

Evaluation indicator of regional energy vulnerability to climate change - spatial and temporal analysis

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Abstract

Climate change might affect energy production and therefore the energy security of a country or region. This vulnerability situation may affect Renewable Energy Sources (RES) such as hydroelectric and has consequences on effective energy transition. Since the transition to RES is a key for decarbonizing the economy in line with the Paris Agreement this situation is critical for many countries in which their energy systems are linked to resources strongly affected by climate. The aim of this study is to propose a vulnerability indicator (VI) to evaluate the electric energy vulnerability of an on-grid system to climate change at national and regional level taking as base the case of study of Colombia, a country with a system based on 70% RES. VI is computed with different variables that may be related to climate change, the energy matrix, and vulnerability. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to select the variables involved in the VI calculation. The VI was calculated for the whole country and the 32 departments (states) showing that the regions with the larger vulnerability correspond to the more energy demanding regions. These vulnerable regions to climate change are more than 50% of the maximum possible vulnerability, meanwhile, the vulnerability of the whole country was estimated as 43%. The analysis was developed for the current situation of Colombia in which there are two regions: interconnected (SIN) and not-interconnected (ZNI) areas.

Keywords

energy planning; global warming; renewable energy sources; energy transition; energy matrix

43 **Highlights**

44

- 45 ● A new vulnerability indicator (VI) to estimate the energy vulnerability of a country or region to climate
46 change is proposed and used for the case of the study of Colombia.
- 47 ● A link between climate change and the increasing energy vulnerability in Colombia was evidenced based
48 on the analysis performed.
- 49 ● VI was used for the case of Colombia showing that the vulnerability of the country is 43% of the
50 maximum possible, and the most vulnerable regions have more than 50% of the maximum vulnerability.
- 51 ● 7 variables related to climate change, the energy matrix, and climate change were selected for the VI
52 calculation using the PCA and correlation matrix approaches.

53

54 **1. Introduction**

55

56 Energy transition has turned imminent. Since the human appearance on the globe, the temperature has been
57 stable until the 19th century with the beginning of the industrial revolution (Houghton and Woodwell 1989;
58 Wallace and Hobbs 2006). Between 1850 and 2012, the near-surface air temperature increased by 0.8 °C mainly
59 due to anthropogenic emissions produced during the energy production demanded by transport, industry,
60 residential, among other sectors (González 2007; Jacobson 2020; Seba 2014; Seba and James 2017). This trend
61 is dangerous for many countries in which their energy resources are linked with resources strongly affected by
62 climate change. The transition to Renewable Energy Sources (RES) is key for decarbonizing the economy in
63 line with the Paris Agreement, to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80-95% by 2050 from a 1990
64 baseline (Fernández-Reyes 2016).

65

66 Colombia is a developing country with a population of more than 50 million inhabitants in 2020. It is an Andean
67 country that produces around 75.5 TWh/yr of electric energy(UPME 2020). Colombia is currently energetically
68 autonomous and has an energy mix that produces around 70% of its electric energy based on renewables, mostly
69 hydropower production facilities, only a few small RES-based solar and wind projects take place currently in
70 the country, and they do not represent more than 2% in the near future (UPME 2020). The current energy
71 situation makes the country sensitive to climate change. Large scale blackouts have been registered in Colombia
72 in 1992, and more recently in 2016 during the most recent El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) period due to
73 the decrease in the dam and reservoir levels (Mateus 2016). The aforementioned situation is evidence that during
74 strong dry seasons, mainly characterized by the ENSO, the country faces a lack of energy supply leading to
75 blackouts (Cuadros et al. 2019). Additionally, the electric energy demand is trending to increase due to the
76 development processes, the energy transition, migration from the countryside to urban areas, and important
77 population growth due to the massive immigration of refugees from Venezuela in recent years(Berg et al. 2020;
78 Betts 2019). These two issues: the hydropower based energy matrix and the increasing electric energy demand,
79 will drive the decision-making process regarding the energy strategies of the country in the next years.

80

81 To assess the vulnerability of regions and countries to climate change several studies have been published. The
82 RES vulnerability has been assessed in 2012 considering several factors such as endowment, infrastructure,
83 distribution, and transmission of energy based on many studies (Schaeffer et al. 2012). Energy is identified as
84 one of the areas with more impact on climate change (Mideksa and Kallbekken 2010), authors also mentioned
85 that energy supply is impacted as a result of climate alteration since variables such as wind speed, river flow,
86 evaporation rates, and solar radiation are changing. Additionally, it has been found that climate change is

87 affecting the performance of non-RES (mainly thermal and nuclear power plants) in Russia (Klimenko et al.
88 2018).

89
90 The main aim of this study is to propose a vulnerability indicator (VI) to evaluate the electric energy vulnerability
91 of an on-grid system to climate change at national and regional level taking as base the case of study of Colombia.
92 The proposed indicator is based on the different variables that may be related to climate change, the energy
93 matrix, and therefore the vulnerability. To identify the variables that must be used for the indicator calculation
94 the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method was used since this approach allows identifying the
95 relationships between the different variables. The data used was retrieved for the last 20 years at the country
96 level and the last 7 years at the regional level.

97
98 The VI was calculated for the whole country and the 32 departments (states). The spatial comparison between
99 the different geographical locations was evaluated using different regional distributions of the VI. The method
100 based on the indicator proposed is designed to be easily adapted and used in other countries or regions
101 worldwide.

102 **2. Methodology**

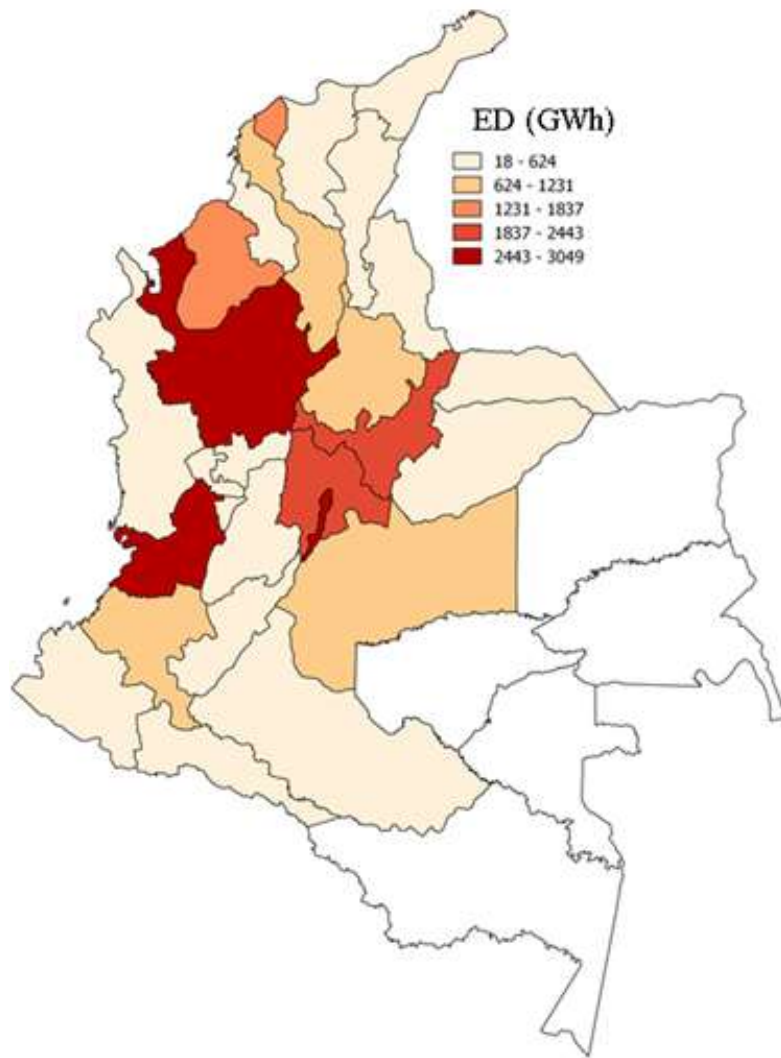
103 **2.1. Current Situation of energy in Colombia**

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105 The current situation of Colombia is described in terms of the climate and energy variables. Climate and energy
106 data were retrieved for the last 20 years nationwide and last seven years to the departmental level. Climate data
107 was downloaded from the ERA-5 database from ECMWF (European Centre for Medium-Range Weather
108 Forecasts)(ECMWF 2020).

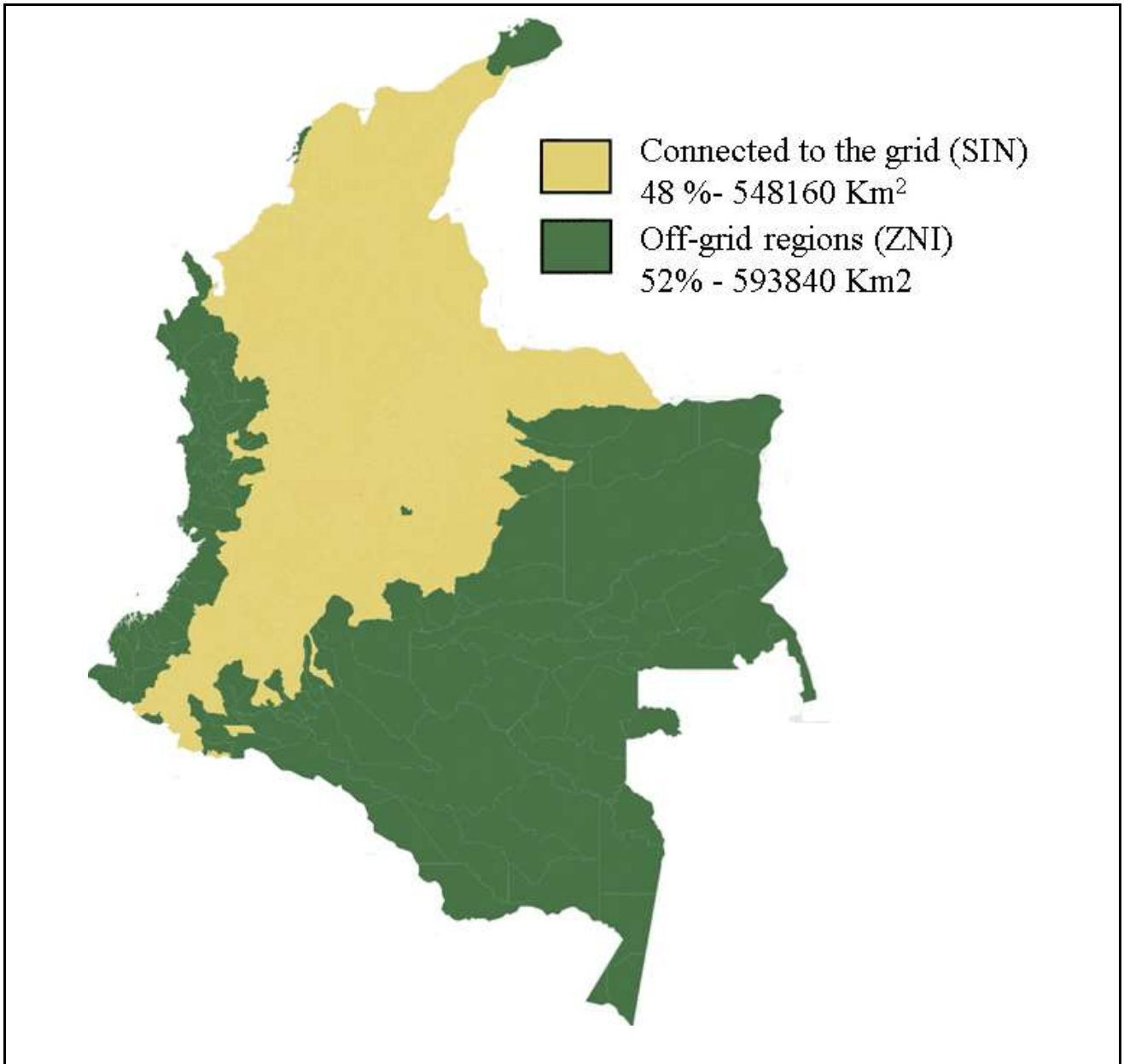
109
110 The energy demand and production were obtained from the historic records from UPME (Unidad de Planeación
111 Minero Energética). Figure 1a shows the electric energy demand (ED) per department. Figure 1b shows the areas
112 of the country connected to the grid (SIN) and off-grid regions (ZNI), the percentages in Figure 1b are linked
113 with the total area from Colombia. 11 389407 of SIN users were reported in 2018, differently a smaller number
114 of users were reported for ZNI: 207653 (XM S.A. E.S.P. 2021a). The relationship between population (Pop) and
115 ED from 2000 to 2019 is shown in Figure 2. Population data were obtained from the World Data Bank (The
116 World Bank 2021).

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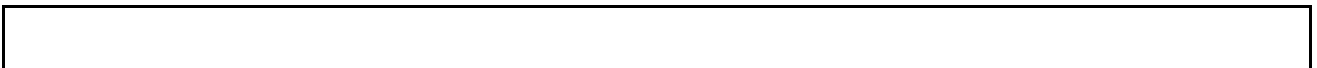


118 **Figure 1. The current electric energy situation in Colombia: a) Spatial distribution of electric energy**
 119 **demand (ED) in 2019, b) Supply system coverage in terms of areas connected to the grid (SIN) and off-**
 120 **grid regions (ZNI). (Adapted from:(López et al. 2020))**

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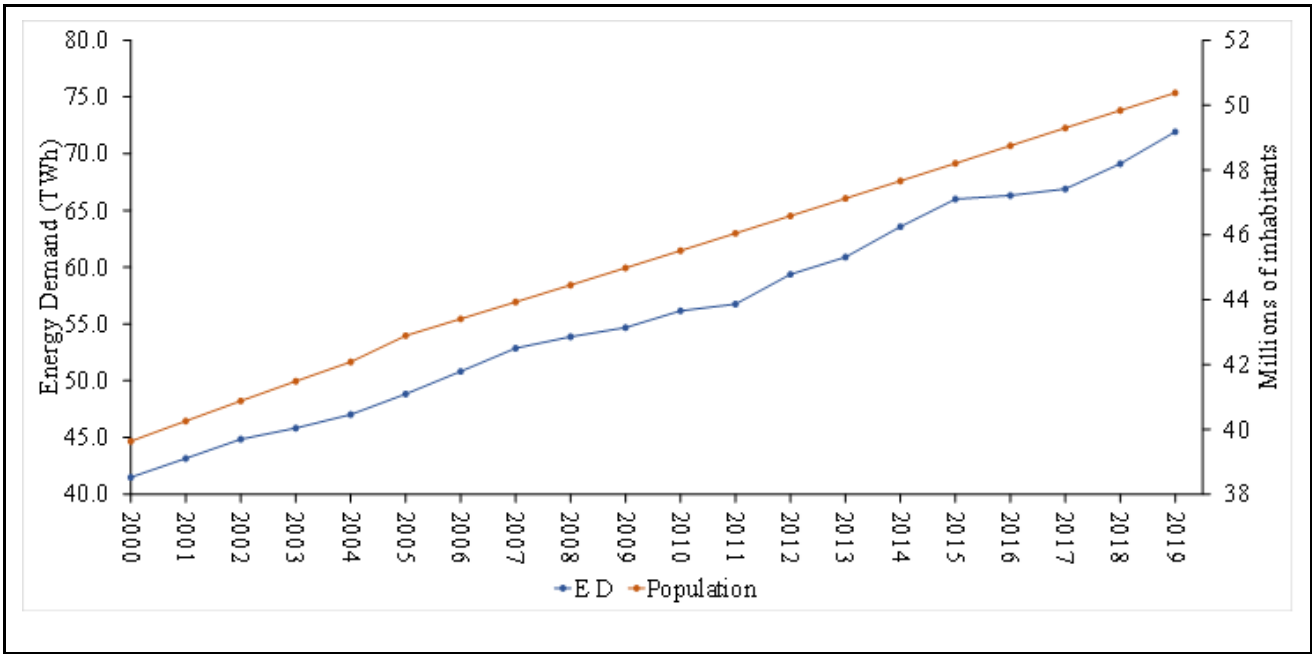


Figure 2. Population and Energy Demand (ED) in Colombia from 2000 to 2019.

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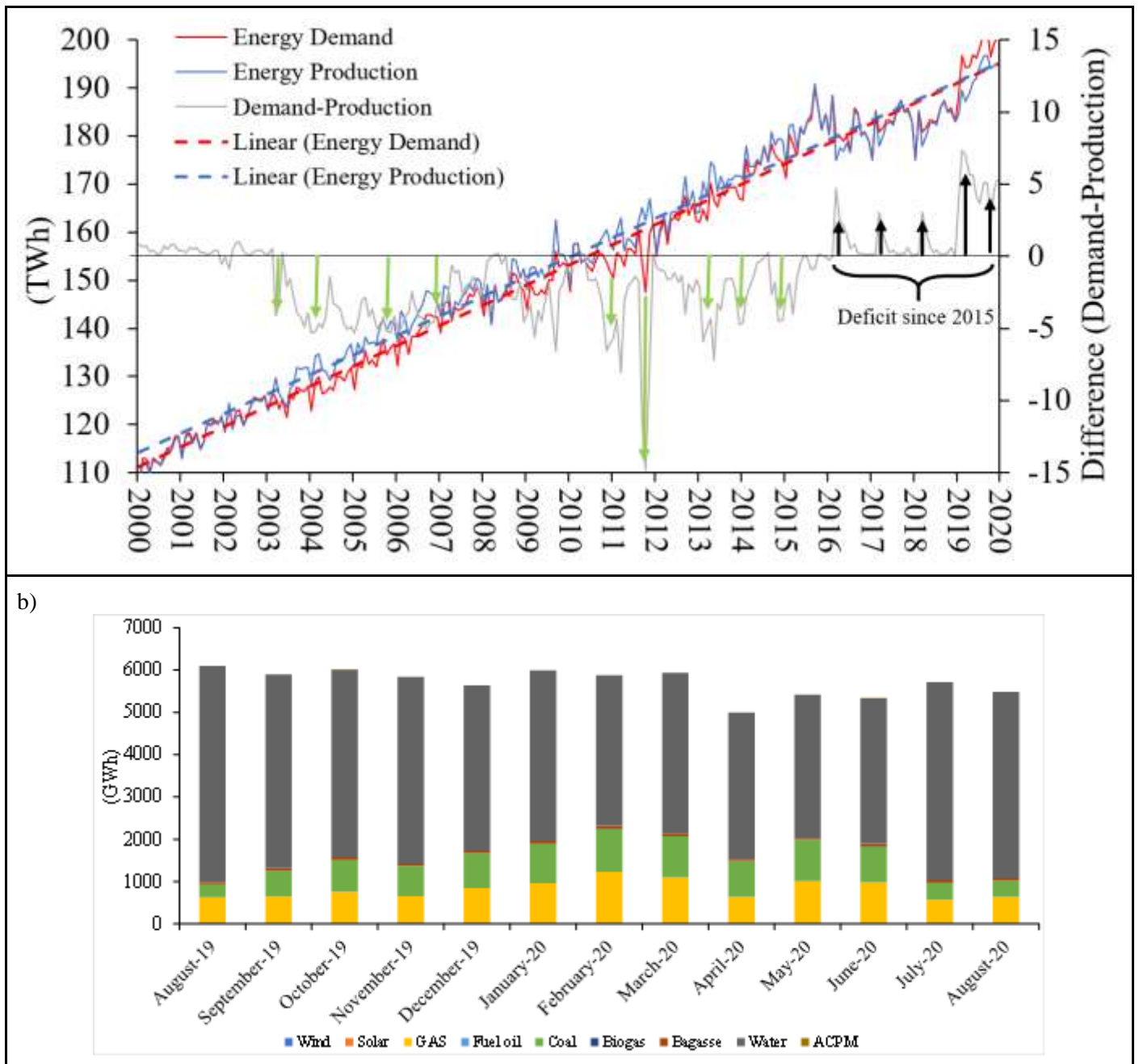
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Figure 3a shows the electric energy production (EP) and the ED of Colombia between 2000 and 2020. Differences between demand and production are also shown to identify the strong deficit of energy production since 2015. Between the years 2003 and 2015, no deficit of energy supply was presented, even so in the early 2000s small deficits took place in the country. Additionally, Figure 3a also shows the increasing trend of ED and energy production with time. The data used for Figure 3a were retrieved from the UPME website (UPME 2021). This data is composed of ED and production records per month for the whole country.

Figure 3b shows the composition of the energy mix based on the energy generation sources per month between 19 august 2019 and 20 August 2020, data was retrieved from SIEL (UPME 2020), the current electric energy mix is characterized by hydropower as the main production source with 70.4%, followed by natural gas and coal with a 13.7% and 12.7 % respectively.

a)



147 **Figure 3. Total energy production and energy demand of Colombia: a) Total electric energy production**
 148 **(EP) and electric energy demand (ED) trend from 2000 to 2020, and b) Energy production by the source**
 149 **from august 2019 to august 2020 (UPME 2020).**

150

151 2.2. Vulnerability indicator (VI)

152 The indicator utilizes several variables for which the time profiles must be retrieved as the first step in the
 153 calculation of the indicator. The variables must correspond to the same spatial area of study, i.e. the same region,
 154 city, or country, and during the same period of time. Profiles of each used variable should be based on the same
 155 time basis i.e. daily, weekly, monthly or yearly data. These variables might be related to climate change and
 156 between them in order to be significant for the indicator calculation of the region of study. Variables can be
 157 linked with different types of fields such as economic, climatic, and electric. Since the index calculation is
 158 focussed on the variables strongly linked to climate change, to identify these variables a statistical method such

159 as PCA (Principal Component Analysis) (Abdi and Williams 2010) can be used. In addition, for some clusters
 160 with many variables, it is necessary to use a correlation matrix to choose the most representative variable of the
 161 cluster (Bartholomew 2010).

162
 163 The Vulnerability Indicator of the region r (VI_r) can be computed using the equation (1). In this equation, W_k is
 164 the weighting factor of the variable k , and S_k is the score factor of the time with increasing vulnerability for
 165 variable k .

$$166 \quad 167 \quad 168 \quad 169 \quad VI_r = \sum_k W_k * S_k \quad (1)$$

170 The scoring factor is calculated according to equation (2), in which n is the time unit (e.g. months, years, etc.),
 171 and t_n can take the value of 0 or 1 in each timestep depending if the vulnerability in terms of the variable k
 172 decreases or increases respectively.

$$173 \quad 174 \quad S_k = \sum_n t_n \quad (2)$$

175 $t_n = 0$ if the vulnerability does not increase during time n
 176 $t_n = 1$ if the vulnerability increases during time n

177
 178 The weighting factor is calculated according to equation (3), when σ is the standard deviation of variables
 179 identified as the suitable ones for the vulnerability consideration, in this expression the indexes i and k denote
 180 the aforementioned variables. Additionally, the condition of equation (4) must be complied with in any case.

$$181 \quad 182 \quad 183 \quad W_k = \frac{\sigma_k}{\sum_i \sigma_i} \quad (3)$$

$$184 \quad 185 \quad \sum_k W_k = 1 \quad (4)$$

186 With a good indicator, it might be possible to compare against cases (regions, cities, or countries), and against
 187 the minimum and maximum possible values. The formulation of VI_r presented in this study allows this type
 188 of analysis. To perform this analysis the calculation of the maximum possible VI_r can be carried out taking the
 189 maximum possible S_k value as $S_k = n$. This will lead to equation (5). Differently, the minimum possible
 190 VI_r will always take the value of zero, see equation (6).

$$191 \quad 192 \quad maximum \quad VI_r = S_k = n \quad (5)$$

$$193 \quad 194 \quad minimum \quad VI_r = 0 \quad (6)$$

195
 196 With the results from equations (1), (5), and (6) it is possible to estimate the vulnerability of region r as the
 197 vulnerability percentage ($V\%$), see equation (7). This percentage can be used as a complementary indicator of
 198 the sensitivity of r to climate change based on the variables used, and the period of time evaluated. A high $V\%$
 199 for the region, city or country will mean r has been strongly affected by climate change, and a low $V\%$ will mean

200 that r has not been strongly affected by climate change.
201

$$202 \quad V\% = \frac{VI_r}{\text{maximum } VI_r} * 100 \quad (7)$$

203

204 **3. Discussion with already published works on similar topics from other parts of the world**

205 Climate change vulnerability has been considered in different ways in already published studies world wide.
206 Methodologies change according to the study area, e.g. some have been developed in border regions (Scholze et
207 al. 2020), or islands (Genave et al. 2020). Other studies have proposed a vulnerability index calculation
208 methodology for its global application(Gatto 2019).

209

210 Scholze (2020) shows an assessment of climate change in the Trinational Upper Rhine Region more, the border
211 region between France, Germany and Switzerland. This research uses a specific set of variables with high spatial
212 resolution to define the vulnerability linked to a spatial approach. Variables were selected based on different
213 vulnerability concepts, taking account indicators such as climatic stress, exposure, sensitivity and impact.
214 Indicator data was retrieved from satellite based databases. Genave (2020) reports the assessment of energy
215 vulnerability in small islands, the variables used were selected taking into account guidelines from literature
216 (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2005), the data used was retrieved from the World Data Bank, data used
217 is related to economic, social and environmental fields. The Gatto (2019) methodology uses less variables than
218 the other studies already published, the dataset was built with records between 1960 and 2016 a relatively long
219 time range.

220

221 The variables selection in the vulnerability index of energy to climate change strongly depends on the study area.
222 For some cases the difference between energy and environmental policies makes necessary the use of more
223 specific data. In any case can be seen the use of satellite-based data is possible and a good source of information
224 for the vulnerability the analyses such as the presented in this article.

225

226 Some already published studies used the PCA method to select variables to be used in the calculation of
227 vulnerability to climate change (Gatto 2019; Genave et al. 2020). Once with the variables selected the authors
228 bring a weighting for each variable in order to consider its impact. In this step Scholze (2020) uses an algorithm
229 to classify raster files and obtain the vulnerability index. Differently, Genave (2020) uses The Benefit-of-the-
230 Doubt (BoD) Model for the weighting.

231

232 In this research data used was retrieved from different sources of information e.g. local agencies reports, public
233 databases and satellite-based data. We apply the PCA approach to select the variables used in the calculation of
234 the VI, the weighting of variables was performed based on the standard deviation of the independent variable-
235 time-series. This study is performed at country scale.

236

237 **4. Results and discussion**

238 **4.1. Variables selection**

239 The raw input variables used in this research were Temperature in °C (T), Precipitation in mm (P), Population
240 (Pop) in terms of millions of inhabitants, Gross domestic product (Total GDP) in US-dollars, CO₂ equivalent
241 emissions in Ton of CO₂-eq per year (CE), Water reserves volume from dams (RV) in million of m³, Energy

242 reserves based on RV (ER), Energy demand (ED), Energy production (EP), Energy imports (EI) and Energy
243 exports (EE). Energy quantities ER, ED, EP, EI, and EE are in GWh. These variables have different trends in
244 time, and the relationships between them must be considered to evaluate properly the vulnerability of the system
245 to climate change. Relationships between these variables were analyzed using the PCA method (Figure 4a).
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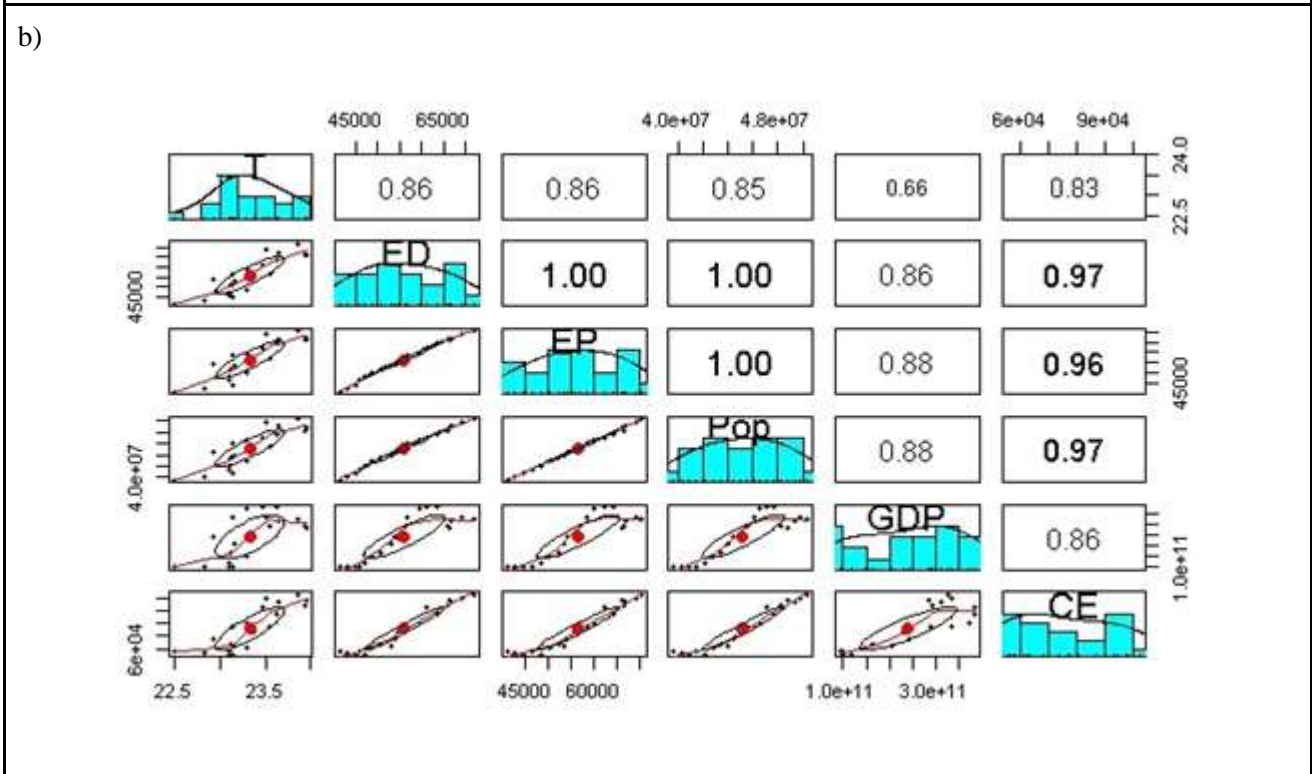
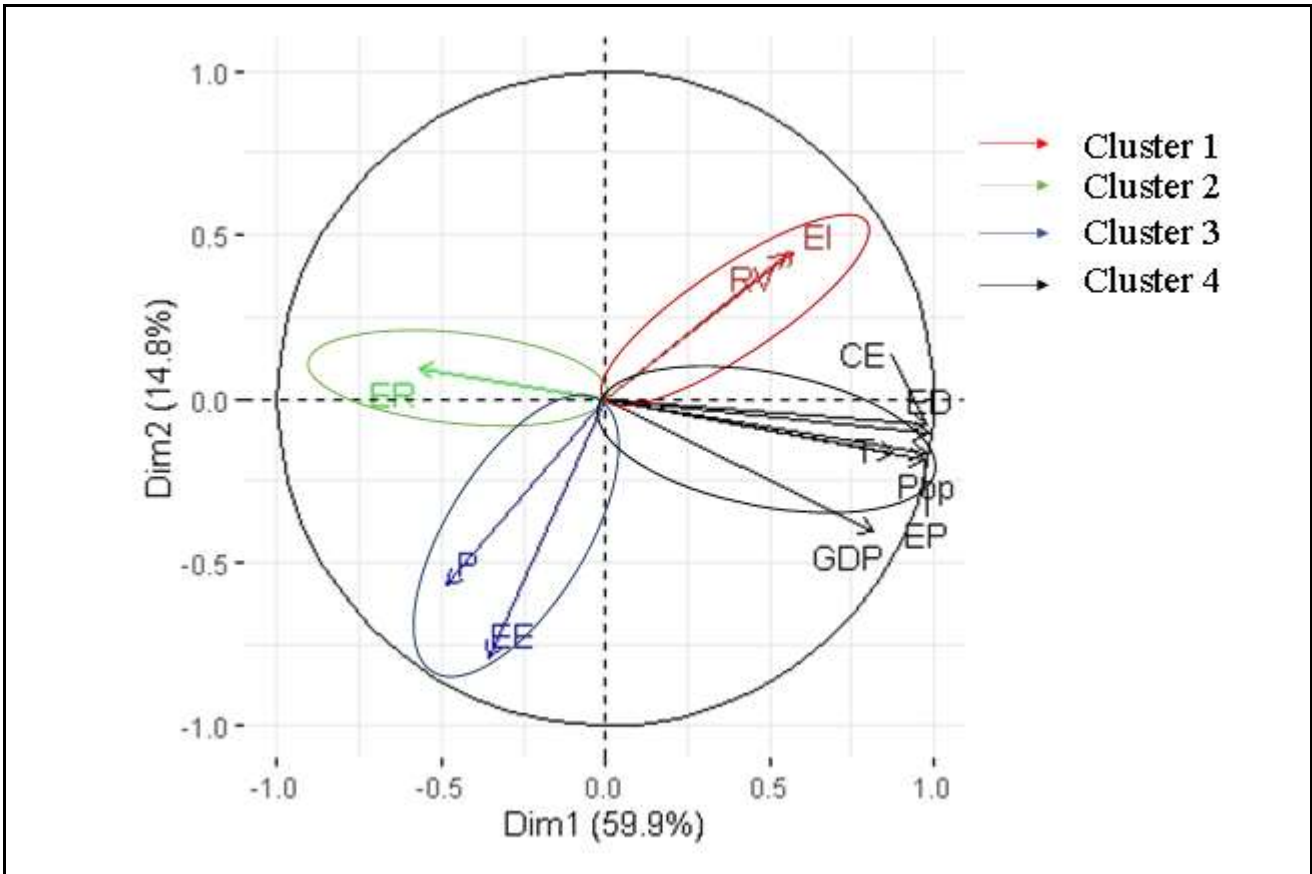
247 Figure 4a. shows the PCA results for the aforementioned variables, the test performed has representativeness of
248 the 2 main components of 59.9% and 14.8% for Dim 1 and Dim 2 respectively. The studied variables are well
249 represented by the 2 main components (Dim 1 and Dim 2) in the performed PCA test since the representativeness
250 of Dim 1 + Dim 2 exceeds 70% (Figure 4a) (Abdi and Williams 2010).
251

252 As a result of the PCA (Figure 4a) analysis, 4 clusters were identified: cluster 1 composed by RV and EI; cluster
253 2 composed by ER; cluster 3 composed by P and EE; and cluster 4 composed by CE, Pop, ED, T, GDP, and EP.
254 These clusters are composed of variables with similar temporal trends, i.e. variables within the same cluster
255 decrease or increase with time (Abdi and Williams 2010).
256

257 For clusters 1, 2, and 3 one single variable was selected as the representative of the set of variables within each
258 cluster. The criterion used was the strength of the correlation in terms of the arrow length, i.e. the variable with
259 the larger arrow (the arrow closer to the circle) was selected. The cluster 4 has several variables, and the criterion
260 used for the cluster 1, 2, and 3 is not applicable, for this reason, to select the representative variable of cluster 4,
261 a correlation matrix analysis was performed for the variables within the cluster 4 (Figure 4b). For cluster 4 the
262 ED was selected as the representative variable since according to the correlation matrix it has a higher correlation
263 coefficient than the other variables within the same cluster.
264

265 According to the analysis performed the selected variables for the vulnerability index calculation were ER, EE,
266 EI, and ED since they are representative of the identified clusters 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.
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a)



275 **Figure 4. Selection of variables for calculation of the vulnerability index: (a) PCA (Principal Component**
 276 **Analysis) to identify the representative variables for vulnerability index calculation, (b) Correlation**
 277 **Matrix analysis for Cluster 4.**

278 Variables within the same cluster have a direct relationship, this can be verified for cluster 1, variables in cluster
 279 1 increase with time, e.i. EI increases during the period of time studied (Figure 5b) just as RV does. Based on

280 the vectors plot in Figure 4a. EI and RV are inversely proportional to the EE (clusters 1 and 3), e.i. EI increases
281 with RV, but at the same time, EE decreases with time. The increase of EI and RV is explained by the installation
282 of new dams between January 2000 and January 2020, it is estimated that the capacity of the reservoirs increased
283 by 27.7%, rising from 18 to 23 dams in the whole country (XM S.A. E.S.P. 2021b). As a consequence of the
284 energy supply deficit after 2015, the EE presents the fast reduction seen in Figure 5a.
285

286 There is an inverse relationship of RV with P (clusters 1 and 3)(Figure 4a), e.i. The decrease in precipitation
287 leads to a water level decline in the dams of the energy matrix, this is evidence of the relationship between the
288 energy system of the country and climate change through climate variables such as P. This is also evidence of
289 the valid clusterization performed based on the PCA method.
290

291 Figure 4a shows an inverse relationship between clusters 2 and 4, ED, EP, and Pop are the variables with major
292 influence in this relationship. Cluster 4 vectors show how when ED increases with Pop, this needs a major EP,
293 and this affects negatively the ER. Analysis of T and CE is important since they are variables related to climate
294 change. T and CE variables also conform to Cluster 4, with increasing but slightly weaker trends.
295

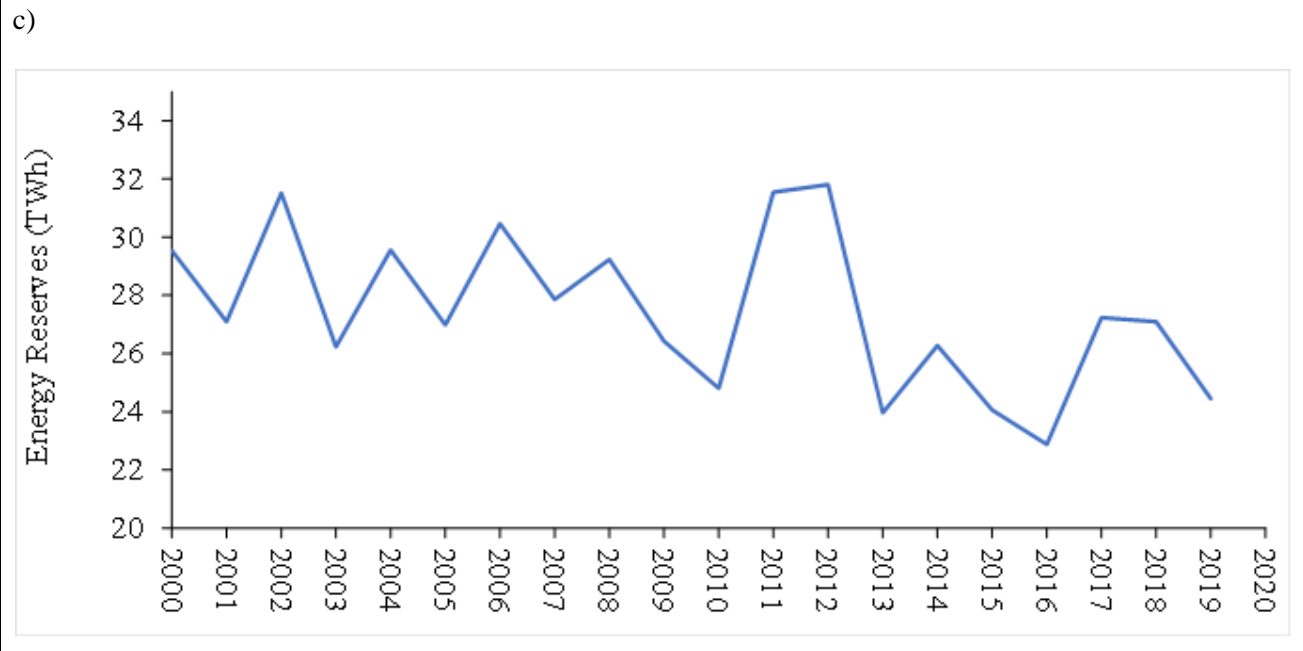
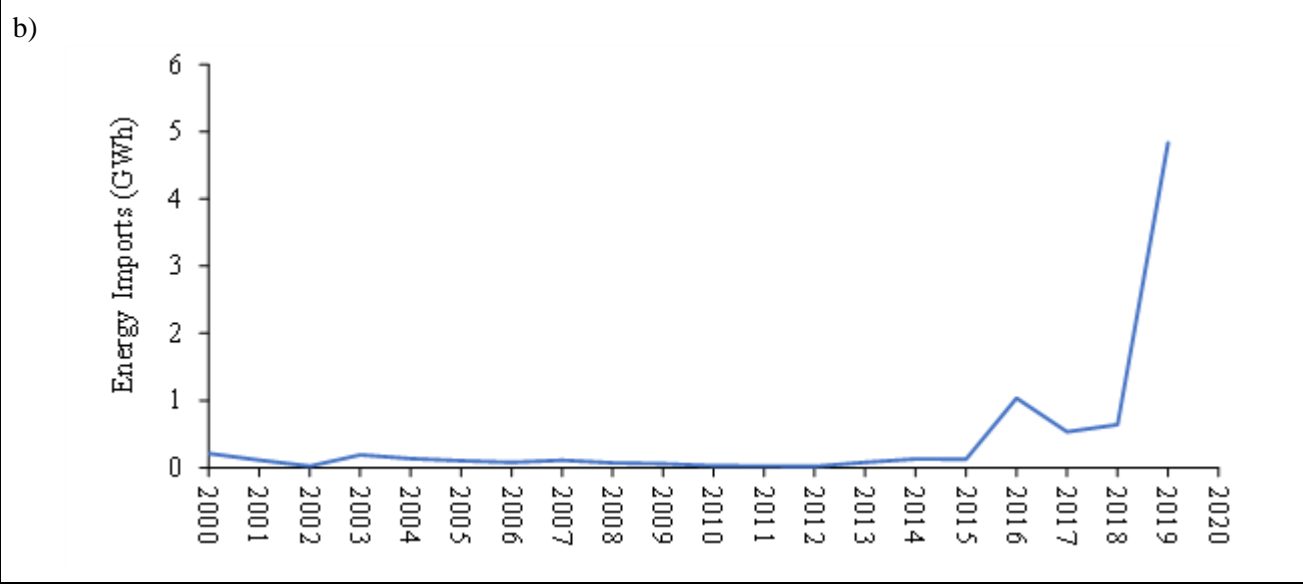
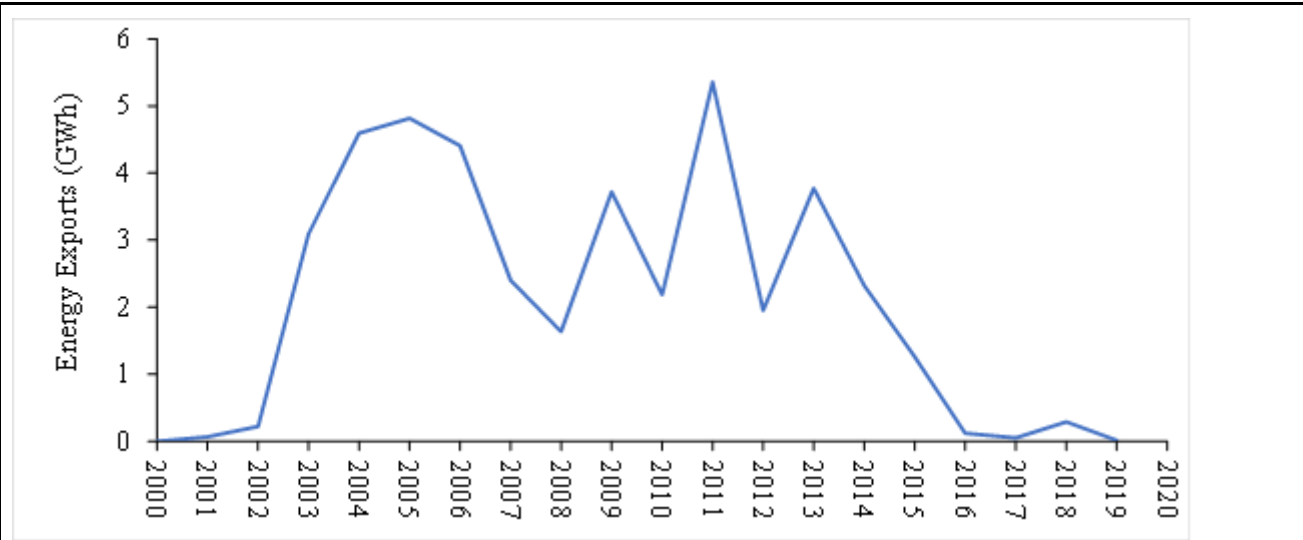
296 The CE trends to increase in developing countries such as Colombia, this due to the link between GHG emissions
297 and activities linked to industry, transport, agriculture, etc. In the case of Colombia T has the capability to
298 influence the energy structure of the country since the biggest share of the energy mix is dependent on water, a
299 resource-sensitive to T.
300

301 An interesting relationship between clusters 1 and 3 is observed, the P has a positive relationship with EE,
302 meaning that when rains are presented a super-habit of energy takes place, and therefore EE increases during
303 these periods. P is also inversely related to RV, for the same reason when no rains have presented the level of
304 water in the dams decreases leading to fewer reserves. This observation is coherent with the trend in Figure 5.
305 These observations evidence the high vulnerability of the Colombian energy system to climate variations since
306 this energy system is rich in hydropower (70% hydropower); this is, therefore, evidence of hydropower-RES-
307 based-systems vulnerability to climate change.
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309 **4.2. Variables tendencies**

310 Figure 5 shows the time series with the selected variables for the vulnerability analysis at the country scale, the
311 plotted data correspond to yearly average values in the time period from 2000 to 2019 in Colombia.
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314 **Figure 5. Time series of selected variables for the vulnerability analysis at country scale: a) Energy**
315 **exports (EE), b) Energy imports (EI), and c) Energy reserves (ER).**

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318 Figure 5a. shows the variation of EE with time during 2000 and 2019. EE was almost 0 GWh in 2000 and
319 progressively increased up to the maximum of 5.5 GWh in 2011, after 2011 the EE has gradually decreased to
320 low values in 2019.

321

322 Figure 5b shows the EI which has been relatively small between 2000 and 2015, even so, after 2015 the EI has
323 strongly increased reaching its maximum of 5 GWh in 2019, for 4 years. This EI important increase took place
324 starting in 2015, the same year the start of the last ENSO phenomenon was evidenced, this period of time
325 corresponds also to the EP deficit years shown in Figure 3a.

326

327 Figure 5c. shows the ER, this ER has its minimum in 2015-2016 the aforementioned period of time characterized
328 by the last strong ENSO event. differently, the maximum ER is observed in 2010 and 2011, years in which “La
329 Niña” phenomenon took place in South America. Figure 5c shows a net decrease of 4 TWh for ER between 2000
330 and 2020.

331 **4.3. Vulnerability evaluation**

332 **4.3.1 National vulnerability**

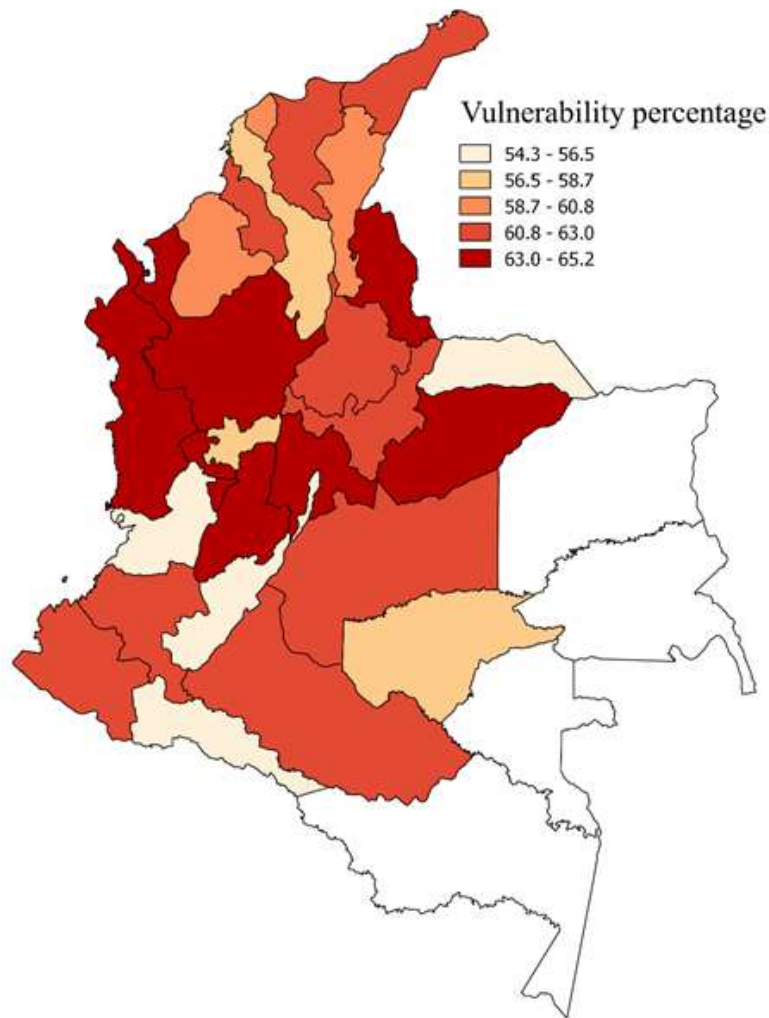
333 To analyze the vulnerability at the national level, the VI was computed using the method proposed in this study.
334 The variables selected based on the PCA and correlation matrix were used for the computation of the VI as
335 suggested in section 2.2.

336

337 A VI of 8.64 was estimated for Colombia based on the data from 2000 to 2019. This index value corresponds to
338 43% of the maximum possible vulnerability ($VI_{max}=20$), e.i. The country has 43% of its maximum possible
339 energy vulnerability to climate change. This percentage represents the vulnerability of SIN regions only in this
340 study.

341 **4.3.2 Regional vulnerability**

342 To analyze the distribution of the vulnerability in the country the VI was calculated for all the departments of
343 Colombia. This distribution allows analyzing the vulnerability in spatial terms. Figure 6 shows the percentage
344 of vulnerability in the departments of Colombia, calculated based on the VI proposed in this study for the period
345 between 2000 and 2019. ZNI regions are not included in the map.



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Figure 6. Vulnerability percentage of the maximum possible estimated by department computed from 2011 to 2018

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To analyze the spatial distribution of the vulnerability, the average percentage of vulnerability was computed considering the values grouped in 3 ways: 1-north/south, 2-east/west, and 3-per natural region (i.e. Amazonia, Andina, Caribe, Orinoquia, and Pacifica). These 5 natural regions correspond to the national planning regions of the country(Natural Regions of Colombia 2021).

The north/south averages obtained were 61.2% and 59.5% for north and south respectively. For the east and west averages, the averages were 60.9% and 60.5% respectively. For the averages considering the regions were: Amazonia: 55.5%, Andina: 61.7%, Caribe: 60.1%, Orinoquia: 61.0%, and Pacifica: 61.1%.

A small difference is observed between the east and west averages (0.4%), the east average is slightly larger than the average for the west. This is due to the distribution of the surface covered by the interconnected areas (SIN)

361 since the SIN areas are balanced in east/west, differently to the difference between north and south which is
362 greater, being the north more vulnerable than the south with an average percentage of vulnerability 1.7% larger.
363

364 The region Andina has the largest average percentage of a vulnerability index that might be linked with the large
365 electricity demand in this region. differently, the Amazonia region has the lowest percentage of vulnerability, a
366 result in agreement with the lower electricity demand of this region. Pacific and Orinoquia regions have similar
367 average percentages of vulnerability, with values 0.6% and 0.7% lower than the Andina region.

368 **5. Conclusions**

369 This study presents a method to evaluate the energy vulnerability to climate change based on a vulnerability
370 index (VI), for this calculation a numerical analysis performed with the PCA method and correlation matrix was
371 performed. The study presents the method to calculate the VI and its implementation using Colombia as a case
372 of study.
373

374 Relationships between the variables linked to the energy system and climate change were identified. Evidence
375 linking climate change and energy vulnerability was observed in the relationships of the analyzed variables
376 (Figure 4), e.g. P is inverse to EI, and T inverse to ER. Additionally, the trends of the studied variables with
377 time show the impact of ENSO and “La Niña” phenomena on the system during the period of time between 2000
378 and 2019 (Figura 3a and Figura 5). This demonstrates that an important risk of energy supply lack in Colombia
379 is linked to hot dry years, and therefore to conditions induced by climate change in the future. This effect also
380 contributes to the estimated vulnerability, e.i. A link between climate change and the increasing energy
381 vulnerability in Colombia was evidenced based on the analysis performed with the variables involved.
382

383 The PCA analysis performed on the variables of the Colombian system allowed us to identify relationships
384 between the variables in clusters 1 and 3, leading to identify a high vulnerability of hydropower-RES-based-
385 systems to climate variation, and therefore to climate change.
386

387 The vulnerability of the energy system of Colombia to climate change was quantified as 43% of its maximum
388 possible at the national SIN scale. The analysis per region was based in the department borderlines of the country
389 SIN areas showing that the higher vulnerability is located in the regions with higher demand (e.g. departments
390 of Andina region), even if they have an important EP infrastructure and are part of SIN. Some regions such as
391 Chocó located at the west of the country on the pacific coast, have a large vulnerability, this can be explained by
392 the lack of EP and transmission infrastructure due to geography and security issues due to the presence of illegal
393 groups.

394 **Acknowledgments**

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407 LR developed the research and wrote the major part of the manuscript

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409 MG wrote part of the manuscript, contributed to the vulnerability calculations and research management

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419 **References**

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