

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF ARMED CONFLICT VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

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The poster I propose to present to ICC 2009 is a preliminary overview of a research project on historical cartographies of armed conflict and violence. I currently am the main investigator for the "Historical Atlas of Armed Conflict Violence in Colombia" through the Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos CERAC (Conflict Analysis Resource Center) in Bogota, Colombia.

The Historical Atlas project confronts the following paradox: despite the large diversity of studies on the history of violence and armed conflict in Colombia, historical Cartography has been largely ignored as an analytical tool. Some thematic mapping has been carried out to represent the geographical presence, activity and intensity of the illegal armed actors. But only few spatial patterns related with combats, casualties, damages, and victims have been examined or disseminated among the general Colombian population. Those that have reached beyond the limits of academia are few and far between. Surprisingly almost no historical geography has systematically been done for Colombian sixty year's old conflict. Nothing resembling a historical atlas of Colombian history of violence and armed conflict has ever been produced.

A systematic project of spatial analysis and of cartographic representation of diverse dimensions of the armed conflict worthy of study in Colombia is yet to be done, particularly in an historical way. Many social, economical, political, environmental and cultural aspects of the Colombian violence past should be studied from geographical and cartographical perspectives, especially for truth, memorial, and remembrance purposes. We expect the "Historical Atlas of Armed Conflict in Colombia" to fulfill this gap, to generate new dimensions of analysis and discursions over Colombian past and present, to diffuse these issues to new publics, and to pressure for better institutional and social responses to the armed conflict consequences.

The project is conceived to combine the traditional structure of historical atlas with an interpretative focus on previous cartographic approaches to violence, from the perspective of the contemporary history of cartography. 2012 is the year expected for publishing the Atlas in a full-colored printing, with an interactive website and a DVD But before this date it is expected to publish preliminary research results in articles from Colombian and international specialized prestigious journal.

These articles and the Atlas itself would be diffused throw CERAC and Razón Cartográfica networks, with the support of project partners like the Colombian Commission for Reconciliation and Reparation.

The project currently is in a fund raising stage but has preliminary results. The poster will present examples an analysis of diverse international cartographic work related with violence, genocides, revolution, conflict, civil wars, crime, humanitarian crisis, etc. We are sure that research on past cartographies of violence, together with the generation of new understandings of the spatial dimensions of conflict for Colombian case, will generate international academic interest in terms of critical cartography, history of cartography scholarship, and for future comparable thematic mapping projects.