (2015). 'La protezione internazionale dei diritti umani. Nazioni Unite e organizzazioni regionali'. Franco Angeli editore.
- Pisillo R (2020). 'Diritto internazionale dei diritti umani. Teoria e prassi'. Giappichelli Editore. Italia.
- Rhodes, R (1996), "The New Governance: Governing without Government", *Political Studies*, xlv, Oxford, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 652-667.
- Sacavino, S (2015). Pedagogía de la memoria y educación para el "nunca más" para la construcción de la democracia. *Folios*, (41), 69-85. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0123-48702015000100005&lng=en&tlng=es.
- Samaniego, E., Polo, E., Rosalino, M., & Usiña, J. (2024). Crisis de gobernabilidad en el Ecuador en el siglo xxi y sus impactos en la balanza comercial. *Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar*, 8(1), 8146-8160. https://doi.org/10.37811/cl_rcm.v8i1.10133
- Smith, G. (2019). Lessons from democratic innovations. In *Whose government is it?: the renewal of state-citizen cooperation*, Vol. 91, ed. H. Tam. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Vidal J., (2002), Las palabras del Imperio (1): gobernabilidad y gobernanza, en www.geocities.com/contragobernanza/gobernanza.htm
- Woo & Kübler (2020) Taking Stock of Democratic Innovations and Their Emergence in (unlikely) Authoritarian Contexts, *Polit Vierteljahresschr*, 61:335–355