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***In Colombia, the elitist mafia minority that reaches 0.02% of its population that has historically held power, is the one that has not allowed to generate a national project.***

Corruption in Colombia is historically an endemic evil that is evidenced by the fact that during more than two centuries of republican life the State has been dominated by around 100 families who have always used it as booty and that consequently became inherent in the survival and status quo of the elites.



Although the suggestive study *Elites, power and principles of domination in Colombia (1991-2022): Origins, profiles and historical account*, [Libro Libre](#) (you can download [here](#)), directed by Jenny Pearce, British professor and researcher at the Latin America and

Caribbean Centre of the London School of Economics and Juan David Velasco Montoya, professor at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the Javeriana University of Bogotá, does not delve into the determining influence of factors such as drug trafficking, paramilitarism and the so-called parapolitics (alliance of private armies with political mafias that have kidnapped practically all regions of the country), which have made possible the consolidation of structures of socioeconomic domination throughout the national geography, their general conclusion is that the pettiness, corruption, short-sightedness and mafia spirit of the Colombian establishment, they have not allowed the generation of a national project.

The research identifies that more than numerically there are few people who direct the direction of the State and the economy in Colombia, *"there is a deep fragmentation of power and there is a structural difficulty for there to be national projects that are binding and hegemonic, since each elite constellation (judicial, political, economic and technocratic) that emerged after the Constitution of 1991, it has different (sometimes diametrically opposed) values, customs, gender perspectives, regional backgrounds and academic preparations. In other words, the identities and cohesion factors among the elites are minimal, which denotes a historical pattern of building unstable power coalitions with no vocation for permanence. This would explain why reformist projects have failed."*



La corrupción en Colombia es históricamente un mal endémico que se evidencia en el hecho de que durante más de dos siglos de vida republicana el Estado ha sido dominado por alrededor de 100 familias que siempre lo han utilizado como botín y que consecuentemente se volvió inherente a la sobrevivencia y el *statu quo* de las élites. De esta manera detentan su dominio político y su capacidad económica privilegiada que les permite como gobernantes vender y transferir bienes públicos de acuerdo a sus conveniencias y corruptos intereses. El caso más patético, aunque se puede enumerar mucho más ejemplos, fue la pérdida de Panamá en 1903, orquestada por el gobierno de Washington. En realidad y los hechos históricos así lo demuestran, es que el istmo no fue robado sino que fue vendido por las élites colombianas con el presidente de la época José Manuel Marroquín y su hijo Lorenzo a la cabeza, para que Estados Unidos tuviera una posición de dominio sobre América del Sur y lograra expandir sus acciones de injerencia.

*Colombia, uno de los países más desiguales del mundo*

El diario *El Espectador* de Bogotá entrevistó a Jenny Pearce para ahondar sobre el resultado de su investigación académica, cuyos hallazgos dejan entrever la poquedad de la

clase dominante en Colombia que no llega a ser dirigente, sino que se constituye en un grupúsculo parásito del botín estatal que históricamente se lo han robado para consolidar sus fortunas mal habidas y convertir al país con sus acciones y complicidad en un narco-estado.

*Pearce asegura que de acuerdo con los datos recabados en desarrollo de la pesquisa académica, desde 1991 tan solo el 0,02 % de la población colombiana ha direccionado el rumbo de un país que hoy tiene 50 millones de habitantes. El estudio “documenta que 68 familias han manejado la política y que aún prevalece el patriarcado en la cúpula del poder público”. La investigación perfila además quiénes y cómo son las élites que han ocupado los máximos cargos en el Gobierno, los organismos de control, las altas cortes, el Congreso, los gremios económicos y los propietarios de las empresas más grandes del país.*

*La mafia política colombiana ha logrado consolidar “una cultura de intercambio de fidelidades y votos, por acceso privilegiado a los bienes y servicios que provee el Estado”, lo que comúnmente se conoce como clientelismo.*

Si como se sabe América Latina tiene un problema de violencia aguda y preocupante que la hace la región más desigual del mundo, Colombia es el país más inequitativo de los países de la OCDE y el segundo más desigual entre 18 naciones de la región, explica Pearce. En tal sentido, recalca, “desigualdad, violencia y élites son temas conectados”.



Jenny Pearce

Otro de los elementos que la académica subraya del informe es que la élite colombiana se ha destacado por ser totalmente obsecuente con los dictados de Washington, pues desde los años 20 del siglo pasado hizo suya la directriz diplomática formulada por el expresidente conservador Marco Fidel Suárez, quien ocupando la Cancillería, pocos años antes de haber asumido la jefatura del Estado, acuñó la [doctrina de \*réspice polum\*](#) (mirar hacia el norte) como principio de subordinación y entrega a Estados Unidos.

Adicionalmente, Pearce destaca que la cuestionada élite colombiana ha sacralizado la propiedad privada “*como principio de dominación*”, de ahí los bloqueos históricos a la reforma agraria y la negación reiterada de la validez de la expropiación con fines redistributivos. En buena parte, ello explica la primacía de la política transaccional mediante el clientelismo como eje ordenador de las relaciones políticas y socioeconómicas en Colombia.

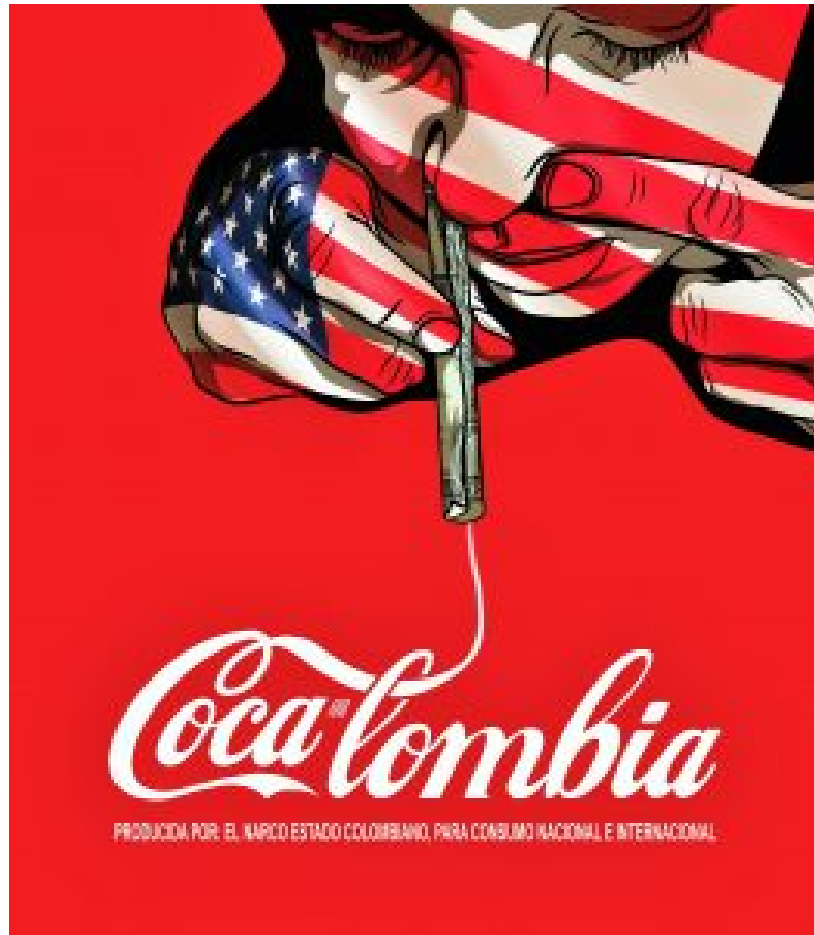
The British researcher suggests that *"it is necessary to better understand the concept of 'elite' to generate a debate on how the concentration of political, social and economic power is related to factors that reproduce violence and prevent necessary transformations for a society"*.

*Elites are the stick in the wheel to consolidate peace*

On the multiple attempts to achieve a solid and consequently lasting peace in the country, Pearce makes a forceful reading regarding the miserable role that the Colombian *establishment* has played.

*"Colombia," he says, "is the tenth country with the most negotiations and peace agreements signed with guerrilla and paramilitary groups in the history of the world. Precisely, from the 80s until now, 16 peace negotiations have been developed and more than 75,000 ex-combatants have been demobilized. With the FARC, the broadest and most sophisticated Peace Agreement occurred, but despite this the country is in a new phase of armed conflict, with indicators that could resemble what was happening at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century in terms of the number of massacres, the wave of massive forced displacements of populations, confinement, dismemberment, etc. That is why in our study we proposed that it would not be possible to make a complete peace and reduce all expressions of violence if the elites do not commit themselves to building an equitable rule of law in all territories, accept a more progressive taxation and build a public and human security accessible to all that transcends the protection of farms, companies and recreational sites".*

He also explains that *"in Colombia it has become very difficult to build a nation, because coalitions between elites tend to be very unstable. Also for the under-representation of society in the managerial positions of the State and the economy. That is why, when consensus is reached as in the [National Front](#), huge sectors of the population are excluded – and with violence from the State – thus generating spaces for violent and insurrectionary contestations."*



*Gustavo Petro has a historic opportunity*

Pearce believes that President Gustavo Petro "has the historic opportunity to unite two different countries. If the pattern of votes in the presidential elections of 2018 and 2022 is analyzed, it is observed that it has managed to consolidate electoral majorities in the Pacific and the Caribbean, two regions where violence and inequality have been concentrated. But it has also hooked in large cities such as Bogotá, Barranquilla, Santa Marta and Cali. In that sense, it can promote a broad coalition of urban and rural sectors. However, the weight of history is strong, because in Colombia from the government of Alfonso López Pumarejo, through the mandates of Alberto Lleras Camargo and Carlos Lleras Restrepo, to point one of the Peace Agreement with Juan Manuel Santos, there were brakes and even setbacks in the land redistribution plans. Then the question arises: will the agrarian reform plan be sustainable given these historic vetoes by certain regional elites? The key will be in the speed with which they make the reform, the solidity of the multipurpose cadastre, the fixing of high taxes on unproductive latifundia, the administrative efficiency of the different state agencies and ensuring that there are alternatives to violence to resolve agrarian conflicts. "

*Interests of big capital will be crossed to the reforms of Petro*

It should be borne in mind that if you review the range published by the Superintendency of Companies on the companies with the highest operating income in Colombia, adds the British professor, it can be seen that at the top of the list are those financial holdings, oil companies and health promotion companies (EPS) that would be affected by their greedy and dark interests if the socioeconomic reforms proposed by Petro are implemented.

*CronicÓN.Net*

*Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)*

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