

# What is published on coping strategies and emotional intelligence in displaced women victims of the Colombian armed conflict?

## ¿Qué hay publicado sobre estrategias de afrontamiento e inteligencia emocional en mujeres desplazadas víctimas del conflicto armado colombiano?

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### SUMMARY

**Objective of the Review:** *To analyze the scientific publications produced between 2010 and 2023 on coping strategies and emotional intelligence in women victims of the armed conflict in Colombia, within the framework of a state response that combines military action with the implementation of the Victims' Law. This legal framework has contributed to the visibility of girls, mothers, grandmothers, wives, and widows as surviving victims, as well as to the identification of the strategies adopted to promote resilience.*

**Type of Review:** *A structured narrative review was*

*conducted in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR guideline.*

**Total Number of Studies Included:** *A total of 32 articles published in the databases EBSCO, Dialnet, ProQuest, SciELO, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar were reviewed.*

**Main Message of the Findings:** *The results indicate that empirical research on emotional intelligence among women victims of armed conflict remains limited. With respect to coping strategies, the evidence shows that victims tend to rely primarily on religious beliefs and family support, whereas seeking professional psychological or psychosocial services is the least utilized option. These findings underscore the need for further research to explore how emotional intelligence and coping approaches can serve as key components in the development of promotion and prevention programs aligned with public policy frameworks.*

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**Keywords:** *Emotional intelligence, adaptation, psychological, armed conflicts, women displaced.*

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo de la revisión:** *Analizar las publicaciones desarrolladas entre los años 2010 y 2023 sobre las estrategias de afrontamiento y la inteligencia emocional en mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia, en el marco de una respuesta estatal que combina la acción militar con la implementación de la Ley de Víctimas, la cual ha permitido visibilizar a niñas, madres, abuelas, esposas y viudas como víctimas sobrevivientes, así como describir las estrategias adoptadas para promover la resiliencia.*

**Tipo de revisión:** *Se llevó a cabo una revisión narrativa con enfoque estructurado, sustentada en los lineamientos de la guía PRISMA-ScR.*

**Número total de estudios incluidos:** *Se consultaron 32 artículos publicados en las bases de datos EBSCO, Dialnet, Proquest, Scielo, ScienceDirect y Google Scholar.*

**Mensaje principal de los hallazgos:** *Dentro de los hallazgos, se evidenció que existe poca evidencia empírica sobre inteligencia emocional y, en cuanto a las estrategias de afrontamiento, las mujeres víctimas se apoyan en posturas religiosas y en el entorno familiar; la estrategia de menor aplicación es acudir a profesionales. Esto permitió concluir que se deben desarrollar más investigaciones para profundizar en cómo la inteligencia emocional y los estilos de afrontamiento pueden considerarse mecanismos para la generación de programas de promoción y prevención que se articulen con las políticas públicas.*

**Palabras clave:** *Inteligencia emocional, adaptación psicológica, conflicto armado, mujeres desplazadas.*

## INTRODUCTION

The origins of Colombia's internal armed conflict can be traced back to 1931, emerging from the national-level dispute between members and supporters of the Conservative and Liberal parties, whose contrasting social, political, and economic positions shaped divergent visions for the country's future. While the Conservative Party defended the continuity of a social and economic order that favored the upper classes, the Liberal Party promoted a reformist agenda. It firmly supported merchants and citizens in conditions of economic vulnerability (1).

The early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Colombia were characterized by ongoing clashes between liberals and conservatives, accompanied by sustained episodes of violence and political assassinations. During this period, the global economic crisis exerted profound political, economic, and social effects on the nation. These conditions were further exacerbated by the assassination of presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in April 1948. According to some historians, this event marked the emergence of armed dissident groups operating outside the law in the country (1).

However, other authors argue that it was the emergence of the National Front in Colombia, following a period of bipartisan violence, which exacerbated the conflict and led to the appearance of guerrilla groups. This National Front was an agreement between the two main traditional parties, the Conservatives and Liberals. This pact was in effect from 1958 to 1974 and aimed to restore democracy after the dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla. Still, it was exclusive to these two parties, sparking a new wave of violence in the 1960s, mainly by subversive or guerrilla groups, especially the FARC-EP, which persisted from then until 2017 when peace agreements were signed with the Santos government (1).

These agreements with the FARC-EP did not signify the definitive end of the conflict in Colombia, nor did the agreements with other subversive groups such as the EPL and the M19, or the treaties with paramilitary groups during the Uribe government, as elements such as drug trafficking of illicit drugs and organized crime groups have emerged during the conflict, maintaining unrest and phenomena such as kidnapping, extortion, massacres, forced displacement, persecution, and assassination of social leaders, among others, which still underpin the conflict in Colombia today.

The causes of the conflict in Colombia are multi-causal. For some historians, one factor that contributed to the conflict was bipartisan disputes over political power (1). However, added to the extensive list of reasons are the limitations of rights such as suffrage, rent payment, and the corruption of the upper classes, to the detriment of less privileged compatriots, peasants, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, and the middle class,

understanding this as a form of social exclusion and bureaucratic monopoly. Another cause related to the conflict is the struggle over rural territory and its seizure, which peasants and minorities perceive as unjust, given that they must fight for their right to land and agricultural investment (2).

With these antecedents, it can be understood that in Colombia, the armed conflict is a topic of many years, characterized by registering various forms of violence affecting quite different territories and causing marked consequences in the population (3). Given the number of conflict-related victims, 15 % of the territory's total population has been affected (4). Furthermore, according to the Unique Victims Registry between 1985 and 2013, the report of women affected by this scourge was 2 683 335 (5). These forms of violence produce negative effects on individuals, affecting their subjectivities and all areas of adjustment in general (6).

At this point, it is also worth noting that the armed conflict in Colombia exhibits both similarities and differences with other conflicts in the global context. Thus, a parallel is drawn between the Colombian conflict and the situation with guerrilla groups in Peru. Both countries share the common feature of an internal conflict that has extended for more than five decades, marked by the participation of guerrilla groups linked to drug trafficking and political corruption. The most significant distinction lies in the strategies each government employs to address the unrest. Colombia seeks resolution through a democratization process oriented toward achieving peace, whereas Peru adopted an exclusively militarized approach, attempting to settle the conflict through armed force. This military posture also influenced patterns of social mobility in Peru, as forced displacement was never formally recognized from a sociological standpoint, given that the internal armed conflict itself was not officially acknowledged. The absence of a targeted response to the issue has generated severe repercussions, which are currently visible in state-led military interventions, such as the alarming and unacceptable rates of femicide (7).

Beyond Peru, other conflicts rooted in social inequality and political exclusion have emerged

across Central and South America, leading to the formation of guerrilla movements in El Salvador (1979-1992), Guatemala (1960-1996), and Nicaragua (1978-1990).

Although these conflicts have been resolved, they have transcended into the era of drug trafficking and organized crime, with specific cases in Mexico and Argentina. Similar to Colombia, these disputes result in a high indicator of lost lives, especially among men, as in Latin America, half of the homicides target adolescents and emerging adults aged between 15 and 29.

While women are violently killed in smaller proportions than men, femicide is becoming an increasingly concerning problem in Latin American countries. Additionally, women are the main victims of sexual violence, with approximately one-third of cases perpetrated by their intimate partners. Peru is one of the countries with the highest rates of sexual violence, along with Colombia (8).

Seen in this light, women tend to be the survivors of conflict, bearing all the social, economic, and, of course, emotional consequences. Therefore, this review focuses on investigating the findings established in various studies regarding coping strategies and emotional intelligence in women victims of armed conflict in Colombia.

While it is true that in the country, the main victims of armed conflict are men through acts such as homicides, massacres, forced disappearances, and landmines, women are the main survivors of gender-based violence that has led them to become widows or orphans, carrying psychological, physical, sexual, and moral scars with them (9,10). According to Garzón et al. (11), "Violence against women is one of the main focuses of research and social intervention in Colombia. During 2017, approximately 75 000 cases of gender-based violence were reported, of which 76 % were against women, meaning 57 000 cases."

Given the above, emphasis must be placed on the mental health consequences in women victims, as their effects may provide explanations and guidelines on the conditions that facilitate the conversion of this population into essential agents of change

within the framework of post-conflict (12,13). In Colombia, according to studies conducted by Campo-Arias et al. (14), it has been identified that up to 63 % of conflict victims present some type of significant clinical symptoms, and up to 33 % meet the criteria for the diagnosis of a mental disorder. It is worth noting that individual trauma related to the internal armed conflict has a negative effect for up to eight years after the end of the armed conflict (9).

It is important to view this situation as highly relevant, as these individuals will need to develop competencies that enable them to adapt to the conditions of their new destinations. This not only disrupts displaced individuals but also alters the social, economic, environmental, and political dynamics of the destination sites. In this context, emotional intelligence plays a fundamental role in the processes of reintegration and readjustment to the new environmental conditions. Emotional intelligence is understood as the psychological skills and abilities that involve the recognition, understanding, regulation, and modulation of one's own and others' emotions. An emotionally intelligent person is one who can effectively regulate emotions to achieve positive outcomes across all areas of life (15).

Coping strategies are defined as cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage internal and/or external demands perceived as overwhelming or exceeding the individual's resources. Among the psychological consequences of displacement are inhibition of emotional expression, distrust, helplessness, and avoidance of anything related to the past (16).

According to Solomon et al. (17), individuals who possess an effective repertoire of coping strategies will be able to withstand severe stress with minimal consequences for mental health (18). All individuals have the ability to express their feelings, as it is a social skill, but depending on the environment in which they operate, some of these expressions may be inhibited or coerced.

Individuals in displacement situations also use community coping strategies to confront violence, prevent the fragmentation of relationships, and seek clarification of events through justice, thereby becoming social actors. Family factors, such as the quality of emotional attachment, also

enable individuals to confront and integrate the psychosocial impacts of violence. In many cases, even when the family is absent, communities have resources available during periods of stress and tension (18,19).

Based on these premises, the aim of the review of studies on this issue is to establish which coping strategies are observed and proposed in these studies, and to assess the frequency and relevance attributed to emotional intelligence as part of this process of readjustment and adaptation in women victims of armed conflict in Colombia.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

An exploratory scoping study was conducted through a structured narrative review in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR guideline (20), aiming to understand the social and cultural phenomenon under study through the systematic consultation of scientific articles published between 2010 and 2023 in the EBSCO, Dialnet, ProQuest, SciELO, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar databases. The search strategy combined free-text keywords and equivalent MeSH/DeCS descriptors — such as “coping strategies,” “psychological adaptation,” “emotional intelligence,” “armed conflict,” and “women victims” — using Boolean operators. Two reviewers independently screened titles, abstracts, and full texts, and disagreements were resolved by consensus or, when necessary, through consultation with a third reviewer. In total, 32 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis.

The search process was guided by the following keywords: coping strategy, emotional intelligence, armed conflict, and women victims of violence. To systematize the information, a matrix was employed that contained the following categories: database consulted, year of publication, article title, keywords, objective, hypothesis, methodology, principal findings, and main conclusions.

The following criteria were considered for the selection of articles: *Inclusion criteria:* Documents published between 2010 and 2024; Documents published in English or Spanish. Research articles and review articles; Research conducted in Colombia. *Exclusion criteria:*

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Duplicate documents between databases; Research conducted in other countries; Articles that cannot be downloaded in full text; Documents that are editorials or meeting abstracts.

The initial search yielded 135 articles. During the screening stage, 18 articles were removed due to duplication, and an additional eight were

excluded because they did not satisfy the criteria required to address the study's objectives. This process was carried out manually. A selection based on title and abstract of 64 articles yielded 30 full-text articles, which were read and ultimately narrowed to 18 to address the objectives outlined in this study (Figure 1).

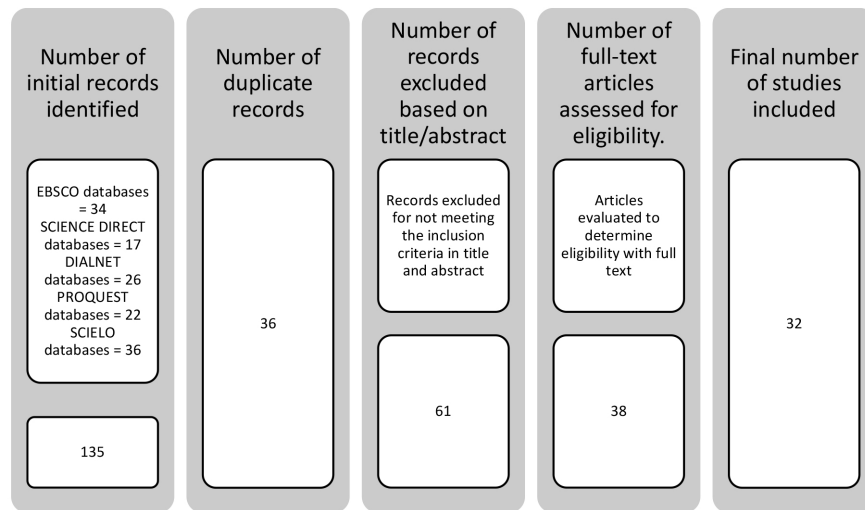


Figure 1. Search and Retrieval Diagram of Articles. Source: PRISMA 2020 Statement (20).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reviewed studies provide insights into the aftermath of violence against women in various parts of Colombia, particularly in the Andean and Caribbean regions. However, this doesn't imply that in other areas, such as the Pacific, the Eastern Plains, and the Amazonia, the conflict is less significant. The reason for this lies in the location of universities that promote and facilitate research in these regions.

The 32 reviewed articles addressed the issue of violence against women in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia, using different qualitative and quantitative approaches. The studies addressed a range of variables, including

psychological impact, neuropsychological functioning, feminist analyses of the conflict, sociodemographic profiles, household leadership among surviving women, national and international legal frameworks, sexual violence, coping mechanisms, and emotional intelligence (Table 1).

Findings indicate that the reviewed research consistently identifies women as victims of the conflict and highlights the specific psychological reactions they experience. Some women actively resist, while others choose to flee when the situation becomes overwhelming. Moreover, many women who survive the conflict assume both economic and emotional leadership roles within their families, thereby heightening the vulnerability of displaced households.

Table 1. Review of 32 articles.

N.	MAGAZINE NAME	PUBLICATION TITLE	YEAR
1	Anuario de Psicología jurídica	La Inteligencia Emocional y Las Estrategias de Afrontamiento de las Mujeres Desplazadas Víctimas del Conflicto Armado (19)	2022
2	JSR Funlam Journal of Students' Research.	Perfil psicológico y neuropsicológico de víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia (21)	2019
3	Agora	Memoria, historias de vida y papel de la escucha en la transformación subjetiva de víctimas / sobrevivientes del conflicto armado colombiano (22)	2013
4	Agora	Posturas en la atención psicosocial a víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia (4)	2016
5	Analecta Política	Mujer: blanco del conflicto armado en Colombia (5)	2014
6	Universitas Estudiantes	La reparación integral a las víctimas mujeres: una aproximación a la aplicación del enfoque diferencial de género en el contexto del conflicto armado colombiano (23)	2014
7	Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría	Prevalencia de síntomas, posibles casos y trastornos mentales en víctimas del conflicto armado interno en situación de desplazamiento en Colombia: una revisión sistemática (14)	2014
8	Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales	La violencia sexual como genocidio Memoria de las mujeres mayas sobrevivientes de violación sexual durante el conflicto armado en Guatemala (24)	2016
9	Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría	Polivictimización por el conflicto armado y sufrimiento emocional en el Departamento del Magdalena, Colombia (25)	2017
10	Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría	Violencia por conflicto armado y prevalencias de trastornos del afecto, ansiedad y problemas mentales en la población adulta colombiana (26)	2016
11	Psychosocial Intervention	Comprensiones sobre el perdón y la reconciliación en el contexto del conflicto armado colombiano (27)	2016
12	Acta sociológica	Violencia contra la mujer y desplazamiento forzado. Análisis de las estrategias de vida de jefas de hogar en Medellín (28)	2014
13	Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría	Problemas mentales, trastornos del afecto y de ansiedad en la población desplazada por la violencia en Colombia, resultados de la Encuesta Nacional de Salud Mental 2015 (29)	2016
14	Archivos Venezolanos de Farmacología y Terapéutica	Caracterización sociodemográfica de mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado que asisten a una fundación sin fines de lucro en el municipio de San Juan de Nepomuceno, Bolívar-Colombia (30)	2019
15	Revista de Estudios Internacionales de la Mujer	Hacia una visión feminista del papel de la mujer en el posconflicto colombiano (31)	2019
16	Análisis político	Los nombres de nuestra guerra. Balance de la comisión histórica del conflicto y sus víctimas en Colombia (32)	2018
17	Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales	Subjetividad ciudadana de las mujeres en contextos de conflictos armados (33)	2018
18	Revista Colombiana de Psicología	Psychological symptoms, coping strategies, and resilience in adults exposed to the Colombian armed conflict (34)	2016
19	CS Ciencias Sociales	Enfoque de género en la implementación de la Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras: una propuesta para la caracterización de las mujeres y niñas víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia (35)	2016
20	Desafíos	Organizational Processes of Women and Victims of Armed Conflict and their Relationship with Local Democracy in Eastern Antioquia (36)	2017
21	Foro Revista De Derecho	Conflicto armado y feminismo de Estado: la incursión de la problemática de la guerra en la acción pública para las mujeres en Colombia (37)	2018
22	Desafíos	Emotional Transformation in the Victims of the Armed Conflict for Reconciliation in Colombia (38)	2019

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...continuation Table 1. Review of 32 articles.

N.	MAGAZINE NAME	PUBLICATION TITLE	YEAR
23	Journal of International Women's Studies	Hacia Una Mirada Feminista Del Rol De La Mujer En El Posconflicto Colombiano (39)	2019
24	Estudios de Derecho	Impacto de la ampliación de los derechos de las víctimas de violencia sexual con ocasión del conflicto armado en el ejercicio del incidente de reparación integral (40)	2016
25	Revista de Estudios Sociales	What We Have Learned about Treating Female Victims of Sexual Violence in the Colombian Armed Conflict (41)	2010
26	CS Ciencias Sociales	Escuchando a las víctimas del conflicto armado colombiano: la experiencia de un dispositivo de atención psicosocial (42)	2018
27	Archivos Venezolanos de Farmacología y Terapéutica	Afectaciones psicológicas en víctimas del conflicto armado (43)	2019
28	Revista Internacional de Psicología	Secuelas psicológicas de la guerra en mujeres forzadas a desplazarse (3)	2016
29	El Ágora USB	La vulnerabilidad de la mujer en la guerra y su papel en el posconflicto (13)	2017
30	Universitas Psychologica	Investigaciones y comprensiones del conflicto armado en Colombia. Salud mental y familia (44)	2017
31	Revista CES Psicología	Salud mental de adolescentes y jóvenes víctimas de desplazamiento forzado en Colombia (45)	2019
32	Revista de Psicología GEPU	Funcionamiento Familiar en Familias Desplazadas, Asentadas en el Departamento del Quindío en el Período 2009-2013 (46)	2015

Source: author's own work.

Another significant finding is that many women who have been victims of the conflict strengthen their family bonds, especially with their children, although they show distrust towards forming new relationships. To overcome these emotional difficulties, it is necessary to work on forgiveness and reconciliation, which can help develop coping strategies and enable them to continue their life projects.

Campo-Arias et al. (14) also argue that women, and the population affected by armed conflict in general, are subjected to stigmatization, prejudices, and discrimination, exacerbating the negative consequences for this population. According to Gómez-Restrepo et al. (26), all these events are associated with a higher prevalence of mental disorders, directing towards the planning of public health interventions to mitigate the consequences of armed conflict. Emotional symptoms and possible cases of mental disorders resulting from these situations have a prevalence in Colombia of over 20 % of

reported cases; however, it is considered that there is underreporting of the population that does not have access to the services and entities that manage these processes within the system.

These new roles and social stigmatization towards women exacerbate psychological symptoms in them. Amarís et al. (47) understand this as an emotional state secondary to adverse situations in a person's life that may or may not constitute a psychiatric disorder (48); however, for Espíndola et al. (49), it is a clinical entity that refers to a set of psychic reactions, emotional manifestations, and behaviors characterized by their brief course, rapid evolution, and good prognosis.

Cadavid (5) in her writing "Women: Target of the Armed Conflict in Colombia" argues that women, mainly those living in rural areas, tend to experience guilt regarding the acts of violence suffered against their dignity, which allows for the evidence of the degree of inequality and macho tradition, taking into account certain

sectors of Colombia. The search for mechanisms of mourning, reparation, and professional help is often secondary because the right to justice is subordinated to the need to survive. In this regard, (23) argues that the female gender in the armed conflict experiences multiple victimization regarding gender-based violence, the differential impact that the conflict causes regarding their special condition, and the impact that violence has had on their individual personhood. According to Andrade et al. (50), the emotional life of women victims of armed conflict is not stable; negative feelings and affects are not a fundamental factor for them because their focus is on surviving, escaping, and protecting their family from real or potential dangers.

On the other hand, Torres (51) argues that victims of armed conflict possess prior knowledge that may positively affect emotional recovery, the reconstruction of social fabric, and the restoration of dignity. Women victims of armed conflict have traditions and customs that have shaped them to be mothers, daughters, and wives, and this experience has helped them cope with the punishable consequences of armed conflict, such as homicides, displacements, and physical, psychological, and sexual violence, among others.

These investigations argue that displaced individuals maintain a variable emotional state, experiencing fluctuations between joy or optimism and anxiety and irritability. However, some conflict victims apply coping strategies that help reduce the impact of displacement on their subjective psychological well-being. Instrumental strategies, such as logical analysis and problem-solving, are effective in minimizing the impact of adverse events, whereas affective regulation and avoidance strategies appear to be detrimental (52). Based on this, it could be said that the strategies displaced individuals use when facing traumatic situations affect their well-being, as they mitigate the effects of adversity on emotional experience. This could explain why, despite manifesting trauma symptoms, these individuals can increase their positive affect and decrease their negative effect.

In the study conducted by Hewitt-Ramirez et al. (9), it was found that victims of armed conflict more frequently employ coping strategies in which they wait for things to resolve themselves. The population is exposed to such advanced levels

of hopelessness that they assume there is nothing they can do to prevent the punitive consequences they are subjected to.

Conversely, Martínez (53) notes that although some authors have suggested that certain women adopt an attitude of resigned acceptance—marked by a passive hope that circumstances will resolve on their own—scientific literature presents a more nuanced perspective. Religious affiliation emerges as a prominent coping strategy among women in adverse situations, challenging the assumption of complete resignation. Indeed, reliance on faith does not merely signify passive acquiescence; rather, it reflects an active pursuit of spiritual comfort in response to experienced injustice and suffering. This nuance underscores the need to recognize the complexity of women's lived experiences and the breadth of coping mechanisms they employ, extending far beyond mere resignation. The quest for spiritual support stands out as a form of active resistance, wherein women not only acknowledge their pain and the injustices they endure but also consciously seek empowerment through their beliefs and religious practices.

However, this phenomenon warrants further consideration, as faith-based coping strategies should not be interpreted as mere resignation but as a dynamic process of confronting and transforming adversity.

Cudris et al. (43) argue that it is important to identify psychological impairments and their relationships with social interaction and coping strategies to promote mental health and prevention programs in populations affected by conflict, taking into account both psychological and social dimensions.

Since 2020, following the peace agreements signed by the Colombian government with one of the main subversive groups accused of victimizing women in Colombia, various studies have been conducted indicating the consequences in this regard. Jimenez et al. (19), in their study conducted in one of the country's most conflict-affected regions, indicate that among some coping strategies adopted by women victims of conflict are acceptance and acceptance of what has been experienced. Although they do not present a clear trend in this regard, they do demonstrate appropriate levels of emotional intelligence with

respect to clarity, reparation, and regulation of emotional attention, in general.

On the other hand, Cerquera et al. (54) conducted a study with a sample of young people from the northeastern region of Colombia, in which 67 % of participants were women aged 18 to 28, all identified as victims of the Colombian conflict. They indicated that, in descending order, the coping strategies adopted by this population include religion, expressing coping difficulties, seeking social support, and aggressive reaction. In contrast, less commonly used strategies include seeking professional support, denial, cognitive avoidance, emotional avoidance, problem-solving, waiting, positive reappraisal, and autonomy.

Religion emerges as one of the most prominent strategies in studies of this population. Victims often cling to prayer, entrust everything to God, and express their faith (18,55), in addition to relying on support networks such as friends, family, and governmental and non-governmental organizations (18). Some individuals use coping strategies perceived as negative, including aggressive reactions, which become a risk factor for alcohol consumption (9,54). The use of coping strategies such as religion, emotional avoidance, aggression, denial, and lack of autonomy increases the likelihood of anxiety-depression presentations. Regarding resilience levels, 61 % of the population had moderate resilience, whereas 32 % exhibited high resilience (9).

Among the studies, it was also found that seeking professional support is one of the least utilized coping strategies, which raises concerns regarding the mental health conditions of a significant percentage of women victims of the conflict who, due to lack of awareness, do not seek the required psychological or psychiatric care (54,55).

Finally, the order of the emotional intelligence variable in the study indicates that there is very little investigation of this variable among the displaced population. However, authors reviewing it argue that conducting studies in which this variable can be related to coping strategies could provide competent authorities with a course of action to strengthen coping strategies in situations of violence and displacement (56).

The study Jiménez et al. (19) examined emotional intelligence in its dimensions of attention, clarity, and repair, observing that most displaced women victims of violence in the central region of the Cesar department have adequate levels in identifying their emotions, the stimuli that generate them, and a truly significant percentage (72 %) demonstrate appropriate regulation of their behavioral component. Furthermore, when examining coping strategies, the emotional repair dimension showed the strongest association with strategies such as acceptance/resignation, positive reappraisal, and problem-solving.

In addressing the challenges generated by the armed conflict in Colombia, this study not only clarifies the complexities surrounding coping styles and emotional intelligence among women victims but also outlines several key implications. From a research standpoint, the findings open new pathways for examining the underlying psychological mechanisms involved, identifying specific gaps that warrant deeper investigation in future work. In practice, the results provide a strong basis for developing tailored, culturally responsive interventions. Implementing targeted strategies derived from this analysis can substantially improve the effectiveness of psychosocial support programs by fostering resilience and emotional well-being. At the societal level, these insights offer an opportunity to inform public policy and to promote more comprehensive and emotionally attuned approaches within communities affected by violence.

This study makes an important contribution to the broader understanding of psychological adaptation in conflict settings, serving as a valuable reference for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers concerned with addressing the emotional needs of women impacted by armed violence. The practical relevance of these findings—ranging from professional training initiatives to public awareness efforts—reinforces the commitment to translating academic research into concrete actions that meaningfully improve women's lives.

Although several studies have identified noteworthy associations between emotional repair and adaptive coping strategies focused on acceptance, positive reappraisal, and problem-

solving—particularly the work of Jiménez et al. (19), along with the contributions of Hewitt-Ramírez et al. (9) and Cerquera et al. (54) from a resilience perspective—the reviewed literature continues to display considerable conceptual and methodological fragmentation. Most investigations examine coping and mental health outcomes separately, without systematically incorporating the distinct components of emotional intelligence, such as emotional attention, clarity, and repair (14,26,50). Additionally, there remains a significant gap in the design, implementation, and evaluation of structured interventions grounded in emotional intelligence training as a direct means of strengthening coping processes in women victims of armed conflict. Existing evidence largely consists of academic proposals with limited empirical validation (56). This limitation constrains the translation of knowledge into clinical, community-based, and public health initiatives, leaving an urgent and promising area for applied research focused on developing prevention and psychosocial rehabilitation models with stronger empirical foundations.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Colombia, the conflict originates from political differences, and its resolution approach also centers on a democratic stance. This implies that in a dispute recognizing both victims and perpetrators, there is subsequent action towards forgiveness, reconciliation, and reparation, unlike in other conflicts in the Latin American context, where the conflict stance is purely militaristic, making it difficult to visualize the victims of the dilemma, where women are the most affected.

Women, as both direct and indirect victims of the armed conflict, have been the subject of scrutiny from various fields of social sciences and related disciplines. This review identified how diverse fields of knowledge have conducted research to highlight legal, physical, psychological, moral, and social consequences.

The variables identified in the study of women victims of conflict fall within the psychosocial profile, psychological alterations, coping strategies, and emotional intelligence. Among all the themes, emotional intelligence has the

lowest production, yet significant correlations between its dimensions and coping strategies have been established.

This systematic review shows that, although the emotional intelligence construct has been extensively developed in recent years, its application to the context of armed conflict has not been accompanied by a proliferation of publications on practical applications.

Studies examining coping styles agree that female victims tend to exhibit passivity in problem-solving, opting to wait for difficulties to resolve themselves, which sometimes exacerbates the situation. The role of being a mother to a significant number of these victims of violence due to armed conflict helps deploy assertive coping strategies when forms of violence are not extreme. Women must ensure that their children can transform unexpected futures into opportunities for growth and development. This significant challenge helps them develop life projects that mitigate grief and pain.

Jiménez et al. (57) assert that those displaced by violence continue to flee, carrying with them their own history, way of life, who they were, and what they did in their place of origin, facing the challenge each day of thinking, of constructing a new reality that gives them new opportunities to start a new life project.

Following this review, it becomes evident that there remains an ongoing need to strengthen research that enables the identification and promotion of strategies aimed at safeguarding the mental health of victims.

Intervention mechanisms must situate each case within the victim's specific social and cultural context. Such strategies should include the development of awareness campaigns and educational programs focused on disseminating information about adaptive coping methods and the cultivation of emotional intelligence; practical workshops that equip women with effective coping skills such as problem-solving, stress regulation, and informed decision-making; the creation of support groups and women's networks that encourage the sharing of experiences, foster mutual support, and provide safe spaces for emotional expression and guidance; guaranteed access to specialized mental health services;

and initiatives that foster women's economic empowerment through vocational training, employment opportunities, and financial resources. These recommendations may be tailored to respond to the distinct needs of the communities and the women affected by the armed conflict in Colombia.

### Limitations and Contributions

This review presents several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis was restricted to studies conducted in Colombia, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other sociopolitical contexts affected by armed conflict. Second, publication bias cannot be ruled out, as the review was based exclusively on articles indexed in academic databases, which may have excluded grey literature and unpublished studies with non-significant results. In addition, although the review followed PRISMA-ScR guidelines, no formal assessment of the methodological quality or risk of bias of the included studies was performed, thereby preventing an assessment of the strength of the available evidence. Despite these limitations, this study makes relevant contributions by offering a systematic and updated synthesis of the scientific production on coping strategies and emotional intelligence in women victims of the Colombian armed conflict. It also identifies critical research gaps, particularly the limited integration of emotional intelligence dimensions and coping styles, as well as the scarcity of empirically validated interventions grounded in emotional intelligence training. These findings provide a solid foundation for future applied research and for the design of culturally sensitive psychosocial, clinical, and public health interventions to strengthen resilience and emotional well-being in this population.

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