



PRESS UNDER BURDEN: FIVE THREATS TO COLOMBIAN JOURNALISM.

Master Thesis

By

Diana Carolina Ortiz Herrera

**A dissertation presented to the Center for Peace Studies, Faculty of Social Science,
University of Tromsø, as part of requirements or the Award of Master of
Philosophy Degree in Peace and Conflict.**

Spring 2014

Norway

Dedicated to those who in fulfillment of their job as journalists or reporters in Colombia
have sacrificed a lot... even their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe a great deal of gratitude to those who believed in me and the purpose of this work. To my supervisors: Fabian Mosenson, who with patience, and enthusiasm helped me shape my thoughts and arguments; and Bjørn Ola Tafjord, great professor from UiT, who has greatly helped me with his advice and input.

The Center of Peace Studies of the University of Tromsø, deserve all the gratitude as well, for providing me with great academic environment, tools and support. My fellow students, and to Percy Oware, who deserves my utmost respect, for being someone who is aware about every single student, our difficulties, while highlighting our strengths.

To all my collaborators in Colombia, who always had a great will to help me, Semana.com; El Espectador; Caracol TV; Radio Super; Centro de Estudios en Periodismo from University of Los Andes; Journalism Department at the University Del Rosario and La Sabana.

My friends in Tromsø, in Oslo, and overseas, as well as my and family, who in spite of my frustrations believed in me throughout this process, and last but definitely not least, for their love and support, thanks to my parents Deyci and Alvaro, and my siblings, Adriana, Juan David, Juan Pablo and Johana.

This document has been prepared in good faith on the basis of information available at the date of publication. It takes personal opinions of the informants without any independent verification, since it is a research based on their own experience,

Thanks for the strength, thanks for the trust!

ABSTRACT

In times of war or during non-democratic regimes the press situation tends to suffer dramatically. Freedom loses ground, censorship slowly –sometimes rapidly- sets in. In Colombia the situation is very special due to the characteristics of the war, the plurality of actors, the complexities of the media market, and the intricate influence of the State.

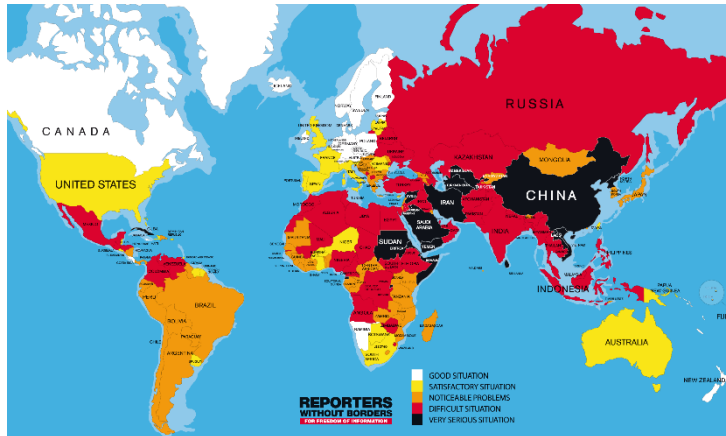


Figure 1: Freedom of the Press Worldwide in 2014. Source: Reporters without Borders/2014

This map represents the situation of Freedom of press in 2014, according to RWB.

In terms of freedom of the press Colombia seems to share the “same situation” with several other countries.

However if we look closer we find that most of those countries suffer real

challenges in terms of democracy, economy and security, that Colombia is not. What is happening with Colombia then? It is a democracy that is currently starting a peace process, and recently worked a peace agreement with the paramilitaries. Economically the situation it is getting better, for instance last year got GDP grew a 4.9%. The question called to ask is: why if Colombia has an acceptable standing politically, socially and economically the freedom of the press rank is still so low?

Colombian Media deals with many tests. It is threatened by diverse sources of pressure. I identify those sources as: (I) the guerrillas; (II) the drug traffic; (III) the paramilitaries and the new criminal gangs, (IV) the market, and (V) the State. These pressures create an atmosphere where being journalist is a challenge, a risk, but also a risky thrill.

The Colombian war is difficult to define, not just because of its length and different shifting grounds, but also because a) the multiple actors involved, b) the large complex geography and the singularities of each region; and c) the differences between urban and rural areas.

Therefore, when I refer to the Colombian war I mean the fight between the State, paramilitary groups, guerilla groups, and illegal drug traffickers, who fight each other to increase their power (economic, political, social and/or cultural) along the territory and where the main victim it is the civil society.

This research is the result of an investigation about journalists' work in Colombia, my aim is to understand how journalists perceive these different pressures. In doing so I will analyze the situation of Colombian journalists through the points mentioned above and during the recent Colombian history. The data was mainly collected during my field work trip done in Bogota during 2012. My theoretical framework stems from the tenets of media dependency theory and the all-important concept of "culture of violence."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	3
ABSTRACT	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	6
LIST OF FIGURES	8
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	9
1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	13
1.2 Hypothesis	13
1.3 Research Questions.....	13
2. CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY	14
2.1 Preparation for the field-work.....	14
2.3 The questionnaire.....	15
2.4 Field work: The data collection	16
2.5 Presentation of the Sources	18
2.5.1 Source nr 1: From CARACOL TV:	19
2.5.2 Source nr 2: From EL ESPECTADOR	19
2.5.3 Source nr 3: From REVISTA SEMANA.....	19
2.5.4 Source nr 4: From RADIO SUPER.....	19
2.5.5 Source nr 5: From RCN RADIO.....	19
2.5.6 Source nr 6: From CARACOL RADIO AND TV	19
2.5.7 Source nr 7: From NOTICIAS UNO	19
2.5.8 Source nr 8: From UNIVERSITY DEL ROSARIO	19
2.5.9 Source nr 9: From UNIVERSITY OF LA SABANA.....	20
2.5.10 Source nr 10 From UNIVERSITY OF LOS ANDES.....	20
2.6 Personal Reflection	20
2.6.1 Me as researcher.....	20
2.6.2 The language	21
2.6.3 Ethical considerations	22
3. CHAPTER TWO: MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN COLOMBIA	23
3.1 Television.....	23
3.2 Print Press	24
3.3 Radio	24

4. CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	
26	
4.1 Cultural Violence	26
4.2 Media System dependency Theory	27
5. CHAPTER FOUR: PREASSURES.....	30
5.1 The Guerillas.....	30
5.1.1 Context	30
5.2 The Drug Traffic Cartels.....	32
5.2.1 Context	32
5.3 The Paramilitaries and New Criminal Gangs	33
5.3.1 Context	33
5.4 The Market Forces	35
5.5 The Colombian State	36
5.5.1 The ineffectiveness of state investigations and judgments against attacks on the press and the lack of guaranties.....	37
5.5.2 Politics and Media	39
5.5.3 Abuse of legal forces.....	39
6. CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44
ANNEXES	46
Annex 1 – Questionnaire for field work	46
Annex 2: Map of media in Colombia – Print Press	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Freedom of the Press Worldwide in 2014. Source: Reporters without Borders/2014	4
Figure 2: Headquarters of EL ESPECTADOR after the bomb attack. Source: Files EL ESPECTADOR	10
Figure 3: Ex-President Alvaro Uribe Velez, on different speeches. Source: Files from CONTRAVIA MORRIS in YouTube. Nov 2 nd 2010.....	12
Figure 4: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011	30
Figure 5 Owners of Media in Colombia. Source: La República.COM. April 4 th 2012..	35
Figure 6 Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011	37
Figure 7: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011	38
Figure 8: Police and reporter during disturbs in Bogota. Source: ElEspectador.com. October 2012	40
Figure 9: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011	42

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	:	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM	:	Bandas Criminales
DAS	:	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad
ELN	:	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
EPL	:	Ejército Popular de Liberación
FARC	:	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias
FLIP	:	Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa
M-19	:	Movimiento 19 de Abril
MSDT	:	Media System Dependency Theory:
NGO's	:	Non-Governmental Organizations
RCN	:	Radio Cadena Nacional
RWB	:	Reporters Without Borders

1. INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the armed conflict in Colombia, the security, democracy, journalism and free expression have been targeted by all actors involved on the war.

The end of 90's left an indelible mark in Colombian society. Plunged into an economic crisis, the media were in the painful task of limiting its work due to resources constraints. In terms of TV, if in 1998 there were around twenty public national TV daily newscasts and several debate and editorial programs, three years later we find no more than five broadcasts in total. The reason for this can be attributed to the economic situation but also due the existence of two new private channels with national coverage as well.

On the other hand, El Espectador, one of the national newspapers, important and traditional in the country, was forced to print their news only once a week, this meant that the country have had only one national newspaper, El Tiempo. It provided a single point of view and certainly with a pro-governmental bias regarding Colombian political realities. The owners are traditional members of social and political elite: the Santos family. One of its heirs –Juan Manuel- current president.

But undoubtedly the biggest footprint that journalism and free speech in Colombian suffered, was the persecution and threats against reporters, journalists, and social communicators during the 80's and 90`s; threats, attacks, kidnappings, torture, murders among others. This was perpetrated mainly by drug cartels, paramilitaries, and guerrillas.

And while so far this persecution had been orchestrated from illegal actors, it has gradually been discovered that government forces and state officials were also behind many of these assaults against free speech and free expression. In August 1999 Jaime Garzon Forero, a Colombian journalist, comedian, lawyer, peace activist and political satirist, was holding an important role as a peace negotiator in the release of FARC guerrillas hostages, and unexpectedly he was murdered by suspected right-wing paramilitary forces in 1999. Jaime became an icon for the free press and independent journalism against violence, but also was an icon that showed everything that was wrong with the lack of interest of the military and judicial authorities on the investigation.

Figure 2: Headquarters of EL ESPECTADOR after the bomb attack. Source: Files EL ESPECTADOR



Almost a decade later, with economic recovery and the importance of the country as a democratic state, it is considered that the situation of journalism and freedom of speech has improved significantly. Since 2002, for instance, the government strove tenaciously to restore security to the country and reinstate confidence in national institutions, strengthening democracy and even directly and forcefully ending the war between paramilitaries, guerrillas and state.

The Democratic Security Policy of the Uribe government was clear and obvious action against armed actors, his speech was full of accusations against guerrillas and terrorists who attacked state institutions and certainly in many cases accused the press and some of its representatives, mostly independent ones, of being the FARC's allies, enemies of the government or traitors to the nation and so forth.

So long was the extent and strength of his campaign against everything that went contrary to his thoughts that research from different sectors found what is known as the Colombian Watergate. In February 2009 it was discovered and publicly denounced the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), out of its competences, was conducting illegal surveillance and wiretapping of opposition leaders, judges, journalists and officials. Not content with this they also performed a smear campaign or black propaganda against recognized journalists from the opposition. The campaign aimed to end the credibility and to discredit those who think and criticize the ideas and policies of the Uribe government.

During eight years, the press and the opposition in general, was threatened in terms of credibility and impartiality; some of the most important and influent media figures were labeled as “guerrilla allies” and everything else out of that circle became opposition, they were discredited and labeled with warlike tendencies. The national media coverage, became a soundboard for the government policies. For instance with the president’s re-election, the referendum for it and its quest for a third became the core of the news stories. They were focusing on each step of the reforms and the debate but in spite of it the re-election term wasn’t approved. The whole country witnessed the effort of the State to keep Uribe as the President for another period.

Figure 3: Ex-President Alvaro Uribe Velez, on different speeches. Source: Files from CONTRAVIA MORRIS in YouTube. Nov 2nd 2010



Due to the DAS scandal, the situation of the media and the press in Colombia, call the attention to many international agencies, NGO's who disapproved such practices. Reporters without borders during 2012 placed Colombia in the 143rd place on the worldwide rank.

Where one journalist was killed as direct result of his work, remained far down the list because journalists were repeatedly threatened, forced to stop working of force to flee abroad (or to another region), particular journalists operating in areas where there is fighting, despite improvements in the judicial system, the country has not yet put its years of civil war behind it, not the grim practices of the former DAS security service such as espionage, sabotage and smear campaigns. (World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012)

The government in Colombia has changed since. In 2010 Juan Manuel Santos, former ministry of defense during the Uribe's administration, was elected president with wide acceptance.

There is a new atmosphere in terms of peace talks in the country, since 2012 there are formal peace talks with the guerrillas and they are working on the agreements, however the threats to journalism hasn't change and the State has shown its inefficacy with the investigations regarding crimes against the press.

According to the most recent report of Fundación Para La Libertad De Prensa¹ in Colombia, from 1977 to 2014 in total 142 journalists were kill and just 19 cases have

1 Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP): It is an NGO that follow the situation of freedom of press in Colombia. Its aim is help with the protection of journalists, mass media and

been tried with a concrete sentence. During 2013, 194 journalists were victims either of threats, obstruction of journalistic work, physical aggression, crimes, or murders. The report also agrees that at the end of 2000 Colombia registered 39 cases of journalists killed just in one year, there is not any country with such figures in such a short period of time. (Fundacion para la Libertad de Prensa, 2013)

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The different threats journalism has faced over the past decades have not allowed the thriving of a free press and therefore the right to a proper and accurate information still has not been granted in Colombia. The accuracy, impartiality and the social responsibility of the media, it is always under question.

1.2 Hypothesis

These threats coming from the various armed conflicts that for shifting reasons act against the media as institutions and journalists as individuals have a very negative effect in the daily business of the written and audiovisual press in Colombia. For this host of reasons we can presume that the transformation of society towards a free and fair press will turn complicated. Here we will strive to assess this different threats by posing the following guiding questions.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How the Colombian media landscape is constituted?
2. What are the historical turning points that have determined the Colombian media landscape today?
3. What are the main threats to Colombian journalism today?

claims for the freedom and access of information. It's also a consulted member of the Organization of American States.

2. CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY

In this research I will analyze the factors that have affected journalism in Colombia during its recent story. It is based on some significant contributions from important members of the field, professors, journalists, reporters, and TV critics. The place of this research it is mainly Bogotá, but with critical insights and analysis from members in other regions of the country.

This research is mainly a qualitative investigation. I follow an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research and the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman, 2001). My purpose at this stage is predominantly descriptive: I will provide a detailed picture of the media situation in Colombia. In this way I will present a profile and an outline of the steps needed to answer questions regarding the freedom of press; the censorship; the role of the journalists; the neutrality of the media; the agenda in the news, and the independence of the press. These elements will help me draw an informed landscape of Colombian media and its challenges while presenting the point of view of a particularly qualified group of people.

2.1 Preparation for the field-work

In order to plan the design for the fieldwork, I worked on the project proposal. This proposal was well in consonance with questions that journalists in Colombia have today. I strove to illustrate the roles of the media as an actor within the Colombian context, as well as to explore the challenges that the media endures. My main question to start this project, was about the current situation of freedom of press. This includes, but is not limited to, the issues about the physical security of journalists; the threats and trials they have to stand, and who are the those who make them suffer, the perpetrators. Comprehending this is to provide a frame of understanding to the particular Colombian style of journalism and its changes along the development of the armed conflict.

While in Norway, I contacted potential informants via email. I introduced myself, my professional background, intentions and objectives as a researcher, as well as the rationale behind my interest in the topic. Our email communication was in Spanish, with a casual style, clear and concise, but without losing formality or professionalism. At the end of each communication mail I requested a meeting to discuss my questions. Ethical, professional, and confidential issues were address too.

I contacted informants from the most important and relevant media channels, TV, newspapers; the traditional ones as well as those that set the. At the end the sample was good. As described below, my informants work in important outlets such as Caracol Noticias, Revista Semana, El Espectador, Radio Super.

Usually they did answer rapidly and where willing to meet me as soon as I reached Bogotá.

2.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was semi-structured and based on open questions in order to be able to get more information. I strove to avoid my bias on their answers as much as I could. I followed the idea of social research professor Alan Bryman to get the basic elements for the preparation. A certain order on the topic areas to make it reasonably but as well to alter the order in the interview if necessary. Formulate questions or topics that help to answer the research questions but no to make them too specific. The use of a proper language is important, so the questions are intelligible and relevant. Finally I got the profile information of each informant: useful to contextualize people's answers (Bryman, 2001).

So, the starting point of my questionnaire was a personal description of the informants' profile: name, age, job, position, and general background. Then I formulated different questions around the principal one: What is the role of the media in the Colombian conflict? From there I brainstormed with topics and ideas such as media landscape, relevant political or social position of the different media concerning the conflict, censorship, freedom of press, security and working conditions among others. In total I made 14 questions that in some interviews, because the flexibility of the model, became more than 20 or 25. These questions are varied: specific questions, indirect questions, probing questions, interpretative questions, and so forth. In the field interviews members expressed themselves in the way in which they normally speak, think and organize reality (Neuman, 2011). That is what I wanted to offer to them with this type of questionnaire, a space where they could feel comfortable to speak on the topics at stake.²

² See Annex 1: Questionnaire for field work

2.4 Field work: The data collection

The data collection for this type of research comes in different ways. Sociologist W. Lawrence Neuman, divides them in two major categories: field research and historical-comparative research. The field research is defined in a way in which the researcher directly observes and records notes on people in their usual setting for a length of time; the historical-comparative research is where the researcher examines data on events and conditions in the historical past and/or in different societies (Neuman, 2011).

For this specific case I used both approaches because at one point I collected information from people about their jobs and themselves. But I also needed to go to the historical record in order to study the armed conflict and the place of the journalism in the map of Colombian Media.

Within the field research we can identify three main ways to get information and data: ethnographic protocols; participant observation; interviews; and focus groups.

In my case, where I am analyzing the point of view of the journalist about the media, and that is my group of study, I choose the field research and I used primary sources collected in the fieldwork through the interviews in Bogota during July 2012.

The ethnography and participant observation can be useful for research that merits immersion on the temporal-space of the case/area/topic of study. Both draw attention to the fact that the participant observer/ethnographer immerses him- or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing their behavior, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions. (Bryman, 2001) This kind of collecting data doesn't fit with the needs of my research because I am not looking for answers according to behaviors and relation of the participant with the context, community, other participants or so on.

The second Bryman's proposal is the focus group method. It is a form of group interview in which there are several participants; there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is upon interaction with the group and the joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2001). Those groups are typically emphasizing a specific theme that is explored in depth, whereas group interviews often span very widely. However the interaction is an important component of discussion and that might not work with my research questions since what I am looking

for is for the individual approach of my participants without any peer-pressure or direct external influence over their answers. Also the participants are well related with the topic, the media in Colombia, but with different profiles, expertise and point of views.

Interviews as a collecting data method work better on my research, since my point is to analyze the role of the media according to journalists. I took a short sample or members of the media in Colombia. I designed a questionnaire and in one month I got the information. The field interview is a joint production of researcher and one or more members. Members are active participants whose insights, feelings, and cooperation is an essential part of a discussion process that reveals subjective meanings (Neuman, 2011).

Then, the primary data of my research comes from the oral semi-structured interview that I made with the different sources. I used this kind of interview, bases in “a list of questions of fairly specific topics to be covered referred to as an interview guide” (Bryman, 2001). This is a flexible type of interview that permit to bring questions that are not included in the original questionnaire. Those not relevant are omitted. In this way I made the communication less strict and more casual but still controlled.

A total of eight interviews took place; five of them to recognized journalist, reporters, and editors of the different type of media, radio, TV, newspaper and online journalism. Three of them to academics from the most important schools of communication in Colombia. I choose them because they work for the most relevant journalism schools and at different research centers: University of Los Andes, University Del Rosario, and University of La Sabana. Professors with important trajectory and recognition in there field, experiences on the topic and critics of the media in the country.

They are eight men, between the 30 and 55 years of age, with more than 7 or 8 years of experience, who have been involved in the media and grew their professional profile there. Three of them are recognized faces on the media and within the general population. The others more belong to the academic and journalistic field.

Interviews were conducted in Spanish. They took place in different scenarios in Bogota. Two of them in public cafes. I found that location comfortable enough as a neutral place. The atmosphere was less strict, friendly. That helped to encourage my

confidence. I should point out that these two interviews were the first ones and for me was very important to feel calm both with the place and the informant; luckily it was exactly like that. The other five interviews were conducted at their work places. It was pretty exciting for me because since I had never been in a TV or radio studio, or in a Newspaper edition room. Of course the informality and relax mood from the previous ones at the cafes vanished. From the getting dress to how I talked, walked, and generally steered myself. I was in an environment where everyone is at work, at their offices and I had to fit into the picture. Despite this formality, the relation between the informer and me was relaxed, without rush and kind as well. The time was more or less one hour, and I registered the interviews through personal notes. I didn't "record" to keep a good level of comfort, confidentiality and trust.

The second method used to collect data is the one presented by Neuman: historical-comparative research. It focuses on one historical period to compare changes diachronically. The researcher examines data on events and conditions in the historical past and/or different societies (Neuman, 2011).

As my work is about the role of the media on the Colombian conflict, I have to study and review the vicissitudes on the different matters along the time of study (2003 – 2012). For that I follow Neuman with the steps in conducting a historical-comparative research project: Locating evidence, evaluating quality of evidence, organizing evidence, synthesizing and writing a report (Neuman, 2011).

There are important reports done by organizations dedicated to study the situation of press worldwide and in Colombia. The FLIP elaborates every year a detailed report that discusses transparency, accuracy and neutrality regarding this topic. Every year reports what the sources of pressure have been, what are the annual results of justice and investigation, who, by name and organization, have been victims of violence due to journalism duties and so on. I used this reports to illustrate also the situation and what researches have done about it.

2.5 Presentation of the Sources

I will present my sources as anonymous, due to ethical considerations. I will identify them along the documents with numerals. While keeping the confidentiality I consider important to bring a short profile on each of them:

2.5.1 Source nr 1: From Caracol Tv:

Social communicator. He began his career in 1987 and has assumed charge as editor in one of the principal news channel during the 90's. Nowadays is one of the most recognized news anchors on Colombian TV news.

2.5.2 Source nr 2: From El Espectador

Journalist, reporter. He has worked on both newspapers, EL TIEMPO and EL ESPECTADOR. Was Editor in Chief and won many awards due to his research and publications.

2.5.3 Source nr 3: From Revista Semana

Recognized as one of the greatest chroniclers of the country bullfighting. Was also general editor of Colprensa, was responsible for the last two years at Semana.com

2.5.4 Source nr 4: From Radio Super

A radio producer who has been working constantly for more than twenty years. His is a computer administrator. His dedicated his career to the radio station and this has won also him some major distinctions.

2.5.5 Source nr 5: From RCN Radio

One of the most traditional journalists in Colombia, not only for his work, but by "origin". He is part of a traditional family. He was managing editor and/or director of relevant newspapers and magazines.

2.5.6 Source nr 6: From Caracol Radio And Tv

Social communicator with a long journalistic tradition in Bogota. Started as a producer of a program of chronicles in 1996. Worked for CARACOL Radio, today he is a reporter and researcher.

2.5.7 Source nr 7: From Noticias Uno

He has been editor in chief of the Colombian national newscast: Noticias Uno, NTC Noticias, and Noticias RCN. Has ben a TV journalist since the beginning of his career and served as general coordinator for the national newscasts Noticiero de las 7.

2.5.8 Source nr 8: From University Del Rosario

Journalist with a master's degree in International Relations. He has founded the media observatory during the "distension era" in 1999. He has collaborated with many leading media production in writing manuals and codes of ethics for journalists. He is currently a professor and his expertise area is about media moral and ethical issues.

2.5.9 Source nr 9: From University Of La Sabana

Social Communicator PhD in Information Science. College professor in journalism field of studies. He practiced his profession during the 90's until 2000 when start his job as a professor.

2.5.10 Source nr 10 From University Of Los Andes

A journalist and media analyst. He has worked for the University Javeriana, director of one of the master's programs at the University of the Andes. He is also a newspaper columnist and collaborates with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

2.6 Personal Considerations

2.6.1 Me as researcher

During the fieldwork and data collection process, I realized that the way how I portrait myself is important too, and so at this point I will like to share my experience as a researcher, how I see myself into the role in my hometown with a subject that is not my expertise area.

I am from Bogota, Colombia. I lived there for 22 years. I belong to a section of what is considered “upper middle class”, I am a graduate from one of the most prestigious private universities of the country. Apart from that I have work experience in politics with the Parliament, senators and political parties. My expertise is public relations in politics and that former experience helped me to get contacts, mails, telephone numbers and so on.

Spanish is my native language and I feel that it was an obvious plus into the whole contact and interview process.

I come from a family where the journalism and publications are a significant legacy. My grandfather worked for many years in one of the most important newspaper on the 40's as a typographer. My great-uncle was one TV pioneers in Colombia. My other uncle, a recognized retired journalist, was director of an important TV new outlet. My cousin is editor in chief of the Publishing Fund National University. Another cousin was worked in radio and is currently a TV reporter for CARACOL TV.

This last one was my first interview. Because the familiar tie and the interest on my topic he was always willing to contribute with my project. He provided the information that I needed and helped me understand practical matters. In this way he

shared valuable tools in terms of advice and suggestions about method: How to address interlocutors? What is an effective way to drive my questions? These insights were an invaluable help when it came the time to face the coming interviews.

It was important for me the image I projected, All my collaborators were men with a large experience in journalism and academia, and well recognize people on the public scene in Colombia, so I worked hard to be able to learn as much knowledge as I could from this valuable informers.

Quoting Neuman: A field interview involves a mutual sharing of experiences. You might share a background to build trust and encourage the informant to open up, but never to force answers or use a leading question. You want to encourage and guide in a process of mutual discovery (Neuman, 2011). So I followed this line and introduced myself to the sources.

In summary, by the time of the fieldwork, I am a young woman, living abroad for the last two years, studying a Master in Peace Studies in Norway and going back to Colombia, my hometown, to obtain data for my thesis. That made a good impression in to my sources, in each interview we had time for a short talk about my background and myself. They were interested on the thesis topic and the entire “top of the world - Norway adventure”. After each interview they extend their help to me, offering me further suggestions on my data collection.

In the end the result was very positive. I left leaving doors open and I still am in contact with some of my sources.

2.6.2 The language

As I mentioned before, the fieldwork and most of my research was done in Spanish. On the interviews for instance, it was easier to communicate and express in that way, to use the same vernacular, vocabulary, and general expressions. My fears were those of a beginner. I was going to perform a role that I never played before; to interviews people who are used to do interviews as a part of their daily working life. After the first encounter I realized that taht wouldn't be an issue. So rapidly I gain some confidence with the language I used, the technical expressions and the communication needed to conduct the process.

The challenge however is on the translation to the English language. The way of the redaction and writing in Spanish and English are very different in structure and style. Also trying to represent the scene of each interview has been tough, I work hard not to lose important elements during transcription.

2.6.3 Ethical considerations

Before fieldwork, I thought that the informants would be more difficult to reach without allegiance to the topic and my interests. I thought that there will be some security considerations or conditions from them in order to accept my offer, but it wasn't like that.

When I sent the first e-mail, I offer to send them the questionnaire in advance so they would know what we would be talking about. However that wasn't necessary, none of them ask me for it and they did show an interest and willingness from the beginning. Although some of them requested to be contacted over the phone, when we talked, I answered them questions about my objectives and topic, the length of the interview, what was the main goal of the project and so on, but always in a very friendly terms.

Before starting the interview I informed I would take notes. Sometimes they explicitly ask to not being recorded but always in a pleasant way. At the end of each interview I reiterated what I was going to do with the information collected. They never refused to use their names or references, they didn't set any confidential or security clauses.

As Bryman identify the need to avoid any invasion of privacy as an ethical principle, I was very carefully when asking personal questions. I didn't want to cross any line and basically.

3. CHAPTER TWO: MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia there are media are on a few hands. The Media sources aren't so many if we take into account the size of the population of the country. Also their scope and type of ownership are low on diversity. I briefly described the political atmosphere and social panorama in Colombia, now I will break down the media landscape, the offer, in terms of information, opinion and analysis.

3.1 Television

Since 1998 there are two private channels, Caracol and RCN, with national diffusion that bring the news, advertisement, merchandise and family entertainment, at home with the highest ratings. The owners are the two biggest economic groups Caracol belongs to Valorem, manager of Santodomingo family business, and RCN belongs to Organización Ardila Lule.

The state-run channels are Señal Institucional (1966: it broadcast programs produce by the State institutions with the aim to promote the State, also the session of the Congress and the communitarian councils³), Señal Colombia (1970: it broadcast educational and cultural programs) and Canal Uno (1954: It is the only run-state channel with commercial scope, the production belongs to private companies and Noticias Uno o CM& stand out of this programs).

There are some regional channels that contribute somehow to open the scope of information, in Bogotá, for instance, there is Canal Capital own by the local administration (1997: with large variety programs but with an important emphasis on political, cultural and educative meanings) and City Tv, own by Casa Editorial El Tiempo (1999: similar format of the original Canadian station, with also TV News with important audiences)

The TV space for information and national and international news, it belongs mostly to TV news, unfortunately are few opinion or analysis programs, at least in those with the national coverage and high ratings.

³ The "communitarian councils" (consejos comunales) were launch in 2002; it was a weekly TV program, where the President Alvaro Uribe was being broadcast while having meetings with local communities along the country. It reached the 300 emissions.

3.2 Print Press

In Colombia, there are two major newspapers, El Espectador, as I named it before, And EL TIEMPO, (who enjoyed for some time the monopoly of the newspapers up to 2008 when El Espectador go back to the business after the economic crisis). El Tiempo, founded in 1911, belongs to the Economic group of Carlos Sarmiento Angulo and the Santos Family (one of the most influent and politic important one) among others. The name of the firm that groups all the publications and the TV channel City Tv, is Casa Editorial El Tiempo. On the other Hand, El Espectador, founded in 1887 it is owned by Valorem, same as CARACOL TV. On a smaller scale, but also important, El Nuevo Siglo (1936 and re founded 1990) by the conservative family Gómez and La República (1954) of liberal tendency.

There are also some regional print papers own to important families of each region. A recent investigation from the University of Los Andes, has shown that in 2013, in Colombia there are 60 “brands” of newspapers in Colombia, that distribute along the country on their different regional editions make 95 print newspapers. The research also, shows a good description of the print landscape and their owners⁴.

The only magazine of national distribution, of opinion and anlysis is Semana, founded in 1956 owned by Publicaicones Semana, with a independent tendency among the media.

3.3 Radio

As State-Run, there is one radio station, Radiodifusora Nacional, founded in 1940, that has two frequencies, one in AM and one in FM, with national and international news, with hourly updates.

With Private capital, Caracol, founded in 1948, owned for a long time by the Santodomingo Family and now by the Spanish economical group Grupo Prisa. It has eight radio station with different formats, but in terms of news and current news, there are two major ones: Cadena Básica (with two frequencies, one in AM and the other in FM) with 5 principal programs, very traditional on the radio, with more than 30 years on air, along the day just related with news, analysis, interviews. The other one is W RADIO (with two frequencies, one in AM and the other in FM) created in 1973 and the

⁴ See Annex 2

main activity is discussed current affairs and news at the national and international level.

Also with private capital, RCN Radio, founded in 1948, owned by Carlos Ardila Lulle since 1973, same as Caracol, has many different formats and stations but for this case, just two focus on news: La Radio (with two frequencies, one in AM and the other in FM) it has 5 principal programs, as well as Caracol, very traditional, with important reporters and journalists on air. LA FM (with two frequencies, one in AM and the other in FM) created in 1997, also is a very important informative space, mostly in the mornings.

Blue Radio, it is a new radio station, owned by Caracol Tv, founded in 2012 and is growing fast in audiences. Also discuss along the day news and relevancies.

On a small scope, but also traditional and with his audiences there are Cadena Super (1970) and Cadena Todelar (1957).

The radio panorama helps to open the spectrum of information, Caracol Radio and RCN Radio, along with TODELAR And RADIO SUPER, have important programs of discussion and analysis, they call or bring to the studio, specialize people on the breaking news, the ones involve; they interview them and have a deeper interaction compare to the one that are on the TV news. The most important frame of news on radio is from 4:00hrs until 10:00hrs. “It is strong and with tremendous insight, not just on information or entertainment, but as an engine to create opinion. It is almost a habit among Colombians to turn on the radio to hear the news” (Semana.com, 2013).

4. CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The hypothesis establishes that due to the constant violent acts and threats to the press in Colombia, along the times, makes difficult the transformation of the society towards a free press and even a peaceful environment. The cultural violence in which Colombia is immersing for long time ago it is reproducing over and over again. Reproduction that is coming with a strong bias to the truth. Major threats affecting press freedom and what the media shows and this information makes the audience dependent, fixing and molding the public opinion.

I will introduce the CULTURAL VIOLENCE concept and the THEORY OF MEDIA DEPENDENCY in order to explain in a future chapter the hypothesis presented.

4.1 Cultural Violence

This concept it was introduced in 1990 by Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist, founder of the peace and conflict studies. The culture of Violence is defined “as any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form”⁵.

Hence, the cultural violence are those aspects of the culture, exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science, that makes direct and structural violence look and feel right –or not wrong. (Galtung, Cultural Violence, 1990).

The direct violence it is defined as the event of violence — war, murder, rape, assault, verbal attacks, etc. — is the kind we physically perceive, while the structural it is a process with ups and downs, behind the physical act; injustice (Galtung, 1969), and the Cultural Violence is an “invariant, a permanence, remaining essentially the same for long periods, given the slow transformation of basic culture”⁶.

Galtung explains his concept with a (vicious) violence triangle, to demonstrate that the constant interact action with each other, it's the cause of a long term violent

5 (Galtung, Cultural Violence, 1990)

6 Ibid.

conflict. So, the triangle is stood on the direct and structural violence and so the cultural type will invoked as the legitimizer of both.

Violence can start at any corner in the direct-structural-cultural violence triangle and is easily transmitted to the other corners, with a violent structure institutionalizes and the violent culture internalized, direct violence also tends to become institutionalized, repetitive, ritualistic (Galtung, 1990).

4.2 Media System dependency Theory

It is a theory developed in 1976 by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Lawrence DeFleur, professors in the field of communication. The theory states that the more dependent an individual is on the media, the more important the media will be to that individual, and that the media depends on the social context. (Ball-Roceach & DeFleur, 1976)

The core of the theory is that the dependency it emerges out of three relationships⁷:

- I. The integral relationship among audiences, media and the larger societal systems (that varies across political, economic and cultural system).
- II. The individual depends on media information to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals.
- III. The societies influence the individual needs. Those external factors perform as restrictions on what and how media can be used and on the availability of other non-media alternatives. Thus the more alternatives, the less dependent the individual will become.

During times of high tensions or conflicts the needs get more relevance for the people and those must be meet more often; the needs that the MSDT identify are: The need to understand what is happening, to understand the social context; the need to act meaningfully into the society and being useful, and the need to escape from the high tensions. Hence, there are needs that need to be satisfied, then people turn to media and so the media fill up those needs and so have the opportunity of affect the people.

7 (Ball-Roceach & DeFleur, 1976)

According to the authors, there are two conditions to intensify the media needs, number one “when the number of media and centrality of functions in society are high and when a society is undergoing social change and conflict.” (Ball-Rocheach & DeFleur, 1976).

Correspondingly, there are three kinds of effects of media use “premised upon characteristics of both individuals and their social environment”⁸.

Cognitive effects:

I. Creation and resolution of ambiguity: it happens when the audiences receive inadequate or incomplete information, thus, when the social tension is high, so it's the ambiguity, and so the mass turn to media to “resolve” the ambiguity.

II. Agenda-setting: The agenda setting theory was published in 1994 by Maxwell McCombs, the central statement is that the media doesn't have the power to determinate the behavior on the society, however have effects on the scope of their thinking. In other words, people learn about relevant issues from the amount of coverage give to the issues in the news media. (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2010)

III. Attitude formation: the audiences are sensible to the media, and so the media, selects objects and people to form attitudes over that sensible audience.

IV. Belief systems: the effect to expand some believes trough dissemination of information about other people, other places, other religions, etc.

V. Clarification and conflict: By giving information about value conflict, media helps to make clear values within the society, and so the audiences end forming their own value points of view.

Affective effects:

I. Desensitization: due to a constant exposition to violent contents, the audiences might turn “insensible”

⁸ Ibid.

II. Exposure: due to the violent contents, exposure on the media people increase fear and anxiety about a physical place, a community, a group of people, etc.

III. Moral Feelings: the way how media portrays certain moral codes, or behaviors, within a social group, it affects the sense of morale in belonging to that group and their sense of alienation with each other, due to feelings or moral patrons.

Behavioral Effects

I. Activation: It is when the audiences do something that they would not otherwise have done if media doesn't send certain messages.

II. Deactivation: In this case, due to media messages, audiences don't do something that they supposed to do.

The authors also explain the dependency of the media and the different societal systems, economic, political and so on. How they get benefit from each other with a constant vis-à-vis dependency.

5. CHAPTER FOUR: PREASSURES

5.1 The Guerillas

5.1.1 Context

The trigger of what we know as the Colombian conflict is “La Violencia” period (1946-1958). In 1948 Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, populist liberal politician, was murdered and this produced cholera among the people and provoked, what the historians register as BOGOTAZO, riots, assaults, murders; in total 5000 people died just in one day. But, why this act opens a new whole episode on the history? Two years before the tensions between the partisans (conservatives and liberals)⁹ increased due to political empowerment and the country’s agriculture land. The fact that Gaitán was assassinated during his presidential campaign, on a conservative government term, raised tempers and suspicions; the tensions between liberals and conservatives couldn’t be contained anymore and the civil war started. Inside the political parties, grew armed branches, the conservatives armed were known as “Chulativa” and “los pájaros” while the liberals “Guerrillas liberales” and “autodefensas comunistas”. The confrontation turned radical, the groups were authors of massacres, violent acts, sexual crimes, among others.

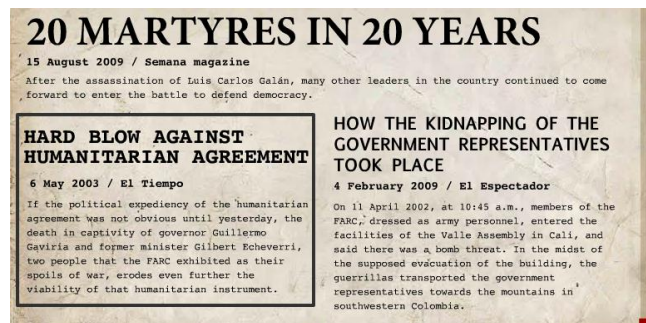


Figure 4: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011

The sectarianism of the conservative government and the cruel violence prepared the scenario to end the episode with the coup d’état in 1953. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla was an army General, who imposed the martial law and established the only dictatorship that Colombia had during the XX century. With the aim to bring the peace and end “la Violencia” period, his government offered an amnesty to the “guerrillas liberales” and to “autodefensas campesinas”; while the first ones got into it, the second ones rejected the program therefore, the State deployed his forces against the hubs of “autodefensas

⁹ Conservative Party founded in 1849, established a centralized government, an education system based on the Catholic Church, protecting the private property and against the socialism and communism. Liberal Party founded in 1848, hold the idea of a federal and decentralized government, social democratic and based on liberalism principles.

campesinas”, and at the same time, the irregular forces started to transform his style to “guerillas war”.

The years upcoming, between 1958 and 1974, are known as “Frente Nacional” – National Front- it was a period with an agreement where both parties hold the power, alternating it, for a term of 16 years. The international scenario of cold war and the alliances with the US agencies, helped to strength the anticommunist strategies combined with the repression to insurgents groups or any social reform.

“The anticommunists logic build during the cold war, helped to define the security concept and set the basis for the military strategy, strategy that found reinforcement on the exclusion of political forces different to the traditional ones” (Grupo de Memoria Historica , 2013)

A land problem without any attention or solution: political and economic inequality among the regions; an exclusionary regime as the Frente Nacional, all this within the international frame of victorious communist revolutions like Cuba and Chine, left in Colombia an enough “reason” for some peasants, to choose the revolutionary army road. The first guerrilla groups were FARC and ELN founded in 1964; EPL in 1965; M-19 in 1973 and Quintín Lame in 1984.

“Estuve en el Meta haciendo una investigación sobre el reclutamiento de menores de edad dentro de las FARC, dos días después de haber llegado me enviaron un sufragio. Yo sé que no puedo volver allá porque si no me matan” (Source nr 1)

According with the informants that I interviewed for this research, one of the majors threats and fears coming from the guerrillas are the kidnapping or being murder. The world saw in April 2012, when Rómeo Langlois was abducted by the FARC. That one is the drama of hundreds of reporters, journalists and cameramen in Colombia during the last decades. But also, be in the middle of the misinformation of the conflict. Spread the news regarding one or other band might end up in a major consequence for their life.

On those areas where the armed confrontation it is critical, called “zonas rojas” being a journalist it is an odyssey. The guerrilla, both FARC and ELN control many villages on the whole territory, and there they have given their own rules, that everybody have to follow, specially the journalists because they are the ones that spread the word. They received the communique from them and if they don’t divulgate then

soon or later they will become a target, but also they received the one from the military forces and if they doesn't then they will be tagged for them as well (Source nr 5).

During the last years, threats are arising whitening the different types of violations to the press because confer an appreciable advantage to the authors: anonymity and ease of keeping it. In 2007, the annually inform of the FLIP, registered that the 52% of the violations against the media, corresponded to threats, out this the 18% is coming from the FARC.

In February of 2014, CARACOL RADIO registered that 130 journalists have been threaten on the last year (2013). “Most threats are being made through telephone calls, surveillance and letter from members of illegal armed groups such as the FARC and ELN. The threats have been reported mainly in Bogotá, Caesar, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca” (Caracol, 2014).

5.2 The Drug Traffic Cartels

5.2.1 Context

At the end of the 70's, the illegal drug traffic started to operate in Colombia. The marihuana cultivation was the first boom, and then the cocaine, and the American market was the main buyer. During the 80's the illegal armed groups started to get profit out of the drug traffic too, and rapidly became one of the main economic sources to finance the war against the State.

By other hand, producers and traffic chains started to cluster into “cartels” to ensure security and logistics, and very soon became criminal organizations. Cartel de Medellín: On its time was pointed as the most dangerous criminal organization of the world, due to its “modus operandi” and the actions of its polemic leader Pablo Escobar, but as well because it was time where it managed the 95% of cocaine that was produce and distributes, it was on operation from 1976 until 1993,

«The drug traffic created prototypes of life; trespassed the guerillas; fed paramilitaries; build a hired assassin models; on the youth, created the statement of “easy money”, change the body of women; corrupted politics and became the main fuel of the armed conflict” (Bedoya, 2013)

when Escobar was murdered by the police. Cartel de Calí: according with American authorities, it was responsible for the 35% of drugs that were consumed in the States, and the Medellín Cartel, it was the second most dangerous criminal organization for the world, its gold years was just after the fall of the Medellín cartel until 1995. Cartel del Norte del Valle: After Cali and Medellín's Cartels break down, this one has the control of the market, its operation lasted until 2008. Cartel de la Costa: it controlled all the production and traffic within the Colombian Caribbean area. It last until 2000. (Gómez-Giraldo, 2009)

The war was intense, the Colombian state, with a lot help from USA, fought the Cartels and extradition was the legal trend for them, but the military was it too. Take down labs, fight them and so on; but also among them the confrontation was extreme.

It where many actions from drug cartels that tried to shut down the press and their representatives, as I mentioned before, the bomb attack against EL ESPECTADOR and the follow murder of his director.

Kidnaping was one of the tools that drug traffickers had to “force” the government. During the 80's and early 90's, Colombia was negotiation and extradition trade with US. Pablo Escobar and others traffickers get together to create “El Grupo de los Extraditables” and force the State one way or another to stop such agreement. On their long battle it where kidnaped and murder important politicians and journalists. Francisco Santos, Diana Turbay, Maruja Pachón, Álvaro Gómez Hurtado. Maybe the murder of Diana Turbay on the day of her release was the saddest episode of this story¹⁰. (Source nr. 3)

5.3 The Paramilitaries and New Criminal Gangs

5.3.1 Context

The paramilitaries in Colombia are known as AUC, farmers groups, landowners and drug traffickers created them as private security organizations. The aim was to protect them from the threats and extortion of guerrillas. More than 70% of its revenue came from drug trafficking, but also from kidnapping and extortion. They also

¹⁰ The whole story it is told by Gabriel García Márquez on his book, *Crónica de un Secuestro*.

collaborated with the armed forces and kept strengths with many politicians. Gain political and military along the country was its aim (Semana.com, 2008).

They are responsible for many massacres and tortures, using war techniques that are outcast, attacking civil population and guerrillas. They were the cause of a lot of internal and external displacement, and the missing of almost 15.000 people. During 1980 and 2000, they murder more than 3.500 people and took over 6.000.000 hectares of land. (MOVICE, 2008)

During 2003 the armed group agreed with the National Government, on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program. With a special legal framework created to give legal guaranties, at the end of 2008, they were 33.000 paramilitaries off of the illegal group. The leaders of the criminal organization were extradited to the USA. But his illegal structure was not so easy to disarticulate. Remains of paramilitaries cluster into new criminal bands, the government call them BACRIM. Most of them took over the business of drug traffic, extortion, and politician and military control of regions.

As well as the other two, they have found that media it is a trend for their criminal acts. Many journalist and reporters have been forced to exile, or tortured or in the worst case murder.

I mentioned before, Jaime Garzon, that was murder under orders of Paramilitaries. Another case is Jinneth Bedoya, journalist of EL TIEMPO. She was under an investigation that involved criminal acts of paramilitary chiefs that while being on jail, were breaking the law. She arrived to the main men jail in Bogotá, to do an interview and at the entrances was taken, raped, abused and hurt.

What it is represent all this acts, and all those symbols as persons and acts against them or their institutions is fear. It brings the idea among most of the journalist that their work represents something important but in order to keep their lives and their families it is necessary shut up. (Source nr. 11)

After the demobilizations of Paramilitaries during 2003 and 2006, new gangs have appeared on the conflict. Some of them are residues of the AUC who did not join the peace process or relapsed, or new members who want to take illegal business of drugs, left by the paramilitary. They are along the country on divided cells such as:

Aguilas Negras, Los Urabeños, Los Rastrojos, Los Paisas, la Oficina de Envigado, and other minor fractions as Los Machos and Renacer. (Restrepo, 2011)

They also are a real threat for journalists; most recently RWB accused Los Urabeños of:

Instigating terror campaigns against journalists and human rights activists in 337 municipalities in central Colombia and on the Caribbean coast, and in the Cali and Medellín metropolitan areas in particular, where you have managed to establish a hold; using death threats in early 2013 to force journalists and correspondents for national and regional media based in the cities of Medellín, Montería and Sincelejo to censor themselves or to stop working or in some cases, to flee the region or the country; hiring young criminals, some of them juvenile delinquents known as “combos,” to intimidate, threaten or even kill those who dared to cover your activities; involvement in the murder of Clodomiro Castilla Ospina, the editor of the magazine *El Pulso DEL TIEMPO* and a presenter on radio *La Voz de Montería*, in Montería on 19 March 2010; repeatedly designating journalists as “military targets.”; inspiring or encouraging other criminal gangs that have emerged from the paramilitary movement such as Los Rastrojos, which have a presence in the south of the country. In 2011, Los Rastrojos declared 11 indigenous community radio stations in the department of Cauca to be “permanent military targets. (Reporters Without Borders , 2014).

5.4 The Market Forces

During the field work, all the sources agreed on this point when I asked about the landscape and the relation with the economics. “In Colombia there are two major owners of the media, Grupo Santodomingo and Ardila Lulle Organization. The both own (and in some cases are majors immersionists) the main TV channels, newspapers, magazines, and radio stations.



Following with the information taken from the sources, they agreed that the lack of pluralism of the media enterprise it is a damage for the quality of information and the variety of it. (Source nr 10).

This situation it is also the cause of the self-censorship that the journalists apply on them. They obey to the interests of the board members and so

Figure 5 Owners of Media in Colombia. Source: La República.COM. April 4th 2012

it is better not to develop any news that can politicize or compromise their securities (Source nr. 7)

On the other hand there is the “independent” press. We can tell that it is that press that doesn’t belong to the enterprises mention above and yet has their audiences but isn’t strong enough to set the agenda of information (Source nr. 2). Hollman Morris for instance it is journalists that fits among this “independent” and has have a career full of criticisms because his publications. Contravia it is his TV Program and bring a different point of view and researches really far of what RCN or Caracol can do. Public denounces regarding the abandon of the State on isolated regions, violations of Human rights, and so on. But still it has a minuscule audience and is not enough to open the spectrum of media pluralism in Colombia.

The other issue that media has to deal with is the economic source, it isn’t a problem for the big chains, but for the small ones it is the big struggle. For instance on periphery the reporters and small radio chains, due to the lack of resources, have to obey the interests of who pays for the advertisement, or their benefactors. Otherwise there is not money to work, to pay and so on.

There is not a unique situation worldwide, it happens in the US or UK or elsewhere, that the power of media it is concentrated on few hands, but they have a variety on their goods, many different channels with different contents, the freedom isn’t limited due to economic resources, but in Colombia it is (source nr 3). The economic groups are so big that it is difficult to compete with them if there is not enough power or money. Many small publications go to bankrupt fast even though most of them are of free distribution. Also it has to matter with the preferences of the people, the mass is willing to pay and read the major newspapers because one way or another it is on what they trust, but this is not the issue. The thing is that on they trust is has a particular and determinate point of view, once again due to the market forces. (Source nr 10).

5.5 The Colombian State

Along the conversations with the sources, I identified three major fails on the being of the Colombia State regarding the media. At one point the inefficacy of the system in reference of justice on crimes against the press sideways with the lack of guaranties and tools to give the necessary protection for this kind of work; the second

one the use of the media on behalf of the government, state policies or whatever it is relevant for the regime on turn, and the third one, the abuse of power of the members of the State over the press.

5.5.1 The ineffectiveness of state investigations and judgments against attacks on the press and the lack of guaranties.

The Colombian judicial system is certainly very complex in its entirety. Besides being a slow, extensive and also with high corruption unit¹¹, makes access to justice and effectiveness very difficult.

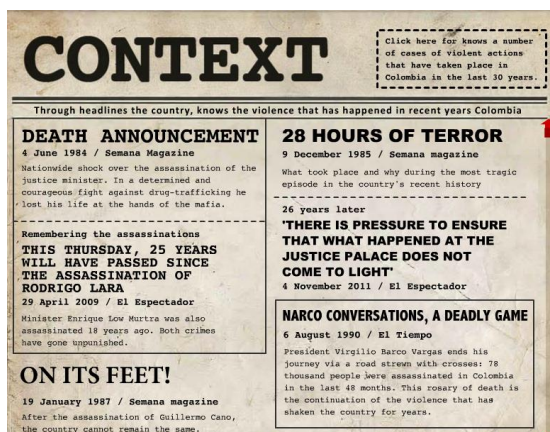


Figure 6 Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011

Therefore the justice regarding crimes against the press it is a shame in the country, in spite of the freedom of speech has a constitutional recognition since 1991¹². According with the report of FLIP regarding impunity in Colombia they have registered 142 cases of assassination of

journalists and reporters due to their work, from 1977 until 2014. 57 cases out of those

139 have prescribed already, it means the justice cannot find the perpetrators. By other hand the 90% of cases of assassinations that took place before 1991 have gone unpunished.

¹¹ According to WJP Rule of Law Index 2014, over 99 country Colombia comes in at 61st overall. “The country outperforms most Latin american countries in the dimensions of regulatory enforcement (ranking 5th in the region), and open government (ranking 6th in the region and 40th globally). The country’s judicial system is independent and one of the most accessible and affordable in the region; however, it is afflicted by lack of effectiveness in the investigation and prosecution of crimes. On a less positive note and notwithstanding some recent progress in resolving it is longstanding civil conflict, the country still faces challenges in the area of security (ranking 89th), particularly in regard to high levels of crime, which is partly attributable to the presence of powerful criminal organizations. Police abuses, violations of human rights, and poor conditions at correctional facilities are also areas that require attention.” (The World Justice Project , 2014)

¹² Art. 20: Colombian Constitution – To every person is guaranteed the freedom to express and disseminate their thoughts and opinions, to transmit and receive truthful and impartial information, and to establish mass media. These are free and have social responsibility. The right to rectification is guaranteed in terms of equity. There will be no censorship.

Given the inefficiency and lack of punishment, the credibility of the system is lost. The perpetrator does not expect to get caught for killing a journalist or even expects to an investigation. On the other hand the reporter gives away from the idea of justice to their profession, so before any real threat, he/she decides for self-censorship, stop his/her investigations, quit or give out in exile (Source nr. 8).

One of major challenges of being a journalists in Colombia, it is the extension and length of the territory, the disconexion between the regions and what happens along just one day.

The work conditions are ridiculous, at least on the periphery, radio stations hire reporters or journalists just if the reportage sells; due to many factors (security or corruption) there are topics that people don't talk about. The protection of the journalist it is round by silence and complacence. (Source nr 9)

Another source opines that Colombia is a country with a dizzying fluctuation information. It changes every day the journalistic agenda. In the case of conflict is very complicated, because the conflict has only one side, it has just one version, the official one and very occasional the side communities, and moreover, those who have dared to go and ask the guerrillas about the conflict, today are doomed as aides guerrillas. We, the private channels, cannot go to the jungle to talk to FACR, because they will kill us, for them we are means of the oligarchy. That's just a possibility that have the independent press or shipped international (e.g. Romeo Langlois). It is a very complex and yet cover the country but it is a country fascinate to work, because there is news of all sizes every day. They are unique incomparable events. And journalists are "fishing in troubled waters" in the midst of a

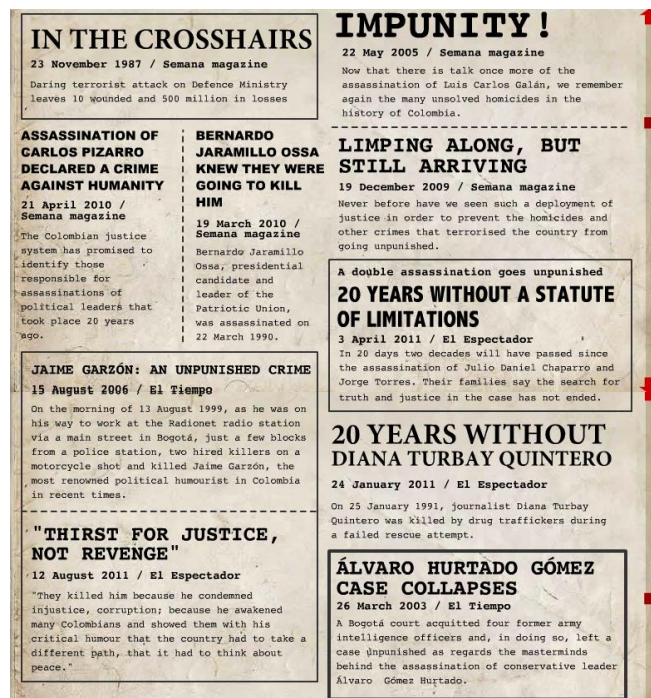


Figure 7: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011

society that failed to behave, failed to choose their leaders and led the country to a century-old crisis. (Source nr 6)

5.5.2 Politics and Media

One of the most important hallmarks of the press in Colombia is its familiar character. Major newspapers and TV channels, as I mentioned above, are linked to economic empires and traditional families; and so the news agenda of the media often impose the source and ends converted into a representation of the interests of those who hold political and economic power. These agendas are sometimes not connected with the audience and then the final feeling is that the media do not address social issues and problems that really matter to people (source nr. 6).

On the other hand, there is a control exercised by the press through the official Publish, to get “benefits” for the state. For example, during Uribe government (2004 - 2010), it was clear that private channels, were allies of the government. They were used as soundboards for the policies of his agenda (Source nr. 1).

Overall there was not an equilibrium on the management of the conflict on the media. The language use was irresponsible. Often journalist took or sides, because economic reasons or for achieve audiences and so the war became a public spectacle. The conclusion is that on the screens, the radio or the press the agendas are set around the conflict, the political pressure, and lately elections. (Source nr. 10)

Conflict dynamics have been changing slowly, there is a rearrangement of the map of the war that has caused some journalists have resorted to self-censorship on certain issues and certain regions. There are shifting to dangerous places and only present data from official sources. There is a permanent state of privacy in journalistic work, mainly in the departments where direct conflict is latent. (Source nr. 3)

5.5.3 Abuse of legal forces

Within the complaints against press freedom in Colombia, surprisingly, after the legal armed groups as perpetrators, the state agencies placed on the second line.

For instance, as I mentioned before, the DAS scandal, which made it illegal surveillance and follow a smear campaign against journalists and opposition members during the term of former President Alvaro Uribe.

It is unacceptable that in a democratic State, that holds the duty to preserve the constitutional rights of citizens is a factor of destabilization. The FLIP, in their statistics indicates that mainly members the State abuse their power against journalists in



Figure 8: Police and reporter during disturbs in Bogota. Source: EIEspectador.com. October 2012

coverage. In some cases do not allow to record the disturbances, seize journalistic material and have even used physical force against them. (Source nr. 4) "In a period of 75 days FLIP recorded 44 attacks on journalists covering riots

between demonstrators and security forces, 14 of those attacks were S.W.A.T responsibility."

The cases of obstructing the work of journalists mostly reflected in the members of the state police, the army, INPEC (Custodians officers), S.W.A.T and security agencies.

6. CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The media is the central arena where different confrontations of social kind, economic, political, and cultural matters of the conflict, take place. All the actors involved in the conflict search for the validation of their acts through the media. The State to show their results on his battle against the illegal forces and the illegal forces to hide their crimes and in many cases the mafias of corruption and the different actors of the War have been in alliance to silence the press.

This discussion has been developed to show that all the threats coming from the various armed conflicts acted against the media as institutions and journalists as individuals and have a very negative effect in the daily business of the media in Colombia. For this host of reasons we can presume that the transformation of society towards a free and fair press will turn complicated.

The MDT tells us that there is a relation between the audiences, the media and the society and that relation changes with the different conjectures. According to this conjecture, the individual creates needs that the media satisfies but also achieves that media help to conquer. The entire society influence the needs and those in the middle of a conflict take relevance. There is a need to understand what is happening and the contexts, a need of take part and also a need to escape of that tension.

On the Colombian context we have a highly tense conflict that media displays every day, unfortunately due to the lack of alternatives of newscast, or press, or radio, and the economic power held by the media, the information is biased. Furthermore that becomes audiences only choice. And that generates a dependency over the media market.

The constant reproduction of violence and conflict on the press ended up legitimizing the structural and direct violence, as Johan Galtung points out. The speech that is reproduced creates a culture around the conflict as well as lasting stereotypes. Thus, the guerrillas are killers, terrorist, kidnappers, the paramilitaries are bloody murders, the illegal business of drugs is dangerous and just left silicones and short lives, the State is doing great and what Colombia needs it to attack everything that goes against democratic state (without paying so much attention to the means) .

The Colombia media is creating ambiguities in the conflict, and those ambiguities are building up with incomplete or inadequate information, because of the lack of

pluralism on the media, the narrow link of the industry with the politics, and the traditional families that rules the country and owns the press.

The audience is sensible to the media and creates feelings and attitudes around what it is displayed in it. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission on a research of 2010 regarding the situation of the press in Colombia, points out that Colombians trust media more than the justice system, politics, police, private corporations or the church. If this is so, the dependency on the press, is problematic too.

Now, with the whole reproduction of culture of violence, under the stereotypes of the conflicts, the audiences build their belief systems. That was the whole point of the smear campaign of DAS in Colombia; work on those audiences feelings. The aim was to portrait journalists as an opposition to the government and as allied to the guerrillas. And they did managed somehow to accomplish this. Holman Morris, a well-known independent journalist, has been characterized as a “guerrillero”, his work denounced for corruption, violation of human rights, and so on. Like Morris there are many, some of them are in exile, but the audience doesn’t read it on a different way of someone hiding.

The dependency on media on high tension scenarios, combined with the culture of violence perpetuates a vicious circle of constant conflict. The inefficacy of the Colombian state when it comes to address investigations regarding crimes against the press, it’s an invitation to impunity and the continuation of the attacks. Their own media in Colombia that is being attack by many forces do not act on it. It is immersed on the same vicious circle of threats and attacks and not broadcast, because if a reporter on the far Cauca is killed, that is not a news, that doesn’t go on the first page on the print edition, it isn’t breaking news, it is **just one more** among the 142 that since 1977 had been murdered.

So if the same media is not telling what is happening with their reporters, journalists, and so on, how the audiences can

actually mange to be informed? How the individuals can turn their needs into empathy

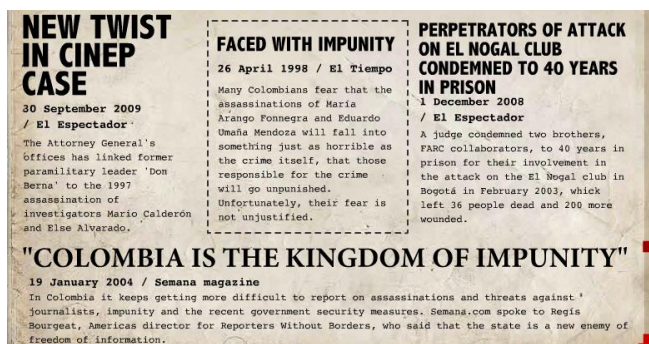


Figure 9: Special Report from FLIP about impunity. November 2011

and how can they take action? It is not just about the media agenda, it is also that the market is so small that it is difficult to get to know what are the conditions of the reporters far from Bogota or the other main cities.

Colombian society is still unaware of the meaning that an attack on a journalist or what it means, is a society that does not consider an attack on the media is an attack on their fundamental right to be informed. It seems to be disconnect between media and stakeholders and even the exclusion of one of them is critical; audiences are passive meanwhile arranges ineffectiveness regarding the failure of the media. Failure to report truthfully and independence.

With the peace talks that are happening between the government and the guerillas of the FARC, the hypothetical scenario of a demobilization, might help to clean up somehow the large threats that the media has. The media has to play an important role now on, to keep the memory of the conflict alive in order to get justice and reparation, to the victims of the conflict but also to get the recognition of the society as the informants of truth and accuracy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ball-Rocheach, S., & DeFleur, M. (1976). A dependency model of Mass-Media Effects". *Communication Research* 3, 3-21.
- Bedoya, J. (2013, November 23). Guerra contra el narcotráfico: 20 años de dolor, muerte y corrupción. *EL TIEMPO*.
- Borders, R. W. (2002, October 01). *Reporters Without Borders*. Retrieved from Colombia: <https://en.rsf.org>
- Borders, R. W. (2012). Retrieved from World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012: <http://en.rsf.org>
- Bryman, A. E. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caracol. (2014, February 11). *Alerta 130 periodistas amenazados de muerte en el último año: Defensoría*. Retrieved from www.caracol.com.co: <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/alerta-130-periodistas-amenazados-de-muerte-en-el-ultimo-ano-defensoria/20140211/nota/2077170.aspx>
- CONTRAVIA. (2010, NOVEMBER 02). *CONTRAVIA MORRIS PROD*. Retrieved from YOUTUBE.COM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uod82uOxoE>
- EL PAÍS. (2014, Marzo 10). *Hace medio siglo cayó Rojas Pinilla*. Retrieved from [ELPAIS.COM.CO](http://historico.elpais.com.co): <http://historico.elpais.com.co>
- Fundacion para la Libertad de Prensa. (2013). *PROTESTAS "sin garantías para cubrir"*. Bogota: FLIP.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, 167-191.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27, 291 - 305.
- Gómez-Giraldo. (2009, Junio 1). Libertad de Prensa en Colombia, entre la amenaza y la manipulación. *Palabra Clave*, pp. 13-35.
- Grupo de Memoria Historica . (2013). *¡Basta ya! Colombia: Memorias de guerra y dignidad*. Bogota: Imprenta Nacional.
- Jiménez, C. (2009). Implementation and Instrumentalization of the National Security Doctrine in Colombia (1978-1982): Effects on Human Rights Problems. *Reflexión Política*, 17.
- Maxwell, M. C., & Donald, S. (1972). The Agenda-Setting function of Mass Media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-187.

- MOVICE. (2008, February 05). Retrieved from Movimiento de Víctimas contra Crímenes de Estado: <http://www.movimientodevictimas.org/node/549>
- Neuman, L. (2011). *Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson.
- Reporters Without Borders . (2014). *Predators: "Otoniel" and Los Urabeños – paramilitaries*. Retrieved from rsf.org: http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=predateur&id_article=44493
- Restrepo, J. (2011, February 09). La tardía guerra contra las llamadas "Bacrim". *SEMANA.COM*, p. 1.
- Semana.com. (2008, August 09). *El testamento de Carlos Castaño*. Retrieved from Semana.com: <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-testamento-carlos-castano/94444-3>
- SEMANA.COM. (2009, February 23). *El DAS sigue grabando*. Retrieved from SEMANA.COM.CO: <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-das-sigue-grabando/100370-3>
- Semana.com. (2013, Julio 13). *¿A quién escuchan más los Colombianos?* Retrieved from Semana.com: <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/a-quien-escuchan-mas-colombianos/351001-3>
- The World Justice Project . (2014). *WJP Rule of Law Index 2014*.
- Wanta, w., Golan, G., & Lee, C. (2010). Agenda Setting and International News. In *War and Conflict Communications: Critical concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (pp. 274-287). New York: Routledge.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Questionnaire for field work

1. ¿Quién es usted? (descripción del perfil profesional)
2. ¿Cómo es panorama mediático nacional?; en términos de medios de información o canales de información ¿qué se le está dando a los Colombianos?
3. ¿Qué y Cuál es la prensa independiente?
4. ¿Cuál es la relación prensa y democracia en Colombia? Debería ser de otra manera.
5. ¿Ha existido algún cambio en la labor periodística, en el discurso, en el ser y/o el deber ser de periodista desde la implementación de la política de seguridad democrática en Colombia?
6. Existe un posición clara, establecida y dicha de los diferentes medios (canales de noticias, periódicos, revistas, radio estaciones) ó por el contrario hay una constante ambigüedad con respecto al lugar que ocupan los medios dentro del mapa del conflicto.
7. Hay libertad de expresión en Colombia
8. Reporteros sin fronteras en el índice 2011 – 2012, Colombia ubica el puesto 143/179 y lo describe como:

“Colombia (143rd), where one journalist was killed as a direct result of his work, remained far down the list because journalists were repeatedly threatened, forced to stop working or forced to flee abroad (or to another region), particularly journalists operating in areas where there is fighting. Despite improvements in the judicial system, the country has not yet put its years of civil war behind it, nor the grim practices of the former DAS security service such as espionage, sabotage and smear campaigns.”

¿Qué opina al respecto?

9. ¿Cómo es el proceso entre que sucede una noticia (de cualquier tipo) y se publica?
10. ¿Qué es más fácil, informar ó opinar?
11. ¿Existe la auto censura en Colombia?
12. ¿El conflicto en Colombia se cuenta desde algún actor del conflicto? (victimarios, víctimas, gobierno, ejército, ONG's, etc.)
13. ¿Conoce algún tipo de sanciones legales a periodistas que hayan sido a causa de algún tipo de reportaje, publicación, etcétera? (mas allá de si es justo ó injusto)
14. ¿Cómo se protege el periodismo y al periodista en Colombia?
15. ¿Cuál es la mayor amenaza al periodismo y la libertad de prensa en Colombia?

Annex 2: Map of media in Colombia – Print Press

¿A QUIÉN PERTENECE LA PRENSA QUE LEEMOS?

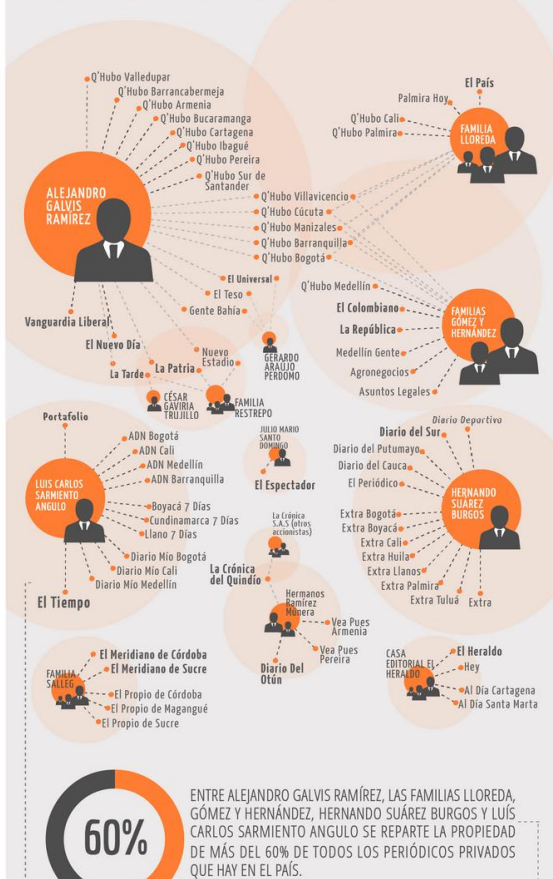
UN ANÁLISIS DE LA PROPIEDAD DE PRENSA EN COLOMBIA

www.mediosencolombia.com

LOS DUEÑOS

A 2013 hay unos 95 periódicos impresos en el país
[ó unas 60 marcas si se engloban sus ediciones locales y regionales en una sola]

Así se distribuyen los principales empresarios, familias y grupos económicos que controlan el negocio de las noticias impresas en el país:



Por su parte **EL TIEMPO**, propiedad de Sarmiento Angulo, es el periódico más leído del país con aproximadamente **1.130.000 lectores diarios** y unas **5 millones de visitas al mes** en su portal web.

180 millones de dólares
fue la suma que pagó el Grupo Editorial Planeta por EL TIEMPO en 2005.

Sin embargo, en 3 años Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo adquirió las partes de los otros accionistas haciéndose el dueño del **100%** del periódico icono del país:

- en 2010 compra el 33% por \$210 mil millones de pesos
- en 2012 compra el 55% por \$428 mil millones de pesos
- (la suma del 12% restante se mantuvo en secreto) pero se especula que fue de \$75 mil millones de pesos

380 millones de dólares
ó 713 mil millones de pesos sumó en resultado la venta del TIEMPO al empresario más rico del país.

A MANERA COMPARATIVA, EN 2013 JEFF BEZOS, EL DUEÑO DE AMAZON.COM, PAGÓ 250 MILLONES DE DÓLARES POR EL 100% DEL WASHINGTON POST.

LUÍS CARLOS SARMIENTO ANGULO



Ocupa el puesto 64 entre los hombres más ricos del planeta según Forbes con una fortuna de **13.900 millones de dólares** y fue recientemente nombrado quinto entre los banqueros más adinerados del mundo por Bloomberg. Con un emporio que va desde la banca y los servicios financieros, hasta la construcción y la hotelería —pasando ahora por los medios de comunicación— Sarmiento Angulo ya no es solo el 'rey' del sector financiero en Colombia sino también en Centro América a donde ha expandiendo su emporio con el Grupo Aval.

LOS DUEÑOS DE LA PRENSA REGIONAL

ALEJANDRO GALVIS RAMÍREZ



más de 20 periódicos en los que figura este empresario santandereano **estaría rondando o incluso superando los 2 millones de lectores diarios**, sin contar el tráfico web que generan sus portales o el alcance que tiene Colprensa, otra de sus aventuras empresariales.

ÁREA DE INFLUENCIA



Economista de la Universidad de los Andes y máster en Administración de Empresas de la Universidad de Michigan, Galvis Ramírez expandió el emporio familiar que heredó de su padre con Vanguardia Liberal, asociándose astutamente con importantes figuras de la prensa colombiana como los Lloreda de Cali y los Gómez y Hernández de Medellín para consolidar su redes regionales.

No pasa desapercibido su trabajo 'rescatando' diarios regionales a punto de la quiebra como lo hizo con el El Universal de Cartagena y el sobresaliente caso de su emprendimiento con el Diario Q'Hubo, que en 6 años años ya cuenta con **16 ediciones impresas** y alrededor de **2 millones lectores diarios**.

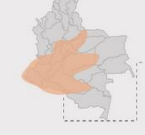
En 2009 la Revista Semana afirmó que habría una oferta del empresario para adquirir El Heraldo y así llenar la pieza que le falta para consolidar definitivamente su poder en la costa Atlántica, pero dicho rumor no ha tenido una conclusión definitiva.

HERNANDO SUÁREZ BURGOS



Fundador del Diario del Sur y propietario del Grupo Editorial El Periódico, que abarca hoy en día buena parte del sur-occidente del país y compite en el centro con los otros grandes de la prensa. Suárez Burgos confiesa que "era un empresario que nunca había tenido nada que ver con los medios de comunicación", pero que hoy tan solo con su marca **EXTRA le llega a 20 ciudades del país**.

ÁREA DE INFLUENCIA



En el mundo suenan por todas partes las alarmas frente a la suerte de las noticias impresas, pero Suárez Burgos afirma orgullosamente que es "el mayor importador de papel de Colombia".

Ahora se aventura con un nuevo emprendimiento, **HSB noticias** y **HSB Televisión**, que junto con su emisora **Ondas del Mayo**, busca consolidar un espacio radiofónico y web para ampliar su influencia y cobertura.

Algo que definitivamente llama la atención en el caso de Suárez Burgos, es que si bien los grandes poderes de la prensa se han concentrado históricamente en la zona norte y central del país, este empresario nariense le ha estado apostando a tomarse el siempre desatendido sur del país en una jugada astuta por consolidarse como líder en grandes departamentos como el Putumayo y el Cauca.