Juan David Gelvez

Website   jgelvez@umd.edu
Google Scholar   juan.gelvezf@gmail.com

I am a PhD(c) in Political Science, specializing in crime, security, and institutional trust, with an emphasis on evidence-based policies that strengthen the rule of law and state capacity. My work combines advanced causal inference, machine learning, and survey experiments to inform policies that enhance government effectiveness and citizen trust in Latin America

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Education

University of Maryland, USA
Ph.D., Government and Politics, (2026 expected).
         Comparative Politics & Computational Methods.
M.A., Government and Politics, 2023.

Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia
M.A., Public Policy (MPP), 2018.
B.S., Government and Public Affairs, 2016.

Professional Experience

University of Maryland
Graduate Researcher, Interdisciplinary Laboratory of Computational Social Science, 2021–Present
Conducted research on crime, democratic accountability, and climate disasters using causal inference, survey experiments, and machine learning. Managed large datasets and contributed to policy recommendations, interdisciplinary workshops, and student mentorship.

Inter-American Development Bank
Academic Consultant, Citizen Security Division, 2025
Produced policy analysis on crime, governance, and climate risks in Latin America. Authored a policy article on how organized crime contributes to environmental degradation and supported regional recommendations for prevention and institutional capacity.

Georgetown University
Research Fellow, Department of Government, 2024- 2025
Led a project on legal frameworks and accountability institutions across the Americas. Supervised a large team, developed cross-national datasets, organized public events, and co-authored policy reports and manuscripts with faculty and students.

Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Colombia
Team Coordinator and Policy Analyst, Security and Defense Area, 2019 - 2021
Coordinated teams designing and evaluating security and justice interventions. Advised senior officials, organized collaborations with national and international actors, and contributed to federal policy design on public safety.

Fundación Ideas para la Paz, Colombia
Researcher, Crime Dynamics Team, 2018-2019
Developed applied research on crime prevention, community security, and illicit markets. Worked with local partners to translate evidence into guidance for programs and public safety strategies.

Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia
Research and Teaching Assistant, School of Government, 2016-2018
Supported research on conflict, security, and political behavior. Assisted course instruction in quantitative methods and contributed to research design and data collection.

Selected Publications

- 2025. Predicting Police and Military Violence: Evidence from Colombia and Mexico Using Machine Learning Models. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications - Nature.

- 2025. Rewards, Sanctions, and Trust in the Police: Evidence from Colombia. *Policing & Society*. With Cesar Mantilla and María Nieto.

- 2023. *Los nadies y las nadies*: The effect of peace-building on political behavior in Colombia. Latin American Politics & Society. With Marcus Johnson

- 2022. Prediciendo el crimen en ciudades intermedias: un modelo de "machine learning" en Bucaramanga, Colombia. URVIO- Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de Seguridad. FLACSO, Ecuador. With María Nieto and Rocha.

- 2020. ¿Cómo prevenir el delito? Estrategias efectivas de convivencia y seguridad ciudadana Published for Universidad de Los Andes.

- 2019. Trato procesal y uso de la detención preventiva en una muestra de audiencias de control de garantías en Bogotá y Cali. In Cuadernos de Economía Universidad Nacional de Colombia. With Rengifo, Ávila, Ramírez and Mora.

- 2018. ¿Cuáles determinantes se relacionan con la percepción de inseguridad? Un análisis estadístico y espacial para la ciudad de Bogotá, D. C.. In Revista Criminalidad, Policía Nacional.

Skills

- Languages: Spanish (native), English (advanced), Portuguese (intermediate).

- Software: RStudio, SQL, ArcGis, Stata, GeoDa, LaTeX, Markdown, SPSS.

Extracurricular: Barista, Scuba Diver, and Triathlete

Last updated on January 2, 2026