Transnational Geographies in the Making: Adaptive Spatialities, Selective Transnationalism, and Colombian Networks in Germany

Dissertation
with the aim of achieving a doctoral degree
at the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences
Department of Earth Sciences
at Universität Hamburg

submitted by

Jorge Luis Zapata Salcedo

Hamburg, 2026

Department of Earth Sciences

Date of Oral Defense:	03.06.2026
Reviewers:	Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter
	Prof. Dr. Martina Neuburger
Members of the examination commission:	Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter, chair
	Prof. Dr. Martina Neuburger
	Prof. Dr. Benno Fladvad
	Prof. Dr. Jana Kleibert
	Prof. Dr. Uwe A. Schneider

Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter, for guiding me throughout my doctoral studies. I also thank the Institute of Geography at the University of Hamburg for welcoming me during my time there.

This PhD journey would not have been possible without the relentless love and support of my wife, Jully Paternina. I am forever thankful for her presence in my life.

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation examines Colombian transnational migration in Germany through a geographical perspective, addressing a methodological and theoretical gap in transnational studies. Despite Colombia having one of Latin America's largest diasporas, with 4.7 million emigrants representing 9% of the national population, the transnational formations of Colombians in Germany remain understudied. This research investigates whether and how a relatively small migrant population (20,705 individuals in 2020) develops transnational social practices and produces transnational geographical spaces within a European context traditionally favoring assimilationist integration models.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis of official statistical data, an ethnosurvey of 201 Colombian migrants, and semi-structured interviews with Colombians and leaders of Colombian organizations. A central methodological contribution is the construction of a multidimensional Transnationality Index (TI), which operationalizes transnationalism across four dimensions: family-affective, sociocultural, economic, and political-civic practices. This instrument, adapted from composite indices used in social sciences, provides the first systematic quantitative tool for measuring transnationality in medium-sized migrant populations within European contexts.

The principal finding establishes that Colombians in Germany develop a pattern of selective transnationalism characterized by practices focused on maintaining family and community ties rather than comprehensive transnational engagement. The average TI score of 33.5 points (on a 0–100 scale) places the population at a low but measurable level of transnationality, with 68.7% scoring below 40 points. Dimensional analysis shows a clear hierarchy: family-affective (43.9 points) > sociocultural (35.4) > economic (25.9) > political-civic (20.1), indicating uneven development across different spheres of social life. This pattern reflects both the structural conditions of the German context and the specific adaptive strategies of Colombian migrants, who primarily arrived for academic and professional rather than economic or political reasons.

Contrary to theoretical expectations, the research demonstrates that integration into German society does not reduce connections to Colombia. Correlation analysis reveals virtually zero relationship between German integration and Colombian ties ($r = .024$), confirming the complementarity hypothesis over the substitution hypothesis. This finding

challenges integration policies that assume a zero-sum relationship between local integration and transnational engagement, suggesting that both processes can operate independently and complementarily.

The dissertation makes three significant theoretical contributions. First, it proposes the concept of *selective transnationalism* to characterize differentiated transnational profiles in medium-sized populations. Second, it develops the notion of *adaptive spatialities* to explain how migrants produce transnational spaces without consolidated material infrastructures, operating through temporary and symbolic appropriations of urban space, exemplified by demonstrations in Berlin and Hamburg during Colombia's 2019–2021 National Strike. Third, it introduces a *transnational organizational ecosystem* model, revealing how Colombian organizations operate through complementary functional specialization rather than centralized organization structures, with entities like Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis, CAPAZ, and various cultural and solidarity networks functioning at different developmental stages simultaneously.

Spatial analysis demonstrates that transnational practices concentrate in major German cities (Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich) while also emerging in medium-sized cities, creating a hierarchical yet distributed urban network. The research reveals that Colombian transnational spatiality is adaptive, characterized by significant political content despite lacking permanent material infrastructure. Transnational spaces emerge from domestic kitchens where *arepas* are cooked to public squares transformed into sites of political solidarity, demonstrating scalar continuities from household to urban geographies.

This research establishes that Colombian migration in Germany exists at an initial stage of transnationalization, developing individualized practices that have not yet formed into a consolidated transnational community but exhibit organizational foundations for future development. The study demonstrates that transnational social formations are inherently geographical phenomena requiring spatial analysis to understand how cross-border practices reconfigure both origin and destination spaces, producing hybrid geographies characteristic of contemporary globalization.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Doktorarbeit untersucht die transnationale Migration von Kolumbien nach Deutschland aus geografischer Perspektive und schließt damit eine methodische und theoretische Lücke in der transnationalen Forschung. Obwohl Kolumbien eine der größten Diasporas Lateinamerikas hat – mit 4,7 Millionen Emigrant:innen, die 9 % der nationalen Bevölkerung repräsentieren – bleiben die transnationalen Formationen von Kolumbian:innen in Deutschland systematisch unterforscht. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht, ob und wie eine relativ kleine Migrantenpopulation (20.705 Personen im Jahr 2020) transnationale soziale Praktiken entwickelt und geografische Räume in einem europäischen Kontext hervorbringt, der traditionell assimilationistische Integrationsmodelle bevorzugt.

Für die Studie wird ein Mixed-Methods-Ansatz verwendet, der quantitative Analysen amtlicher Statistiken, eine ethnografische Umfrage unter 201 kolumbianischen Migrant:innen sowie halbstrukturierte Interviews mit Kolumbianer:innen und Leitungspersonen kolumbianischer Organisationen umfasst. Eine zentrale methodologische Innovation ist die Konstruktion eines multidimensionalen Transnationalitätsindex (TI), der Transnationalismus über vier Dimensionen operationalisiert: familiär-affektive, soziokulturelle, ökonomische und politisch-zivile Praktiken. Dieses Instrument baut auf bestehenden zusammengesetzten Indizes aus den Sozialwissenschaften auf und ermöglicht erstmals eine systematische, quantitative Erfassung von Transnationalität in mittelgroßen Migrantenpopulationen innerhalb europäischer Kontexte.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Kolumbianer:innen in Deutschland eine Form selektiven Transnationalismus entwickeln, die sich vor allem durch Praktiken zur Aufrechterhaltung familiärer und gemeinschaftlicher Bindungen auszeichnet, weniger jedoch durch ein umfassendes transnationales Engagement. Der durchschnittliche TI-Wert von 33,53 Punkten (auf einer Skala von 0 bis 100) weist auf ein niedriges, aber messbares Niveau von Transnationalität hin, wobei 68,7 % der Befragten unter 40 Punkten liegen. Die dimensionsbezogene Analyse offenbart eine klare Hierarchie: familiär-affektiv (43,9 Punkte) > soziokulturell (35,4) > ökonomisch (25,9) > politisch-zivil (20,1). Dies deutet auf eine ungleiche Ausprägung transnationaler Praktiken in verschiedenen Lebensbereichen hin. Dieses Muster spiegelt sowohl die strukturellen Rahmenbedingungen des deutschen Kontextes als auch die spezifischen Anpassungsstrategien kolumbianischer Migrant:innen wider, die

überwiegend aus akademischen oder beruflichen – nicht aber aus wirtschaftlichen oder politischen – Gründen nach Deutschland gekommen sind.

Entgegen theoretischer Erwartungen zeigt die Studie, dass die Integration in die deutsche Gesellschaft die Verbindungen zu Kolumbien nicht abschwächt. Die Korrelationsanalyse weist mit r = ,024 eine nahezu nicht vorhandene Beziehung zwischen dem Grad der Integration in Deutschland und den kolumbianischen Bindungen auf und bestätigt damit die Komplementaritätshypothese gegenüber der Substitutionshypothese. Dieses Ergebnis stellt Integrationspolitiken in Frage, die von einem Nullsummenverhältnis zwischen lokaler Integration und transnationalem Engagement ausgehen, und legt nahe, dass beide Prozesse unabhängig voneinander, aber zugleich komplementär verlaufen können.

Die Dissertation leistet drei zentrale theoretische Beiträge. Erstens führt sie das Konzept des *selective transnationalism* ein, um differenzierte transnationale Profile in MigrantInnenpopulationen mittlerer Größe zu beschreiben. Zweitens entwickelt sie die Konzeption *adaptive spatialities*, die erklärt, wie Migrant:innen und Migranten transnationale Räume ohne konsolidierte materielle Infrastrukturen hervorbringen – durch temporäre und symbolische Aneignungen urbanen Raümes, wie dies etwa in den Demonstrationen in Berlin und Hamburg während des kolumbianischen Nationalstreiks 2019-2021 deutlich wurde. Drittens präsentiert die Dissertation ein Modell eines *transnational organizational ecosystem*, was aufzeigt, wie kolumbianische Organisationen nicht über zentrale Strukturen, sondern durch komplementäre funktionale Spezialisierung agieren. Beispiele hierfür sind der Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis, das CAPAZ-Institut sowie verschiedene kulturelle und solidarische Netzwerke, die sich in unterschiedlichen Entwicklungsphasen befinden und parallel wirken.

Die räumliche Analyse zeigt, dass sich transnationale Praktiken vor allem in den großen deutschen Städten (Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, München) konzentrieren, zugleich aber auch in mittelgroßen Städten hervortreten. Dadurch entsteht ein hierarchisches, jedoch dezentral organisiertes urbanes Netzwerk. Die Studie verdeutlich, dass kolumbianische transnationale Räumlichkeit einen adaptiven Charakter aufweist: Sie ist politisch stark aufgeladen, obwohl sie über keine dauerhaften materiellen Infrastrukturen verfügt. Transnationale Räume entstehen in alltäglichen Kontexten – von häuslichen Küchen, in denen *Arepas* zubereitet werden, bis hin zu öffentlichen Plätzen, die sich in Orte politischer Solidarität verwandeln. Dies weist auf skalare Kontinuitätsbeziehungen, die das Zuhause mit dem Urbanen verbinden.

Die vorliegende Arbeit zeigt, dass sich die kolumbianische Migration in Deutschland in einer frühen Phase der Transnationalisierung befindet – es entwickeln sich individualisierte Praktiken, die sich bislang noch nicht zu einer konsolidierten transnationalen Gemeinschaft verfestigt haben, jedoch bereits organisatorische Grundlagen für eine zukünftige Entwicklung erkennen lassen. Darüber hinaus macht die Arbeit deutlich, dass transnationale soziale Formationen inhärent geografische Phänomene sind und eine räumliche Analyse erfordern, um zu erfassen, wie grenzüberschreitende Praktiken sowohl Herkunfts- als auch Aufnahmeräume neu konfigurieren und dabei hybride Geografien hervorbringen, die die Globalisierung der Gegenwart prägen.

Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral estudia la migración transnacional de colombianos en Alemania desde una perspectiva geográfica, llenando una vacío teórico y metodológico en los estudios transnacionales. A pesar de que Colombia tiene una de las diásporas más grandes de América Latina, con 4,7 millones de emigrantes que representan el 9% de la población nacional, las formaciones transnacionales de colombianos en Alemania han sido poco estudiadas. Esta investigación examina si y cómo una población migrante relativamente pequeña (20.705 en 2020) desarrolla prácticas sociales transnacionales y produce espacios geográficos transnacionales dentro de un contexto europeo que tradicionalmente ha favorecido modelos de integración asimilacionistas.

El estudio emplea un enfoque metodológico mixto que combina análisis cuantitativo de datos estadísticos oficiales, una encuesta etnográfica de 201 migrantes colombianos y entrevistas semiestructuradas a colombianos y líderes de organizaciones colombianas. Un aporte central de la tesis es la construcción y aplicación de un Índice Multidimensional de Transnacionalidad (IT) que operacionaliza el transnacionalismo a través de cuatro dimensiones: prácticas familiar-afectivas, socioculturales, económicas y político-cívicas. Este instrumento, adaptado de índices compuestos utilizados en las ciencias sociales, proporciona la primera herramienta cuantitativa para medir la transnacionalidad en poblaciones migrantes de tamaño medio dentro de contextos europeos.

El hallazgo principal establece que los colombianos en Alemania desarrollan un patrón de transnacionalismo selectivo caracterizado por prácticas enfocadas en mantener vínculos familiares y comunitarios en lugar de un transnacionalismo integral. El valor promedio del IT de 33,5 puntos (en una escala de 0-100) sitúa a la población en un nivel bajo pero medible de transnacionalidad, con un 68,7% por debajo de los 40 puntos. El análisis dimensional muestra un patrón jerarquico: familiar-afectivo (43,9 puntos) > sociocultural (35,4) > económico (25,9) > político-cívico (20,1), indicando un desarrollo desigual a través de diferentes esferas de la vida social. Este patrón refleja tanto las condiciones estructurales del contexto alemán como las estrategias adaptativas específicas de los migrantes colombianos, quienes llegaron principalmente por razones académicas y profesionales en lugar de económicas o políticas.

Contrario a las expectativas teóricas, la investigación demuestra que la integración a la sociedad alemana no reduce las conexiones con Colombia. El análisis de correlación revela

una relación prácticamente nula entre la integración alemana y los vínculos colombianos (r = ,024), confirmando la hipótesis de complementariedad sobre la hipótesis de sustitución. Este hallazgo desafía las políticas de integración que asumen una relación de suma cero entre la integración local y el compromiso transnacional, sugiriendo que ambos procesos pueden operar independiente y complementariamente.

La disertación realiza tres contribuciones teóricas significativas. Primero, propone el concepto de *transnacionalismo selectivo* para caracterizar perfiles transnacionales diferenciados en poblaciones de tamaño medio. Segundo, desarrolla la noción de *espacialidades adaptativas* para explicar cómo los migrantes producen espacios transnacionales sin infraestructuras materiales consolidadas, operando a través de apropiaciones temporales y simbólicas del espacio urbano, ejemplificado por las manifestaciones en Berlin y Hamburgo durante el Paro Nacional colombiano de 2019-2021. Tercero, introduce un modelo de *ecosistema organizacional transnacional*, mostrando cómo las organizaciones colombianas operan a través de especialización funcional complementaria en lugar de estructuras organizativas centralizadas, con entidades como el Círculo de Amistad Colombo-Alemán, CAPAZ y diversas redes culturales y de solidaridad funcionando simultáneamente en diferentes etapas de desarrollo.

El análisis espacial demuestra que las prácticas transnacionales se concentran en las principales ciudades alemanas (Berlín, Hamburgo, Fráncfort, Múnich) mientras emergen, también, en ciudades intermedias, creando una red urbana jerárquica y distributiva. La investigación demuestra que la espacialidad transnacional colombiana es adaptativa, caracterizada por un contenido político significativo a pesar de carecer de infraestructura material permanente. Los espacios transnacionales emergen desde cocinas domésticas donde se preparan las arepas hasta plazas públicas transformadas en sitios de activismo político, demostrando una continuidad escalar desde geografías domésticas hasta urbanas.

Esta investigación establece que la migración colombiana en Alemania se encuentra en una etapa inicial de transnacionalización, desarrollando prácticas individualizadas que aún no se han cristalizado en una comunidad transnacional consolidada, pero que exhiben bases organizacionales para un desarrollo futuro. El estudio demuestra que las formaciones sociales transnacionales son fenómenos inherentemente geográficos que requieren análisis espacial para comprender cómo las prácticas transfronterizas reconfiguran tanto los espacios de origen

como de destino, produciendo geografías híbridas características de la globalización contemporánea.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Studying an Emergent Phenomenon

This research examines the transnational migration of Colombians in Germany, with a particular focus on transnational connections, networks, and the production of transnational geographical spaces. The current body of knowledge concerning Colombian transnational migration in Germany remains limited, representing a significant gap in migration studies. Rather than indicating the phenomenon's insignificance, this gap presents an opportunity to contribute to our understanding of Colombian migration patterns. This represents one of the starting points of this doctoral thesis: analyzing Colombian migration to Germany from a transnational geographical perspective. The motivations for this research will be explained in detail later; for now, it is essential to outline the *leitmotif* through two central ideas that guide this study.

The first central idea concerns how Colombian migration constitutes a relevant subject of study from a transnational perspective. The Colombian population abroad is estimated to be 4.7 million by 2023 (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2023), corresponding to 9% of Colombia total population of 52.3 million in that year. This high proportion of Colombian emigrants has led to its recognition as a diaspora. This motivates the need to analyze the trends, spatial distribution, stages, and intensity of this migratory process, as well as the transnational ties that are woven between the Colombian community in Germany, which numbered 20,705 in 2020 according to the Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office of Germany).

The transnational approach provides an analytical framework for understanding transnational social practices, that is, the empirical manifestations of transnational ties and networks spanning family, work, political, and cultural spheres. Analysis of the process and degree of development of transnational formations becomes particularly relevant in this context. The Colombian case offers valuable insights precisely because of its emergent developmental stage. It is an ongoing social phenomenon.

The second idea is that transnational social formations are also a geographical reality. The spatiality of transnationality is not only a conceptual issue that still requires attention, but also a pragmatic concern at the methodological and empirical levels to observe the spatial organization of transnational social formations, in our case, the Colombian population living

in Germany. This research proceeds from the premise that transnational social practices have both material and symbolic spatial dimensions. These practices can manifest in highly diverse global cities as well as in medium-sized or small towns with established migrant communities.

The cities of Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Munich in Germany theoretically fulfill the preconditions for the agglomeration of migrant populations. This allows for the density of socio-spatial relations necessary for the formation of transnational political and cultural organizations. However, the conceptual details will be addressed in the following chapter, on the theoretical framework and literature review, in a section dedicated to spatial categories in transnational studies. It is worth noting that social media, such as Facebook and Twitter (now X), have fostered a flexible interaction that facilitates participation and the establishment of groups among Colombians scattered throughout Germany. These virtual social media ease, or at least soften, the tension between spatial concentration and dispersion by encouraging participation, growth, and connection within the Colombian migrant community. Therefore, the link between transnational social practices and geographical spaces becomes a reciprocal one, which, in turn, generates sociocultural content that can be mapped and studied by geographers. It is not possible, or at least it should not be, to study the transnational without considering the geographical.

1.2 Conceptual Criteria for Identifying Transnationality

The first step is to establish whether transnationality exists among Colombians in Germany as an observable phenomenon. The presence of Colombian transnational formations, as demonstrated by their level of development, will be explored in the following chapters. To do this, we need to confront the reality and the concept, as we understand that conceptual categories shape our ability to interpret and analyze reality. Therefore, empirical evidence requires conceptual precision. Transnationality should not be assumed as an automatic outcome of international migration; rather, it requires genuinely transnational social practices to develop. Such practices constitute a conceptual and methodological category that carries risks, as it cannot fully capture the complexity of social relations surrounding migrants. Scientific research often confronts the paradox of reducing complexity to analyze it. Thus, transnational practices offer a means to gain partial understanding of the sociocultural reality of migrant communities through their transnational practices.

Vertovec (2009) defines transnational social practices as sustained cross-border links and exchanges between individuals. Portes et al. (1999) concur, defining transnationalism

based on activities requiring regular and sustained cross-border social contacts. Migrants constitute the subjects of study in transnational social spaces, and researchers have effectively defined the ideal types of transnational agents (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). This focus on the migrant individual who lives a cross-border life between two languages, two homes, two places, and two cultures corresponds to the microstructural level, as noted by Guarnizo (2008). The central unit of analysis at this micro level is social practices, which indicate whether or not actions are cross-border actions between families, individuals, and migrant groups, and whether they are sustained over time and with sufficient intensity. This is relevant because it provides the methodological and conceptual clarity necessary to set out whether transnational social practices exist and at what level of development they are, which will in turn lead to an understanding of the meso- and macro-structural levels of transnationalism within transnational networks and communities. The latter, networks and communities, are consolidated forms of transnational social spaces. It is precisely for this reason that we propose analyzing the potential transnationality of Colombian migration in Germany through an examination of social practices.

Thus, these social practices provide a means to observe transnationality and empirically spot the occurrence of transnational formations. Specifically, these include economic, political, identity and integration, and family and community social practices, which constitute the four main social dimensions. According to Faist et al. (2013), transnational economic practices include two spectrums, one of small-scale and informal practices, and the other of large-scale and formal practices. Remittances are the most common small-scale practice and are considered a transnational connection when that money is used for cross-border family care and economic support for the community of origin. *Family* remittances serve as a regular income for families in their country of origin, fostering a relationship of dependence and solidarity that supports daily expenses, such as food and clothing, as well as education and healthcare for family members. *Business* remittances are used for investments in small businesses, such as restaurants and retail establishments, as well as for the purchase of land and the construction of housing. Remittances *to support* local associations are used to finance community projects to meet infrastructure needs such as aqueducts, sports facilities, and public services. These latter remittances are considered a strong transnational connection that supports local development, with migrants serving as a channel for transnational transfer and aid. On the other hand, transnational entrepreneurship represents a large-scale and formal transnational economic practice, that involves the exchange of goods, capital, services, and labor between two countries. These practices include financial entrepreneurship, such as companies that

handle remittances; the import-export of goods related to both communities; cultural enterprises, including music, film, and other cultural products and services; and micro-enterprises of returning migrants, such as restaurants and other businesses. In both cases, small and large scales can describe transnational practices; there is no hierarchical order. Both use of remittances in everyday life, such as health and education expenses, and their use in material objects, such as housing and infrastructure, contain the transnational action of family and community care described by Faist et al. (2013).

Likewise, transnational family practices are strongly related to the above. The migration process separates and spreads families, but does not break ties (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Some places exert more influence on family identity depending on the strength of extra-family networks with the host society. Bryceson and Vuorela's concept of *Frontier Networks* suggests that geographically spread families operate as a network within other networks, such as community, work, and moral networks. This is how multi-nuclear families in different locations keep bonds of care and responsibility among children, parents, siblings, and grandparents, through a relationship of mutual support for both material and emotional needs. Family remittances are often the most noticeable indicator of this cross-border family care.

For their part, transnational socio-cultural practices, as described by Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002), refer to the transnational links that recreate a sense of community among migrants and their places of origin. Socio-cultural transnationalism refers to the emergence of practices of sociability, mutual aid, and public rituals rooted in cultural conceptions of belonging and the social obligations of immigrants. Such practices include participation in associations in the city of origin, sending remittances for projects in the immigrant's city of origin, traveling to participate in public festivities in the place of origin, participating in local sports clubs or leagues that maintain links with the country of origin, and participating in charitable organizations linked to the country of origin.

The degree of development of these sociocultural practices may vary, as some are oriented toward formal organizations, while others are more individual oriented. However, sociocultural transnationalism is also expressed in the individual sphere, in the symbolic ties and multiple identities of migrants (Faist et al., 2013). Migrants who feel they belong to more than one community and who express more than one identity, or identities that are not so clearly defined, are signs of developing transnationalism. This is how social remittances, according to Levitt (1998; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011), facilitate the transfer of ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital between communities. This is usually done through organizations that provide financial aid, along with political and cultural practices, which are often referred

to as *cultural loans.* Levitt (1998) distinguishes three types of social remittances: *normative structures*, which include ideas, values, and beliefs; norms of interpersonal behavior; notions of intra-family responsibility; norms of age and gender appropriateness; principles of neighborliness and community participation; and aspirations for social mobility. Second, *systems of practices*, which are all the actions defined by normative structures, such as domestic work, religious practices, and forms of civic and political participation. Within organizations, they include modes of recruitment and socialization of members, strategies, leadership styles, and forms of intra-organizational contact. Third, *social capital*, both the values and norms on which social capital is based and social capital itself, were socially transmitted.

According to Faist et al. (2013), transnational political practices are expressed when migrants participate in voting in their place of origin; support political parties and campaigns outside their country of origin; support associations and social organizations in their place of origin; belong to political organizations in the destination country; and consume political media. These practices drive the process of political transnationalization of migrant communities. However, these political practices tend to be the most complex, as they always describe a degree of social organization, not just individual. The scope and commitment of such practices can change, ranging from participation in political organizations focused on issues specific to the migrant community, such as rights, legal status, discrimination, and citizenship in the destination country, to support for other political groups and social movements in the country of origin. This cross-border dynamic of political practices depends on the local circumstances of each country. Some events trigger public demonstrations and international support, as well as medium- and long-term processes in the organization of cross-border political groups and networks.

Thus, these cross-border practices, both collective and individual, constitute the empirical basis for explaining the degree of development of transnational migration. This framework enables two key analyses; first, identification of the Colombian case as an ongoing transnational phenomenon; and second, assessment of its developmental state and intensity. Although sufficient empirical foundations have been established through surveys, interviews, and analysis of primary and secondary sources, further studies on Colombian migration to Germany are needed to address identified gaps. This remains a collective task requiring institutional and academic commitments that this dissertation aims to stimulate.

1.3 Preliminary Empirical Evidence

The Colombian case demonstrates a wide array of cross-border social practices. By categorizing these practices using the established frameworks, we can effectively evaluate their stage of development. In the economic dimension, the most obvious of these practices is remittances, which represent a small-scale, informal, yet significant form of cross-border interconnection. The Banco de la República (Central Bank of Colombia) reports that in 2010, US$33.9 million was sent from Germany to Colombia, and in 2020, US$78.2 million was sent. These remittances serve as economic support and facilitate cross-border care between families, which is sustained and expanded through constant telecommunications that help maintain family and social ties between Colombians and their places of origin. The sending of remittances is undoubtedly a cross-border activity whose importance is widely documented from a transnational perspective. Although remittances from Germany to Colombia are not an exemplary case study, as in the case of the United States and Spain, the increase in amounts over the last decade is notable. This is described and analyzed in detail in Chapter 6. There are also institutional and formal economic links, such as the Deutsche-Kolumbianische Industrie- und Handelskammer (AHK, German-Colombian Chamber of Industry and Commerce) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, German Corporation for International Cooperation), which have a portfolio of economic support for Colombia and promote transnational entrepreneurship. This formal and institutional organization is underdeveloped in the Colombian case, as few documented cases of cross-border entrepreneurship constitute transnational economic activities. Overall, both small- and large-scale practices exhibit a state of development that is not yet consolidated.

The case of political practices is relevant, but presents a contradiction. The survey data show that Colombians have very low participation in political organizations. On average, 85% of those surveyed are not affiliated with formal political groups in Germany that have ties to Colombia, Germany, or third countries, nor do they engage in political activities in Colombia. This resistance to political organizations is one side of the coin, but the other is political practices that are outside the institutional and formal sphere; politics is not limited to established organizations. Electoral participation and political activities like protest marches and demonstrations during key political moments in Colombia demonstrate transnational political connections that often align with Colombia domestic political climate. While it is true that Colombian migrants are in the process of integration, political networks and formal and informal organizations exhibit a certain degree of development and consolidation that is subject

of analysis in this research. Political junctures in Colombia, such as electoral events and mass social movements like the mobilizations in support of the Plebiscito por la Paz (Plebiscite for Peace) in 2018; the social movement of 2019 and 2020, called Paro Nacional 21#N (National Strike #21N) and that of 2021, called Estallido social de Colombia (Colombian Social Uprising) had a display of international support that was of great importance to our research, as the Colombian community in Germany has been organizing itself since those specific moments.

The Colombian diaspora in Germany acts as a cross-border social movement. Its political activities are deeply interconnected and activate in direct synchronization with the political climate in Colombia. It uses urban spaces as places of struggle and expression. These are multi-sited spatial practices, but they always coincide in urban demos, where the streets are perceived as spaces for social mobilization. In turn, the sense of community and cohesion suggests that there are genuine expressions of transnational political practices. From a Lefebvrian perspective (Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991; Schmid, 2022), *perceived spaces* are where subjects deploy their spatial practices, they need the materiality of bodies, they are meeting points, squares, streets, restaurants, community venues in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, all the places where the Colombian community has a physical presence. *Conceived spaces* contain the discourses, the political statements expressed in the streets by social movements; the streets are part of the message, the city is taken, it is the place where the struggle takes place, it is the space for social action. The *lived spaces* are crossed by experience; it is where Colombians discover themselves as a community, where they experience being together in a country that is not their own. It is a transnational political spatiality from below, stemming from community networks of Colombians in Germany. However, the production of transnational spaces in the Colombian case presents some unique features. Their material basis is underdeveloped, but their symbolic and social basis is strong. It is a transnational spatiality that is adaptive to resources and circumstances. Chapter 7 explains this finding in detail.

However, the above political practices are not the only ones. Political campaigns for Colombia's presidential and parliamentary elections in Germany are conducted through cross-border networks across Europe, which are activated months in advance of each election. Their activism is both virtual and physical, often mixing with the social mobilizations described above, although they are not the same. These are similar political practices, but not identical; one is related to elections, while the other is related to social activism. Likewise, there are already well-established formal institutional networks, such as the German Node of the Truth

Commission[1], the German-Colombian Peace Institute – CAPAZ[2] and the Deutsch-Kolumbianische Freundeskreis e.V.[3], which constantly has projects for institutional cooperation events between Colombia and Germany.

The formation of networks among social organizations is a crucial and fascinating stage in transnational studies, as it consolidates Colombian transnationality in the main cities where Colombians in Germany congregate. Their mere existence indicates an initial stage of development, but their permanence over time and the frequency of their activities can demonstrate their consolidation as a transnational social space. In both cases discussed, on the one hand, the demonstrations and social protests linked to the political and social situations in Colombia, as well as the cross-border electoral dynamics, are evident. On the other hand, the institutional networks and formalized collectives exhibit intermittency in the first case and stability in the second. Transnationality is presented unevenly, as a relational fact; it often intersects with other aspects, and that nature is the subject of analysis presented in Chapter 7.

Sociocultural practices, on the other hand, are also contrasting. The ethnosurvey compiled information that matches the resistance to participation in cultural associations among Colombians; few do so. Colombians perceive that the degree of associativity is higher than it actually is. The statistical analyses reveal a gap between perception and reality, 85% do not participate in associations, yet they believe that 64% of Colombians do. Likewise, their participation in events with non-Colombian migrants is slightly higher, with around 50% participating with some frequency, which indicates other forms of integration beyond the Colombian community.

On the other hand, the ethnosurvey found that 65% of Colombians in Germany report being in the process of integration, and 30% claim to be fully integrated into German society. This brings up a knot that needs to be untied. Identities and the way migrants see themselves are complex. Glick Schiller et al. (1992) describe how migrants live in a complex network of social relationships, with some feeling a stronger sense of identity with one of the places, either their place of origin or their destination. However, transmigrants tend to have fluid identities that span both.

[1] This is a Colombian state entity that was created by Legislative Act 01 of 2017 and Decree 588 of 2017 to investigate, clarify, and disseminate findings on the origin and causes of the Colombian armed conflict.
[2] It is a binational academic network with a research agenda on conflict and peace in Colombia. It has a presence in Bogotá and Gießen.
[3] It is an association with a network of offices in several cities in Germany. It was founded in the 1980s and promotes cooperation between the two countries.

1.4 Framing the Research Questions

The central question concerns whether transnationality exists in the Colombian case. If the answer is affirmative, transnationality becomes a categorical fact: it either exists or it does not. From this affirmative answer, the research proceeds to discover and explain the nature of transnational migration under an appropriate theoretical and methodological approach. The conceptual architecture of transnationalism, developed over three decades, is robust and flexible enough to support such analysis.

In contrast, if the answer is negative, if transnationality does not exist within the Colombian community in Germany, several analytical options emerge. The first option, to abandon the research in favor of a proven case, is clearly unsuitable. The second option involves explaining why a phenomenon that, according to the literature and theoretical framework, should have occurred has not materialized. This would require an explanation of the absence, which presents both conceptual and methodological challenges. A study explaining the absence of an expected phenomenon may seem paradoxical, yet it holds significant analytical value. If international migration does not become transnational, this constitutes a phenomenon demanding explanation, a research strategy that both tests the theoretical framework of transnational migration and potentially reveals important boundary conditions for transnational formation.

These two analytical paths represent the starting point for research on transnational migration. Therefore, assessing the feasibility of the research problem and determining whether empirical evidence can support either path becomes necessary. While proceeding with research on a phenomenon whose existence remains uncertain might seem risky, this uncertainty constitutes the precise foundation for this doctoral dissertation. This is not rhetorical posturing but rather engagement with a research problem in which the phenomenon under investigation is in early stages of development; the transnational formations of Colombians in Germany are just emerging as observable social facts.

This context suggests that transnationality should be understood as a relational process rather than a categorical fact. The transnational connections of the Colombian community with Colombia and among Colombians and other migrants in Germany take different forms. Some transnational social practices are more developed than others: remittances for cross-border family care, political practices, and network organization have emerged more clearly, while economic and sociocultural activities have developed more slowly than family-related ones. This uneven development should not be interpreted as evidence of the absence the

phenomenon. Rather, the analytical task lies in explaining which transnational social practices develop later and why, what preconditions are necessary for their development, and what circumstances delay their emergence.

Likewise, the largest German cities, such as Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Munich, have the largest concentration of Colombians who are driving the development of such network organization initiatives. These cities are migratory and geographical hubs that bring together the transnational activities of Colombians in German territory. The transnational social practices that facilitate the consolidation of transnational connections are a phenomenon with specific urban locations. The mapping of transnational interconnections is also the subject of this research.

On the other hand, Faist et al. (2013) propose a gradual and progressive process of how transnationality occurs. The first stage is one of *transnationalization*, and its unit of analysis encompasses cross-border family, sociocultural, economic, and political practices. Transnationalization is a cross-border process that serves as the framework for the transactions of agents, individuals, groups, and states. The second stage is *transnational social spaces,* which are cross-border social structures that connect the links and practices of agents across borders. The unit of analysis for transnational social spaces includes social formations such as transnational families, networks, and communities. Finally, there is the stage of *transnationality* itself, characterized by varying degrees and intensities of transnational practices. Broadly speaking, this theoretical framework organizes the progressive and cumulative development of transnationality, thereby identifying a migrant population's stage of development.

This conceptual framework, proposed by Faist et al. (2013), suggests that the logical outcome of international migration is that it progresses through these stages of development to become transnational. It therefore serves as a compass for locating the state of development of Colombian transnational migration in Germany and for assessing its degree of transnationality. Colombian transnational connections are either late in developing or non-existent, as already mentioned. While some economic and political networks and practices give rise to visible transnational formations, others, such as the transnational community, remain underdeveloped. The latter is a milestone in the development of transnationality that has not yet been consolidated in the Colombian case; it is not yet a transnational community.

At this point, the limitations of this conceptual framework on transnationality become evident, as it loses sensitivity to the heterogeneous nature of the social practices of a migrant community, which move in various directions and with varying intensity. Thus, both the

characteristics of the migrant population and the migratory process establish an important context for explaining the development of transnational social formations. The geographical origin of the Colombian migrant population, its size, the geographical destination in Germany, and sociocultural heterogeneity are crucial factors for understanding the phenomenon we are investigating. However, spatial density may be even more important than the size of the population itself. The formation of networks is influenced by the frequency and closeness of social relationships within the community; for a network to be a network, its members must be interconnected.

Consequently, two main interrelated issues are central to this inquiry: the transnational nature of Colombian migration and its geographical aspects. To tackle this research problem, the following questions will guide the analysis.

1-What degree of consolidation have transnational communities and networks of Colombians in Germany achieved? This raises the question: Does transnationality exist in our case study?

2-What degree of development do transnational social practices exhibit in the Colombian case?

3-Does the Colombian community in Germany produce transnational geographical spaces? What material and symbolic spatial configurations do the transnational social practices of Colombians in Germany take?

The first question summarizes the research topic to be addressed, regarding the nature and intensity of social practices and transnational networks among Colombians in Germany. Characterizing this social reality will lead to the identification of social practices that promote and facilitate transnational social formations, which is relevant insofar as it provides an opportunity to explore specific explanations for Latino communities in Germany through the Colombian case. The second research topic complements and supports the previous one, involving a detailed explanation of the ongoing transnational practices. The third question refers to the study of the relationship between transnational social practices and the spatialities that take place. It is an exploratory problem at both the theoretical and methodological levels, setting out a significant challenge. Therefore, the research questions are addressed through the following analytical aims:

1. To measure the degree of development of cross-border social practices to determine the existence and intensity of transnationality in the Colombian case in Germany.
2. To characterize the transnational socioeconomic, cultural, family, and political social practices of Colombians in Germany that shape transnational ties based on primary and secondary sources of information.
3. To determine the degree of development of transnational communities and networks of Colombians in Germany, including how they are formed, maintained, and evolved.
4. To identify the processes of production of transnational geographical spaces by Colombian migrants in Germany, examining how the social practices of Colombians in Germany shape material and symbolic forms and contents in urban spaces.

In the spring of 2018, I initiated this research to analyze the production of Colombian transnational spaces in Germany and make a theoretical and methodological contribution to this particular topic. However, the almost non-existent empirical evidence demanded a modification of that initial purpose, redirecting the research toward transnational social practices. It became necessary to first study how the transnational phenomenon occurred in the case of Colombians in Germany. Thus, these practices constitute the empirical target and the first contact with the transnational issue in many of its forms. Specifically, this research investigates the transnational links and networks of the Colombian community in Germany. It should be clarified that this study is not limited to describing transnational social practices, but instead advances toward explaining the transnational connections and networks between Colombians in Germany and their place of origin, as well as the cultural and political practices that consolidate these transnational networks. It is a kind of analytical thermometer, an empirical witness to transnationality.

Also, the study of Colombian migration requires its historical and geographical characterization, understanding how the process has been from its early stages in the mid-20th century to the most recent. The spatial distributions of the migrant population offer intriguing clues about the influence of geographical spaces on transnational social formations. It is essential to recognize the significance of geographical interpretation of transnational migration, as places influence transnational social practices and their derivations in various ways. This research presents both an opportunity and a limitation, as a comprehensive geographical theory on transnationalism in all its expressions has yet to be consolidated. However, the contributions of this doctoral thesis will not be able to fill all the existing theoretical gaps. This research can

provide explanations for the production of geographical space in transnational migration and contribute theoretically and methodologically to the field of study.

1.5 Assumptions and hypotheses

Based on the literature on transnational migration (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Faist et al., 2013; Goldring, 1998; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, 2008; Pries, 2001a, 2001b; Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2009), some cumulative conclusions can be drawn that serve as a background for new research. The following assumptions can be made: Migrant populations maintain, or attempt to maintain, family and cultural ties with their place of origin through remittances, political participation in both countries, and cultural and business events. Also, transnational ties are influenced, in turn, by factors such as the pre-existence of immigrant organizations that promote integration and community support. Likewise, the length of stay in the country of arrival influences the formation and development of their transnational practices; large communities that have been settled for extended periods tend to exhibit a lower degree of development in transnational ties and networks due to assimilation. Cities are also the ideal setting for the social relationships that give rise to transnational formations. Ultimately, communication technologies have had a positive impact on transnational ties, facilitating the maintenance of family relationships and stimulating the formation of new ties within the migrant community. Thus, the study of Colombian transnational migration in Germany is based on the above assumptions, which are accepted and critically examined in the development of this research.

Additionally, this study is strengthened by testing the following hypotheses, proposed to address the research questions:

1. The development of transnational social networks among Colombians in Germany depends on the intensity of transnational social practices among individuals and the Colombian community, which are influenced by the degree of integration with German society, the pre-existence of sociocultural organizations, the length of time they have been settled in Germany, and the size of the population. Additionally, connections with other Latin American groups and organizations contribute to the consolidation of Colombian transnational social networks in Germany. Therefore, the few Colombian migrant organizations in Germany influence the delayed consolidation of transnational networks. Only in the last decade have some favorable conditions come together for this to happen, such as the growth of the migrant population (from

8,584 in 2000 to 20,450 in 2019), the creation of new Colombian organizations in Germany, and the increase in cultural and political group activities.

2. Colombian migration in Germany presents two spatial-temporal patterns. One of them is defined by the concentration of the Colombian population in large urban areas of federal states with dynamic labor markets, such as Berlin, Hamburg, Hesse, Bavaria, and North Rhine-Westphalia. This spatial distribution of the population has remained unchanged over the last six decades. The second pattern complements the first and is defined as a hierarchical network dispersion, which starts from the leading German cities in terms of population and economic dynamism, such as Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt, towards intermediate cities that are part of the urban-regional systems that integrate such cities as Bremen, Bonn, Mainz, Cologne, and Hanover. Thus, the Colombian population has been redistributed between large and intermediate urban nodes since the first decade of the 2000s, producing a migrant network effect that mirrors Germany urban network.

3-The cities of Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt meet the conditions of the assumptions described above and the previous two hypotheses for the formation of transnational social networks. Such networks are also urban spatial networks that reflect the primary geographical configuration of transnational migration. The spatial organization of transnational migration is essentially an urban network organized by population size and the existing Colombian migrant organizations within it. In these same cities, the Colombian population deploys strategies of spatial appropriation as part of their transnational political life. Cities are political arenas from which transnational spatialities are built.

1.6 Motivations for this research

This research has several motivations. The first is broad but fundamental, to provide a geographical study that contributes to understanding contemporary transnational societies, those hybrid formations characterized by strong cultural interconnections. Understanding such interconnections is not straightforward and requires multiple disciplinary approaches to discern the dynamics of globalization. This research analyzes how migrant communities connect socially and geographically. Because the transnational phenomenon is dynamic and constantly evolving, it requires sustained investigation with consistent effort over time. This work pursues that purpose. The geographical dimension of globalization is both challenging and compelling to study, yet its analytical potential often remains underutilized. This thesis therefore aims to offer a geographical interpretation of transnational migration, using the Colombian case as an

empirical reference, addressing the conceptual and thematic imperative to view contemporary global changes from a spatial perspective.

Studying international migration raises ethical considerations that demands explicit acknowledgment. Migration is a phenomenon of scholarly inquiry and a lived experience of individuals and families navigating complex emotions and challenges. As a Colombian immigrant in Germany, my own academic interest and personal experience inform this research. My dual position as a researcher and a member of the studied community, provides insider perspective, but it also requires careful attention to analytical rigor and ethical responsibility.

Latin American international migration can be interpreted through multiple analytical frameworks. First, it encompasses tragic dimensions. The push factors that drive emigration are often euphemisms concealing narratives of exile and forced displacement. Venezuela, Colombia, and Chile have experienced this as a harsh reality. For Latin Americans, the term "migrant" frequently masks underlying conditions of armed violence, political turmoil, and socioeconomic crises, a label that often obscures the reality of exile. Part of the migratory flow from these countries results from highly conflictive political and economic situations. However, no single migratory pattern adequately describes Latin American international migration, as conditions and factors vary across countries of origin and destination and shift historically.

Another interpretation relates to the tension between precarious socioeconomic conditions affecting much of the population and the upward social mobility experienced by others. Migration outcomes are highly differentiated; some migrants achieve improved living conditions while others face persistent or worsening precarity. This apparent contradiction lies in the discrepancy between the reasons for emigration and the economic capacity required to undertake a medium- or long-distance migration process. Precarious living conditions constitute a primary reason for emigrating and a significant constraint on the process itself. As documented in migration literature, emigrating to Europe or the United States from Latin America requires substantial financial resources, as it involves the costs of travel and settlement in another country, as well as other intangible expenses that the family assumes in the absence of the emigrating member, but which are partially recovered through remittances.

Economic capacity shapes emigration possibilities, resulting in differentiated migrant profiles. South-South regional migration primarily involves low-income populations moving to neighboring countries. For Colombians, this includes Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and more recently, Chile. In contrast, migration to the Global North requires greater financial resources.

Colombia in the 1990s and early 2000s experienced strong push factors related to armed conflict and drug trafficking, coinciding with increased Latin American migration to the United States and Spain. Migration to Europe became possible through middle-class expansion, as this demographic possessed the economic resources to access emerging migration networks in Spain and the United States. The limited and unspecialized labor market of Colombia, combined with violence and the late 1990s economic crisis, produced significant emigration of semi-skilled and skilled workers. Some migrated to the Global North, while others moved within the Latin American region.

Latin American migration processes combine the dynamics described above, though they vary across time and space. Colombia exemplifies this complexity as a country shaped by both immigration and emigration. Initially, it received European immigrants from the Conquest and Colonial period through the first half of the 20th century; subsequently, it experienced significant Colombian emigration in the second half of that century.

Colombia is also characterized by substantial internal migration, driven primarily by armed violence and civil conflict throughout the 20th century. Prolonged armed conflict leads to constant forced displacement. Labor migrants often overlap with these forcibly displaced populations. Within Colombia, armed conflict, political violence, and drug trafficking shaped a migratory pattern of displacement from rural to urban areas. Since the first half of the 20th century, many Colombian families have been forcibly displaced to large and medium-sized cities, causing urban macrocephaly and territorial imbalances. This experience, exemplified by families displaced from villages in Boyacá and Santander to Bogotá in the 1940s, represents a shared trajectory for many Colombians. Beyond internal displacement, Colombia participated in broader Latin American migration flows to Venezuela in the 1970s and 1980s, and to the United States and Spain in the 1990s and 2000s, integrating into Latin American communities in those countries. Consequently, the Colombian migrant population has dispersed throughout Europe and the Americas, including Italy, France, Germany, and other Western European countries.

A relatively straightforward situation emerges: a portion of the Colombian population with medium incomes has emigrated to distant destinations, while another part, with low incomes, has moved to large and medium-sized cities in Colombia, as well as to neighboring countries. These two circumstances are not mutually exclusive. It is therefore essential to identify, record, and analyze the spatial trajectories of Colombian migrants in international contexts. Furthermore, research on this migratory process cannot be limited to the analysis of geographical patterns, but requires an understanding of how the migrant population maintains

ties with their places of origin and how transnational social formations are taking place. Little is known about the Colombian case in Europe. This makes it necessary to improve our understanding of these phenomena in order to grasp the dynamics of Colombian society within the context of globalization. This is precisely where the case of Colombians in Germany leads to an understanding of how a community is becoming transnational and how its own geographical configurations are unfolding, offering an opportunity to help fill this gap.

The Colombian population in Germany is a relatively small group of 20,450, compared to 367,816 in Spain and 798,294 in the United States. Typically, these immigrant groups remain underexamined in transnational migration studies, as research tends to focus on well-documented cases of large migrant communities, such as the Turks in Germany and the Mexicans in the United States, which have become paradigmatic examples. However, it is equally important and interesting to observe the processes through which transnationalism takes shape and occurs in smaller communities, such as those of Colombians. This gap requires scholarly attention. This dissertation contributes to the explanation of transnational social formations and their geographical nature.

1.7 Organization of the thesis

This dissertation is presented as a monograph. This introductory chapter frames the research problem, presents the arguments for justification, outlines the hypotheses, and articulates the assumptions. Chapter 2 corresponds to the theoretical framework, where a theoretical and conceptual review of the transnational approach applied to migration is developed. The conceptual architecture that underpins the research is defined, a model for analyzing the transnational phenomenon is proposed, and a review and discussion of the spatial dimension in transnational studies are presented. Chapter 3 describes the methodological structure, defines the system of variables, and develops a multidimensional index to assess the degrees of development of cross-border practices, as well as outlining the stages and instruments of empirical control.

Chapter 4 presents the state of the art of the literature on Colombian international migration, identifying the thematic and empirical gaps in the problem being investigated. Chapter 5 provides a detailed characterization of the migration process of Colombians in Germany, using official demographic information and primary data collected by the author through an ethnographic survey. The spatio-temporal patterns of this migration process are analyzed, one of the research questions is answered, and one of the hypotheses is tested.

Chapter 6 presents the analytical results on social practices and determines the degree of Colombian transnationality in Germany, based on statistical analysis and the application of an index proposed for this purpose, thereby answering two of the research questions. Chapter 7 is an analytical characterization of the geographical dynamics of the cross-border networks and communities. The last chapter presents the conclusions that summarize the discussions on the state of Colombian transnational migration and its interpretation from a geographical perspective.

CHAPTER 2. TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL PRACTICES, SPACES, AND MORPHOLOGIES: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF TRANSNATIONALISM

The purpose of this chapter is to review the theoretical literature on transnational migration, transnationalism, and transnational spaces from a geographical perspective. It presents and organizes a body of theory that allows this research to interpret results through transnational and geographical approaches. It also proposes a conceptual framework for analyzing the geographical production of transnational spaces.

The geographical study of human migration is challenging due to its changing and multidimensional nature. Human mobility has been a historical constant; populations have never stopped moving, and in the era of globalization, this phenomenon is becoming increasingly complex and compelling to comprehend. From the beginning, the theory describing migratory patterns as driven by factors stimulating intensity, destination, and stages of migration (Ravenstein, 1885; Tobler, 1995) provides an initial understanding of the 20th-century migration landscape. Of course, Ravenstein's early ideas from 1885 provided an initial framework for a multiscale phenomenon with numerous theoretical implications. Today it is understood as a valuable precedent that has been refined, expanded, adjusted, and complemented by new approaches and concepts. In perspective, the geographical configuration of the capitalist system, viewed as a world-system (Wallerstein, 1974), suggests that an unresolved tension between the forces of concentration and mobility of economic resources and populations between the centers and peripheries of that system drives migratory flows. This is precisely the scenario of contemporary international migration.

As is well documented, the 20th century witnessed intense migratory events. The world wars in the first half were a factor in the expulsion (push) and exile of Europeans to all corners of the American continent. In the second half, on the contrary, there were large waves of migration due to attraction (pull), with migrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa relocating to economic centers in North America and Europe. International migration during the 20th century, especially in the last few decades of that century, became a massive flow with far-reaching consequences. One of these is the formation of migrant communities that bring with them social and cultural practices from their places of origin to their host countries, giving rise to cultural mixtures that challenge univocal national identities. Consequently, there are families and communities that a single nationality or ethnic label could not define, as they are

pivoting between two languages, two cultures, two countries. These new hybrid social morphologies were referred to as transnationalism.

Thus, both a problem and a solution emerged. The problem of explaining these new communities that interconnect two places and two cultures, and the transnational approach as a conceptual alternative to solve that explanatory need. There have now been nearly 30 years of theoretical and empirical production on transnationalism, supported by the contributions of sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists who bring theoretical and methodological tools from each of these disciplines. Some conceptual limitations remain, but others have already been resolved. In particular, the geographical dimension remains a challenging theoretical and methodological aspect, which is why it is crucial to focus on this topic as a promising field of study.

This chapter offers a critical review of transnationalism. First, it traces the origins and development of the approach and the context of its emergence. Then, it explores how the core conceptual categories of transnationalism were constructed and discusses the convergences and divergences within the conceptual framework that emerged from academic literature in the 1990s and early 2000s. The third section analyzes the integration of geographical space into transnational studies and the intersection of spatial concepts with other transnational frameworks, sometimes resulting in challenges to these frameworks. Ultimately, transnationalism is presented as an essential framework for geographers to understand the evolving socio-spatial dynamics of the contemporary world.

2.1 Origin of the Transnational Approach

The transnational approach had two triggers. The first was the challenge of explaining the nature and consequences of political changes, the revolution in information technologies, the globalization of capitalism, and the growing flow of migration in the last decades of the 20th century. The 1990s were particularly characterized by the expansion of geographically dispersed business networks, the rapid mobility of financial capital, and the acceleration of international migration driven by economic crises and dynamic labor markets, all operating in unstable tension with unprecedented intensity and in novel forms. This new global economic scenario intensified international labor migration, which reshaped migration flows and facilitated the formation of transnational communities. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) argue that this historical convergence of factors helps explain the complexity of transnationalism, which, in turn, is both multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary phenomenon (Vertovec, 2009). This

landscape of intense change required new explanatory theoretical frameworks and the expansion and adjustment of previous theories on international migration.

The second trigger arises from an epistemological problem, specifically a methodological issue in the application of conceptual and analytical categories in international migration research. It is a methodological critique of international migration studies that prioritized quantitative approaches and failed to document the sociocultural, economic, and political ties between migrant families and communities in the destination country and their country of origin. Logically, migrants would integrate into their host societies to a greater or lesser extent while maintaining family and cultural ties with their country and community of origin. In demographic, geographic, and economic research prior to the 1990s, quantitative methods and macro-analytical conceptual categories such as the nation-state prevailed, serving as the natural unit of analysis for any migratory study. This gave rise to the critique of *methodological nationalism* (Glick Schiller et al., 1995), a critique of the bias inherent in analyzing all migration processes from a single conceptual unit. The nation-state as an analytical category was too rigid and narrow to understand the social and cultural fabric of migrant communities.

These two factors, the first empirical, the second methodological, led to the development of the transnational approach to the study of migration, which allowed, among other things, for an exploration from below of the economic interactions, hybrid cultures, and multiple identities of migrants, their families, and communities (Smith, 2001; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). Qualitative methods also became relevant, contributing to exploratory methodologies such as multi-sited ethnography (Hannerz, 2003). The questions addressed by this approach sought to understand the formation of transnational networks, interconnections, and social spaces, those that lie between two cultures, two nationalities, and two simultaneous social realities. This subverted methodological nationalism. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a rapid and intense production of academic literature on the transnational approach. Its conceptual framework is based on concepts such as transnational social spaces (Pries, 2001), transnational social fields (Goldring, 1998; Schiller et al.,1995), transnational communities, and transnational social formations (Guarnizo, 1997; Vertovec, 2009).

While these conceptual categories are theoretically linked through their shared focus on the social relations and practices that produce transnationalism, they also give rise to a polysemic conceptual matrix around the central category *transnational* and *transnationalism*. The first, transnational, operates as an adjective that transfers its conceptual attributes to the noun, *e.g.*, transnational networks is a concept that acquires relevance and importance through

the qualifying adjective. The same applies to the other concepts as well. The second, transnationalism, has been proposed as a conceptual unit that covers most of the research topics of the transnational approach, not just migration. However, this concept emphasizes the new socioeconomic forms linked to globalization, which is why it was characterized as a hierarchical *from above* approach (Smith, 2001), due to its marked focus on international economic relations. Transnationalism examines global economic scenarios, characterized by the geographical simultaneity and decentralization of socioeconomic formations.

It is interesting to note that these categories, contrary to generating theoretical antitheses, set a necessary complementarity. This polysemic matrix is the result of an analytical approach that aims to overcome the limitations of methodological nationalism. Beyond interdisciplinary complementarity, this reflects a deeper theoretical and epistemic flexibility, made possible by the effectiveness of these new concepts in analyzing the dynamic social reality of migration. This conceptual matrix covers a range of social facts, including the formation of binational political identities and the social and intergenerational mobility of migrants within labor circuits in global cities. In other words, the transnational approach moves as flexibly as the phenomenon it seeks to study.

Pries (2001) offers another interpretation of this issue, warning that conceptual iteration threatens to empty research on transnationality and transnationalism, as replacing the foundational categories of this approach with broader and vaguer ones falls into the trap of *catch-all* concepts. Pries expresses concern and insists that it is necessary to give more specificity to the terms transnational and transnationalism. This conceptual emptying leads to the multiplication of concepts about common phenomena, the fate of postmodernism, which, in time and circumstance, coincides with the development of the transnational approach in the social sciences of the 1990s.

2.2 From the Study of Migration to Transnational Networks and Communities

The study of transnationalism required a dual effort from the social sciences; documenting its empirical manifestations and building its theoretical categories. This need was twofold: first, the need to explain complex phenomena such as the dense sociocultural networks of international migration, the spatial mobility of economic activity, and the social changes accompanying globalization; and second, the challenge of constructing a transnational conceptual framework with sufficient rigor to be reliable while remaining flexible enough to address this elusive phenomenon.

Vertovec (2009) provides a foundational definition of transnationalism as a condition of globally intensified connections. Despite vast distances and the presence of international borders, with all their laws, regulations, and national narratives, these relationships now operate on a planetary scale while remaining commonplace, though often virtual. This condition reveals a central contradiction: the dialectical tension between the institutional, top-down regulation of migration and the bottom-up social relationships that intensify and circumvent those very borders and regulations. It is these everyday, transnational relationships *from below* that make the presence of transnationalism most evident.

Likewise, Vertovec (2009) states that transnationalism serves as a conceptual umbrella for one of the most transformative global phenomena of our time, a complexity he captures by outlining six defining aspects. The first dimension is *social morphology*, which describes diasporic migration that gradually transforms into transnational communities, representing a new social formation characteristic of transnationalism. Transnational social networks, often supported by communication technologies, facilitate many of the links necessary for this transformation from a diasporic community to a transnational community. The second dimension is a *type of consciousness* that defines an identity beyond a mere sense of belonging to a community or country. Migrants often have dual or multiple identities that open up an experience of simultaneity and multilocality. The third, the *mode of cultural reproduction,* refers to cultural hybridization, the creation of new ethnic forms derived from mixed cultural practices among members of transnational communities, especially among the younger generation: music, fashion, the arts, and other forms of syncretization of cultural content. The fourth is the *avenue of capital,* defined as the emergence of transnational corporations accompanied by a fluid movement of financial capital and an elite labor market that becomes multi-sited as a strategy for flexible accumulation. The fifth is the *site of political engagement*, referring to social movements and cross-border political activism that reflect the tensions between civil and institutional actors over political power, often arising from situations of social injustice and human rights violations in the countries of origin of transmigrants. The sixth and final aspect is the (*re)construction of "place" or locality,* which relates to new forms of identity and social practices in geographical spaces, as the simultaneity of transnational social relations produces new places that connect cross-border social actors.

Earlier, in 1992, three American anthropologists, Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, published a seminal paper that would mark the development and encouragement of the transnational approach. The paper titled Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration, in which they define transnationalism as

"the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, p. 1). Here, the concept of the social field becomes relevant, enabling the empirical study of the phenomenon of transnationalism. Social fields refer to the possibility of constructing and extending links between different places that are connected through transmigrants. Shiller et al. (1992) recognize a clear precedent in transnational research: transnationalism as a global cultural phenomenon not particularly focused on individuals and communities. For example, Wakerman (1988) and Appadurai and Breckenridge (1988) follow Wallerstein's perspective on the world-system as a framework for cultural interactions on a global scale. For this reason, Glick Schiller et al. (1992) emphasize the need to analyze migration from a global perspective, as this aids categories such as nationality, identity, and race to be observed beyond the methodological nationalism that characterizes the from above view. This represents an adjustment and expansion of the world-system perspective, as the authors accept some of its aforementioned premises. In this regard, Smith and Guarnizo (1998) propose that transnationalism from below should focus on the initiatives of immigrant communities to maintain their sociocultural ties with their communities of origin through transnational social practices that facilitate the formation of transnational social fields.

The intensity of these linkages led Portes et al. (1999) to identify a genuinely novel phenomenon, justifying it as a new field of research. This phenomenon is characterized by an unprecedented intensity of exchanges, new modes of transaction, and a multiplication of activities requiring sustained cross-border contact. They categorize these transnational activities into three primary fields: Economic, involving the mobilization of remittances and cross-border business ventures; Political, encompassing the formal practices of governments as well as those of community leaders and immigrant organizations; Socio-cultural, relating to practices that reinforce cultural identity and integration.

These three fields require the existence of transnational social networks, defined as the set of social relationships that surround individuals immersed in family, work, institutional, and socioeconomic contexts (Lubbers et al., 2018). Furthermore, according to Portes et al. (1999), transnational social networks become the primary unit of analysis for transnational migration, as they provide insights into individuals' interactions with the community and the social relationships that surround them. Transnational networks are a crucial element of transnationalism. They are not merely instrumental means to achieve transnational ends, but constitute the very form in which transnational social life is organized. Their function extends

beyond facilitating exchanges to become the social architecture that enables the existence of communities and practices operating simultaneously across multiple territories.

Transnational social networks constitute the relational infrastructure that underpins and articulates migration-driven transnationalization. Lubbers et al. (2018) highlight the multidimensional nature of these structures and their function as cross-border social support networks. Transnational networks, therefore, are not mere aggregates of individual connections, but complex systems of social relations that operate simultaneously on multiple geographical scales. Networks thus serve as the mediating structure between the individual experiences of migrants and broader social structures. They offer opportunities to analyze how personal ties are linked to macrosocial processes.

Faist et al. (2013) note that transnationality refers to the social practices of agents, including individuals, groups, communities, and organizations, across the borders of nation-states. The term denotes a spectrum of cross-border links in various spheres of social life, family, sociocultural, economic, and political, ranging from travel to remittances to the exchange of ideas. Transnationality is characterized by transactions of varying intensity at different stages of life that extend beyond geographical mobility. Thus, transnationality can be understood as a set of multiscalar practices involving individuals, groups, and cross-border communities. These practices are not geographically restricted, but they do have a spatial expression (Smith, 2001). Though not always readily apparent, their traces become visible in specific sites of transnational daily life, such as restaurants, institutional spaces, and symbolic urban landmarks. Thus, communities shape cities spatially, creating in an urban palimpsest that incorporates transnational practices. However, Portes et al. (1999) add an important caveat: transnationalism requires continuity over time, as only sustained practices can consolidate into a researchable social phenomenon.

Pries (2001) conceptualizes transnationalism through the lens of *Transnational Social Spaces*. He defines these as dense, stable, and multi-local frameworks that are institutionalized through a combination of material artifacts, everyday social practices, and systems of symbolic representation. A cornerstone of his argument is this multi-locality; he contends that the social infrastructure of these practices, artifacts, and symbols is not confined to a single location but is embedded across multiple geographical spaces. This perspective highlights the interaction between socioeconomic structures and human agency across diverse social and spatial contexts.

Echoing this spatial focus, Faist (2000) posits that transnational social spaces comprise combinations of social ties and their contents, network positions, and organizational networks

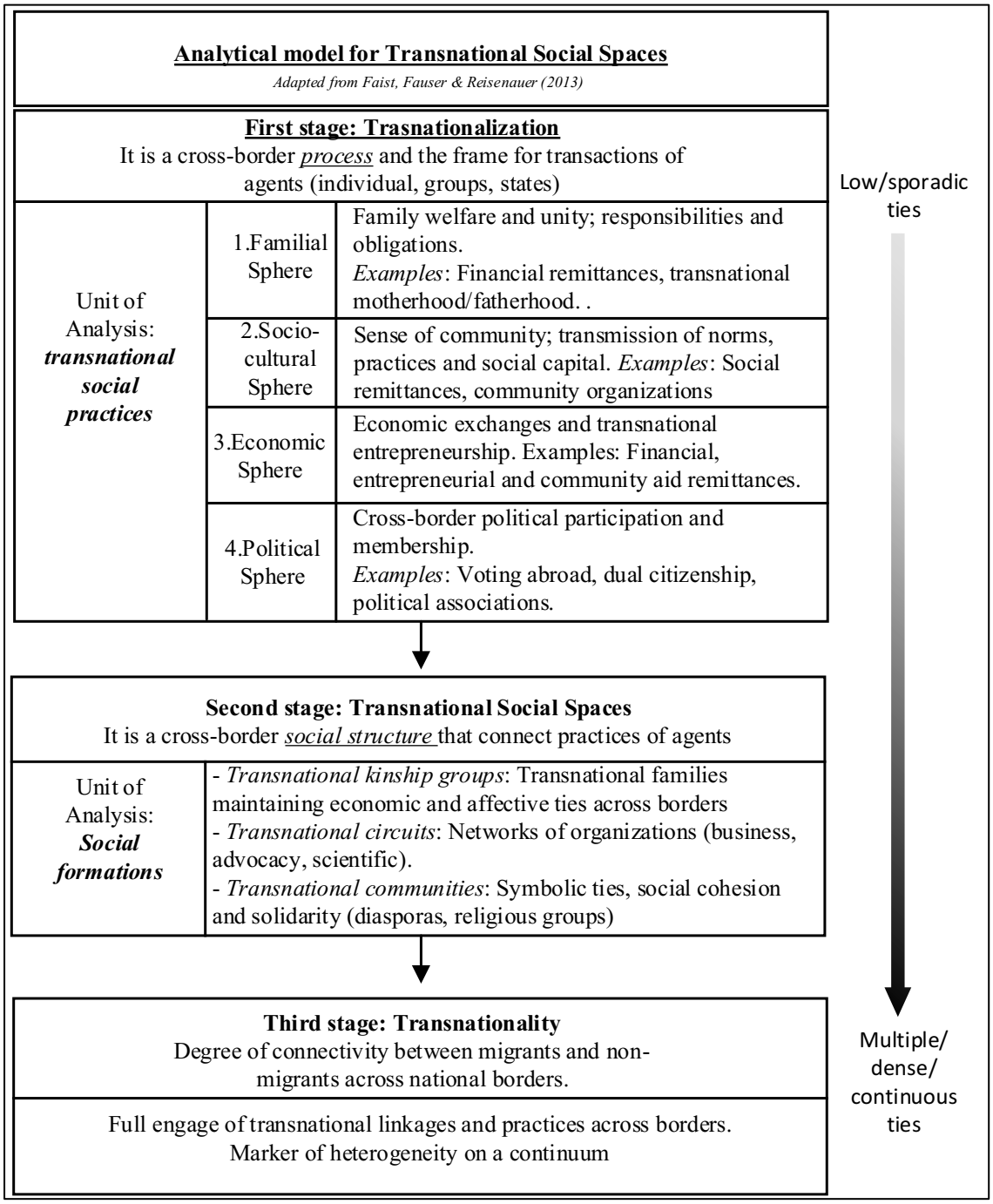
that exist across at least two internationally distinct sites. He identifies four spheres where these spaces are manifested: the familial, sociocultural, economic, and political. For Faist, a key analytical task is to map, locate, and characterize these spheres both physically and symbolically.

Figure 1 provides a conceptual synthesis of transnational social spaces, offering a framework for analysis and explanation based on Faist et al. (2013). The diagram illustrates the authors' three core concepts, such a transnationalization, transnational social spaces, and transnationality. It explains how transnationality operates as a process of varying intensity, thereby transcending a simple transnational/non-transnational dichotomy. While visual representations risk oversimplifying complex concepts, this figure effectively models transnationality as developing through three progressive stages.

First, transnationalization represents the cross-border process that frames the relationships between individual and group agents and takes place in the four spheres of transnational practices (family, sociocultural, economic, and political). The family sphere encompasses practices of care and well-being, as well as responsibilities and obligations, often expressed through remittances that support family members. The sociocultural sphere includes community practices that maintain rules, practices, and social capital, such as the formation of social organizations. In the economic sphere, different transactions take place, including philanthropic and financial remittances for investment purposes. Finally, the political sphere encompasses practices of political participation and belonging, including voting and forming political associations.

Second, transnational social spaces correspond to cross-border social structures that connect practices between agents. The unit of analysis is social formations such as transnational groups, circuits, and communities, including families that provide cross-border care, as well as networks of organizations. Transnational communities require symbolic ties and social cohesion. The third and final stage is transnationality itself, as an advanced and stable degree of connectivity between migrants and their places of origin. The model represents a gradual and progressive development of the transnational phenomenon, beginning with sparse and sporadic cross-border ties in the initial stage of transnationalization and reaching dense and constant ties in the more developed stage of transnationality.

Figure 1. Analytical Model for Transnational Social Spaces, based on Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer (2013)



Note. Author's own conceptual elaboration based on Faist et al. (2013)

2.3 The Spatial Dimension of Transnationalism

Transnationalism has a spatial dimension that was acknowledged, albeit incompletely, by the pioneers of this approach. Initially, the geographical dimension of transnationalism was defined through its constituent elements: fields, social spaces, networks, and transnational linkages between two (or more) communities and places. While the need to integrate geography

into the study of transnationalism was evident from the beginning, this integration remained incomplete. This approach pioneered an intuitive and exploratory incorporation of geographical space, though it did not fully engage with the theoretical advances that geography had achieved by the 1990s. For instance, Glick Schiller, et al. (1995) embraced the concept of deterritorializing globalization. This concept involves the dispersion and flexibility of capital accumulation as global socioeconomic interconnections transcend borders and boundaries. This process reflects the deterritorializing forces inherent in global capitalism, which constitute what scholars have termed transnationalism from above.

However, conceptual clarity regarding the spatial dimension of transnationalism remains elusive. Pries (2001) defines Transnational Social Spaces as configurations of social practices, artifacts, and systems of symbols that unfold across at least two nation-states. While Pries attempts to distinguish between *social spaces* and *geographical spaces*, the latter remains conceived as passive container spaces, fixed territorial units that merely hold social activity. Faist (1998, p. 216) reinforces this passive conception of space, arguing that "physical location and geographical distance are not the only grid upon which political collective action, shared culture, and economic cooperation can be mapped". This difficulty in conceptualizing space comes from two interrelated factors: First, theoretical frameworks were constructed based on the novel and exploratory nature of the transnational phenomenon itself. Second, the first generation of transnationalism researchers engaged little with geographical literature in their foundational empirical works.

The concept of transnational social space risks becoming misleading if "space" is treated merely as a geographical metaphor (Voigt-Graf, 2004), a vagueness that threatens to render it an empty analytical vessel (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). In response, Smith and Guarnizo (1998) advocated for localizing transnationalism *from below* by mapping the counter-hegemonic social practices that challenge asymmetries of economic power, racial domination, and class conflict. Their analysis focused on the degree of local expression, particularly the mechanisms of community organization and sociopolitical actions that directly shape local environments. Despite the prominence of the term "locality" in this framework, geographical space itself often remains a static backdrop, a physical container for social processes, rather than an active component of the theory.

Vertovec (2001) advances this discussion by identifying a tautological problem in early transnationalism studies: the tendency to define social practices and spaces as mutually constitutive mirrors of one another, practices create spaces, and spaces shape practices. He further examines the use of geographical metaphors, such as "space", "field", and

"translocality", to describe the fluid nature of social exchanges mediated across great distances. While such metaphors can illustrate transnational processes, he cautions that they are double-edged: useful for capturing spatial complexity, yet dangerous when they substitute for rigorous spatial analysis, potentially leading to conceptual vagueness and analytical gaps.

Smith (2001) explicitly conceptualizes space as a constitutive element of transnationalism, moving beyond metaphorical usage toward analytical precision. Drawing on urban research, Smith proposes Transnational Urbanism as an approach to examining the local and translocal specificities of socio-spatial practices in cities. His focus is on social networks operating within urban space, a setting imbued with meanings, identities, and power dynamics. He conceptualizes urban space as "a social space that is a crossroads or meeting ground for the interplay of diverse localizing practices of national, transnational, and even global-scale actors" (Smith, 2001, p. 127). As Sheringham (2010) notes, this approach emphasizes the capacity for agency and the social constructivism of actors within transnational social relations.

Similarly, Sassen (2000) emphasizes the need to ground globalization empirically through specific geographical spaces, which is why cities become the spatial reference for transnationalism processes. She argues that the "incorporation of cities into a new cross-border geography of centrality also signals the emergence of a parallel political geography" (Sassen, 2000, p. 151). In the global city, there are two antagonistic actors: financial capital that controls specific forms of urbanization, and the communities that build translocal identities of belonging. Consequently, Sassen observes that translocal interconnections facilitate a *denationalization* of urban space and the emergence of new transnational actors, which raises the question, "whose city is it?" (Sassen, 2000, p. 152).

Despite a proliferation of scientific literature on transnationalism, the conceptual categories of geography are often overlooked. The development of this approach attracted enthusiastic scholars, including geographers who sought to apply its approaches. However, as Carter (2005) points out that a central contradiction persists: spatial metaphors are used pervasively, yet the importance of geography is denied. Geographical space is frequently treated as outdated, particularly when discussions of diasporic migration and deterritorialization foster a false equivalence whereby the dissolution of borders is mistaken for the dissolution of space itself. Carter (2005, p. 55) succinctly captures this core issue, stating that in transnational studies, "Space is invoked, but often left un-interrogated".

Rios and Adiv (2010) express another concern, the tendency among geographers to assume that transnationalism univocally leads to the hybridization of identities and spaces. This hybridization is often presented as an inevitable outcome of transnational interconnection.

However, such assertions lack sufficient empirically grounded theorization and perpetuate the problematic view of geographical space as a passive backdrop, merely a blank canvas upon which social processes unfold. Nevertheless, it is not conceptually or methodologically erroneous to recognize that transnationalism requires understanding through non-traditional theoretical categories. Rather, the challenge lies in expanding and developing conceptual frameworks that explain transnationalism as a relational, non-essentialist phenomenon while simultaneously acknowledging the active role of space in shaping transnational processes.

Population geography, despite its long tradition within the discipline, has been the primary geographical subfield focused on international migration, yet it has been slow to engage with debates on transnationalism and transnational migration. This delay stems partly from the fragmented nature of geography and its tendency to distance itself from broader theoretical discussions in the social sciences. This leads to disciplinary isolation and limited dialogue between geographers and other social scientists studying migration in the era of globalization (Walton-Roberts, 2004). Nevertheless, population geography has gradually opened itself to diverse analytical approaches, consistent with broader developments across geography and the social sciences. From the 1990s onward, interdisciplinary exchange and conceptual borrowing between human geography, anthropology, and sociology became defining characteristics of migration studies.

As discussed earlier, a key analytical difficulty of the transnational approach is its frequent lack of concrete spatial expression (Brickell & Datta, 2011). Many applied studies rely on spatial metaphors, misinterpret geographical concepts, or employ them imprecisely. Michael Peter Smith's contributions were therefore significant for geography, as he was among the scholars who most clearly articulated the spatial dimensions of transnationalism. His approach to "transnationalism and the city focused on the socio-spatial processes by which social actors and their networks forge translocal connections and create the linkages between and across places" (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p. 181). This emphasis on socio-spatial processes as central to producing translocal connections (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013) represents a crucial shift, space becomes the very content of the social world rather than a passive container. Furthermore, applying the concept of translocality to urban studies reconceptualizes the city as a fragmented collection of everyday places that generate social and material connections with other spaces, places, and locations within and beyond the city or nation (Brickell & Datta, 2011). Cities shape the daily lives of migrants, who, in turn, rework and transform urban spaces through places such as churches, schools, and restaurants. These places become sites of translocality, invigorating the multicultural social capital of migrant communities.

Addressing this complexity, Löw (2008) argues that the spatial and the social cannot be differentiated, as space constitutes a specific form of the social. Spatial structures, like temporal ones, are forms of societal structures. Consequently, spaces are intrinsically historical, dynamic, and fluid rather than rigid containers, as Parnreiter (2006) emphasizes. This historical understanding, one that foregrounds the process of spatial constitution, enables Löw to conceptualize spatial changes as shifts in the social practices through which space is produced.

The production of transnational spaces constitutes the material and symbolic expression of migrant social practices that navigate multiple cultures and societies. This process involves more than just recreating familiar places by relocating elements of one's home country to the host country; it also includes creating novel spatial forms that synthesize two or more social realities. Through this process, identities and topophilias expand and transform as transmigrants territorialize everyday spaces and develop a sense of ownership over spaces that were previously unfamiliar or foreign to them.

2.4 A Proposal for a Spatial Analysis of Transnationalism

A categorical distinction between the spatial and social dimensions of transnationalism would perpetuate a false dichotomy, merely excluding one through negation or superimposition. Instead, transnational social practices should be understood as inherently spatial practices; transnational phenomena are simultaneously social and spatial, as any social fact possesses a geographical dimension. The categories of transnational social practices proposed by Faist et al. (2013), which includes family, sociocultural, political, and economic spheres, all involve material and symbolic spatial production. Each social practice thus serves as an indicator of the spatial expression of transnationality. For instance, transnational business activities and remittances materialize in specific locations within cities and in family homes. Jackson et al. (2004) and Crang et al. (2003) categorically argue definitively that space is constitutive of transnationality in all its forms.

Cities act as melting pots of transnational intersections, creating meeting places, even temporary ones, such as carnivals in migrant communities, national holiday celebrations, or sporting events. However, multiculturalism entails friction and conflict among community members, not purely harmonious coexistence. These tensions find spatial expression in segregated ethnic urban areas, where transnational urbanism manifests alongside social conflict.

Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space provides a robust conceptual framework for overcoming the limitations of our understanding of the spatial dimension of transnationalism. Lefebvre (1991; see also Schmid, 2022) posits that space is not a passive container but is socially produced through a triad of elements, *Spatial Practices, Representations of Space*, and *Representational Spaces*. This conceptual triad proves essential for understanding the spatiality of transnationalism. First, spatial practices refer to perceived spaces, the routines and everyday activities that produce and reproduce space; in the transnational context, this includes migratory practices, remittances, cross-border communications, and the physical mobility of people, goods, and ideas. These material practices create the circuits and routes that connect distant spaces and generate what we might call transnational practiced spaces.

Second, representations of space include the conceived space by planners, technicians, and administrators; it is the dominant space in any society. In transnationalism, these representations involve migration policy, border cartography, remittance regulations, and technocratic conceptions of migrant integration. This represents the space of transnationalism *from above* that Smith and Guarnizo (1998) identify as hegemonic and often conflict with the everyday practices of transmigrants.

Third, spaces of representation constitute lived spaces, those rich in symbolism and the imaginings of city inhabitants. In the transnational context, these spaces include places of nostalgia, ethnic neighborhoods, ritual and ceremonial spaces, and all those spatial manifestations where the hybrid identities and collective memories of migrant communities are expressed. Transnationalism from below materializes in these spaces, in restaurants that recreate flavors from the country of origin, in churches that adapt transnational liturgies, and in parks where festivities connecting multiple places are celebrated.

Harvey's grid of spatial practices further expands and reformulates Lefebvre's spatial triad and the social production of space (Harvey, 1990, 2006). Similarly, Collyer and King (2012) adapted Harvey's grid for their own analysis. Building on these frameworks, this study extends the spatial grid for the practical purpose of strengthening the understanding of transnationalism from a spatial perspective. In general, the grid generates nine distinct but interconnected analytical categories, each representing a unique intersection between spatial ontologies of Harvey and theory of space production of Lefebvre.

In Figure 2, Harvey's three spatial conceptualizations are positioned along the horizontal axis, ranging from the most fixed to the most fluid forms of spatial experience. Absolute space incorporates the material, territorial, and institutional dimensions of

transnationalism, including physical infrastructure, property relations, and formal institutional anchors such as consulates and cultural centers. Relative space encompasses the regulatory, positional, and measurable aspects of transnational spaces, including border controls, visa systems, mechanisms of civic stratification, and various forms of state-mediated spatial regulation that structure migratory flows. Relational space addresses the fluid and experiential dimensions of transnationalism, including patterns of circular migration, digital bridgespaces, bodily practices, and migrant emotions, such as migratory grief, which characterize the migratory experience. This horizontal progression reflects Harvey's idea that space is simultaneously fixed and fluid, material and social, restrictive and enabling.

The vertical axis locates Lefebvre's spatial triad to reveal how different dimensions of spatial production operate within transnational contexts. Spatial practices cover the material and bodily activities that create transnational connections, from remittance flows and real estate investments to migratory routes and cultural practices that physically link distant places. Representations of space include official cartographies, migration policies, planning strategies, and digital platforms through which state and corporate actors attempt to conceive, regulate, and control transnational spaces according to particular logics of power and capital accumulation. Spaces of representation sum up the lived, symbolic, and imaginative dimensions of transnational space, including territorial links, diasporic neighborhood formations, nostalgic geographies, and the hybrid cultural imaginaries through which transnational communities negotiate their multiple belongings. This vertical organization illustrates how transnational spaces are simultaneously practiced, conceived, and experienced, revealing the complex interplay between material conditions, regulatory frameworks, and experiential meanings that characterizes contemporary migratory processes.

While this framework does not cover all possibilities, it functions as an analytical net designed to capture transnational spatial practices. The analytical potential of the Lefebvrian perspective for understanding the spatial dimensions of transnationalism emphasizes the need to overcome the conception of space as a mere container that has characterized much of the literature on transnationalism. In contrast, its emphasis on spatial contradictions and tensions offers conceptual tools for analyzing the conflicts and resistances that characterize migrations. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is a social product that is, in turn, productive; that is, space is not only the result of social relations, but also conditions and transforms them. In transnationalism, this means that transnational spaces are not simply passive settings where migratory practices occur, but rather that these spaces actively shape the possibilities and limitations of such practices.

Figure 2. Spatial Categories of Transnationalism

Spatial Categories of Transnationalism

Enhanced spatial grid adapted from Harvey (2006), Lefebvre (1991), Schmid (2022) and Collyer & King (2012)

Harvey Categories / Lefebvre Categories	Absolute Space (Fixed, Immutable, Container)	Relative Space (Relational, Positional, Measurable)	Relational Space (Fluid, Experiential, Lived)
Spatial Practices (Material Experience)	**Territorial Materiality** • Transnational private property • Ethnic residential segregation • Physical infrastructure of enclaves • Real estate remittances • Physical cultural centers **Institutional Anchors** • Consulates and embassies • Mother tongue schools • Transnational places of worship	**Border Regulations** • Border controls • Visa systems • Migration regulations • Bilateral agreements **Regulated Material Flows** • Formal remittance systems • Transnational ethnic trade • Regular international transport	**Transnational Mobilities** • "Transit migration" • Transnationalization of borders • Circular migration • Family mobility routes **Embodied Practices** • Hybrid gestures and embodiments • Transnational food practices
Representations of Space (Conceived Space)	**Official Cartographies** • Diasporic community mappings • Migrant population censuses • Consular registrations • Official migration atlases **Institutional Discourses** • Colombians abroad policies, "Colombia Nos Une" • German integration discourses	**Civic Stratification** • Citizenship hierarchies • Transnational citizenship • National language policies • Differentiated integration frameworks **Multicultural Urban Planning** • Ethnic zoning • Housing policies for migrants	**Digital Spaces** • Transnational cybergeographies • Digital bridgespaces • Family communication platforms • Diasporic social networks **Media Representations** • Transnational media • Hybrid integration narratives
Spaces of Representation (Lived Space)	**Territorial Attachments** • Attachment to place of origin • "Cultural hearths" and nodes • Transnational topophilia • Sacred/ceremonial places **Localized Collective Memories** • Monuments and memorials • Transnational mourning spaces	**Diasporic Spaces** • Ethnic neighborhoods • Transnational "homing" • Nostalgia and collective memory • Community festivals and celebrations **Affective Territorialities** • Family gathering spaces • Generational socialization places	**Transnational Imaginaries** • Transnational imaginary • Diasporic national identities • Hybrid cultures • Dreams of return/permanence **Mobile Affectivities** • Intimacies at distance • Cross-border emotional care • Multiple fluid identities

Note. Author's own conceptual elaboration based on Harvey (2006), Lefebvre (1991), Schmid (2022) and Collyer & King (2012).

This spatial trialectic thus represents a flexible approach that aims to understand how transnational space is produced. The everyday practices of migrants transform urban spaces, while hegemonic representations of space attempt to regulate and control these transnational ties. For their part, spaces of representation are presented as places of resistance and cultural creativity where transnational communities negotiate their multiple identities.

Similarly, Lefebvre's proposal on the *right to the city* is particularly relevant for understanding the spatial struggles of migrant communities, as they not only demand access to urban services but also claim the right to transform and appropriate urban spaces according to their cultural and social needs. This spatial appropriation generates what Lefebvre calls

differential spaces, those spaces that react and emerge as alternatives to the homogenized space of global capitalism.

Lefebvre's framework also enables to consider another analytical spatial grid when integrated with Smith and Guarnizo's perspective on the power relations of transnationalism from above and transnationalism from below. Figure 3 summarizes a conceptual framework that gathers these two approaches. Like the previous framework, which was pre-existing and defined by the authors cited, but expanded upon by us, this framework seeks to provide conceptual and analytical tools for transnationalism from a spatial perspective. The grid comprises six specific categories that enable the examination of how each dimension of the production of transnational space works as a contested space, where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces compete for control, definition, and appropriation of transnational spaces. These spaces are inherently political and conflictual; each spatial practice, each representation of space, and each lived space simultaneously constitutes a site of potential domination and a field of resistance and social transformation.

The grid reveals that the three Lefebvrian dimensions of space production are not politically neutral categories, but battlefields where different transnationalism projects compete for control. At the level of spatial practices, transnationalism from above manifests itself in the institutional control of space through state infrastructures, regulatory migration systems, official consular networks, and corporate frameworks for managing transnational mobility. These mechanisms seek to channel, regulate, and control migratory flows under institutional control. In contrast, transnationalism from below at the level of spatial practices includes all those material activities self-organized by migrant communities: the construction of community cultural spaces, the development of informal remittance networks, the creation of alternative mobility routes, and the various forms of territorial appropriation that escape or subvert official institutional frameworks. These counter-hegemonic practices not only resist institutional control but also create spatial alternatives that express the specific needs, values, and political projects of transnational communities.

Figure 3. Transnational Space Production: Power Relations Analysis

Transnational Space Production: Power Relations Analysis *Lefebvre's Spatial Triad (1991) and Smith & Guarnizo's Power Framework (1998)*		
Spatial Production Dimensions	**Power Relations in Transnational Space**	
Lefebvrian Categories	**Transnationalism From Above** *(Hegemonic/Institutional)*	**Transnationalism From Below** (Counter-hegemonic/Grassroots)
Spatial Practices *Material activities that produce and reproduce space through everyday routines*	**Institutional Spatial Control** • State-managed migration infrastructure • Official consular territorial networks • Regulated remittance systems • Corporate transnational logistics • Planned ethnic residential distribution • Institutional cultural facility development • State-sponsored mobility programs • Official integration infrastructure	**Community Spatial Appropriation** • Self-organized migration routes • Informal family reunion practices • Community-built cultural spaces • Grassroots remittance networks • Right to the city • Self-managed gathering places • Informal economic spatial networks • Community mutual aid infrastructure
Representation of Space *Conceived space of planners, technocrats, and social engineers*	**Hegemonic Spatial Concepts** • Official diaspora management policies • State cartographies of migration • Technocratic integration frameworks • Civic stratification systems • Border security conceptualizations • National language policy mappings • Corporate diversity management models • Bureaucratic spatial classifications	**Counter-hegemonic Spatial Knowledge** • Community-created migration mappings • Alternative integration conceptualizations • Grassroots spatial documentation • Community-defined citizenship models • Informal border navigation knowledge • Multilingual spatial practices • Social cartography • Self-organized spatial planning
Space of Representation Lived space of inhabitants and users, charged with symbolism	**Managed Cultural Spaces** • Official multiculturalism celebrations • State-sponsored heritage projects • Institutionalized nostalgia tourism • Managed ethnic cultural displays • Corporate diversity showcasing • Controlled transnational symbolism • Official identity narratives • Commodified cultural expressions	**Autonomous Lived Spaces** • Self-created hybrid cultural spaces • Community-driven identity formation • Autonomous transnational celebrations • Resistant memory practices • Informal intimate gathering spaces • Self-determined belonging projects • Creative cultural innovations • Grassroots affective territorialities

Note. Author's own conceptual elaboration based on Lefebvre (1991) and Smith & Guarnizo (1998).

Regarding representations of space and spaces of representation, this dialectical tension between hegemony and counter-hegemony takes on specific epistemic and cultural dimensions. Hegemonic representations of space include official cartographies of migration, technocratic integration policies, civic stratification frameworks, and all those forms of spatial knowledge that seek to make the complexity of transnational processes legible and manageable from state and corporate perspectives. These representations of space constitute technologies of power that seek to organize transnational spaces according to logics of control and administrative efficiency. For their part, counter-hegemonic representations of space include alternative community cartographies, autonomous frameworks of integration, spatial knowledge systems developed by migrant communities themselves, and all those forms of spatial conceptualization that arise from the lived experiences of transnational communities. In terms of spaces of representation, the grid reveals how transnational lived spaces are also fields

of struggle between hegemonic cultural projects (managed multiculturalism, official celebrations of diversity, touristification of migrant culture) and autonomous cultural projects (creative hybridizations, practices of resistant memory, self-determined forms of belonging, community cultural innovations) that express the specific aspirations of transnational communities to develop their own forms of cultural life that cannot be reduced to traditional national frameworks or market logic.

This framework does not create new concepts; rather, it employs a straightforward approach: connecting two conceptual categories, transnationalism and the social production of space, and generated a conceptual interstice that brings together the analytical content of these fields. This interstice is precisely a strategy of conceptual expansion based on relating pre-existing conceptual proposals. The articulation between this power grid (Lefebvre vs. Smith & Guarnizo) and the previous spatial grid (Lefebvre vs. Harvey) constitutes a comprehensive proposal for analyzing transnationalism from a genuinely spatial perspective. While the Harvey-Lefebvre grid provides the ontological tools for understanding the different modalities of transnational space (absolute, relative, relational), the Smith and Guarnizo-Lefebvre grid provide the political tools for analyzing the power relations that traverse each spatial modality. The combination of both matrices enables a spatial analysis of transnationalism that can examine both the material and immaterial aspects of transnational spaces, as well as the social struggles that shape their specific spatial forms. This dual proposal acknowledges that transnationalism cannot be fully understood without a spatial theory that considers both the diverse categories of space and the power relations that shape them.

2.5 A Closing Reflection on Transnationalism in the 21st Century

From this perspective, transnationalism is not as novel as researchers often claim. Migration is a proven historical constant that has enabled cultural borrowing between civilizations; therefore, the world has long experienced processes of cultural interconnection. What is new, however, is the intensity, modes, and consequences of such intercultural and geographical relations in recent decades, marking the emergence of a new social morphology, as Vertovec (2009) argues. In this morphology, identities are no longer defined solely by nationality, but by multiple simultaneous or amalgamated identities. Tex-Mex and Chicano culture, which mixes Mexican and American (United States) elements, exemplifies how cultural artifacts emerge from two cultures yet transcend their simple sum. Transnationalism implies something new between two cultures. Similarly, the Turkish-German community lives

transnationally, navigating between Protestant Christianity and liberal European Islam, between German, English, and Turkish languages, between hybrid aesthetics and new vocabularies, and between foods that belong to neither country exclusively but are present nonetheless.

The Burrito and Döner Kebab represent, somehow, the transnational: foods existing between two cultures that require new categories to name them. These hybrid cultural objects are not just gastronomic or aesthetic curiosities but represent processes of identity negotiation and spatial appropriation. In Lefebvrian terms, they constitute spaces of representation where transnational communities express their mixed identities. The proliferation of Turkish restaurants and food stalls in Berlin, *e.g.*, not only responds to product demand but also represents strategies for economic survival, spaces for community gathering, and mechanisms for cultural preservation and transformation. Cities concentrate these transnational interconnections and serve as ideal laboratories for understanding the complexities of globalization.

Today, it is axiomatic that in the third decade of the 21st century, many social, political, cultural, and economic phenomena occur across borders (Yeoh & Collins, 2022). This interconnected reality manifests in various ways and with varying degrees of intensity, as interconnections between places and people around the world continue to intensify. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly revealed our global interconnection and how its consequences affected everyone all simultaneously. Yet the pandemic also demonstrated that global events have unequal consequences, such a lockdowns and access to medical care were not experienced in the same way in a privileged suburb of Hamburg as in the informal settlements of Bogotá. Simultaneity does not imply homogeneity, and it is precisely here that the transnational condition becomes evident. Geographical spaces contain the unresolved tensions between the force of context, local actors, and global forces, whether a pandemic, an economic recession, or climate and environmental change. Global events have different spatial expressions in every corner of the planet: interconnected, yes, but also differentiated.

Transnationalism is deepening at the same pace as information technologies become more omnipresent in everyday life and as the political and economic capacity for action of local actors expands. The fluidity of financial capital and multi-sited business operations have also generated large-scale migration flows, with migrants moving as economic resources (Sassen, 2007). Migrants, refugees, and exiles at the margins also lead transnational lives that are, to varying degrees, integrated into transnational migration networks. This represents an irreversible condition where interconnection is the norm. This scenario continues to prompt

scholars employing transnationalism as an analytical approach to provide explanations for the interconnections of the contemporary world. Pries (2022) argues that transnationalism invites a deeper understanding of space in its geographical and social dimensions. A few decades ago, the social sciences experienced the emergence of the *Spatial Turn*, characterized by the increasing incorporation of spatial categories into disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, and economics. Today, the *Mobilities Turn* (Yeoh & Collins, 2022) draws attention to geographical perspectives for understanding human mobility and transnationalism as its consequence.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF TRANSNATIONALISM

Transnational studies initially focused on international migration but have since broadened to include economic relations, political activism, dynamic labor markets, new classes of transnational workers, and the production of transnational urban spaces. This has led to a conceptual diversity that is both a strength and a weakness, as the multiplication of conceptual categories makes methods and approaches more flexible but also disperses and repeats theoretical achievements already made. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 draws upon diverse methodological approaches, predominantly qualitative methods such as multi-sited ethnography, in-situ ethnography, in-depth interviews, life histories, and ethnosurveys. These approaches are tailored to the researcher's training, expertise, and disciplinary background, as well as to the theoretical frameworks used and the resources available for the research.

Even when researchers employ spatial conceptual categories, robust methodological tools for analyzing the spatial dimension of transnationality remain underdeveloped, a persistent limitation in transnational studies. Geography has made limited theoretical and methodological contributions to this field, despite its potential relevance. Addressing this gap requires both examining processes of theoretical production and developing critical assessments of the existing scholarship in transnational studies. Geography must contribute through conceptual refinement, analytical precision, and theoretical expansion.

As previously noted, transnational studies critique a fundamental assumption that the nation-state represents the natural category for explaining social organization and that migrants' identities are bound exclusively to a single nation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). This framework views migration as a matter of population gains and losses while expecting immigrants to fully adopt the language, values, and identity of their new country (Guarnizo, 2008). However, dense networks of global interconnections transcend nation-states, giving rise to new social forms. These include social, economic, and political networks spanning different places and cross-border societies. This emerging social reality demands new conceptual categories and methodological approaches.

Beyond his critique of methodological nationalism, which challenges the reduction of the nation-state to a simple container of social practices and data bounded by its borders (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Fauser, 2018), Faist (2012) also argues that ethnicity and nationality are essentialist categories. These categories can obscure internal differences within

social groups by reducing heterogeneous populations to simplistic nationality labels based solely on ethnic origin.

Nevertheless, the nation-state retains significant analytical potential when complemented by more flexible categories. World-systems theory (Wallerstein, 1974; Faist, 2012) and the globalization networks approach (Castells, 1996) explain systemic imbalances and global connections that reconfigure the relationship between territory and social life in the global era. These macro-level approaches enable broad analyses combining critical perspectives on the capitalist system and its consequences, deterritorialization and spatial capital accumulation (Massey, 2005). As from above perspectives, they support and complement other interpretations of migratory processes.

The from below perspective focuses on individual, family, and community spheres. However, this approach risks overlooking multiple dimensions of identity within migrant communities, including gender, class, religion, and lifestyle (Faist, 2012), and can lead to assumptions that ethnic communities remain stable over time and constitute homogeneous units. In reality, individuals often hold multiple nationalities and embody diverse ethnic characteristics and identities.

Conceptual categories within transnationalism, transnational formations (Guarnizo, 2008), transnational social practices (Faist et al., 2013), and transnational social spaces (Pries, 2001), draw upon various methodological strategies derived from quantitative and qualitative methods. Methodological tools vary according to the scale or unit of analysis, enabling researchers to understand either individual migrant narratives or aggregate trends in quantifiable variables.

Most researchers employ mixed methodological frameworks combining qualitative and quantitative strategies (Faist, 2012; Fauser, 2018). Each approach offers distinct epistemic advantages depending on the research focus. Quantitative approaches rely on statistical methods to identify patterns and behaviors, enabling sample comparison, particularly valuable in migration and transnational research. Qualitative approaches focus on specific cases, yielding detailed, subject-centered insights that provide substantial analytical depth for case studies and nuanced portrayals of the dimensions of transnational life.

Mixed methods have become standard in transnational migration research, increasing methodological flexibility. Faist (2012) identifies multi-sited ethnography, pioneered by George Marcus (1995), as a primary research method in this field. This approach enables researchers to follow migrants, objects, and networks across different locations while simultaneously tracking connections between migrants and their families or societies of origin.

The value of this methodological innovation lies in its flexibility, capacity for simultaneous data collection across sites, and ability to trace cross-border connections (Faist, 2012). Researchers thus follow actors and cultural objects moving between two or more geographical locations (Fauser, 2018), examining both origin and destination contexts (Vertovec, 2004).

This methodological strategy should not be treated as universally applicable; its pertinence depends on the specific research objectives of each project. In-situ ethnography, ethnographic research conducted at a single site, also effectively shows different aspects of the migratory phenomenon within specific locations, rendering the distinction between multi-sited and single-site approaches less critical than often assumed. Single-site transnational research examines how individuals navigate their transnational lifeworlds, participate across various sites, and experience the influence of events in one location on their lives elsewhere (Fauser, 2018). This approach investigates how transnational connections impact specific individuals within particular geographical spaces, using life histories as analytical lenses through which to observe networks embedded in migrants' daily activities, families, workplaces, and social lives.

Multi-sited ethnography poses practical challenges for data collection. It requires researchers to be present at multiple sites simultaneously in order to track transnational practices and connections between migrants and their families or societies of origin (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). This represents significant logistical difficulties for individual researchers (Faist, 2012). Moreover, cultural differences among researchers can yield varied observations and interpretations of the same phenomena. Multi-sited ethnography thus typically requires research teams working within synchronized frameworks of observation and interpretation.

Given these considerations and the research objectives of this study, in-situ ethnography was selected as the primary methodological approach. This strategy enables deep, contextualized understanding of transnational practices as they manifest within the specific context of the Colombian community in Germany, while maintaining methodological feasibility for an individual researcher.

Geography offers distinctive methodological contributions to this research framework. Places become both the focal point of ethnographic observation and the fundamental analytical unit for understanding transnational phenomena. By examining networks of connected places, geographical approaches enable robust conceptual and empirical analysis of how transnational practices unfold spatially. This geographical mapping, combined with in-situ ethnographic observation, provides the empirical foundation necessary for understanding how transnational social formations are spatially constituted and experienced within specific urban contexts.

3.1 Quantifying Transnationality. Proposal for a Multidimensional Index of Transnationality

Operationalizing the transnational phenomenon represents a key challenge in this research. Translating social facts into scientific formats while applying transnationalism theories risks reductionism and concealing the very phenomena under examination. Here lies the methodological challenge: constructing, processing, and analyzing data with the rigor of quantitative and qualitative methods. The complexity of transnationality must be reduced for operationalization, converted into data, parameters, variables, and dimensions amenable to methodological control. Multidimensional models preserve partial complexity by grouping survey variables to address the research problem: determining the degree of transnationality development among Colombians in Germany.

This task draws upon the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, particularly the analytical model based on Faist et al. (2013), Vertovec (2009), and Pries (2001), which offers methodological utility for empirically testing our research problem. This methodological and analytical exploration extends beyond these authors, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation. Chapter 7 explores Colombian transnationalism through the lenses of spatiality, networks, and qualitative analysis.

First, a methodological caveat is necessary. Analyzing transnationality through statistical methods presents a fundamental epistemological tension between quantitative operationalization requirements and the intrinsically complex, fluid, and contextual nature of transnational phenomena. Statistical methods enable systematization, comparison, and generalization of transnational patterns while establishing empirically verifiable causal relationships. However, they impose significant limitations by reducing multidimensional lived experiences to discrete variables and numerical scales.

Transnationality involves subjective, symbolic, and relational dimensions that partially elude quantitative methods. Statistical methods tend to privilege observable behaviors over meanings, motivations, and contexts, often yielding partial understanding of a phenomenon paradoxically characterized by resistance to fixed categorizations and by its emergent, contextually situated nature. This research proceeds with methodological caution while acknowledging these tensions.

The multidimensional Transnationality Index (TI) was developed out of necessity after an exploration of conventional statistical approaches shown their limitations in capturing the complex, multidimensional nature of transnational engagement. Although initial descriptive

statistical analyses, including frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and bivariate correlations (Pearson's *r*), provided valuable insights into transnational practices, such as remittance-sending patterns, political participation rates, and family communication frequencies, they failed to generate a holistic measure of transnational intensity. Some of these analyses were actually included in this research.

Then, multivariate techniques were explored, including multiple regression analysis to identify predictors of transnational behavior, factor analysis (both exploratory and confirmatory) to reduce dimensionality and identify underlying transnational constructs, cluster analysis to typologize migrants based on practice profiles, and Principal Component Analysis to extract latent transnational dimensions. While these methods identified interesting patterns, they ultimately proved insufficient for addressing the core research objectives. These approaches either oversimplified the phenomenon by collapsing dimensions into abstract factors that lacked interpretability or produced typologies that were statistically driven but theoretically opaque. These typologies failed to provide the methodological and analytical precision required to measure, compare, and interpret varying degrees of transnationality across the four distinct dimensions (family-affective, economic, political-civic, and sociocultural) demanded by the theoretical framework. Consequently, constructing a composite index that could operationalize transnationality as a graded, multidimensional continuum while preserving the conceptual integrity of each dimension and enabling both aggregate measurement and dimensional disaggregation for nuanced analysis became essential.

This multidimensional index of transnationality represents a theoretical advance: recognizing transnational experience not as monolithic but as a constellation of interrelated practices operating across multiple spheres of social life. This multidimensional approach captures the internal heterogeneity of the transnational phenomenon by distinguishing between family-affective, economic, political-civic, and sociocultural dimensions, each with distinct dynamics, temporalities, and logics.

This epistemological differentiation facilitates recognition of diverse transnational profiles, transcending binary conceptions that categorize migrants as simply transnational or non-transnational. The multidimensional approach facilitates analyzing interconnections and tensions between transnationality spheres. It reveals, for instance, how high family transnationality can coexist with low political participation, differentiated strategies for navigating multiple social spaces. This epistemic perspective enables more productive dialogue between quantitative and qualitative approaches by providing analytical categories for in-depth ethnographic and biographical exploration.

I acknowledge that operationalizing transnationality through a multidimensional index carries significant epistemological risks related to the fragmentation and reification of the phenomenon under study. Dividing the transnational experience into discrete dimensions and assigning numerical values to complex social practices risks losing sight of the organic and interconnected nature of transnational life, where the boundaries between the familial, economic, political, and sociocultural are often porous and mutually constitutive. Reducing experiences of transnational life to dimensional scores can obscure the contradictions, ambivalences, and temporal transformations that characterize individual transnational trajectories.

Despite these limitations, developing a multidimensional index of transnationality can constitute a valuable contribution to migration studies. It would provide researchers with a methodological tool that balances analytical rigor with theoretical sensitivity. The index should not be understood as an exhaustive representation of transnational experience but rather as a heuristic tool for mapping general patterns and identifying significant variations within migrant populations, while facilitating more focused inquiry through complementary qualitative methods.

Having established this methodological caveat, we return to Faist et al. (2013) analytical model of transnational social spaces (Figure 1), which represents transnationalism as a three-stage evolutionary process. The model comprises three stages: (1) Transnationalization, the initial process wherein agents (individuals, groups, states) establish cross-border transactions; (2) Transnational Social Spaces refers to social structures connecting agents and practices across borders; and (3) Transnationality, representing full consolidation of cross-border links and practices.

To operationalize these concepts at the methodological level with the data collected by the ethnosurvey, we adopted the four spheres of transnational practices proposed by Faist et al. (2013): family, economic, sociocultural, and political. These practices constitute the observable manifestations of the transnational phenomenon and, therefore, our variables of analysis. Thus, transnational social practices serve as the analytical unit that gives meaning to the entire research, integrating the variables contained within various spheres or dimensions.

3.2 Index Structure and Operationalization

The proposed Transnationality Index (TI) is a composite index that quantifies the degree of simultaneous participation of migrant individuals in social practices connecting origin country (Colombia) with destination country (Germany). The index contains four fundamental dimensions corresponding to Faist et al. spheres, and cover the variables of the survey applied:

1. Family-Emotional dimension: emotional ties, family communication, and maintenance of cross-border emotional ties.
2. Economic dimension: economic exchanges, remittances, and transnational business activities.
3. Political-Civic dimension: binational political participation and civic activism in both countries.
4. Sociocultural dimension*:* cultural practices, associativity, and the construction of transnational social networks.

The Index formula is:

$$TI_i = 100 \times \frac{1}{4} \sum_{d=1}^{4} \overline{X}\, i, d$$

Where:

TI_i (Transnationality Index) represents the dependent variable, from 0 (zero transnationality) to 100 (maximum theoretical transnationality).

The factor 100 scales values from 0–1 to 0–100 for interpretive ease.

The fraction ¼ represents equal weighting (0.25 or 25%) assigned to each dimension (family, sociocultural, economic, and political), totaling 100%.

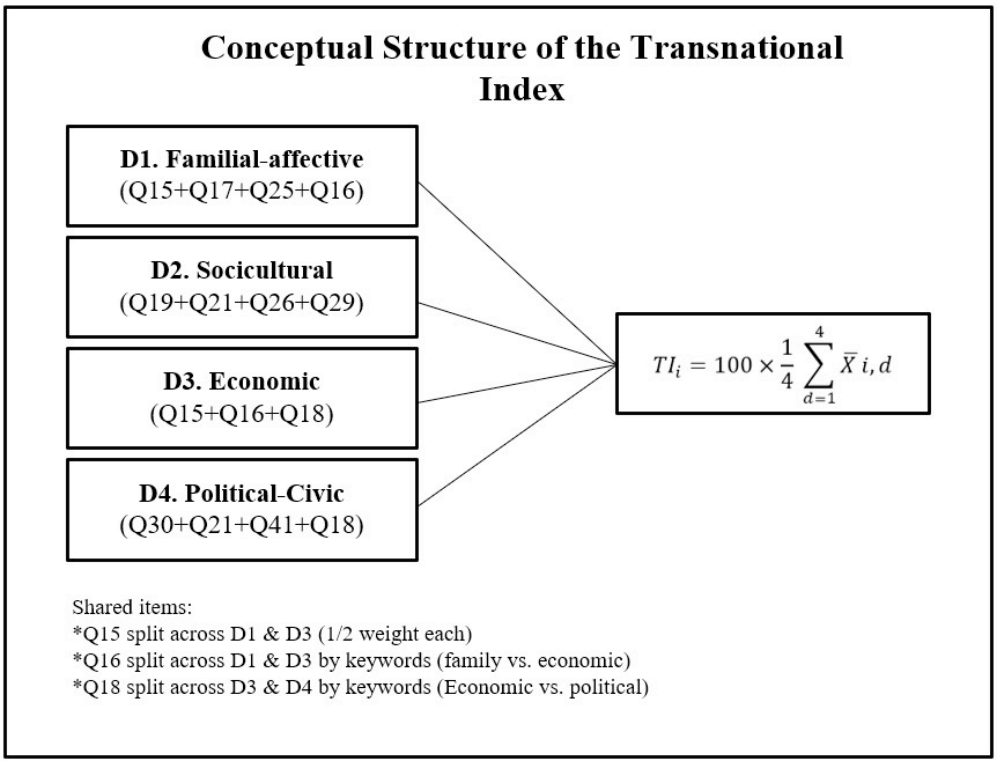
Σ(d=1 to 4) represents the summation operator for the four dimensions averages, where $\bar{X}\, i,d$ denotes each dimension individual average.

The proposed Transnationality Index belongs to the family of multidimensional composite indices widely used in social sciences, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), and Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). These indices select and normalize variables (assigning 0–1 values based on responses),

aggregate them by average (with fixed, often equal weights as in this proposal), and scale results to 0–100.

The Ethnosurvey questions (see Appendix 3) are grouped into the aforementioned dimensions and contribute to the index, as shown in Figure 4. This figure depicts the conceptual structure of the index. Each dimension comprises questions identified by survey numbers. For instance, Q19 corresponds to the question "Membership in associations related to Colombia".

Figure 4. Conceptual Structure of the Transnationality Index (TI)



Note. Author's own methodological design. The figure illustrates the conceptual structure and calculation logic of the Transnational Index developed for this study.

Figure 5 provides complete variable operationalization, detailing the grouped variable system. These are behavioral variables, referring to individuals' actions or transnational social practices. Other survey questions include control variables (*e.g.*, age, gender) and perception variables, discussed subsequently.

The *Family-Emotional* dimension incorporates the following variables: methods of communication, method of sending remittances, family use of remittances, and frequency of remittances, with reduced weight. The *Sociocultural* dimension includes membership in associations related to Colombia, participation in support groups for Colombians, use of social media to connect with other Colombians, and participation in cultural events with other non-

Colombian migrants. The *Economic* dimension groups together the economic use of remittances, transnational economic activities, and the frequency of remittances. Finally, the *Political-Civic* dimension includes membership in Colombian and German political organizations, as well as participation in political activities in Colombia.

Figure 5. Operationalization of the variable system

VARIABLE SYSTEM	
	D1, D2, D3 and D4 are behavioral variables
D1. Familial-Affective	
- X_i,1 = [Q25_i + Q17_i + Q16_family_i + 0.5×Q15_i] / 3.5	**Q25_i**: Communication methods (individual i)
	Q17_i: Method of sending remittances (individual i)
	Q16_familiar_i: Family remittance use (individual i)
	0.5×Q15_i: Frequency of remittances with reduced weight (individual i)
	3.5: Weighted denominator 0.5 of Q15
D2. Sociocultural	
- X_i,2 = [Q19_i + Q21_i + Q26_i + Q29_i] / 4	**Q19_i**: Membership in associations
	Q21_i: Participation in support groups
	Q26_i: Social media
	Q29_i: Participation in cultural events
	4: Four indicators with equal weight
D3. Economic	
X_i,3 = [Q16_economic_i + Q18_economic_i + 0.5×Q15_i] / 2.5	**Q16_economic_i**: Economic use of remittances
	Q18_economic_i: Transnational economic activities
	0.5×Q15_i: Frequency of remittances with reduced weight
	2.5: Denominator by weight 0.5 of Q15
D4. Political-Civic	
- X_i,4 = [Q30_i + Q31_i + Q41_i + Q18_polítical_i] / 4	**Q30_i**: Colombian organizations
	Q31_i: German organizations
	Q41_i: Political activities in Colombia
	Q18_politics_i: Transnational political activities
	4: Four indicators with equal weight

Control variables	***Perception variables***
Q1Gender	*Q22 Assessing the degree of associativity of Colombian immigrants in Germany*
Q2Age	*Q32 Opinion on them ties with Colombia*
Q3Place of residence in Germany	*Q39 Perception and experience on the associativity of Colombians living in the same city as you do.*
Q5Academic background	*Q35 Integration into German society*
Q6 Length of residence in Germany (years)	

Note. Author's own methodological design. The figure presents the operationalization of the variables composing the Transnational Index, based on ethnosurvey items designed and administered by the author.

Perception and control variables were excluded from the index but employed in bivariate and multivariate analyses. While perceptions form part of migratory experience, they do not constitute concrete actions or behavioral variables. This exclusion does not diminish their methodological value; their complementary use offers validation and analytical robustness.

3.3 Interpretation Levels

Transnationality Index scores range from 0 to 100 and are interpreted through five theoretical levels (Figure 6). These quintiles (20 points each) provide flexibility and replicability for similar studies while enabling precise differentiation among levels of transnational social practice engagement, facilitating the identification of variation within the sample.

The characteristics of each level are described in Figure 6. The minimum level of transnationality is between 0 and 20 points; the low level is between 21 and 40; the moderate level is between 41 and 60; the high level is between 61 and 80; and the maximum level is between 81 and 100. They describe the lowest level as having minimal integration, limited to family ties. As participation increases, it typically expands to include a second dimension, such as remittances. The highest levels of development show stronger integration through political and sociocultural activism.

Figure 6. Levels of transnationality

Level of transnationality	Profile/characteristics
Minimal transnationality 0-20	Sporadic ties: Irregular or very limited family contact, with no sustained patterns of cross-border communication
	Integrative orientation: Predominant focus on the receiving society with minimal emotional/practical investment in the country of origin
	Organizational absence: No participation in associations, economic activities, or politics that connect both countries
Low transnationality 21-40	Basic family ties: Maintenance of essential family contacts but without intensity or diversification of practices
	Selective transnationalism: Participation limited to one dimension (typically family) without expansion into sociocultural, economic, or political spheres
	Survival strategy: Transnational ties as a safety net rather than as an active life project
Moderate transnationality 41-60	Dimensional balance: Active participation in 2-3 dimensions simultaneously, indicating a structured transnational life
	Systematization of practices: Established routines for communication, remittance sending, and participation in cross-border activities
	Dual functional belonging: Ability to navigate effectively between both national contexts according to specific needs
High transnationality 61-80	Intense multidimensionality: Significant participation in all dimensions with sustained and diversified practices
	Community leadership: Active roles in transnational organizations, facilitating links for other community members
	Binational life project: Long-term planning that strategically integrates opportunities and resources from both countries
Maximum Transnationality 81-100	Total transnational agency: Maximum involvement in all areas, acting as an institutional "bridge" between countries
	Innovation in practices: Creation of new forms of cross-border connection, establishing patterns that others replicate
	Cosmopolitan identity: Complete integration of both national realities into a coherent and functional hybrid identity

Note. Author's own methodological design. The figure presents the interpretative scale used to classify and analyze the levels of transnationality derived from the Transnational Index.

These theoretical ranges facilitate comparability across studies and potential replication in future research. Alternatively, empirical ranges separated by quantiles based on sample-specific data could be employed. The rationale for our theoretical approach has been established.

3.4 Sample Design

Obtaining representative samples from migrant populations presents significant challenges that include heterogeneity, data scarcity, underreporting, outdated data, and response difficulties with evasive populations. Non-parametric samples, wherein sample size is not predetermined, are commonly employed. These focus on cases or subjects (families, organizations, networks) in specific groups through partial, intentional population sampling (Llopis Goig, 2007). He advises a quota-based strategy to capture hard-to-reach segments, explicitly acknowledging the resulting sacrifice of sample randomness and parametric validity

This research analyzes transnational social practices of Colombians in Germany through a non-parametric in-situ sample for interview application. The sample design aligns with sample characteristics. The non-parametric sample comprises intentionally selected subjects meeting this migrant profile: permanent residents in Germany who have worked and maintain ties with families or communities in Colombia. Snowball sampling was employed to connect with additional migrants meeting this profile. Non-parametric sample size depends on significant cases enabling in-depth analysis of transnational social practices. Case numbers depend on information sufficiency (quantity and quality) from interviewees. Thirty interviews were conducted. This sample provides the basis for semi-structured interviews subjected to qualitative analysis.

A parametric sample was designed for the ethnosurvey conducted in 2019. International Organization for Migration (IOM) records indicate 22,190 Colombians resided in Germany in 2017, constituting the population universe. The sample will include Colombian nationals who meet a basic migrant profile, defined as permanent residents of Germany under categories such as students, asylum seekers, workers, or pensioners, as well as those married to German citizens or other citizens. This set of criteria delineates a new and largely unenumerated population universe for which no specific census data exists. This research therefore employs a parametric sample with unknown universe and the following parameters:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * p * q}{d^2}$$

n= sample size

Z= confidence level (95%, conventional for social science research; normalized value 1.96).

p = probability of success (80% due to high sample control; value 0.8)

q = probability of failure (20%; value 0.2)

d = maximum error level (5–8%, conventional for social science research; value 0.08)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.8 * 0.2}{0.08^2} = 96.04$$

The target sample of 96 serves as the basis for ethnosurvey application; however, 201 respondents provided a sufficient empirical basis.

3.5 Methodological Approach and Instruments

A mixed methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods across three stages is appropriate (Figure 7). This methodological integration complements data types and analytical requirements for the studied phenomenon. This research employs complementary methodological strategies requiring statistical and ethnographic data analysis.

Stage 1: Quantitative Analysis of Secondary Data. This stage involves a quantitative analysis of secondary data, which includes a statistical examination of the spatial-temporal distribution of the Colombian population in Germany. The analysis employed thematic cartography and spatial analysis of migration patterns and population distribution using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), Python, Excel, and GIS software (QGIS and ArcGIS).

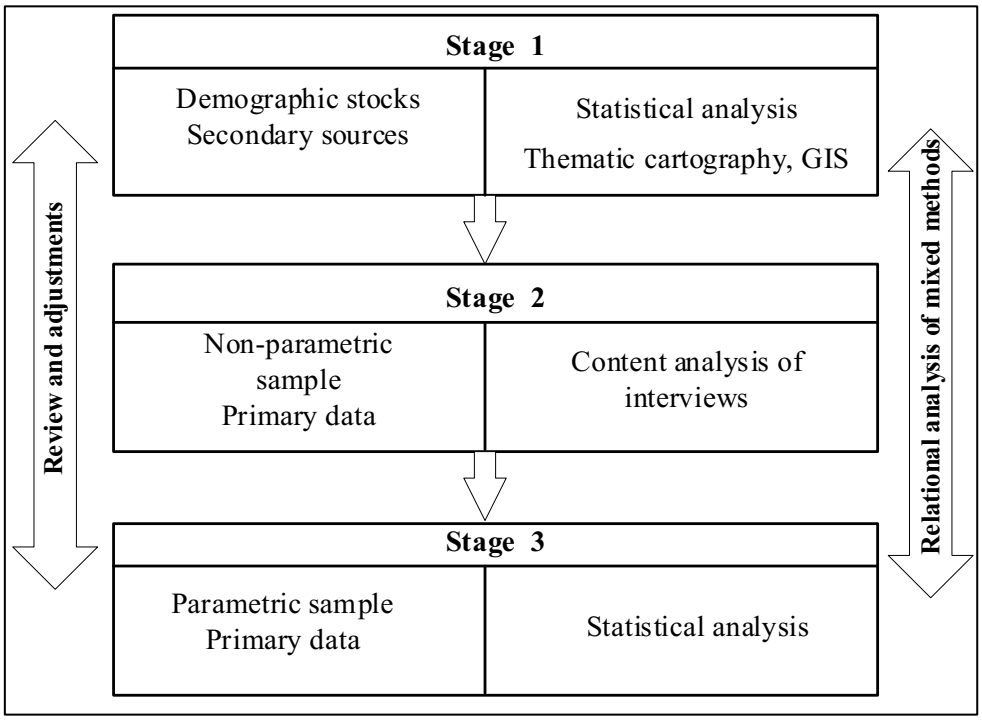
Stage 2: Qualitative Analysis of Primary Data. This stage involves qualitative analysis using primary data from semi-structured interviews conducted in situ and via videoconference with a non-probability sample. Snowball sampling and researcher-established contacts were employed to recruit participants. Interviewees also contributed photographic records through self-photography. Additionally, photographic documentation from the social media of Colombian organizations offered important insights into community practices and self-representation.

Stage 3: Statistical Analysis of Primary Data. This stage involves statistical analysis of primary data gathered through an ethnosurvey, which was administered both in-person and distributed digitally via social media and Colombian community networks across several German cities. Data were analyzed using SPSS, Python, and Excel, generating descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis, and graphical representations.

All interviews and surveys were conducted in Spanish and subsequently translated into English for this analysis. Original Spanish-language data are preserved as part of the empirical record.

Data for Stage 2 were collected using two interview protocols. The first protocol, designed for individual Colombian migrants, covers cultural adaptation, migration history, transnational practices, and relationships with other Colombians. The second protocol, designed for Colombian organizations, addresses organizational activities and scope of action, influence within the Colombian community, and inter-organizational relationships. Data were analyzed using content analysis, categorizing responses according to predefined themes to enable intertextual discourse analysis and qualitative interpretation of interviews and life histories. Semi-structured interview protocols are detailed in Appendices 1 and 2. All survey respondents and interview participants were anonymized to protect their identities. Nevertheless, the original survey datasets and interview records constitute part of the empirical and documentary corpus of this research and were used for systematic analysis.

Figure 7. Stages and Methods



Note. Author's own methodological design. The figure summarizes the stages of the research process and methods employed at each stage.

The parametric sample was randomly applied among Colombians living in Germany. The ethnosurvey addresses main dimensions of migrants' transnational lives. The

questionnaire was adapted from two significant sources. First, the survey from New Landscape of Migration: A Comparative Study of Mobility and Transnational Practices between Latin America and Europe, conducted by the University of California, Davis, and the Danish Institute for International Studies in Copenhagen, directed by Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (2008, pp. 147–173). Second, the Ethnosurvey from the Latin American Migration Project, directed by Douglas Massey at Princeton University.

The ethnosurvey (Appendix 3) includes 42 questions examining key transnational practices of Colombians in Germany. Collected data were statistically analyzed using the previously mentioned software (SPSS, Python, and Excel), generating descriptive statistics, graphical representations, and bivariate and multivariate analyses.

CHAPTER 4. WHERE AND WHERE TO? COLOMBIAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AS A SUBJECT OF STUDY

Scientific research usually begins with a research question and a review of the literature to identify gaps and determine existing knowledge about the topic. This canonical procedure in scientific research requires examining both internal assumptions and external scholarship, exploring the work of other academics and assessing the value of prior contributions. This chapter presents a systematic review of the scientific literature on Colombian international and transnational migration. The review aims to identify the main topics, approaches, and knowledge gained about this phenomenon, as well as gaps requiring further study. The literature review hierarchically organizes research on Colombian international migration, then focuses on studies of Colombian migration in Europe, particularly Germany, seeking to contribute to understanding the transnational nature of this migration. The chapter concludes with an analytical summary of the approaches taken in existing scholarship to identify gaps that this research aims to address.

Migration is a massive, constant, and influential historical process that has played a key role in the formation of societies and territories. It warrants scholarly examination for both its historical significance and its contemporary implications. Understanding contemporary societies requires examining the multiple dimensions of migratory flows, such as the demographic structure and migratory dividends in receiving countries, issues of cultural identity and belonging, migration policies and their instrumental use in electoral politics, immigrant workers participation in pension and social security systems, multicultural dynamics in cities hosting international communities, and the arrival of skilled workers in labor markets. These elements characterize contemporary societies, and international migration serves as an indicator of the ongoing process of globalization.

Understanding Colombian international migratory flows requires mapping their geographic destinations, temporal patterns, and intensities. For this purpose, literature was examined from databases of academic and scientific journals and publications in English and Spanish: DOAJ, Science Direct; JSTOR, ProQuest, Web of Science, Redalyc, Dialnet, Latindex, Scopus, Clacso, SciELO, and the libraries of the University of Hamburg, primarily in the Institute of Geography, and the library of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin.

This chapter is organized into three parts. The first part systematizes academic work on the dynamics of Colombian emigration (outflows, migratory waves, and remittances) as well as research on Venezuela and the United States, the principal migratory destinations with

substantial published scholarship. The second part systematizes migration studies in Europe, focusing on Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany. The third and final part presents an overview of the main approaches, topics, and findings.

4.1 Colombian International Emigration

Colombian migration history can be approached through multiple lenses, with scientific literature providing one crucial perspective for analysis. Scientific journals, research reports, and academic publications offer insights into Colombian international migration patterns and dynamics. Most of the reviewed works date from after 2004, when there was a renewed interest in scholarly research on Colombian migration issues (Mejía, 2012).

Colombian migration, like any migratory process, must be understood within a global system (Wallerstein, 1974, 2004) in which migratory systems (Bakewell, 2014) channel large flows of populations, goods, ideas, capital, and resources. Colombian migration is part of the broader process of globalization (Ayala et al., 2001; Guarnizo, 2006). The Colombian migratory flow becomes clearer when considered within movements from the Global South to the Global North, specifically from Latin America to Europe and the United States, as well as within recent South-South migration patterns. Analyses of emigration determinants confirm that Colombia has experienced internal push factors including high unemployment rates, adverse economic conditions, and violence stemming from internal conflict and drug trafficking. As a result, these factors drove persistent emigration and negative net migration rates from the 1960s into the early 2000s (Botón Gómez & González Román, 2009; Cardenas & Mejia, 2006; Cardona Acevedo et al., 2011; Khoudour-Castéras, 2007; Larotta Silva, 2019).

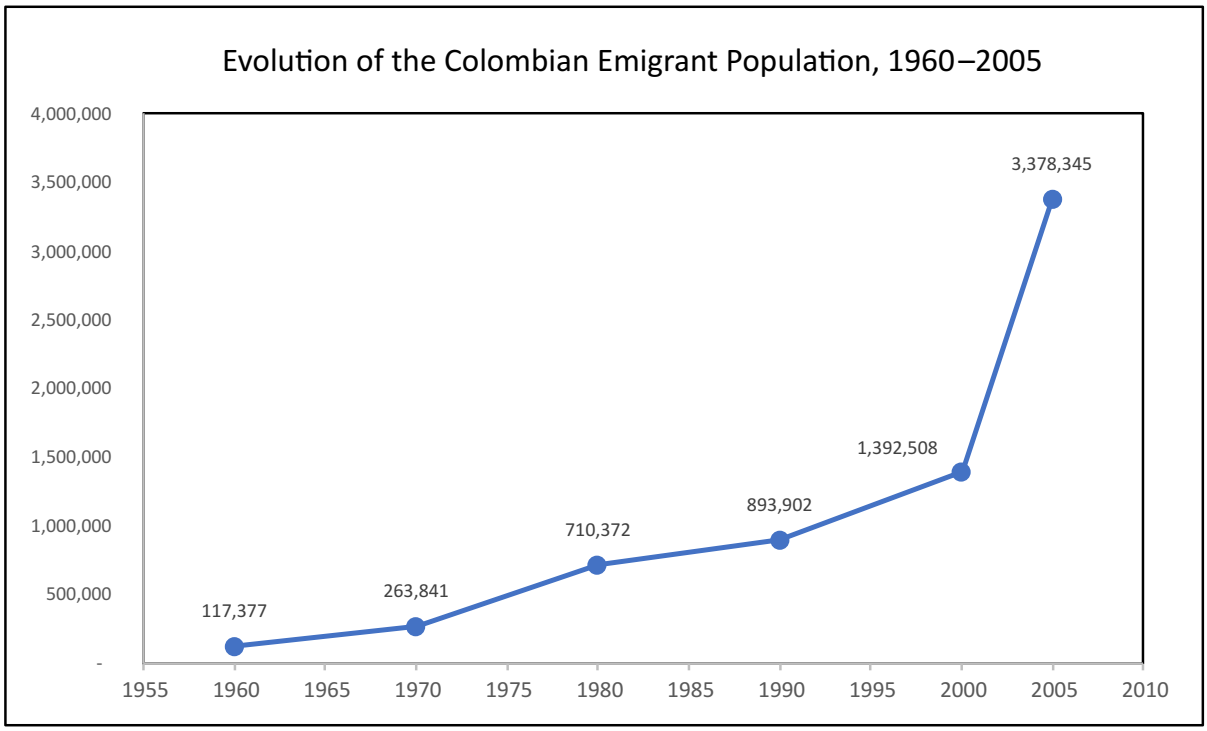
Using cluster analysis, Cardona Acevedo et al. (2011) demonstrate that between 1990 and 2006, the main determinants of emigration were professional factors (47%), economic factors (16%), family factors (10%), political factors (8%), and other factors (19%). Larotta Silva (2019) reaches similar conclusions using a gravitational model with data from 1990 to 2015, finding that economic factors constitute the primary determinant of emigration in Colombia. In particular, unemployment, the gross domestic product (GDP) difference between Colombia and destination countries, political instability, and migrant networks significantly influence the decisions of Colombian migrants during this period. Khoudour-Castéras (2007) adds that, although unemployment, poverty, and economic conditions are the primary determinants of emigration, the middle class and skilled workers are most likely to emigrate.

Geographically, the primary source departments of Colombian emigration are Valle del Cauca, Bogotá, and Antioquia, which account for more than half (54.7%) of total emigration. The three main destinations for Colombian emigration are the United States (35.4%), Spain (23.3%), and Venezuela (18.5%). Significant numbers of Colombian emigrants also reside in countries such as Ecuador, Canada, Panama, and Mexico.

Ayala et al. (2001) demonstrate that the aforementioned factors also influence internal migration. Drug trafficking, violence, armed conflict, agricultural expansion, and urbanization have become push factors, driving rural-to-urban migration within Colombia and subsequently facilitating international emigration.

According to information provided by the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2022), and as shown in Figure 8, the historical pattern of emigration progressed steadily from the 1960s to 2005. In 1960, 117,337 Colombians emigrated, with a historical peak of 3,378,345 in 2005.

Figure 8. Evolution of the Colombian Emigrant Population, 1960–2005



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia (2022). Figures represent estimated stock of Colombian-born population residing abroad.

4.2 First Wave. Venezuela as the First Destination for Mass Migration

Emigration flows unfolded in distinct phases driven by the push of conflict-related violence and the pull of improved living conditions elsewhere, a combination that ultimately triggered emigration. Bernal et al. (2020), Cano (2014), Ayala et al. (2001), and Mejía Ochoa (2012) describe these massive migratory waves. The first occurred between the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, with Venezuela as the leading destination and the United States as the second (Cardona Gutiérrez & Rubiano de Velásquez, 1980). Venezuela's oil boom, combined with its geographical and cultural proximity to Colombia, is what explains the direction of this migratory flow during this period (Cardona Gutiérrez, 1983; Gómez & Díaz, 1989). The demand for labor in cities and regions near the Colombian-Venezuelan border was driven by the exploitation of agriculture and the oil industry. This attracted Colombian workers. The Colombian population in Venezuela grew by 171 percent in just one decade, reaching over 684,000 people by 2011 (Mejía Ochoa, 2012).

Gómez and Díaz (1989) describe how demographic and economic studies on Colombian migration to Venezuela during the 1970s and 1980s focused on two periods: Venezuela's economic boom between 1977 and 1978, and the subsequent crisis phase between 1978 and 1985. Most research during the boom period was conducted by foreign scholars. For example, Kritz (1975) examined labor migration between Latin American countries with differing levels of socioeconomic development. His work focused on how Venezuela became Latin America labor hub and managed the integration of migrants, most of whom came from Colombia. Similarly, Mármora (1979), Sassen-Koob (1979), and Torrado (1979) analyzed the structural relationships between the Venezuelan labor market and the oil bonanza, describing how changes in Venezuelan migration policies that aimed to meet labor demand with international workers generated massive Colombian migration flows to Venezuela.

Migration studies during the crisis phase (1978-1985) focus on analyzing the macro-structural effects of the global economic crisis on migration flows and remittances. Gómez and Díaz (1987) demonstrate that remittances persisted despite the early 1980s crisis, while Deavila (2018) describes how such remittances were used to improve housing in Cartagena, northern Colombia. Pellegrino (1986) and Bidegain (1986) provide estimates of documented and undocumented Colombian immigrants in Venezuela, establishing that of the total immigrant population in 1971 (1,074,000), 47% were Colombian (508,166). However, underreporting consistently failed to capture the total Colombian population in Venezuela. The Colombian

population increased from 180,100 in 1971 to 508,200 in 1981, to 529,900 in 1990 (Gómez & Rengifo, 1999), and to 608,700 in 2000 (Cardenas & Mejia, 2006).

According to Gómez and Rengifo (1999), most Colombians in Venezuela during the 1980s and 1990s held low-skilled, poorly paid jobs in domestic service, agriculture, and various industrial sectors. Álvarez de Flores (2004) notes that this largely undocumented Colombian population accounted for more than 70% of Venezuela's immigrant population and was primarily concentrated in the border states of Zulia, Táchira, and Apure.

The intensification of Colombia armed conflict in the 1990s changed the profile of Colombian migrants in Venezuela from predominantly labor migrants to refugees and asylum seekers (Pineda & Ávila, 2019). This forced displacement continued into the first decade of the 21st century (Álvarez de Flores, 2007), and resulted in over one million displaced Colombians in Venezuela and Ecuador. Since 2011, the severe political and economic crisis in Venezuela has led to the return migration of Colombians and generated a new wave of Venezuelan immigration to Colombia. This recent phenomenon is currently being examined by scholars, but it is beyond the scope of this literature review.

4.3 Second Wave: The Case of the United States

The second wave, this time to the United States, has been extensively documented. This occurred between the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, with the United States as the primary destination, though migration to Venezuela, Ecuador, and other neighboring countries continued. This stage was influenced by broader Latin American migratory flows to North America, Colombia's internal conflict and narcotrafficking, and the powerful pull of opportunities symbolized by the *American Dream* (Granados Vela et al., 2020).

Mejía (2019) provides a detailed analytical description of Colombian migration to the United States, identifying two major phases. The first covers 1850 to the post-World War II period (ending around 1950), while the second phase, ongoing today, includes three distinct waves. The first one (1960-1975) was characterized by skilled migrants with family ties that facilitated relocation. The second wave (1976-1997) peaked in 1980, and the third wave lasted from 1998 to 2004. Between 2005 and 2013, flows declined sharply, primarily due to the 2008 economic crisis and the redirection of Colombian migrants toward new European destinations. The most recent wave began in 2014.

These patterns demonstrate that migration flows are not uniform but directly related to conditions in both origin and destination countries (Aysa-Lastra, 2008; Bidegain et al., 2008),

as well as to the professional qualifications of migrants and the diversification of destination cities. California, New York, New Jersey, and Florida host the largest Colombian populations in the United States (Chaves-González & Batalova, 2023). Nevertheless, several scholars (Amézquita Quintana, 2015; Aysa-Lastra, 2008; Guarnizo & Diaz, 1999; Santamaria Alvarez & Śliwa, 2016) observe that Colombian regionalism, social mistrust, and class divisions persist among immigrants in the United States. This has complicated the formation of cohesive transnational communities, as Colombian immigrants tend toward individualistic practices rather than collective cooperation and association.

Mejía (2018) analyzed annual migration stocks and census data from the American Community Survey (ACS) from 1856 to 2016 to characterize the stages of Colombian migration to the United States. An initial period of low, stable migration lasted until 1950, followed by increasing waves from 1970 onwards. During this later period, the legally resident Colombian population grew from approximately 18,600 Green Card holders in 1970 to just over 720,000 by 2016. These figures exclude undocumented immigrants, whose numbers remain difficult to estimate. Migration trends during this period, including phases of growth, stability, and decline, resulted from changes in immigration rules and policies, as well as economic conditions in the host country. Mejía also identifies demographic shifts including feminization, aging, improved socioeconomic conditions, and enhanced social integration. Although feminization is a recent trend, the 1990s sociodemographic profile was characterized by higher male labor force participation and better educational and income profiles compared to female migrants (Aysa-Lastra, 2008).

Madrigal and Mayadas (2006) describe push and pull factors, as well as the migratory patterns resulting from these forces. They also analyze labor and social establishment modes among Colombian immigrants. Subsequently, Madrigal (2013) explores strategies for achieving well-being through acculturation, resilience, ethnic identity, and self-esteem among Colombians who settle in the United States. Madrigal finds that self-esteem is the most important factor in well-being, in contrast to ethnic identity, which is inversely related to well-being.

From a transnational perspective, Guarnizo and Diaz (1999) analyze Colombian-American transnational ties using a multi-sited sample in the Colombian cities of Cali and Pereira. Their findings show that a consolidated transnational community did not emerge in the United States due to fragmentation along lines of social class, ethnicity and race, and regional origin. Nevertheless, certain social practices and activities demonstrate the existence of transnational ties. Similarly, Guarnizo et al. (1999) analyze the transnational practices of

Colombians in Los Angeles and New York, finding that the process of forming a transnational community remains incomplete. They identify additional barriers including the stigma of drug trafficking, which generates asymmetry in transnational relations, as well as the urban, middle-class origin of the migrant population and the role of the state and corporations in this process.

Attempts to forge transnational identity have been driven, in part, by economic interests. As Guarnizo et al. (1999, p. 390) observe, "to expand their market, several corporations have created forward and backward linkages with immigrant entrepreneurs, thus generating a new community of transnational economic interests with local elites in the process". However, weak community social relations and significant socioethnic differences have prevented full development as a transnational social space. Mejía Murillo (2014) notes that the Colombian government has particular interest in consolidating transnational citizenship, motivated by the significant economic value of remittances as well as the potential for expanded political and electoral influence abroad. This represents what Bauböck (2003) called *cross-border nationalism* established from above, without the participation of migrant families themselves, a utilitarian vision that views migration primarily as a development opportunity through remittances (González Rábago, 2012).

According to Medina and Posso (2011), Colombian migrants who returned from the United States between 1990 and 2005 had lower educational attainment and less favorable employment profiles than those who remained. The study employed statistical methods using household survey data from Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (National Administrative Department of Statistics-DANE) to model the probability of return from the United States based on multivariate estimates from three multi-sited samples. Similarly, Bermúdez Rico (2015) analyzed skilled Colombian immigrants in the United States. Based on American Community Survey data from 2000 to 2011, she found that 25% were highly skilled, with a trend toward feminization. Seventy percent of this population has lived there for more than ten years, and the probability of their returning is low. Both studies illustrate south-to-north *brain drain* migration patterns.

Valderrama-Echavarria (2014), in her master's thesis, examines the experiences of Colombian immigrants in Idaho, exploring the role of social networks in community adaptation. She finds that adaptation is incomplete and fragmented, primarily because social divisions from Colombia are replicated in the United States. These divisions were worsened by stigmas associated with drug trafficking, violence, and armed conflict. These factors have created a fragmented community with individual traumas that hinder integration into American society.

Collier and Gamarra (2001) identified three major waves of Colombian migration to Florida and their respective driving factors. The first wave happened around 1950 due to violence in Colombia; the second in the 1980s involved a young, upper-middle-class population; and the third, beginning in the mid-1990s, was motivated by Colombia's armed conflict. Among push factors, they identify job insecurity, violence, and general insecurity, as well as expectations of improved living conditions. Pull factors include the prevalence of Spanish language due to Florida's large Spanish-speaking population, established migrant networks, geographic proximity to Colombia (approximately a three-hour flight to northern Colombia), and a rich cultural landscape featuring Colombian cuisine, Spanish-language broadcasting, and Latin musical traditions. This research is a prime example of the application of push-pull migration theory to bilateral flows.

Subsequently, Collier (2004) examined return migration from South Florida to Colombia, finding that it results from multiple factors: the desire to resume economic projects in Colombia, the failure to establish desired social status in Florida, the difficulty of creating relationships and social networks in the host society, and the perception that conditions in Colombia had improved.

4.4 Third Wave. Diversification of Destinations

The third wave of mass emigration occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Most of these Colombians headed to Europe, particularly Spain, though migration to other destinations continued. After 2005, destination countries diversified further throughout Europe and Latin America (Aliaga & Flórez, 2020; Bernal et al., 2020; Torre-Cantalapiedra & Giorguli, 2016). According to Mejía (2013), this reorientation of migration destinations was accompanied by return migration, partly driven by tightening migration policies and the economic crisis in the United States and Europe beginning in 2008. Colombian migration flows are therefore characterized by multiple simultaneous streams, some directed toward traditional destinations and others toward new ones, including Chile and Mexico in Latin America, and Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark in Europe (Mejía, 2012). Despite these substantial changes in migration patterns, the reasons for emigration remained essentially unchanged, with employment being the primary motivation (82%) according to Mejía (2013).

Analyzing this third wave, Polo and Serrano (2019) argue that the rapid growth and global diversification of destinations are unprecedented. They also suggest that contemporary Colombian migration cannot be fully explained by armed conflict and violence alone, as

circumstances have changed substantially over the last decade, requiring new analytical frameworks. Migrant networks play a crucial role in these processes by providing information and support. These networks are often organized along gender lines and guide migration to countries where Colombian communities are well-established (Aguilera & Contreras-Medrano, 2022; Silva & Massey, 2015).

Palma (2015) describes how, in recent decades, Colombia has evolved into a complex migration system characterized by transit, return, and immigration flows, particularly influenced by the massive Venezuelan influx to Colombia and other regional countries. This challenges the conventional characterization of Colombia as a country of only emigration and represents an important development for future research.

4.5 Remittances as a Topic of Research on Colombian Migration

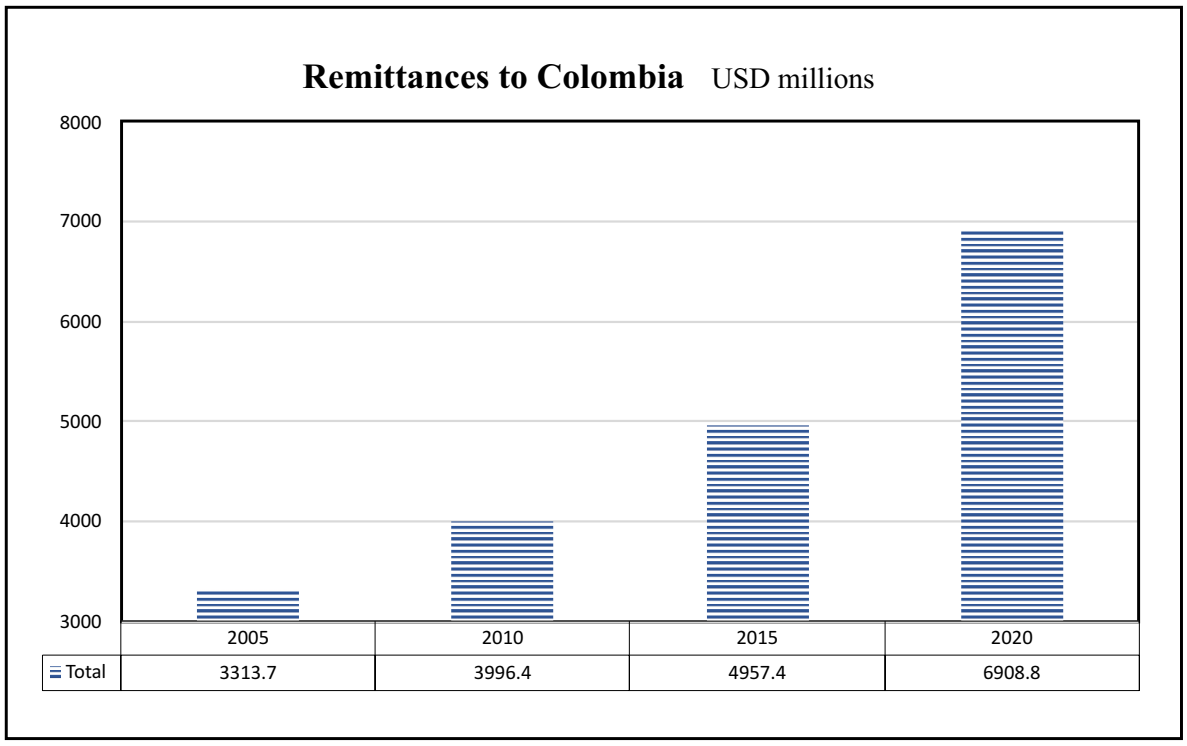
González (2011) situates the growing academic interest in migration studies within the Colombian government's pragmatic need to manage its diaspora effectively from political, legal, and economical perspectives. The substantial economic contribution of remittances has made clear the urgency of comprehensive migration policies addressing the needs of Colombians abroad. As a result, the Colombian government now recognizes diaspora communities as subjects entitled to rights, protection, and assistance. Ciurlo (2015) indicates that Colombia migration policy until the mid-20th century prioritized labor immigration while treating emigration and immigration as separate, unrelated issues. In contrast, the current policy is intersectoral and takes a human rights approach. It assists Colombians through consulates worldwide and the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Colombia Nos Une (CNU) program, in particular, aims to integrate Colombian migrants into Colombian public policies, including programs for the return and protection of migrants abroad (Da Silva, 2013). Because of the remittances they send home, Colombia considers the emigrant population an opportunity for economic development.

For this reason, the Colombian government recognizes and encourages the return and association of Colombian migrants in Latin America and Spain especially (González Rábago, 2012). Clavijo (2013) points out that during Álvaro Uribe's two presidential terms, from 2002 to 2010, the CNU program adopted an instrumental view of Colombian migrants to attract foreign investment by enhancing the image and presence of the migrant community. Migrants are seen as potential economic and labor agents. The CNU program relies on political factors

at both national and international levels, which raises questions about its effectiveness and scope. Currently, the Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (National Council for Economic and Social Policy-CONPES) document regulates migration policy, establishing Colombia's Comprehensive Migration Policy (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2009), which seeks to protect, support, and integrate Colombians abroad through public policies in Colombia. Likewise, new regulatory measures have been implemented to manage the arrival of Venezuelan migrants, particularly through the Special Administrative Unit for Migration Colombia. Created in 2011, this entity functions as the national authority responsible for migration matters (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2011).

Regarding remittances, Garay and Rodríguez (2006) note that in 2006, the primary source of remittances were the United States (50.8%) and Spain (28.1%). Remittances from the United States are older and have been sustained for decades, while those from Spain are more recent and depend on migratory dynamics. They found that 61% of remittances were used for food and public services, 32.9% for education, 27.9% for health, 4.2% for savings, and 4.7% for housing. According to data from the Central Bank of Colombia, the amounts received in Colombia were as follows: 2005, $3,313.7 million; 2010, $3,996.4 million; 2015, $4,957.4 million; and 2020, $6,908.8 million. As shown in Figure 9, the increase has been sustained over the last 15 years.

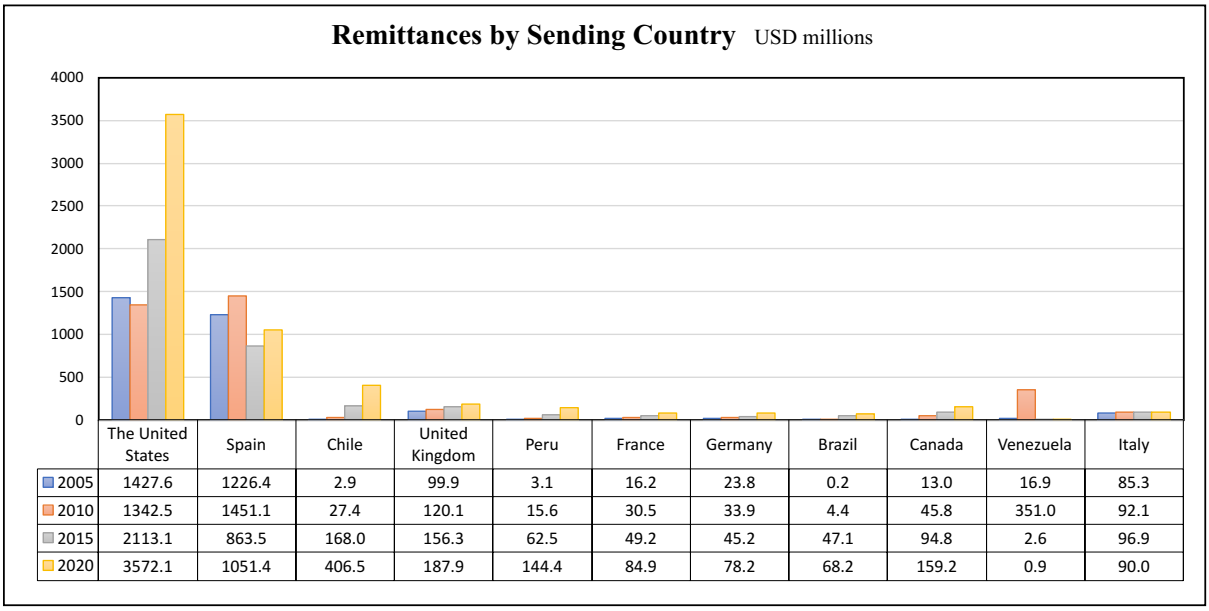
Figure 9. Remittances to Colombia



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Banco de la República (2022).

During that same period, the United States led in sending remittances, with values of $1,427.6 million in 2005 and $3,572.1 million in 2020. It is by far the undisputed source of remittances to Colombia. Spain, meanwhile, sent $1,226.4 million in 2005 and $1,051.4 million in 2020, making it the second largest source of remittances. Chile is also noteworthy, as it went from $2.9 million to $406.5 million in the same years, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 10. Remittances by Sending Country



	The United States	Spain	Chile	United Kingdom	Peru	France	Germany	Brazil	Canada	Venezuela	Italy
2005	1427.6	1226.4	2.9	99.9	3.1	16.2	23.8	0.2	13.0	16.9	85.3
2010	1342.5	1451.1	27.4	120.1	15.6	30.5	33.9	4.4	45.8	351.0	92.1
2015	2113.1	863.5	168.0	156.3	62.5	49.2	45.2	47.1	94.8	2.6	96.9
2020	3572.1	1051.4	406.5	187.9	144.4	84.9	78.2	68.2	159.2	0.9	90.0

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Banco de la República (2022).

In the case of Chile, Zapata (2021) documented how remittances and communication via calls and chats facilitate simultaneity and the maintenance of transnational family routines. Colombians settled in Chile in search of better job opportunities and to escape the violence of Colombia's armed conflict. They perceive Chile as a safe country where they can enjoy a fulfilling career. Nevertheless, they are victims of racism against Afro-Colombians and xenophobia due to stereotypes associated with drug trafficking (Gissi Barbieri et al., 2019). Since 2010, migration to Chile has grown significantly, thanks to the consolidation of migration networks following the first wave of migration to the country since the late 1990s (Polo Alvis & Serrano López, 2018). The redirection of the migratory flow of Colombians to northern Chile is particularly interesting, given that there is an established community there that is open to migration from Latin America and Colombia.

Díaz (2007) provides a thorough examination of research on Colombian migration to the United States, finding that since the 1970s and 1980s, each decade has brought renewed scholarly interest in this phenomenon. This research trajectory has been shaped by technical

and institutional circumstances, including the existence of academic and funding niches supporting migration research; international meetings convened by organizations such as the United Nations; the publication of official censuses and statistical data; and changes in immigration regulations. Additionally, research has been predominantly conducted in demography, sociology, and economics, with quantitative methods serving as the primary analytical approach.

4.6 Colombian Migration to Europe

Since the late 1990s, a third major wave of Colombian migration has emerged, with Spain as the primary destination in Europe. This flow has also spread to other European countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany. Migration always involves two simultaneous tensions: that between the country of origin and the country of destination, as well as regional and global migratory dynamics, which encompass macroeconomic and political processes. Thus, Colombian migration to Europe is part of broader Latin American migratory flows to the continent, rather than an isolated phenomenon. Cortés Maisonave and Sanmartín Ortí (2010) found that in the 1970s and 1980s, migrants from all over South America predominated; in the 1980s, another wave came from the Greater Caribbean; and in the 1990s, Andean countries predominated. Although some Colombians had been relocating to Europe since the 1970s, a time marked by political exile from countries such as Chile, Nicaragua, Argentina, and El Salvador, it was in the late 1990s that Colombians joined the Andean migration to Europe, especially to Spain.

Spain serves as the primary migratory hub for Colombians in Europe, working both as a principal destination and as a transit territory for onward migration. It is also the most extensively documented case of Colombian migration to Europe. Spain therefore provides a logical starting point for understanding how Colombian migration to Europe has unfolded.

A review of the literature shows that the mass migration of Colombians to Spain began in the late 1990s and steadily increased until 2008. Migration networks played a crucial role in this process, expanding and strengthening over time to direct migrant flows toward major Spanish urban areas, particularly the autonomous communities of Madrid, Catalonia, Andalusia, Valencia, and the Canary Islands. The profile of Colombian migrants in Spain varies according to their region of origin in Colombia and educational level; however, the population is predominantly female.

Official statistics provide a clear picture of Colombian migration to Spain. Aparicio Gómez (2006) suggests that the migratory boom since 2000 resulted partly from a redirection of flows due to the increased difficulty entering the United States caused by tightening immigration policies. Colombians selected Spain as an alternative destination because the Spanish language facilitates participation in the labor market and social life. This choice was also enabled by the rapid consolidation of migration networks that channeled new arrivals. At the time, Colombians in Spain constituted the fourth-largest migrant group, after Moroccans, Ecuadorians, and the British. The Colombian migrant population is predominantly female and displays varied educational levels.

Actis's research (2009) describes how, in the late 1990s, Spain became one of the leading destinations for Colombian migration. In 1997, there were approximately 10,000 Colombians in Spain, but by 2001, the figure had risen to 160,000. By 2005, it had exceeded 280,000, and by 2008, it had reached 326,000. This intense migratory flow has been particularly influenced by the existence and consolidation of migratory networks in the main Spanish cities, where such networks are formed. Studies by Actis (2009) and Eguren (2011) assert that, although Colombians in low-wage labor sectors experience job insecurity, they regularly send remittances to their families in Colombia. Actis also argues that the flow of migrants can be sustained over time, as Colombians have expressed their intention for the rest of their families in Colombia to settle in Spain. This study, published in 2009 just before the economic crisis in that country, preceded the shifts that affected subsequent migration patterns. On this point, Polo and Serrano (2019) assert that the Colombian population in Spain has gradually declined due to economic problems since 2010 and suggest that a scenario of migratory return or redirection to other countries with economic stability, such as France and Germany, is emerging.

Cruz (2007) confirms this pattern, noting that although immigration increased gradually before 2000, the Colombian population in Spain grew rapidly thereafter, almost doubling every year. Using official figures from Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistics Institute of Spain), she finds that Colombian residents grew from 7,865 in 1996 to 24,702 in 2000, and to 225,504 by 2006. These figures are conservative, as they exclude an estimated 15% of Colombians with irregular immigration status. Most migrants are labor migrants, followed by those arriving through family reunification, asylum seekers and political migrants, and finally students. During Cruz's study period (1998-2006), the autonomous communities hosting the majority of Colombians were Madrid, Catalonia, Andalusia, Valencia, and the Canary Islands. Garay and Medina (2009) found that nearly 60% of Colombians reside in these regions, with

the largest numbers originating from departments in Colombia's coffee-growing region: Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Risaralda, Caldas, and Quindío. Since the late 1990s, the majority of Colombians migrating to Spain have done so primarily for economic and employment reasons.

Villarraga (2009) identifies several pull factors attracting Colombian migrants to Spain, such as favorable integration policies, language, accessible labor markets, and visa exemptions that existed until 2001 (Echeverri, 2014). Migration networks influence destination choices and facilitate initial settlement in Spain, including employment placement for newly arrived Colombians. Most Colombian workers are employed in hospitality, domestic service, and geriatric care sectors.

The transnational approach is prominent in literature on Colombian migration to Spain. Echeverri (2014) emphasizes that this migration is predominantly female. Since the late 1990s, women have led this migratory flow and have become central to transnational families through family reunification processes, despite facing significant challenges and stigmatization for leaving their homes in Colombia to pursue migration. Following the imposition of visa requirements in 2002 and the economic crisis of 2008-2010, the Colombian population has faced increasingly precarious legal and labor situations due to growing obstacles to family migration and financial stability. These challenges have paradoxically strengthened transnational family organization.

Posso and Urrea (2007) noted that, although the Colombian population in Spain is predominantly female, it largely consists of working-class, lower-middle-class Afro-Colombians from Colombia's Pacific coast and Valle del Cauca. Their ethnographic study reveals a significant shift in gender relations, particularly regarding employment status. This shift provides women with economic independence and decision-making power within their households. However, Rivas and Gonzálvez (2011) found no significant change in gender relations within Colombian migrant families in Spain. They argue that roles of women in domestic work and motherhood have not changed, despite their significant participation in the Spanish labor market.

Lamela et al. (2012) demonstrated the significant influence of transnational networks on Colombian migratory dynamics in Spain through a study of the Colombian community in Galicia. Consistent with other studies, they found that women have driven the formation of transnational linkages and networks to the extent that these networks influence destination choices, as migrants seek locations with established networks, as in Galicia. Similarly, Lacomba and Cloquell (2017) studied Colombian networks and organizations in Madrid,

finding that their pre-existence significantly influences the formation of transnational social fields, defined by them as interconnected networks encompassing a wide range of social, economic, and political activities. An analysis of roughly 40 Colombian associations in Madrid revealed two distinct operational modes: vertically, via Colombian and Spanish government intervention, and horizontally, through formal and informal migrant-led organizations. The coexistence of these two network types amplifies their scope and importance for sustaining migration flows and shaping the expectations of new migrants choosing Spain as their destination.

González (2007) shows another dimension of Colombian migrant organizations in Spain, demonstrating how many prefer to keep a low organizational profile in order to maintain anonymity, due to reasons related to their origin and migratory status, but also because of mutual distrust among Colombians and fears within the Colombian community, which has resulted in weak collectivism. According to Gómez's doctoral thesis (2010), both urban and rural origins also influence participation in migrant support organizations and networks. Those who come from urban environments in Colombia tend not to integrate as easily, unlike those who come from rural areas or small towns, where social networks are stronger. Gómez also highlights that remittances remain one of the most visible transnational links, particularly for Colombians living in Madrid. Likewise, when communities are small, transnational links tend to be limited to family or individual actions. González (2012), in turn, explains that Colombians in the Basque Country with stable employment are the ones who participate most in transnational organizations, as their basic needs are met and they have the opportunity and time to participate in these activities. These Colombians commonly arrive with stronger educational backgrounds, which translate into superior job placements. González finds that as Colombians in the Basque Country establish themselves in Spanish society through consistent employment, they concurrently develop and maintain transnational linkages with Colombia.

Transnational political engagement represents another significant dimension of Colombian life in Spain. Cortés and Sanmartín (2010) demonstrated that the Colombian community remains fragmented abroad, a condition stemming from the replication of class and regional divisions originating in Colombia. When these social dynamics are recreated in the Spanish context, they produce distrust among community members and skepticism toward associational life, particularly regarding organizations tied to Colombian party politics within Spain. For their part, Guarnizo et al. (2019) conducted a comparative study of Colombian and Dominican communities in Spain and Italy, analyzing the political practices of these groups, such as sending remittances, participating in political campaigns, financing political parties,

and voting in elections in both countries, and found that Colombians show greater participation in Spain, as it is a larger community, but participation in Italy is more intense. Dominicans are more active than the Colombian community, as the Dominican come mainly from rural areas, unlike the more urban Colombian population, which supports the hypothesis that urban migrants tend not to participate as actively.

Bermúdez (2006, 2010, 2016) has focused extensively on this topic. In a comparative study of Colombians in Spain and the United Kingdom, Bermúdez (2010) describes how integration into organizations and political activism is more pronounced in Spain, where diverse transnational political practices emerge. These practices range from individual to collective action, and from informal to formal organizational structures. For instance, voting is an individual and formal process, but participation in groups with political agendas can be group-based and informal. How migrants navigate politically depends on their personal circumstances and the characteristics of their community networks. Government-sponsored initiatives like CNU embody transnationalism from above, top-down programs whose bureaucratic and official nature provokes resistance among some community members. Bermúdez (2006) also establishes that migrants driven primarily by economic motives engage less in transnational politics, directly contradicting González's (2012) position.

France has also received Colombians for decades. According to official data, the number of Colombians throughout the country was 3,761 in 1990, 10,983 in 1999, and 26,208 in 2015. The number of Colombians with regular and irregular status, however, could be between 40,000 and 50,000. Most of them come from medium-sized and small towns in Colombia coffee-growing region and constitute a diverse population (Ardila, 2019; Gincel Collazos, 2010). According to González (2007), in the 1970s and 1980s, many political refugees from South America sought asylum in France, particularly from El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, and Nicaragua, due to France openness and its political orientation toward political exiles. By the end of the 1990s, however, there was an influx of migrants from Latin America to Europe, especially to Spain and other European countries. Another influencing factor was that, until 2002, the entry of Colombians into Europe was less regulated, and France was one of the leading destinations for political exiles; consequently, many Colombians settled in that country (Gincel Collazos, 2010). Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, a wave of economic migrants has settled in France. Countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, and Costa Rica, in particular, would take France as their migration destination. González (2007) identifies three regions of origin for migrants: the Andean countries, the Southern Cone, and Brazil. Colombia is included in the Andean group.

Gincel (2010) highlights the significant impact of migratory networks on migration to France. These networks are formed through family and social connections among people with the same geographical origin, as is the case with Cartago, Colombia, and Paris, France. This established network channels the migratory flow and facilitates the inclusion of new Colombians in the labor market, especially in informal ethnic trade. For a long time, France was considered the country of human rights and political exiles. However, this is no longer the reason why Colombians have been settling there since the late 1990s. Cáceres (2007) analyzes the position of Colombian immigrants within assimilationist integration model of France, which treats immigrants as a population in need of rehabilitation and primarily defined by their economic utility. This policy has produced significant social and spatial segregation in cities like Paris, leading to ghettos and ethnic economies. Within this context, the Colombian community, though not large, remains visible within a strict sectoral division of labor: women are concentrated in caregiving and domestic work, while men are typically employed in trades like painting and construction. Cáceres observes that social networks act as vital transnational connectors that shape the migration process. The Colombian population in Paris is diverse and include both legal and undocumented immigrants, some of whom have stable economic conditions and others who face economic hardship. The Colombian population in Paris, however, lacks the necessary cohesion to form a cohesive community.

Ardila (2019, 2015, 2020) has also explored how Colombian migrants in Paris develop transnational practices, particularly through property investment in Colombia, and how many Colombians are involved in this project. This movement of capital implies the existence of transnational links with their places of origin. Likewise, interrupted trajectories occur, such as some migrants who fail to meet the legal requirements for their arrival and stay, but still attempt to fulfill their purpose of residing in France. Alternatively, students who arrive, especially in Paris, to attend university manage to extend their stay and gain permanent residency status in this country.

The Italian case was addressed by Guarnizo et al. (2019) in a comparative study between Colombians and Dominicans in Spain and Italy, which analyzes transnational political practices and finds that Colombians in Italy participate less in transnational political activities than Colombians living in Spain; in turn, less than Dominicans in both countries studied. On the other hand, Ciurlo (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) studied the migration process of Colombians to Italy from gender and transnational perspectives. It examines the trajectories and inequalities of migrant women living in Italy. Based on a 2009 nationwide survey of migrant families, her research revealed that established gender roles and relationship patterns frequently endure

following migration. The reproduction of similar social positions for women across origin and destination countries indicates the transnational persistence of gendered inequality. According to Ciurlo, gender relations operate transnationally and intersectionally, they are shaped by the dynamic relationships between countries and are further constituted through the intersection of race, socioeconomic status, age, and other specific characteristics of migrant women. The transnational family is the social unit that maintains these unequal relationships, even with women playing an active economic role. Moreover, these families often exhibit diverse structures that extend beyond the traditional father/mother figure. Ciurlo further emphasizes the critical role of women in support networks, which are essential for facilitating the arrival and initial settlement of new Colombian migrants in Italy.

Colombian migration to the United Kingdom has been analyzed mainly by geographers and from a transnational perspective. Cock's doctoral thesis (2009) explores how transnational practices and ethnic incorporation create collective Colombian spaces in London. It describes how the Colombian community has produced commercial spaces that link Colombia and the United Kingdom transnationally. He observes the mixing of Colombian and Latin American cultures within British society in an ethnic collective. Bermúdez (2016, 2010) also addresses various aspects of Colombian migration to the United Kingdom from a transnational perspective; her most visible line of work, however, relates to the political practices of Colombians in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Belgium. In the United Kingdom context, she examines how migration to this country aligns with the Colombian diaspora process, driven by factors such as political violence, economic opportunities, and family reunification. Since the 1990s, political violence in Colombia has triggered a surge in applications for political asylum in the United Kingdom, but visa regulations in 1997 discouraged immigration. Employment reasons, therefore, became the primary motive for migration.

Bermúdez (2016) notes that the Colombian community holds a prominent position within the broader Latin American diaspora in the United Kingdom, due to its pioneering role in business development and its high visibility in cultural activities and social organizations serving migrant populations. Likewise, the Colombian community participates in transnational political mobilizations related to the armed conflict and peace demonstrations, supporting political causes directly connected to political events in Colombia. Bermúdez and Cuberos (2021) also explain how, following the 2008 economic crisis, many Colombians living in Spain migrated to London looking for job opportunities. This crisis interrupted the process of economic integration in Spain. In London, they faced additional barriers, including language and discrimination, which proved more challenging to overcome. As a result, the low electoral

and formal political participation of Colombians is influenced by their previous experiences, socioeconomic status, and distrust of institutions. This moment of crisis and adaptation to a third country hinders transnational political participation.

Both Cock and Bermúdez worked under the guidance of Prof. Cathy McIlwaine at the University of London. McIlwaine (2011) has conducted extensive research on Latin American migration to the United Kingdom, with a particular focus on Colombian migration. In a 2012 ethnographic study of Colombians in London, McIlwaine (2012b) reports that approximately one-third of this population had migrated to the United Kingdom only after residing in a second country, such as Spain, the United States, or another Latin American nation. Additionally, she emphasizes that Colombians have suffered frequent episodes of discrimination in London.

The Colombian diaspora in London has played a fundamental role in raising the profile of the Latin community. They have done so through businesses and commerce, as well as various Spanish-language newspapers and cultural events, such as the Carnaval del Pueblo in Burgess Park in South London and shopping centers like Seven Sisters and Elephant and Castle (Cock, 2011). Based on this, McIlwaine (2012a) develops a conceptual discussion, drawing on Bourdieu, on how Latino communities use their sociocultural capital to construct transnational social spaces. The Colombian case is notable, as they have leveraged their cultural, economic, and political capital to participate in social life in the United Kingdom; these forms of capital, however, are unevenly distributed, as cultural capital is highly valued in the United Kingdom, whereas economic capital is highly valued in Colombia. This approach from Bourdieu helps to understand the attempts of migrant communities to integrate into the host society and the tensions of social negotiation due to their location in specific fields.

McIlwaine and Bermúdez (2011, 2015) investigate political participation in both formal and informal activities and find a clear gender pattern. Men participate more in formal and transnational activities, while women participate more in informal politics. These formal and informal activities overlap, however, and immigrants' status, age, and economic position influence their political participation. In the Colombian community in London, older Colombian men with professional degrees were more interested in political issues in Colombia. By contrast, Colombians who had lived in London for extended periods displayed little interest in such engagement (McIlwaine & Bermúdez, 2015). This disengagement persists despite their political rights, like voting at consulates worldwide, which often go unexercised due to deep mistrust in the Colombian electoral system. This is where the ambivalence lies, in how political rights and expressions are deployed. The structural problems of Colombia travel with Colombian emigrants, and political practices that pivot between the formal and the informal

result in the self-exclusion of Colombians from formal electoral processes. Also, political refugees receive attention and care, but migrants without that status do not receive the necessary attention and become a vulnerable population that also suffers from the stress of discrimination and informal work for many of them (McIlwaine, 2014).

Guarnizo (2008) and his team at the University of California-Davis and Ninna Nyberg Sorensen of the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) also developed the study New Landscapes of Migration: A Comparative Study of Mobility and Transnational Practices between Latin America and Europe between 2003 and 2005 on the transnational connections of the Colombian and Dominican community in London. In the specific case of Colombian migrants, the results were published in 2008 in the book Londres Latina: la Presencia Colombiana en la Capital Británica (in English Latin London: The Colombian Presence in the British Capital). Through surveys and interviews, it examines the migration process of Colombians to that country. It describes the socioeconomic constitution of the Colombian community in London while analyzing the transnational practices of migrants with their families in Colombia. One of the key findings concerns the characterization of social mobility among Colombians in London, where deskilling is prevalent in the labor market, with many migrants experiencing downward occupational mobility alongside significant community fragmentation that persists from their origins in Colombia.

Finally, Colombian migration to Germany has not yet been sufficiently studied. In 2015, Grewe (2015) prepared a report for the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, in which she describes the official figures for Colombian immigration to Germany, the sociodemographic profile, remittances, and the cooperation agenda between the two countries. It documents that in 2014, 13,283 Colombian nationals were living in Germany, with the majority residing in Hesse (17%), North Rhine-Westphalia (16%), Bavaria (14.6%), Baden-Württemberg (13%), and Berlin (11%). Forty-three percent are in Germany for studies, 35% for family reunification, and 17% for work reasons. In 2014, $44 million in remittances were sent from Germany to Colombia. The report presented by Braun (2021) focuses on the situation of asylum seekers. She notes that, according to official figures, 18,155 Colombians were living in Germany in 2019, of whom 5,000 held German citizenship; there is likely underreporting of Colombians who reside in Germany without residence permits, however. The number of asylum seekers is relatively low, and even fewer applications are accepted. In 2019, 460 Colombians submitted asylum applications, but only four were granted.

Two doctoral theses in anthropology indirectly address the issue of Colombian migration to Germany. Tabares thesis (2005) describes the experiences of four Colombians

living in Berlin. It details their strategies for identity and relationships with other migrants and other Berliners, as well as with Berlin urban spaces. It describes the daily lives of these four individuals and how they establish links with the local and translocal space, that is, with their places of origin in Colombia. Delgado (2023) conducted a comparative analysis of the perceptions and narratives surrounding Colombian immigration in Barcelona and Berlin. It describes how Colombians in Berlin perceive rejection, exclusion, and some experiences of inclusion. Berliners, in general, perceive Colombians negatively because they are Latin Americans and immigrants, and therefore do not feel integrated into German society.

4.7 Synthesis of the Research Trajectory and Persistent Gaps

Research on Colombian migration began in the early 1980s, around the time of the first mass migration to Venezuela. Those early studies were conducted mainly by demographers and economists, with a clear quantitative focus. The topics analyzed were mostly migration stocks and migration flow between Colombia and Venezuela, the study of remittances, and the determinants of migration. Scholars from both countries and the United States carried out these studies. Later, in the 1990s, although attention remained focused on Venezuela, migration to the United States emerged as a research focus, with Luis Eduardo Guarnizo pioneering work in the late 1990s opening up a generation of studies using the transnational approach as the main theoretical and methodological framework. The boom in migration studies in Colombia has only been experienced since 2004, however, with interdisciplinary approaches and on different topics. The economic approach to remittances and migration determinants remains relevant, as does the study of demographic profiles and migration balances. Sociocultural and political issues have also become subjects of research, broadening the methodological and theoretical spectrum. More geographical destinations and specific communities are being explored, such as Chile, Brazil, and other Latin American countries. Researchers from both countries widely document migration to the United States. Academic and governmental institutions in Colombia are also reaffirming their interest and presence in scientific production on migration research, as remittances and political rights are part of the government agenda, which has also been the subject of study.

Research on Colombian migration to Europe is relatively new. The earliest literature on this topic dates back to the mid-2000s. Spain is the leading destination for migrants, followed by the United Kingdom and France, which are the best documented cases. The diversity of approaches and disciplines in this wave of migration studies is noteworthy, with a marked

emphasis on the transnational approach. Many of the studies focus on transnational families, remittances, political aspects, and identity.

This review demonstrates that the Colombian diaspora has been subject of extensive study. The origin and destinations of migratory flows are well documented, as are the processes of consolidation of transnational migratory networks in the United States, Spain, and the United Kingdom, in particular. Significant gaps remain in transnational migration studies across countries with Colombian populations. Research on the formation of Colombian transnational social spaces, including networks and communities, remains limited. There is also a clear gap in migration studies from a geographical perspective, except in the United Kingdom context, which has a scientific niche led by Cathy McIlwaine at Queen Mary University of London. McIlwaine, Cock, and Bermúdez have made important contributions to the study of Colombian transnational migration from a geographical perspective. In the remaining works that employ the transnational approach, there is a notable lack of geographical conceptual categories and a bias towards transnational social practices in the spheres of individual and family life.

In summary, the first two massive waves of Colombian migration have been studied primarily from demographic and economic perspectives. The transnational approach gained ground thanks to Guarnizo pioneering contributions, who continued to study the Colombian community in Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The wave of migration to Spain and Europe has led to the immediate integration of the transnational approach, with relatively well documented cases, as well as others with notable shortcomings. There is a clear need to research transnational migration using both geographical and ethnographic approaches.

CHAPTER 5. COLOMBIANS IN GERMANY: A CHARACTERIZATION OF COLOMBIAN MIGRATION

This chapter analyzes Colombian migration to Germany using both primary and secondary data. The first part systematizes and analytically describes the information on Colombian migration flows to Germany, based on data from the database GENESIS-Online of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. Information from the Agentur für Arbeit (Employment Agency or Federal Employment Agency) on Colombian workers in this country is also used. The second part of this chapter uses descriptive statistics to analyze primary information collected through an ethnosurvey conducted in 2019 on 201 Colombians living in Germany. This section addresses the research question and analytical objective of understanding the migration process of Colombians in Germany.

5.1 Migratory Flows from South America to Germany

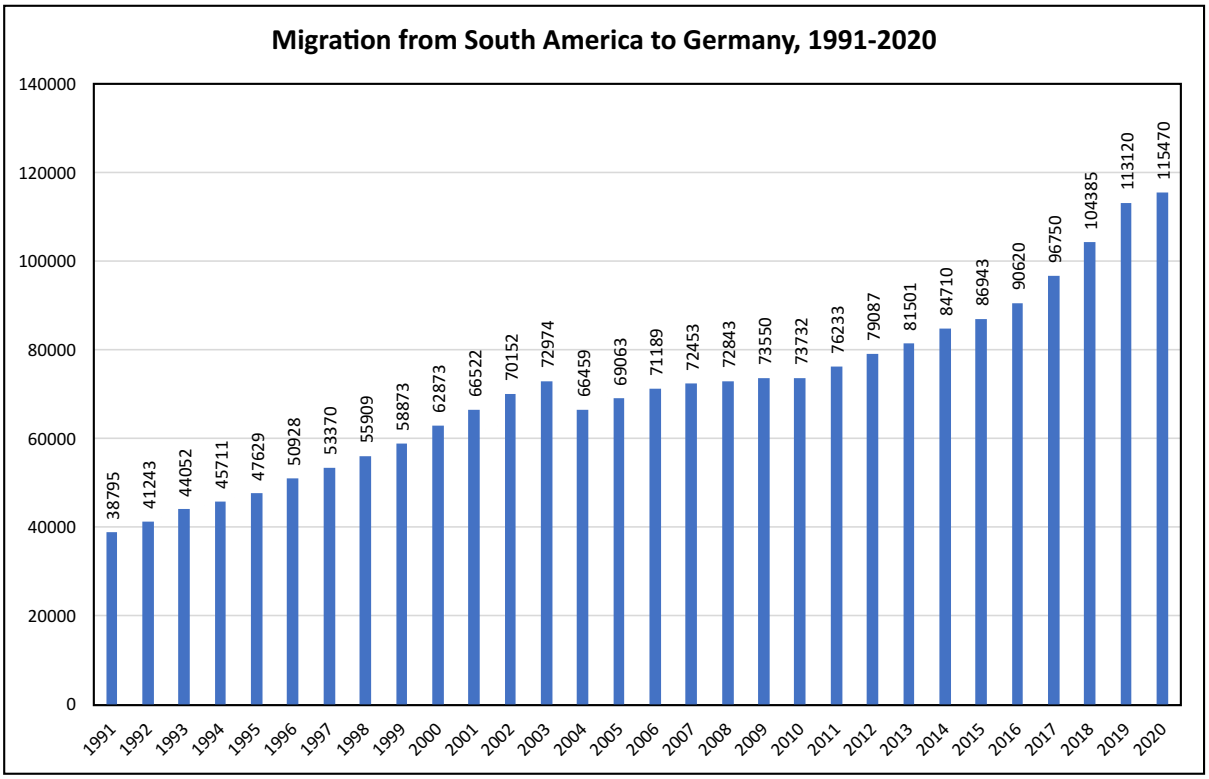
At this point, it is clear that Colombian migration to Europe does not occur in isolation, but rather as part of a broader migratory flow. However, we also acknowledge that each South American country may have its own unique political, social, and economic conditions. Since the second half of the 1990s, a sustained wave of Latin American migration to various European countries has occurred (Bernal et al., 2020). Colombian migration to Europe fits into this regional context and has been described as the third, most diverse, and massive wave of Colombian migration (Mejía Ochoa, 2012). It is a flow with strong inertia that is mainly directed towards Spain, and from there, migrants continue to third countries. In these countries, migrant populations settle in cities that provide basic conditions, such as a labor market and pre-existing migrant support networks. As mentioned in the previous chapter, France, *e.g.,* has been a host country for many political asylum seekers from throughout Latin America since the 1970s. Germany, for its part, has been a destination for Latin American migrants and has seen rapid growth in its foreign communities, especially in the last two decades. Exploring South American migration to Germany provides essential context for understanding the Colombian case. The following discussion uses the term “South America” rather than “Latin America”, following the Federal Statistical Office of Germany’s data aggregation, which groups South American migration patterns for comparative analysis.

This demographic information includes South American countries: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname,

and French Guiana. The records for South American migrants in Germany begin in 1991, just after reunification, when the country's migration stocks and institutional demographic information were adjusted. Thus, this study uses data from 1991 to 2020.

South American migration to Germany demonstrates sustained growth. The population increased from 38,795 in 1991 to 62,873 in 2000, then to 73,732 in 2010, and finally to 115,470 in 2020, representing a total increase of 197.6% between the first and last years, as shown in Figure 11. In other words, during these three decades, the population of South Americans living in Germany increased by a factor of three. The trend is sustained and progressive, as shown in Figure 4 and Table 1. Throughout the 1990s, this pattern was uninterrupted, with an average year-on-year variation of 5.5%; but in the 2000s, the growth trend slowed to only 1.8%. In fact, between 2003 and 2004, there was a negative variation of -8.9%, and between 2009 and 2010, growth was only 0.2%. In the following decade, from 2010 to 2020, the year-on-year variation gained momentum, reaching an average of 4.2% and registering values of 8.3% between 2018 and 2019, the highest in the last three decades.

Figure 11. Migration from South America to Germany, 1991-2020



Note: Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

As initially established, Colombian migration is better understood when viewed within its regional context. Table 1 shows the behavior of the South American population, grouped on the left, and the Colombian population on the right. In 1991, the Colombian population living in Germany was 4,515; in 2000, 8,880; in 2010, 10,294; and in 2020, 20,705. These numbers also show a sustained growth trend, similar to that of the South American group of countries. Likewise, between 2003 and 2004, there was a negative year-on-year variation of -10.2%, and very slight growth in the remaining years of that decade, specifically in Colombia. Comparison of the years with the most significant increases reveals similarities between South American and Colombian migration patterns. For example, in the 1990s, both data series show peaks in 1996 and 2000, as well as in the following decade, between 2000 and 2010, they coincide in the negative values in 2004 and the low figures, around 1% year-on-year variation, between 2007 and 2010, as shown in Table 1. Then, between 2010 and 2020, the behavior converges again, with moderate positive growth at the beginning of the decade and peaking at the end, reaching values above 13% in the year-on-year variation of the Colombian population and above 8% in the South American block.

Although the correspondence between the two populations seems evident in the color gradient and in the bars with the values of the populations in question, as shown in Table 1, it can be established that there is a pattern of positive and strong correlation between the two data series through the application of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (Gomez & Jones, 2010) defined by the following formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})(Y - \bar{Y})/n}{s_x \cdot s_y}$$

Colombian migration is assumed, as a contrasting hypothesis, to coincide with South American migration in a mirror behavior. The results for our case are categorical, with a Pearson's coefficient of r=.992. This value therefore establishes that there is a strong correlation, a similar and regular behavior between the two populations. In short, both migratory flows match; Colombian migration is part of a regional South American migratory flow. The above could be disputed by arguing that the coincidence of the data does not necessarily imply a correlation, as coincidence differs from causality. In this case, the contrasting hypothesis that our argument pursues is that there is an intrinsic and hierarchical relationship between the two migratory flows, where Colombian migration is embedded within South American migration. In other words, the correlation is both conceptually and empirically anticipated. South American migration is closely tied to Colombian migration; therefore, the correlation is logical.

Table 1. South American and Colombian Population Growth in Germany (1991-2020)

Year	South American Population in Germany	Growth Rate %	Colombian Population in Germany	Growth Rate %
1991	38795		4515	
1992	41243	6.31	4876	8.00
1993	44052	6.81	5345	9.62
1994	45711	3.77	5642	5.56
1995	47629	4.20	5825	3.24
1996	50928	6.93	6356	9.12
1997	53370	4.80	6873	8.13
1998	55909	4.76	7330	6.65
1999	58873	5.30	7964	8.65
2000	62873	6.79	8880	11.50
2001	66522	5.80	9673	8.93
2002	70152	5.46	10168	5.12
2003	72974	4.02	10414	2.42
2004	66459	-8.93	9345	-10.27
2005	69063	3.92	9578	2.49
2006	71189	3.08	9906	3.42
2007	72453	1.78	9831	-0.76
2008	72843	0.54	9937	1.08
2009	73550	0.97	10182	2.47
2010	73732	0.25	10294	1.10
2011	76233	3.39	10999	6.85
2012	79087	3.74	11814	7.41
2013	81501	3.05	12695	7.46
2014	84710	3.94	13283	4.63
2015	86943	2.64	13992	5.34
2016	90620	4.23	14935	6.74
2017	96750	6.76	16060	7.53
2018	104385	7.89	17730	10.40
2019	113120	8.37	20045	13.06
2020	115470	2.08	20705	3.29
Pearson's correlation coefficient between South American and Colombian population in Germany r=0,992				

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

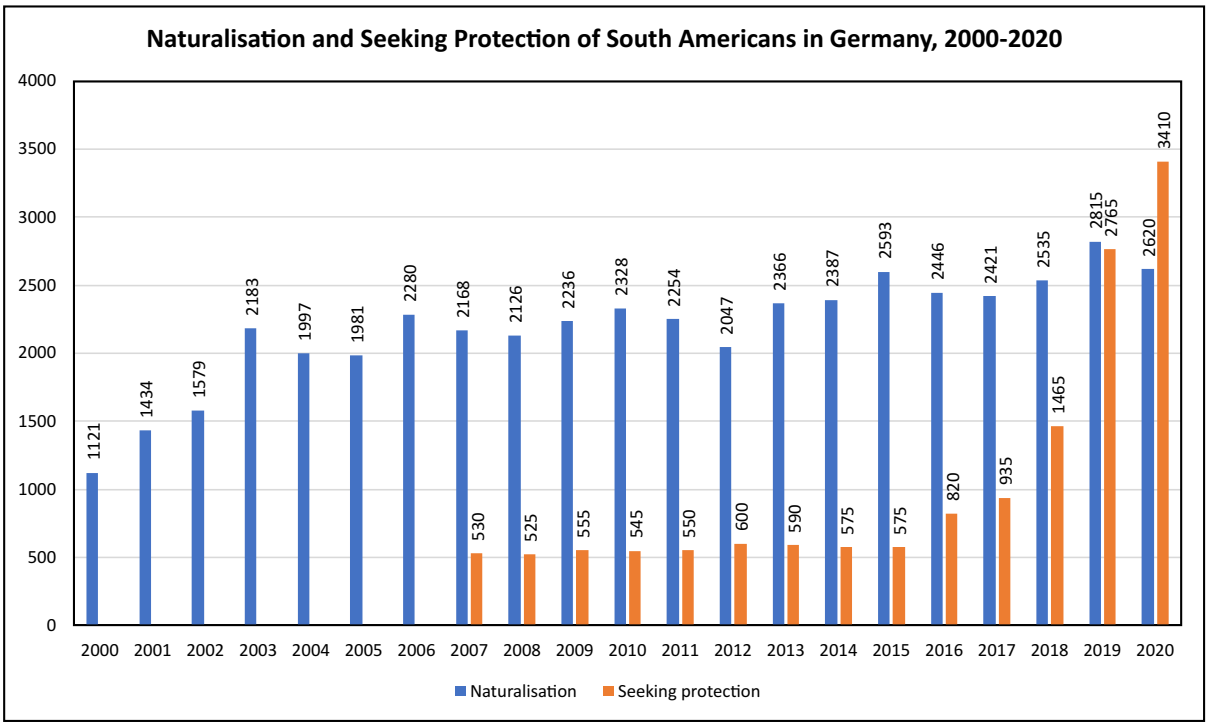
As mentioned in Chapter 4, the imposition of visas for family reunification in 2002 and the economic crisis of 2008 affected the intensity of the migratory flow prior to these years, especially towards Spain (Echeverri Buriticá, 2014). In fact, in 2002, the European Parliament adopted a package of measures to regulate and control both regular and irregular migration, as well as the integration of migrants (European Parliament, 2022). These European Union regulations became requirements and demands imposed by the immigration authorities of each member country in the region on arriving migrants. These changes in migration policies and the economic crisis that occurred towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century may have influenced the low rate of immigration of South Americans and Colombians to Germany

in the 2000s, as well as the adoption of more rigorous security protocols at airports following the 9/11 attacks. These circumstances are taken as impediments or restrictions that attenuated the intensity of the migratory flow. However, the progressive trend continued and returned to high levels from 2010 to the present.

Additionally, that migration projects do not end with arrival in the new country; in many cases, they involve pursuing economic stability and regularization, as well as changes to immigration status. The adoption of German citizenship is part of the migration project of many people, whether for political, economic, or family reasons. Likewise, the immigration of another part of the population is often driven by humanitarian reasons in the pursuit of asylum. The data grouped for South America on naturalization and the search for protection are only available from 2000 to 2007, respectively. Figure 12 illustrates the irregular trend in the naturalization of South Americans as Germans, as it records both positive and negative variations over the period 2000-2020. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of naturalization cases decreased from 2,183 to 1,997. Another negative trend occurred between 2011 and 2012, with a decline from 2,254 to 2,047; and between 2015 and 2016, the number of cases decreased from 2,583 to 2,446. Between these intervals, there were moderate and some sharp increases, such as between 2005 and 2006, from 1,981 to 2,280 cases, and between 2012 and 2013, from 2,047 to 2,366. This irregular behavior may be influenced by administrative processes specific to German institutions, compliance with naturalization requirements, and family reunification processes for women immigrants who form binational families, as Latin American and Colombian migration is predominantly female. This issue will be examined further.

Figure 12 also shows the approved applications from migrants seeking humanitarian protection from 2007 to 2020. Two moments and two trends can be identified. The first covers the period from 2007 to 2015 and is characterized by very slight variation and stable behavior. The second period begins in 2016 and continues to the present, with a trend of accelerated and exponential growth, resulting in a total of 3,410 cases of South Americans obtaining protection status in Germany. This trend is likely to continue in the coming years.

Figure 12. Naturalisation and Seeking Protection of South Americans in Germany, 2000-2020

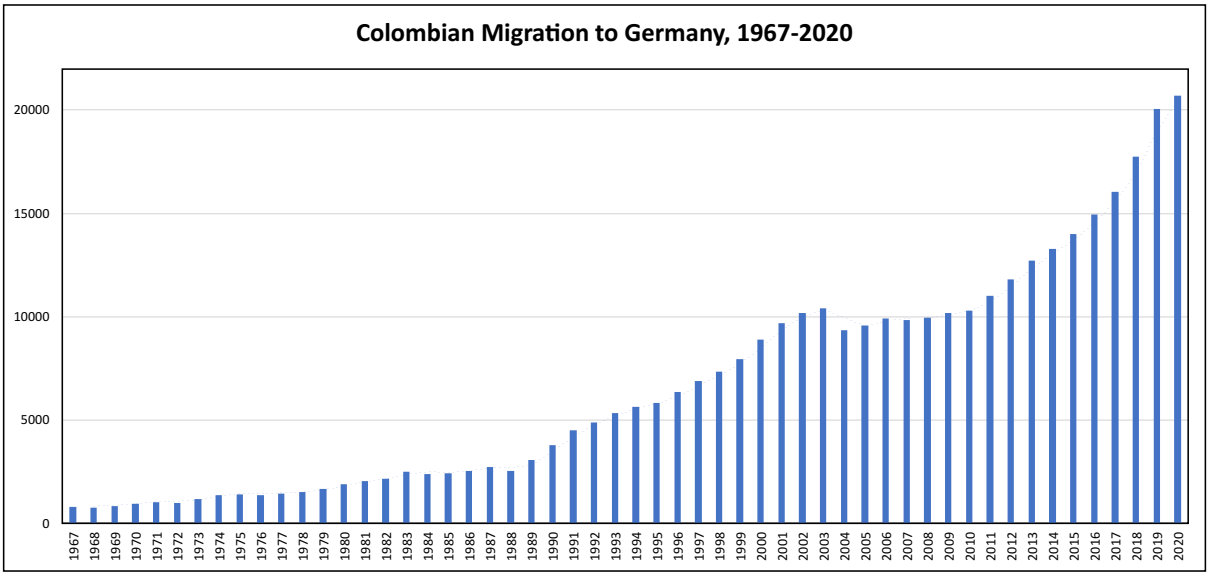


Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

5.2 Overview of the Colombian Population in Germany

Migration records of Colombians in Germany date back to 1967, spanning 53 years to 2020, which helps us understand the intensity, stages, and characteristics of the Colombian population in this country. Two important considerations merit attention regarding the data provided by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. The first is that the data up to 1990 corresponds to the former Federal Republic of Germany, and from 1991 onwards, demographic information from reunified Germany is included. Additionally, in 2004, adjustments were made to the regional authorities' databases, which expanded the data catalog and enhanced its accuracy. This adjustment presents a methodological challenge in any demographic and migratory analysis. Overall, Colombian migration to Germany has shown sustained growth, with some periods of slight growth and decline, as shown in Figure 13 and Table 2. From 1967 to 1990, there was moderate growth, starting with 788 Colombians in 1967 and ending with 3,054 in 1990, representing a total increase of 287% and an average growth rate of 6.6%. This initial period demonstrates stable and moderate growth.

Figure 13. Colombian Migration to Germany, 1967-2020



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

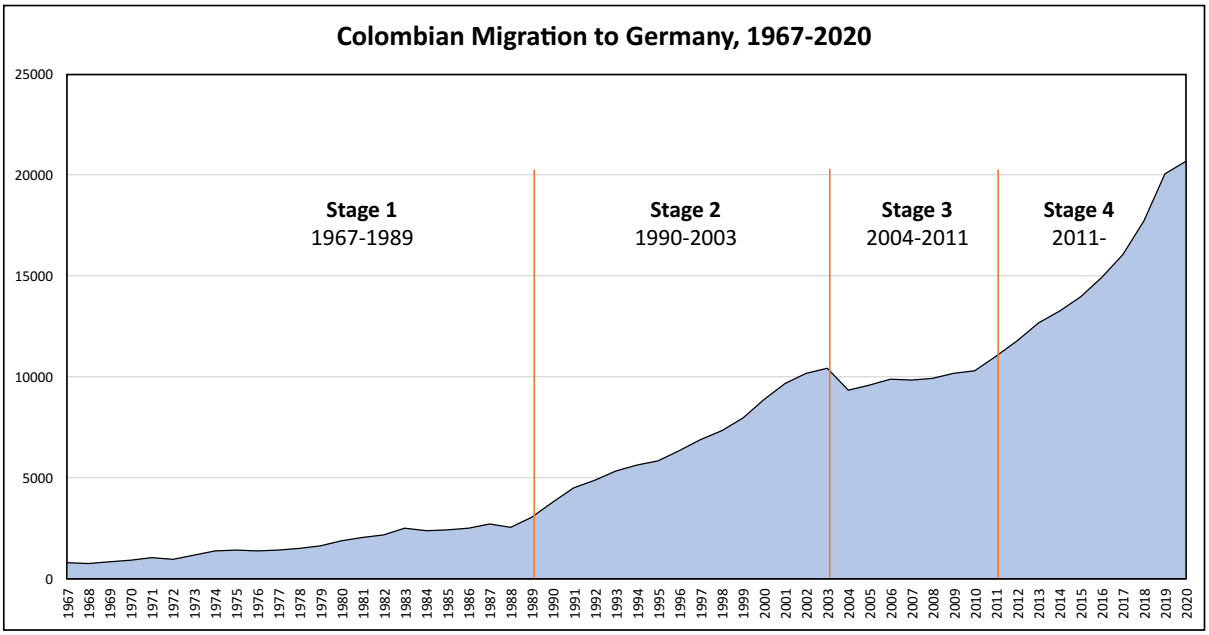
From 1990 to 2003, the Colombian population in Germany experienced notable growth, with an average annual growth rate of 9.3%. In 1990, the population was 3,789, and by 2003, it had increased to 10,414. This second stage coincided with the third wave of mass migration of Colombians to various destinations, especially Spain and other European countries. Spain served as a hub for South American and Colombian migration to Europe. One of the main factors driving this wave of Colombian migration was the Colombian armed conflict, with its extremely high levels of violence, resulting in of internal migration within Colombia and international migration in different directions. However, German reunification also meant the merging of sets of population statistics, a unique circumstance in which two explanations converge. The first, already explained, corresponds to the South American and Colombian flow to Europe, considering the factors of internal violence in Colombia as a significant push; the second is due to the aggregation of demographic data following German reunification. Methodological transparency requires acknowledging the second explanation; however, the gradual and sustained increase coincides with and describes the expected behavior of Colombian migration in different countries, such as Spain, the United States, France, and Italy, as described in the previous chapter. Therefore, we consider that this second stage of Colombian migration to Germany, between 1990 and 2003, coincides with the pattern of the third wave of mass migration of Colombians and with the Latin American migratory flow to Europe and Germany.

From 2003 to 2011, a third stage of moderate growth occurred, with decline in some years, notably between 2003 and 2004, which saw a negative growth rate of -10.27%, as shown in Table 2. During this period, the average year-on-year growth was only 0.8%, with a maximum value of 3.4% between 2005 and 2006. This stage began with a Colombian population of 10,414 in 2003 and ended in 2011 with 10,999, representing a modest total increase of 18%. Two factors explain this slight growth. First, the adjustment of databases at the federal and regional levels in Germany resulted in variations in demographic information. Second, the European Parliament developed migration policies and regulations to control migration beginning in 2002, following the Treaty of Lisbon, which underwent legislative development from 2001 and was amended in 2007 (Treaty of Lisbon. Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community (2007/C 306/01), 2007). However, before the Treaty of Lisbon came into force in 2009, a package of rules for the control of irregular migrants had already been designed and implemented since 2002 (Council Directive 2002/90/EC. Defining the Facilitation of Unauthorised Entry, Transit and Residence, 2002); as well as for family reunification (Council Directive 2003/86/EC. On the Right to Family Reunification, 2003), and the regular migration of persons from third countries (Council Directive 2003/109/EC. Concerning the Status of Third-Country Nationals Who Are Long-Term Residents, 2003). These regulations subsequently became requirements for obtaining visas and residence permits for all migrants, especially those from countries outside the European Union. This may have limited the rapid growth of the second stage, leading to a slow growth rate that characterized this period.

The fourth stage of migration extends from 2011 to the present, with 2020 serving as the terminal date for this analysis. Rapid growth resumed during this period. From 2011 to 2020, the population increased at an average annual rate of 15%, which brought the total number of Colombians in Germany to 20,705. This stage is characterized by an increase in student and skilled worker populations. This trend coincides with the third massive wave of Colombian migrants, which began at the start of the millennium toward destinations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, the European Union, the United States, and various Latin American countries. This increase may also reflect redirected migratory flows from Spain due to its economic crisis from 2008 to 2014. Colombian migration to Germany may have followed a staged trajectory, with migrants initially residing in Spain before relocating to Germany. Figure 14 summarizes the stages described above. Each stage is defined by its rate and intensity of growth, as well as by explanatory factors and differences in behavior compared to the periods

before and after each stage. This fourth stage continues today, characterized by rapid and substantial growth.

Figure 14. Stages of Colombian Migration to Germany, 1967-2020



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

Colombian migration to Germany[4] is predominantly female. Between 1967 and 1975, the population was predominantly male, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 15. By 1994, Colombian female migrants outnumbered males two to one, and this ratio remained unchanged for more than a decade, with 68% of the migrants being women and 32% being men. Since 2004, this gap has begun to narrow slightly, reaching 60% women and 40% men in 2020; However, the pattern of predominantly female migration sustained for over 40 years remains evident.

[4] Note: The terms "men" and "women" refer to the demographic categories used in official statistical sources and do not imply gender identity.

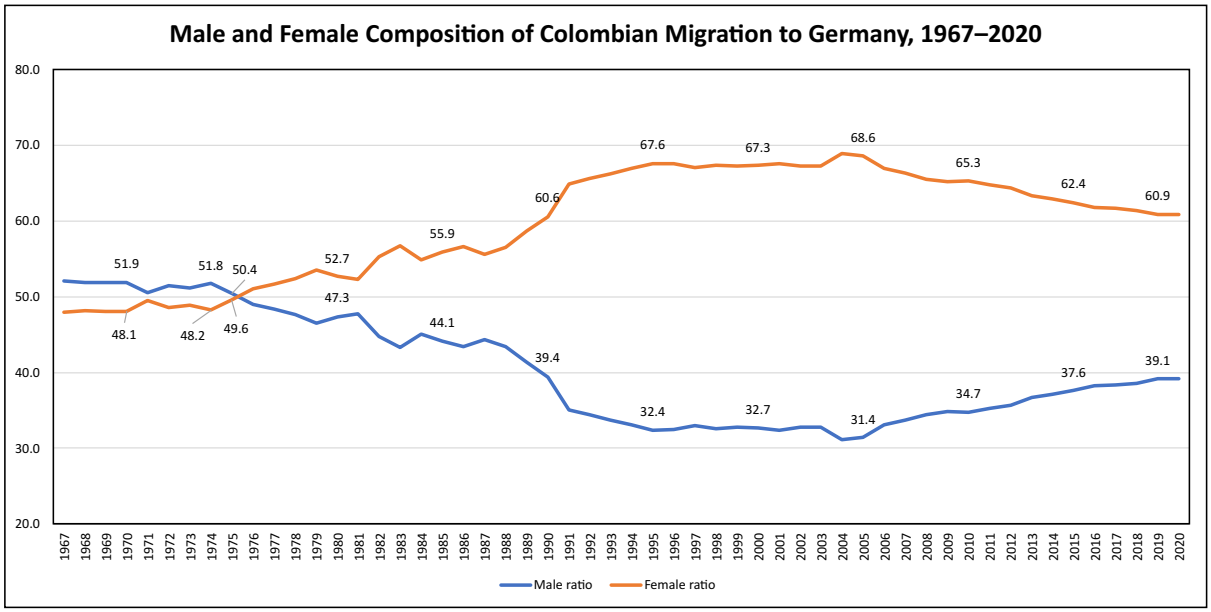
Table 2. Colombian Population Growth in Germany (1967-2020)

Year	Men	Women	Colombian Population in Germany	Growth Rate %
1967	410	378	788	
1968	398	370	768	- 2.54
1969	438	406	844	9.90
1970	489	453	942	11.61
1971	523	512	1035	9.87
1972	508	479	987	- 4.64
1973	595	568	1163	17.83
1974	708	660	1368	17.63
1975	710	698	1408	2.92
1976	669	698	1367	- 2.91
1977	696	744	1440	5.34
1978	721	792	1513	5.07
1979	769	886	1655	9.39
1980	889	989	1878	13.47
1981	980	1072	2052	9.27
1982	971	1200	2171	5.80
1983	1086	1422	2508	15.52
1984	1069	1301	2370	- 5.50
1985	1063	1348	2411	1.73
1986	1096	1430	2526	4.77
1987	1204	1510	2714	7.44
1988	1102	1435	2537	- 6.52
1989	1262	1792	3054	20.38
1990	1494	2295	3789	24.07
1991	1584	2931	4515	19.16
1992	1678	3198	4876	8.00
1993	1804	3541	5345	9.62
1994	1866	3776	5642	5.56
1995	1888	3937	5825	3.24
1996	2065	4291	6356	9.12
1997	2265	4608	6873	8.13
1998	2391	4939	7330	6.65
1999	2609	5355	7964	8.65
2000	2901	5979	8880	11.50
2001	3134	6539	9673	8.93
2002	3331	6837	10168	5.12
2003	3409	7005	10414	2.42
2004	2909	6436	9345	- 10.27
2005	3008	6570	9578	2.49
2006	3279	6627	9906	3.42
2007	3315	6516	9831	- 0.76
2008	3425	6512	9937	1.08
2009	3544	6638	10182	2.47
2010	3572	6722	10294	1.10
2011	3879	7120	10999	6.85
2012	4216	7598	11814	7.41
2013	4661	8034	12695	7.46
2014	4923	8360	13283	4.63
2015	5259	8733	13992	5.34
2016	5710	9225	14935	6.74
2017	6155	9905	16060	7.53
2018	6845	10885	17730	10.40
2019	7845	12200	20045	13.06
2020	8110	12590	20705	3.29

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

The male and female composition of the Colombian population in Germany differs from that observed in other destination countries, such as Spain. According to the Spanish National Statistics Institute, in 2010, 292,641 Colombians resided in Spain, of whom 130,833 were men and 161,808 were women, corresponding to 45% and 55%, respectively. This distribution reflects a relatively balanced migration pattern between men and women. By contrast, Colombian migration to Germany exhibits a persistent female predominance, with women consistently outnumbering men by approximately a two-to-one ratio. As shown in Figure 15, this demographic pattern has been sustained over several decades, a structurally distinct migration profile in the German context.

Figure 15. Male and Female Composition of Colombian Migration to Germany, 1967-2020

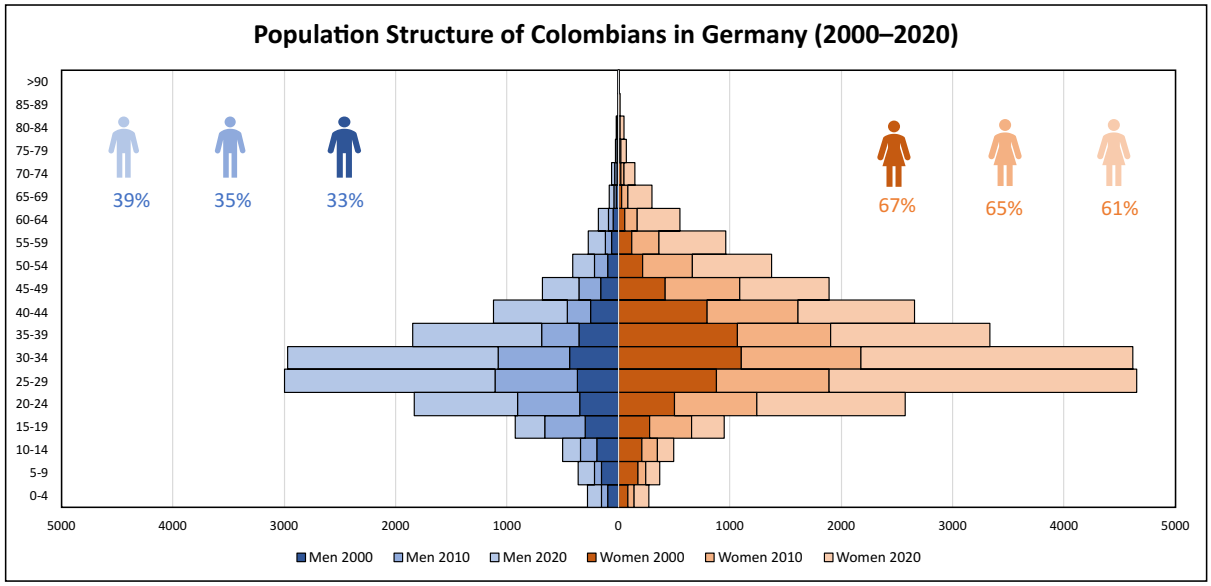


Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

On the other hand, Colombian population in Germany is predominantly young. In 2000, almost half of that population, 47%, was between 25 and 39 years old. Of these, the majority were between 30 and 34 years old. In 2010, the same proportion, 46%, was grouped into three five-year age groups, with the majority falling between 25 and 29. This suggests that younger Colombians began arriving in Germany in 2010, thereby rejuvenating the migrant population. In 2020, a similar proportion, 43%, was grouped into only two age groups: between 25 and 34 years old. Thus, nearly half of Colombians in Germany fall within this age group, a segment concentrated in two distinct five-year periods.

These three demographic segments are represented in Figure 16 with three population pyramids. The more intense colors show the age distribution in 2000, with the male population accounting for only 33% and the female population for 67%. The difference is noticeable, and it can also be seen that the age distribution of the male population is more dispersed. In contrast, the female population is more concentrated in the 30-39 age group. The same figure shows data for 2010 in a less intense color and in the middle of the pyramid. At that time, the male population was 35% and the female population was 65%. This indicates a trend where the majority of the population is concentrated in the 25-34 age group. In 2020, with the paler color, it shows that the male population was 39% and the female population was 61%. This demonstrates a slight decrease in the gender ratio difference, making the migrant population more homogeneous. In the same year, the pyramid shows population growth and reinforces the trend of concentration in the 25-34 age group. In summary, this migration exhibits a defined age and gender profile: predominantly female and young adult.

Figure 16. Population Structure of Colombians in Germany (2000–2020)

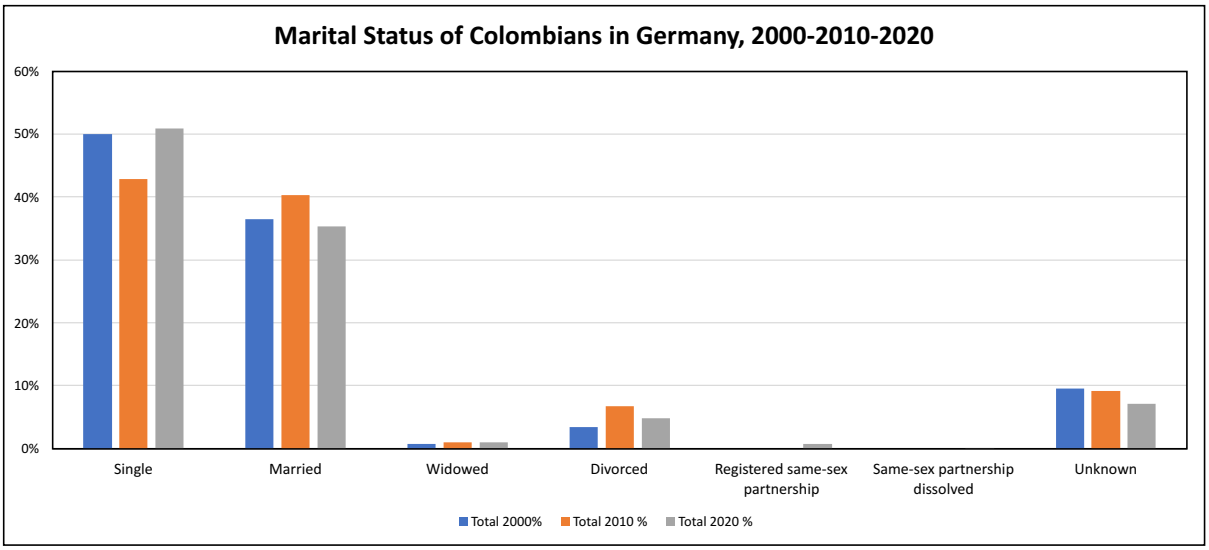


Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

Of this population, 50% were single in both 2000 and 2020, with a notable drop to 43% in 2010. Married Colombians accounted for around 35% in 2000 and 2020, and 40% in 2010. The rest of the population is widowed, divorced, cohabiting with a same-sex partner, or other. The data do not specify whether the marriages are binational or whether they involve family reunification of Colombians in Germany. No notable changes occurred in the marital status of Colombians in Germany over the last 20 years, as shown in Figure 17. This population is that

is mainly single, young, and female. These demographic profiles of the Colombian population are part of the social nature of the Colombian community in Germany.

Figure 17. Marital Status of Colombians in Germany, 2000-2010-2020



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

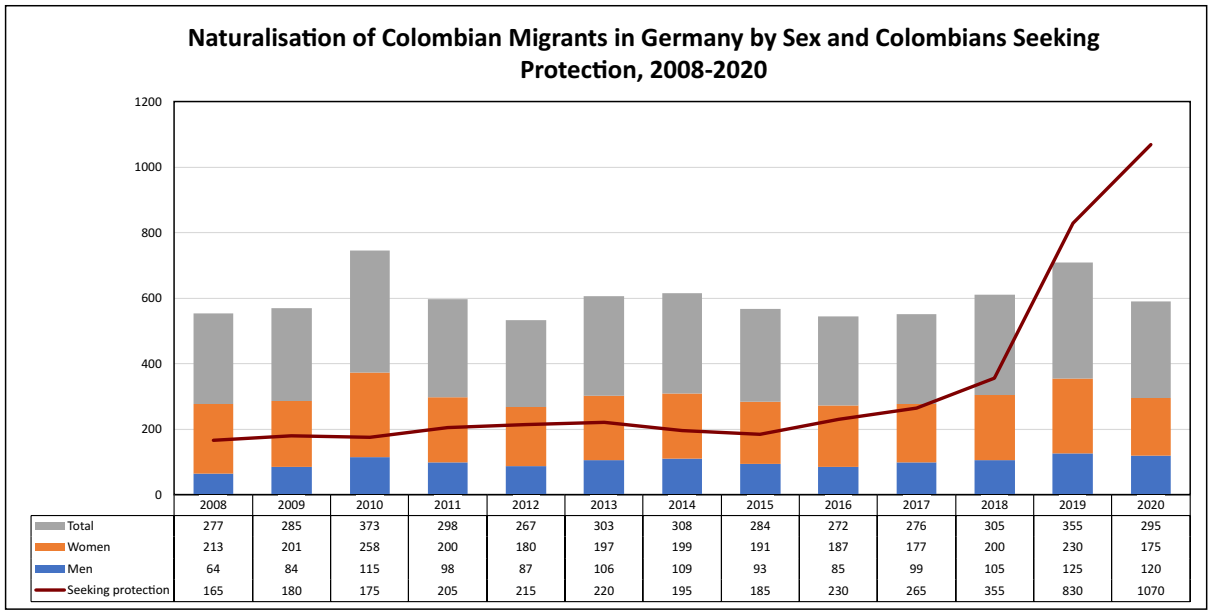
Notably, marital status, together with other demographic variables, can serve as a explanatory factor. Hypothetically, older male migrants who are married would likely seek to establish social ties limited primarily to the workplace and local community. In contrast, young, single women are potentially more open to establishing more intense social and family relationships with the host community. Exceptions exist, as social relationship patterns cannot be modeled so simplistically. Nevertheless, the age, marital status, and gender of migrants are interesting indicators that suggest trends in the intensity of social relationships between the host community and migrants.

Naturalisation and humanitarian protection represent additional aspects and the search for humanitarian protection. Figure 18 illustrates these patterns, as the female population naturalizes at a rate three times higher than the male population. Although the trend is irregular, with increases and decreases between 2008 and 2020, naturalization rates are consistently higher among the female population, which is likely related to the potential intensity of the ties established by a migrant population that is predominantly young, female, and single. Expectedly, more women become naturalized as German citizens, as they make up a larger proportion of the population than men; this represents a proportional outcome.

Figure 18 shows that there are two phases in the number of Colombians seeking humanitarian protection in Germany. The first phase, from 2008 to 2015, was stable with little

variation, averaging 190 cases per year. However, since 2015, the number has increased to more than 400. This second period is the current one, with a historic figure of 830 cases in 2020.

Figure 18. Naturalisation of Colombian Migrants in Germany by Sex and Colombians Seeking Protection, 2008-2020



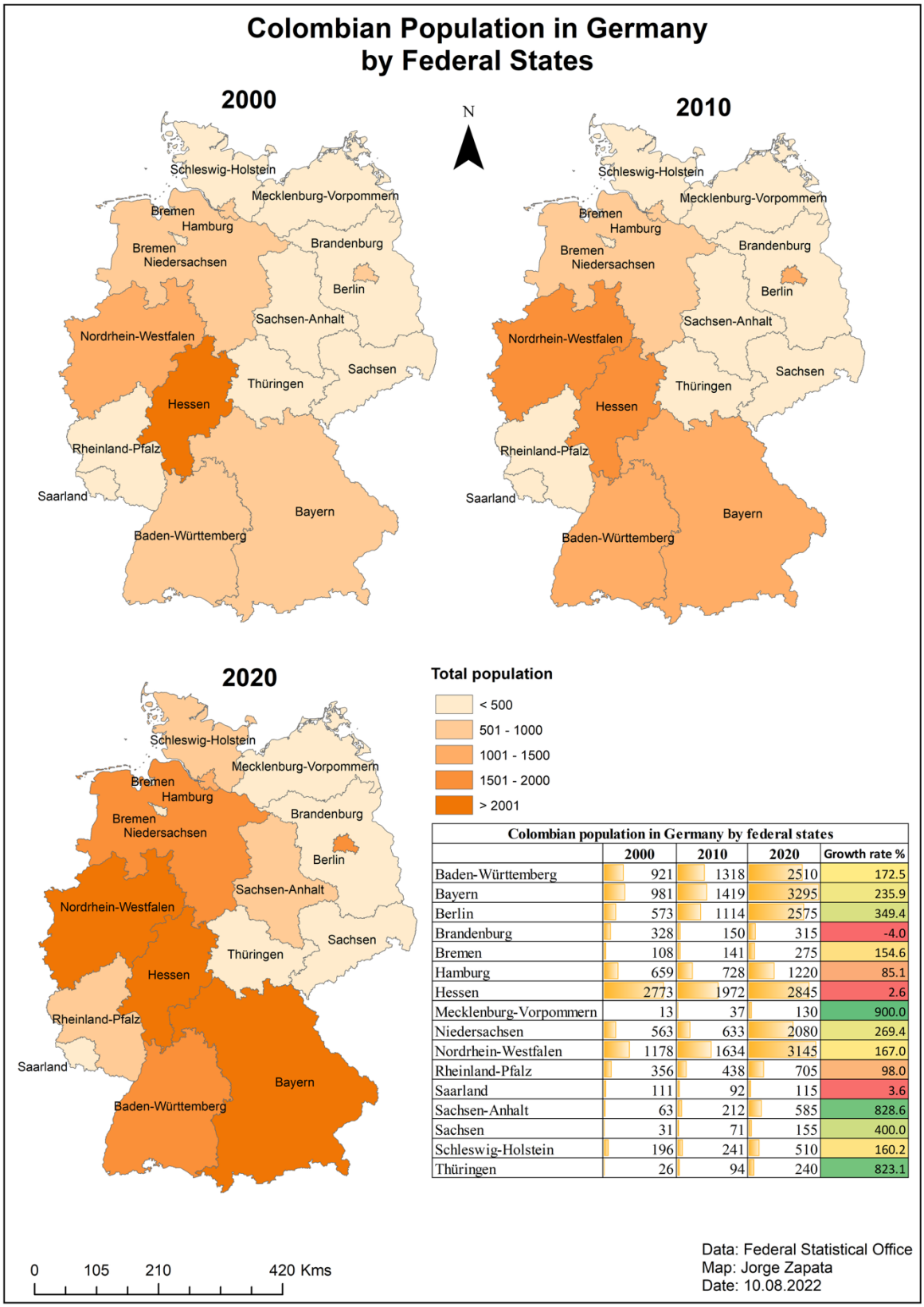
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	277	285	373	298	267	303	308	284	272	276	305	355	295
Women	213	201	258	200	180	197	199	191	187	177	200	230	175
Men	64	84	115	98	87	106	109	93	85	99	105	125	120
Seeking protection	165	180	175	205	215	220	195	185	230	265	355	830	1070

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022). Note. Bars represent the annual number of Colombian men and women naturalized as German citizens. The line indicates the number of Colombians applying for protection in Germany. Data reflect administrative classifications used by German authorities.

5.3 Spatial Distribution of the Colombian Population in Germany (2000-2020)

The Colombian population in Germany has been heavily concentrated in the western and southwestern federal states over the last two decades, see Figure 19. In 2000, the states of Hesse (2,773 inhabitants), Bavaria (981), and North Rhine-Westphalia (1,178) had the largest Colombian populations, showing an initial concentration of settlement in economically developed regions. This initial distribution reveals a preference for states with major urban centers and diversified economic opportunities, particularly in the Rhine region and southern Germany.

Figure 19. Colombian Population in Germany by Federal States, 2000-2010-2020



Colombian population in Germany by federal states				
	2000	2010	2020	Growth rate %
Baden-Württemberg	921	1318	2510	172.5
Bayern	981	1419	3295	235.9
Berlin	573	1114	2575	349.4
Brandenburg	328	150	315	-4.0
Bremen	108	141	275	154.6
Hamburg	659	728	1220	85.1
Hessen	2773	1972	2845	2.6
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	13	37	130	900.0
Niedersachsen	563	633	2080	269.4
Nordrhein-Westfalen	1178	1634	3145	167.0
Rheinland-Pfalz	356	438	705	98.0
Saarland	111	92	115	3.6
Sachsen-Anhalt	63	212	585	828.6
Sachsen	31	71	155	400.0
Schleswig-Holstein	196	241	510	160.2
Thüringen	26	94	240	823.1

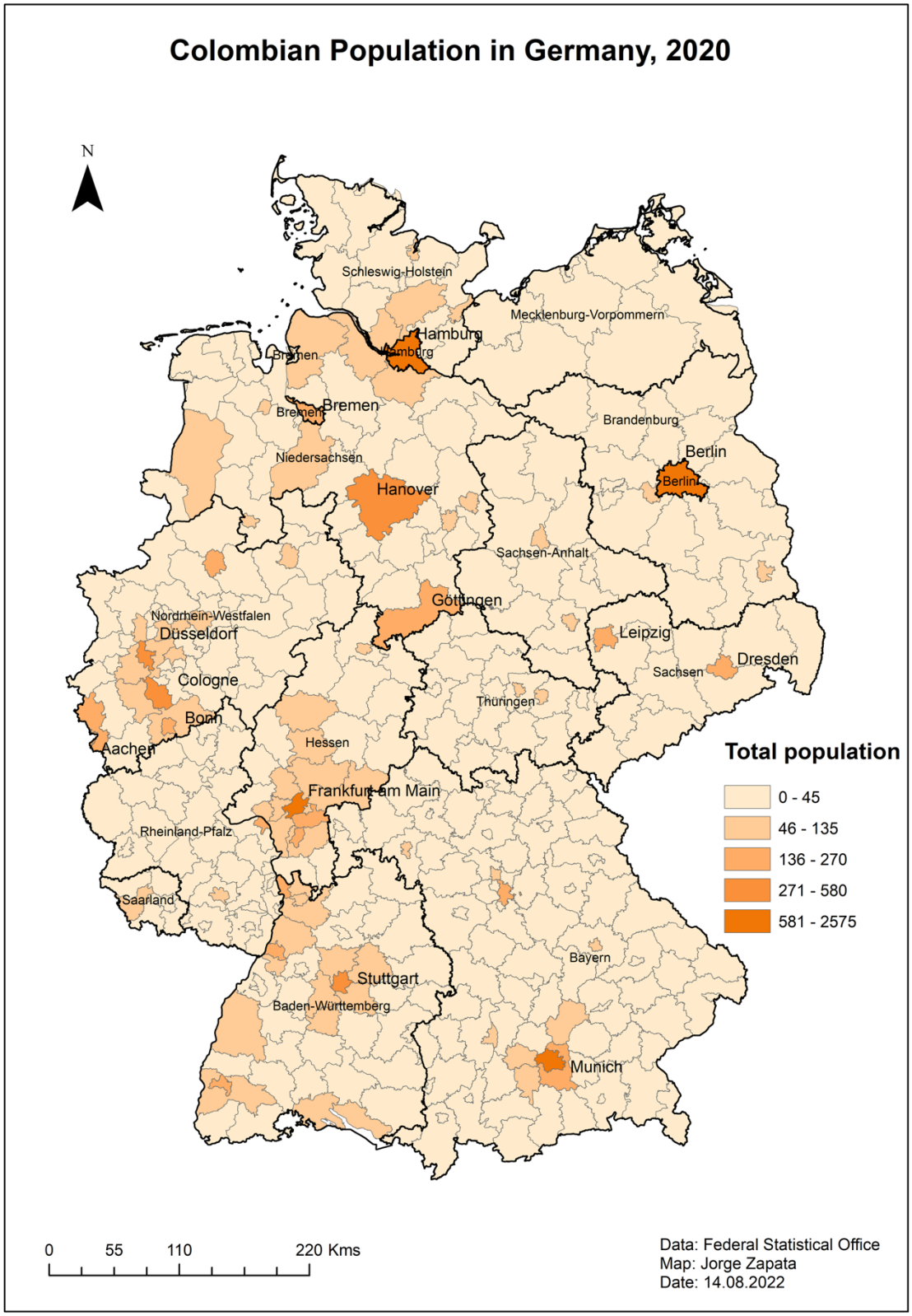
Note. Author's own cartographic elaboration based on data from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

By 2010, the pattern of concentration in the West remained, although the first signs of a slight dispersion were observed. States such as Bavaria (1,419) and Berlin (1,114) experienced significant growth, joining the main population centers, including Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia. In contrast, some western states, such as Saarland (92), saw a decline, but most continued to grow. Simultaneously, nearly all eastern states with small Colombian populations recorded notable percentage increases (Sachsen-Anhalt, +236.5%), which suggest an incipient internal redistribution processes or new employment and educational opportunities that were attracting Colombians to these regions.

By 2020, the spatial configuration shows a more balanced distribution, yet keep persistent concentration in the west-south axis. The states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and North Rhine-Westphalia remain the main centers of settlement, a spatial pattern that reflects the importance of factors such as proximity to economic centers, the presence of established communities, and labor market opportunities. This behavior reflects the maturation of the Colombian migration pattern in Germany, characterized by the consolidation of communities in economically dynamic regions and a gradual expansion into territories that were previously less attractive for international migration.

The distribution of the Colombian population in Germany on an urban scale confirms and elaborates the patterns observed at the federal state level. In 2020, the Colombian population concentrated in major German cities, with a hierarchical spatial distribution (see Figure 20). Berlin is the urban center with the largest Colombian presence, followed by cities such as Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, and Stuttgart. This urban pattern reflects the attraction of large metropolitan centers, characterized by diversified economies, dynamic labor markets, and consolidated service networks. Dresden and Leipzig represent regional centers of attraction for Colombians, suggesting that historical and economic factors continue to influence the settlement patterns of this migrant community.

Figure 20. Colombian Population in Germany, 2020



Note. Author's own cartographic elaboration based on data from the GENESIS-Online database (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022).

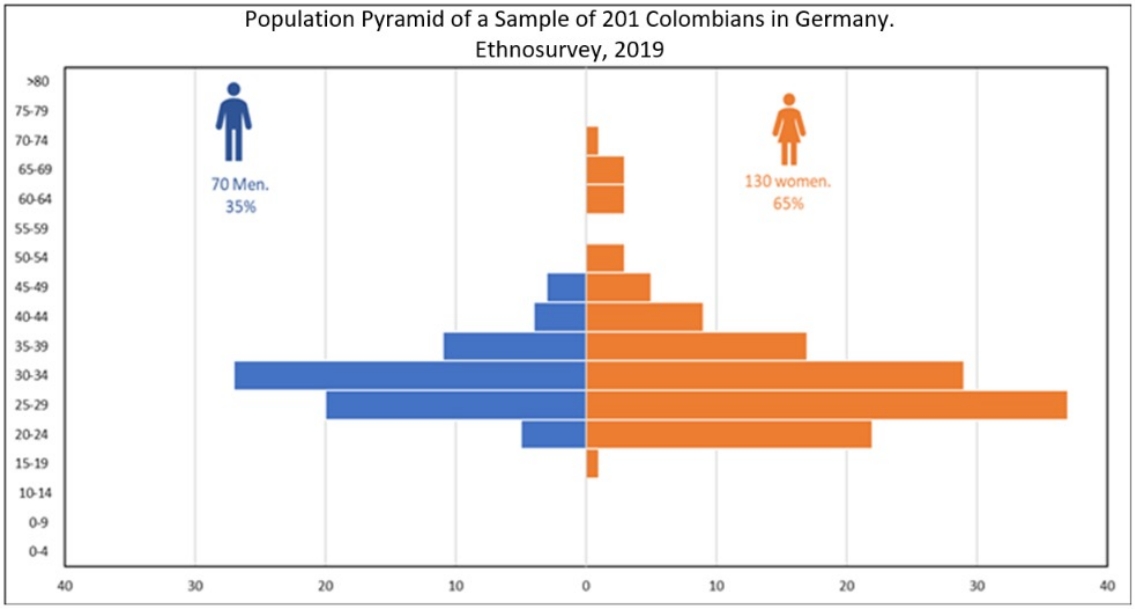
In the west and southwest, a densified corridor exists of Colombians in two metropolitan areas, the Rhein-Ruhr (Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn, and Aachen) and the Rhein-Main (Frankfurt am Main). Further south, Stuttgart and Munich reinforce the pattern of concentration in the industrial and technological arc of southern Germany. This spatial continuity suggests a polycentric network of nearby cities. In the north, Hamburg appears as a prominent pole and Bremen and Hanover as secondary nodes. The primacy of Berlin is evident, with Leipzig and Dresden occupying intermediate ranks, while inland cities such as Göttingen have smaller populations. The urban hierarchical pattern is clear with a few cities concentrate most of the Colombian population, and outside these centers, the values decrease rapidly.

The configuration is polycentric and metropolitan, with large capitals and city-regions connected by economic corridors (Rhein-Ruhr and Rhein-Main) predominating. Berlin exhibits notable centrality, and secondary nodes in the north and east provide support.

5.4 Sociodemographic Characterization of the Colombian Population Based on the Ethnosurvey

This section characterizes the Colombian population in Germany based on the survey conducted during this research. It complements data from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany by including additional relevant variables and information on demographic composition, origin, current cities of residence, migration motivations, and employment status. Figure 21 illustrates the age distribution by gender, showing that there are more women than men in almost all age groups, with 65% being women and the remaining 35% being men. The highest concentration of the population between 25-40 years old for both men and women, with very few individuals in the younger (15-20) and older (60+) age groups. In fact, there are only women in the over-55. This pyramid type, typically bulb shaped, characterizes populations consisting mainly of working age immigrants, which is consistent with the previous pyramids we saw earlier. The average age of the sample is 32.6 years, with a standard deviation of 9.2 years, where the majority are young adults between 25 and 40 yearsold.

Figure 21. Population Pyramid of a Sample of 201 Colombians in Germany, 2019



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

It can be said that Colombians in Germany are highly educated, with more than 70% holding professional and postgraduate degrees, as shown in Table 3. Specifically, 33.3% hold a Master's degree, followed by a Bachelor's degree at 27.9%. Seventeen percent were pursuing master's and doctoral degrees at the time of the survey, consistent with skilled migration patterns and Germany's reputation as a destination for postgraduate studies.

Table 3. Academic Background

Academic background

	N	%
Master's degree	67	33.3%
Bachelor's degree	56	27.9%
Incomplete Master's degree	21	10.4%
Incomplete PhD	14	7.0%
High School	12	6.0%
Incomplete Bachelor's degree	11	5.5%
Vocational training (Ausbildung)	10	5.0%
PhD	5	2.5%
Postdoctorate	4	2.0%
Elementary School	1	0.5%

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

In Colombia, as in Germany, there is a system of regional public universities, whereby most departments (equivalent to a Länder) have a public university that meets regional demand. However, access is limited, as there are few places available each year and demand is high. For this reason, there is a wide range of private universities that complement and expand the educational offering, normally covering this demand in similar proportions: 45% for public universities and 55% for private universities (Sistema Nacional de Educación Superior de Colombia, 2022). Thus, the sample appears to mirror a similar proportion.

In terms of length of residence, the data show significant variability. The average length of residence in Germany is 5.8 years, but with a standard deviation of 7.9. It means a wide dispersion of the data. The maximum value is 49 years, and the minimum is less than one year. This indicates that the survey successfully captured information from Colombians from various migration waves to this country.

Table 4 summarizes the survey results on the key push and pull factors driving Colombian migration to Germany. The left side presents emigration reasons hierarchically, listing the push factors. First, academic reasons (opportunities) account for 49%, followed by the search for job opportunities with 14%, and family reunification, also with 14%. These three factors total 78%, with the first two primarily related to skilled migration, while the third is associated with the formation of binational families. In fourth place is safety and security, with 7%, which is related to the circumstances of insecurity and violence in Colombia, including the presence of political exiles. In fifth place is the pursuit of adventure and lifestyle (5%). This represents a group with favorable socioeconomic conditions, by Colombian standards, who emigrate for reasons distinct from those above, indicating a purely voluntary migration.

On the right-hand side of Table 4 are the reasons for immigration to Germany, the pull factors. The first reason is job opportunities, at 45.8%, followed by peace and security at 13%, and academic opportunities at 10%, which together account for two-thirds of the sample. The fourth reason is language and culture, with 9%, and the fifth is family reunification, with 9%. Other reasons cited are ease of immigration, family members in the country, and other reasons that combine more than one option.

Notably, academic reasons are the primary push factor (49.3%), primarily driven by the search for educational opportunities, whereas the main pull factor is the labor market (45.8%). There is, therefore, a skilled labor migration flow, driven by a push force motivated by access to postgraduate studies outside Colombia and entry into the German labor market. Among the reasons for immigrating to Germany, peace and security rank second, and academic

opportunities rank third. This suggests a shift in priorities during the migration process, with Germany becoming a centripetal labor market that attracts skilled Colombian migrants.

Table 4. Push and Pull Factors in Colombian Migration to Germany

Reasons for emigration from Colombia

	N	%
Academic reasons	99	49.3%
Looking for better job opportunities	29	14.4%
Marriage and family reunification	29	14.4%
For security and safety	14	7.0%
Lifestyle reasons (seeking adventures)	10	5.0%
Relatives and friends abroad	6	3.0%
Cultural and lifestyle reasons	2	1.0%
Family problems	2	1.0%
Political reasons	2	1.0%
Academic reasons; Looking for better job opportunities	2	1.0%
Au Pair	1	0.5%
Job relocation	1	0.5%
Religious reasons	1	0.5%
School exchange	1	0.5%
Marriage and family reunification; For security and safety; Looking for better job opportunities	1	0.5%
Not specified	1	0.5%

Reasons for immigration to Germany

	N	%
Professional and job opportunities	92	45.8%
Peace and security	27	13.4%
Educational and academic opportunities	21	10.4%
Culture and language	18	9.0%
Marriage and family reunification	18	9.0%
Ease of immigration	7	3.5%
Relatives in Germany	4	2.0%
By chance, not for any particular reason	3	1.5%
Au Pair	2	1.0%
Professional and job opportunities; Peace and security	2	1.0%
Educational and academic opportunities; Professional and job opportunities	2	1.0%
Cultural and lifestyle reasons	1	0.5%
Missing System	4	2.0%

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

At the time of leaving Colombia, 70% were working, see Table 5, either as Employed as a graduate professional (40.3%); Temporary employee (14.9%); business owner (3%); informal working (3%); sales/office clerk (3%); employed in a technical/technological role (2.5%); freelance (1.5%), and other employment categories. Only 17.4% were unemployed at the time of emigration, and 9.5% were students. Those who worked as employed graduate professionals did so in their professional field; for instance, an engineer worked as an engineer. Notably, in Colombia, high unemployment rates lead workers to seek jobs outside their professional training. A significant portion of the sample worked in their professional field.

Table 5. Employment Status Before Leaving Colombia

Employment status before leaving Colombia		
	N	%
Employed as a graduate professional	81	40.3%
Unemployed	35	17.4%
Temporary employee	30	14.9%
Student (graduate and postgraduate)	19	9.5%
Business owner	6	3.0%
Informal working	6	3.0%
Sales/office clerk	6	3.0%
Employed in a technical/technological role	5	2.5%
Freelance	3	1.5%
Permanent employee	3	1.5%
University professor	3	1.5%
Homemaking	2	1.0%
Civil servant	1	0.5%
Missing System	1	0.5%

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

Regarding the employment status of the respondents, it was divided into two periods, upon arrival and at the time of the survey, as illustrated in Table 6. At the time of arrival, nearly 33.8% were unemployed, 24.4% were students, 10.4% had found work in their professional field, 10% worked as au pairs, 8% as homemakers, 6.5% held temporary jobs, and the remaining categories accounted for lower values. However, at the time of responding to the survey, 28.4% had temporary jobs, 21.9% had permanent jobs, 13.4% were official employees (governmental institutions), 10.4% were students, and only 7% were unemployed. Other categories, such as freelance (6%), informal work (3.5%), and homemaking (3%), indicate a situation of difficult access to the labor market, or it may be due to other factors, such as personal choice or immigration status that restrict other work activities. Finally, the number of Colombians who came to Germany as au pairs (for childcare) decreased from 10% to 2%, which could be interpreted as a bridge to employment in the first stage of migration.

Table 6. Employment Status upon Arrival in Germany and Current Employment Status

Employment status upon arrival in Germany

	N	%
Unemployed	68	33.8%
Student (graduate and postgraduate)	49	24.4%
Employed as a graduate professional	21	10.4%
Au Pair	20	10.0%
Homemaking	16	8.0%
Temporary employee	13	6.5%
Informal working	5	2.5%
Freelance	3	1.5%
Employed in a technical/technological role	2	1.0%
University professor	1	0.5%
Permanent employee	1	0.5%
Sales/office clerk	1	0.5%
Volunteer	1	0.5%

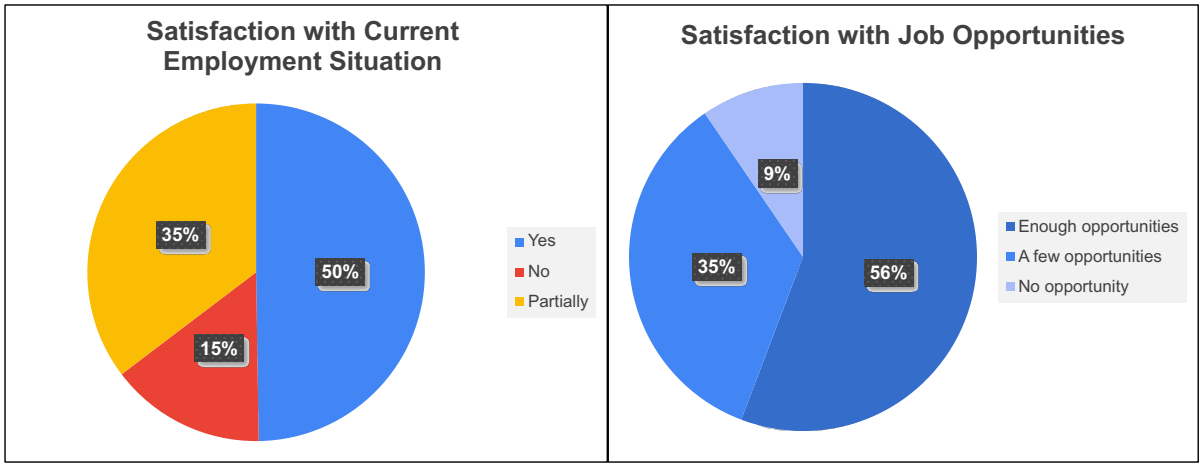
Current employment status

	N	%
Temporary employee	57	28.4%
Permanent employee	44	21.9%
Civil servant	27	13.4%
Student (graduate and ...	21	10.4%
Unemployed	14	7.0%
Freelance	12	6.0%
Informal working	7	3.5%
Homemaking	6	3.0%
Au Pair	4	2.0%
Business owner	2	1.0%
Volunteer	2	1.0%
Pensioner	2	1.0%
Missing System	3	1.5%

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

Despite relatively successful labor market integration, surveyed Colombians report the following satisfaction levels. Half report satisfaction with their current job position (see Figure 22); 35% are partially satisfied, and 15% are dissatisfied. Likewise, 56% consider that they have had sufficient job opportunities, 35% say they have had some opportunities, and only 9% have not had any.

Figure 22. Current Job Satisfaction



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

Employment satisfaction is generally positive, reflecting skilled migration patterns. Multiple factors several factors influenced emigration from Colombia and immigration to Germany. The push factors indicate that Colombians leaving the country sought a country

where they could obtain academic qualifications. In contrast, the pull factors are driven by an attractive labor market and an environment that provides security and well-being. Upon arrival, many Colombians initially faced labor market barriers, either due to temporary contracts or unemployment, but later managed to secure permanent jobs.

Survey data are complemented by information from the Federal Employment Agency (Table 7), which compiles 2020 data on Colombians registered by their employers and shows their professional qualifications. The data shows that 17% have no qualifications, 16% have recognized professional qualifications, 52% have academic qualifications, and 15% have no recorded information. Half the migrants have professional academic training, and 16% of those with recognized professional qualifications are part of vocational training programs, which also constitute a professional qualification in line with the German labor market.

Table 7. Professional Qualification of Colombian Employees in Germany in 2020

Colombian Employees in Germany Subject to Social Security Contributions in 2020		
Feature	**Employees subject to social insurance contributions**	**Share of total in %**
Without a professional qualification	1,490	17
Recognized professional qualification	1,440	16
Academic professional qualification	4,520	52
Not specified	1,310	15

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from the Federal Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit, 2020).

Regarding integration into German society, the majority of respondents (64.2%) are actively engaged in the integration process, as shown in Table 8, and perceive themselves as partially integrated or in the process of integration. Secondly, 29.9% consider themselves fully integrated, which indicates that approximately one-third of Colombians have achieved satisfactory integration. In contrast, only 5.0% say they are not integrated. Overall, 94.1% of Colombians in Germany experience some degree of integration.

Table 8. Perception of Integration into German Society

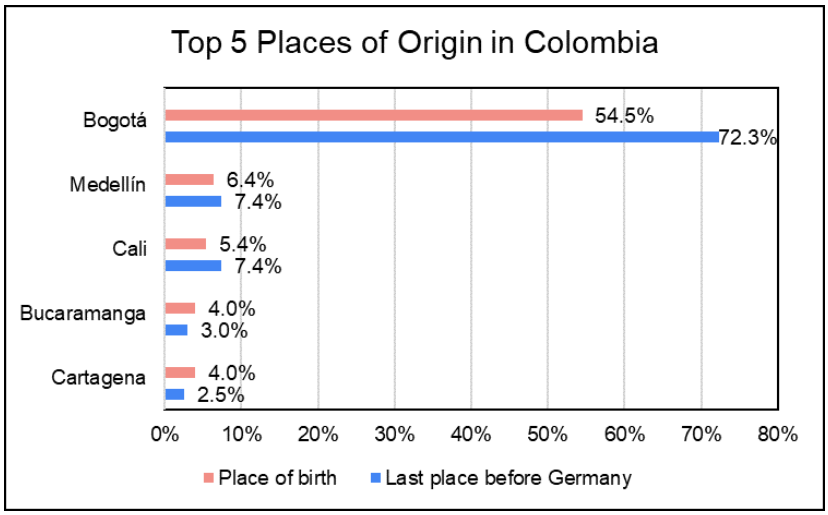
Integration into German society			
		N	%
	Fully integrated	60	29.9
	Partially or in the process of integration	129	64.2
	No integrated	10	5.0
	Total	199	99.0
	System	2	1.0
		201	100.0

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

Migration processes occur in specific geographical contexts. Figure 23 shows the top five cities of origin of the Colombians surveyed. The red bar represents their place of birth, 54.5% were born in Bogotá, 6.4% in Medellín, 5.4% in Cali, 4% in Bucaramanga, and another 4% in Cartagena. The blue bar, meanwhile, defines the city of residence prior to migration to Germany. It shows that Bogotá accounts for 72.3%, Medellín for 7.4%, Cali for 7.4%, Bucaramanga for 3%, and Cartagena for 2.5%. In both cases, the top three cities are Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali, which are, in fact, the largest cities in Colombia. They are the Colombian economic hub and are home to universities, financial services, health services, and state institutions.

This indicates that Bogotá share increased from 54% to 72%, an 18-percentage-point rise. This shift reflects a Colombian typical migration pattern from small and medium-sized cities to large urban centers. As discussed in previous chapters, these patterns reflect there are factors driving people out of these small cities, such as a saturated labor market, violence, and armed conflict (especially in the last three decades); at the same time, Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali are the destinations with the most significant pull on internal Colombian migrants. This explains the concentration in these cities, especially in the capital of the country.

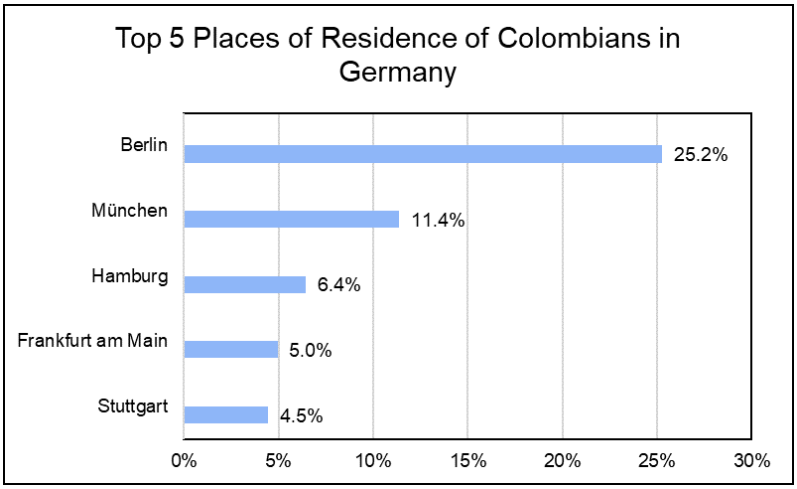
Figure 23. Top 5 Places of Origin in Colombia



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

Germany exhibits similar geographical concentration patterns. According to Figure 24, the top 5 cities of residence for Colombians in Germany are Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Stuttgart, with 25.2%, 11.4%, 6.4%, 5.0%, and 4.5% of Colombians living in each, respectively. While the first three cities are also Germany's largest, the hierarchical distribution is more uniform, with the primary city accounting for 25% compared to Bogotá's 74%. The socioeconomic and geographic context is different, and this is evident in the labor market and educational institutions, which are distributed across different German cities. Berlin is a destination for international students, as well as a hub for specialized service companies. Hamburg and Munich are important urban centers that attract skilled migrants who find an environment of cultural diversity and other migrant communities, as well as a diversified job market. Colombian migration to Germany appears predominantly direct from major Colombian cities to major German cities. These cities have favorable conditions for the occurrence of this pattern of skilled migration, demonstrating spatial concentration along an urban hierarchy.

Figure 24. Top 5 Places of Residence of Colombians in Germany



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey

As already described, Colombian migration to Germany exhibits a clearly skilled migratory flow, predominantly female and from urban areas to other urban areas. The analysis demonstrates that Colombian migration forms an integral part of a broader South American migratory movement, evidenced by the strong correlation (r=.992) between population trajectories, and has evolved through four distinct stages since 1967, with the current phase (2011-present) marked by rapid annual growth of 15%, reaching 20,705 individuals by 2020. This population exhibits a pronounced gender imbalance, with women consistently comprising 60%, and concentrates demographically among young adults aged 25-34 and spatially in major metropolitan centers such as Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg. These findings characterize Colombian migration to Germany as a skilled flow driven by educational pursuit and subsequent integration into Germany knowledge economy. This movement follows a direct geographic trajectory from major Colombian cities, particularly Bogotá (72.3%), to economically dynamic German urban centers.

CHAPTER 6. MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF COLOMBIAN TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES IN GERMANY

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the transnational social practices of Colombians in Germany, which constitutes the empirical core of this research. It examines the degree of development of Colombian transnationalism in Germany, addressing the central research question and the first and second objectives of this dissertation. The chapter focuses on statistical analysis of the applied ethnosurvey, the methodology for which is described in Chapter 3. The analysis uses primary data from the survey, complemented by secondary sources and official Colombian and German statistics. This mixed-methods approach enables examination of both aggregate patterns of transnational phenomena and the individual experiences that shape them.

Therefore, this chapter aims to provide an analytical explanation of the transnational practices of Colombians in Germany. As previously described, Faist et al. analytical model serves this purpose by examining four dimensions of transnationality: economic, political, sociocultural, and familial. Through multivariate analysis, the chapter assesses the degree of development of Colombian transnationality and determines whether a consolidated transnational community exists. The analysis employs descriptive and multivariate statistical techniques to address the aims of this research.

The chapter is organized into four parts corresponding to the four dimensions of transnational practices measured in the survey and to the application of the Transnationality Index. The variables in each part were defined according to the theoretical model guiding this research. The first part is dedicated to transnational economic practices, where a pattern of low intensity in family remittances and the trade balance between Colombia and Germany is documented. The second part details the political practices that show the low level of commitment of Colombians to formal and institutional political organizations. The third part explores sociocultural and family practices, which describe different levels of development, with family practices exhibiting the highest degree. This speaks to an individual- and family-oriented transnationalism, but with limited community participation. The fourth part is devoted to multidimensional analysis using the Transnationality Index to quantitatively determine the low degree of development of the transnational phenomenon in the Colombian case, with specific patterns and typologies detailed in that section.

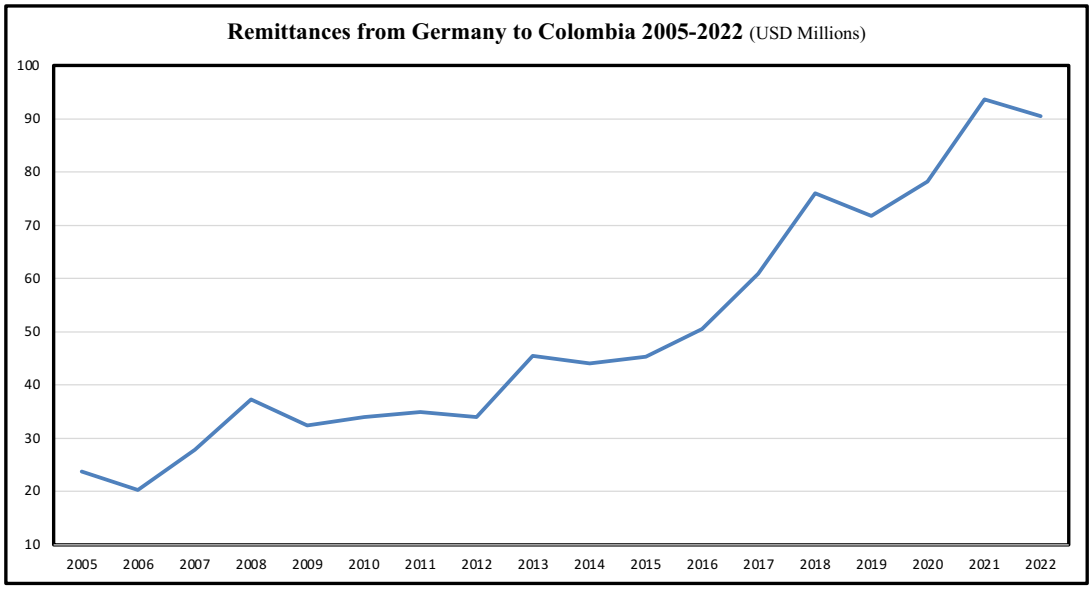
6.1 Economic Practices

6.1.1 Remittances

As mentioned in Chapter 1, sending remittances is the most common and easiest to identify transnational economic practice. As a key form of cross-border care, remittances represent an essential financial link between migrant workers and their families in the country of origin. Faist et al. (2013) identify two spheres of action for remittances, small-scale and large-scale. Small-scale remittances correspond to family and informal remittances, since they are not regulated or registered as an activity of social organizations, and the frequency of remittances sent is irregular. While the academic literature commonly classifies remittance sending as a transnational activity, this research argues that it is the use of remittances that ultimately confers their transnational character, insofar as it materializes sustained socio-economic relations across borders. Remittances sent to organizations or those used for business purposes are formal and considered large-scale. The latter are regulated and subject to control by authorities in both countries, many of which encourage the development of these binational business links. This will be explored further below.

According to data from the Central Bank of Colombia, Colombians living in Germany sent a total of $23.7 million to Colombia in 2005; in 2010, $33.9 million; in 2015, $45.2 million; and in 2020, $78.2 million. This indicates, as shown in Figure 25, sustained growth, with the number increasing three times the initial number. Data from Federal Statistical Office Germany, examined in the preceding chapter, show an increase in the Colombian population from 15,200 in 2005 to 22,190 in 2020. This implies an average remittance per Colombian of $1,559 in 2005 and $3,524 in 2020. This 126% per capita increase significantly exceeds the population growth rate. This would initially suggest an improvement in average economic capacity or a greater concentration of remitters in high-income segments. Unfortunately, this data cannot be traced.

Figure 25. Remittances from Germany to Colombia, 2005-2022 (USD Millions)

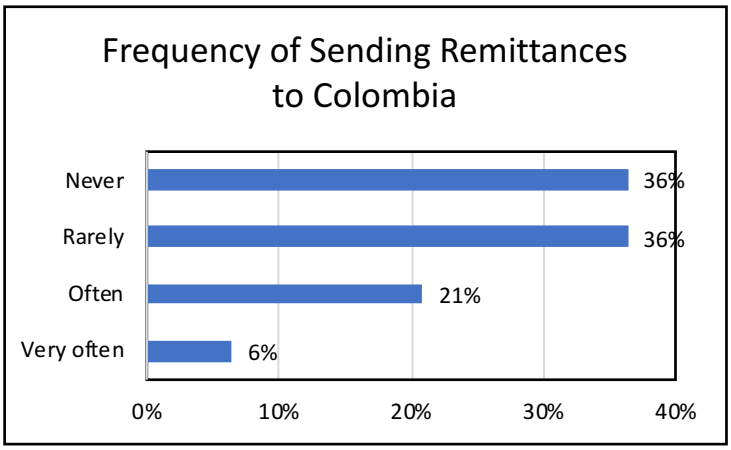


Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Banco de la República (2022).

This sustained growth in remittances to Colombia can be seen as a direct and proportional consequence of the increase in the Colombian migrant population. More people, more money. Although the amount of money sent is not small, it is far from being the highest. The United States far surpasses all other countries in terms of remittances sent to Colombia, with $3.572 billion sent in 2020 alone. This figure is 45 times greater than the amount sent from Germany. In second place, Spain sent $1.051 billion in the same year, and in third place is Chile, sending $406 million. The difference is striking, with the volume of remittances corresponding to a larger Colombian population.

Remittances from Germany to Colombia are proportional to and correspond to the size of the population. This hypothesis requires empirical validation against other data. This assumption is tested below using survey data. When respondents were asked about the frequency of remittance transfers (Figure 26), 36% answered that they never do so, and another 36% do so rarely. This accounts for 72% of the sample. Twenty-one percent do so frequently, and only the remaining 6% do so very frequently.

Figure 26. Frequency of Sending Remittances to Colombia



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Compared to the largest remittance-sending countries, the Colombian community in Germany sends few remittances and infrequently, with only a third (27%) doing so regularly. Of those who do send remittances (see Table 9), 47.8% do so to support their families; 10.6% for health expenses; 8.8% for savings, the same as for discretionary spending, with another 8%; 7.1% for the purchase or improvement of housing; and another 7.1% for educational expenses. Payment of debts and other miscellaneous expenses account for less than 5%. In general, all uses of remittances correspond to cross-border family care.

Table 9. Use of Remittances

Use of remittances			
	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage adjusted to positive answers
N/A	88	43.8	
Family support	54	26.9	47.8
Health care expenses	12	6.0	10.6
Savings	10	5.0	8.8
Free spending	9	4.5	8.0
Home improvement or purchase	8	4.0	7.1
Education expenses of family members	8	4.0	7.1
Debt repayment	5	2.5	4.4
Miscellaneous assistance	4	2.0	3.5
Travel for family members	1	0.5	0.9
Personal investments	1	0.5	0.9
Exceptional expenses	1	0.5	0.9

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

At the same time, significant differences emerge between men and women. A bivariate analysis and contingency tables reveal that women (64.7% of the sample) have a slightly higher propensity to send remittances. 31% of women send remittances frequently, compared to 24% of men. However, the differences are more pronounced in the destination of remittances, where women concentrate their remittances significantly more on family support (52% vs. 39% for men), while men diversify more towards business investments (18% vs. 11% for women) and savings (15% vs. 8%).

Of these remittances sent (see Table 10), almost half are made through websites and smartphone applications, such as Xoom, Azimo, Worldremit, Transferwise, and Small World. All of these connect banking services in both countries. The traditional method used a few years ago involved using financial operators such as Western Union and MoneyGram, which accounted for 24.6% in the survey. Bank transfers account for 18.3%, and sending money through third parties traveling to Colombia accounts for 6.3% personally carrying money and direct payment of bills account for very low percentages.

Table 10. Method of Remittance Sending

Method of remittance sending			
	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage adjusted to positive answers
N/A	75	37.7	
Apps/Websites: Xoom; Azimo; Worldremit; Transferwise; Small World	58	29.1	46.0
Western Union/Money Gramm	31	15.6	24.6
Bank transfers	23	11.6	18.3
Sending money through friends	8	4.0	6.3
Bringing the money personally	2	1.0	1.6
Credit card bill payment	1	0.5	0.8
Sending money in cash	1	0.5	0.8

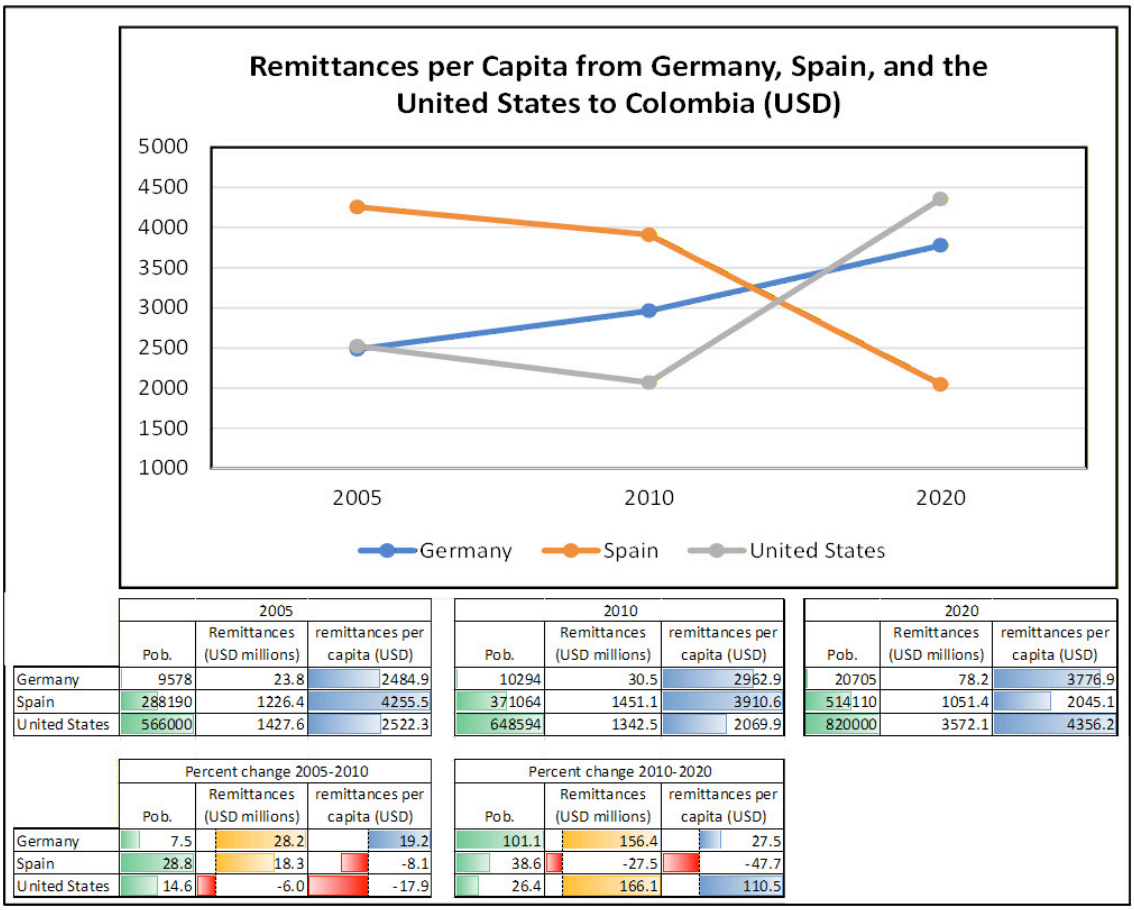
Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Institutional data from the Central Bank of Colombia and primary information indicate that the volume of remittances is directly proportional to the size of the Colombian population, and that the frequency of remittances is relatively low. Colombians do not send much money or very often, unlike in the United States and Spain. However, comparing per capita remittances across the three countries reveals a different pattern. This comparison examines the years 2005,

2010, and 2020. As detailed in Figure 27, two variables define the behavior of per capita remittances, the size of the population and the volume of remittances. The figures show that in 2005, the largest remittance senders were the United States and Spain, with figures between $1.2 billion and $1.4 billion. However, the Colombian population in the United States is almost double that of Spain, which is why Spain had the highest per capita remittance value that year. From Germany, on the other hand, the values are lower in terms of both population and remittances, but with a high per capita level, almost equal to that of the United States, with nearly $2,500 sent to Colombia that year. By 2010, the Colombian population had grown in all three countries, with Spain experiencing the highest growth. In terms of remittances, Germany saw the most significant increase, with growth of 28% compared to 2005; Spain saw an increase of 18%, and the United States sent 6% fewer remittances, leaving Spain as the country with the highest per capita remittances, followed by Germany and the United States in last place. By 2020, the behavior of the United States and Spain was reversed, with the United States experiencing significant growth of more than 100% in per capita remittances, Spain reducing those same remittances by 47%, and Germany increased them by 27%.

The data indicate a reconfiguration in Colombian remittance patterns, driven by changes in migration patterns and economic crises. The sustained growth in per capita remittances from Germany, as shown in Figure 27, imply that the Colombian community is relatively small but highly skilled, with greater individual economic capacity. The sharp decline in Spain coincides with the European economic crisis (2008-2014) and that of the United States with the 2007-2010 crisis, which particularly affected sectors where Colombian migration was concentrated (construction, services). This indicates that remittances from Spain and the United States were more dependent on mass labor migration, vulnerable to economic cycles. The behavior of these two countries was more volatile, with periods of growth and decline; however, Germany exhibited sustained growth without any notable changes or alterations. It is understood that remittance sending depends on several factors, and the demographic and socioeconomic composition of the established migrant population must be taken into account. The survey showed that only 21% send remittances frequently, which supports the explanation of a high concentration of senders. Additionally, as already analyzed in the previous chapter, they have a relatively high academic profile, indicating that Colombians in Germany are qualified remittance senders with high professional and economic capacity.

Figure 27. Comparison of Remittances per Capita from Germany, Spain and the Unites States to Colombia (USD)



	2005			2010			2020		
	Pob.	Remittances (USD millions)	remittances per capita (USD)	Pob.	Remittances (USD millions)	remittances per capita (USD)	Pob.	Remittances (USD millions)	remittances per capita (USD)
Germany	9578	23.8	2484.9	10294	30.5	2962.9	20705	78.2	3776.9
Spain	288190	1226.4	4255.5	371064	1451.1	3910.6	514110	1051.4	2045.1
United States	566000	1427.6	2522.3	648594	1342.5	2069.9	820000	3572.1	4356.2

	Percent change 2005-2010			Percent change 2010-2020		
	Pob.	Remittances (USD millions)	remittances per capita (USD)	Pob.	Remittances (USD millions)	remittances per capita (USD)
Germany	7.5	28.2	19.2	101.1	156.4	27.5
Spain	28.8	18.3	-8.1	38.6	-27.5	-47.7
United States	14.6	-6.0	-17.9	26.4	166.1	110.5

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Central Bank of Colombia, National Statistics Institute of Spain, Census Bureau of the U.S., Pew Research Center, and Federal Statistical Office of Germany.

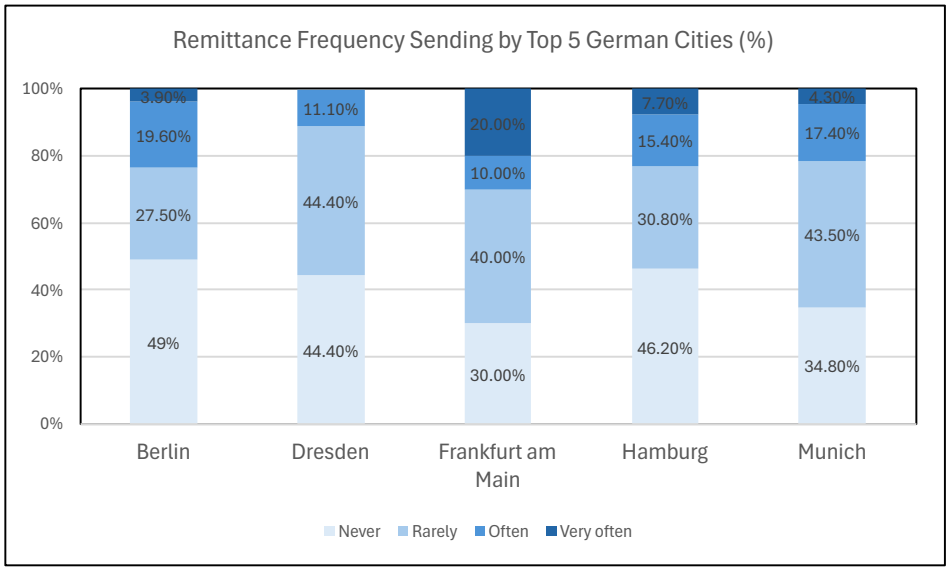
Another alternative explanation is that the cumulative 10% allocated to savings in Colombia may be related to medium-term return projects or transnational financial diversification strategies. This indicates that, for some Colombians in Germany, remittances are not only altruistic transfers but also a possible transnational financial strategy.

Now, let's examine the spatial dynamics of remittances, specifically where remittances are sent and to whom they are sent. Because the population representation of the sample is concentrated in the main German and Colombian cities, remittance flows occur between those cities. Therefore, in Figures 28 and 29, we only take the five cities that concentrate the highest values in each variable.

In Germany, Berlin has the largest number of Colombians, but only 23.5% send remittances, either frequently or very frequently; 27.5% do so rarely, and 49% never do so. In Dresden, 44.4% never or rarely send money, and only 11% do so frequently. Frankfurt is the city from which the most remittances are sent, with 20% doing so very frequently and 10%

frequently, totaling 30%. Likewise, 40% rarely and 30% never send money, the lowest figure among these top five cities. Hamburg and Munich show similar patterns, with just over 20% of remittances sent frequently and very frequently in both cases.

Figure 28. Remittance Frequency Sending by Top 5 German Cities (Percentages)



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

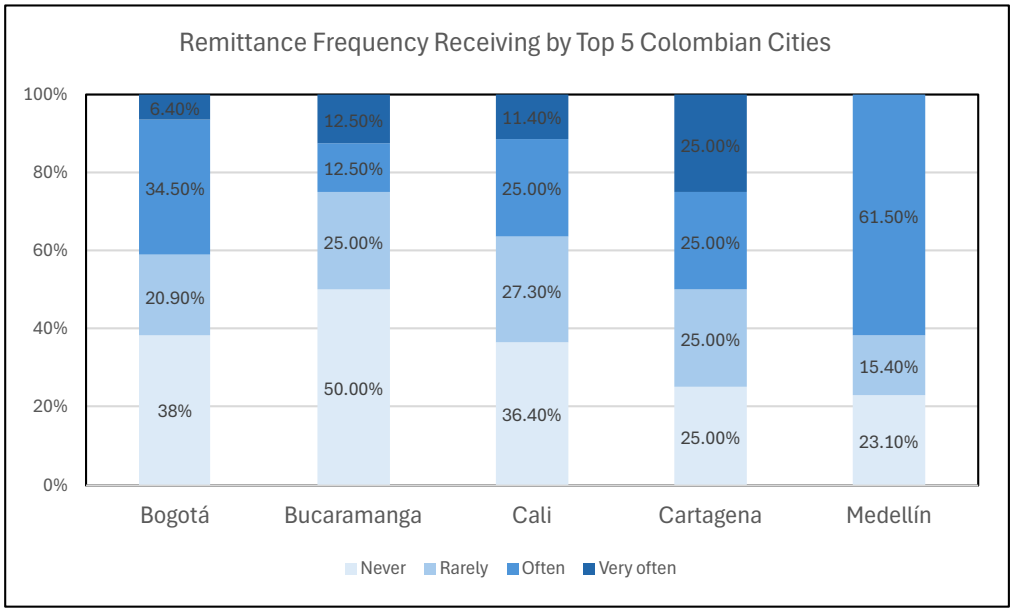
The differences between German cities reflect variations in the local economic structure and the profile of the Colombian resident population. Frankfurt, German financial center, may be concentrating Colombians in higher-paying jobs (banking, consulting, and international organizations), which explains the higher frequency of remittances. Berlin, despite having the largest absolute population, has a lower remittances volume due to its more diversified profile, which includes students, artists, and workers in creative sectors with more variable incomes.

Although the survey did not ask which city in Colombia the money was sent to, it is assumed that the place of origin is where the family resides. Therefore, we considered this variable as a possible destination for remittances, which we have also categorized into a top five list of cities with the highest values.

Bogotá is the primary center of emigration and receives a substantial proportion of remittances, accounting for over 40% of *often* (34.5%) and *very often* (6.4%) remittances. Bucaramanga has a higher percentage of *very often* remittances, at 12.5%, and the same proportion of *often* remittances, totaling 25%, or a quarter. Cali receives *very often* remittances at 11.4% and *often* remittances at 25%, adding 36%. Cartagena is the city with the most unusual behavior, as frequent and very frequent remittances total 50%; in fact, 25% of remittances are

very often, the highest value of the five cities. Medellín receives 61.5% of remittances frequently, but does not record any *very often* values.

Figure 29. Remittances Frequency Receiving by Top 5 Colombian Cities (Percentages)



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Both push and pull factors influence remittance flows. The main cities of emigration in Colombia are the ones that receive the most remittances, just as the German cities with the highest levels of Colombian immigration are the ones that send the most. This flow of remittances demonstrates an interaction between two urban systems; migration interconnects specific geographical areas, and remittances serve as a means of making this visible. Although the volume of remittances between Germany and Colombia is relatively small compared to other countries, the flow of remittances serves as a geographical indicator that reflects the hierarchy and intensity of transnational connections. The main migration hubs are those that typically drive transnational economic practices, as they offer favorable conditions for their development, such as a large population and established networks. Of course, family remittances are small-scale practices between individuals and their families in Colombia, which do not necessarily require interactions with a migrant community.

This pattern of remittance flows shows a significant interconnection between specific cities. Figure 30 categorizes remittances as *very often*, *often*, and *rarely* (excluding those who never send remittances) within a single category that groups Colombians who send remittances, regardless of frequency, to and from the first five cities analyzed. The heat map identifies Bogotá as the major recipient of remittances. Additionally, Bogotá channels three main

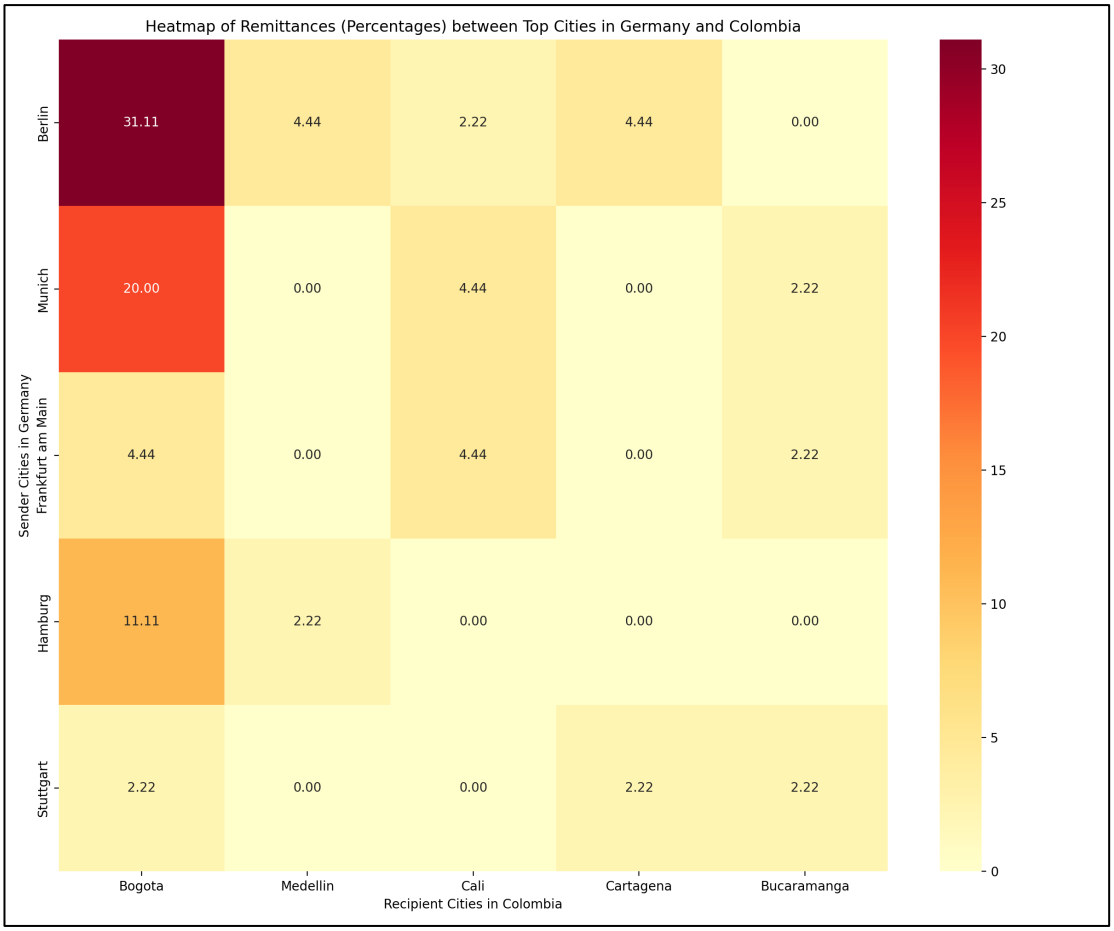
corridors. The first is Berlin-Bogotá, representing about one-third (31%) of all remittances. This suggests a strong economic and possibly cultural link between these two capitals. It could also be a potential indicator of the migratory flow itself, since Berlin-Bogotá is the main migratory corridor. The second corridor is Munich-Bogotá with 20% of remittances, and Hamburg with 11%. This means that Bogotá absorbs 60% of all remittances. Cali is the second Colombian city that receives the most remittances (11%), especially from Munich and Frankfurt. It is followed by Bucaramanga (6.6%), Cartagena (6.6%), and Medellín (6.6%).

On the other hand, Berlin is the primary push sender, as it sends 42% of remittances to different destinations in Colombia. Bogotá, as already mentioned, is the leading destination, accounting for 31%, followed by Medellín and Cartagena. These corridors originating in Berlin indicate that it is a hub for remittances to Colombia, reflecting the diverse and considerable Colombian diaspora in the city. The second primary sender is Munich, with a total of 26.6%, mainly to Bogotá, and secondly to Cali. Hamburg sends 13%, with Bogotá as the first destination, followed by Medellín.

From a spatial perspective, remittance flows reveal the emergence of a binational transnational urban system structured by specific hierarchical relationships. Berlin operates as a secondary hub for the Colombian diaspora and serving as a redistributive center for multiple Colombian destinations. This function contrasts with Munich and Frankfurt, which operate more as specialized cities with specific corridors to Bogotá and Cali, respectively.

The dominance Bogotá as a recipient reflects its demographic weight and its function as a central city in the Colombian urban system. However, the dispersion to intermediate cities (Cali, Medellín, Bucaramanga, Cartagena) point to that migratory flows to Germany are not limited to the Bogotá elites, but include Colombian professionals from across the national urban system.

Figure 30. Heat Map of Remittance between Top Cities in Germany and Colombia



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

While it is clear that there are defined patterns, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI)[5] is useful for analyzing the concentration of remittance sending and receiving. For this analysis, all German sending cities (n= 53) and all Colombian receiving cities (n = 26) were included. A higher concentration index indicates that a few sending cities (or receiving cities, depending on the case) dominate remittance flows. In contrast, a lower index suggests a more even distribution of remittances among several cities.

In the case of German remittance-sending cities, the calculated HHI is .0726 and indicates a moderate concentration, with Berlin as the dominant sending city, followed by Munich and Hamburg, but smaller cities also contribute. When applied to remittance-receiving cities, this same index gives an HHI result of .3040. This means that there is a greater

[5] The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) is a measure of market concentration, but it is useful for analyzing trade flows. It is defined by this formula: $HHI=\sum^{N}_{i}=1S_i^2$ where *Si* is the percentage share of remittances from sending city *i*, and *N* is the total number of sending cities. The same is done for receiving cities. It ranges from 1/N (where N is the number of cities) to 1, with higher values indicating greater concentration.

concentration among receiving cities, with Bogotá as the leading destination, which, as already noted, receives 60% of all remittances, a figure substantially higher than that of the next city, Cali, with only 11%.

Thus, the HHI index for sending cities in Germany indicates that remittances are more evenly distributed among its major cities. In contrast, Colombian receiving cities exhibit a high concentration of remittances, with Bogotá as a significant hub for collecting them. In other words, although Berlin is the city that sends the most remittances, Munich and Hamburg contribute significantly to remittances to Colombia. However, Bogotá dominates its reception. This asymmetry in concentration indices (.0726 vs .3040) reflects structural differences between the two urban systems. The German urban system, which is more polycentric and decentralized, enables a more balanced distribution of the Colombian population across multiple economic centers. In contrast, the Colombian urban system, with Bogotá greater urban primacy, concentrates family networks and expectations of return in the capital.

6.1.2 Entrepreneurship and Binational Economies

Transnationalism from above, as proposed by Smith & Guarnizo (1998), come from refers to institutionalized cross-border economic practices driven by state and private actors. This form of transnationalism does not operate directly through migrants or migrant communities but is instead constituted through networks of companies and organizations across multiple countries. Companies are therefore the object of analysis, and it is worth considering the distinction made by Parnreiter (2018) between international, multinational, and transnational companies or organizations. The first, international companies, have a single production center that exports its goods, which means they have a productive concentration that relies on international trade. However, the benefits are exclusive to the country of production. Multinational companies make their production more flexible through facilities in different countries. They maintain a vertical organizational structure in which the dispersed production centers have no administrative relevance or decision-making authority. Transnational companies, on the other hand, decentralize not only production but also the administration of the companies. This involves a horizontal and interdependent flow of resources and workers between the headquarters of companies. These transnational companies require favorable conditions for their development in each country, such as tax, legal, and labor market systems that enable their multi-localized activities.

The existence of an ecosystem of transnational companies would be an unequivocal indicator of a high degree of transnationalism; however, this condition is not often met, even in countries with highly developed industrial and service economies. Of the above categories, multinational companies are the most common, especially when companies from high-income, high-productivity countries expand their operations into countries with low or medium productive capacity. It is precisely in this unequal relationship that multinational companies tend to exploit their favorable position to expand their productive capacity without relinquishing administrative control. This is the case with business relations between Colombia and Germany, where administrative agreements and institutional support facilitate the expansion of the market for goods and services of German companies in Colombia and Colombian companies in Germany. However, the conditions for the flourishing of genuinely transnational companies have not yet materialized. What is evident is that binational state relations and private initiatives promoting the expansion of the market for products and services between the two countries are growing and strengthening. This economic policy has shaped the relationship of Colombia with the European Union (EU) and the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) over the last two decades.

International trade activities and the establishment of multinational companies are cross-border activities that reflect a pre-transnational period that leads, sometimes, to the formation of transnational economic circuits. International trade is a helpful indicator for observing the integration of goods and services markets. In this case, government intervention is frequent, as the regulatory and legal frameworks governing international trade, tariffs, and taxes are part of the sphere of action of governments, articulated and defined by short- and medium-term economic policies. Colombia and Germany have established macro-political agreements that contain specific agreements (Cancillería de Colombia, 2022), such as those related to binational trade.

According to the Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany) (2024), trade between Germany and Colombia made €5.3 billion in 2023, making Germany Colombia's leading trading partner within the European Union. Although international trade is not an indicator of transnationalism, it does serve to observe the type of binational economic relations between two countries, and this is useful when other economic factors are also considered. Therefore, exports and imports between the two countries indicate that trade relations between 2000 and 2020 have more than doubled. According to data from the Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales (CEPII, 2020; OEC, 2020), in 2000, the total trade volume was $1.02 trillion; in 2010, it was $2.2 trillion; and in 2020, it was $2.1

trillion. However, the export ratio is positive for Germany and negative for Colombia. In 2000, it was 1.22 in favor of Germany; in 2010, it was 2.88, and in 2020, it was 2.69. In other words, for every dollar that Colombia exports to Germany in products, the latter exports $2.69, meaning a greater presence of German products in the Colombian market.

In the first year, trade was relatively balanced, with Germany exporting slightly more; however, by 2010 and 2020, the balance had shifted markedly in Germany's favor, with German exports to Colombia reaching nearly three times the value of Colombian exports to Germany. This indicates that the trade relationship has become increasingly unbalanced over the last 20 years, with the period between 2000 and 2010 witnessing the most significant change in export volume.

Colombia has traditionally exported primary sector products, especially coal, coffee, and bananas, while Germany exports industrial manufactured goods, such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals, machinery, and motor vehicles. Here, it is important to analyze the concentration and diversification of exports. While exports from Colombia to Germany are concentrated in a few products, Germany exports a highly diversified basket of products to Colombia. Let's take a closer look at this situation.

In 2000 (see Table 11), Colombia exported 338 types of products to Germany; however, 89.8% were concentrated in only five products, with coffee accounting for 44% and coal 32.4%. The HHI for this case was .3081, indicating a very high concentration in a few products. In contrast, the HHI for Germany in the same year was .0153, indicating a highly diversified portfolio, where the five most exported products to Colombia accounted for only 21.2% of the total. These products included pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, and machinery.

Table 11. Top 10 Export Products 2000

Top 10 Export Products 2000			
Colombia to Germany 458 USD million		**Germany to Colombia** 560 USD million	
Coffee	44.0	Potassium fertilizers	6.0
Coal Briquettes	32.4	Rubberworking Machinery	4.6
Bananas	8.4	Pesticides	3.7
Coffee and Tea Extracts	3.1	Telephones	3.5
Non-Knit Men's Suits	2.0	Packaged Medicaments	3.5
Footwear Parts	1.4	Gas Turbines	3.2
Cut Flowers	1.2	Hormones	2.3
Gas Turbines	1.1	Nucleic acids	1.9
House Linens	0.9	Amines	1.9
Other Fruits	0.6	Medical Instruments	1.9

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from the database of CEPII

In 2010, exports from Germany to Colombia grew considerably, almost tripling. Colombia maintains a similar profile of primary sector products, with coal accounting for half of all exports (52%), followed by bananas (15%) and coffee (approximately 14%), as shown in Table 12. Colombia HHI was .3196, which indicates little diversification of exports, which are dominated by a very few products. In contrast, German exports to Colombia remained highly diversified with an HHI of .0193, with industrial products such as automotive, aviation, machinery, and pharmaceuticals.

Table 12. Top 10 Export Products 2010

Top 10 Export Products 2010			
Colombia to Germany 575 USD million		**Germany to Colombia** 1.66 USD billion	
Coal briquettes	52.5	Cars	7.4
Bananas	15.3	Planes, helicopters, and/or spacecraft	6.6
Coffee	13.8	Packaged Medications	4.2
Coffee and Tea Extracts	2.6	Combustion Engines	4.1
Coke	1.5	Electric Generating Sets	3.7
Railway Maintenance Vehicles	1.3	Medical Instruments	2.0%
Cut Flowers	1.3	Kaolin Coated Paper	1.7
Other Fruits	1.1	Vaccines, blood, antisera, toxins, and cultures	1.5
Non-Knit Men's Suits	0.9	Pesticides	1.4
House Linens	0.8	Centrifuges	1.4

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from the database of CEPII

In 2020, the exact pattern of economic sectors and the degree of diversification remains. Colombia continues to export mineral and food products, with coffee (36%), bananas (11.4%),

and coal (9.3%) being the primary commodities, as shown in Table 13. The HHI of .1664 continues to indicate a basket consisting of a limited number of products. It is noteworthy that coal accounted for 52% in 2010 and only 9.3% in 2020, due to a reduction in coal-based electricity consumption, as part of Germany's *coal phase-out*, which led to a significant decrease in its importation (Heinisch et al., 2021). However, other mineral products are also important in Colombian exports, including crude petroleum, ferroalloys, and coke, as well as various agricultural products such as sugar, palm oil, and tea extracts. For its part, Germany maintains a diversified export portfolio of high-value manufactured goods, such as pharmaceuticals, machinery, industrial chemicals, and motor vehicles. Though, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, exports of medicines, including vaccines and related products, increased significantly. The HHI was .0366, which is consistent with the above.

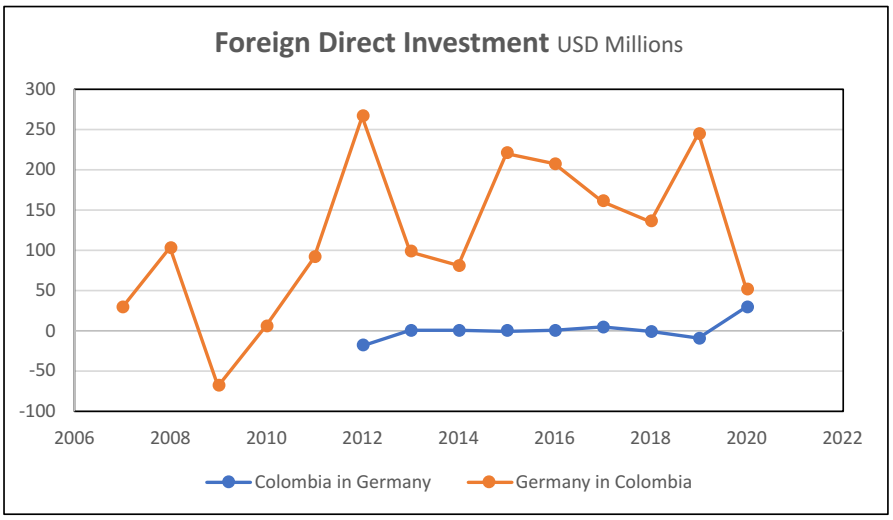
Table 13. Top 10 Export Products 2020

Top 10 Export Products 2020			
Colombia to Germany 578 USD million		**Germany to Colombia** 1.55 USD billion	
Coffee	36.0	Packaged Medicaments	16.4
Bananas	11.4	Cars	5.4
Coal briquettes	9.3	Medical Instruments	3.8
Crude Petroleum	8.1	Vaccines, blood, antisera, toxins, and cultures	3.3
Ferroalloys	5.8	Washing and Bottling Machines	2.2
Plastic Lids	4.2	Centrifuges	2.1
Raw Sugar	3.5	Raw Plastic Sheeting	1.4
Coffee and Tea Extracts	3.4	Other Precious Metal Products	1.3
Palm Oil	2.1	Pesticides	1.3
Coke	1.9	Potassium fertilizers	1.2

Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from the database of CEPII

Regarding foreign investment, since 2012, the Central Bank of Colombia has been compiling data on Colombia's direct investment abroad (Inversión Directa de Colombia en el Exterior-IDCE) and, since 2007, on foreign direct investment in Colombia (FDI), which are investments made by shareholders in companies in each country (see Figure 31). Colombia has recorded low direct investment in Germany. From 2012 to 2019, the values were negative, *i.e.*, expenses exceeded income due to investment cancellations and loan amortization expenses. In 2020, it reached positive figures for the first time, with Colombian investment in Germany reaching $29.7 million. For its part, Germany has maintained a constant level of investment in Colombia, with only one negative number in 2009, and a peak in investment in 2012 at $265.9 million, as shown in Figure 31.

Figure 31. Foreign Direct Investment (USD Millions)



Note. Author's own elaboration based on data from Banco de la República (2022).

The participation of German subsidiaries in Colombia, as well as direct investment by German shareholders, suggests that Germany considers Colombia a promising market for its companies. At the same time, the unequal capacity for market participation is evident, with Colombian investment in Germany being almost non-existent, positioning Colombia as a recipient country for investment and a destination for German capital and companies. These two circumstances illustrate an unequal economic relationship, in which Colombia has a limited capacity for foreign investment in Germany and a portfolio of primary products dominated by coffee, coal, and bananas. In contrast, Germany is a major investor in Colombia with diversified exports of manufactured goods. Colombian exports indicate an essentially primary economy, whereas German exports reveal an industrialized economy with a substantial export capacity. Manufactured goods add value to products, as there is an industrial production sector that benefits from the production process of such machinery, pharmaceuticals, and automotive products. This means that the Colombian economy exports products with low added value and imports products with high added value. Colombia exports low-value commodities while importing high-value manufactured goods. It is an unequal trade relationship that benefits Germany.

On the other hand, trade relations between Germany and Colombia are promoted and protected by the governments of each country, as is the case with the German-Colombian Chamber of Industry and Commerce-AHK, which is a private non-profit organization and one of the binational chambers of commerce that the German government supports and regulates in 92 countries. Its purpose is to expand economic relations between Colombian and German

companies (AHK & CNC, 2019). It is based in Bogotá and Medellín. Its role in promoting trade relations focuses on strategic sectors, including industry, services, compliance, logistics, and construction. This includes business sectors such as automotive, chemicals, energy efficiency, ICT, infrastructure, logistics and transport, food industry, machinery, medical technology, oil and gas, startups, Industry 4.0, and vocational training.

Since 2018, the AHK has registered 300 affiliated companies, of which 43% are Colombian companies with commercial relations with Germany, 45% are subsidiaries of German companies, and 12% are Colombian cross-sector service companies (AHK, 2020). In its periodic reports, the AHK (2018) organizes frequent networking events and business fairs, workshops for knowledge transfer, and publishes magazines (including reports and newsletters). Additionally, it facilitates missions of Colombian businesspeople to Germany and Germans to Colombia. These networking events bring together representatives of German and Colombian companies seeking alliances and business relationships, including large German companies in Colombia, such as Siemens, Bayer AG, Allianz, DHL, Hamburg Süd, and SAP, with their Colombian counterparts. Although these are activities that the AHK carries out in an economic context, they are complemented by strategies to promote German culture in Colombia. The positioning of German companies and products benefits from cultural branding through events such as Weihnachtsmarkt (German Christmas markets), Oktoberfest, and sporting events. Products are positioned through the positioning of Germany as a commercial brand. Similarly, the AHK lobbies Colombian government representatives to continue expanding agreements and promoting new economic opportunities for both countries.

Beyond the AHK's role in promoting binational trade relations between private companies, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit-GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) also contributes to economic development, albeit with some differences. GIZ is the German state agency that supports cooperative economic development in African, Asian, and Latin American countries to achieve better socioeconomic and environmental conditions for vulnerable populations. Colombia is one of the countries that the GIZ has supported for 50 years (GIZ, 2023). However, since 2016, GIZ has deployed specific cooperation programs with Colombia to support the peace process, sustainable use of natural resources, and sustainable economic development. Funding for these programs comes from various German government ministries and the European Union, and is directed at fostering state cooperation, civil society, and private sector engagement. One of GIZ programs is the Migration and Diaspora Program (PMD) of the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM).

This GIZ initiative prioritizes Colombia as one of its key countries. This program aims to encourage professionals to return to Colombia and transfer the knowledge and experience they acquired in Germany by financing business projects that benefit communities and institutions. Regarding this program, Aliaga-Sáez et al. (2025) observe that Colombians participants in this program utilized the program to coordinate the mobility of resources, professional experiences, and business initiatives; however, they faced barriers and limitations, including binational institutional bureaucracy, language barriers, and weak transnational networks.

GIZ, as an institutional umbrella organization that manages financial resources from the BMZ, has developed several programs with different profiles but with the same goal of development cooperation in countries such as Colombia. One such program is the promotion of companies formed by Colombians who seek to return to Colombia or establish alliances with entrepreneurs and communities in Colombia, to leverage their work experience and academic-technical training received in Germany. At the time of writing this chapter, nearly 158 projects have been implemented. Between 2013 and 2017, the Innovation Fund to Support Peacebuilding in Colombia was implemented, with direct funding from the BMZ for the promotion of peace within the context of the peace process between the Colombian national government and the FARC guerrilla group (GIZ, 2016). Through this fund, 25 projects were implemented, of which 15 were completed. Although not specifically a business program, it focused on developing socio-economic enterprises to reduce the economic vulnerability of affected populations. In addition, the PROINTCAME project (Participation of internally displaced persons and host communities in economic development) was implemented in the department of Meta, eastern Colombia, between 2018 and 2020, and financed 31 producer associations with more than 600 members and 380 small entrepreneurs, indirectly reaching some 3,000 people (GIZ, 2020).

GIZ also financed a cocoa production project in collaboration with the National Federation of Cocoa Growers of Colombia in 2023 (Fedecacao, 2023), benefiting local farmers and communities in the department of Huila, southern Colombia. It also focused on gender and the inclusion of young people in cocoa production through agricultural associations. Finally, the Shaping Development-Oriented Migration program (Migration Entwicklungspolitisch Gestalten-MEG), led by the GIZ (2024), is a program designed for migrants and organizations from various countries residing in Germany. Its objective is to promote business ideas (start-ups, coaching, networking), finance small businesses in Colombia, and missions led by experts

from the diaspora. It is a program synchronized with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which is why GIZ has called its own program Diaspora 2030, and it is ongoing.

This limited sample does not comprehensively indicate of binational or transnational business activity, as the GIZ program has a limited scope and capacity due to institutional requirements and its focus. Many Colombian entrepreneurial ventures in Germany fall outside this institutional-governmental framework and seek traditional investment mechanisms with regular loans and partnerships with other individuals. Let's check it out at this aspect from the Colombian side.

Colombian initiatives, despite more limited financial resources than their German counterparts, to promote business development, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. For example, Propaís, a Colombian public-private organization (Propaís, 2014b), recognizes that the model of Colombian small and medium-sized enterprises must adapt to the German business environment through innovation and the addition of value to their products and services, as the primary sector sustains most of the trade balance. Certified tourism services and food products are a potential niche. However, relations between German and Colombian companies should focus on partnerships between German and Colombian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), rather than just between multinationals or large companies. Propaís has organized missions of Colombian entrepreneurs to Germany to create binational business alliances, such as the one that took place in 2014 in Baden-Württemberg with the support of a delegation from the Colombian Embassy in Germany, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, and GIZ, to discuss strategies for creating and strengthening SMEs and start-ups, networking, and knowledge transfer between both countries. In 2017, Fedecaribe, an ally of Propaís, also sent a mission to Germany to encourage alliances between Colombian companies in the agro-industrial and food sectors and potential importers in Germany (Propaís, 2014a, 2015, 2017).

Another similar organization, ProColombia, has also implemented programs to bring Colombian and German organizations, institutions, and entrepreneurs closer together. It has participated in programs such as Partnering in Business with Germany, implemented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, which aims to strengthen international trade between partner countries (ProColombia, 2025). It has also facilitated meetings between Colombian and German companies in the energy sector, particularly in Bavaria, as well as at technology fairs.

On the other hand, Colombia and Latin America are seen as potential markets for German start-ups seeking to expand their presence in that region. For example, Colombia needs

technological solutions in Industry 4.0 (renewable energy, smart cities), B2B technologies (business-to-business, Internet of Things-IoT, artificial intelligence, robotics), and logistics (electric mobility) (Munich Startup, 2021). For this reason, the Bavarian Representative Office for South America aims to capitalize on these advantages for Germany, and specifically for Bavaria, to enhance the capacity and growth of German start-ups in Colombia. However, it is possible to create a business ecosystem that enables mutual benefits through partnerships between start-ups in Latin America and Bavaria.

6.2 Political Practices

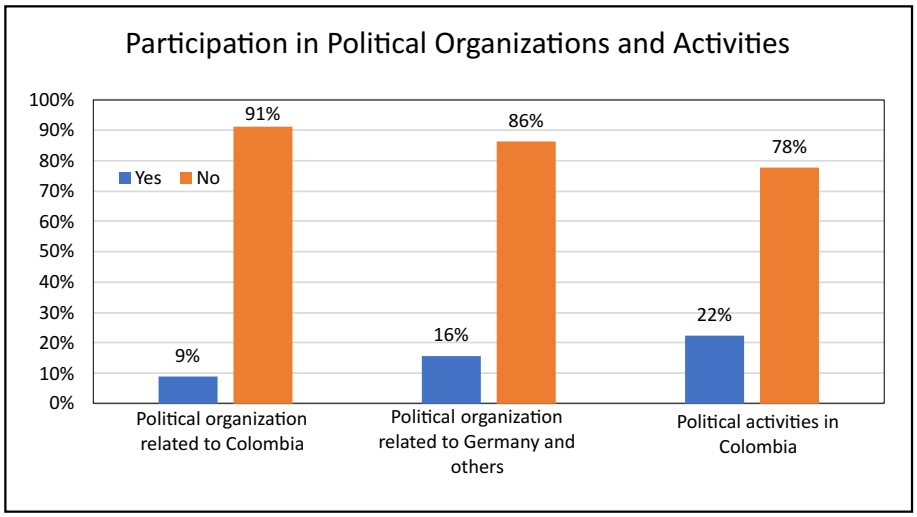
Transnational political practices are expressed, as defined in the analytical model for the ethnosurvey, through participation in political organizations linked to Colombia, participation in political organizations linked to Germany and other countries, participation in Colombian elections, and involvement in political activities in Colombia. Political action, however, is not limited to quantifiable variables but includes other forms of engagement explored in this research, with individual participation varying according to context. In Colombia, political expressions are tied to the way electoral politics are conducted and the forms of social organization. In Germany, with a different electoral and political system, as well as a distinct social environment, such political expressions are both encouraged and limited. This is where it becomes relevant to examine how Colombians express themselves politically in Germany.

The survey shows that Colombians in Germany have low participation in political organizations and activities. Figure 32 summarizes three of the survey questions mentioned above. The first is the participation of Colombians in political organizations related to Colombia, such as collectives, groups, associations, and any other type of political organization related with Colombia. The second also refers to participation in this type of organization, but this time related to Germany or third countries. The third question measures participation in political activities in Colombia, including voting in elections, participating in political campaigns, and attending political demonstrations (Demos).

Overall, participation is low yet exhibits differentiated patterns of political participation. Only 9% participate in organizations related to Colombia, 16% participate in organizations related to Germany or third countries, and 22% participate in direct political activities in Colombia. This upward progression suggests a specific hierarchy in the forms of

political engagement of this population, where direct links with the country of origin are more important than participation in organizations in the country of residence.

Figure 32. Participation in Political Organizations and Activities



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Low participation in political organizations reflects factors counting the limited presence of Colombian political organizations in Germany. Likewise, German bureaucracy may impose some legal restrictions on foreign political activities. Political participation can also take place outside established organizations and within informal settings, as an expression of individual political practices. Furthermore, this behavior may suggest that Colombians temporarily disengage from their collective political activities during the process of adapting to and integrating into German society.

This progressive pattern indicates that Colombians prefer to participate in social organizations related to Germany and third countries, with 16% doing so. This could denote a greater willingness to integrate into the German political context and system. It is therefore possible that Germany's strong and well-established political networks facilitate the participation of international communities. This suggests that German political organizations may have several political agendas, one local that addresses issues specific to the city and communities, and another more global that integrates international issues and communities. In both cases, the preexistence of German networks enables the participation of Colombians.

Paradoxically, direct political engagement with Colombia reaches a peak of 22%, sharply contrasting with low participation in formal political organizations within Germany. This engagement likely manifests through voting in Colombian elections, joining virtual

political debates, supporting electoral campaigns, or actively following national politics. This distinction is crucial for understanding how the transnational political ties of Colombians often operate outside formal German institutional frameworks.

Political participation displays differentiated patterns when analyzed across key sociodemographic variables, including length of residence in Germany, age, educational level, and sex. The most significant effect come from educational background, as 75% of respondents with postgraduate university studies are the most politically active. A moderate difference between women and men is also evident, with a 6.5% gap in participation (35.7% of men vs. 29.2% of women). Age is the weakest of the relationships, as the average difference between respondents who participate and those who do not is only 1.5 years. The length of residence shows an upward trend, among the total number of respondents who have been in the country for less than 5 years, 28% participate politically; between 5 and 10 years, 33%; and those who have been in the country for more than 10 years, 42%. The findings suggest a growth pattern in which participation increases with time and stability, potentially reflecting greater civic commitment.

Broadening the analysis to include the relationship between migration motivations and integration in Germany reveals additional patterns that deepen understanding of the transnational phenomenon. The survey collected information on the motivations for leaving Colombia and choosing Germany as a destination, which was already analyzed in the previous chapter, but here it provides another analytical possibility. The relationship between migratory motivations (push-pull effect) and transnational political participation reveals a moderate but significant effect, with variation ranges of 28.6% among those who reported some political participation for motivations for leaving Colombia and 31.9% for motivations for choosing Germany as a destination.

The analysis show that Colombian migrants motivated by educational opportunities in Germany exhibit the highest level of political participation (46.7%), followed by those with pre-existing family or friendship networks abroad (50.0% of those who left Colombia). In contrast to what is suggested in the literature on a direct relationship between forced migration and political activism (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003), Colombians who left the country for security reasons do not show the highest levels of transnational political participation. Pre-existing social networks, due to the push effect of family reunification and educational and professional opportunities, better explain transnational political participation. Borjas (1987), along the same lines, has already explained that the selective migration (self-selection) of educated and skilled migrants can lead to more active participation in civic activities. In the Colombian case, this

pattern is supported by the fact that more educated Colombians seeking educational and employment opportunities tend to participate more actively in transnational political practices.

The analysis of the relationship between integration variables, as described in the previous chapter, and political participation states that fully integrated Colombians have a political participation rate of 25%. In comparison, those who are partially integrated have a rate of 24.8%. This is particularly important in refuting, at least in the case of Colombians in Germany, that the zero-sum assumptions (Koopmans et al., 2005) are not true, as integration into German society does not nullify political ties with Colombia. Instead, it points to simultaneous transnationalism (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004), which suggests that migrants maintain multiple transnational ties without excluding each other. In contrast, Colombians who are not integrated in Germany show the highest level of participation in Colombia (40.0%), which could be explained by their short time in the country and as a reaction to their exclusion from the German political system.

Now, let's go back to the 22% participation rate in political activities in Colombia and examine the information in Table 14. This political participation is also embedded in the set of transnational activities analyzed in the survey, where the cumulative percentage of those who participate in one or more activities adds up to 47%, who combine voting in Colombian elections with paying pensions in Colombia, and another 15% who exclusively vote in Colombian elections. Thus, transnational political practices are primarily defined by individual practices, such as voting, and are far removed from formal organizations. Participation in electoral campaigns accounts for only 4% cumulatively, which aligns with individual participation outside formal and regulated organizational structures, such as electoral events subject to surveillance and control.

The aforementioned 47% suggests that pension payments in Colombia serve as a form of anticipation and planning for retirement, as well as a cross-border investment, involving the movement of money from employment income in Germany through formal institutional mechanisms, such as banks and financial intermediaries. Along the same lines, 15% invest in Colombian businesses, suggesting that the movement of money is not exclusive to remittances, but rather a strategic investment typical of an upper-middle class that has the capacity to think about economic strategies beyond subsistence and possible medium- or long-term return plans, which also involves specialized knowledge of finance and cross-border management skills.

Table 14. Participation in Transnational Activities

Participation in Transnational Activities			
	Frequency	Percent	Percentage adjusted to positive answers
None	99	49	
By pension contributions, voting in Colombian elections	48	24	47
By participating in aid and development projects in Colombia	18	9	18
By investing in business or assets in Colombia	15	7	15
By voting in Colombian elections.	14	7	14
By participating in political campaigns in Colombia	4	2	4
More than one choice	3	1	3

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

The 18% corresponding to participation in development and aid projects shows a commitment and social responsibility that can be channeled through NGOs or international cooperation institutions for socioeconomic development and environmental protection in Colombia. This considerable participation would show that Colombians in Germany are becoming agents of socioeconomic development, and is conceptually consistent with forms of social and political transnationalism.

Another way of transnational political practices is the mobilizations (Demos) of Colombians in Germany from a political activism perspective. This research has documented two significant events of transnational political activism that represent additional manifestations of transnational political engagement. It has already become clear that political participation in formal organizations is very low and that political practices have an individual and informal sphere. However, the demonstrations that took place in 2019 and 2021 contradict the above and are worth exploring.

Since 2019, groups of Colombians in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, and Bonn have organized demonstrations in solidarity with the social mobilizations occurring in Colombia. While mobilizations predated 2019, they achieved unprecedented scale that year. Protests in Colombia trigger coordinated responses from a dispersed international network. This dynamic reveals a relationship of dependency and cooperation between groups abroad and their counterparts within the country. Their recent mass character since 2018 stems from

the widespread use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, which makes them decentralized and multi-spatial, as connections between dispersed groups react synergistically and in response to events happening in Colombia.

These mobilizations primarily respond to political events occurring in Colombia. Therefore, rather than being deterritorialized, it is multi-sited, transnational, and quasi-spontaneous. The participating groups coordinated through digital social media without formally forming an organization. There is always an element of informality, which is made possible by the speed and, in many cases, the anonymity of social media. In such groups, responsibilities for communication, mobilization, and organization of Demos are shared and rotated, depending on the availability and willingness of members in the Facebook and WhatsApp groups. In 2019, demonstrations were held in several German cities in public squares with the intention of raising international awareness of Colombia internal political problems. In Berlin, demonstrations are held regularly in front of the Colombian Consulate, though they also occur in other locations throughout the city. The 2019 demonstrations (Lewin, 2023; Pardo, 2019) were organized in support of Colombian National Strike, protesting the murders of social leaders and the perceived lack of commitment by President Iván Duque's government to the peace agreements with the FARC (Figure 33).

Figure 33. Demonstrations in Berlin in solidarity with the 2021 social uprising in Colombia

Note. Photograph reproduced from Unidas por la Paz–Colombia Facebook page (2021).

The 2021 protests marked a turning point due to their magnitude, international coordination, and political visibility. The protests took place in several major European cities, including Berlin, where nearly 1,000 Colombians attended from the Consulate to the Brandenburg Gate. The main reason was the rejection of a tax reform by the President Duque government and the death of protesters due to excessive violence by the Colombian police forces. In solidarity with the demonstrations in Colombia, large-scale, high-visibility international demonstrations were organized (Amerika21, 2021; Amnesty International, 2022; El Espectador, 2021). Groups from other Latin American countries and ethnic minorities also participated in these intersectoral and transnational demonstrations.

This form of political participation cannot be quantified, as there are no accurate records of the number of people who participated in these demonstrations, nor is it recorded in the survey. However, these events are documented as demonstrations that took place in the streets and public places of major German cities. Political transnationalism faces this methodological difficulty, as it is sensitive and challenging to record, is underreported, and escapes the quantitative data described above. The permanence of this political activism is crucial in determining its transnational character, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The events of 2019 and 2021 show that, beyond the low levels of participation in formal political organizations documented in the surveys, there is an active core of Colombians in Germany who have developed strategies for transnational political participation, which work between local activism in Colombian groups in each of the German cities, and which are motivated by international solidarity. Political transnationalism is a social sphere of great interest in the case of Colombians in Germany.

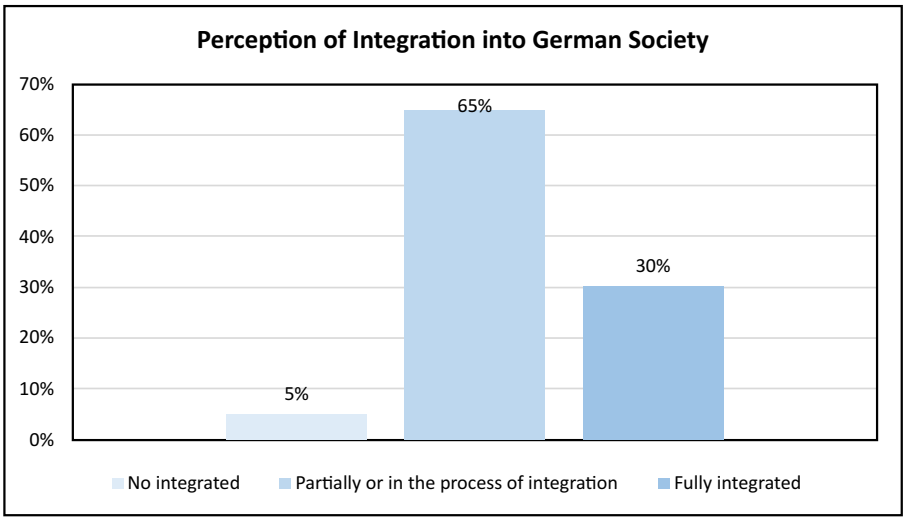
6.3 Socio-Cultural and Family Practices

This section examines the sociocultural and familial practices of Colombians in Germany based on survey data analysis. These practices represent concrete expressions of transnationality, from communication methods with family members in Colombia to participation in community organizations and cultural activities. The analysis incorporates both respondents' perceptions of these practices and their reported behaviors. Taken together, these dimensions provide insight into how Colombians navigate and sustain transnational lives within the German context.

Integration into German society therefore provides the starting point the variable of integration into German society, as represented in Figure 34. It shows a pattern of progressive

integration, where 5% define themselves as not integrated, 65% are in the process of integration, and 30% declare themselves to be fully integrated. This integration is influenced by employment status, language learning, and length of residence in Germany. Therefore, it cannot be assumed to be a binary relationship of belonging or not belonging. Rather, it is a gradual, multidimensional process, as illustrated in the figure and the other variables analyzed in this section.

Figure 34. Perception of Integration into German Society



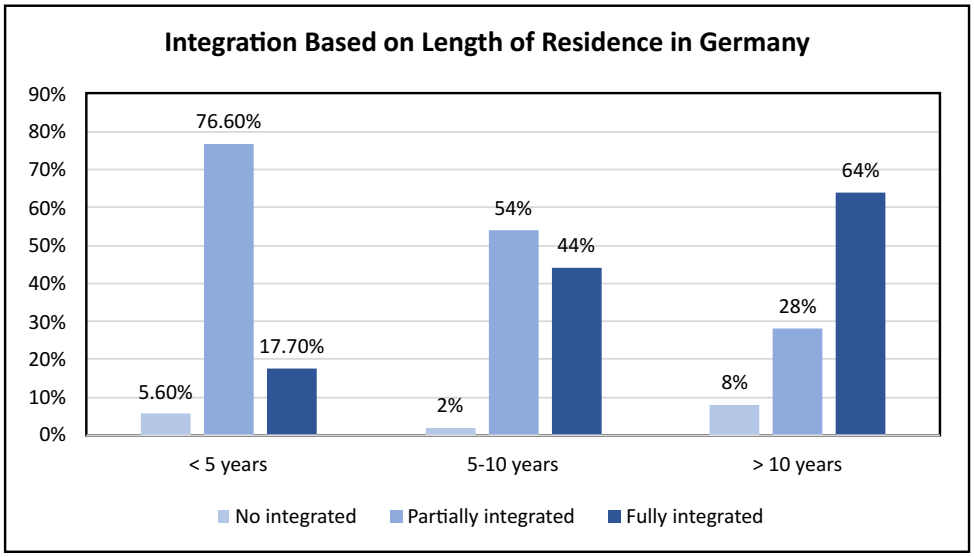
Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Colombians' assessment of their integration is high, a self-perception marked by their migration history and their own experiences in Germany. It is common for migrants to understand the process of *cultural negotiation* as a stage of adaptation and integration into the host society. This process of negotiation involves learning and adapting to new social, economic, political, and cultural practices while simultaneously maintaining those from the country of origin. This is the very essence of transnationality, which aligns with the literature referenced in the theoretical framework, particularly the ideas proposed by Pries (2001a) and Vertovec (2009) regarding the simultaneity of multiple belongings.

When cross-referencing integration variables with length of residence in Germany, a clear pattern of sustained progression emerges, as shown in Figure 35. The longer the residence, the greater the integration. Let's examine the bars for partially integrated across the three-time horizons: less than 5 years, between 5 and 10 years, and more than 10 years. There is a gradual transfer, that is, it can be deduced that 76.6% of those with less than 5 years is reduced to 54% between 5 and 10 years, and then to 28%, which means that they become fully integrated over

time. The partially integrated bar decreases simultaneously with the increase of the fully integrated bar. This is the possible transfer. Specifically, the fully integrated bar goes from 17.7% to 44% and reaches 64% as Colombians live longer in Germany. This is a very telling fact and could be used as an analytical predictor that considers the integration of migrants.

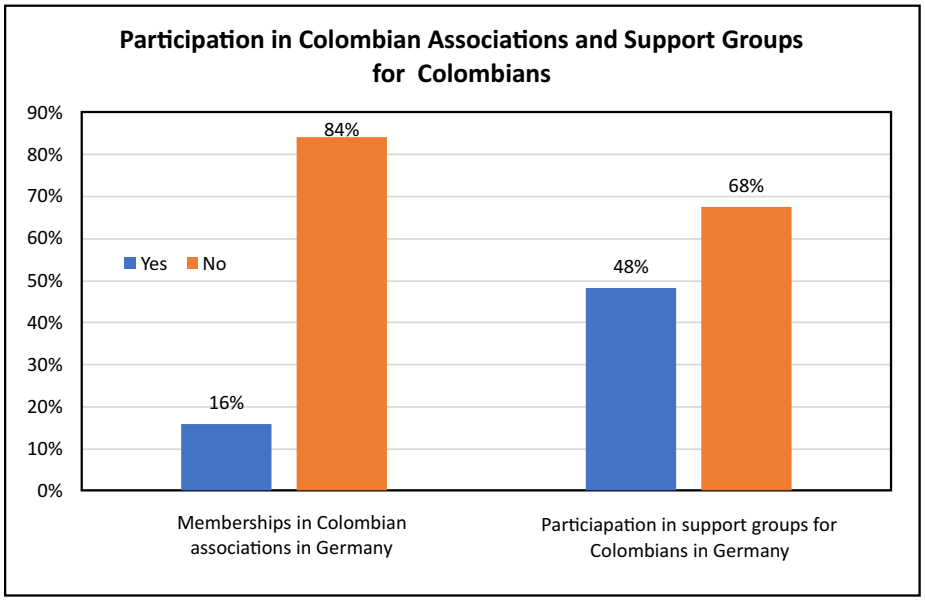
Figure 35. Integration Based on Length of Residence in Germany



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Participation in migrant groups constitutes an important dimension of community and social life, as it provides opportunities to meet other Colombians and sustain cultural and social practices. These groups operate on the premise that practices characteristic of the migrant community cultural identity emerge and are reinforced through interactions among its members. Colombian celebrations, events, and activities usually take place in the presence of other Colombians. Figure 36 summarizes two variables from the survey. The first is membership in Colombian associations in Germany, such as the Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis and the association Aluna-Minga. The second is participation in support groups for other Colombians, such as social media groups and local city-based groups. The first is formal, established and permanent organizations; the second is informal, consisting of intermittent groups that do not require formal membership.

Figure 36. Participation in Colombian Associations and Support Groups for Colombians

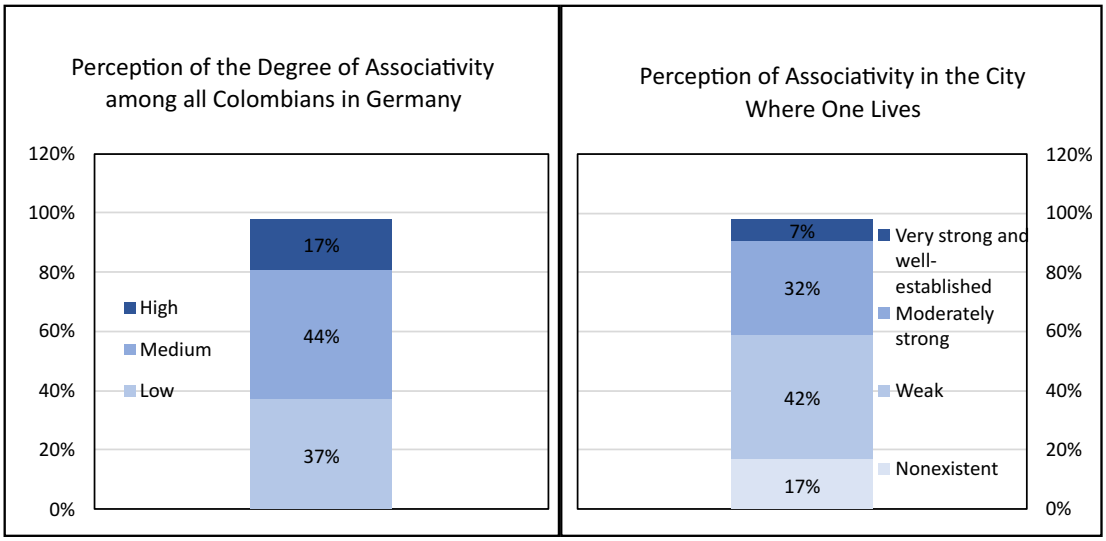


Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Formal organizational membership remains limited at 16%, while participation in informal groups is substantially higher at 48%, indicating a 32% gap between formal and informal forms of community involvement. This disparity suggests that Colombians living in Germany tend to favor less structured and institutionalized forms of organization, with greater flexibility and spontaneous mutual support networks over formal affiliations with established organizations. Likewise, the predominance of non-participation in both categories (84% in formal associations and 68% in support groups) shows the low levels of community association. However, it also suggests that there is a segment of the population that, although not willing to commit to formal organizational structures, occasionally participates in mutual aid initiatives.

Perceptions offer a complementary perspective to observable practices. the previous section documented how Colombians associate; the following data capture their perception of this same phenomenon. Figure 37 summarizes two variables from the survey. The first is the respondents' perception of the degree of associativity of all Colombians in Germany as a whole. The second variable is the perception of the degree of associativity of Colombians residing in the same city as the respondents.

Figure 37. Perception of Associativity in National and Local Context



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

A differentiated perceptions of Colombian associativity emerge between the national and local levels. At the national level, 44% of respondents perceive a medium degree of associativity among Colombians in Germany. In comparison, only 17% consider it high, which constitutes a moderately positive perception of the associative fabric at the national level. However, this perception is dramatically reversed when examining the local level, where 42% rate associativity in their city of residence as weak and 17% as non-existent, reaching 59% who perceive significant limitations in community cohesion in their cities at the immediate territorial level. This disparity suggests that Colombians tend to idealize or overestimate the strength of their community at the abstract-national level, while experiencing the real limitations of associative ties in their concrete living spaces on a daily basis.

From a geographical perspective, this finding is significant. The gap between national and local perception (44% vs. 32% in medium-high categories) highlights a feature characteristic of dispersed migrant communities, in which the imagined cohesion of a national community contrasts with patterns of effective territorial fragmentation. This discrepancy can be interpreted as the result of the influence of digital social networks and virtual media that generate a sense of broad community belonging without necessarily translating into dense associative ties within specific territories. The fact that only 7% perceive local associativity as very strong, compared to 17% at the national level, underscores the structural difficulties in materializing cohesive transnational social spaces at the urban scale.

This virtual nature is a key or understanding contemporary associative life. Communication via social media constitutes a major part of interactions among Colombians in Germany, and, consequently, plays a significant role in shaping associative dynamics. The purpose of digital technologies in building and sustaining transnational social spaces is central. As indicated in Table 15, 82.1% of respondents use these platforms to connect with fellow Colombians in Germany. The high penetration of social networks contrasts significantly with the low levels of participation in formal associations (16%) and face-to-face support groups (48%), as discussed earlier. This suggests that virtual communities have become the main means of fostering community cohesion, either replacing or supplementing traditional territorial organizations. The 17.9% who do not use social media to connect with other Colombians represent a small proportion who probably maintain direct, face-to-face interpersonal links.

Table 15. Use of Social Media

Use of social media to communicate with other Colombians in Germany

	N	%
Yes	165	82.1
No	36	17.9
Total	201	100.0

Social media App used

	N	%
Facebook	136	67.7
Instagram	3	1.5
WhatsApp	31	15.4
YouTube	2	1.0
More than one	3	1.5
None	25	12.4
Total	200	99.5
Missing	1	.5
	201	100.0

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

Among the social media options, Facebook is the leading platform with 67.7% preference. This concentration of communication on a single platform facilitates the efficient circulation of community information, cultural events, job opportunities, and content related to Colombia. The significantly lower presence of other platforms such as WhatsApp (15.4%), Instagram (1.5%), or YouTube (1%), tells specific functional specializations, *i.e.,* these media are used for specific purposes, but Facebook operates as a virtual public place. At the same time, WhatsApp is reserved for more personal, direct, and perhaps more private communications. The 12.4% who say they do not use any specific application may be using multiple platforms without a defined preference or maintaining connections through non-digital means.

This is how communication defines and enables some transnational sociocultural practices, especially when it comes to communicating with family and friends in their place of origin. The ethnosurvey asked whether the respondents lived in Germany with family members, as this could define part of the social relationships that an individual establishes in their destination. The type and nature of interpersonal relationships established by a married person with a family differ from those of a single person. Table 16 summarizes the living arrangements of Colombian respondents and the methods of communication used to connect with their families in Colombia. Clear patterns arise. Almost half, 46.8%, do not live with any relatives, *i.e*., without a spouse, children, parents, or other relatives, while 38.8% live with their spouse or partner. These two predominant types of domestic organization account for 85.6% of cases. The minority presence of other family arrangements (8% with children, 1% with parents, 5.5% with other relatives) shows that Colombian migration to Germany is predominantly characterized by individual or couple migration projects, rather than by processes of extended family reunification, which directs the dynamics of maintaining transnational ties from the domestic sphere.

Table 16. Living Arrangements and Communication Methods

Living with a family member in Germany.	N	%
None	94	46.8
Spouse/partner	78	38.8
Children	16	8.0
Parents	2	1.0
Other relatives	11	5.5
Total	201	100.0

Ways to communicate with family and friends	N	%
Video-calls (WhatsApp, Skype, other)	5	2.5
Chat + Video-calls (WhatsApp and others)	78	38.8
Chat (WhatsApp, Facebook, otros)	91	45.3
Cell phone	2	1.0
Email	2	1.0
Landline phone	23	11.4
Total	201	100.0

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

The data highlight the digitization of communication as a dominant pattern, with 83.6% of Colombians relying exclusively on digital channels to maintain contact with family and friends in Colombia (38.8% chat only, 45.3% chat and video calls). This digital pattern contrasts dramatically with the residual use of traditional media such as cell phones (1%), email (1%), and landlines (11.4%). The preference for applications such as WhatsApp and similar platforms reflects not only economic and accessibility considerations but also shapes new

forms of long-distance family intimacy, allowing for continuous daily contact without the time and financial limitations of previous technologies.

Virtual communications with family members have undoubtedly made it possible to maintain cross-border ties. Being virtually connected between Germany and Colombia means that it is possible to remain largely in touch with family. The spatial dispersion of the family no longer means the breaking of ties. The ethnosurvey also collected data to assess the nature of transnational ties. Table 17 summarizes the variables that Colombians perceive as affecting the current state of ties with Colombia, which include economic, family, cultural, and political connections, as well as emotional and identity-related ones. The results show an equal division between those who consider them to be strong (50.2%) and those who perceive them to have weakened (49.3%). This could be interpreted as meaning that Colombians perceive their experience of transnational connectivity in a different way. This symmetrical distribution suggests that ties with Colombia are maintained in diverse ways, shaped by individual, family, and contextual factors across different stages of residence in Germany.

Table 17. Ties Strength and Importance of Maintaining Ties with Colombia

Ties with Colombia		
	N	%
They have weakened	99	49.3
They remain strong	101	50.2
Total	200	99.5
Missing	1	.5
	201	100.0

Importance of keeping these ties with Colombia		
	N	%
Very Important	144	71.6
Not very important	56	27.9
Total	200	99.5
Missing	1	.5
	201	100.0

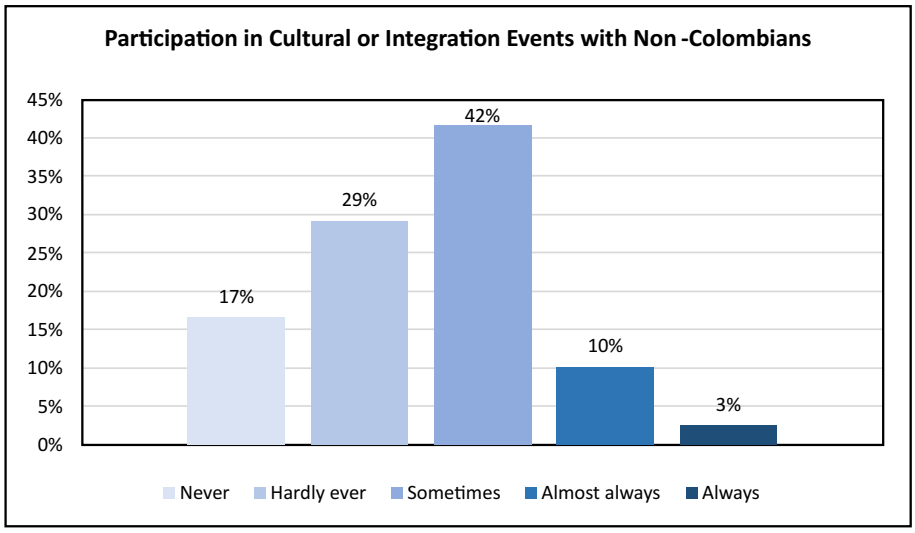
Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

However, perceptions of the strength of current ties differ from their perceived importance, as only 50.2% report strong ties, yet 71.6% regard maintaining connections with Colombia as very important. There is a 21.4% gap between subjective assessment and practical experience. This difference could indicate the existence of structural barriers or practical limitations that prevent the desire to maintain strong transnational ties from being fully realized. Factors such as geographical distance, the demands of integration into German society, local work and family responsibilities, or economic limitations on frequent travel and communication could be contributing to this unwanted erosion of ties with the country of origin.

On the other hand, migrants' daily lives often involve interactions with nationals of the host country and with other migrants of their own nationality and diverse origins. Thus,

Colombians develop their daily social practices among Germans, with other Colombians, and with other migrants in their workplaces and social circles. These are spheres that sometimes coincide and sometimes do not. Participation in cultural or integration events with non-Colombian populations is a crucial indicator for assessing intercultural integration processes and openness to diversity in the German migration context. The frequency distribution shown in Figure 38 reveals a pattern of moderate participation, with 42% of respondents sometimes participating in this type of activity, which is therefore the predominant modality. This, in turn, shows a selective attitude toward intercultural involvement. This 42%, added to the 13% who participate more regularly (almost always, 10%, and always, 3%), amounts to 55% of Colombians who maintain some degree of participation in intercultural spaces, contrasting with 45% who have limited or no participation (hardly ever, 29%, and never, 17%).

Figure 38. Participation in Non-Colombian Events



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

This pattern reflects the 42% who participate occasionally are engaging in a pragmatic integration strategy with other migrants, especially other Latinos, whereby Colombians selectively participate in multicultural events without committing themselves intensively to these activities. As established, Colombians demonstrate a particularly high degree of commitment. This suggests intercultural integration operates as an instrumental practice oriented toward specific objectives (such as professional networking, language learning, and cultural knowledge) than as a form of primary socialization or deep identity construction. The 29% reporting rare participation may face language, cultural, or socioeconomic barriers that restrict their access to these spaces. The 17% who never participate may be evidence of another,

opposite strategy by integrating exclusively with the majority German society or maintaining endogamous community orientations, exclusively with other Colombians.

6.4 Multidimensional Analysis of the Transnationality of Colombians in Germany

This section presents the results of applying the Transnationality Index (TI) to analyze transnational social practices and determine the degree of development of the transnational phenomenon among Colombians in Germany. The results constitute the first systematic application of a quantitative transnationality index to Colombian migration in the European context. The analysis employs the index methodology described in Chapter 3 and is based on ethnosurvey data, interpreted within the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

The results are quantitatively characterized by the degree of development of transnational social practices among Colombians in Germany, identify differential patterns in the four proposed analytical dimensions (family-affective, sociocultural, economic, and political-civic), and establish transnationality profiles that contribute to the theoretical understanding of the contemporary migration phenomenon from a geographical perspective.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were partially described in Chapter 5; however, it is relevant to note that the data confirm a higher proportion of Colombian women in Germany, a pattern consistent with contemporary international migration trends. Regarding temporal distribution, the sample displays substantial heterogeneity in years of residence in Germany, reflecting different stages of the settlement process, from the initial phase of establishment (1–2 years) to long-term residence (more than 11 years). This temporal diversity is particularly valuable for the analysis, as it allows us to observe how transnational practices develop over the course of residence.

The cities of residence include both major urban centers and medium-sized and small cities, providing a diverse geographical representation that captures spatial variability, analyzed in Chapter 5. This spatial distribution is particularly relevant for future research that seeks to map the specific territorial expressions of Colombian transnationalism in the German urban context.

6.4.1 Application of the Transnationality Index

The application of the multidimensional Transnationality Index to the sample of Colombian migrants yields an average value of **33.5** points on a scale of 0 to 100, with a median of 33.7 points. Table 18 summarizes the main statistics. These values position the studied population at a low level of transnationality, according to the interpretive scale proposed in the methodology. The proximity between the mean and the median (difference of 0.2 points) suggests a relatively normal distribution of scores, although with a slight concentration at the lower values of the scale.

The data exhibit moderate variability, evidenced by a standard deviation of 19 and a corresponding coefficient of variation of 56.7%. This dispersion reveals that transnational profiles within the Colombian community are heterogeneous, with some individuals engaging in more intense transnational practices than others. The observed range of 87.5 (minimum: 5.0, maximum: 92.5) confirms this heterogeneity, showing that, although no migrant reaches the theoretical maximum of 100 points, there is considerable variation in the degrees of transnationality developed.

Table 18. Statistical Summary of the Transnationality Index

Statistical Summary		
Statistic	**Value**	**Interpretation**
Sample Size (n)	201	Colombian migrants in Germany
Mean	33.53	Low-moderate transnationality level
Median	33.75	50th percentile value
Standard Deviation	19.01	Moderate variability in scores
Range	5.0 - 92.5	Wide distribution span
Coefficient of Variation	56.70%	Substantial heterogeneity in sample

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Transnational Index developed for this study.

The average value of the index is 33.5, which indicates **low overall transnationality**. The disaggregated values of each of the four dimensions according to the interpretive scale (Figure 39, Chapter 3). Minimum Level (0-20 points): 51 cases (25.4%). This segment of the population is characterized by limited and sporadic transnational ties, restricted mainly to basic family contacts. According to the theoretical framework, these migrants are in the initial stage

of transnationalization proposed by Faist et al. (2013), characterized by incipient cross-border practices that have not yet consolidated stable transnational social structures.

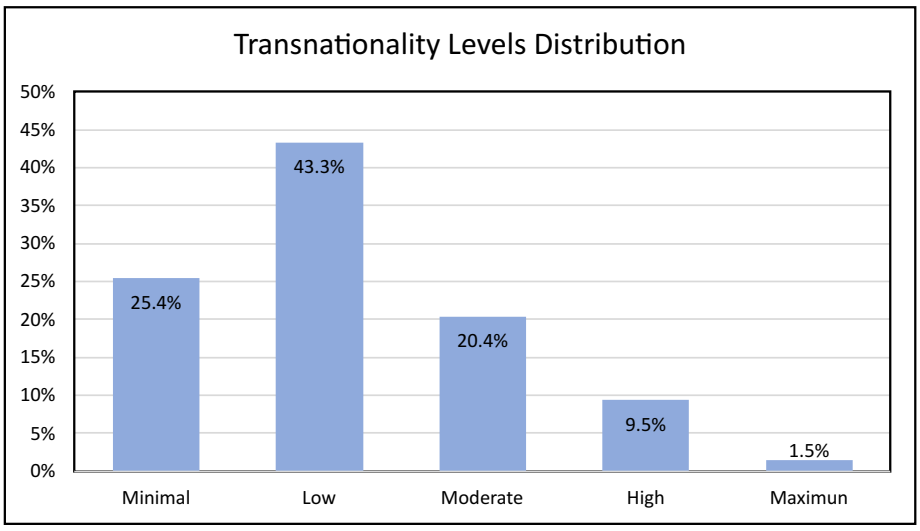
Low level (21-40 points), 87 cases (43.3%). This is the predominant group in the sample, representing the most common pattern of transnationality among Colombians in Germany. Migrants at this level develop selective transnational practices, typically concentrated in two main dimensions: the family-affective and, to a lesser extent, the sociocultural. This pattern suggests the formation of what Vertovec (2009) calls basic transnational social fields, focused on maintaining essential family and community ties.

Moderate Level (41-60 points), 41 cases (20.4%). This segment showcases a more diversified transnational engagement, characterized by regular participation in multiple dimensions of transnational life. These migrants have developed what Pries (2001) conceptualizes as more consolidated transnational social spaces, characterized by practices that transcend family ties to include systematic sociocultural and, occasionally, economic activities.

High Level (61-80 points), 19 cases (9.5%). Migrants at this level demonstrate robust transnational integration that includes sociocultural activism and, in some cases, political participation. This group approaches what Faist et al. define as full transnationality, with sustained practices that articulate multiple spheres of cross-border social life.

Maximum Level (81-100 points), 3 cases (1.5%). The very few cases at this level suggest that the development of comprehensive transnationality faces significant structural limitations in the German context.

Figure 39. Transnationality Levels Distribution



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Transnational Index developed for this study.

The overall Transnationality Index of 33.5, placing Colombia at a relatively low level, and the proportions at each level of the scale have also been established. Significantly, the concentration of 68.7% (25.4% + 43.3%) of the sample at the minimum and low levels of transnationality (0-40 points). This distribution suggests that most Colombians in Germany develop a **selective transnationalism**, characterized by practices focused on maintaining family and community ties, rather than engaging in comprehensive transnational activities.

This concentration at lower levels can be interpreted from multiple theoretical perspectives. From Smith and Guarnizo's (1998) approach to transnationalism *from below*, the results suggest that community-based transnational initiatives face structural limitations in the German context that restrict their full development. On the other hand, from the perspective of Faist et al. (2013), these findings may suggest that most migrants are in the early stages of the transnationalization process, having not yet achieved the consolidation of dense and stable transnational social spaces.

Furthermore, analysis of the individual dimensions (Figures 40 and 41) reveals a clear hierarchical pattern in the development of transnational practices, indicating differentiated levels of transnational intensity across distinct spheres of social life.

Family-Emotional Dimension: 62.5%. This dimension registers the highest scores, confirming the centrality of emotional and family ties in the construction of transnationality. The findings are coincistent with Vertovec's (2009) concept on *transnational social morphologies*, in which emotional ties constitute the fundamental basis of new hybrid social formations. The high score in this dimension reflects the persistence and intensity of family communication practices, the systematic sending of remittances for family support, and the maintenance of cross-border emotional ties that characterize the Colombian migratory experience.

Sociocultural Dimension: 45.2%. The moderate scores in this dimension indicate the formation of what Pries (2001) refers to as *transnational social spaces* through participation in Colombian associations, mutual aid groups, virtual social networks, and cultural events. However, the intermediate score suggests that not all migrants develop strong community ties, indicating differentiated processes of integration into Colombian transnational social networks in Germany. Some Colombian migrants develop systematic community ties, while others maintain more individualized or family-based patterns of participation. Relatively high levels of engagement are seen through virtual social media with other Colombians, whereas membership in formal associations and participation in cultural events display considerably greater variability. This means that digital technologies are facilitating the creation of

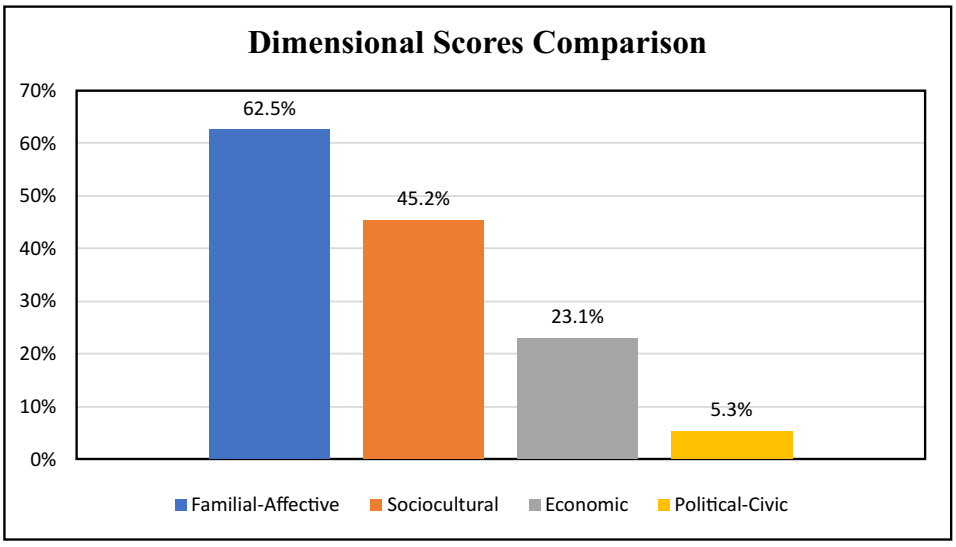
transnational virtual communities, but in-person participation in community activities faces additional barriers related to time, resources, and geographic location.

Economic Dimension: 23.1%. The limited scores in this dimension show significant restrictions on the development of transnational economic activities. Contrary to other migratory contexts documented in the literature, such as the Mexican-United States case analyzed by Portes et al. (1999), Colombians in Germany show limitations in developing transnational entrepreneurship, binational investments, or systematic cross-border economic activities. This lower propensity for transnational economic activities can be attributed to a combination of German-specific bureaucratic barriers, binational investment hurdles, limited capital access, and restrictive regulatory frameworks. It is also linked to the socioeconomic profile of the Colombian migrant population, which consists primarily of professionals and students rather than entrepreneurs. From Sassen (2000) theoretical perspective on global cities, the results establish that German cities do not function as effective nodes for the development of Colombian transnational economic circuits. This limits the formation of what she calls *cross-border geographies of centrality*. This economic limitation also restricts the possibilities for creating economically dynamic transnational urban spaces, concentrating the spatial expression of Colombian transnationalism in domestic and community spheres.

Political-Civic Dimension: 5.3%. The extremely low score in this dimension is one of the most significant findings of the analysis. Minimal transnational political participation suggests the existence of institutional and structural barriers that limit the development of what Guarnizo (2008) refers to as transnational citizenship. Weak participation in Colombian and German political organizations, as well as limited participation in political activities in Colombia, indicates a pattern of political disengagement that contrasts with the intensity of family and sociocultural ties.

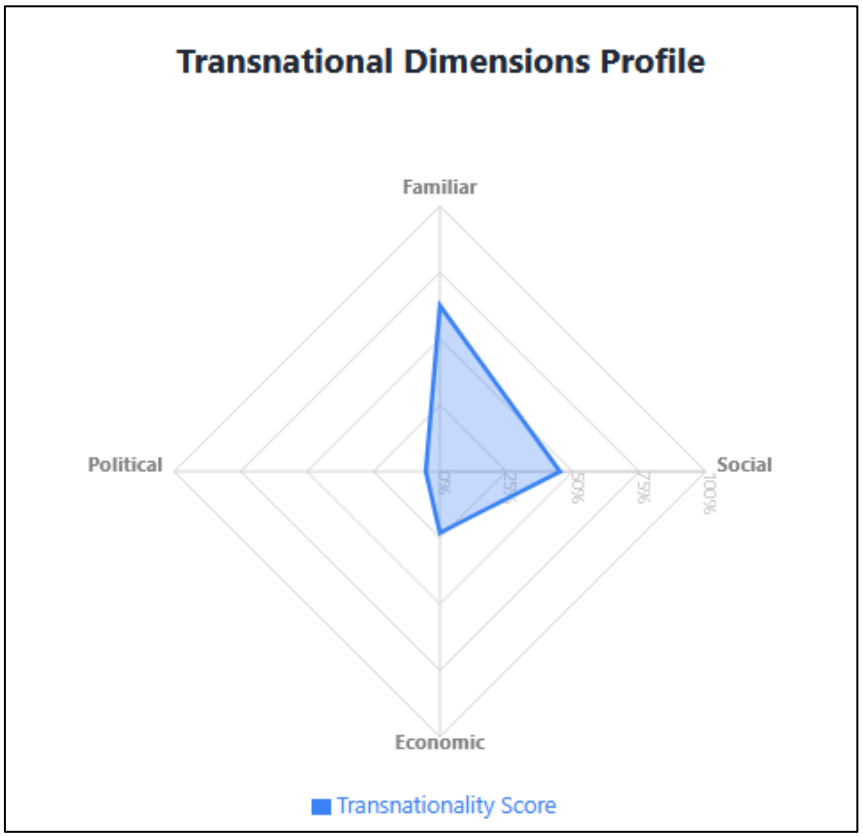
Several concurrent factors can explain limited political participation. First, the characteristics of the German political system, which have traditionally favored assimilationist rather than multiculturalist models of integration, may discourage transnational political participation. Second, German regulations on dual citizenship and political participation by foreigners may impose significant institutional barriers. Third, the nature of Colombian migration to Germany, motivated primarily by academic and professional reasons rather than political crises, may lead to a lower propensity toward transnational political activism.

Figure 40. Dimensional Scores Comparison



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Transnational Index developed for this study.

Figure 41. Transnational Dimensions Profile



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Transnational Index developed for this study.

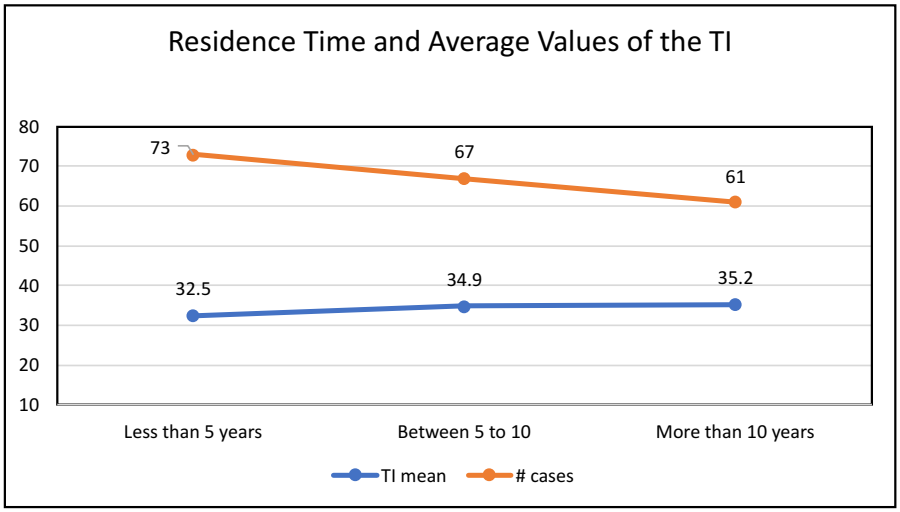
The observed dimensional hierarchy (***Family > Sociocultural > Economic > Political***) reflects the structural conditions of the German context and the adaptive strategies of

Colombian migrants. The dominance of the family-affective dimension can be interpreted in light of what Smith (2001) refers to as the translocal nature of migratory practices, where places of origin and destination are connected primarily through emotional ties and family care practices. However, the weaknesses in the economic and political dimensions suggest that the transnational urbanism proposed by Smith (2001) develops only partially in the Colombian-German case, being limited to certain types of urban places (restaurants, churches, domestic spaces) without fully extending to economic and political spheres. The following chapter provides a detailed exploration of this topic.

Comparing overall values of the index by gender, minimal differences emerge, with women scoring an average of 33.2 points, while men score 35.1 points. This difference of 1.9 points is not statistically significant, suggesting that, in the German context, transnational practices are not strongly differentiated by gender.

Another interesting finding when analyzing the relationship between the length of residence in Germany and the development of transnationality challenges conventional theoretical expectations. The data in Figure 42 shows limited variation in TI scores according to years of residence:

Figure 42. Residence Time and Average Values of the Transnationality Index



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Transnational Index developed for this study.

The gradual but modest progression (a total increase of 3.7 points between the most recent group and the group with the longest stay) suggests that transnational practices stabilize relatively early in the migration trajectory, contrary to the expectation of a linear increase in transnationality over time of residence. This pattern can be interpreted from two perspectives. On the one hand, the early stabilization of transnational practices indicates that Colombians

quickly develop strategies for maintaining cross-border ties as an initial adaptation mechanism. On the other hand, the limited progression over time indicates the existence of structural factors that impose a *ceiling* on transnational development, regardless of length of residence.

Overall, the results provide empirical validation of the analytical model of transnational social spaces proposed by Faist et al. (2013). The Colombian case in Germany presents a dimensional hierarchy: Family > Sociocultural > Economic > Political and confirms the theoretical proposal on the gradual and differentiated development of transnationalism across the spheres of social life. In particular, the findings support the conceptual distinction between *transnationalization* (the initial process), *transnational social spaces* (intermediate structures), and *transnationality* (full consolidation). The concentration of the sample at the lower levels of the index establishes that most Colombians in Germany are in the initial stages of transnationalization.

The analysis of control variables using Pearson's *r* correlations yields complementary results that help explain these behaviors. Table 19 summarizes Pearson's bivariate analyses as a correlation matrix. This matrix reveals that there is virtually no correlation between German integration and ties to Colombia (r = .024), which constitutes compelling evidence that refutes the substitution hypothesis and confirms the complementarity hypothesis, meaning that integration into German culture and society does not reduce Colombians' connection to their country of origin, Colombia. The absence of a negative correlation suggests that the processes of local integration and the maintenance of transnational ties operate independently and non-competitively.

On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between length of residence and German integration (r = .452), confirming the evolutionary behavior of transnational development where temporal consolidation facilitates integration without compromising ties to the country of origin. The longer Colombians live in Germany, the greater the possibility of integration. At the same time, the weak negative correlation between age and ties to Colombia (r = -.186) suggests that younger generations develop more intense transnational strategies, possibly mediated by digital communication technologies. This evidence supports the conceptualization of transnationality as a generationally differentiated phenomenon.

The correlations between transnational practice variables show links with Colombia and are significantly associated with more frequent remittances (r = .289) and associative participation (r = .234). Educational level shows weak positive correlations with transnational economic practices (r = .198), indicating that, while cultural capital facilitates transnationality, it does not determine it.

Table 19. Correlation Analysis Matrix

Correlation Analysis Matrix				
Variable Relationship	**Pearson's r**	**Strength**	**Direction**	**Interpretation**
Residence Time × German Integration	0.452	Moderate	Positive	Longer residence increases integration probability
German Integration × Colombia Ties	0.024	Very Weak	Positive	Integration does NOT reduce transnational ties
Age × Colombia Ties	-0.186	Weak	Negative	Younger migrants maintain stronger ties
Education Level × Remittances	0.198	Weak	Positive	Higher education enables more remittances
Gender × Transnational Practices	0.134	Weak	Positive	Women slightly more transnational

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey. Pearson's correlation coefficients are reported.

Analysis of the variables of perception regarding the degree of associativity of Colombians in Germany and in the same city where the Colombian respondents live reveal a fundamental contradiction in Colombian transnationalism in Germany, the existence of a big gap between perception and associative practice (see Table 20). While 44.7% of participants perceive a medium level of Colombian associativity at the national level and only 17.3% consider associativity to be non-existent in their local city, empirical reality shows that 84.1% do not belong to any Colombian association. This discrepancy can be interpreted as a form of *imagined transnational social capital* that transcends formal organizational structures. The consistency analysis states that 35.0% of cases exhibit inconsistency between perception and practice. This imply that a substantial proportion of migrants maintain optimistic perceptions of community associativity despite not actively engaging in it.

Table 20. Associativity Perception vs. Actual Membership

Associativity Perception vs Actual Membership					
Dimension	**High/Strong**	**Medium/Moderate**	**Low/Weak**	**None/Nonexistent**	**Reality Check**
National perception of associativity	17.80%	**44.70%**	37.60%	—	62.5% perceive medium-high associativity
Local perception of associativity in Germany	7.10%	33.00%	**42.60%**	17.30%	40.1% perceive moderate-strong local networks
Actual Membership	**15.9% YES**			**84.1% NO**	**MASSIVE PERCEPTION-PRACTICE GAP**
Coherence Analysis	65.0% Coherent Cases		35.0% Incoherent Cases		Moderate perception-practice alignment

Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data collected through an original ethnosurvey.

The scalar differentiation is interesting, perceptions at the national level (62.5% positive perception combining medium and high) are consistently more optimistic than local perceptions, indicating that *transnational imagination* functions more intensely on broad geographical scales than in specific urban contexts. Importantly, the analysis by level of German integration shows that perceptions of associativity do not vary significantly according to the degree of local integration, thereby reinforcing the idea of complementarity by demonstrating that transnational awareness persists regardless of the level of incorporation into the host society. These findings provide empirical evidence to the theoretical debate on transnationalism; they validate the methodological importance of including perceptual variables in the measurement of transnational phenomena and contributing to the conceptual development of transnational social spaces as multidimensional configurations that operate simultaneously in material and symbolic dimensions.

CHAPTER 7. TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS, COMMUNITIES, AND SPACES

This chapter examines the existence and degree of development of two advanced social formations of transnationalism, transnational networks and communities in the Colombian context, and the material and symbolic production of transnational geographical spaces. This addresses research questions two and three, along with their corresponding objectives three and four, established at the introduction chapter of this dissertation. Together with the previous chapter, these analyses constitute the core empirical examination of transnational practices to determine their level of development.

Likewise, this chapter utilizes primary information from 30 semi-structured interviews conducted with Colombians in various German cities and online, as well as with Colombian social organizations in Germany. Additionally, the ethnosurvey collected qualitative and opinion-based information on specific aspects of Colombian organizations. The findings from Chapter 6 provide an analytical and complementary foundation for this examination. Secondary audiovisual information and documents from these social organizations, as well as from the interviewees, are also utilized. Therefore, a content and discourse analysis of these mixed sources was necessary. The findings reveal that the Colombian population in Germany is in an early stage of transnationalization, characterized by individual rather than community social practices, organizations with intermittent cycles of activity, but with sufficient density to establish networks with a certain degree of stability. The chapter concludes that, although there are constituent elements of transnationality, the Colombian community has not yet achieved the level of consolidation required to be considered a fully formed transnational community; however, the organizations have achieved a level of organization that allows us to say that it is an established, diversified, and still developing transnational network. transnational geographical spaces lack their own material infrastructure and rely on the temporary appropriation of Colombians from domestic to urban spaces. It is an adaptive and hybrid transnational spatiality.

The question of transnational communities and networks must be situated within the Colombian migration context, a relatively recent and small population of approximately 20,705 residents in Germany as of 2020. This distinguishes it from the large diasporas typically examined in transnational studies and offers insights into how transnational formations emerge in smaller communities.

To address this chapter guiding questions, concerning the existence of Colombian transnational communities in Germany, the consolidation of their networks, and their production of transnational geographical spaces, this analysis employs the analytical models established in the theoretical framework. Specifically, it applies the conceptual framework of Faist et al. (2013) on the stages of transnational development. Furthermore, it utilizes the Harvey-Lefebvre grid to analyze spatial modalities (absolute, relative, relational) in conjunction with Lefebvre's triad (spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation), as well as the Smith and Guarnizo-Lefebvre grid to examine power relations (transnationalism from above vs. from below) across each of these spatial dimensions.

7.1 The Ties That (Don't) Bind: Individualism, Distrust, and the Limits of Community Formation

Since transnational practices constitute the basis for the formation of transnational communities, it is necessary to revisit the main findings of the previous chapter. According to the analytical model based on Faist et al. (2013), the development of a transnational community requires progression from individual practices of transnationalization to the consolidation of dense and stable transnational social spaces.

Among Colombians in Germany, familial-affective practices are the most developed dimension (62.5% in the transnationality index), as evidenced by the systematic maintenance of cross-border emotional ties and regular daily family communication. This preference for family connections over broader community engagement is reflected in one respondent answer, "…because the only thing that ties me down is my family, and I don't travel there much anymore due to the cost of the ticket, so I prefer to travel around Europe to get to know it." The primacy of selective family ties is further confirmed by the 83.6% who use exclusively digital communication means and the sustained sending of remittances, which grew from $23.7 million in 2005 to $78.2 million in 2020. However, remittance frequency remains limited, with only 21% sending them regularly. These practices produce material and symbolic transnational circuits that connect distant spaces but focus primarily on family ties rather than complex social formations.

The moderate score of the sociocultural dimension (45.2%) points to the formation of transnational social spaces that remain incipient and fragmented. This is driven by the use of social media, with 82.1% using digital platforms to connect with compatriots, Facebook being the predominant platform (67.7%). However, the digital contradiction is evident, as one

interviewee testifies, "…you may have 50 friends on Facebook, but there is no communication. Everyone posts their own stuff but doesn't comment on others posts." This superficial connectivity is reflected in the fact that "they invite you to their events, but when you go, they're not there; they're too busy and don't even say hello." Although 48% occasionally participate in informal mutual support groups and 55% maintain some degree of participation in intercultural activities, the community perception is contradictory, while 44% perceive a medium degree of national associativity, only 32% consider associativity in their specific city to be positive. One respondent sums up this fragmentation "I don't know many Colombian associations or formal and informal groups." Taken together, these accounts shows that digital networks have created a virtual public square that does not necessarily translate into dense and systematic community ties.

Transnational political practices demonstrate the capacity for mobilization, yet this potential is activated only under specific contextual conditions. Although participation in formal political organizations is very low (9% in organizations related to Colombia), the events of 2019 and 2021 demonstrated significant transnational coordination capacities. As one participant in the organizational interview recounts, "it was set up in 2016 to support the peace referendum in Colombia" (Unidas por la Paz), and subsequently "mobilizations took place in several major European cities, including Berlin, where nearly 1,000 Colombians marched from the Consulate to the Brandenburg Gate". However, these mobilizations face the limitation of situational dependence, "the fact that Gustavo Petro, a leftist, won the election [the Colombian presidential election] had an impact on the collective, as its identity was based on resistance and protest. The organization is currently experiencing a period of discouragement from organizational activities." This capacity for quasi-spontaneous mobilization, coordinated through decentralized social media, demonstrates the existence of effective transnational communication infrastructures. However, its reactive nature highlights the absence of permanent political structures that can sustain a stable transnational citizenship beyond specific events.

However, quantitative analysis using the Transnationality Index (Chapter 6) exposes significant structural limitations that prevent community consolidation. The average score of 33.5 points places Colombians at a low level of transnationality, with 68.7% of the sample concentrated at the minimum and low levels (0-40 points). This distribution confirms individual perceptions of community fragmentation, as expressed by multiple respondents, "Colombians are very individualistic…Everyone minds their own business." One testimony offers an explanation for this fragmentation based on experiences in Colombia; one interviewee

explains that “so many years of violence make you distrust even your neighbour... that distrust is in me because I have experienced violence... it’s a matter of survival.” This structural distrust translates into conscious strategies of community avoidance and confirms that the majority develop a selective transnationalism focused on maintaining basic family ties, rather than engaging in comprehensive development of transnational community activities. Only 11% reach high or maximum levels of transnationality, which may confirm that the formation of consolidated transnational leadership faces significant structural barriers derived from both the German context and the specific characteristics of Colombian migration. Guarnizo and Diaz (1999), Cortés and Sanmartín (2010), and González (2007) had already reported that mistrust is a characteristic present in the Colombian community in the United States and Spain, a characteristic that is corroborated by the findings of this study.

The low score of the economic dimension (23.1%) points to the lack of consolidated transnational economic circuits. Contrary to other documented migration, such as the Mexican-United States, Colombians in Germany face severe restrictions on developing transnational entrepreneurship or systematic binational investments. The data confirm this limitation, only 15% of respondents invest in Colombian businesses, according to the survey, while only 21% send remittances frequently, with 47.8% of these concentrated on basic family support. One respondent explains the motivations behind remittances, “I have physical reminders of my homeland, such as a vueltiao hat, and I watch news and reports from Colombia at home or at work,” but remittances are primarily used to “support his family” rather than for productive investments. This economic reality is exacerbated by the predominant migratory profile, as one interviewee observes, “the first Colombian students I met here are middle class, upper middle class. They came from German schools, from wealthy families,” but without transnational business orientation. The absence of genuinely transnational Colombian-German companies confirms that economic relations operate mainly through German multinational corporate structures rather than transnational community initiatives, limiting the possibilities for creating economically dynamic transnational urban spaces that sustain a consolidated community.

Territorial fragmentation constitutes a fundamental structural obstacle to community consolidation, as evidenced by demographic data and individual perceptions. With only 20,705 Colombians distributed throughout Germany, the population does not reach the critical mass necessary to generate consolidated community territorializations. Although the exact size of this critical mass is difficult to quantify, it is clear that it must exceed the current Colombian population. This dispersion generates individual experiences of isolation, “as far as Colombians are concerned, that has never played a role; no Colombian has ever accompanied

me," says one interviewee about his experience of integration. The analysis of associativity reveals that only 16% belong to formal Colombian associations. In comparison, 84% maintain exclusively individual or family ties, and ratifies the perception of one interviewee, "little participation. It served more as a seedbed for students at the University of Cologne" (referring to the now non-operational Kolumbiengruppe). The geographical paradox identified is particularly revealing, while 44% perceive a medium degree of national associativity, 59% consider cohesion in their specific cities to be weak or non-existent. The everyday experience of fragmentation explains this discrepancy, "Colombia's social differences are transferred to Germany. Little integration. Social networks were not strong at that time." Transnational imagination operates more intensely on abstract scales than in concrete territories of everyday life, highlighting the limitations of materializing territorially anchored transnational social spaces.

The political-civic dimension exhibits the most precarious development (5.3%). It implies the absence of consolidated transnational citizenship and permanent political structures. Systematic transnational political participation is practically non-existent, with minimal participation in formal political organizations in both Colombia and Germany. One activist interviewed acknowledges the inconsistency of Colombian political behavior, "support was partial, as the peace process polarized Colombian society, which was also reflected in the Colombian community in Germany. Migrants live in different worlds." This polarization translates into mutual distrust, as one interviewee explains about his experience with other Colombians, "we avoid each other, we meet at moment, but we avoid each other because everyone wants to be the star of their little group of Germans, the exotic and interesting one in their little group of Germans, and they don't want another Colombian around to compete with them." Although 22% of Colombians occasionally participate in direct political activities (mainly voting in elections), this practice primarily operates as individual behavior rather than an expression of community organization.

The dependence on specific political circumstances to generate mobilization, as observed in 2019 and 2021, indicates that Colombian political activism in Germany lacks permanent institutional structures. As one organization acknowledged in an interview, "There is also a desire to continue, even with fewer members." The subsequent loss of purpose following Gustavo Petro's electoral victory underscores the fragility of organizations whose collective action is closely tied to moments of political resistance and insufficiently anchored in sustained community-building processes.

On the other hand, the temporal pattern of transnational development contradicts theoretical expectations of progressive consolidation and confirms the structural limitations to community formation. Contrary to the hypothesis that longer residence generates greater transnationality, the data show limited variation according to years of residence, from 32.9 points (less than 5 years) to 36.6 points (more than 10 years), which represents a marginal increase of only 3.7 points (see Figure 42). This early stabilization is explained by the nature of the Colombian migratory profile, as noted by a long-term resident interviewee, "Colombians come here to make money. That's it. So, Colombians don't want to know anything about politics, because they're fleeing from the 1990s, when there was so much violence. So, there's a lot of mistrust." Individual expectations also limit community consolidation, "Colombia matters to me because my family lives there," says one respondent about the weakening of ties. The absence of a significant correlation between length of residence and organizational consolidation suggests that transnational practices are established as initial adaptation strategies but face a structural ceiling that prevents their development into more complex community forms. The limiting factors are systemic rather than temporal, pointing to German institutional restrictions, specific characteristics of Colombian migration marked by trauma from violence, and demographic limitations that prevent the natural evolution toward mature transnational communities.

Empirical evidence suggests that Colombians in Germany constitute a migrant aggregate with limited levels of cohesion, rather than a fully consolidated transnational community. The concentration of practices in the family-affective dimension (62.5%) versus severe limitations in the economic (23.1%) and political (5.3%) dimensions shows a pattern of fragmented transnationalism that does not achieve the multidimensional integration required to configure dense transnational social spaces. Individual testimonies confirm this fragmentation, "I have found a new home in Germany, even though the rest of my family is there. I don't travel often due to a lack of money," expressing resignation to limited ties rather than active community participation. The predominant strategy of community avoidance is evident in testimonies such as "I have always known Colombian people and I have had the impression that we avoid each other" or "it has always been that way, as you can see now, because now at least you can see it clearly, before you had to feel it."

These perceptions reinforce the predominance of individual and family-based ties over structured community organization. As one interviewee explained, "Colombians group together informally around Colombia, but then on specific issues, such as LGBTI+, Afro-descendants and indigenous people, women, and under the umbrella of Latin American

groups." This pattern points to fragmented forms of collective articulation structured around specific identities, limiting the emergence of a cohesive Colombian national community. The absence of stable institutional leadership and the dependence on digital platforms to compensate for the lack of physical territorialization confirm that Colombian transnational practices in Germany operate as connections between dispersed individuals, with limited consolidation into a cohesive community.

A partial conclusion at this point is that Colombians in Germany have developed a *transnationalism without community* characterized by structurally fragmented practices. Individual testimonies reveal a clear awareness of this fragmentation, "the associative question of Colombians is a question that is not easy to answer. I think it happens if there are interests such as sports for a few," recognizing that only specific interests manage to generate temporary groups. The explanation for this limitation is based on transferred historical conflicts, "that mentality is the same in Colombia. It's not just abroad, the social climbing and mistrust. And those patterns are repeated." These testimonies shows that Colombian patterns of mistrust are reproduced in Germany. While Colombians maintain significant transnational ties that distinguish them from linear assimilation processes, as demonstrated by one respondent who describes his process of Colombianization of spaces as "with food, music, and Latino friends," they have not managed to consolidate the community institutions, urban territorializations, economic circuits, and political structures necessary to form a transnational community in the full sense of the term. The reality is that, as expressed by multiple interviewees, "Every Colombian wants to be a star in their little group of Germans," and they do so by prioritizing individual strategies of social differentiation over community solidarity.

7.2 Morphology of Colombian Organizations: Typological Diversity and Functional Specialization

The question of the degree of consolidation of Colombian transnational networks in Germany represents a fundamental analytical challenge for understanding the nature and scope of contemporary migratory social formations. This section critically examines the available empirical evidence to determine whether Colombians in Germany have developed consolidated transnational networks or whether their organizational forms remain in incipient stages. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with social organizations, online sources, individual testimonies, and survey data, this section of the chapter documents the characteristics, limitations, and potential of Colombian social organizations in the German context.

A thorough analysis of the available information reveals a Colombian organizational ecosystem in Germany that is significantly more complex, diversified, and robust than initially documented at the beginning of the research. Of the 16 organizations identified, at least 10 have formal legal status as registered association (in German: eingetragener Verein-e.V.) or equivalent institutional structures: DKF e.V. (1981), Action pro Colombia e.V. (1988), Intercambio - Solidarität mit Kolumbien e.V. (1992), kolko e.V. (2003), Colombia Carnaval e.V. (2010), Aluna Minga e.V. (2017), Colombia Viva e.V., COLPAZ (supported by Wissenskulturen e.V. and internationales frauenzentrum bonn e.V.), and Instituto CAPAZ as a DAAD Center of Excellence. Even KiKo Kinderhilfe für Kolumbien e.V., although dissolved in 2017, operated formally for 15 years (1999-2014).

This predominance of institutional formalization shows organizational patterns that contrast sharply with the characterizations of informality applicable to other Latin American diasporas or first-generation migrant organizations. Colombian organizations in Germany navigate German institutional bureaucracy, which requires knowledge of the legal system and institutionalization strategies that transcend the limitations associated with temporary informal structures.

The organizations identified can be classified into eight main types according to their institutional morphology and areas of action, see Table 21 and Figure 42: (1) *institutionalized binational organizations*, such as the CAPAZ Institute (2016) which operate with German government funding, robust formal structures, and systematic intercultural mediation; (2) *human rights and political solidarity organizations,* including kolko e.V. (2003), Action pro Colombia e.V. (1988), Intercambio - Solidarität mit Kolumbien e.V. (1992), and Kolumbienkampagne Berlin (2000), which carry out advocacy work, accompaniment, and systematic political denunciation; (3) *cultural and integration organizations,* such as Colombia Carnaval e.V. (2010), Colombia Viva e.V. (Frankfurt), Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis DKF e.V. (1981), Aluna Minga e.V. (Munich, 2017), and Casa Latinoamericana, specializing in cultural promotion, migrant integration, and identity maintenance; (4) *transnational solidarity networks,* such as REDHER, Colombia Solidaridad-Hamburg, and Red Colombia Rhein-Main, they operate through horizontal structures for political coordination and mutual support; (5) *political collectives,* such as Unidas por la Paz-Alemania, Desbordando, and COLPAZ, they are activated in response to specific political events with flexible organizational modalities; (6) *development cooperation organizations,* represented by CIM - GIZ, coordinate binational programs for professional exchange and knowledge transfer; (7) *virtual communities,* exemplified by Colombianos en Alemania

(Colombians in Germany) (Facebook), which constitute digital spaces for information, mutual support, and coordination for in-person activities; and (8) *humanitarian organizations,* such as the now defunct KiKo Kinderhilfe für Kolumbien e.V. (1999-2014, dissolved in 2017), which specialized in direct cooperation with vulnerable populations in Colombia through international aid projects.

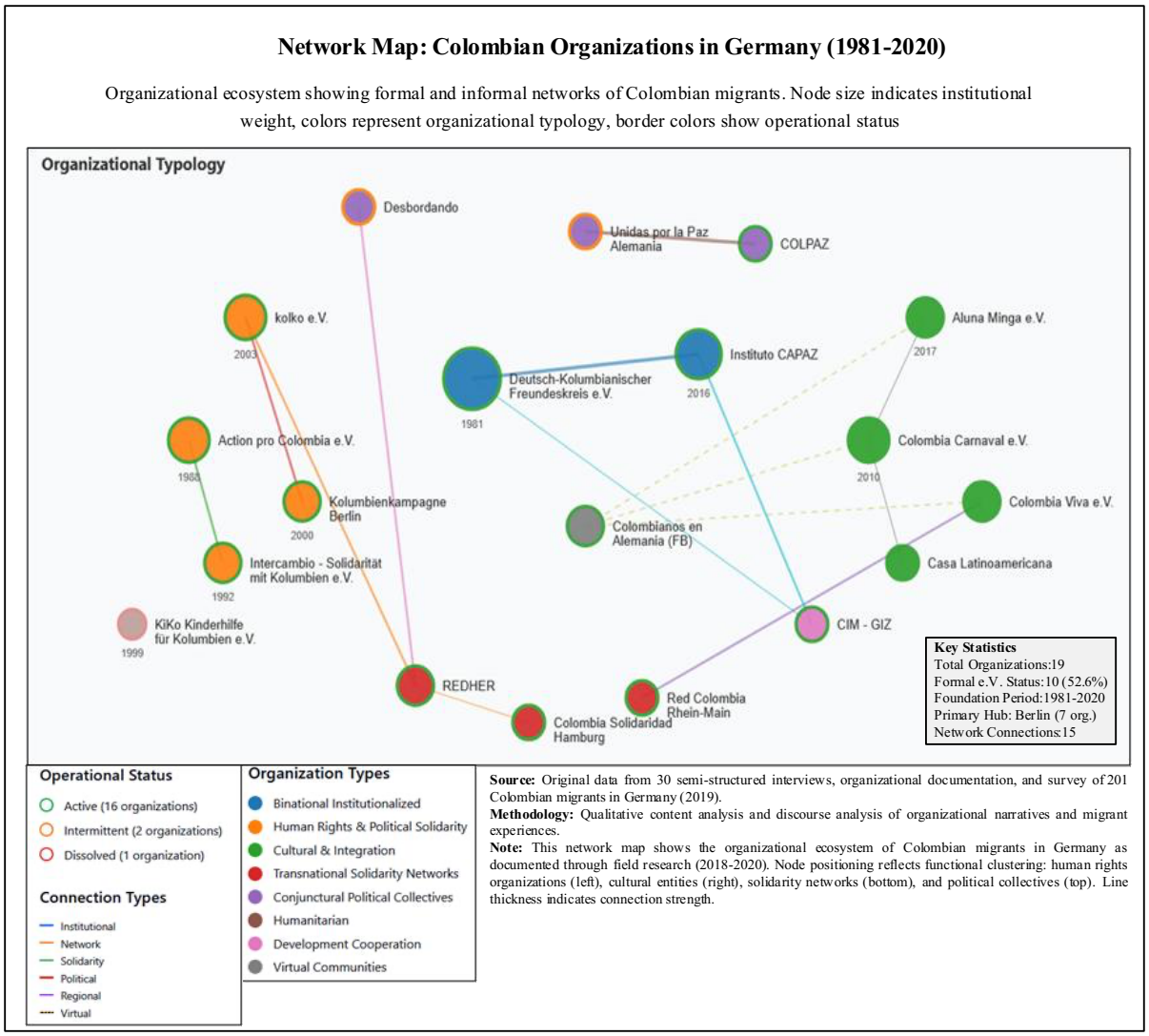
The geographical distribution of these organizations reveals patterns of urban concentration with Berlin as the main organizational center (kolko e.V., Colombia Carnaval, Kolumbienkampagne Berlin), followed by cities with significant Colombian communities such as Frankfurt (Colombia Viva e.V.), Munich (Aluna Minga e.V.), and Hamburg (Colombia Solidaria-Hamburg). This differentiated geographical distribution allows for broad territorial coverage, but also generates inter-organizational fragmentation that limits systematic coordination.

Table 21. Colombian Organizations in Germany: Directory and Classification by Type and Region

Organization	Type	Year	City/Region	Status	Legal Status	Description
Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis e.V. (DKF)	Binational Institutionalized	1981	Multiple locations	Active	e.V.	Oldest Colombian-German organization, cultural promotion and development cooperation *Cultural events, development projects, binational dialogue*
Instituto CAPAZ	Binational Institutionalized	2016	Berlin	Active	DAAD Excellence Center	Academic cooperation center for peace and development studies *Research, academic exchange, peace studies*
Unidas por la Paz-Alemania	Conjunctual Political Collectives	2016	Multiple locations	Intermittent	Informal collective	Peace process support collective, activated during political conjunctures *Peace advocacy, political mobilization, awareness campaigns*
Desbordando	Conjunctual Political Collectives	2021	Multiple locations	Intermittent	Informal collective	Activist collective for human rights with flexible organizational structure *Human rights activism, political mobilization, advocacy*
COLPAZ	Conjunctual Political Collectives	2017	Bonn	Active	Supported by e.V.	Peace-focused organization supported by established institutions *Peace building, political dialogue, educational activities*
Colombianos en Alemania (Facebook)	Virtual communities	—	Virtual	Active	Digital platform	Main Facebook group for Colombians in Germany, information and mutual support *Information sharing, mutual support, event coordination*
CIM - GIZ	Development Cooperation	—	Multiple locations	Active	Government program	Development cooperation program for professional exchange *Professional exchange, capacity building, development projects*
Colombia Carnaval e.V.	Cultural & Integration	2010	Berlin	Active	e.V.	Cultural promotion through festivities and community events *Cultural festivals, community integration, identity maintenance*
Aluna Minga e.V.	Cultural & Integration	2017	Munich	Active	e.V.	Culture, migration orientation, and sustainable development education *Cultural programs, migration counseling, education workshops*
Colombia Viva e.V.	Cultural & Integration	—	Frankfurt	Active	e.V.	Cultural activities and community building in Frankfurt region *Cultural events, community networking, integration support*
Casa Latinoamericana	Cultural & Integration	—	Berlin	Active	Cultural center	Latin American cultural house with Colombian participation *Cultural programming, community space, artistic events*
Action pro Colombia e.V.	Human Rights & Political Solidarity	1988	Aachen	Active	e.V.	Human rights advocacy and solidarity with Colombian civil society *Advocacy, financial support, awareness campaigns*
Intercambio - Solidarität mit Kolumbien e.V.	Human Rights & Political Solidarity	1992	Multiple locations	Active	e.V.	Solidarity with Colombian social movements and human rights defenders *Political solidarity, awareness raising, networking*
Kolumbienkampagne Berlin	Human Rights & Political Solidarity	2000	Berlin	Active	Informal	Political advocacy campaign for Colombian human rights issues *Campaigns, protests, political advocacy*
kolko e.V.	Human Rights & Political Solidarity	2003	Berlin	Active	e.V.	Human rights work, member of MRKK and OIDHACO networks *Policy advocacy, reports, international networking*
KiKo Kinderhilfe für Kolumbien e.V.	Humanitarian	1999	Multiple locations	Dissolved (2017)	e.V. (dissolved)	Children aid organization specialized in vulnerable populations (1999-2014, dissolved 2017) *Children aid projects, humanitarian assistance, fundraising*
REDHER	Transnational Solidarity Networks	—	Multiple locations	Active	Network	Human rights network with transnational coordination *Human rights monitoring, international advocacy, networking*
Colombia Solidaridad-Hamburg	Transnational Solidarity Networks	2019	Hamburg	Active	Informal network	Regional solidarity network in Hamburg metropolitan area *Solidarity campaigns, community support, political advocacy*
Red Colombia Rhein-Main	Transnational Solidarity Networks	2019	Frankfurt Region	Active	Informal network	Regional network covering Rhein-Main metropolitan area *Regional coordination, mutual support, community organizing*

Note. Author's own elaboration based on publicly available information collected from the organizations' official websites, social media, and related online sources.

Figure 43. Network Map: Colombian Organizations in Germany (1981-2020)



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary qualitative and ethnosurvey data. The network map visualizes formal and informal organizational ties among Colombian migrant organizations in Germany between 1981 and 2020.

Organizational longevity demonstrates variable but significant temporary sustainability capacities. Organizations such as Action pro Colombia e.V. (1988-present), Intercambio - Solidarität mit Kolumbien e.V. (1992-present), and kolko e.V. (2003-present) demonstrate successful institutionalization over decades, contrasting with the narrative of temporary organizational fragility. Even organizations that have ceased activities, such as KiKo Kinderhilfe für Kolumbien e.V. (1999-2014, dissolved in 2017), exhibit medium-length organizational life cycles that transcend the characterization of episodic typically applied to temporary collectives. The first organizations founded during the 1980s and 1990s correspond to the first wave, which can be classified as solidarity networks, and were born in the context of Latin American conflicts, including, of course, the Colombian conflict. In the first decade

of the 21st century, the Colombian conflict intensified, stimulating the emergence of new organizations with the same purpose of solidarity and denunciation of human rights violations. The third and current wave corresponds to the context of the peace process, which began approximately in 2013, and the establishment of a larger and more stable Colombian migrant community, marked by the emergence of academic organizations, cultural integration organizations, and sporadic political collectives.

This predominance of organizational diversity contrasts with the pattern of thematic concentration observed in other Latin American diasporas. It demonstrates processes of functional specialization that may represent an adaptive strength rather than a limitation. The Desbordando collective paradigmatically illustrates the flexible organizational model by defining itself as "an activist collective supporting human rights" that has "roots in Bogotá" but operates with organizational structures that can be adapted to specific projects. This organizational flexibility, while limiting the consolidation of stable long-term structures, allows for rapid response to specific political situations and specialization in differentiated organizational niches.

Aluna Minga e.V. is one example of institutionalization within the Colombian organizational landscape in Germany. Founded as a non-profit association based in Munich and obtaining formal legal status in 2017, Aluna Minga displays organizational characteristics that are closer to the model of a consolidated transnational organization. Its organizational structure includes three main lines of work: culture and citizen participation, migration guidance, and education for sustainable development, demonstrating programmatic diversification and institutional sustainability.

The Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis-DKF e.V. is a paradigmatic case that categorically challenges generalizations about Colombian organizational weakness in Germany. Founded in 1981, it is the oldest, most consolidated, and most institutionalized Colombian-German organization in the study, and demonstrates a degree of organizational development that exceeds the patterns identified in the other organizations analyzed. With approximately 400 members and around 1,000 external guests who regularly participate in its events, the DKF exhibits an organizational mass that no other Colombian institution in Germany has achieved. Its operational structure includes multiple Niederlassungen und Freundeskreise (see figure 43) distributed throughout the territory, a quarterly magazine (Kolumbien Aktuell), Jahrestagungen mit umfangreichen Kulturprogrammen (annual conferences with extensive cultural programs), and a systematic portfolio of humanitarian projects in Colombia financed with Fördergelder von öffentlichen Trägern wie z.B. der GIZ

(funding from public institutions such as GIZ). However, the organization's binational German–Colombian orientation and predominantly German membership situate it within a different organizational category. Although it illustrates the potential for strong Colombian–German institutional cooperation, it cannot be considered a Colombian diaspora organization per se, but rather an intercultural entity with dominant German participation.

Figure 44. Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis e.V. Network

Note. Map reproduced from the website of Deutsch-Kolumbianischer Freundeskreis e.V.

The Comisión de la Verdad-Nodo Alemania managed to achieve a significant degree of institutionalization by coordinating with official bodies such as the German-Colombian Peace Institute-CAPAZ Institute and receiving support from Colombian state entities, as well as establishing collaborations with "the German parliament, German political parties, and the Colombian embassy in Germany." However, its temporary nature and link to a specific institutional process (the mandate of the Truth Commission) limit its potential as a permanent organizational structure.

Some Colombian organizations emerged in response to specific political developments within the Colombian national context, with their formation driven less by endogenous organizational processes within the migrant community than by external political events. For example, Unidas por la Paz–Alemania "was organized in 2016 to support the plebiscite for peace in Colombia," while Desbordando intensified its activities during the national strike of

2021, highlighting the central role of Colombian political events as catalysts for organizational mobilization.

With this same intention, the CAPAZ Institute was created as a bilateral cooperation organization between Colombia and Germany, founded in 2016 to support documentation and applied research on the post-conflict issues, to generate institutional cooperation between universities in both countries to provide academic support for the implementation of the peace agreements. CAPAZ works as a scientific network that brings together actors from civil society, the state, and the international community.

This dependence on external political circumstances produces a cyclical pattern of organizational activation and latency that fails to guarantee the long-term sustainability of initiatives. As mentioned before, in the testimony on Unidas por la Paz-Alemania, "the fact that Gustavo Petro, from the left, won the elections had an impact on the collective, as its identity was based on resistance and denunciation" leading to "a change in circumstances since 2022," and "the organization is going through a period of discouragement regarding its organizational activities." This testimony illustrates how dependence on external motivational frameworks limits an organization ability to self-reproduce.

The Kolumbiengruppe Köln represents a case of this temporary fragility, having operated between 2005 and 2014 from an academic and cultural approach, but eventually ceased its activities without achieving permanent institutionalization. Its last activity was described as a *night of candles* in December 2015, symbolically marking the end of a decade of organizational work that failed to transcend the individual cycles of its founders.

On the other hand, organizations do not always have the same level of visibility and formality as the DKF and the CAPAZ Institute. Other, less visible organizations are very active politically and engage in transnational activism in defense of human rights and political solidarity. The Red Europea de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia (Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia-REDHER) exemplifies this type of organizational formation; it operates through informal network structures yet has a tangible political impact.

REDHER is a transnational solidarity network that organizes human rights caravans in Colombia, carries out international campaigns to denounce abuses, such as the one calling for the release of leaders of the National Agrarian Coordinator (CNA) and the Congreso de los Pueblos (Congress of the People), and maintains systematic links with Colombian social organizations. Its practices include international petitions, digital campaigns with hashtags such as #SerLiderSocialNoEsUnDelito (Being a social leader is not a crime) and #NoMásMontajesJudiciales (No more judicial setups), as well as direct support for agrarian

and popular organizational processes in Colombia. This network demonstrates its capacity for transnational coordination, international mobilization of solidarity, and the establishment of systematic bridges between the Colombian diaspora in Europe and social movements in Colombia.

These low-visibility organizations work through horizontal network structures, *i.e.*, cooperation between collectives that prioritize direct political action over service provision and maintain organic links with Colombian social movements rather than with state institutions. Their organizational informality is an intentional strategy of flexibility that allows them to respond to political situations and maintain autonomy from institutional funding that could limit their capacity to speak out.

As defined by Pries (2001), these solidarity networks could be considered transnational social spaces. They are dense, stable, multi-local, and institutionalized frameworks that permanently structure cross-border practices. Their relational density is evident in the systematic coordination of campaigns, their temporal stability, as demonstrated by the continuity of their actions over the years, and their institutionalization in the reproduction of specific organizational patterns and repertoires of action. However, their impact is limited to the sphere of political solidarity and does not extend to other domains of transnational social life, such as the economic, cultural, or family spheres.

The organizations studied thereby fulfill Vertovec (2009) basic criterion of transnationality by developing practices that simultaneously connect German and Colombian contexts. The spectrum of these practices ranges from institutionally mediated to informal political solidarity that evidences diversity in modalities but limitations in systemic consolidation.

The Comisión de la verdad-Nodo Alemania is another example of institutionally mediated transnational practices. It has "collaborated with other Nodes that were part of the Network of Nodes supporting the CV, 24 in total," including connections with "Spain, in Madrid and Barcelona, as sub-nodes" where "these European nodes were in close contact." Desbordando developed particularly sophisticated symbolic-political transnational practices, including the contribution from Berlin to "cover the Colombian courthouse in September with fabrics embroidered in different parts of the world" and the production of "stickers that were distributed in several countries, Germany, France, Spain, and the UK."

Solidarity networks, such as REDHER, also demonstrate systematic transnational political advocacy practices that coordinate international campaigns for specific cases. It includes the arrests of Colombian peasant leaders from the National Agrarian Coordinator

(CNA), and develop human rights caravans that directly connect European organizations with Colombian social movements. These practices include transnational petitions, coordinated digital campaigns, and direct political accompaniment that crosses national borders.

However, these transnational practices, though existing and significant, do not achieve the density, permanence, and institutionalization required to constitute consolidated transnational networks in a strict theoretical sense. Connections tend to be project-based, episodic, and dependent on specific individual leaders or particular political circumstances. As evidenced by the case of Desbordando, "after the strike, there were no more activities, but the relationships remained." This suggests that transnational links, although significant, fail to crystallize into stable, long-term organizational structures.

This is due to inter-organizational fragmentation, as the links are predominantly weak and circumstantial in the case of political collectives. The interviews document sporadic and contextual relationships. Unidas por la Paz-Alemania acknowledges that "there is not much integration with collectives from other cities, except during the 2021 uprising," and that relationships are mainly activated "during election periods, especially presidential elections." This inter-organizational fragmentation contrasts sharply with the links that Colombian organizations establish with broader Latin American collectives. Unidas por la Paz-Germany reports "strong relationships with other Latin American collectives in Berlin" under the umbrella of the Global South that includes feminist spaces and migrant rights organizations. This indicates that Colombian organizations tend to integrate more effectively into general Latin American networks than into specifically Colombian networks.

The Kolumbiengruppe Köln reports a total absence of "links with other collectives" and limited functioning to "students from the same university." This pattern indicates an organizational isolation. Moreover, this inter-organizational atomization represents a fundamental structural limitation to the consolidation of transnational networks, as it prevents the exchange of resources and strategic coordination necessary for robust network formations.

However, returning to the quantitative data from the ethnosurvey, the qualitative findings on the organizational limitations of Colombians in Germany are confirmed and complemented. Only 11.5% of respondents report belonging to Colombian associations, while 88.5% state that they do not belong to any specifically Colombian organization. This figure for organizational participation is significantly below the standards observed in consolidated diasporas, according to the comparative literature on migratory transnationalism. Even more revealing is the analysis of the migrants' own assessment of the degree of associativity. 46.1% rate associativity as average, 37.8% as low, and only 16.1% consider it high. This distribution

shows that the Colombian community itself recognizes the limitations of its social organization, with 83.9% evaluating associativity as insufficient or moderate.

The explanations provided by respondents for this low level of associativity are particularly informative. Testimonies such as “lack of identity”, “mistrust”, “everyone wants to be the star of their little group of Germans, the exotic and interesting one in their little group of Germans, and there are no other Colombians around to compete with them,” unwrap identity fractures and symbolic competition that hinder the construction of collective solidarity. One respondent expresses this tension, “Just because we were born in the same country, doesn’t mean we have anything else in common.”

Several structural barriers can be identified that hinder the consolidation of Colombian transnational networks. First, the socioeconomic heterogeneity of the Colombian migrant population generates internal fragmentation. As one of the interviewees documents, “there’s a social difference in Colombia that is also transferred here to Germany,” which leads to a migratory stratification that reproduces inequalities of origin and limits the possibilities for building collective identities. Similarly, geographical dispersion constitutes a second fundamental structural barrier. Although Berlin is the center of the greatest organizational concentration (22.1% of mentions as the best-consolidated city), the distribution of Colombians across multiple German cities prevents the formation of the critical mass necessary for robust organizations. A third barrier is what could be called *competitive integration*, a process by which Colombian migrants prioritize individual integration into German society over the construction of collective solidarity with other Colombians. Testimonies refer to the perception that association with other Colombians can delay individual processes of integration and social advancement in the German context.

Despite the documented limitations, it is clear that resources and potential could facilitate more consolidated forms of social organization. First, there is a proven capacity for mobilization in specific situations, such as the activities carried out during the 2021 national strike, when inter-city coordination and significant symbolic actions were achieved. Digital communication technologies represent an underutilized organizational resource with considerable potential. Facebook groups, such as *Colombians in Germany* or *Colombians in Hamburg, Berlin,* or *Munich*, serve as spaces for information exchange, mutual support, and basic coordination. One respondent describes this phenomenon, “there are groups of Colombians on social media such as Facebook where people often ask for help, and I have noticed that in many cases people actually help. I have seen questions ranging from which cheese is best for making food to job offers and even emergency accommodation.”

The human capital of Colombians in Germany constitutes a significant organizational asset, as the high proportion of migrants with university and postgraduate education, as documented in both interviews and survey data, represents a reservoir of technical, cultural, and political skills that could be mobilized for more ambitious organizational initiatives.

Analysis of the interview testimonies, the ethnosurvey, and information from the analyzed organizations identifies an organizational ecosystem characterized by high institutional formalization (62.5% of organizations were registered associations), differentiated functional specialization, and systematic transnational capacities that operate through complementary organizational architectures. The dominant pattern means that Colombian organizations possess institutional knowledge of the German legal system and employ formalization strategies that contrast sharply with characterizations of informality commonly applied to other migrant populations. Colombian organizations have developed bureaucratic navigation capabilities, access to diversified financing (including German government funding, private donations, and international cooperation), and temporary sustainability that significantly surpasses the models of informal collectives.

From Faist et al. perspective, Colombian organizations operate simultaneously in multiple stages of transnational development, some have consolidated dense transnational social spaces (DKF, CAPAZ), others develop systematic transnationalization practices (kolko, action pro colombia, Aluna Minga), and the least institutionalized function as specialized solidarity networks (REDHER, political collectives). A more accurate characterization of the Colombian case is that of a formally differentiated transnational organizational ecosystem that works through complementary functional specialization. Each organizational typology develops specific practices in different domains: binational organizations in institutional cooperation, human rights organizations in political advocacy, cultural organizations in migration integration, solidarity networks in cross-border accompaniment, and political collectives in situational mobilization.

Thus, the TI of 33.53 points should be interpreted in light of this functional specialization. The organizational ecosystem reveals robust transnational capacities across multiple institutional modalities, despite average individual participation remaining moderate. Through functional complementarity, these capacities develop transnational effectiveness comparable to that of traditional consolidated networks, albeit operating through alternative organizational architectures.

7.3 From the Kitchen to the Streets. Colombian Transnational Spatialities.

This section of the chapter applies the theoretical frameworks of Harvey, Lefebvre, Smith, and Guarnizo to examine the process of production of transnational spaces by the Colombian community in Germany. The analysis focuses on the spatial modalities and power relations that shape transnational territorialization. The analysis shows how Colombians in Germany engage in spatial practices that shapes a transnational political geography characterized by from below activism and the symbolic appropriation of German urban spaces.

When analyzing transnationalism from a spatial perspective, methodological difficulties arise due to a lack of conceptual clarity regarding how the phenomenon manifests geographically. Although the literature offers several key approaches to studying transnational spaces empirically, synthesizing the spatial category grids developed by Lefebvre, Harvey, Smith, and Guarnizo provides a clearer, more specific, and more applicable conceptual orientation for transnational research. This analysis examines the social practices of Colombians to reveal how transnationality is expressed spatially through a progression from domestic to public spaces and broader urban networks. A kitchen provides the starting point.

7.3.1 Scalar Continuities: from *Arepas* to Social Uprisings

The kitchen is a space of singular importance in a home; we all know it. In kitchens where *arepas* (a type of savory finger food made from corn) are made, beans are cooked, and *vallenato* music (traditional Colombian music) is played constitute a way of Colombian transnational territorialization. An analysis of 141 responses (from 201 respondents) on spatial *Colombianization* reveals that 52.5% focus on culinary practices shows that kitchens are spaces with the highest density of transnational appropriation. There is an undeniable mixture of German and Colombian elements in this very place: the home. A respondent living in Munich describes the sensory integration, “from the food prepared at home to the decoration of the house, a clear example is the need for rice at lunch, not every day, but for me it is important, as are soups and broths, and on the other hand, emotionality and expressions.” This exemplifies how domestic territorialization extends beyond the material to include temporalities (meal routines), corporealities (gestures, expressions), and affectivities (emotionality) that reconfigure the experience of living in Germany. A responder from Berlin documents the social dimension of these practices, “in my house, I usually have Colombian ingredients such as coffee or flour to make arepas. We often have dinner or breakfast with a group of Colombian

friends and prepare Colombian dishes. We usually invite friends of other nationalities to try Colombian food." Thus, kitchens work as bridges between domestic territorialities and community social networks, and as community-built cultural spaces that extend from the domestic sphere toward the construction of transnational social networks. The Colombianization of a German space extends beyond the material dimension to incorporate temporalities (eating routines), affectivities (emotionality), and corporealities (expressions) that reconfigure the spatial experience.

Material objects are the closest thing to physical cultural artifacts with self-explanatory symbolic content; they are the material anchor for Colombians in domestic spaces. Mentions include "sombrero vueltiao" (a patterned straw hat), "photos of Colombian landscapes", and "Colombian handicrafts" with a function as symbolic mediators. These objects fulfill a non-material but symbolic function. One respondent from Hamburg describes "I have souvenirs from my homeland, such as a vueltiao hat, and I follows the news and reports from Colombia at home or at work." This articulation between objects (hat), media practices (news), and multiple spaces (home, work) indicate how homes turn into nodes of information circulation that connect everyday German life with Colombian events. Likewise, there are 35 mentions of music in the survey; music played in domestic places constitute another anchor that transforms German apartments into spaces of Colombian experience. One respondent says "I listen to Spanish or Colombian music." Music has both a personal and a social sphere; in homes, it is a cultural connection, but in public spaces, music has a unifying effect, particularly among Latin communities in Germany. Music integrates.

However, a significant finding is the strategies of resistance to domestic Colombianization. One respondent from Frankfurt says, "the process I have experienced has been the opposite. My living spaces have become *Germanized*, not *Colombianized*. A Colombianization of living spaces would not have allowed for a minimum of integration." Moreover, a respondent from Cologne replies, "not at all, on the contrary, I'm aware that I live in a different environment and I must accept it as it is." This conscious *Germanization* also constitutes a form of transnational appropriation that seeks to maximize the possibilities for social integration and strategic spatial assimilation. It represents a specific strategy that recognizes domestic spaces as territories of negotiation between multiple identities.

Thus, domestic places perform a function as nodes in social networks that extend domestic territorialities into community sociabilities. Descriptions of "groups of Colombian friends having dinner or breakfast" show how individual domestic spaces become collective

territories that facilitate regular encounters between Colombians. These apartments serve as informal *third places* that compensate for the lack of consolidated community infrastructures.

Colombians have not established ethnic neighborhoods or their own spatial infrastructure, but that does not prevent them from engaging in social practices of appropriating urban spaces. In Germany, community territories are built without such consolidated ethnic neighborhoods. This limitation is compensated for through creative appropriations of existing German spaces that are temporarily transformed into Colombian meeting places. For example, urban parks work as community meeting places. The analysis of urban preferences reveals 78 mentions (52.3%) oriented towards natural spaces. This finding demonstrates that parks, lakes, and green spaces function as neutral territories of family and community gatherings. This means that, despite structural limitations, Colombians use specific material infrastructures as community spatial nodes, as well as the presence of ethnic shops, specialized services, and institutional spaces that serve as territorial anchors for the dispersed Colombian community.

The reference to La Cantina, "a Latin bar that used to be in Oranienburger Tor but is now in Friedrichshain," by a Colombian respondent in Berlin demonstrates the existence of commercial infrastructures that facilitate social gatherings and community musical experiences. Its forced relocation reveals both the importance and fragility of these ethnic commercial spaces. Similarly, the restaurant Tierra Colombiana was an important meeting place for Colombian community in Berlin, but it was not sustainable and closed, a common fate for ethnic businesses that fail to reach the threshold for sustaining sales and services.

On the other hand, formalized organizations look for specific institutional support. Unidas por la Paz-Alemania uses the FDLC (Forschungs-und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V.) in Berlin, while other organizations get access to meeting places such as K-19, also in Berlin. These appropriations of existing German infrastructure confirm creative strategies for developing institutional territorialities without significant investment in their own infrastructure. K-19 is, in fact, a café-bar, a place of great political significance; it is a hub for Latin American political collectives, hosting musical events, films, and thematic talks by these collectives. Colombian culture is embedded in Latin American groups in this same place.

Berlin is home to political collectives (Unidas por la Paz-Alemania, kolko e.V., Kolumbienkampagne Berlin) that take advantage of the German capital to develop high-visibility activism. Hamburg develops hybrid modalities that mix political activism with cultural management. Frankfurt specializes in economic articulations that capitalize on its position as a German financial hub. This territorial specialization is an organic adaptation to opportunities provided by each urban context. Organizations develop territorial density in

specific cities while maintaining coordination through digital networks that facilitate synchronized transnational events. Social media has been the platform for coordinating the organization of events. 82.1% of respondents use social media to connect with other Colombians, with Facebook being the most prevalent (67.7%). WhatsApp groups organized by city facilitate the coordination of face-to-face meetings, cultural events, and political demonstrations. One interviewee describes how, during the 2021 demonstrations, "they coordinated through social media without formally forming an organization," demonstrating that digital territorialities allow for temporary mass mobilizations without requiring permanent organizational infrastructures.

It is worth noting that territorial conflicts may occasionally arise between organizations competing for representation. The interviews document tensions over "who represents Colombians" at significant demonstrations. These frictions make evident that community networks do not act as seamless, unified organization. Instead, they are better understood as negotiated fields where different political and cultural projects converge.

The public sphere is one of tensions, and the streets are the space for expressing them. The mobilizations that took place in 2018, 2019, and 2021 in support of the Colombian National Strike constitute the most significant expressions of collective appropriation of public spaces in Germany. These demonstrations do not replicate Colombian protests in German urban places, but rather develop specific forms of activism that utilize German urban configurations to amplify transnational political demands. The 2021 demonstration in Berlin, visually documented in Figure 45, shows the appropriation of the Brandenburg Gate with banners that include *Stop the Massacre in Colombia* and *Aussergerichtliche Hinrichtungen in Kolumbien* (extrajudicial executions in Colombia). This appropriation of Berlin landmarks demonstrates a strategic understanding of German spaces of power, facilitating maximum political visibility for Colombian demands. Likewise, the multilingual banners (in Spanish, German, and English) reveal communication strategies that aim to connect multiple audiences, including Colombian residents, the German society, and the international community. One interviewee describes, "They carry banners that seek to highlight issues that the collective wants to denounce... in several languages... Because they want German society to be aware of these problems."

Figure 45. Stop the Massacre in Colombia, Berlin 2021

Note. Photograph taken by the author during fieldwork in Berlin, 2021.

One of the demonstrations in Hamburg in 2013, as seen in the Figure 46, documented in urban parks, exposes alternative forms of activism that favor natural spaces over political centers. The image shows protesters with a banner reading “Mr. President Santos: even in Hamburg we know that the national agricultural and popular strike does exist” displayed in the Stadtpark. This choice of green spaces responds to the need to gain political visibility without confrontation with the authorities. The appropriation of green spaces also aligns with Colombian spatial preferences, as documented in surveys, where 78% of respondents express a preference for natural spaces. This convergence between individual preferences and collective strategies demonstrates consistency between everyday and political territorialities. However, demonstrations have also been held in central locations in Hamburg, particularly in the context of the #21N National Strike in 2019, utilizing Mönckebergstraße and other central areas in Hamburg as sites for demonstrations and gatherings (see Figure 45). Therefore, the Colombian community tends to adapt and deploy spatial strategies for its political practices that allow it to make its political actions visible, usually in solidarity with collectives and civil society in Colombia, as a kind of extraterritorial strategy for Colombia’s internal conflicts, which ultimately connect specific German urban spaces, such as those mentioned above.

Figure 46. Demos in Hamburg in 2013 and 2021

Note. The photograph on the left is reproduced from the Facebook page of Colombianos en Hamburgo (2013). The photograph on the right is reproduced from the Hamburger Abendblatt website (2021).

The political-artistic performance *Los 6402* played at Potsdamer Platz, see Figure 47, documents a form of spatial appropriation that combines political activism with aesthetic innovation. The performance commemorates the 6,402 civilians killed by the Colombian army between 2002 and 2010, also known as *false positives*, inscribing specific memories of Colombian political violence in central Berlin spaces. The image depicts a military boot holding a red flower, with the numbers *6402* visually dominating the space. This symbolic economy produces maximum political impact with minimal material resources, being a territorialization strategy adapted to the limitations of numerically small migrant populations. The selection of Potsdamer Platz, another landmark and historic site of German reunification, once again demonstrates a strategic understanding of Berlin's symbolic geographies, allowing for resonance between histories of German and Colombian political violence and making it easier for German audiences to connect their own historical experiences with contemporary Colombian political denunciations.

Figure 47. Los 6402, Collaborative performance

Note. The photograph on the left is reproduced from the Facebook page of Unidas por la Paz–Colombia (2021). The poster on the right is reproduced from materials published by the MAFAPO collective (2021).

The work of the *Latin American Block* linked to Colombian collectives, documents the production of alternative cartographies that challenge official representations of Berlin urban space. The images show displays in Kiezfenster with messages such as "The neighborhood is... Der Kiez ist... " and "Berlin is not an island, Let's be a river / Berlin ist keine Insel, Lasst uns der Strom sein". See Figure 48. These social cartographies are connections between Berlin neighborhoods and Latin American cities through narratives that emphasize fluidity ("let's be a river") over fixed territorial demarcations. The displays include maps of Berlin intervened with images of Latin American landscapes, texts in Spanish and German, and symbols that connect local Berlin struggles with Latin American resistance.

Figure 48. Bloque Latino

Note. The photograph is reproduced from the Instagram page @BloqueLAberlin

However, spatial appropriations work according to differentiated temporalities, revealing specific modes of territorialization. Domestic appropriations are characterized by permanent temporalities, like daily cooking, decorating, and habitual music listening. Public appropriations run within circumstantial temporalities, such as demonstrations during political crises and performances on commemorative dates. This temporal difference does not indicate fragmentation; instead, it reflects complementary modes of operation. The demonstrations during the 2019 and 2021 National Strikes manifest mobilization capacities that surpass routine organizational capabilities. This pattern suggests the existence of latent territorial reserves that become activated during particular political conjunctures. Community networks operate with intermediate temporalities, characterized by regular meetings (weekly, monthly) that connect domestic permanence with political junctures. WhatsApp groups maintain constant communication, facilitating rapid coordination for specific events, where digital territorialities serve as interfaces between different temporalities.

A key finding is that Colombian transnational spatial materiality is not attached in fixed infrastructures, such as churches or established ethnic shopping centers, and is instead expressed through pop-up spaces and forms of tactical urbanism that are deployed temporarily in response to specific needs. The kitchens where arepas are prepared constitute real material

transformations (smells, tastes, routines, objects) that work permanently, but flexibly. The manifestations generate intensive temporary materialities (physical occupation, sounds, visuals) that transform German spaces during specific moments.

Between these two poles, community networks develop intermediate materialities (regular meetings, circulation of objects, economic exchanges) that connect domestic permanence with political intensification. These adaptive spatialities constitute a specific mode of spatial appropriation that goes beyond the dichotomy between *real* and *symbolic*, producing territorialities that are simultaneously material and representational, permanent and temporary, intimate and public.

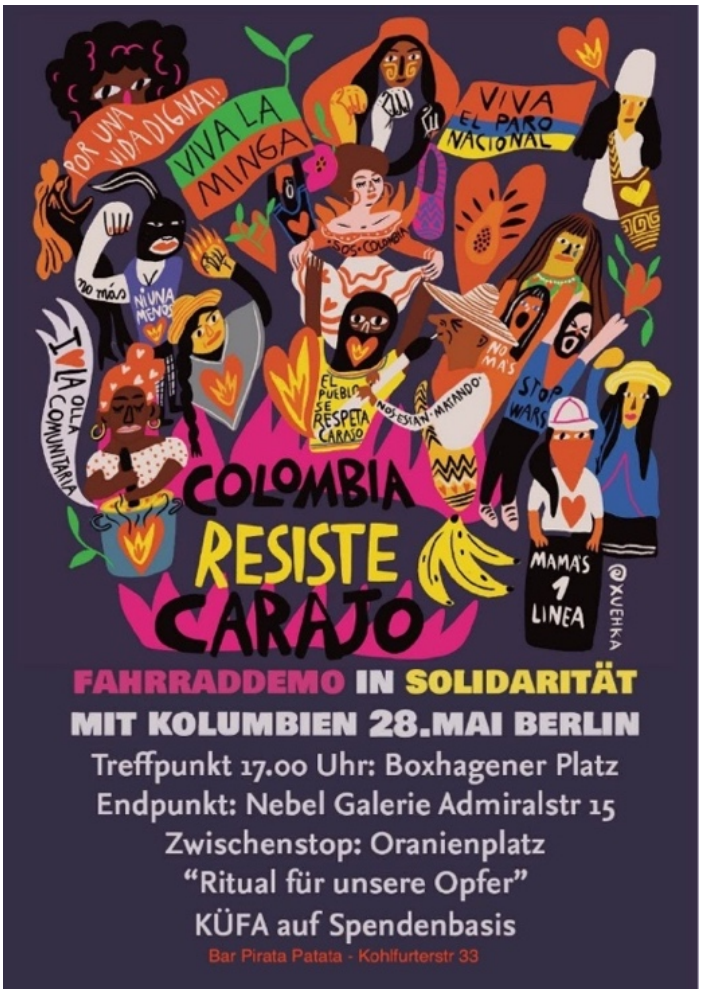
These arepas prepared in German kitchens are directly connected to demonstrations at the Brandenburg Gate through social networks that facilitate coordination, community gatherings that develop solidarities, connecting domestic everyday life with political situations. This progression does not operate according to linear logic (domestic → community → public), but instead works through scalar jumping, whereby intimate domestic practices are directly articulated in large-scale political expressions, bypassing intermediate scales. WhatsApp networks allow decisions made in individual kitchens (to participate in demonstrations) to be immediately coordinated in collective appropriations of central German spaces.

The transnational spaces documented do not constitute processes of gradual assimilation into German spatialities or nostalgic replication of Colombian territorialities. They represent genuine territorial innovations that generate specifically transnational spatial syntheses: German kitchens where arepas are maded with German ingredients, demonstrations in German spaces that display Colombian aesthetics for international audiences, cartographies that connect Berlin neighborhoods with Latin American geographies. These spatial strategies are hybrid territorialities that cannot be reduced to nationally circumscribed interpretive frameworks; instead, they require recognition of hybridization as a constitutive modality of territorialization. Colombian transnational spaces show that transnationalism does not require consolidated material infrastructures to generate meaningful territorialities, but can operate through adaptive spatialities that maximize territorial impacts with limited resources. The research demonstrates that there are systematic and coherent processes of transnational spatial production that reconfigure German spatialities and Colombian identities. These spaces constitute specific geographical realities that demonstrate that transnationalism is a genuinely spatial phenomenon, transforming concrete territorial materialities and producing new territorial syntheses.

Spatial practices, based on the work of Lefebvre and Harvey, constitute the most visible dimension of transnational space production. During the demonstrations of the 2019 and 2021 National Strikes, Colombians gathered in large numbers in several cities, transforming these urban spaces into territories of transnational political solidarity. Streets and squares are not passive containers for protest; they actively shape and produce transnational political meanings. The demonstrations coordination across multiple locations represents self-organized migration routes and community mutual aid infrastructure. WhatsApp and Facebook networks enabled synchronous coordination among Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, and Bonn, which facilitated mobilizations that respond to political events in Colombia. These actions are transnational, multi-sited, and quasi-spontaneous, but not deterritorialized. This transnational spatiality transcends the dichotomies between local/global and national/international. The demonstrations function as cross-border spatial practices that produce simultaneous territorialities across various German cities, configured as what can geographically be termed an urban network of transnational resistance.

Representations of space, as outlined by Lefebvre and Harvey, are clearly expressed in organizational discourses that articulate alternative conceptions of urban citizenship and territorial belonging. Colombian organizations develop *community-created migration mappings* that challenge the official cartographies of integration. The concept of *Colombia resiste, carajo!* (Colombia resists, damn it!), as seen in the Figure 49, is used as the name for fundraising events and constitutes a spatial representation that connects local Colombian resistance with German territories of solidarity. This discursive formulation is an alternative integration conceptualization that reject the assimilationist frameworks of official German multiculturalism, proposing instead forms of urban belonging that maintain active political links with Colombia.

Figure 49. Colombia Resiste, Carajo!



Note. The image is reproduced from Instagram page @xuehka

Spaces of representation constitute the most complex dimension, as the lived experience of German urban space is charged with transnational meanings. Discourse analysis identifies three main modes of transnational spatial experience: (1) territorial nostalgia, (2) affective appropriation, and (3) cultural hybridization. Territorial nostalgia is present in narratives that describe the Colombianization of German domestic spaces. One respondent answered, "I have a Colombian diet every day, music, souvenirs from Colombia as decorations in the house." This domestic spatial practice constitutes transnational topophilia, where the German home is transformed into a symbolic Colombian territory. Affective appropriation is expressed in the selection of specific urban spaces that resonate with transnational emotional geographies. The repeated preference for ports (Hamburg), parks, and open spaces reveals what one interviewee describes as *connecting spaces*: places that facilitate the experience of mobility and openness

that characterizes the transnational condition. Cultural hybridization is evident in spatial practices that combine Colombian and German elements in novel territorial syntheses. The activities of the *Berlin Carnival of Cultures* (see Figure 50), where Colombian dance groups join international groups annually in an event that takes place in a central area of Berlin. These practices are connected transnational celebrations that transform Berlin public spaces into territories of hybrid cultural expression.

Figure 50. Colombian Carnival dance group at the Berlin Carnival of Cultures

Note. The photograph is reproduced from the Facebook page of Colombia Carnaval Facebook.

On the other hand, what Smith and Guarnizo (1998) propose as transnationalism from below reflects the Colombian case, because Colombian spatial practices constitute forms of resistance and subversion of the hegemonic conceptions of German urban space. The demonstrations represent more than just demands for inclusion in German society; they also articulate alternative forms of urban citizenship that maintain active political links with Colombia. The experience of Unidas por la Paz-Alemania during the social unrest of 2021 illustrates these dynamics. The organization developed grassroots remittance networks that sent economic resources to Colombia, while simultaneously occupying Berlin urban spaces for political protest activities. This dual territoriality, economic and political, demonstrates the community mutual aid infrastructure that operates transnationally. One interviewee says: “Artistic activities were carried out, flags were painted, and a message was embroidered on

fabric that read *if the river sounds, history tells*, due to the disappeared and murdered in Colombia, whose bodies were thrown into the rivers. That embroidered flag was unfurled on the Admiralbrücke in Berlin." This spatial practice constitutes a resistant memory practice that inscribes the geographies of Colombian violence into Berlin urban infrastructure, transforming a bridge into a territory of transnational memory.

However, these spatial manifestations of Colombian transnationality have the same sustainability problems as some of the political collectives, as dependence on Colombian political circumstances limits the capacity to develop sustained territorial attachments. The organizations manage more as responsive spatial networks than as autonomous territorial projects, highlighting the structural limitations to the consolidation of permanent transnational spaces. The intermittent nature of the organizations leads to intermittent production of transnational spaces, as noted in one of the interviews with organizations, "after the strike, there were no more activities, but the relationships remained. The political situation in Colombia defined the intensity of the activities." The experience of the Kolumbiengruppe Köln illustrates these dynamics. Active between 2005 and 2014, the organization managed to establish institutional anchors at Evangelische Studierendengemeinde (ESG) Köln; however, its dissolution highlights the fragility of transnational spatial appropriations when they depend exclusively on individual voluntarism without the development of sustainable community infrastructures.

Furthermore, community fragmentation leads to transnational spatial fragmentation, where limitations in building social trust among Colombian migrants restrict the capacity to develop sustained collective spatial appropriations. As one interviewee puts it, "Colombia's social differences are transferred to Germany. There is little integration. Social networks were not strong at that time." This transfer of Colombian social dynamics to the German context generates what one interviewee conceptualizes as potential aggressor perception, where "one perceives the other Colombian as a potential aggressor... the violence in Colombia is transferred... it is a matter of protecting one's life." This structural mistrust limits the capacity to develop sustained community-built cultural spaces and restricts spatial appropriations to politically motivated, circumstantial events.

Even with the problems of sustaining transnational spaces, the application of the Harvey-Lefebvre and Smith and Guarnizo-Lefebvre matrices to the Colombian case demonstrates the existence of significant transnational spatial practices, albeit still in the process of consolidation. Colombians in Germany have managed to develop what can be characterized as transnational conjunctural spaces, which are temporary territorializations that

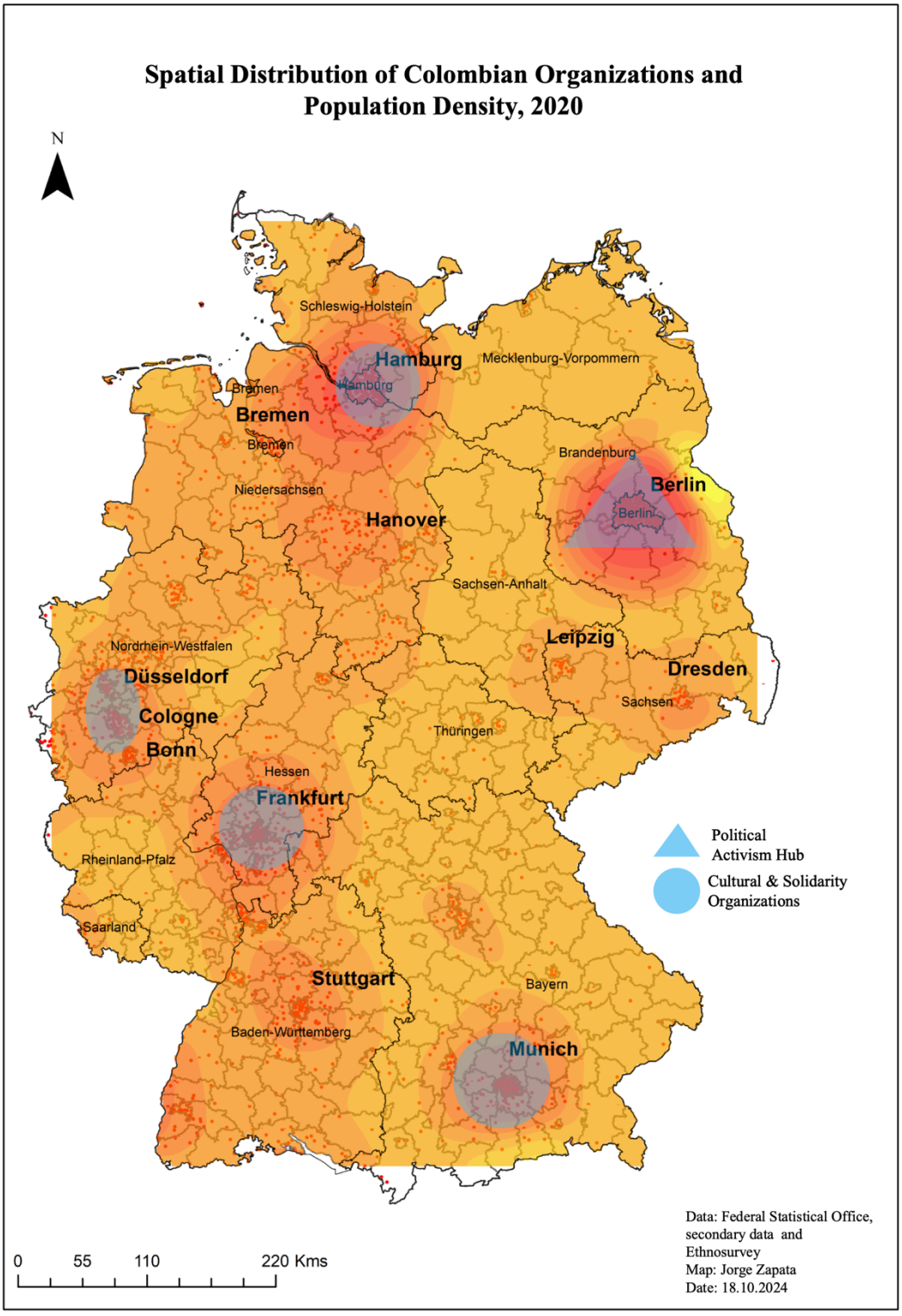
are activated in response to specific political events and demonstrate capacities for spatial appropriation and transnational political articulation.

7.4 The Spatial Paradox of Population Density

Figure 51 displays the distribution of the Colombian population in Germany in 2020. As analyzed in Chapter 5, the population concentrates in western and southwestern Germany, particularly in the metropolitan areas of Rhein-Ruhr (Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn, and Aachen) and Rhein-Main (around Frankfurt). Towards the south, this pattern is reinforced by Stuttgart and Munich, situated in the dynamic industrial and technological hub of southern Germany. This distribution shapes a network of interconnected cities working as demographic centers of attraction. In the northern region, Hamburg stands out as the main center, with Bremen and Hanover playing a secondary role. Berlin has evident primacy, followed on an intermediate scale by Leipzig and Dresden; in contrast, inland locations such as Göttingen have a significantly lower presence. This let out a hierarchical urban pattern, where a few urban centers bring together the majority of the Colombian community, with density rapidly declining outside these main hubs.

However, the relationship between the spatial density of the Colombian population and the development of transnational organizational networks exposes a paradox. While the density map reveals significant concentrations in the largest cities in Germany (Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt), which align with the distribution of the 16 identified organizations, the Transnationality Index score of 33.5 points indicates a very low level of transnational development. This apparent contradiction requires an examination of how spatial density interacts with specific structural factors to produce particular modes of transnationality.

Figure 51. Spatial Distribution of Colombian Organizations and Population Density in Germany, 2020



Note. Author's own elaboration based on primary data from the Ethnosurvey and secondary data from online resources, and the Federal Statistical Office of Germany.

According to the theoretical framework of Faist et al. (2013), the formation of transnational social spaces requires progression from dispersed individual practices to consolidated organizational structures. In this process, spatial density operates as a fundamental facilitating variable, as it provides the demographic *critical mass* necessary to sustain systematic social interactions. As first hypothesis states, "The development of transnational social networks of Colombians in Germany depends on the intensity of transnational social practices among individuals and the Colombian community, which are influenced by [...] the size of that population". Urban concentration facilitates three processes crucial to transnational development: 1- Relational density: a greater likelihood of casual and systematic encounters between compatriots. 2-Organizational economies of scale: economic viability of cultural events, ethnic services, and community infrastructure. 3- Political visibility: the capacity for mobilization in demonstrations and transnational activism.

Therefore, critical mass is not only a population threshold, but there must also be a population density that allows for the processes described. Density is, theoretically, more important than the population threshold. However, in the Colombian case, this must be interpreted with caution. Networks are distributed in the same way that the population is concentrated, even when the Transnationality Index expresses a low level. The existence of networks is a precondition for political activism to occur, as we have already analyzed above. Smith (2001) and Sassen (2000) agree that cities are spaces where transnational practices create centralities and nodes of interconnection. From this perspective, cities are active places that produce transnationality and facilitate the articulation of hybrid identities and cross-border practices. In the Colombian case, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt operate as nodes in this cross-border geography of centrality, where population density interacts with specific urban infrastructures to facilitate transnational practices.

The correlation between population density and the concentration of organizations is problematic. Figure 51 shows how Berlin has the political hub (kolko e.V., Colombia Carnaval, Kolumbienkampagne Berlin, Unidas por la Paz), which coincides with the largest Colombian population (25.2% of respondents). Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt are cities with intermediate densities that develop specialized organizations (Colombia Solidaridad-Hamburg, Aluna Minga e.V., Colombia Viva e.V.). However, this organizational concentration does not translate into mass participation. Only 11.5% of respondents belong to Colombian associations, suggesting that spatial density is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the consolidation of transnational development.

Part of the same paradox is the scalar differentiation in perceptions of associativity. As analyzed above, while 44% perceive a medium degree of Colombian associativity at the national level, only 32% consider associativity in their specific city to be positive. This geographical paradox shows that transnational imagination (following Anderson on imagined communities) open up more intensely on abstract scales than in concrete territories of everyday life. This discrepancy suggests that spatial density alone does not guarantee the construction of dense community ties at the local level.

Although Germany is home to 20,705 Colombians (as of 2020), this population does not reach the critical mass necessary to sustain consolidated community territorializations comparable to those of more numerous diasporas. Territorial fragmentation hinders the formation of ethnic neighborhoods or transnational enclaves, which are characteristic of consolidated migrant communities. Spatial density does not resolve the transfer of social fragmentation from Colombia; social inequalities and conflicts also travel with Colombians. It is a transfer of habitus (following Bourdieu), which means that physical proximity does not guarantee social cohesion, as Colombian structural mistrust is reproduced in the German context, limiting the organizational potential of urban concentration.

So far, we could say that there is a specific transnational threshold below which spatial density fails to generate consolidated transnational social spaces. In the Colombian case, the population of ~20,000 individuals distributed across multiple cities does not reach this threshold, resulting in fragmented transnationalism characterized by high organizational formalization (62.5% with e.V. status) but low individual participation (11.5%); significant conjunctural mobilization capacities, but weak permanent structures; and complementary rather than integrated urban functional specialization. Spatial density, therefore, should be conceptualized not as a determining variable but as a territorial resource that facilitates specific modes of transnational organization, whose consolidation depends on the articulation between demographic concentration, organizational institutionalization, high associativity, and favorable urban contexts.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSIONS

This doctoral research had several starting points. First, it responds to the identification of a significant gap in studies on transnational migration, the absence of systematic analysis of the transnational social formations of relatively small migrant populations in European contexts, specifically the case of Colombians in Germany. This empirical gap is striking, considering that Colombia has one of the largest diasporas in Latin America, with more than 4.7 million Colombians residing outside the country by 2023, representing 9% of the national population. The second starting point is the need to understand the production of transnational geographical spaces, taking the Colombian community in Germany as an empirical reference point, based on the recognition that transnational social formations are also a genuinely geographical phenomenon. The spatiality of transnationality is not only a conceptual problem awaiting resolution, but also a pragmatic issue at the methodological and empirical level that allows us to observe the spatial organization of transnational social formations.

The relevance of studying the Colombian case in Germany lies in the fact that it allows for the analysis of transnationalization processes in their formative stages, observing how a relatively small community develops transnational social practices and configures transnational geographical spaces in a national context that has traditionally favored assimilationist models of integration over multiculturalist approaches.

The research outlined four specific analytical objectives that were systematically developed and addressed throughout the dissertation. The first aim is to measure the degree of development of cross-border social practices to determine the existence and intensity of transnationality in the Colombian case, was achieved through the construction and application of the Transnationality Index (TI), which yielded an average value of 33.53 points on a scale of 0 to 100, placing the Colombian community at a low but existing and measurable level of transnationality. The second aim, focused on characterizing transnational social practices in their socioeconomic, cultural, family, and political dimensions, was developed through multidimensional analysis that revealed a clear hierarchy: family-affective dimension (43.9 points) > sociocultural (35.4 points) > economic (25.9 points) > political-civic (20.1 points). This gradation confirms theoretical expectations regarding the differentiated development of transnationalism across various spheres of social life. The third aim to determine the degree of development of transnational communities and networks was achieved through organizational analysis that identified a formally differentiated transnational ecosystem that run through complementary functional specialization logics that include binational organizations (DKF,

CAPAZ), cultural organizations (Kolko), human rights collectives (REDHER), and conjunctural political solidarity networks. The fourth aim, focused on identifying the processes of production of transnational geographical spaces, was developed through the application of the theoretical frameworks of Harvey-Lefebvre and Smith and Guarnizo. This analysis shows that Colombians develop adaptive spatialities that maximize territorial impacts with limited resources, working from domestic spaces to symbolic appropriations of urban public spaces.

Regarding the hypotheses presented, the research confirms that the development of transnational social networks indeed depends on the intensity of transnational social practices, although with important nuances. Contrary to initial expectations, it was established that integration into German society does not reduce the connection with Colombia (correlation practically zero: $r = .024$), confirming the hypothesis of complementarity over the hypothesis of substitution. Additionally, the research confirmed the second and third hypotheses, which posited a hierarchical urban pattern in the dynamics of remittances, population distribution, and density, as well as in the organization of organizational networks.

The mixed-methodological strategy, developed in three stages, proved its relevance in addressing the multidimensional complexity of the transnational phenomenon. The combination of quantitative analysis of secondary data from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the application of the ethnosurvey, and the qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews allowed for the triangulation of evidence and the construction of a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon studied. The construction of the Transnationality Index represents a significant methodological innovation that provides a specific quantitative instrument for medium-sized migrant populations and overcoming the limitation of transnational studies that have traditionally focused on large diasporas. However, the fundamental epistemological tension between quantitative operationalization and the intrinsically complex, fluid, and contextual nature of the transnational phenomenon is recognized.

The central finding of this research is that the Colombian community in Germany develops a form of selective transnationalism, characterized by practices oriented toward the maintenance of family and limited community ties, rather than by the comprehensive development of transnational activities across multiple spheres. This selectivity is evident in the concentration of 68.7% of the sample at the minimum and low levels of transnationality (0-40 TI points). This categorizes the Colombian community as a whole as a non-transnational community. Practices are unevenly developed, and the economic and political dimensions, according to the IT, are slow to develop during the first stage of transnationalization, as

analyzed within the framework of Faist et al. (2013). However, the more advanced development of family and sociocultural practices indicates a type of selective transnationality oriented toward the individual and the immediate interpersonal sphere of the family and close social circles. This pattern of uneven development unfold the integration strategies of Colombians and could suggest similar behavior in communities with similar characteristics. This pattern has a defined dimensional hierarchy structure: Family > Sociocultural > Economic > Political, as determined by the analysis in Chapter 6. This hierarchical pattern reflects both the structural conditions of the German context and the specific adaptive strategies employed by Colombian migrants. The dominance of the family-affective dimension confirms the *translocal* nature of migratory practices proposed by Smith (2001), where places of origin and destination are connected mainly through emotional ties and family care practices.

The relative weakness of the economic and political dimensions suggests a weakness in geographical transnationalism, suggesting that transnational urbanism develops only partially in the Colombian-German case, limited to certain types of urban spaces (restaurants, churches, domestic spaces) without fully extending to formal economic and political spaces. This limitation can be attributed to the specific characteristics of Colombian migration to Germany, which is primarily driven by academic and professional reasons rather than economic or political crises. However, the research also showed that the Colombian community, with little transnational development, produces non-material transnational spaces. It does not require consolidated material infrastructures to generate meaningful territorialities, but can operate through *adaptive spatialities* that maximize territorial impacts with limited resources. The most visible spatial practices are manifested in the mobilizations in support of the Colombian National Strike of 2019 and 2021, where Colombians transformed German urban spaces into territories of transnational political solidarity. The appropriation of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin is an example of the symbolic and temporary appropriation of German urban spaces, with the intention of turning them into spaces of political power through activism and the deployment of networks of social organizations and Colombians not affiliated with any collective who participated in demonstrations of political solidarity in contexts of cross-border political conjuncture. The streets and squares are spaces for transnational political expression. For this reason, transnational spatialities, in the Colombian case, do not possess a concrete materiality, but they do have a significant political content, even if it is intermittent.

Transnational spatiality functions as urban networks of transnational resistance that transcend the traditional dichotomies between local/global or national/international. The demonstrations function as multi-sited practices that produce simultaneous territorialities in

multiple German cities (Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, Bonn), configuring a transnational political geography characterized by activism from below. This hierarchical dispersion reflects well-known characteristics of the German urban network, which suggests that transnational practices are channeled through pre-existing spatial conditions of accessibility, labor markets, and cultural infrastructure. Spatial analysis corroborates the idea that transnationality occur where density, diversity, and institutional presence create opportunities for association, exchange, and visibility. These findings highlight the significance of urban scale and spatial location in shaping the convergence of practices. The research question regarding the production of transnational geographical spaces is addressed in the terms described. The transnational spatiality of Colombians in Germany is adaptive, occurs depending on the preconditions and organizational capacity of the migrant community, and does not yet produce a material infrastructure of its own.

The concept of adaptive spatialities broaden the scope of Lefebvre's and Harvey's theories of the social production of space by revealing that spatial significance can emerge from intermittent, event-based, and temporary appropriations. They also refine Smith's concept of transnational urbanism by demonstrating how smaller diasporic groups, even without the density of ethnic enclaves, can achieve territorial visibility through temporary and performative means. The Colombian case illustrates that adaptive spatialities function through three interrelated dimensions: temporality, scale, and intentionality.

Adaptive spatialities work through flexible temporal structures, moving beyond permanent spatial occupation to create impact through strategic timing. This approach, exemplified by the Colombian case, unfolds in three distinct modes, *ephemeral appropriations*, such as the single-day 2021 protest at Berlin Brandenburg Gate, which temporarily transformed a national symbol into a space of dissent; *cyclical activations* like the recurring presence in the Berlin Carnival of Cultures, which creates a predictable yet non-permanent footprint; and *crisis-responsive* concentrations, where territorial practices intensify during pivotal political moments, such as the 2019 and 2021 national strikes, before receding to a sustained baseline. Also, a distinctive feature of adaptive territorialities is their capacity for scalar jumping, which is the ability to articulate practices across multiple geographical scales without requiring consolidated presence at each level. The Colombian case demonstrates this multi-scalar articulation through simultaneous operation at four levels: *micro-scale domestic* territorialization through culinary practices, music, and decorative objects in individual apartments; *meso-scale community* gatherings in urban parks, restaurants, and borrowed institutional spaces that create temporary collective territories; *macro-scale appropriation* of

strategic landmarks like the Brandenburg Gate that project Colombian political demands onto the German national stage; and *trans-scalar digital* coordination through WhatsApp groups and Facebook that enables simultaneous mobilizations across multiple German cities (Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Bonn), creating an urban network of transnational resistance. This scalar articulation reveals that adaptive territorialities do not require linear progression from local consolidation to national presence, but can strategically activate different scales according to political and community needs.

Likewise, adaptive spatialities come out through varying degrees of conscious planning, from spontaneous practices to deliberately coordinated actions. Colombians in Germany exhibits three modes of intentionality: *organic adaptations*, consisting of individual and family practices of domestic Colombianization that emerge spontaneously from everyday needs for cultural continuity; *semi-coordinated practices*, including community gatherings in parks and restaurants that develop through informal social networks without formal organizational structure; and *strategic mobilizations*, encompassing politically planned demonstrations that consciously select symbolic German spaces to maximize political visibility and impact. The Colombian case evidence that the most politically effective adaptive territorialities combine organic grassroots practices with strategic organizational coordination. This suggests that effectiveness emerges from the articulation rather than the dominance of any single mode of intentionality.

On the other hand, contrary to theoretical expectations that anticipated the formation of a consolidated transnational community, the findings show the emergence of a transnational organizational ecosystem characterized by complementary functional specialization. Colombian organizations operate simultaneously in multiple stages of transnational development according to the framework of Faist et al. (2013), some have consolidated dense transnational social spaces (DKF, CAPAZ), others develop systematic transnationalization practices (Kolko, Action Pro Colombia, Aluna Minga), and the least institutionalized function as specialized solidarity networks (REDHER, political collectives). This alternative organizational architecture demonstrates robust transnational capacities distributed across multiple institutional modalities, which, through functional complementarity, develop transnational effectiveness comparable to that of traditional consolidated networks. This result challenges the conceptual assumptions that assume the need for centralized community organizations for transnational development and demonstrates that medium-sized migrant populations can develop innovative organizational forms adapted to their specific resources and contexts. It is an incomplete network, if you will, but it is efficient and developing, offering

the preconditions for the future existence of a dense and stable network of networks that consolidate a clear and strong transnationality. The network mapping analysis suggests this may take place in the near future.

Additionally, Colombians in Germany have developed a form of transnationalism without a community, characterized by intense yet structurally fragmented practices. While they maintain significant transnational links that distinguish them from linear assimilation processes, they have not managed to consolidate the community formations, urban territorializations, economic circuits, and political structures necessary to configure a transnational community in the conceptual sense of the term. This pattern points to the need to expand existing theoretical frameworks of transnationalism to account for modalities of cross-border connectivity that function effectively without territorial community consolidation. It highlights contemporary forms of transnationality that privilege relational networks over institutional structures, virtuality over territorial embeddedness, and affective ties over formal organizations. The Colombian case in Germany thus represents a distinct modality of transnationalization.

Reading these findings requires a shift from categorical to processual thinking. Instead of asking whether a transnational community exists, the evidence encourages us to ask what stage of formation it is currently in and through what mechanisms it could be strengthened or weakened. The observed patterns correspond to the initial phase of a three-part process in which individualized practices crystallize into transnational social spaces and, under specific organizational and material conditions, evolve into consolidated transnational communities. Within this framework, the Colombian case is best understood as a set of practices with uneven strengths in different spheres and places, ready to consolidate where urban possibilities and network dynamics allow. This interpretation allows the coexistence of strong family ties with weak formal politics, and it helps explain why national imaginaries of cohesion can overcome the density of local networks.

Therefore, the correlation analysis using Pearson's *r* revealed counterintuitive findings that refute central hypotheses in the transnational literature. The virtually zero correlation between German integration and ties to Colombia (r = .24) is a compelling result that refutes the substitution hypothesis and confirms the complementarity hypothesis, demonstrating that integration into German culture and society does not reduce Colombians connection to Colombia. Assimilation, which occurs after several generations of migration, does not happen automatically nor is it natural to transnationality. The Colombian case serves as a refutation. Likewise, the positive correlation between length of residence and German integration (r =

.452) confirms the evolutionary pattern where temporal consolidation facilitates integration without compromising ties to the country of origin. However, contrary to expectations, length of residence shows limited progression in transnational development (an increase of only 3.7 points between the most recent group and the group with the longest stay), indicating that transnational practices stabilize relatively early in the migration trajectory. Cross-border ties are strong at the beginning of the migrant cultural adaptation, as they function as a cultural bridge strategy.

These findings represent a theoretical contributions to the field of transnational studies from a geographical perspective. First, it proposes the concept of selective transnationalism to characterize the specific pattern of transnational development in medium-sized migrant populations, thereby overcoming binary conceptions that classify migrants as either *transnational* or *non-transnational*. This concept allows for the recognition of differentiated transnational profiles that operate through strategies of selective navigation between multiple social spaces. Second, the concept of adaptive spatialities is developed to explain how medium-sized migrant populations produce significant transnational spaces without requiring consolidated material infrastructures. This theoretical contribution demonstrates that transnationalism can maximize territorial impacts with limited resources by employing strategies of temporary and symbolic appropriation of urban spaces. Third, the transnational organizational ecosystem model is proposed as an alternative to traditional theoretical models that assume the need for centralized community organizations. This model acknowledges that medium-sized migrant populations can develop distributed organizational architectures that operate through specialized functional complementarity, achieving transnational effectiveness comparable to that of traditional, consolidated networks.

The construction of the Transnationality Index represents another contribution of this research. It recognizes that the transnational experience constitutes a constellation of interrelated practices in the spheres of social life. This multidimensional approach allows us to capture the internal heterogeneity of the transnational phenomenon by distinguishing between family-affective, economic, political-civic, and sociocultural dimensions, each with specific dynamics, temporalities, and logics. The proposed index is simple in structure. Its development follows the methodological framework of multidimensional composite indices widely used in the social sciences (HDI, MIPEX, MPI); however, it represents the first systematic application of a specific quantitative instrument to measure transnationality in medium-sized migrant populations within the European context. The methodology developed facilitates productive

dialogue between quantitative and qualitative approaches that provides analytical categories that can be explored in depth using ethnographic methodologies.

Additionally, the application of the spatial theoretical frameworks of Harvey-Lefebvre, and Smith and Guarnizo-Lefebvre constitutes a conceptual and methodological contribution to the analysis of transnational spatial production. These frameworks made it possible to analyze spatial modalities (absolute, relative, and relational) intersected with the Lefebvrian triad (spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation), and delivers specific analytical tools to examine the geographical dimension of transnationalism. The claim made by us geographers cannot remain mere rhetoric; these conceptual grids based on Lefebvre, Harvey, Smith, and Guarnizo are my attempt to develop a strategy for the spatial analysis of transnationalism.

For its part, this research constitutes the first systematic and comprehensive documentation of Colombian transnational migration in Germany from a geographical perspective. The primary data collected through an ethnosurvey and semi-structured interviews provide an empirical basis for future comparative research in the European context. Findings on the spatial distribution of the Colombian population reveal a concentration in major cities (Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich) that act as transnational urban nodes, but also a significant presence in medium-sized cities that develop alternative forms of transnational organization. This diversified spatial distribution contradicts theoretical models that assume urban concentration as a prerequisite for transnational development. Furthermore, the characterization of transnational social practices specific to the Colombian case provides empirical evidence on patterns of maintaining family ties (82.1% use digital platforms to connect with compatriots), selective cultural participation (42% occasionally participate in intercultural events), and limited formal political participation, but with significant episodes of political mobilization in specific circumstances.

On the other hand, no single study can cover the full complexity of transnational life, and this work is no exception. The most general limitation arises from the tension between the fluid and relational nature of transnational practices and the discretizing imperatives of measurement. Any index runs the risk of reification, it assigns limits and weights where, in lived reality, domains overlap and meanings shift. The thesis mitigated this risk by treating the index as heuristic and by embedding quantitative results within narrative and spatial analyses. Nevertheless, readers should be aware that scoring practices cannot capture all the temporal dynamics, contradictions, and ambivalences that characterize the transnational experience. We recognize that operationalizing transnationality through a multidimensional index carries

significant epistemological risks related to the fragmentation and reification of the object under study. Statistical methods, while allowing for the systematization, comparison, and generalization of transnational patterns, impose limitations by reducing lived experiences to discrete variables and numerical scales. Transnationality, understood as a set of social practices that transcend borders and create hybrid social spaces, involves subjective, symbolic, and relational dimensions that partially escape quantitative methods. Statistical methods tend to privilege the measurement of observable behaviors over meanings, motivations, and contexts, often resulting in a partial understanding of the phenomenon, which is characterized by its resistance to fixed categorizations and its emergent and contextually situated nature.

A second limitation concerns external validity. The Colombian case in Germany has particular historical, demographic, and political configurations that may not be extrapolated to other national groups or host societies. Though some characteristics, such as the predominance of family practices, may be replicated elsewhere, their magnitude and implications could differ significantly. Therefore, comparative work is needed to test the transferability of the framework and refine the proposed typology of stages. Such comparisons would benefit from the harmonization of instruments and the exchange of analytical protocols to ensure that the differences observed reflect substantive variations and not methodological artifacts. For this reason, the findings of this research should be interpreted with consideration for the specificity of the Colombian case within the German context. The validity of the results is limited to medium-sized migrant populations (20,000-30,000 people) in national contexts with political-administrative systems similar to Germany's. Extrapolation to other European contexts or to migrant populations of different sizes requires specific comparative studies that consider variations in integration policies, legal frameworks for citizenship, and multicultural traditions.

The information was collected between 2019 and 2022, capturing a specific moment in the evolution of the Colombian community in Germany. The transnational patterns identified may have undergone significant transformations since then, especially considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international mobility and communication practices, as well as on social practices themselves due to the preventive social isolation that occurred during 2020 and part of 2021. Spatially, although the research included major and medium-sized German cities, the application of a comprehensive multi-sited ethnography would have required simultaneous fieldwork in Colombia, which was not possible due to resource constraints. This limitation was partially offset by the analysis of digital networks and transnational practices that allow for the observation of bidirectional connections without requiring simultaneous physical presence.

Therefore, there are threats to statistical validity that warrant caution. The survey questions and their aggregation into dimensions necessarily simplify complex practices and may be sensitive to wording, context, and respondent interpretation. The sample size, although adequate for the analyses performed, limits the precision of estimates and the specificity of subgroup analysis, especially at more detailed spatial scales. Therefore, future work should aim for larger and more diverse samples, conduct instrument validation exercises, and strengthen triangulation with alternative data sources, such as digital tracking data, organizational records, and ethnographic observations. These improvements would reinforce confidence in the measurement model and expand the research analytical capacity.

The confirmation of the complementarity hypothesis over the substitution hypothesis has important theoretical implications for debates on integration and transnationalism. The results show that local integration and the maintenance of transnational ties are independent and non-competitive phenomena, which calls into question integration policies that assume a zero-sum relationship between the two processes. In political debates, it is often implied that efforts to support migrants' participation in host societies will erode ties to the country of origin or that an active transnational life means a lack of integration. The empirical pattern observed here suggests that such binaries are misleading, forms of belonging can be multiple, and participation in one sphere does not necessarily exclude participation in another. Recognizing this allows for the design of policies that pursue integration and diaspora participation as complementary goals.

The concept of selective transnationalism challenges linear models of transnational development and demonstrates that migrant populations can develop differentiated strategies for navigating multiple social spaces that prioritize certain dimensions over others, depending on their specific contexts and available resources. Similarly, the proposed transnational organizational ecosystem model suggests the need to reconceptualize theoretical frameworks on transnational community development by incorporating distributed and functionally specialized organizational forms as viable alternatives to the centralized models that have traditionally been studied.

This dissertation contributes to filling the gap identified by Carter (2005) on the metaphorical use of space in transnational studies. The spatial analytical frameworks developed provide specific conceptual tools for examining how transnational social practices produce material and symbolic geographical configurations. The concept of adaptive spatialities offers a specific contribution to urban geography that demonstrates how medium-sized migrant populations can reconfigure urban spaces through temporary and symbolic appropriations that

transcend permanent ownership or control of infrastructure. Furthermore, the mapping of transnational networks has practical implications for the design of migration integration policies in European contexts. The confirmation that local integration does not reduce transnational ties suggests that integration policies can adopt more inclusive approaches that recognize and facilitate the maintenance of transnational connections as a complement, not an obstacle, to local integration.

This research opens up some lines of inquiry that may expand the understanding of geographical transnationalism. First, it is necessary to develop comparative studies that apply the Transnationality Index to other medium-sized migrant populations in different European contexts that allows for the identification of cross-cutting patterns and contextual specificities in transnational development. Second, longitudinal research is needed to observe the temporal evolution of transnational practices and the consolidation of transnational geographical spaces. Findings on the early stabilization of transnational practices require verification through temporal monitoring. Third, the application of comprehensive multi-sited ethnography, including simultaneous fieldwork in Colombia, would allow for an analysis of the bidirectional dimensions of Colombian-German transnationalism, examining how transnational practices also reconfigure spaces of origin. Finally, the development of studies on the impact of digital technologies on the configuration of transnational spatialities is promising, especially considering how digital platforms facilitate the coordination of adaptive spatialities without requiring physical proximity.

For geography, this study demonstrates that analyzing transnational migrations from a geographical perspective is an analytical necessity for understanding the inherently spatial nature of the transnational phenomenon. The findings show that transnational social formations are also geographical formations that produce specific territorialities, reconfigure urban spatialities, and produce spatial networks that transcend traditional conceptions of national space. The spatial dimension of transnationalism is an active agent in the production of meanings. German cities are part of a transnational political geography that amplifies local Colombian demands through the strategic appropriation of German spatialities of power.

The spatial analytical frameworks developed represent a specific contribution to contemporary geographical theory. The application of Lefebvre's triad (spatial practices, representations of space, spaces of representation), and Smith and Guarnizo's dialectic from above and from below to transnational analysis provides conceptual tools for a systematic examination of how transnational social practices produce concrete spaces. The concept of adaptive spatialities contributes to theoretical debates on territoriality and deterritorialization

in contemporary human geography. Deterritorialization does not imply the disappearance of territoriality; instead, it involves its transformation into more flexible and strategically adapted forms that maintain territorial effectiveness through innovative modes of spatial appropriation.

This doctoral dissertation fulfills its fundamental purpose of contributing to the explanation of transnational social formations and their geographical nature. It provides a theoretical, methodological, and thematic framework for the field of migration studies applicable to cases of migrant populations in different contexts. Not only do large diasporas deserve to be studied, but the Colombian case proved to be an interesting case study, as the Colombian community in Germany develops specific ways of inhabiting urban spaces that simultaneously articulate multiple geographical scales, from the domestic territorialization of kitchens where *arepas* are prepared and *vallenato* is listened to, to the symbolic appropriation of central public spaces for transnational political demonstrations. This scalar articulation demonstrates that transnationalism functions as a distinct mode of spatial production, warranting systematic geographical research.

Colombian migration in Germany is at a stage of organizational consolidation, suggesting a potential for growing transnational development in the coming decades. The organizations identified have demonstrated the ability to adapt to temporary crises, such as the National Strike (2019-2021), and to develop sustained organizational infrastructures that provide a solid foundation for the expansion of transnational practices. The German context, characterized by growing debates on cultural diversity and integration policies, may offer opportunities for the development of more inclusive forms of urban citizenship that recognize the contributions of transnational communities to German urban life. Colombians have demonstrated an ability to articulate transnational political demands with universal human rights frameworks that resonate in German society.

Ultimately, this research demonstrates that the study of transnational migration requires the incorporation of a geographical perspective in order to fully understand how transnational social practices reconfigure spaces of origin and destination, producing hybrid geographies that constitute one of the most significant expressions of contemporary globalization. The geography of transnationalism is emerging as a promising field of research that can make substantial contributions to understanding the spatial transformations of the contemporary world, where socio-spatial changes are occurring that geographers are obligated to address with academic rigor and social commitment.

References

Actis, W. (2009). La migración colombiana en España: ¿salvados o entrampados? Revista de Indias, LXIX(245), 145–170. https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.2009.006

Aguilera, M., & Contreras-Medrano, D. (2022). Migración internacional de Colombia: El impacto de las redes de información de migración. Migraciones Internacionales, 13. https://doi.org/10.33679/rmi.v1i1.2462

AHK, D.-K. I. H. (2018). Informe anual 2018.

AHK, D.-K. I. H. (2020). AHK 2020. Portafolio de servicios y eventos.

AHK, D.-K. I. H., & CNC, C. N. de C. (2019). Barómetro empresarial colombo-alemán 2019. Perspectivas de negocio.

Aliaga, F., & Flórez, A. (Eds.). (2020). Dimensiones de la migración en Colombia. Universidad Santo Tomás.

Aliaga-Sáez, F., García-Arango, D. A., Riaño, Y., Sepúlveda-Aguirre, J., & Betancur-Betancur, D. (2025). Migrant Entrepreneurs Between Colombia and Germany: Return, Strategies, and Expectations. Social Sciences, 14(5), 305. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14050305

Álvarez de Flores, R. (2004). La dinámica migratoria colombo-venezolana: Evolución y perspectiva actual. Geoenseñanza, 9(2), 191–202.

Álvarez de Flores, R. (2007). Evolución histórica de las migraciones en Venezuela. Breve recuento. Aldea Mundo. Revista Sobre Fronteras e Integración, 22, 89–93.

Amerika21. (2021). Deutschland und die Illusion vom Frieden in Kolumbien. https://amerika21.de/analyse/248851/deutschland-illusion-frieden-kolumbien

Amézquita Quintana, C. (2015). El transnacionalismo político de los migrantes colombianos en Nueva York y Nueva Jersey (1990-2010): Su comprensión desde la óptica de las heridas identitarias y la búsqueda de reconocimiento. OASIS, 21, 81. https://doi.org/10.18601/16577558.n21.05

Amnesty International. (2022). Kolumbien 2021. https://www.amnesty.de/informieren/amnesty-report/kolumbien-2021

Aparicio Gómez, R. (2006). Migración colombiana a España. In Colombia: Migraciones, transnacionalismo y desplazamiento (pp. 191–2011). Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Centros de Estudios Sociales-CES.

Appadurai, A., & Breckenridge, C. A. (1988). Why Public Culture? Public Culture, 1(1), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-1-1-5

Ardila, M. (2019). Comprar una casa en Colombia desde Francia: Proyecto migratorio y acciones transnacionales desde abajo. Territorios, 41, 101. https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/territorios/a.7731

Ardila Sierra, M. C. (2015). Circulaciones, esperas y retornos: A medio camino, de colombianos y colombianas que no llegaron al destino propuesto. Maguaré, 29(1), 113–145.

Ardila Sierra, M. C. (2020). "Me fui quedando": The temporary-prolonged stay of Colombian students in Paris. Revista de Antropología y Sociología: Virajes, 23(1), 155–178. https://doi.org/10.17151/rasv.2021.23.1.7

Auswärtiges Amt Deutschland. (2024). Deutschland und Kolumbien: Bilaterale Beziehungen. https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/kolumbien-node/bilateral/201522

Ayala, G., Bermúdez, S., Masón, A., & Murcial, P. (2001). Un acercamiento al actual éxodo colombiano al exterior. Colombia Internacional, 51, 87–97. https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint51.2001.04

Aysa-Lastra, M. (2008). Perfil sociodemográfico de residentes en Estados Unidos. Año 2000. In Presencia Colombiana en Estados Unidos. Caracterizacion de la Poblacion Inmigrante. (pp. 27–48). Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia.

Bakewell, O. (2014). Relaunching migration systems. Migration Studies, 2(3), 300–318. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnt023

Banco de la República de Colombia. (2022). Ingresos de remesas de trabajadores en Colombia [Dataset]. Banco de la República - Sección Sector Externo - Balanza de pagos. https://totoro.banrep.gov.co/analytics/saw.dll?Go

Bauböck, R. (2003). Towards a Political Theory of Migrant Transnationalism. The International Migration Review, 37(3), 700–723.

Bermudez, A. (2010). The transnational political practices of Colombians in Spain and the United Kingdom: Politics 'here' and 'there.' Ethnic and Racial Studies, 33(1), 75–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870903125838

Bermúdez, A. (2016). International Migration, Transnational Politics and Conflict. The Gendered Experiences of Colombian Migrants in Europe. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53197-1

Bermudez, A., & Cuberos-Gallardo, F. (2021). Colombian-Spanish Migrants in London since the Great Recession Political Participation and Attitudes amid (Dis)Integration Processes. Migraciones, 51, 181–205.

Bermúdez Rico, R. E. (2015). La población inmigrante calificada colombiana residente en Estados Unidos. Sociedad y Economía, 29, 107–125. https://doi.org/10.25100/sye.v0i29.3920

Bermúdez Torres, A. (2006). Colombian migration to Europe: Political transnationalism in the middle of conflict. COMPAS University of Oxford, Working Paper, 39, 1–28.

Bernal, C., Cardozo, K., Granados, L., & Polo, S. (2020). Perspectivas globales de las emigraciones de colombianos al exterior en el siglo XXI: un fenómeno en movimiento. In Dimensiones de la migración en Colombia. Universidad Santo Tomás.

Bidegain, A. M., Aysa-Lastra, M., & Wooldridge, B. (Eds.). (2008). Presencia colombiana en Estados Unidos. Caracterización de la población inmigrante. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia.

Bidegain, G. (1986). Inrnigrantes: Mito o realidad? Revista Sobre Relaciones Industriales y Laborales, 18.

Borjas, G. (1987). Self-Selection and the Earnings of Immigrants. American Economic Review, 77(4), 531–553.

Botón Gómez, S., & González Román, P. (2009). Una revisión a los estudios sobre migración internacional en Colombia. Revista Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, 18(1), 195–204. https://doi.org/10.18359/rfce.2288

Braun, N.-C. (2021). Dinámicas del asilo de personas colombianas en Alemania. Instituto Colombo-Alemán para la Paz – CAPAZ.

Brickell, K., & Datta, A. (Eds.). (2011). Translocal Geographies. Space, Places, Connections. Ashgate.

Bryceson, D. F., & Vuorela, U. (2002). Transnational Families in the 21st Century. In The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks (pp. 3–30). Berg Publishers.

Cáceres Domínguez, C. (2007). Aspectos identitarios de los inmigrantes colombianos en París. In En busca de un nuevo El Dorado. Análisis del fenómeno migratorio colombiano (pp. 245–295). Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Cancillería de Colombia, E. de C. en A. (2022). Asuntos Económicos y Comerciales entre Colombia y Alemania. https://alemania.embajada.gov.co/colombia/asuntos_economicos

Cano, G. (2014). Tesis de Maestría, Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira.

Cardenas, M., & Mejia, C. (2006). Migraciones internacionales en Colombia: ¿Qué sabemos? Working Papers Series - Documentos de Trabajo No. 30. Fedesarrollo. http://www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/bitstream/11445/810/1/WP_2006_No_30.pdf

Cardona Acevedo, M., Ruiz Olaya, I., & Vargas, C. (2011). Aproximación a los determinantes de la migración laboral internacional de Colombia. 2(1), 93–114.

Cardona Gutiérrez, R. (1983). Migración de colombianos a Venezuela. Corporación Centro Regional de Población. https://books.google.de/books?id=ZusYAAAAYAAJ

Cardona Gutiérrez, R., & Rubiano de Velásquez, S. (1980). El éxodo de colombianos: Un estudio de la corriente migratoria a los Estados Unidos y un intento para propiciar el retorno. Ediciones Tercer Mundo.

Carter, S. (2005). The geopolitics of diaspora. Area, 37(1), 54–63.

Castells, M. (1996). The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume I. Blackwell Publishers.

CEPII, R. and expertise on the world economy. (2020). Bilateral trade by products, Colombia-Germany. BACI HS6 REV. 1992 (1995-2022). [Dataset].

Chaves-González, D., & Batalova, J. (2023). Colombian Immigrants in the United States. Migration Information Source. The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombian-immigrants-united-states

Ciurlo, A. (2012). Migración colombiana hacia Italia: Un estudio exploratorio y de género sobre las familias transnacionales [Doctoral thesis]. Pontificia Universidad Gregoriana.

Ciurlo, A. (2013). Migración colombiana hacia Italia a la luz del género y la familia transnacional. Fondo Editorial, Universidad Antonio Nariño.

Ciurlo, A. (2014). El colectivo colombiano en Italia y el impacto de la cuestión migratoria en las relaciones internacionales entre los dos países. Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo, 1(2), 125–162.

Ciurlo, A. (2015). Nueva política migratoria colombiana: El actual enfoque de inmigración y emigración. Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo, 2(2), 205. https://doi.org/10.21500/23825014.2276

Clavijo Padilla, J. K. (2013). Reflexiones en torno a la relación entre el Estado y los nacionales en el exterior: Un análisis del caso colombiano. Revista Chilena de Derecho y Ciencia Política, 4(3), 85–121. https://doi.org/10.7770/rchdycp-V4N3-art645

Cock, J. C. (2009). Colombian Migrants, Latin American Publics: Ethnicity and Transnational Practices amongst Colombian Migrants in London [PhD thesis]. University of London, Queen Mary.

Cock, J. C. (2011). Latin American Commercial Spaces and the Formation of Ethnic Publics in London: The Case of the Elephant and Castle. In Cross-Border Migration among Latin Americans. European Perspectives and Beyond (pp. 175–195). Palgrave Macmillan.

Collier, M. W. (2004). Colombian Migration to South Florida: A Most Unwelcome Reception (Working Paper No.9). Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University.
https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=laccwps

Collier, M. W., & Gamarra, E. (2001). The Colombian Diaspora in South Florida A Report of the Colombian Studies Institute's Colombian Diaspora Project (Working Paper No.1). Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University. https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=laccwps

Collyer, M., & King, R. (2012). Transnational Space: Territory, Mobility and Technology. Willy Brandt Series of Working Papersin International Migration and Ethnic Relations, 1(12), 3–35.

Cortés Maisonave, A., & Sanmartín Ortí, A. (2010). Transnacionalismo político: Políticas migratorias de vinculación de los estados de origen y de las asociaciones de migrantes en España. Los casos ecuatoriano y colombiano. 1146–1164.

Council Directive 2002/90/EC. Defining the Facilitation of Unauthorised Entry, Transit and Residence, Pub. L. No. 2002/90/EC (2002). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002L0090&qid=1421139238307&from=EN

Council Directive 2003/86/EC. On the Right to Family Reunification, Pub. L. No. 2003/86/EC (2003). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002L0090&qid=1421139238307&from=EN

Council Directive 2003/109/EC. Concerning the Status of Third-Country Nationals Who Are Long-Term Residents, Pub. L. No. 2003/109/EC (2003). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-
content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002L0090&qid=1421139238307&from=EN

Crang, P., Dwyer, C., & Jackson, P. (2003). Transnationalism and the spaces of commodity culture. Progress in Human Geography, 27(4), 438–456. https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132503ph443oa

Cruz Zúñiga, P. (2007). Aproximación a los flujos y tipologías de la migración colombiana en España 1996-2006. Biblio 3W Revista Bibliográfica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, 12(755). http://www.ub.es/geocrit/b3w-755.htm

Da Silva, P. H. (2013). Colômbia, migração internacional e política pública: O caso do programa Colombia Nos Une. Conjuntura Austral, 4(19), 55. https://doi.org/10.22456/2178-8839.41252

Deavila Pertúz, O. C. (2018). Lazos transnacionales: La migración colombiana a Venezuela y el desarrollo de la vivienda popular en Cartagena, 1973-1983. Revista Palobra, "Palabra Que Obra," 18, 66–81. https://doi.org/10.32997/2346-2884-vol.0-num.18-2018-2184

Delgado Montaldo, D. (2023). Percepciones hacia la inmigración y significaciones de la integración del colectivo de inmigrantes colombianos en Barcelona y Berlín, 2007-2008 [Tesis doctoral]. Universidad de Barcelona.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). (n.d.-a). Diaspora 2030. Starting a business in Colombia. Retrieved April 15, 2023, from https://diaspora2030.de/en/starting-a-business/starting-a-business-in-colombia/

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). (n.d.-b). Programa Migración & Diáspora (PMD). Retrieved April 15, 2023, from https://diaspora2030.de/en/about-us/

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). (2023). Kolumbien. https://www.giz.de/de/weltweit/397.html

Díaz Mesa, L. M. (2007). Reflexiones en torno a la investigación sociodemográfica sobre la población colombiana en Estados Unidos. In En busca de un nuevo El Dorado. Análisis del fenómeno migratorio colombiano (pp. 49–86). Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Echeverri Buriticá, M. M. (2014). A los dos lados del Atlántico. Reconfiguraciones de los proyectos migratorios y la vida familiar transnacional de la población colombiana en España. Papeles Del CEIC, 2014(2). https://doi.org/10.1387/pceic.12988

Eguren Rodríguez, J. (2011). La construcción de las comunidades latinoamericanas transnacionales en España. Psicoperspectivas. Individuo y Sociedad, 10(1), 69–98. https://doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-Vol10-Issue1-fulltext-130

El Espectador. (2021). Colombianos en España, EE. UU. y Alemania se suman al Paro Nacional del 28 de abril. El Espectador. https://www.elespectador.com/mundo/mas-paises/colombianos-en-espana-ee-uu-y-alemania-se-suman-al-paro-nacional-del-28-de-abril-article/

European Parliament. (2022). Immigration policy. Legal basis. European Parliament Portal. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/152/immigration-policy

Faist, T. (1998). Transnational social spaces out of international migration: Evolution, significance and future prospects. European Journal of Sociology, 39(2), 213–247.

Faist, T. (2000). Transnationalization in international migration: Implications for the study of citizenship and culture. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 23(2), 189–222.

Faist, T. (2012). Toward a Transnational Methodology: Methods to Address Methodological Nationalism, Essentialism, and Positionality. Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales, 28(1), 51–70. https://doi.org/10.4000/remi.5761

Faist, T., Fauser, M., & Reisenauer, E. (2013). Transnational migration. Polity Press.

Fauser, M. (2018). Mixed Methods and Multisited Migration Research: Innovations From a Transnational Perspective. Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 12(4), 394–412.

Fedecacao. (2023). Entrevista con Sabine Triemer, de Cooperación Alemana para el Desarrollo-GIZ. https://www.fedecacao.com.co/post/entrevista-con-sabine-triemer-de-cooperaci%C3%B3n-alemana-para-el-desarrollo-giz

Garay, J., & Rodríguez, A. (2006). Estudio sobre Migración internacional y remesas en Colombia: Aproximaciones teóricas alternativas y visión panorámica a partir de la recepción de remesas en el país. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM).

Garay Salamanca, L. J., & Medina Villegas, M. C. (2009). La migración colombiana a España. El capítulo más reciente de una historia compartida. Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración, Gobierno de España.

Gincel Collazos, A. B. (2010). La migración colombiana a Francia: ¿En búsqueda del país de los Derechos Humanos? Sociedad y Economía, 19, 77–90.

Gissi Barbieri, E. N., Pinto Baleisan, C., & Rodríguez, F. (2019). Inmigración reciente de colombianos y colombianas en Chile: Sociedades plurales, imaginarios sociales y estereotipos. Estudios Atacameños, 62, 127–141. https://doi.org/10.22199/issn.0718-1043-2019-0011

GIZ. (2016). Fondo de Innovación en Colombia. https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/37181.html

GIZ. (2020). Income and employment for internally displaced persons and host communities.

GIZ. (2024). Shaping Development-Oriented Migration. https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2023-en-Shaping-Development-Oriented-Migration.pdf

Goldring, L. (1998). The Power os Status in Transnational Social Fields. In Transnationalism from below (pp. 165–195). Routledge.

Gómez, A., & Díaz, L. M. (1987). Las perspectivas de la migración internacional en el contexto de la crisis económica. La experiencia cclornbo-venezolana. In Migraciones internacionales en las américas. (Vol. 3). CEPAM.

Gómez, A., & Díaz, M. (1989). El estado del conocimiento sobre las migraciones laborales de Colombia a Venezuela 1973-1988. Lecturas de Economía, 29, 9–32.

Gómez, A., & Rengifo, F. (1999). Dinámica de la migración colombiana a Venezuela en las últimas décadas. In Colombia-Venezuela. Agenda común para el Siglo XXI. (pp. 319–406). Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Central de Venezuela-Tercer Mundo Editores.

Gomez, B., & Jones, J. P. (Eds.). (2010). Research methods in geography: A critical introduction. Wiley-Blackwell.

Gómez Johnson, M. C. (2010). Más allá de la frontera. Migración y desarrollo: Colombianos en Madrid [Tesis doctoral]. Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

González Gil, A. (2007). La organización de los inmigrantes como potenciador y/o inhibidor de su instalación en las sociedades de destino: El caso de los colombianos en España. AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana, 2(3), 521–549.

González León, L. (2011). Estado del arte sobre los trabajos migratorios en Colombia (1970-2010). Revista Análisis Internacional (Cesada a Partir de 2015), 2, 237–254.

González Rábago, Y. (2012). Migración transnacional colombiana y estrategias políticas online. Reproducción de la comunidad a través de la vinculación transnacional. Ánfora. Revista Científica de La Universidad Autónoma de Manizales, 19(32), 69–90.

González Roa, O. (2007). Del exiliado al migrante económico: Reconfiguración de la migración latinoamericana en Francia. In En busca de un nuevo El Dorado. Análisis del fenómeno migratorio colombiano (pp. 217–244). Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Granados Vela, L., Polo Alvis, S., & Serrano López, E. (2020). Identidad nacional y sistema migratorio colombiano en Estados Unidos: De fuga de cerebros a ganancia de cerebros. Colombia Internacional, 104, 183–208. https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint104.2020.07

Grewe, M. (2015). La diáspora colombiana en Alemania: Acción transnacional y compromiso con los orígenes. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) / Centro para la Migración Internacional y el Desarollo (CIM. https://www.cimonline.de/static/media/giz2015-es-diaspora-colombia.pdf

Guarnizo, L. E. (1997). The Emergence of a Transnational Social Formation and The Mirage of Return Migration Among Dominican Transmigrants. Identities, 4(2), 281–322. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.1997.9962591

Guarnizo, L. E. (2008). Londres latina. La presencia colombiana en la capital británica. Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas & Miguel Ángel Porrúa.

Guarnizo, L. E., Chaudhary, A. R., & Sørensen, N. N. (2019). Migrants' transnational political engagement in Spain and Italy. Migration Studies, 7(3), 281–322. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnx061

Guarnizo, L. E., & Diaz, L. M. (1999). Transnational migration: A view from Colombia. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 397–421. https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329530

Guarnizo, L. E., Sanchez, A. I., & Roach, E. M. (1999). Mistrust, fragmented solidarity, and transnational migration: Colombians in New York City and Los Angeles. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 367–396. https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329521

Hannerz, U. (2003). Being there... And there... And there!: Reflections on Multi-Site Ethnography. Ethnography, 4(2), 201–216.

Harvey, D. (1990). The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change. Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (2006). Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development. Verso.

Heinisch, K., Holtemöller, O., & Schult, C. (2021). Power generation and structural change: Quantifying economic effects of the coal phase-out in Germany. Energy Economics, 95, 105008. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2020.105008

Itzigsohn, J., & Saucedo, S. G. (2002). Immigrant Incorporation and Sociocultural Transnationalism. International Migration Review, 36(3), 766–798. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2002.tb00104.x

Jackson, P., Crang, P., & Dwyer, C. (2004). Transnational Spaces. Routledge.

Khoudour-Castéras, D. (2007). ¿Por qué emigran los colombianos? Un análisis departamental basado en el Censo de 2005. Revista de Economía Institucional, 9(16), 255–271.

Koopmans, R., Statham, P., Guigni, M., & Passy, F. (2005). Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe. University of Minnesota Press.

Kritz, M. (1975). The irnpact of international migration on Venezuelan Demographic and social structure. Lnternational Migration Review, 9(4), 513–543.

Lacomba Vázquez, J., & Cloquell Lozano, A. (2017). Asociaciones de inmigrantes, Estados y desarrollo entre España y Colombia. ¿Un nuevo campo social transnacional? Revista de Estudios Sociales, 61, 44–57. https://doi.org/10.7440/res61.2017.04

Lamela, C., Pérez-Caramés, A., & Fernández-Suárez, B. (2012). The Effect of Networks on the Selection of Migrants and Destinations: Colombians in Galicia (Spain): The effect of networks. International Migration, 50(6), 83–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00580.x

Larotta Silva, S. P. (2019). Determinantes para la migración internacional de colombianos entre 1990-2015 a partir de un modelo gravitacional. Territorios, 41, 69. https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/territorios/a.7414

Lefebvre, H. (1991). The Production of Space. Blackwell.

Levitt, P. (1998). Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion. International Migration Review, 32(4), 926. https://doi.org/10.2307/2547666

Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society. The International Migration Review, 38, 1002–1039.

Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2008). Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society. In The Transnational Studies Reader (pp. 284–298). Routledge.

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends. Annual Review of Sociology, 33(1), 129–156. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131816

Levitt, P., & Lamba-Nieves, D. (2011). Social Remittances Revisited. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 37(1), 1–22.

Lewin, J. E. (2023). Cuatro años de un paro nacional que cambió la historia de Colombia. El País. https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-11-21/cuatro-anos-de-un-paro-nacional-que-cambio-la-historia-de-colombia.html

Llopis Goig, R. (2007). El "nacionalismo metodológico" como obstáculo en la investigación sociológica sobre migraciones internacionales. Empiria. Revista De Metodología De Ciencias Sociales, 13, 101–120.

Löw, M. (2008). The Constitution of Space: The Structuration of Spaces Through the Simultaneity of Effect and Perception. European Journal of Social Theory, 11(1), 25–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431007085286

Lubbers, M. J., Verdery, A. M., & Molina, J. L. (2018). Social Networks and Transnational Social Fields: A Review of Quantitative and Mixed-Methods Approaches. International Migration Review, 54(1), 177–204. https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918318812343

Madrigal, C. (2013). Colombians in the United States: A Study of Their Well-Being. Advances in Social Work, 14(1), 26–48. https://doi.org/10.18060/3795

Madrigal, C., & Mayadas, N. (2006). Push and Pull Factors: A Profile of Colombian Migration to the United States. Social Development Issues, 28(3), 30–42.

Marcus, G. (1995). Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. Annual Review of Anthropology, 24, 95–117.

Mármora, L. (1979). Labor Migration Policy in Colombia. The International Migration Review, 13(3), 440–454.

Massey, D. (2005). For Space. SAGE Publications.

McIlwaine, C. (Ed.). (2011). Cross-Border Migration among Latin Americans. European Perspectives and Beyond. Palgrave Macmillan.

McIlwaine, C. (2012a). Constructing transnational social spaces among Latin American migrants in Europe: Perspectives from the UK. Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society, 5(2), 289–304. https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsr041

McIlwaine, C. (2012b). The Colombian community in London (p. 44) [Research report]. University of London, Queen Mary.

McIlwaine, C. (2014). Everyday urban violence and transnational displacement of Colombian urban migrants to London, UK. Environment and Urbanization, 26(2), 417–426. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247814544416

McIlwaine, C., & Bermúdez, A. (2011). The Gendering of Political and Civic Participation among Colombian Migrants in London. Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, 43(7), 1499–1513. https://doi.org/10.1068/a4371

McIlwaine, C., & Bermúdez, A. (2015). Ambivalent citizenship and extraterritorial voting among Colombians in London and Madrid. Global Networks, 15(4), 385–402.

Medina-Durango, C. A., & Posso-Suárez, C. M. (2011). Colombian immigrants in the United States of America: Education levels, job qualifications and the decision to go back home. Ensayos sobre Política Económica, 65, 12–59. https://doi.org/10.32468/Espe.6501

Mejía Murillo, M. F. (2014). ¿Es Colombia una Nación diaspórica y transnacional? Análisis del nuevo discurso del Estado colombiano frente a la diáspora. Justicia, 26, 137–156.

Mejía Ochoa, W. (2012). Colombia y las migraciones internacionales: Evolución reciente y panorama actual a partir de las cifras. REMHU - Revista Interdisciplinar Da Mobilidade Humana, 20(39), 185–210.

Mejía Ochoa, W. (2013). Diáspora y mercado de trabajo en Colombia. Una mirada pensando en el retorno voluntario. (Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP)).

Mejía Ochoa, W. (2018). Casi dos siglos de migración colombiana a Estados Unidos. Papeles de Población, 98, 65–101.

Mejía Ochoa, W. (2019). Casi dos siglos de migración colombiana a Estados Unidos. Papeles de Población, 24(98), 65–101.

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia. (2009). Documento CONPES 3603 de Política Integral Migratoria de Colombia. https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/colombia/migracion/conpes

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia. (2022). Antecedentes históricos y causas de la migración. https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/colombia/migracion/historia

Munich Startup. (2021). Going Global: Latin America has a Need for Innovation and Technology. https://en.munich-startup.de/2021/01/20/going-global-latinamerica/

OEC, O. of E. C. (2020). Bilateral trade by products, Colombia and Germany [Dataset]. https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/deu/partner/col?dynamicBilateralTradeSelector=year2020

Østergaard-Nielsen, E. (2003). The politics of migrants' transnational political practices. International Migration Review, 37(3), 760–786.

Palma, M. (2015). ¿País de emigración, inmigración, tránsito y retorno? La formación de un sistema de migración colombiano. OASIS, 21, 7. https://doi.org/10.18601/16577558.n21.02

Pardo, D. (2019). Paro nacional en Colombia: 3 factores inéditos que hicieron del 21 de noviembre un día histórico. BBC Nwes. https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50520302

Parnreiter, C. (2006). Historische Geographien, verräumlichte Geschichte. Die lateinamerikanische Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert (Habilitation thesis). University of Vienna.

Parnreiter, C. (2018). Geografía económica: Una introducción contemporánea. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst - DAAD.

Pellegrino, A. (1986). La inmigración en Venezuela, 1971-1981. Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello.

Pineda, E., & Ávila, K. (2019). Aproximaciones a la migración Colombo-Venezolana: Desigualdad, prejuicio y vulnerabilidad. Misión Jurídica, 12(16), 59–78. https://doi.org/10.25058/1794600X.988

Polo Alvis, S., & Serrano López, E. (2018). Nueva república, nuevo horizonte, nuevo porvenir: Las migraciones colombianas hacia Chile, 1990-2016. Novum Jus, 12(1), 165–188. https://doi.org/10.14718/NovumJus.2017.12.1.7

Polo Alvis, S., & Serrano López, E. (2019). La diáspora silenciosa: Estudios sobre la tercera ola de migraciones colombianas al exterior (2005-2015). Desafíos, 31(1), 311. https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/desafios/a.6129

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 217–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329468

Posso, J., & Urrea, F. (2007). La migración internacional y los cambios en las relaciones de género y estructuras de los hogares: La migración colombiana hacia España. Papers, 85, 109–133.

Presidencia de la República de Colombia. (2011). Decreto 4062 DE 2011. https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=44541

Pries, L. (Ed.). (2001a). New Transnational Social Spaces. International migration and transnational companies in the early twenty-first century.

Pries, L. (2001b). The Disruption of Social and Geographic Space: Mexican-US Migration and the Emergence of Transnational Social Spaces. International Sociology, 16(1), 55–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580901016001005

Pries, L. (2022). Chapter 15. Transnationalism. In Introduction to Migration Studies. An Interactive Guide to the Literatures on Migration and Diversity (pp. 233–247). Springer and IMISCOE Research Series.

ProColombia. (2025). Negocios verdes, café con propósito y eventos globales: Colombia crece en Alemania y Países Bajos. https://procolombia.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/negocios-verdes-cafe-con-proposito-y-eventos-globales-colombia-crece-en-alemania-y-paises-bajos

Propaís. (2014a). Misión Propaís a Alemania. https://propais.org.co/mision-propais-a-alemania-23-de-junio-a-27-de-junio-de-2014/

Propaís. (2014b). Pymes, eje de la economía alemana. https://propais.org.co/pymes-eje-de-la-economia-alemana/

Propaís. (2015). Misión colombiana a Alemania para fortalecimiento de clusters. https://propais.org.co/mision-colombiana-a-alemania-para-fortalecimiento-de-clusters/

Propaís. (2017). Fedecaribe organiza Misión Empresarial a Alemania. https://propais.org.co/fedecaribe-organiza-mision-empresarial-a-alemania/

Ravenstein, E. G. (1885). The laws of migration. Journal of the Statistical Society of London, 48(2), 167–235.

Rios, M., & Adiv, N. (2010). Geographies of Diaspora: A Review. UC Davis Center for Regional Change.

Rivas, A. M., & Gonzálvez, H. (2011). El papel de las remesas económicas y sociales en las familias transnacionales colombianas. Migraciones Internacionales, 6(2), 75–99.

Santamaria Alvarez, S. M., & S′liwa, M. (2016). Transnational activities of Colombians in the US: A qualitative exploration of the migration-development nexus. Critical Perspectives on International Business, 12(2), 140–166. https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-09-2012-0038

Sassen, S. (2000). New frontiers facing urban sociology at the Millennium. The British Journal of Sociology, 51(1), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2000.00143.x

Sassen-Koob, S. (1979). Economic Growth and Immigration in Venezuela. The International Migration Review, 13(3), 455–474.

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc, C. S. (1995). From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration. Anthropological Quarterly, 68(1), 48. https://doi.org/10.2307/3317464

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration.: A NEW ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 645(1 Towards a Tra), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1992.tb33484.x

Schmid, C. (2022). Henri Lefebvre and the theory of the production of space. Verso.

Sheringham, O. (2010). A Transnational Space? Transnational Practices, Place-Based Identity and the Making of ‘Home’ among Brazilians in Gort, Ireland. Portuguese Studies, 26(1), 60–78.

Silva, A. C., & Massey, D. S. (2015). Violence, Networks, and International Migration from Colombia. International Migration, 53(5), 162–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12169

Sistema Nacional de Educación Superior de Colombia. (2022). Información estadística de estudiantes universitarios [Dataset]. https://snies.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/

Smith, M. P. (2001). Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization. Blackwell Publishers.

Smith, M. P., & Guarnizo, L. E. (Eds.). (1998). Transnationalism From Below. Routledge.

Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis). (2022). GENESIS-Online database. https://www-genesis.destatis.de/

Tabares, X. (2005). Cuatro historias de migrantes en Berlín [PhD thesis]. Freie Universität Berlin.

Tobler, W. (1995). Migration: Ravenstein, Thornwaite and Beyond. Urban Geography, 16(4), 327–343.

Torrado, S. (1979). International Migration Policies in Latin America. The International Migration Review, 13(3), 428–439.

Torre-Cantalapiedra, E., & E. Giorguli, S. (2016). Movilidades internas e internacionales en Colombia. Revista Latinoamericana de Población, 10(19), 7–32. https://doi.org/10.31406/relap2016.v10.i2.n19.1

Treaty of Lisbon. Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community (2007/C 306/01), Pub. L. No. (2007/C 306/01) (2007). https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/688a7a98-3110-4ffe-a6b3-8972d8445325.0007.01/DOC_19

Valderrama-Echavarria, C. (2014). Fragmented Ties: Colombian Immigrant Experiences [Thesis, M.A. History]. Boise State University.

Vertovec, S. (2001). Transnational social formations: Toward conceptual cross-fertilization. 1–37.

Vertovec, S. (2004). Migration Transnationalism and Modes of Transnationalism. International Migration Review, 38(3), 970–1001.

Vertovec, S. (2009). Transnationalism. Routledge.

Villarraga, H. (2009). Inmigración colombiana en España: Un estado del arte. Sociedad y Economía, 17, 35–50.

Wakerman, F. (1988). Transnational and comparative research. Items, 42(4), 85–88.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 16(4), 387–415.

Wallerstein, I. (2004). World-System Analysis. An Introduction. Duke University Press.

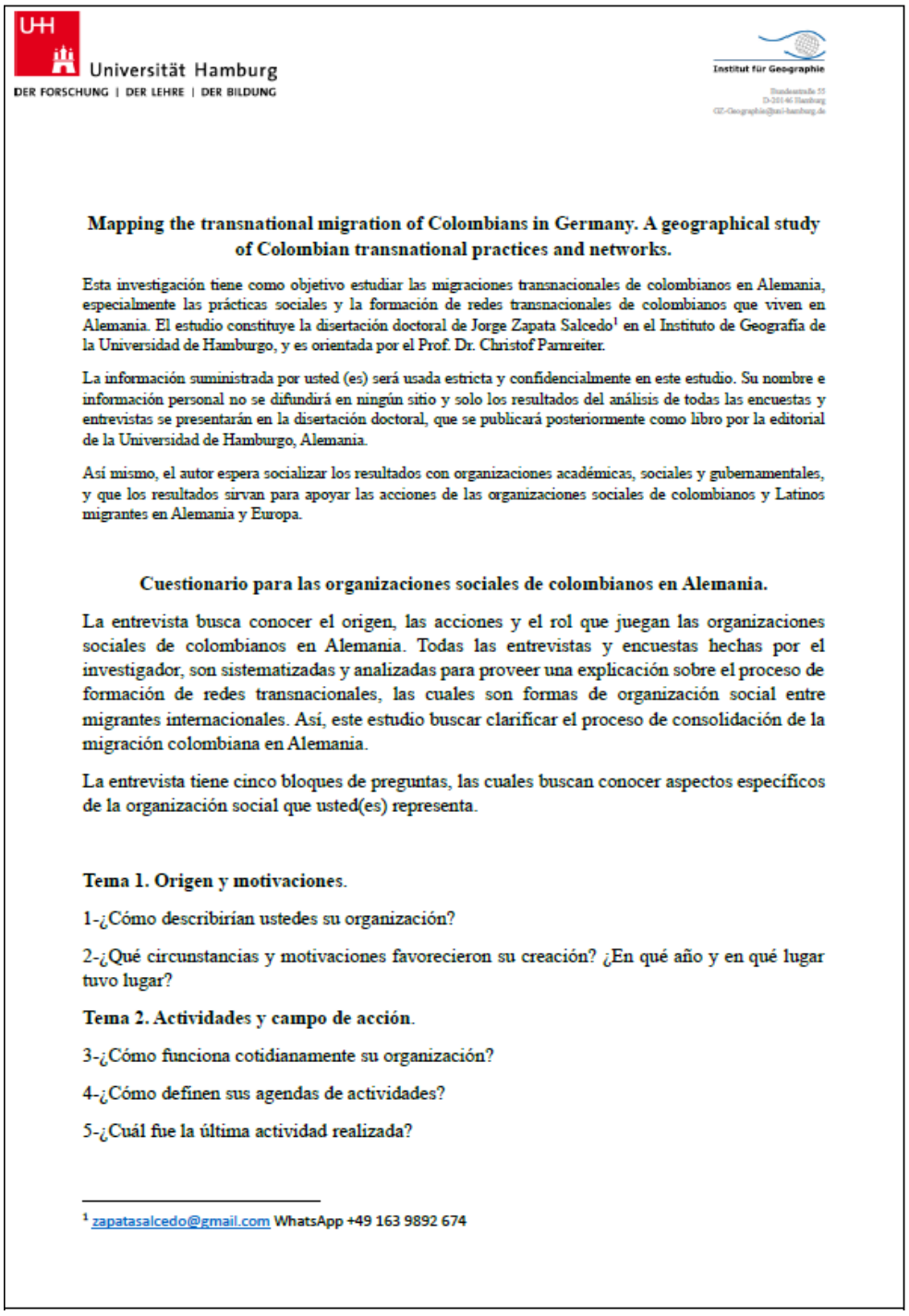
Walton-Roberts, M. (2004). Transnational Migration Theory in Population Geography: Gendered Practices in Networks Linking Canada and India. Population, Space and Place, 10, 361–373.

Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. Global Networks, 2(4), 301–334. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0374.00043

Yeoh, B., & Collins, F. (Eds.). (2022). Handbook on Transnationalism. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Zapata Martínez, A. (2021). El hogar en contextos transnacionales: Una reflexión desde la migración de madres/padres colombianos a Santiago de Chile. Antípoda. Revista de Antropología y Arqueología, 43, 75–96. https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda43.2021.04

Appendix 1. Protocol for Interviewing Colombian Organizations in Germany



Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Mapping the transnational migration of Colombians in Germany. A geographical study of Colombian transnational practices and networks.

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo estudiar las migraciones transnacionales de colombianos en Alemania, especialmente las prácticas sociales y la formación de redes transnacionales de colombianos que viven en Alemania. El estudio constituye la disertación doctoral de Jorge Zapata Salcedo[1] en el Instituto de Geografía de la Universidad de Hamburgo, y es orientada por el Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter.

La información suministrada por usted (es) será usada estricta y confidencialmente en este estudio. Su nombre e información personal no se difundirá en ningún sitio y solo los resultados del análisis de todas las encuestas y entrevistas se presentarán en la disertación doctoral, que se publicará posteriormente como libro por la editorial de la Universidad de Hamburgo, Alemania.

Así mismo, el autor espera socializar los resultados con organizaciones académicas, sociales y gubernamentales, y que los resultados sirvan para apoyar las acciones de las organizaciones sociales de colombianos y Latinos migrantes en Alemania y Europa.

Cuestionario para las organizaciones sociales de colombianos en Alemania.

La entrevista busca conocer el origen, las acciones y el rol que juegan las organizaciones sociales de colombianos en Alemania. Todas las entrevistas y encuestas hechas por el investigador, son sistematizadas y analizadas para proveer una explicación sobre el proceso de formación de redes transnacionales, las cuales son formas de organización social entre migrantes internacionales. Así, este estudio buscar clarificar el proceso de consolidación de la migración colombiana en Alemania.

La entrevista tiene cinco bloques de preguntas, las cuales buscan conocer aspectos específicos de la organización social que usted(es) representa.

Tema 1. Origen y motivaciones.

1-¿Cómo describirían ustedes su organización?

2-¿Qué circunstancias y motivaciones favorecieron su creación? ¿En qué año y en qué lugar tuvo lugar?

Tema 2. Actividades y campo de acción.

3-¿Cómo funciona cotidianamente su organización?

4-¿Cómo definen sus agendas de actividades?

5-¿Cuál fue la última actividad realizada?

[1] zapatasalcedo@gmail.com WhatsApp +49 163 9892 674

6-¿En qué lugares desarrollan las actividades? ¿En qué ciudades y en qué tipo de escenarios?

7-¿Qué acontecimientos en Alemania y en Colombia consideran que han sido importantes en su organización? ¿Nos podría dar ejemplos?

8- ¿Cómo influye la situación política colombiana en sus actividades? Por ejemplo, épocas electorales, movilizaciones sociales y otros acontecimientos.

Tema 3. Impacto en la comunidad colombiana.

9-¿Cómo describen la participación de colombianos y colombianas en organizaciones sociales? En su caso particular, ¿qué tan activa es la participación de colombianos y colombianas en su organización?

Tema 4. Relaciones con otras organizaciones sociales.

10-¿Cómo es la relación de ustedes con otras organizaciones sociales en Colombia?

11-¿Cómo es la relación de ustedes con otros grupos de colombianos en Alemania?

12-¿Cómo es la relación de ustedes con otros grupos de colombianos en Europa y otros lugares?

Temas 5. Varios

¿Qué otra información les gustaría compartir sobre su organización?

¿Podemos usar las fotos e información de su website u otra que nos pueda proveer?

---- o ----- o ----

¡Les agradezco el tiempo y su disposición a la entrevista!

Appendix 2. Protocol for Interviewing Colombians in Germany

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Cuestionario para entrevista a colombianos en Alemania.

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo estudiar las migraciones transnacionales de colombianos en Alemania, especialmente las prácticas sociales y la formación de redes transnacionales de colombianos que viven en Alemania. El estudio constituye la disertación doctoral de Jorge Zapata Salcedo[1] en el Instituto de Geografía de la Universidad de Hamburgo, y es orientada por el Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter.

La información suministrada por usted (es) será usada estricta y confidencialmente en este estudio. Su nombre e información personal no se difundirá en ningún sitio y solo los resultados del análisis de todas las encuestas y entrevistas se presentarán en la disertación doctoral, que se publicará posteriormente como libro por la editorial de la Universidad de Hamburgo, Alemania.

Así mismo, el autor espera socializar los resultados con organizaciones académicas, sociales y gubernamentales, y que los resultados sirvan para apoyar las acciones de las organizaciones sociales de colombianos y Latinos migrantes en Alemania y Europa.

1- ¿Cómo describiría usted su llegada y primeros años en Alemania? Cuénteme de por qué y cómo llegó a este país y su proceso de integración hasta la fecha.

2- ¿En dónde vivió antes de venir a Alemania? Cuénteme de su historia migratoria

3- ¿Cómo se mantiene conectado con Colombia en lo familiar, político, económico y social? *(Se realizan preguntas por separado para abarcar la pregunta global)*

4- Aquí en Alemania, ¿está usted vinculado a grupos de colombianos, latinos u otros migrantes?

5- ¿Cómo percibe usted la forma en que los colombianos se relacionan entre sí?

6- ¿Cómo describe usted el modo en que los colombianos se apropian de los sitios o lugares en la ciudad?

---- o ----- o ----

¡Les agradezco el tiempo y su disposición a la entrevista!

[1] zapatasalcedo@gmail.com WhatsApp +49 163 9892 674

Appendix 3. Ethnosurvey Protocol

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

05.01.19

FORMULARIO DE LA ENCUESTA A COLOMBIANOS EN ALEMANIA.

Ciudad: _____ Estado: _____ Encuesta No._____

Fecha de inicio de la encuesta: _____

PRESENTACIÓN

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo conocer los modos de vida, adaptación y los desafíos que enfrentan los colombianos que viven en Alemania. El estudio constituye la disertación doctoral de Jorge Zapata Salcedo en el Instituto de Geografía de la Universidad de Hamburgo, y es orientada por el Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter. Se busca resaltar las estrategias que usan los colombianos en Alemania para mantener conexiones transnacionales con sus hogares y familias en Colombia.

La información suministrada por usted será usada estricta y confidencialmente en este estudio científico. Su nombre e información personal no se difundirá en ningún sitio y solo los resultados del análisis de todas las encuestas se presentarán en la disertación y defensa de la tesis doctoral, que se publicará posteriormente como libro por la editorial de la Universidad de Hamburgo, Alemania.

Así mismo, el autor espera socializar los resultados con organizaciones académicas, sociales y gubernamentales, y que los resultados sirvan para apoyar las acciones de las organizaciones sociales de colombianos y Latinos migrantes en Alemania y Europa.

¿Está usted de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación?

Datos sociodemográficos generales

Esta sección inicial tiene por objeto conocer información personal general.

1-Sexo: Hombre____ Mujer ____ otro _____

2-Edad: _____

3-Ciudad de residencia en Alemania: _____

4-Ciudad o municipio y departamento de nacimiento: _____

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

5-¿Qué nivel educativo ha alcanzado hasta hoy?

No ha estudiado ___
Primaria ___
Secundaria ___
Formación técnica o
Tecnológica ___
Universitaria inc. ___
Universitaria com. ___
Maestría inc. ___
Maestría com. ___
Doctorado inc. ___
Doctorado com. ___

Trayectoria migratoria y laboral

6-¿Cuándo llegó a vivir a Alemania? Mes_____ Año_____

7-¿Cuá fue la última ciudad en Colombia en la cual vivió antes de salir del país?
_____

8-¿Qué razones lo motivaron para salir de Colombia?

Falta de oportunidades laborales___
Inseguridad, violencia___
Conflictos familiares___
Tenía familiares o amigos en el exterior____
Razones políticas___
Muchos conocidos ya habían emigrado___
Razones académicas___
Por el cónyuge___
Por aventura___
Otras_____

9-¿Por qué razones eligió Alemania?

Me negaron la visa en otro país___
Oportunidades profesionales y laborales___
Seguridad, paz y tranquilidad___
Por su cultura, idioma___
Por la facilidad de inmigrar___
Otro_____

10-En el momento de salir de Colombia, ¿cuál era su situación laboral?

Desempleado o fuera del mercado laboral*___* Menores de edad, jubilados, militares, otros.
Hogar*___*Labores de hogar, 'amas de casa' no asalariado
Trabajo domestico___
Vendedor/oficinista___
Obrero(a)____
Tecnólogo(a)___

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

Profesional universitario___
Gerente, admón. de negocios___
Otro_____

11-En el momento de llegar a Alemania ¿cuál fue su primer empleo?

Desempleado o fuera del mercado laboral*___* Menores de edad, jubilados, militares, otros.
Hogar*___*Labores de hogar, 'amas de casa' no asalariado
Trabajo domestico___
Vendedor/oficinista___
Obrero(a)____
Tecnólogo(a)___
Profesional universitario___
Gerente, admón. de negocios___
Otro_____

12-¿Cuál es su situación laboral actual?

Empleado oficial___
Contrato permanente___
Contrato temporal___
Trabajo sin contrato___
Autoempleado___
Por tarea específica____
Otro_____

13-¿Su ocupación actual, y su historia laboral en este país, satisface las aspiraciones que tenía?

No___
Muy poco___
Parcialmente___
Totalmente___

14-¿Cree que según su formación académica y experiencia laboral, ha recibido las suficientes y/o justas oportunidades?

Ninguna__
Pocas___
Suficientes___

Prácticas transnacionales

Queremos saber un poco de su familia:

15- ¿Con qué frecuencia envía ayuda económica?

Nunca _____ poco frecuente _____ frecuente _____ Muy frecuente _____

16-¿Cuál es el destino de esa ayuda económica a sus familiares?

Manutención___
Gastos educativos___
Gastos de salud___

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

Deudas____
Mejoramiento o compra de vivienda___
Compra de enseres u otros bienes ____
Ahorro___
Otros _____

17-¿Qué medio usa para el envío de las ayudas económicas?

Western Union/Money Gramm ____
Banco ___
Con amigos____
otro_____

18- Desde que llegó a Alemania, ¿qué actividades ha desarrollado y con qué frecuencia?

	Nunca	Pocas veces	Regularmente	Muchas veces
a-Invertido dinero en negocios o bienes en Colombia				
b-Participado en asociaciones o proyectos de ayuda o desarrollo en Colombia				
c-Hecho aportes en dinero para obras o proyectos en Colombia				
d-Participado en campañas políticas de candidatos en Colombia				
e-Participado en campañas políticas de candidatos en Alemania				
f-Votado en elecciones en Alemania				
g-Votado en elecciones colombianas				
h-Seguir las noticias generales de Alemania				
i-Seguir las noticias generales de Colombia				

19-¿Es usted miembro de alguna asociación de colombianos en Alemania?

Sí__ No___

20- ¿Cuál es la asociación? (en caso de respuesta afirmativa en la anterior pregunta)

_____

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

21-¿Participa de alguna organización social de ayuda a colombianos?

Sí__ No___

22- Según su percepción y experiencia, considera que la comunidad de colombianos que residen en Alemania, tiene un grado de asociatividad:

Bajo_____ Medio_____ Alto_____

23-¿Cómo explicaría la anterior situación?

_____

24-Aquí en Alemania, ¿con qué miembro de la familia vive usted?

Cónyuge ___
Hijos(as) ___
Padres ___
Otros ___

25-¿Qué medio usa frecuentemente para comunicarse con sus familiares/amigos en Colombia?

Teléfono fijo ___
Teléfono celular ___
Correo postal ___
E-mail ____
Chat (WhatsApp, Facebook, otros) ___
Video-llamadas (WhatsApp, Skype, otro) ____

26-25-¿Ha utilizado las aplicaciones virtuales como Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, y otras, para entrar en contacto con otros colombianos en Alemania?

Sí____ No____

27-¿Qué medio usa frecuentemente para comunicarse con sus familiares/amigos en otros países?

Teléfono fijo ___
Teléfono celular ___
Correo postal ___
E-mail ____
Chat (WhatsApp, Facebook, otros) ___
Video-llamadas (WhatsApp, Skype, otro) ____

28-Según su opinión, ¿cómo influyen esas tecnologías de la comunicación en el modo en que los colombianos que viven en Alemania se relacionan?

_____

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

29- ¿Con qué frecuencia participa de eventos culturales o de integración con otros inmigrantes no colombianos?

Casi nunca_____ A veces_____ Casi siempre_____ Simpre_____

30-¿Participa de alguna organización social o política relacionada con Colombia?

Sí__ No___

31-¿Participa de alguna organización social o política relacionada con Alemania u otro país?

Sí__ No___

32-¿Cree que sus vínculos con Colombia se han debilitado con los años?

Se mantiene fuertes___ Se han debilitado___

33-¿Por qué lo cree así?

_____

34-¿Qué tan importante es para usted mantener esas conexiones con Colombia?

No es importante___
Poco importante___
Importante___
Muy Importante___

35-¿Siente que se ha integrado a la "vida alemana"?

Totalmente integrado___
Parcialmente o en proceso de integración___
Otro_____

36-¿Por qué lo cree así?

_____

37- En su vida cotidiana, ¿cómo ha "colombianizado" sus espacios de vida, como su residencia, sitios de trabajo y otros?

_____

38- ¿Cuáles son los lugares que más le gustan en la ciudad en la cual reside?

_____

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Institut für Geographie

Bundesstraße 55
D-20146 Hamburg
Phone: +49 40 42838-4963
GZ-Geographie@uni-hamburg.de

39- Según su percepción y experiencia, considera que la comunidad de colombianos que residen en la misma ciudad que usted, tiene un grado de asociatividad.

Inexistente_____ Débil _____ Medianamente fuerte _____ Muy fuerte y consolidada_____

40-¿Por qué lo cree así?

_____

41-Participa en actividades políticas en Colombia:

Sí____ No___

42-¿Qué intercambios o influencias desde Alemania ha llegado a su hogar o familia en Colombia a través de usted?

_____

¿Tiene algún comentario sobre su experiencia como migrante viviendo en Alemania o sobre la migración de otros colombianos a este país?

_____
_____
_____
_____

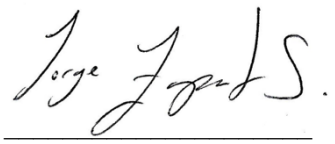
Si respondió digitalmente y sin presencia del encuestador, por favor envíe este archivo al correo: zapatasalcedo@gmail.com o jorge.luis.zapata.salcedo@studium.uni-hamburg.de

¡Agradecemos mucho su tiempo y colaboración con esta investigación!

Eidesstattliche Versicherung | Declaration on Oath

Hiermit erkläre ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertationsschrift selbst verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Sofern im Zuge der Erstellung der vorliegenden Dissertationsschrift generative Künstliche Intelligenz (gKI) basierte elektronische Hilfsmittel verwendet wurden, versichere ich, dass meine eigene Leistung im Vordergrund stand und dass eine vollständige Dokumentation aller verwendeten Hilfsmittel gemäß der Guten wissenschaftlichen Praxis vorliegt. Ich trage die Verantwortung für eventuell durch die gKI generierte fehlerhafte oder verzerrte Inhalte, fehlerhafte Referenzen, Verstöße gegen das Datenschutz- und Urheberrecht oder Plagiate.

UnterschriftI hereby declare and affirm that this doctoral dissertation is my own work and that I have not used any aids and sources other than those indicated. If electronic resources based on generative artificial intelligence (gAI) were used in the course of writing this dissertation, I confirm that my own work was the main and value-adding contribution and that complete documentation of all resources used is available in accordance with good scientific practice. I am responsible for any erroneous or distorted content, incorrect references, violations of data protection and copyright law or plagiarism that may have been generated by the gAI.



Jorge Luis Zapata Salcedo

Berlin, 12.01.2026