

State for Hire: Corporate-state security contracts in extractive zones

Shauna N. Gillooly, *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile*

Jamie Shenk, *University of Warwick, United Kingdom*

Activists and NGOs have long accused extractive companies and state security forces of colluding to suppress opposition to extractive projects, often via means of violence, sabotage, or repression around the world. Evidence of this practice, however, is harder to come by. This article investigates these linkages directly, using original data of contracts signed between various branches of the Colombian armed forces and judiciary bodies with extractive companies around issues of security. In its essence, these contracts allow private companies to contract out sectors or branches of the Colombian government to protect private installations or project infrastructure throughout the country. Our data sheds light on these specter-like agreements, and proves that the relationship between state forces and private companies can and are formalized. This allows us to directly observe what types of conditions might make their presence more probable and explore potential effects.

Keywords: security, private company, armed forces, extractives, repression, PSC

Introduction

Activists and NGOs have long accused extractive companies and state security forces of colluding to suppress opposition to extractive projects, often via means of violence, sabotage, or repression. For instance, joint public private security forces hired by Skye Resources were accused of gang-raping eleven Maya Q'eqechi women during a forced eviction (320). In Nigeria in the 1990s, the community of Umuechem participated in peaceful protests to voice complaints about oil-extractive pollution. The multinational petroleum company, Shell, repeatedly denied collusion with the Nigerian military only to later admit to providing logistical and weapons support in the military's bombardment of the community (Gedicks 2001, 45-46). An unpublished government report from Colombia, again from the 1990s, accused British Petroleum of collaborating with Colombian members of the armed forces who were involved in kidnappings, torture, and murder of social leaders and union members (Ibid, 59-60).

The cases above, however, represent the odd exception. While activists across the Global South often allege encountering instances of collusion between companies and state security forces, proof is hard to come by (Larsen 2023). Meanwhile, companies and governments tend to explain such proven examples as the work of one rogue agent, or a few "bad apples." This tendency gives these arrangements a shadowy, ghost-like, or specter quality, which are terms that Paul Amar (2013) uses to describe parastatal formations.

This article seeks to shed light on these specter-like agreements and proves that the relationship between state forces and private companies can and are formalized. We do this by investigating state-company linkages directly. We leverage a dataset of contracts signed between various branches of the Colombian armed forces and judiciary bodies with extractive companies around issues of security. In its essence, these *fuerzas del convenio*, as the team of investigative journalists who originally published the dataset calls them, allow private companies to contract out sectors or branches of the Colombian government to protect private installations or project infrastructure throughout the country.¹ The majority of the companies that engage in this type of contract are those that are engaged in extractive industry, such as petroleum exploration projects and mining companies. These data allow us to directly observe what types of conditions might make their presence more probable and explore potential effects.

¹ It is important to note here, and as we describe later in this article, that these types of arrangements can be with other government agencies as well. For example, in the case of Colombia, we know that these contracts are in force not just with branches of the armed forces, but also with the General Attorney's Office. The existence of such structures in an entity like this has serious implications for the practical realities of troubling political trends like the criminalization of protest, which we discuss more in our background section and our analysis.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is two-fold. First, we provide a descriptive analysis of these usually hidden contracts and the patterns of their implementation across Colombia. Second, we explore the data in cross-national and panel formats to explore two related research questions: 1. under what conditions are these contracts likely to be put into place? And 2. What possible impacts may these contracts have on civil society where they are in place? Our findings are mixed. Patterns of where *convenios* are in place are only weakly correlated with potential security threats and are more strongly correlated with historical threats or hotspots of resistance in our cross-national dataset. Meanwhile, we do not find correlation between the presence of *convenios* and threats, assassinations, or arbitrary detentions. Results go against our initial expectations, but we offer a few explanations for why this might be the case and avenues for future research.

This article makes three important contributions to the security and extractive studies. Our first contribution is a significant empirical one in its introduction of *convenios* dataset. The introduction of this data set makes visible what activists and scholars have long claimed: that state security forces are explicitly contracted and financed by private companies (e.g. Becerril, Larsen, Middeldorp & Le Billon 2019, Gedicks 2001). This research also turns on its head our general understanding of state-company relationships in the security sector. Most literature in this space focuses on instances of states contracting private military or security companies (PMCs/PSCs) to directly provide security or training in conflict zones (Reno 1997, Akcrinaroglu and Radziszewski 2013, Avant 2006, Avant & Neu 2019), or specifically around extractive projects (Enns et al. 2020; Abrahamsen and Williams 2010, 2017). Yet these *convenios* represent a different arrangement: *state forces working directly for private companies*.

Finally, this article contributes to a growing field of study of the criminalization of protest, particularly in Latin America (Becerril 2018, Doran 2017, Rasch 2017, Sieder 2020, Lindt 2023). Past studies look at the various uses of state apparatus, from judicialization (Sieder 2017, 2020), to arbitrary arrest and other forms of state repression (Becerril 2018, Arce and Nieto-Matiz 2024) as a major block to civil society organization. Most of these studies (Arce and Nieto-Matiz being the exception) examine one or a handful of case studies, or else describe general trends without identifying specific actors (Middeldorp and Le Billon 2019). With our dataset, we are able to look across time and geography to unpack how state repression may operate as a result of these specter-like relationships.

The structure of this article is as follows: in the next section, we situate our study in the broader literature on public-private partnerships, PSCs, and the criminalization of protest and bridge this literature with our understanding of the historical context and structure of *convenios*

in Colombia. From these literatures, we generate two sets of hypotheses regarding the conditions under which contracts are more likely to be signed and the potential effects these contracts have on civil society. We then move on to discuss our data and methodology, including the limitations of our data and scope conditions.² Lastly, we discuss our results, the implications they have for the larger literature on the criminalization of protest, as well as for a more profound understanding of structures of violence around extractive sites.

Literature

While little has been written about the types of security contracts that *convenios* represent, we situate our study first in robust scholarship studying the relationship between states and private companies, particularly in the security field. We focus here on the connections that our work has to existing literature on PMCs and PSCs, in particular work that looks at the relationship between state and private companies around extractive sites. Next, we use Paul Amar's discussion of parastatal formations to theoretically frame these relationships and describe their "specter-like or shadowy qualities" that our interlocutors on the ground in different parts of Colombia have described to us. Lastly, we engage with the growing literature on the criminalization of protest. We argue here that these murky assemblages are further complicated by said criminalization of protest.

Parastatal formations, PPPs, PMCs, and PSCs

Work that focuses on PMCs and PSCs have generally looked at the role that private military or security companies have played in conflict-affected settings, such as the impact of PMCs on conflict duration (Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski 2013; Avant and Neu 2019) and everyday security provision (Robb Larkins 2023). Other work on PSCs tells us that even in so-called 'weak states' that exercise limited control over large parts of their territory, extractive enclaves are sites with high levels of 'stateness' (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010, 123). This illustrates to us that issues around stateless territory is, in part, a strategic decision made by governments. Private security companies continue to play a large role in this, though they may not function as the private, independent armies that they were in the 1990s. As the global political landscape has shifted, so has their structures. For example, in their multi-national study, Abrahamsen and Williams argue that PSCs are part of larger "security assemblages" around extractive zones. They describe that these assemblages:

² Due to the nature of the *convenios*, not all of them are publicly accessible. We have compiled as complete of a dataset as we can, but we do know that there are more *convenios* we did not gain access to, likely in the hundreds.

“Not only incorporate the traditional security providers such as the public police, private security companies and in-house security specialists, but also a range of development specialists, human rights educators and local community leaders. They represent the coming together of a plethora of different actors, norms, agendas and interests – some local, some global, some public and some private – in close but often tension-filled relationships. They give rise to new security institutions, practices and forms of cooperation and conflict, while simultaneously serving to ensure and facilitate the continuation of resource extraction in complex fragile environments” (Abrahamsen and Williams 2017, 16).

Work like that of Abrahamsen and Williams (2017) tries to outline the complex array of actors that are present.

Paul Amar (2013) pushes this theory further, explicitly linking security assemblages with parallel histories of state harm and illegality in the Global South. Parastatal formations, he explains, can function in obvious manners. They may include, for example, paramilitary groups that maintain close ties to elite actors and “perform illegal acts of enforcement, coercion, and punishment” to benefit both the illegal group and their legal backers. But parastatal formations can also function in more subtle ways, existing as parallel governance nodes where organized crime collaborates with state officials and development firms (Amar 2013, 18). In these arrangements, the activity of illegal actors, such as paramilitary groups, often garner the majority of attention from scholars, activists, and other critics. This focus on paramilitaries, however, obscures how the state’s political and economic interests are served when these parallel nodes of governance flourish. This is, in part, one of the benefits of parastatal formations to political and economic elites. Olsen and Bernal-Bermúdez similarly describe this phenomenon as a form of economic complicity, when the state, either through direct action of its security forces or widespread impunity, contributes human rights abuses in a corporation’s “sphere of influence” (Olsen and Bernal-Bermúdez 2022).

Public-private partnerships (PPP), when poorly regulated, or not regulated at all, create opportunities for shady deals to proliferate without any real oversight, particularly where weak, unstable, or uninterested government institutions already exist. Despite ineffective or substandard economic performance, states utilize parastatal formations both economically and politically to consolidate and perpetuate a particular form of power (Mukandala, 1988). Despite claims of industrializing and developing in different parts of the world, the links of parastatal formations and development firms have demonstrated that their positive impact on communities is non-existent, and in fact harmful, often leaving communities with even less effective infrastructure than they had before, and contributing to displacement through land grabs (Bowman 2020; Obera 2015; Mahlangu 2001). This technique has been used widely around the

world, and is one against which communities have mobilized against, at great personal risk, particularly amidst the rising trend of the criminalization of protest (Ballvé 2012; Gillooly 2022). Concepts such as the security assemblage and parastatal formations connect to ideas of co-COIN that we see emerging from literature in the criminalization of protest (Becerril 2018; Larsen 2023). We see this as a tendency of governments to reframe protest as a security issue.

Criminalization of Protest

States' employment of parastatal formations to protect corporate assets has coincided with a documented increase in the criminalization of protest in the recent decades. Of particular note is what scholars like Doran and Olarte refer to as the "neutralization" or "depoliticization" of protest (Doran 2017; Olarte 2014). In this process, protests are re-framed, not as a civil liberty or a valid exercise to petition for change in behavior or attitude, but rather as a "danger" or "security problem" (Selmini and Di Ronco 2023; Martin 2017). Other scholars have noted the significant expansion of state control over protest in recent years, such as an increase in public order offenses in countries like the United Kingdom and an extension of preemptive policing power, even before a protest event has taken place (Gilmore 2019).

Some scholars note that corporate managers and elites have begun to rely on the state to punish their opponents, who in the past were a faceless "collective" such as 'a labor union' (Becerril 2018). However, new strategies engage in systems of private oppression: "corporate counterinsurgency" utilizes measures of espionage, physical violence, threats, and defamation to weed out leaders from said collective in an attempt to demobilize resistance altogether (Ibid; Larsen 2023). Becerril (2018) argues that this type of corporate counterinsurgency will and should change our analysis of repression to closely examine how states and corporations engage in repressive strategies together. We take this call seriously with our focus on *convenios*.

Background and Hypotheses

While past work has focused on private security interactions with rebel groups or civil war, as the *fuerzas del convenio* claim they engage with, this article flips research about private security on its head (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010; Dietz 2023; Kinsey 2006). How can we observe and understand the effects of repression when the state is contracting out its services to private companies or organizations? To do this, we engage with the following research questions with our original data: **RQ1. under what conditions are these contracts likely to be**

put into place? And RQ2. What possible impacts may these contracts have on civil society in the municipalities where they are in place?

To form our hypotheses, we draw on both the literature above and our knowledge of the specific Colombian context in which companies may pursue *convenios*. The original jurisprudential justification for the *convenios* is based on the larger context of the Colombian armed conflict— to protect project infrastructure in the face of attacks from guerrilla groups during an ongoing insurgent conflict. To that end, in this section, we provide a discussion of the legal timeline and implementation of the *convenios*, as well as some context on the larger Colombian armed conflict as we articulate two sets of hypotheses to the research questions above.

Fuerzas del Convenio and the Colombian Government during the Conflict

Fuerzas del Convenio represent a subcategory of agreements that Colombian government agencies are permitted to sign with private actors in order to facilitate their work. Known as *convenios de colaboración, cooperación y/o coordinación* (contracts for collaboration, cooperation, and/or coordination), this broader category of agreements feature across a number of different sectors and levels of government. For instance, corporations may sign contracts with local municipal governments to provide funding for emergency road maintenance after a mudslide, under the assumption that the agreement will benefit both the Colombian state and the private company by ensuring public works are kept up to date. As stated in Resolution 5342 from the Colombian Ministry of Defense, a *convenio* is:

A category of state contracts, which respond to a contract modality whose purpose is to combine forces to achieve a common goal which, first and foremost, is the the achievement of the functions of legal duties of the parties and, in the second place, a collective benefit. This consequence is characterized by support via financial means, or the efforts by the parties involved to join focus to achieve the common goal established (Resolution 5342, June 2014).

These general agreements are also not unique to Colombia— as we touch upon in our introduction, they also feature in other governments. Observers trace the signing of these agreements specifically between the military and extractive companies in Colombia to 1995, when foreign petroleum companies BP and Oxy began to negotiate protection agreements with the military and private security firms around the large Cusiana oil reserve in the Eastern region of the country (Gedicks 2001, 60). At this particular moment in time, Colombia's ongoing armed

conflict had posed a hindrance to extractive industries, targeting existing oil projects and discouraging foreign investment in mining, primarily due to leftist guerrilla group attacks on infrastructure in rural parts of the country. This provided justification for these kinds of agreements, particularly under the language of protecting property and installations against acts of terrorism committed by groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Citing the high incidence of guerrilla attacks on the Caño Limón oil pipeline, Oxy contracted the maintenance of two counter-guerrilla army units near the pipeline. Companies and state forces continued to sign *convenios* in the ensuing years, even after a 2016 peace accord with the country's largest guerrilla group ushered in an internationally supported, if domestically tenuous, peace (Gillooly 2022).

The use of *convenios* runs parallel with the expansion of extractive industries, particularly mining, across the country since the 2010s (Shenk 2023) with a significant increase from 2013 onwards. In their 2019 report, Colombian NGO *Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con Presos Políticos* identified 365 cooperation contracts with the Colombian Ministry of Defense—CSPP reports that there were *convenios* in 27 of the 32 departments of Colombia, and the company that has participated the most in its financial support of the Colombian armed forces via these means is oil company Ecopetrol, which from 2016-2019, has given over \$39 million USD to the Colombian Navy, Army, National Police, and the Air Force (CSPP Report, 2019).

Of note is that around the same time we see an uptick in *convenios*, Colombia also recorded a significant increase in cases of community displacement and detention of community leaders. In response, the Resolution 5342 that we cite above was passed. It states that collaboration between private companies and state entities is *only permitted in the interest of national security*. However, in that same resolution, defining national interest was a responsibility given to the Ministry of Defense to “resolve internally” (Resolution 5342, June 2014). Since 2014, the Ministry of Defense has provided detailed guidelines regarding the conditions, structure, and oversight of these agreements. These require the language of the *convenio* to justify its use by explaining how the project in question represents a national security concern for the country. It also requires signatories to specify that the company will not provide lethal weaponry to the armed forces.³ These guidelines, rather than restraining the implementation of *convenios*, have in effect become a template for later contracts. The legal language of every *convenio* that we looked at during the course of this research simply cites the fact that extractive industries are a critical industry and have been targeted historically—without specifying localized

³ Instead, this type of exchange typically consists of companies provided compensation for items like the improvement of military barracks.

threats— as a justification for the *convenio* as a function of national security. In the case of Colombia, such contracts are not limited to defense— it also includes the judiciary. Of particular note in our research was the revelation of cooperation contracts between private companies like Ecopetrol and the Colombian Attorney General’s Office. This type of cooperation contract involves a private company, such as Ecopetrol, paying up to 70% of a public prosecutor’s salary.⁴

Two conditions outlined above: the targeting of extractive infrastructure by illegal armed groups and the expansion of Colombia’s extractive industries leads us to our first set of hypotheses aimed at RQ1. The legal justification for *convenios* is predicated on the state’s classification of attacks on extractive infrastructure as a matter of national security. Therefore, If we take the Colombian government and extractive companies at their word, we should expect that the distribution of *convenios* across Colombia should reflect imminent security concerns (H1a). Put differently, we should see more *convenios* in place where the threat of attack on extractive infrastructure is highest. The existing literature on parastatal formations and criminalization of protest (Amar 2013, Beceril 2018, Doran 2017), however, suggests that this might not be the case. Instead, the distribution of *convenios* will not correspond to imminent security threats (H1b). One of these factors may be the relative value of the extractive project in question. Recent scholarship examining the determinants of violence and social conflict around mining sites indicates that governments and companies alike have stronger incentives to use all means necessary to protect high-value projects (Arce and Nieto-Matiz 2024). This may lead firms to pursue *convenios* to protect high-producing projects, even when the relative threat via violence from armed groups is not as great as in other parts of the country (H1c).

Turning now to RQ2 and the impact of *convenios* on civil society, we hypothesize the uptick in social leader detentions and community displacements around the introduction of *convenios* suggests that these agreements may lead to an increased incidence of “insidious forms of repression” (Middeldorp and Le Billon 2019). Specifically, we predict that the introduction of a *convenio* will be associated with an increase in threats (H2a), targeted killings of community leaders (H2b), and arbitrary detentions (H2c), all with the aim of dismantling or preventing resistance to extraction.

Table 1. Summary of RQs and Hypotheses.

⁴ *Rutas del conflicto* interview with Gillooly, Bogotá, Colombia, 2022.

RQ1: under what conditions are <i>convenios</i> likely to be put into place?	
H1a	The distribution of <i>convenios</i> across Colombia will reflect security risks (i.e. armed group presence).
H1b	The distribution of <i>convenios</i> will <u>not</u> reflect security risks.
H1c	<i>Convenios</i> will be more likely to be in place in areas with higher-value extractive projects.
RQ2: What possible impacts may these contracts have on civil society in the municipalities where they are in place?	
H2a	The signing of a <i>convenio</i> in a municipality will be associated with an increased incidence of <u>threats of violence</u> .
H2b	The signing of a <i>convenio</i> in a municipality will be associated with an increased incidence of <u>targeted killings of community leaders</u> .
H2c	The signing of a <i>convenio</i> in a municipality will be associated with an increased incidence of <u>arbitrary detentions</u> .

We already see anecdotal evidence for some of these hypotheses. Since the signing of the Peace Accords between the Colombian government and the leftist guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), more than 1,500 human rights leaders/defenders (known as *lideres sociales* in Colombia), have been assassinated (INDEPAZ 2023). At time of writing in early March, 20 human rights leaders have already been killed in the country in 2024 alone. The issue of continued violence after a peace accord, particularly one as domestically controversial as the 2016 Peace Accords, is not a new phenomena. Indeed, critical literature that addresses peacebuilding and transitional justice is very clear about the limitations of perspectives that a successful peace negotiation means a ‘clean break’ from the violence that preceded it, even with inclusion of mechanisms like special tribunal courts and truth commissions (Baker and Obradovic-Wochnik 2016; Gillooly, Solomon, and Zvobgo 2024; Lambourne 2009). The possibilities, mechanisms, and theorized causes of continued structures of violence in Colombia abound— documentation of structures of violence as a result of gender or ethnicity (Gillooly 2021; Hagen 2017; Stallone and Zulver 2024); as a result of ‘resource grabs’, particularly around extractive industry like mining (Ballvé 2012; Shenk 2022); and around government structures of historic abandonment or corruption in particular regions of the country (Ballvé 2013; Gill 2009; Oslender 2008). It is possible that we should add *convenios* to this list.

Meanwhile, where activists and communities resisting extractive development have not succumbed to lethal violence, they have often been subject to threats and stigmatization.

Throughout the last three decades, opponents of social leaders have wielded what Clara Voyvodic calls the “fog of war” (Voyvodic 2024) or the context of Colombia's armed conflict as a weapon to delegitimize popular challenges to development and extractive projects. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders denounced in 2010 the persistent stigmatization of social leaders through baseless accusations of their membership in non-state armed groups. She mentioned, in particular, a case in 2010, when then-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez publicly accused a group of human rights defenders of supporting guerrilla groups, calling them “terrorists in civilian clothes” (Bonilla Stuck 2019, 174). More recently, activists opposing large-scale mining projects by the South African firm, AngloGold Ashanti, in two separate regions of the country were falsely accused of belonging to either the FARC or the ELN (McNeish 2017, Verdad Abierta 2023). Activists in both regions have reported receiving death threats, as well.

This has serious consequences. Stigmatization can sometimes lead to the violence kinds of targeted violence described above. It can also exacerbate the issues of criminalization and judicialization of protest by the state described in the previous section. In the 1990s, striking members of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (SINALTRAINAL) in Barrancabermeja faced arbitrary detention and arrest by state forces alongside assassination attempts by paramilitary groups operating in the city (Gill 2016). Recent reporting by investigative journalists suggests that the practice of arbitrary detentions remains prevalent. Seven environmental defenders in the oil-producing region of Meta, for instance, were detained by police in 2018 on various terrorism-related charges before eventually being released. At least some of the coverage of these arrests points squarely to the presence of *convenios* in the region as a possible explanation for their arbitrary arrest (Rutas del Conflicto 2019).

In the section that follows, we describe the data and methods that we employ to more systematically test possible relationships between *convenios*, violence, and the criminalization of social leaders.

Data and Methods

We address the hypotheses above by analyzing an original dataset of *fuerzas de convenio* originally published by *Rutas del Conflicto*, a digital news outlet based in Colombia. In 2014, the Colombian government passed Law 1712, which increased citizens' rights to access public information. As a result of these new public transparency laws, a group of Colombian journalists and the CSPP began to investigate the extent and scope of the Colombian armed forces' agreements with extractive companies. In 2018, *Rutas del Conflicto* published the preliminary

results of its investigation alongside a geo-located database of 198 individual *convenios* signed between extractive companies and branches of the Colombian armed forces and/or judiciary.⁵

We use these data as our starting point. For each *convenio*, we hand-coded the years that the agreement was valid for, as well as the municipalities the agreement covered. We exclude *convenios* that do not list any municipality under its zone of coverage from our analysis, as we are interested in the localized effects that these agreements have on civil society in the municipalities where they are in effect. We also exclude *convenios* that list Colombia's capital, Bogotá, from our analysis. None of the companies that signed *convenios* in our data held or currently hold titles for extractive projects within the municipality's limits. We therefore assume that these *convenios* list Bogotá as their main location to account for their firms' headquarters rather than an active extractive site. This assumption was corroborated during interviews with *Rutas del Conflicto* staff.⁶

Cross-sectional analysis

We carry out our analysis in two stages to address each research question separately. First, we examined a cross-sectional version of our *convenios* dataset to examine what conditions make a municipality more likely to be covered by a *convenio*. The unit of analysis for this dataset is the municipality, the smallest administrative unit in Colombia that data is consistently collected for (n=1,101). For our dependent variable, we constructed a dichotomous variable, *convenio*, that captures whether that municipality is specifically mentioned in any *convenio* in any of the years included in our dataset (2002-2020).

⁵ See <http://rutasdelconflicto.com/convenios-fuerza-justicia/#herramienta> for full investigation.

⁶ *Rutas del Conflicto* interview with Gillooly, Bogotá, Colombia, 2022.

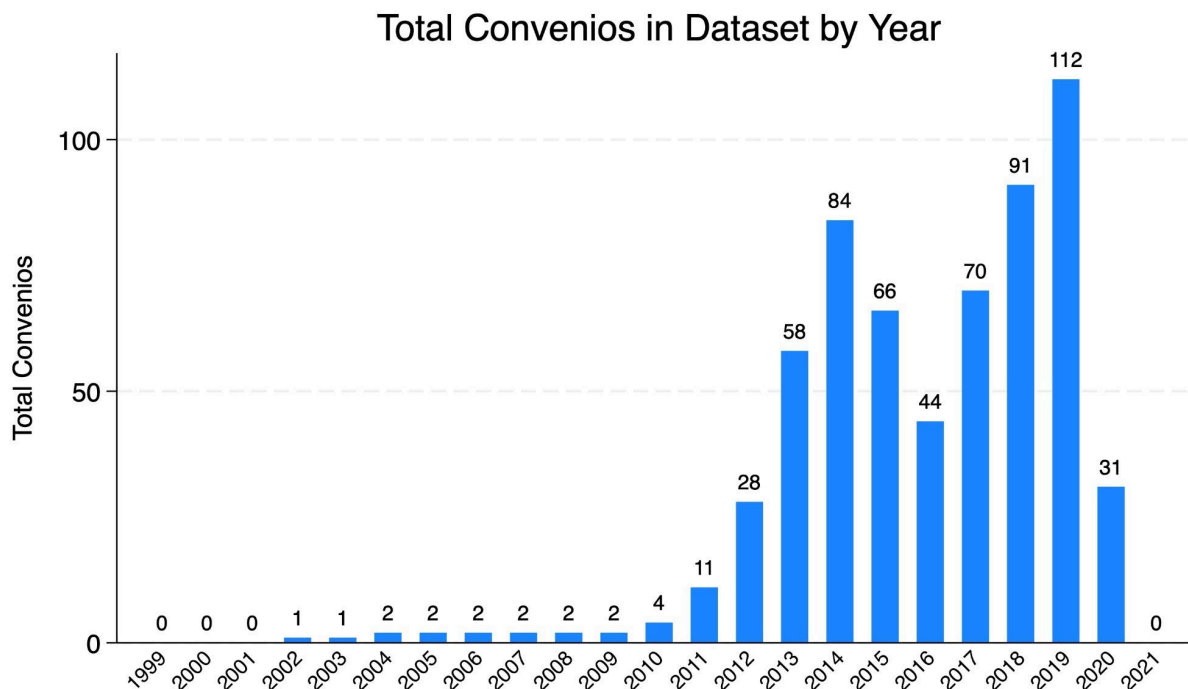


Figure 1: Number of *convenios* included in the dataset by year.

Working off of the Colombian government’s justification that non-state armed groups pose a significant threat to extractive operations, we focus on armed group presence as the primary explanatory variable for our first hypothesis. We use data collected by the Colombian NGO, *Misión de Observación Electoral* (MOE), that codes for the presence of non-state armed groups across all Colombian municipalities during election years. MOE’s coding relies on reports made to its team or other conflict-focused NGOs—namely CERAC, PARES, and the *Corporación Arcoiris*—by local civil society groups of armed group presence with the goal of warning where armed groups have the capacity to interfere with citizens’ abilities to participate in free and fair elections.⁷ Armed group presence variables for the three major non-state armed groups active during our period of study—the FARC, ELN, and paramilitary groups—are coded as a 1 where reports indicate the presence of each respective group and a 0 where there are no reports of that armed group being present.

We run models to capture the effects of armed group presence during three election years—2007 (local elections), 2016 (peace plebiscite), and 2018 (national elections)—which are chosen to capture different phases of the Colombian armed conflict. Both the FARC and

⁷ See <http://datoselectorales.org/datos/mapa-de-riesgo>.

paramilitary groups were operating near peak capacity in 2007, representing the highest potential threat to extractive operations across the country (Ballvé 2013). Most of the *convenios* in our sample were signed *after* this year. Therefore, we use armed group presence in 2007 as a proxy for the *historical* presence of armed groups. We used armed group presence during the 2016 and 2018 to capture more contemporary security threats to extractive projects that the *convenios* in our sample may have sought to address.

We recognize that the MOE's reliance could introduce the possibility of bias, excluding municipalities where civil society groups are either non-existent or unable to report armed group presence. That said, a growing chorus of scholars has warned that alternative measures of armed group presence, such as violence indicators, fail to capture when armed groups intentionally reduce violence as they consolidate control or negotiate with other groups (Kalyvas 2006, Arjona 2016, Aponte-González et al. 2023, Ch et al. 2018, Matanock and García-Sánchez, 2018). With this in mind, we consider the MOE's data a more robust measure of armed group presence than measurements based on violent events. We do, however, also include models that consider the impact of violence committed by each armed group. We use violence indicators from the Universidad de los Andes' CEDE municipal panel dataset, which collates information from the National Police and Ministry of Defense, and sum the total number of homicides by armed groups (FARC, paramilitaries) for each municipality.⁸

To capture the value of extractive projects, which is crucial to H1c, we use the logged sum of royalty transfers by both Ingeominas (2004-2012), the National Mining Agency (2012-2016), and the National Hydrocarbon Agency (2004-2018) to municipal governments to capture the relative value of extractive sites. We do acknowledge that this measure is less effective at capturing the *potential* value of a site, as a municipality only receives these transfers after production begins. Future iterations of this work may explore measures that capture this potential value.

Finally, we include several control variables in our analysis. Municipality size, rurality index, basic needs index, and the presence of coca cultivation can affect company's perception of risk to their operations. Oil-producing municipalities with a higher proportion of urban residents, for instance, might signal a denser population of workers who could threaten company operations through strikes. The presence of coca cultivations may provide a draw for

⁸ We also acknowledge the limitations of this data— in many cases, we know that conflict-related homicides are reported to the National Police and not recorded or investigated, or they are never reported to the National Police to begin with, particularly due to low levels of public trust in the National Police and historic collusion between the police and armed groups, particularly paramilitary groups (Hristov 2009; Wood 2009).

non-state armed groups, even where no group enjoys an established presence. We use these variables from Colombia's National Department of Statistics (DANE) and CEDE across all models.

Panel data analysis

To test our second set of hypotheses, we generate a municipality-year panel that covers all Colombian municipalities where data is available for our measures of interest from 2001-2020. The resulting sample consists of 18,410 municipality-years. Again, we code municipalities using a dichotomous variable that captures the presence of any *convenio* in the municipality in a given year. We use this variable as our primary explanatory variable. We also consider that it might take time for a *convenio*'s impacts to bear out on a population. It may take time for the military to deploy its troops or for an attorney general paid for by the company to take on her first case, for instance. For this reason, we generate a time-lagged, dichotomous variable that captures whether a municipality was under a *convenio* in the previous year (t-1 year).

We draw data for our outcome variables for our three hypotheses from different sources. To measure threats against civilians, we use the CEDE panel dataset's threat occurrence variable. This indicator measures the number of threats issued against civilians in a municipality in a given year, counting threats made against multiple people as a single case. Data on the assassination of social leaders was collected in 2021 from Datasketch, a website that compiles reports from various human rights and media organizations in Colombia. While observers noted that the targeting of social leaders constituted a serious problem to Colombian civil society throughout the country's armed conflict, organizations across the country only systematically began collecting data and coding assassinations of social leaders as a specific category of violence after the 2016 Colombian peace agreement with the FARC (Albarracín et al. 2022). Our analysis of the relationship between *convenios* and social leader assassinations is restricted to the years 2017-2020 and our sample size drops to n=6,705 municipality-years.

Finally, we drew data for our third outcome variable, arbitrary detentions, from the Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP)'s *Noche y Niebla* database. CINEP maintains its database using a combination of media and NGO reports, victim testimony, and reports from its staff in location to identify human rights abuses and code them according to type, location, date, and perpetrator (CINEP 2023). We included all cases where one or more perpetrators was identified as a state agent (i.e. police, army, navy, special investigative unit) and generated a count variable of the number of arbitrary detentions per municipality-year. The data was then

manually checked to exclude cases that involved paramilitary groups. State forces frequently colluded with paramilitary groups to target communities and social leaders during the Colombian armed conflict (Gill 2009), a practice that has been denounced by human rights groups for years. However, we are primarily interested in actions that state forces could justify under the legal auspices of a *convenio*. Therefore we only include cases where all perpetrators are legal agents.

As two of our outcome measures are count variables, we fit poisson models to data on threats and arbitrary detentions and cluster standard errors by municipality. For data on social leaders, the low frequency of outcomes led us to transform our count variable into a dichotomous variable that codes municipalities as 1 if one or more social leaders were killed in a given year. We then fit panel logit models to the data. As in the cross-sectional analysis above, we also include a number of control variables that could affect our outcomes of interest. Specifically, we control for population size, royalties, and the presence of coca cultivations. Municipalities may record a higher number of threats, detentions, and assassinations simply because they have more residents. Controlling for royalties helps to ensure that we capture the relationship between *convenios* and our dependent variables rather than the impact of other extractive-related phenomena. We also know from previous studies that the presence of coca cultivations and other illegal industries are associated with the assassination of social leaders (Albarracín et al. 2019). This variable also displays high collinearity with other indicators of armed group presence. Finally, all models include two-way fixed effects (municipality and year) to account for location- and time- invariant unobservables.

Data Limitations

Before moving on to our results, it is important to note that we are aware of the limitations of our data. The most significant issue is that of missing data. Throughout 2022 - 2023, we carried out interviews with staff of *Rutas del Conflicto*, union leaders, and other individuals who participated in various efforts to collect data on *fuerzas de convenio* after the 2014 data transparency law was passed. We learned that, while *Rutas del Conflicto* were able to obtain data on many *convenios*, they understand that there are **at least** 100 other agreements they were not able to access and code.⁹ We worked with individuals in Colombia to file freedom of information requests to access these *convenios* in 2023. As of writing in Spring 2024, we have not received a response from the Colombian government.

⁹ *Rutas del Conflicto* interview with Gillooly, Bogotá, Colombia 2022.

Analysis of the *convenios* that we do have access to suggests that at least some of these missing agreements likely cover municipalities already in our data. Many of the *convenios* in our dataset represent renewals of previous contracts covering the same projects, rather than agreements for new projects. There are also a limited number of major extractive sites in Colombia owned by firms with enough capital to enter into these types of agreements with the state. With this in mind, we believe that our coding of *convenio* as a binary rather than a count variable in our cross-sectional analysis may make up for this missing data.

We are aware that missing data poses a bigger problem for our panel data analysis. Namely, it is possible that the Colombian government has been more reticent to release information on *convenios* precisely for municipalities where its agents have been involved in human rights abuses, such as threats, physical harm, and arbitrary detentions. It is also possible that the direction of the relationship points in the other direction. The *Noche y Niebla* data relies on victims, local leaders, and observers to report human rights abuses as they happen. Yet these victims and leaders may be less likely to report abuses where state agents have threatened retribution, or where there are multiple different armed groups that have influence or are fighting for control of a territory. Similarly, abuses are more likely to be reported where human rights observers are present, leading other areas to suffer from underreporting. That said, *Noche y Niebla* is considered the gold standard for data on violence in Colombia (Aponte-González et al. 2023), and issues of underreporting are a common problem with violence data. We discuss both problems of missingness and endogeneity at length in our discussion.

Results

We turn now to the results of our models. To address our first set of hypotheses, we test the relationship between *convenios* and armed group presence in each of our three time periods separately with robust standard errors clustered by province to account for regional effects. The results are presented in table 2 below as odds ratios for ease of interpretation. The full table of results, which includes each variable of interest tested separately is available in the appendix (A.2).

Table 2. Logistic regression of armed group presence by time period and *convenio*.

	Historical Presence (1)	Peace Accord (2)	2018 Election (3)
Paramilitary 2007	2.008** (0.681)		
FARC 2007	2.233*** (0.570)		
ELN 2007	2.783*** (1.095)		
Paramilitary 2016		1.458** (0.224)	
FARC 2016		2.005* (0.811)	
ELN 2016		1.115 (0.552)	
ELN 2018			1.063 (0.538)
GAO 2018			2.169** (0.697)
Rural index	0.578*** (0.120)	0.527*** (0.111)	0.526*** (0.107)
Muni size	1.288 (0.220)	1.311 (0.251)	1.364 (0.276)
Basic needs	0.964 (0.286)	0.879 (0.271)	0.979 (0.288)
Total royalties (2000-2020)	3.882*** (1.194)	4.123*** (1.326)	4.127*** (1.284)
Coca	1.723 (0.641)	1.824 (0.806)	2.343* (1.039)
Prob>chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	1,122	1,122	1,122

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$. The table reports logit regression results with odds ratios for ease of interpretation. Standard errors are clustered by province and continuous variables are standardized by dividing by two standard deviations of the mean.

The results reported in table 2 indicate that armed group presence is associated with a greater likelihood that a municipality will be included in a *convenio* at some point between 2000-2020. This relationship is strongest for measures of armed group presence in 2007 (model 1). The presence of paramilitary groups in a municipality is associated with a two-fold increase in the odds that a municipality will be included in a *convenio*. The association between *convenios* and the presence of guerrilla groups in 2007 is even more robust; the presence of the FARC or ELN in a municipality in 2007 is associated with 2.2-fold and 3-fold increases in the

likelihood of that municipality featuring in a *convenio*. These results are significant to the inclusion of control variables and alternative explanations.

These results align, in general, with the government's justification for approving *convenios* with extractive companies and that language in the *convenios* that warns of “terrorist threats” to extractive sites. The ELN and the FARC (to a somewhat lesser extent) purposefully attacked extractive sites and oil pipelines as “state targets” during Colombia’s armed conflict (Vasquez 2014). The relationship between paramilitary presence and *convenios* does not fit this narrative as closely. Testimony from paramilitaries during the *Justicia y Paz* demobilization process in the 2000s provided evidence that these groups more often collaborated with state forces and private business interests than targeted them for violence, and were significantly less likely to attack private infrastructure sites as a part of their bellic strategies (Sánchez León et al. 2018). Yet this history of collaboration may also explain the correlation between paramilitary presence and *convenios*. Namely, paramilitary groups and their successors may have been able to exist alongside state forces where *convenios* were put in place and/or served as a kind of unofficial security force to respond to guerrilla attacks on extractive sites before *convenios* were implemented.¹⁰

The results from models 2 and 3 seem to provide evidence for the latter explanation. The statistical significance of the association of *convenios* with the presence of either the ELN or FARC drops off in later time periods. Presence of the ELN in 2016 and 2018 is not correlated with a municipality’s inclusion in a *convenio*. FARC presence in a municipality at the signing of the peace accords in 2016 is associated with a two-fold increase in a municipality’s inclusion in a *convenio*, but the correlation is only weakly significant ($p < 0.1$). Meanwhile, the relationship between paramilitary and successor groups (GAO; *grupos armados organizados*) and *convenios* remains positive and statistically significant in models 2 and 3. Paramilitary presence in 2016 and GAO presence in 2018 are associated with 1.5- and two-fold increases in the likelihood of municipality being included in a *convenio*, respectively. We can visualize these changes over time in figures 2 and 3.

¹⁰ Colombia’s main paramilitary groups (those operating under the banner of the AUC—United Self-defense forces of Colombia) formally demobilized in a collective process between 2003–2006. Paramilitary groups, however, remained active during and after this formal demobilization, as both low-ranking and mid-level commanders reformed successor groups throughout the country (Gutiérrez Sanín 2022).

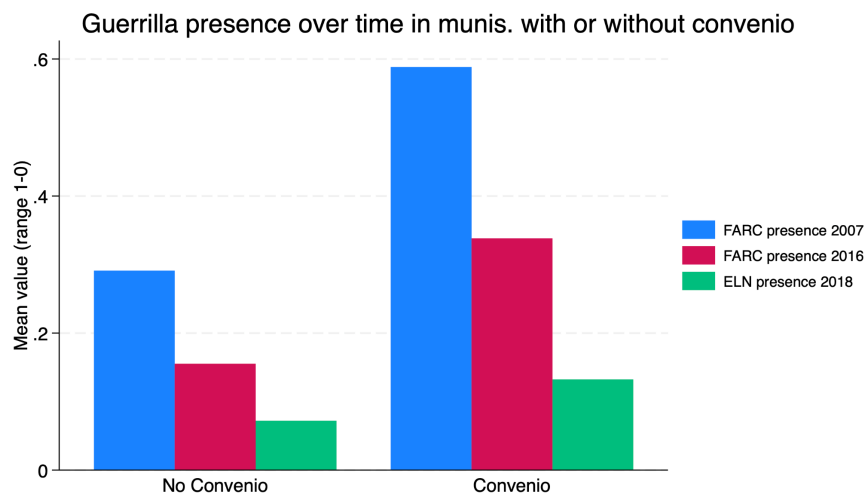


Figure 2. Bar graph of guerrilla presence over time plotted over the presence of a *convenio* in a municipality.

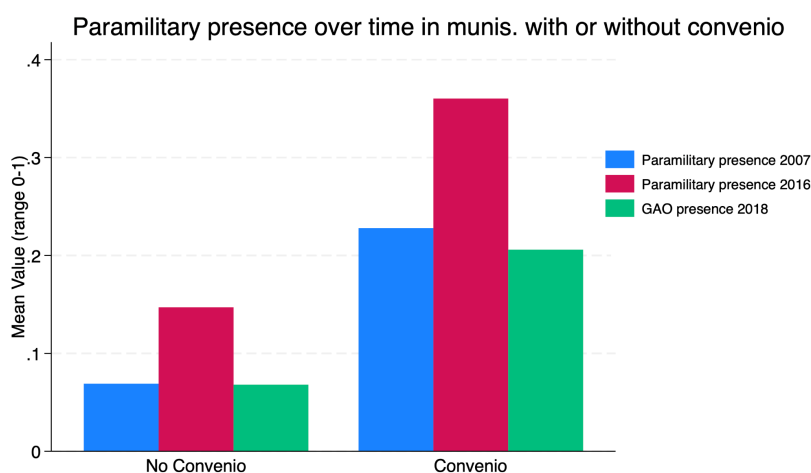


Figure 3. Bar graph of paramilitary and successor group presence over time plotted over the presence of a *convenio* in a municipality.

These results suggest that historical presence of guerrilla groups is a better predictor than contemporaneous threats for the distribution of *convenios* across the country. As depicted in figure 1 above, only 10 of the *convenios* in our sample are dated between 2000-2007. The vast majority were signed between 2012-2020. By 2012, and certainly 2016, military operations by the Colombian government had shrunk both the geographic reach and the influence of both the FARC and the ELN, reducing their threat to extractive operations (Ince 2013; Marre 2014). The results presented above, however, indicate that the distribution of *convenios* does not seem to respond to that shift.

Finally, if we consider H1c that more valuable assets are more likely to be protected via a *convenio*, our results also provide support for that hypothesis. A one unit increase in royalties makes a municipality approximately 4 times more likely to be included in a *convenio* across all of our models, and the result is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. Our models suggest, however, that this association exists *alongside* the relationships between armed group presence and a municipality's inclusion in a *convenio*. The inclusion of royalties in the models does not impact either the coefficient or significance level of the coefficients for armed group presence.

It is important to underscore that the results we present demonstrate correlation, not causation. The direction of the relationship between armed group presence and *convenios* could work in the opposite direction of the theories we propose. Namely, it is possible that *convenios* between the state and companies do, in fact, drive out guerrilla groups from areas of extractive exploitation and prevent new incursions. That said, the fact that the relationship between paramilitary and successor groups persists throughout the period of study indicates an important overlap between parastatal formations and paramilitary violence. The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the effect size of paramilitary homicides is nearly double that of FARC homicides, though both are positive and statistically significant. Again, we cannot make any claims regarding the direction of the effect, but we can assert that *convenios* are correlated with higher rates of lethal violence by paramilitaries than guerrilla groups.

Table 3. Logistic regression of homicides by armed group and *convenio* presence.

	(4)	(5)	(6)
Paramilitary Homicides	5.313*** (1.860)		4.543*** (1.779)
FARC Homicides		2.981*** (0.896)	2.478*** (0.687)
Rural index	.485*** (0.103)	.489*** (0.104)	0.477*** (0.105)
Muni size	1.317 (0.257)	1.190 (0.179)	1.220 (0.191)
Basic needs	1.229 (0.347)	1.135 (0.330)	1.299 (0.380)
Total royalties (2000-2020)	4.056*** (1.268)	4.144*** (1.299)	3.962*** (1.225)
Coca	2.401*** (0.726)	1.711* (0.552)	1.587 (0.497)
Prob>chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	1,122	1,122	1,122

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$. The table reports logit regression results with odds ratios for ease of interpretation. Standard errors are clustered by province and continuous variables are standardized by dividing by two standard deviations of the mean.

This result aligns with qualitative accounts of the close relationship between the Colombian state and paramilitaries. We know that paramilitary and successor groups have worked in close concert with the Colombian Armed Forces, even to the extent that a shadow paramilitary group known as *Las Aguilas Negras* in Colombia is not an active paramilitary group *per se*, but rather, a name that right-wing Colombian politicians and security forces use to threaten left-wing leaders and activists in the country (Johnson and Gillooly 2023). This level of collaboration between these different types of parastatal formations is well-documented in Colombia. Our results may demonstrate that via means of the *convenios*, these parastatal formations have taken on new relationships and forms between the government, private companies, and paramilitary and successor groups.

From these results, we conclude that we cannot reject H1a (that the distribution of *convenios* will reflect imminent security concerns), but we also cannot reject H1b (that the distribution of *convenios* will not reflect imminent security concerns) or H1c (that *convenios* are more likely in areas with high-value projects). Moreover, it is possible that both H1b and H1c are true *at the same time*.

Turning now to our second set of hypotheses, results from our panel data analysis are presented in table 4 and indicate that the impact of *convenios* on civil society repression are more mixed. Model 7 indicates that the presence of a *convenio* in a municipality in a given year has no effect on the instances of threats issued against civilians in that municipality (coefficient of zero). Model 8 shows that the presence of a *convenio* in the previous year ($t-1$) has a slightly negative effect on the number of threats issued in a municipality, which actually runs counter to our expectations. This result, however, is not statistically significant at conventional levels. We see similar results for models 11-12, which test the relationship between *convenios* and arbitrary detentions. The effect sizes for both *convenio* and lagged *convenio* variables on reports of arbitrary detentions in a given municipality-year are small and not statistically significant to conventional levels. We therefore reject hypotheses H2a and H2c, which predicted that *convenios* would lead to increases in threats and arbitrary detentions, respectively.

Table 4. Poisson regression and panel logit regressions results.

	(7) DV=threats	(8) DV=threats	(9) DV=assassinations	(10) DV=assassinations	(11) DV=detentions	(12) DV=detentions
Convenio	0.000 (0.094)		0.641* (0.347)		-0.273 (0.370)	
Convenio (lagged)		-0.018 (0.106)		0.707** (0.346)		0.276 (0.391)
Coca	0.719*** (0.171)	0.719*** (0.106)	2.078*** (0.310)	2.041*** (0.311)	0.768 (0.826)	0.705 (0.829)
Royalties	-0.040* (0.022)	-0.041* (0.022)	0.289*** (0.031)	0.294*** (0.027)	0.014 (0.058)	0.029 (0.054)
Population	0.873** (0.434)	0.875** (0.429)	1.076*** (0.249)	1.071*** (0.246)	-0.518 (0.704)	-0.539 (0.675)
2-way FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	18,404	18,404	5,603	5,603	6,174	6,174
Municipalities	1,067	1,067	1,121	1,121	294	294
Prob>chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$ The table reports coefficients from poisson regression models (7-8 and 11-12) and logit regression models (9-10). For logit regression models, continuous variables are standardized by dividing by two standard deviations of the mean. 20 groups are dropped from models 1-2 because there is only one observation per group. A further 27 groups are dropped because of all zero outcomes. For models 5-6, 827 groups (17,365 observations) are dropped because of all zero outcomes.

In contrast, results of models 9 and 10 do provide evidence to support hypothesis 2b, which predicted that *convenios* would be associated with an increase in the assassinations of social leaders. We do see a weak but positive relationship between the presence of a *convenio* and the assassination of at least one social leader in a municipality-year (model 9). The coefficient increases by 0.1 and the statistical significance increases ($p < 0.05$) when we lag the *convenio* variable by one year. These results are robust to the inclusion of coca, royalties, and population size as control variables.

The positive relationships between *convenios* and the killing of social leaders provides further evidence to support our theory of these contracts operating as parastatal formations. Colombian government officials have blamed criminal groups and economies for the wave of targeted assassinations of activists and local leaders since 2016 (Albarracín et al. 2022). This follows both a historical and global trend of governments diffusing blame when activists are killed in conflict zones. As Voyvodic (2024, 13) notes, “civilian victimisation when there are political armed groups already present in a territory warrant less investigation by authorities who frame their existence as explanation enough.” Yet the evidence that we present, which links *convenios*—agreements intended to increase the capacity of the armed forces and judiciary—with a higher likelihood of violence against social leaders, suggests two scenarios: 1. These state forces are either unwilling or incapable of preventing and/or punishing violence against civilians because they are focused exclusively on protecting extractive capital; or 2. They are *complicit* in the targeting of opponents to extractive development. Either way, the results support assertions by activists that *convenios* are oriented toward protecting capital over, or to the detriment of, surrounding communities.

The null results from models 7-8 and 11-12, meanwhile, are somewhat surprising. Given that *convenios* are correlated with a higher likelihood of social leader assassinations, we expected that threats would also increase as a precursor to lethal violence. Meanwhile, multiple people we interviewed from NGOs, unions, and *Rutas del Conflicto* told us that the arbitrary detention and judicialization of social leaders are often the first indication that local communities have that a *convenio* is in place.¹¹

There are a few possible explanations for these puzzling results. First, threats are cheap. Actors motivated to quell opposition to extractive projects face few consequences for issuing threats to local leaders and communities given the high rate of impunity in Colombia. This is especially true where the active presence of armed groups provides perpetrators with plausible

¹¹ NGO interview with Gillooly, Bogotá, Colombia 2022. This was also mentioned in Gillooly's interviews with *Rutas del Conflicto* and a union leader, both in Bogotá, Colombia 2023.

deniability of their involvement (Voyvodic 2024). With this in mind, supporters of extractive projects may issue threats whether or not a *convenio* is in place.

It is also possible that issues of reporting and data collection are driving our null results. As we mention in our method section, the data we use for threats and detentions relies on reporting either by victims or local activists and human rights observers. This likely leads to undercounts in areas where these groups face barriers to reporting, which may include intimidation by the very state forces we study here. Further, *Noche y Niebla*'s coding of arbitrary detentions includes a degree of subjectivity in that it relies on either observers on the ground or coders at CINEP to distinguish between “arbitrary” and “legitimate” detentions. These distinctions are not always clear cut, and there may be disagreement between the actors involved. In the case described above of six social leaders detained on terrorism-related charges in Meta, community members interviewed by *Rutas del Conflicto* referred to the case as one of arbitrary detention. The state, however, would likely contend that the detentions were legitimate, as the charges against the leaders have not yet been dropped. It would be up to the coder to decide whether or not to include this case in the database. It is therefore possible that cases like these are not represented in our data.

Conclusion

In this empirical contribution, we shed light on a practice that has long been what interlocutors report to be a *secreto a voces*, or an open secret, on the ground in Colombia, and test to see if some of the accusations leveled at the government by civil society and activists bear out. In sum, we find that the distribution of these contracts *does* broadly follow patterns of armed group presence. However, the relationship between *convenios* and the biggest threat to extractive development—guerrilla groups—weakens over time. Put differently, the geographical distribution of *convenios* is more strongly predicted by *historical* presence than imminent threats. At the same time, we find a significant and persistent correlation between the distribution of *convenios* and the presence of paramilitary groups and their successors. This finding lends credence to our theory of *convenios* functioning as parastatal formations, with the dual purpose of stymying mobilization in the present via actions like threats and violence, and stymying mobilization in the *future* via the specter of threat. This finding is bolstered by panel data analysis, which finds a weak, but positive, correlation between *convenios* and the targeting of social leaders. We take this finding with a grain of salt, given relatively small sample size and null effects for our other models. However, these findings could also point to a more direct relationship, were we to have access to a more complete database of *convenios*.

Future work could aim to examine causation by exploring the mechanisms of *convenios* more in depth, either through a difference-in-difference study, subnational, or other country case studies. Still other studies could examine Colombia with more detail– we acknowledge the limitations of our data in this initial empirical examination. It is our hope that future greater data transparency, in Colombia as well as in other parts of the world, may allow us to investigate if these patterns are reflective of global practices, and interrogate the consequences that these patterns may have for the role of the state and its relationships with citizens.

This article makes important contributions to the security and extractive studies literature by firstly, introducing the *convenios* dataset, and empirically testing claims of how state security forces are contracted and financed by private companies (e.g. Becerril, Larsen, Middeldorp & Le Billon 2019, Gedicks 2001). This research also turns on its head our general understanding of state-company relationships in the security sector by examining the context of these *convenios*, which represent *state forces working directly for private companies*. Finally, this article contributes to a growing field of study of the criminalization of protest, particularly in Latin America. With our dataset, we are able to look across time and geography to unpack how state repression may operate as a result of these spectre-like relationships and offer new insights and directions for future research.

References

- Abrahamsen, Rita, and Michael C. Williams. 2010. *Security beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ESg0mLCMJ5wC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Abrahamsen+and+Williams+2010%3B&ots=PA6Cm29mf&sig=8Ae2tuHVHXSEfP2tk81JFB5ZOjg>.
- Akcinaroglu, Seden, and Elizabeth Radziszewski. 2013. "Private Military Companies, Opportunities, and Termination of Civil Wars in Africa." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(5): 795–821. doi:[10.1177/0022002712449325](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002712449325).
- . "Golden Assemblages: Security and Development in Tanzania's Gold Mines." In *Private Security in Africa: From the Global Assemblage to the Everyday*, eds. Paul Higate and Mats Utas. Bloomsbury Academic, 15–31. doi:[10.5040/9781350221987](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350221987).
- Albarracín, Juan, Juan Corredor-García, Juan Pablo Milanese, Inge H. Valencia, and Jonas Wolff. 2022. "Pathways of Post-Conflict Violence in Colombia." *Small Wars & Insurgencies*: 1–27. doi:[10.1080/09592318.2022.2114244](https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2022.2114244).
- Amar, Paul. 2013. "The Security Archipelago." In *The Security Archipelago*. Duke University Press.
- Aponte González, Andrés F., Daniel Hirschel-Burns, and Andres D. Uribe. 2024. "Contestation, Governance, and the Production of Violence Against Civilians: Coercive Political Order in Rural Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 68(4): 616–41. doi:[10.1177/00220027231177591](https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027231177591).
- Arce, Moises, and Camilo Nieto-Matiz. 2024. "Mining and Violence in Latin America: The State's Coercive Responses to Anti-Mining Resistance." *World Development* 173: 106404. doi:[10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106404](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106404).
- Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Avant, Deborah. 2006. "The Implications of Marketized Security for IR Theory: The Democratic Peace, Late State Building, and the Nature and Frequency of Conflict." *Perspectives on Politics* 4(03). doi:[10.1017/S1537592706060336](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592706060336).
- Avant, Deborah, and Kara Kingma Neu. 2019. "The Private Security Events Database." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(8): 1986–2006. doi:[10.1177/0022002718824394](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718824394). [Baker, Catherine, and Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik. 2016. "Mapping the Nexus of Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10 (3): 281–301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2016.1199483>.
- Ballvé, Teo. 2012. "Everyday State Formation: Territory, Decentralization, and the Narco Landgrab in Colombia." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30 (4): 603–22. ———. 2013. "Grassroots Masquerades: Development, Paramilitaries, and Land Laundering in Colombia." *Geoforum* 50 (December): 62–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.08.001>.
- Becerril, Michael S Wilson. 2018a. "Mining Conflicts in Peru Civil Resistance and Corporate Counterinsurgency." *Journal of Resistance Studies* 4 (1): 99–132.
- Becerril, Michael S. Wilson. 2018b. "Mining Conflicts in Peru: Civil Resistance and Corporate Counterinsurgency." *Journal of Resistance Studies* 4 (1): 99–132.
- Bonilla Stuck, Camilo Amador. 2019. *¿Cuáles son los patrones? asesinatos de líderes*

- sociales en el post acuerdo*. 1. ed. Bogotá, Colombia: Comisión Colombiana de Juristas.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaa013>
- Bowman, Andrew. 2020. "Parastatals and Economic Transformation in South Africa: The Political Economy of the Eskom Crisis." *African Affairs* 119 (476): 395–431.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaa013>.
- Ch, Rafael, Jacob Shapiro, Abbey Steele, and Juan F. Vargas. 2018. "Endogenous Taxation in Ongoing Internal Conflict: The Case of Colombia." *American Political Science Review* 112(4): 996–1015. doi:[10.1017/S0003055418000333](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000333).
- Dietz, Kristina. 2023. "Agrarian Change through Speculation: Rural Elites as Land Brokers for Mining in Colombia." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 23 (4): 706–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12563>.
- Doran, Marie-Christine. 2017. "The Hidden Face of Violence in Latin America: Assessing the Criminalization of Protest in Comparative Perspective." *Latin American Perspectives* 44 (5): 183–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X17719258>.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X17719258>
- Gedicks, Al. 2001. *Resource Rebels: Native Challenges to Mining and Oil Corporations*. 1st ed. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- . 2016. *A Century of Violence in a Red City: Popular Struggle, Counterinsurgency, and Human Rights in Colombia*. Durham: Duke University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jols.12190>
- Gill, Lesley. 2009. "The Parastate in Colombia: Political Violence and the Restructuring of Barrancabermeja." *Anthropologica* 51 (2): 313–25.
- Gillooly, Shauna N. 2021. "Who's an Expert? Leveraging Trauma as Expertise in Peacebuilding Movements." *St Antony's International Review* 16 (2): 271–88.
- . 2022. "Legacies of Political Violence and Voter Behavior in Colombia." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 15423166211015149.
- Gillooly, Shauna N., Daniel Solomon, and Kelebogile Zvobgo. 2024. "Co-Opting Truth: Explaining Quasi-Judicial Institutions in Authoritarian Regimes." *Human Rights Quarterly* 46 (1): 67–97.
- Gilmore, Joanna. 2019. "Lessons from Orgreave: Police Power and the Criminalization of Protest." *Journal of Law and Society* 46 (4): 612–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jols.12190>.
- Gutiérrez Sanín, Francisco. 2022. "Paramilitary Territorial Control and Patterns of Violence Against Civilians in Colombia: Disappearances in a Stable Paramilitary Fiefdom." doi:[10.1285/I20356609V15I1P37](https://doi.org/10.1285/I20356609V15I1P37).
- Hagen, Jamie J. 2017. "Queering Women, Peace and Security in Colombia." *Critical Studies on Security* 5 (1): 125–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2017.1294835>.
- Hristov, Jasmin. 2009. "Legalizing the Illegal: Paramilitarism in Colombia's 'Post-Paramilitary' Era." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 42 (4): 12–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2009.11722227>.
- Ince, Matt. 2013. "Filling the FARC-Shaped Void: Potential Insecurity in Post-Conflict Colombia." *The RUSI Journal* 158 (5): 26–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.847708>.
- Johnson, Philip L., and Shauna N. Gillooly. 2023. "Grammar of Threat: Governance and Order in Public Threats by Criminal Actors." *Comparative Political Studies*, 00104140231152745.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kinsey, Christopher. 2006. *Corporate Soldiers and International Security: The Rise of Private Military Companies*. Routledge.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203018354/corporate-soldiers-international-security-christopher-kinsey>.

- Lambourne, Wendy. 2009. "Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding after Mass Violence." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 3 (1): 28–48.
- Larsen, Simon Granovsky. 2023. "'The Situation Will Most Likely Turn Ugly': Corporate Counter-Insurgency and Sexual Violence at a Canadian-Owned Mine in Guatemala." *Norteamérica* 18 (1): 2.
- Lindt, Angela. 2023. "The Dark Side of Judicialization: Criminalizing Mining Protests in Peru." *Latin American Research Review* 58(4): 368–82. doi:[doi:10.1017/lar.2023.4](https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.4).
<https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/3246>
- Mahlangu, Brian Basil Mxolisi. 2001. "Public Accountability and Transparency of Parastatal Organisations in South Africa : Umgeni Water as an Illustrative Case." Thesis.
<https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/3246>.
- Marre, Franck Emmanuel. 2014. "FARC's Facade and Other Major Obstacles to a Genuine Peace in Colombia." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6 (6): 4–9.
- Martin, Greg. 2017. "Criminalizing Dissent: Social Movements, Public Order Policing and the Erosion of Protest Rights." In *The Routledge International Handbook of Criminology and Human Rights*. Taylor & Francis. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/76371>.
- Matanock, Aila M., and Miguel García-Sánchez. 2018. "Does Counterinsurgent Success Match Social Support? Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Colombia." *The Journal of Politics* 80(3): 800–814. doi:[10.1086/694915](https://doi.org/10.1086/694915).
<https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/76371>
- McNeish, John-Andrew. 2017. "A Vote to Derail Extraction: Popular Consultation and Resource Sovereignty in Tolima, Colombia." *Third World Quarterly* 38(5): 1128–45. doi:[10.1080/01436597.2017.1283980](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1283980).
- Middeldorp, Nick, and Philippe Le Billon. 2019. "Deadly Environmental Governance: Authoritarianism, Eco-Populism, and the Repression of Environmental and Land Defenders." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 324–37. doi:[10.1080/24694452.2018.1530586](https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2018.1530586).
- Mukandala, Rwekaza Sympho. n.d. "The Political Economy of Parastatal Enterprise in Tanzania and Botswana." Ph.D., United States -- California: University of California, Berkeley. Accessed March 1, 2023.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/303540518/abstract/BF4248C6DB7B44C6PQ/1>.
- Obera, Jeremiah Ojochema Johnson. n.d. "Governance and Accountability Issues in Nigerian Parastatals: The Case of Ajaokuta Steel."
- Olarte, Carolina. 2014. "Depoliticization and Criminalization of Social Protest through Economic Decisionism: The Colombian Case." *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 4 (1).
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2358593.
- Olsen, Tricia D., and Laura Bernal-Bermúdez. 2022. "Uncovering Economic Complicity: Explaining State-Led Human Rights Abuses in the Corporate Context." *Journal of Business Ethics*, December. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05280-1>.
- Oslender, Ulrich. 2008. "Another History of Violence: The Production of 'Geographies of Terror' in Colombia's Pacific Coast Region." *Latin American Perspectives* 35 (5): 77–102.
- Rasch, Elisabet Dueholm. 2017. "Citizens, Criminalization and Violence in Natural Resource Conflicts in Latin America." *ERLACS* 0(103): 131. doi:[10.18352/erlacs.10193](https://doi.org/10.18352/erlacs.10193).
- Reno, William. 1997. "Privatizing War in Sierra Leone." *Current History* 96: 227–30.
- Robb Larkins, Erika. 2023. *The Sensation of Security: Private Guards and Social Order in Brazil*. Ithaca [New York]: Cornell University Press.
- Rutas del Conflicto. 2019. *Líderes Tratados Como Delincuentes*. La Liga Contra el

- Silencio.
<https://www.rutasdelconflicto.com/especiales/LideresAmbientalesDelMetaEnAmenaza/GustavoCarrion/Judicializacion.html>.
<https://doi.org/10.5129/001041522X16358097946287>
- , 2023. "Colombia: Contradictions of the Territorial Peace Extractive Bargain." In *Extractive Bargains*, eds. Paul Bowles and Nathan Andrews. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 193–211. doi:[10.1007/978-3-031-32172-6_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32172-6_9).
- Sánchez León, Nelson Camilo, Leigh A. Payne, Gabriel Pereira, Laura Bernal Bermúdez, Daniel Marín López, and Miguel Barboza López. 2018. *Cuentas claras: El papel de la Comisión de la Verdad en la develación de la responsabilidad de empresas en el conflicto armado colombiano*.
<https://www.dejusticia.org/publication/cuentas-claras-empresas/> (November 29, 2018).
<https://doi.org/10.1086/727553>
- Selmini, Rossella, and Anna Di Ronco. 2023. "The Criminalization of Dissent and Protest." *Crime and Justice* 52 (November): 197–231. <https://doi.org/10.1086/727553>.
- Shenk, Jamie L. 2022. "Consultations and Competing Claims: Implementing Participatory Institutions in Colombia's Extractives Industries." *Comparative Politics* 55 (1): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041522X16358097946287>.
- Sieder, Rachel. 2017. "Indigenous Sovereignities in Guatemala: Between Criminalization and Revitalization." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 49(3): 370–72. doi:[10.1080/10714839.2017.1373971](https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2017.1373971).
- , 2020. "The Juridification of Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Law and Anthropology*, eds. Marie-Claire Foblets, Mark Goodale, Maria Sapignoli, and Olaf Zenker. Oxford University Press, 701–15. doi:[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198840534.013.41](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198840534.013.41).
- Stallone, Kiran, and Julia Margaret Zulver. 2024. "The Gendered Risks of Defending Rights in Armed Conflict: Evidence from Colombia." *Journal of Peace Research*, February, 00223433231220261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433231220261>.
- Wood, Rachel Godfrey. 2009. "Understanding Colombia's False Positives." *Oxford Transitional Justice Research Working Paper Series*.
- Vasquez, Patricia I. 2014. *Oil Sparks in the Amazon: Local Conflicts, Indigenous Populations, and Natural Resources*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Verdad Abierta. 2024. "Las Redes Sociales Como Un Escenario Más de Amenaza." *Verdad Abierta*.
<https://verifico.verdadabierta.com/analisis/las-redes-sociales-como-un-escenario-mas-de-amenaza>.
- Voyvodic, Clara. 2024. "The Fog of War: Development, Conflict Narratives, and Civilian Victimisation in Colombia." *Third World Quarterly*: 1–20. doi:[10.1080/01436597.2024.2324969](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2324969).