

**THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LAND REFORM AND
CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA 1936-2018**

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ABSTRACT

Why did land reforms attempted in 1936, 1961 and 1994 not lead to more equality, stability, and peace in Colombia? Using a theoretical framework informed by Gramsci's theory of passive revolution, this study examines the origin of inequality and the propagation of conflict in Colombia by exploring the relationship between international political economy, production relations and class conflict surrounding three cases of land reform (1936, 1961 and 1994). I argue that land reforms have failed to address inequality and have exacerbated class conflicts for three interrelated reasons: 1) though campesinos demanded the redistribution of large estates, pro-capitalist land reforms left productive plantations intact and instead promoted access to lands in frontier areas where the state had little effective control over property rights; 2) demands for reforms emerged during 'commodity booms', when a bourgeois-peasant alliance in favour of capitalist expansion was possible, but during phases of subsequent crisis and price collapse, agrarian reforms were coopted by landlord-bourgeois alliances that pushed the consolidation of larger, more 'productive' holdings; 3) the failure of reforms to address popular demands for land contributed to an atmosphere of instability in which reactionary elites used popular unrest as a pretext for repression against opponents of capitalism with the support of international financial and military power. The result has been the intensification of land conflicts and several waves of landlord-led dispossession, popular resistance, and counterinsurgency in the 1940s-50s, 1960s-1970s and 1980s-2000s. Political instability in Colombia is indicative of the dynamics of passive revolution as the case lends itself to a Gramscian analysis of uneven development in the 20th century Latin American context. Colombia's experience shows the limits of "passive revolutionary" land reforms which may unite diverse constituencies under certain conditions, but which leave the material and social foundations of conflict fundamentally unchanged, leaving campesinos vulnerable to shifts in global market conditions. This leads me to the conclusion that there will be no stable peace in Colombia without redistributive land reform. Redistribution has been the demand of the agrarian social movement since the 1930s but has been consistently denied in land reforms during broader processes of passive revolution that favour large-scale corporate farming, natural resource development and the debasement and exploitation of labour through dispossession in a context of unevenly expanding capitalism.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABDP	Air Bridge Denial Program
ANUC	Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos / National Association of Peasant Tenants
APEN	Acción Patriótica Económica Nacional /National Economic Patriotic Action
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia / United Self Defense Forces of Colombia
CED	Committee for Economic Development
CTC	Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia / Colombian Confederation of Workers
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas / Administrative Department of National Statistics
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency (USA)
ELN	Ejercito de Liberación Nacional / National Liberation Army
EPL	Ejercito Popular de Liberación 1967-1991 / Esperanza, Paz y Libertad / Popular Liberation Army / Hope, Peace and Liberty
EXIM	Export-Import Bank (United States)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia 1966-1982; Fuerzas Alternativas Revolucionarias de Colombia 2016-present / Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia / Revolutionary Alternative Forces of Colombia
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejercito del Pueblo 1982-2016 / Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army
FEDECAFÉ	Federación Nacional de Cafeteros / National Federation of Coffee Growers
FEDEGAN	Federación Nacional de Ganaderos / National Stockmen’s Federation
FENSUAGRO	Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria (FENSUAGRO-CUT) / National Federation of Syndicates – Agricultural Unit
FNC	Fondo Nacional Cafetero / National Coffee Fund
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

IFI	International Financial Institution
IGAC	Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi / Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCODER	Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural / Colombian Institute for Rural Development
INCORA	Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria / Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform
IPE	International Political Economy
M-19	Movimiento de 19 de abril / April 19th Movement (urban guerrilla movement)
OAS	Organization of American States
PCC	Partido Comunista Colombiano / Colombian Communist Party
PRT	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores / Revolutionary Workers' Party
PSR	Partido Socialista Revolucionario / Revolutionary Socialist Party
SAC	Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia / Colombian Agricultural Society
UD	Uneven Development
UN	United Nations
UP	Unión Patriótica / Patriotic Union
US	United States of America
UTC	Unión de Trabajadores de Colombia / Union of Workers of Colombia

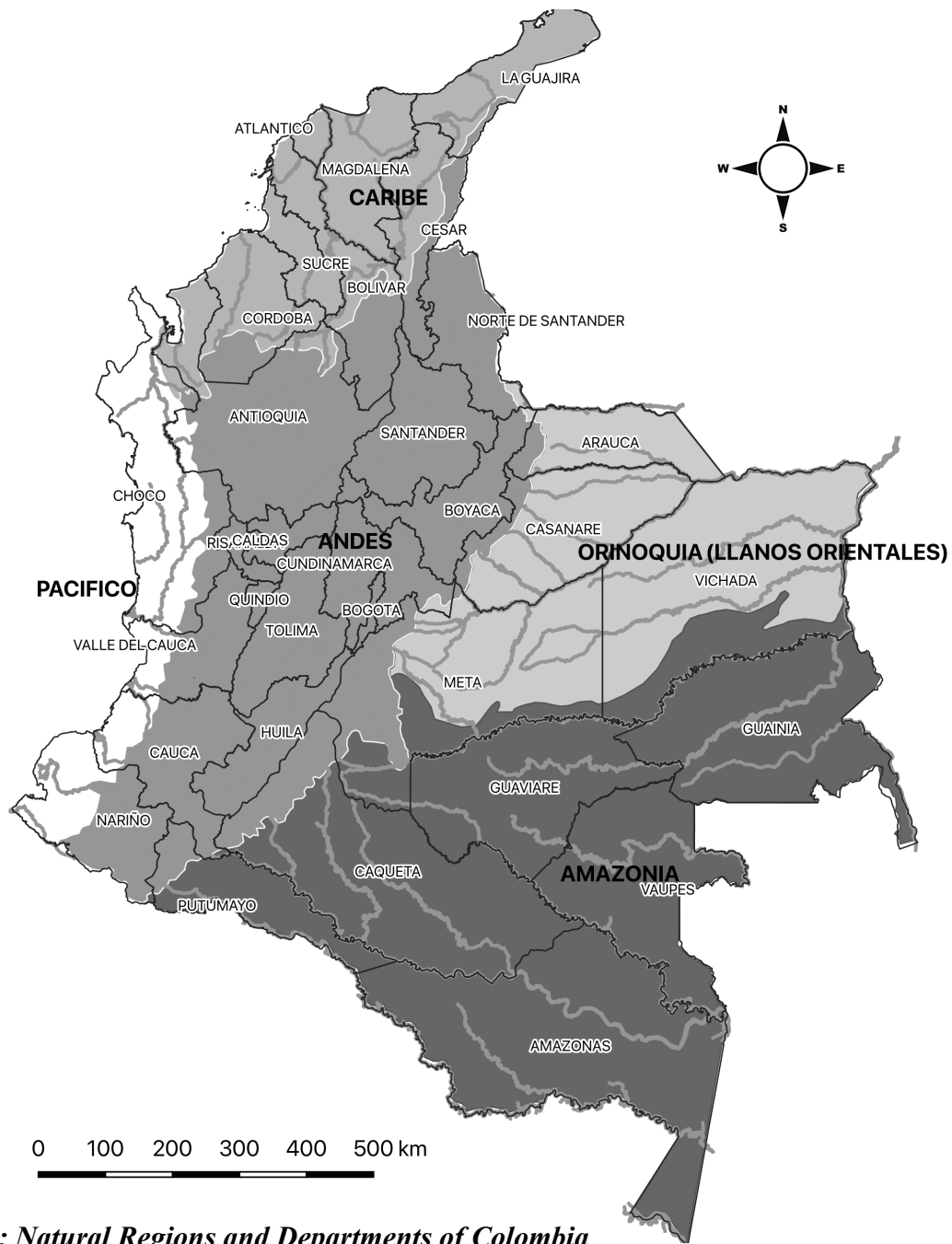


Figure 1: Natural Regions and Departments of Colombia

- Departments
- Ríos principales - Colombia
- Natural Regions (Grey Shade)

WGS 84 EPSG 4326
 Scale on A4 - 1:7,500,000
 Sources: ESRI, DANE
 Instituto Geografico Agustin Codazzi
<https://www.datos.gov.co/>
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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the relationship between uneven capitalist development, passive revolution and violence in Colombia in historical perspective. I depart from the conventional view informed by modernization theory and neoclassical economics that unequal land tenure and violent production relations are products of colonial legacies that require pro-market land reforms to resolve (Currie, 1950; 1966; Deininger, 2011; Deininger and Binswanger, 1999; Eder, 1965; Frankema, 2006; Gonzalez, 1969; Griffin, Khan & Ickowitz, 2002; Grunig, 1969a; 1969b; World Bank, 2008). Instead of colonial or feudal legacies, I argue that inequality in land tenure has been reproduced and intensified on the periphery during phases of growth in commodity production through which conditions for the expansion of capitalist accumulation are violently imposed (Banaji, 1977; Laclau, 2011 [1977]; Mandel, 1975; O'Brien, 2007; Harvey, 2004). From an examination of three historical cases of land reform in Colombia (1936, 1961 and 1994), I argue that inequality in land tenure that prompted class conflict in the 1920s and 1930s has been further aggravated by reforms intended to promote capitalist development and that these pro-capitalist reforms pushed class conflict to the point of war.

Conjunctures of reform generated potential opportunities for the Colombian elite – a heterogeneous mix of landlords, merchants, financiers and industrialists - to form alliances with campesinos to broaden access to land for commodity production, expand domestic agricultural production, and generate internal demand for industrial goods. Instead, during phases of ensuing agricultural crisis (1930-40s, 1970s and 1990s), state policy reinforced landlord and agribusiness interests with the material, ideological and military support of imperial powers. The consequences have been forced displacement of campesinos aimed at the concentration of landed property and the devaluation and exploitation of labour along with armed peasant resistance, state repression and counterinsurgency.

Campesino – literally “people of the fields” - is usually translated into English as “peasant” but as Charles Bergquist points out (1992, 53), in a large body of western and European literature, the peasantry refers to pre-capitalist rural people, distinct from the working class (for a detailed review of this literature see Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2009; Bernstein, 2010). In Colombia, a relatively diverse set of rural workers are often referred to in Spanish as “campesinos” including sharecroppers, tenants or day labourers. Catherine LeGrand writes: “a much debated term, *peasant* in this study is used to designate small rural cultivators who rely on

family labor to produce what they consume. Sharecroppers, service tenants, small proprietors, and frontier settlers would, by this definition, all be called peasants”(1986, 207). More recent definitions of the peasantry recognize the diversity among agrarian working people and their articulation with capitalist development but emphasize their direct relationship to land through labour. Akram-Lodi and Kay write: “a peasant is an agricultural worker whose livelihood is based primarily on having access to land that is either owned or rented, and who uses principally their own labour and the labour of other family members to work that land”(2009, 3).

In the historic development of modern Colombia, large scale dispossession of many small-holders has created a large population of landless rural workers while many campesino families struggle to survive partially from “*micro-fundio*” – tiny plots of land - and supplement their consumption of farm products with wage labour (Kay, 1980; 2001; Suarez Montoya, 2007; Taussig, 1978). Because of the uneven development of capitalism in Colombia, the Colombian “peasantry” is heterogenous. As I use it here, the term “campesino” refers to various groups of rural people, including landless agrarian labourers, smallholders and commodity-producing family farmers. As Bernstein points out, “as a result of class formation there is no single ‘class’ of ‘peasants’ or ‘family farmers’ but rather differentiated classes of small-scale capitalist farmers, relatively successful petty commodity producers and wage labourers”(Bernstein, 2010, 4). In recognition of the class dynamics of agrarian transformations in the peripheral context, I use the term campesinos to refer to rural working people, whether they produce for their own consumption (subsistence peasants), run their own small farms to produce for the market (small scale capitalist farmers) or work the fields for wages (agrarian workers). What they have in common is a degree of direct access to agricultural land which they may use in part for their own subsistence, but they also share a vulnerability to exploitation by landlords and farm managers, expropriation by armed actors, and market shifts due to relative impoverishment vis-à-vis larger landowners.

As this thesis will discuss, dynamics of agrarian change in Colombia have seen the size of the plots of land controlled by campesinos for their own consumption diminish, leaving campesinos with very little land, forcing many to join the labour market (Restrepo, 2002; Kalmanovitz, 1996; Grajales, 2011). One consequence of this process has been the potential emergence of a campesino class identity around an agrarian working-class interest (Bergquist 1992, Zamosc, 1986; Torres, 1970[1963]). However, in the unevenly developed countryside,

fragmented by geography, productive sector, and political partisan loyalties, Colombian agrarian social movements have largely been unable to articulate a unified working class interest that transcends sector, region and the urban-rural divide (Hylton, 2014).

In this thesis I explore the consequences of pro-capitalist agrarian reforms for levels of inequality, political instability and violence directed at working people in Colombia - campesinos. As components of passive revolutions designed to mobilize state power to impose capitalist subjectivity from above, pro-capitalist agrarian reforms exacerbate inequality, generate violence directed at rural working people, and trigger resistance among campesinos. Passive revolution will be defined and discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 below. I use the term to describe a specific process of alliance formation and contestation among campesinos and rural workers on the one hand, and bourgeois and landed elites on the other, in peripheral phases of capitalist expansion. Passive revolution theorizes how transformations of production relations occur through processes of cooptation and repression during moments of crisis. Passive revolutions are contradictory processes featuring “revolution-restoration” whereby state promotion of capitalist development tends to preserve the existing power relations and hierarchies within the state and society, even as the economic basis for this power is altered following moments of expansion, then crisis (Bieler and Morton, 2018, 11; Gramsci, 1971, 57-58). A passive revolution is a capitalist transformation of the economy through state action without a full political revolution. By blocking the revolutionary potential of agrarian reforms that could redistribute concentrated property and empower small farmers, pro-capitalist reforms in processes of passive revolution tend to downplay popular demands and exacerbate class conflict, rural violence and inequality.

This thesis contributes to the literature on conflict in Colombia by offering in-depth historical case studies of the antecedents and consequences of three phases of land reform, including rising inequality, capitalist expansion, and conflict. This expands the scope of recent studies of land tenure in Colombia which tend to focus on market-led reforms of the 1990s and 2000s (Alban, 2011; Albertus & Kaplan, 2012; Berry, 2002; Borrás Jr., 2003; Thomson, 2011). My approach is informed by historical materialist theory, particularly Gramscian international political economy (IPE) (Cox, 1993[1983]; 1987; Gill, 1991; 2002; 2003; Short, 2007; Allinson and Anievas, 2010; Bieler and Morton, 2018; Morton, 2018; Morton, 2007; van der Pijl, 1998). My thesis applies Gramscian concepts to explain the persistence of inequality and violent social

relations in rural Colombia, not only through the lens of hegemony, which has been largely absent in Colombian domestic politics, but rather through the dynamics of peripheral passive revolution and uneven development (Gramsci, 1971; Morton, 2007; 2018; Cox, 1987; Hesketh, 2017; Bieler and Morton, 2018; Webber, 2016; Short, 2015). The thesis is in part a response to the call for neo-Gramscian theory to move beyond the North Atlantic domain and instead focus on peripheral contexts where violence, coercion and domination, rather than hegemony, characterize production relations (Persaud, 2016, 549-50; Bieler and Morton, 2018, 10).

Gramsci's formulation of passive revolution, I argue, explains the failure of Colombian Liberals to consolidate a bourgeois/small farmer alliance surrounding the 1936 land reform and the subsequent reaction by landlords in the violence of the 1940s and 1950s. The concept of passive revolution provides a way to reconceptualize the motives for the mid-century *Violencia* as a process of landlord retaliation against the coffee farmers' gains of the 1920s and 30s (see Bergquist, 1992; Fals-Borda, 1965; 1967). From this angle, violence is the ultimate expression of the failure of hegemony – what Hobsbawm calls a failed social revolution (1963, 246) - and was the reassertion of landlord power over capitalist modernization (Kalmanovitz, 1996). However, to Hobsbawm's and Kalmanovitz' take on *la Violencia*, I add that the international dimension of US material and ideological support enabled an allied landlord-bourgeois class to reassert its power over agrarian capitalist transformation in the late 1950s. This view refutes the idea that *la Violencia* was simply an attempt at the re-feudalization of rural relations (Posada, 1969), a bi-partisan conflict reminiscent of nineteenth century civil wars (Bushnell, 1993, 204), or an irrational outpouring of collective terror that defies study (for a summary of this argument see Peñaranda, 1992, 294). Rather *La Violencia* was the consequence of a passive revolution that involved the use of state power to assert allied *capitalist* landlord and bourgeois class power over rural production following a period of crisis, mass revolt and the expansion of capitalist relations.

Passive revolution continued in the post-war period of US (North-Atlantic) hegemony on the periphery in the developmental state (Cox 1980; 1987).¹ I adapt Robert Cox's framework to

¹ Throughout the thesis, I use the term “peripheral developmental state” to refer to what Cox called the “neo-mercantilist developmental state.” This is the institutional form of the dependent “southern” state within the capitalist, embedded-liberal international order in the post-war period that imposed modernization of production relations with the support of the US hegemon. This relatively weak peripheral state focuses economic policy on controlling imports and exports to selectively promote national economic growth in the absence of a dynamic internal industrial and agricultural sector. “Neomercantilist developmentalism opens a wide sphere of political appropriation and disposition of resources within an economic system that remains linked with capitalist accumulation at the world level, i.e., through remission of profits by foreign direct investment and by servicing of

explain the dynamics of Colombia's second attempt at land reform in the 1960s. The Colombian state continued to promote development through indebtedness and sought foreign aid and investment to prop up large-scale agribusiness rather than promote pro-poor rural development policies in the era of US hegemony, the internationalization of production, and the Alliance for Progress. With access to foreign loans, transnational class affinity for the internationalization of agriculture, and ideological justification from modernization theory, Colombian elites mobilized counterinsurgency to repress campesino demands for land during the "green revolution."

For the more recent conjuncture, Stephen Gill's concept of disciplinary neoliberalism and the new constitutionalism offer insights into why pro-market reforms failed to resolve Colombia's unequal and conflict-prone rural sector in the 1990s during the globalization of neoliberal capital accumulation (Gill, 2002; Gill & Cutler, 2014). By adopting neoliberal and new constitutional reforms, the Colombian elite was able to avail of US financial, ideological and military power to counter popular demands for land, repress the insurgency and prop up its tenuous claims to legitimacy. Moving beyond hegemony then, this thesis applies the Gramscian concepts of passive revolution, the peripheral developmental state, and disciplinary neoliberalism to elucidate the failure of land reforms and the emergence of conflict in Colombia in a context of uneven development.² This introductory chapter outlines in general terms the problematic of violence, inequality and uneven capitalist development in Colombia and identifies some of the main gaps in the literature on the Colombian conflict that the thesis seeks to address.

The Problematic: Inequality & Violence in Colombia

Colombia has long been one of the most conflict-prone societies in the world. From the Wars of Independence in the early nineteenth century to the mid-1890s, it is estimated that 49,300 Colombians died in battle (McGreevey, 1971, 88). The phase of intra-elite and bipartisan civil war culminated in the War of the Thousand Days that left an estimated 100,000 dead from 1899 to 1902 (ibid). Colombia was marred by devastating acts of collective violence between

foreign debt"(Cox, 1987, 232). Cox adds that the impetus of development (of the productive forces) in this peripheral state comes from external capital and technology, rather than endogenous or domestic industrialization. Due to the potentially confusing use of the term "neomercantilist" – is the hegemon neomercantilist or the vassal state? – I have chosen to deploy the term peripheral developmental state. This term describes the state's relative status in the world economy, the accumulation and growth strategies it pursued, and its periodization (1950s to 1980s) before it is replaced by the disciplinary neoliberal state. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

² Each of these terms – passive revolution, peripheral developmental state and disciplinary neoliberalism will be defined and discussed in the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 1.

civilians in the middle of the twentieth century (1946 to 1957) when an estimated 200,000 people were murdered (Oquist, 1980, xi). After decades of civil war from the 1960s to 2012 during which there were 1,055,549 murders, 181,291 disappearances and 8,175,000 people forcibly displaced (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018), Colombians are implementing an uneasy peace process between the state, paramilitary forces and leftist-rebel groups (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2016; United Nations, 2018). As I will demonstrate in this dissertation, the prospects for a sustainable peace will likely come down to the way the state implements redistribution and restitution of lands stolen from campesinos during the armed conflict.

Rather than a classic civil war between standing armies, in Colombia's case, much of the twentieth-century violence was perpetrated by irregular armed forces against civilians, the conflict between rebels and the state was mostly a low-intensity war fought on the margins of society, and there is a large element of criminality which obscures the links between capitalism, the state and violence (Kaldor, 2013; Peñaranda, 1992; Bergquist, 1992; Sanchez, 1992; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2001; 2005; Guerrero & Mond, 2001). Indeed, the violence blurs lines between the economic and political, state and civil society. Yet much of the peace and conflict literature on Colombia has been informed by the 'feasibility model' that suggests financial motives, terrain and the weakness of the central state have created conditions in which insurgency based on the drug trade, kidnapping and gangsterism is profitable (Collier, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; McDougall, 2009; Ross, 2004; for a critique of the feasibility model see Thomson, 2011). The feasibility model uses a rational actor approach to explain the motives for war common in neo-classical economics but fails to explain the historical origins, emergence and maintenance of the Colombian conflict which began decades before the cocaine trade made insurgency profitable (Flores, 2014, 6).

Conventional security studies on Colombia ignore power and class in the analysis of security threats posed by non-state actors without taking seriously the historic antecedents for the conflict (Manwaring, 2002; Lujala, 2009). Other explanations for the prevalence of conflict downplay economic and structural motives, instead emphasizing purely cultural explanations (Waldmann, 2007). Rather than simple economic approaches, on the one hand, or cultural approaches to violence on the other, a framework is required that incorporates material interests with ideological sources of violence in the proper historic and socioeconomic context. Further, the international dimension of violence cannot be ignored considering the long history of

imperialism in relations between the US and Colombia (Rippy, 1931; Ocampo, 1975; Fernández, 1979; Fernández & Ocampo, 1974; 1975; Chomsky, 2008; Brittain, 2005; Bergquist, 1996; Galli, 1975; 1978).

In the literature on Colombia, among the explanations for violence is the high degree of economic inequality, particularly due to the concentration of agricultural property (Ioris & Ioris, 2018, 157; Frankema, 2006; Villarreal Escallón, 2020). Colombia ranks consistently near the top of the world's listings of Gini coefficients for income distribution (World Bank, 2018). In the agrarian sector, estimates of the Gini coefficient of Colombian land distribution vary between 8.805 and 0.864, depending on the formula used and the dataset (see DANE, 2016; Deininger and Olinto, 1999; Frankema, 2006; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a; IGAC, 2012; Ibáñez & Muñoz, 2010). These levels of inequality in land distribution are not entirely unique in Latin America – Colombia's rural land distribution is comparable to that of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Ecuador (Grain, 2021; FAO, 2021). But rural inequality in Colombia has consistently been accompanied by higher levels of violence and political instability. “In Colombia, more than in other countries, violence and injustice have been tightly linked and have clearly combined to contribute to the inequality of access to land and to the inequality of income” (Berry, 2017, 278). If violence and inequality are inextricably linked, agrarian reform seems like a remedy for both (Villarreal Escallón, 2020). Yet, “attempts of successive governments to advance agrarian reforms have largely been ineffective due to corruption and limited resources. In recent years, the focus has shifted from land reform to agribusiness-based rural development” (Ioris & Ioris, 2018, 157). The persistence of inequality, its link with violence, and the failure of state actions such as land reforms to redistribute land beg the question of the source of inequality.

Particularly among modernization theorists in the 1950s to 1970s, but also among neoliberal and neo-populist agrarian studies scholars in the 1990s and 2000s, there is a marked tendency to attribute the concentration of property and social inequality to colonial legacies and the prevalence of pre-capitalist production relations (Beyer, 1961; Fluharty, 1957; Machado, 2009; Lambert, 1986 [1967]; Rostow, 1960; Griffin et al., 2002; Adams, 1966, Smith, 1976; Vertinsky, Geffner & Fox, 1972). The continued existence of the “dual economy” - what they thought was a colonial legacy of landlord-peasant agriculture - appeared archaic to Modernization theorists; pre-modern landlords were only interested in social status obtained through ground rents and valued political control over tenants above productivity. Meanwhile

peasants were unable to achieve their potential for wealth creation as small scale, commodity producing, capitalist farmers due to ignorance, cultural backwardness or the violence of the colonial estate system (Lambert, 1986 [1967]; Rostow, 1960). Confronted with the empirical reality of concentrated property and unequal production relations, modernization theorists argued that the dual-tenure system was feudal and required capitalist modernization to put land in the hands of the most efficient commercial producers and enable rural progress (Currie, 1966). What the modernization theorists failed to consider was how the component parts of the dual system, peasant and landlord production, were mutually tied in the expansion of commodity production for the world market.

Explanations for inequality in land tenure that place too much emphasis on the legacy of colonial land tenure patterns are flawed since these were not homogenous and have changed significantly over the centuries (Bulmer-Thomas, 2014, 13; Adams, 1966, 43). The characterization of the “dual-tenure” system as feudal or semi-feudal ignores the historic development of agrarian capitalism in the former colonial countries which saw subsistence peasant production functionally subjugated within commodity producing estates and broader capitalist social formations (Banaji, 1977, 34-35). LeGrand argues that Colombia’s dual economy, the resurgence of labour repression, the great concentration of land and the misery of the smallholders are actually products of the expansion of export-commodity production from 1850 to 1930 (LeGrand, 1986, xii). LeGrand’s critique suggests that there had already been waves of capitalist development much earlier than most modernization scholars of the 1950s and 1960s realized. The expansion of the dual land tenure system and the heterogeneity of Colombian production relations, rather than a colonial legacy, was the result of the process of uneven capitalist development on a world scale from 1850 to 1930 (LeGrand, 1986; Bergquist, 1986[1978]; 1986; Thorp, 1998; Hough & Bair, 2012).

Rather than feudal or pre-capitalist legacies, World Systems theorists argued that Latin American economies were tightly integrated with global commodity production and the expansion of capitalism in the colonial period (Frank, 1986[1969]; Wallerstein, 2011 [1983]). The origins of inequality were found in the subjugation of periphery to the metropole through long distance trade which allowed those from the core capitalist economies to take advantage of depressed labour costs and peripheral underdevelopment (Amin, 1976). To overcome dependency on loans and imported manufactures, peripheral societies would have to pursue

autonomous national development strategies. However, dependency theorists and world systems scholars who sought international explanations for peripheral underdevelopment tended to overemphasize commodity exchange rather than production relations in their explanations for peripheral inequality (Wallerstein, 2011 [1983]; Frank, 1986 [1969]). What was missing was a way to study how classes from different modes of production interacted in often contradictory ways within a unified world system that was both dominated by capitalists and yet not uniformly capitalist (LaClau, 1986 [1971]; Banaji, 1977, 34).

The persistence of unequal land tenure patterns and its relation to violent conflict over land is therefore not simply the result of colonial legacies; and yet pre-capitalist subsistence production and coercion of primary producers (*campesinos*) continue, even in export commodity production, particularly in the early stages of capitalist development (Hart, 1986, 201; Foster-Carter, 1978, 56). Structuralist approaches that explain uneven development due to centre-peripheral dynamics of capital accumulation deny working people in Colombia the credit they deserve in shaping their own place in the society and economy (LeGrand, 1986, xii). On the other hand, Colombia's subordinate integration with the world capitalist system has shaped the accumulation strategies of landlords, entrepreneurs and *campesinos* - including the use of violence - and has constrained the development and security policies chosen by the state. An explanation for violence and inequality in Colombia, as I develop here, must identify the political and economic forces, both domestically and internationally, that shape land tenure, capital accumulation and conflict.

To fill these theoretical gaps, I am offering a detailed empirical-historical account to explain the emergence of structural inequalities in agrarian property relations in Colombia and to link these patterns to state-sponsored violence, capital accumulation and armed conflict. My original contribution to the literature examines historical scholarship, archival information and primary government statistics on land tenure that reveal the prevalence of inequality and the instrumental use of violence in structuring this inequality through various phases of world order characterized by uneven development. My extensive use of primary sources including archives of Colombian political debates and government statistics on land tenure and the victims of violence, mostly from Spanish language sources, brings to light for a broader audience the dynamics of violent accumulation of lands in Colombia (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018; DANE 2016; IGAC, 2012; Martinez, 1939a;1939b). My explanation also elucidates the

consequences of various attempts at reform for land tenure and conflict. Further, I take into account how *ideas* about modernization influence the content of land reforms and their consequences.

Despite its ahistoricism, lack of empirical grounding and Anglo-American cultural bias, the modernization paradigm nonetheless shaped economic development and land reform policy in Colombia from the 1950s to the 1970s (Currie, 1950; Edwards, 1980; Egginton & Ruhl, 1974). Those who deployed these theories erroneously assumed all societies transition through the same phases of development from feudalism to capitalism and denied agency of subordinate classes (Banuri, 1990a; 1990b). Successive Colombian governments, acting on the advice of foreign advisers, repeatedly enacted reforms to promote productivity and efficiency in land use that aggravated inequality in land tenure, undermined the rights of family farmers, and intensified class conflict and displacement (for example Currie, 1950; Eder, 1965).

In response to demands from campesinos for land, and often on the advice of foreign advisers to modernize agriculture, land reforms were attempted in Colombia at several conjunctures (1936-1944, 1961-1973, and 1991-1994). As the empirical chapters will show, there was both an escalation in social conflict to the point of war, *and* intensification of inequality in land holdings in the years following reform attempts (see Palacios, 2011; Safford and Palacios, 2002; Machado, 2009; Mondragón, 2006; Londoño et al. 2016). Furthermore, these periods of reform coincided with shifts in the world order. One of the main contributions of this dissertation to the literature on the Colombian conflict is the focus on the international sources of the conflict in ideational and material terms.

Land reform was attempted in the 1930s, during the world economic crisis, but was effectively repealed during World War II, only to be followed by extreme civil violence in the 1940s and 1950s (*La Violencia*) when hundreds of thousands of Colombians were killed (Oquist, 1980; Roldán, 2002; Sánchez, 1992). Land reform was on the agenda again during the Cold War and was central to the US-led Alliance for Progress during the period of US hegemony in the west. However, the 1961 land reforms failed to address inequality and democratize access to land (Reinhardt 1983; Eder 1965; Janssen and Ruiz de Londoño 1994; Grunig 1969b, 1969a; Vertinsky et al. 1972). The reforms were partially abandoned in 1973 during the “green revolution” and at the onset of the world economic crisis (Albà, 2011, 348; Palacios, 2011, 225). The failure of the 1961 land reform was followed by a reactivation of communist peasant

guerrillas who mobilized and sustained an armed force in defense of campesino interests for decades as mass murder and repression continued through the 1970s and 80s (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004; Brittain, 2010; Avilés, 2006; 2010; Kay, 2001).

The growth in illegal drugs production, the expansion of popular insurgency and landlord/drug-lord/paramilitary violence threatened to destroy Colombia in the 1980s (Sánchez, 1992; Saab and Taylor, 2009). In response, Colombia enacted constitutional reforms that included pro-market land use legislation (1991-1994). The reforms, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and in an emerging neoliberal world order, once again, favoured large landlords and were followed by an escalation in the scale, intensity and effects of the armed conflict as rebel armies extended their presence throughout the country, the army and counterinsurgency forces ramped up operations and millions were forcibly displaced (Bergquist et al. 2001; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a; 2010b; Borras Jr et al., 2012).

What were the objectives of these land reforms and why did armed conflict appear to intensify following periods of reform? Within the modernization paradigm, land reform is proposed as the means to end landlord-peasant conflict by providing access to land for “entrepreneurs.” This would liberate peasants, expand free labour markets and establish a class of commercial farmers who would ostensibly create internal demand for the “take-off” of endogenous industrialization. However, despite attempts at land reform in the 1930s, 1960s and 1990s, property remains more concentrated in Colombia than at any time in its history and arguably more than anywhere else in the world. The task for the dissertation is therefore twofold: 1) to explain the sources of long-standing social conflict in Colombia and 2) to explain why land reform has failed to address (and even aggravated) struggles over land in consideration of international political economic forces.

Overview of the Argument: Passive Revolution, Uneven Development & Agrarian Reform

I argue that to understand conflict in Colombia, it is necessary to comprehend the historic processes that gave rise to unequal land tenure patterns in a context of uneven development and passive revolution. Passive revolution will be defined and discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 below, but for now I use the term to describe the process of alliance formation and contestation among bourgeois and landed elites to transform production relations to promote capitalist development without altering the existing power relations and hierarchies within the

state and society (Bieler and Morton, 2018, 11; Gramsci, 1971, 57-58). A key element of passive revolution is the cumulative effect of violence to structure property relations and promote conditions for capital accumulation.

At key moments of conjunctural crisis in the international system, the Colombian oligarchy has consistently pushed for agrarian capitalist development and sought foreign investment to modernize the 'haciendas' while ignoring workers' demands to democratize land tenure. Therefore, I ask, in the historical record in Colombia, what are the relationships between: a) Inequality in land tenure and violence? b) Land reform and accumulation in the international political-economic context? and thus c) violence and international capital accumulation? My central thesis statement is as follows: Although demands for land reform in the 1930s, 1960s, and 1990s have come from the *campesino* movement and factions of the political elite have shown a willingness to entertain land reforms as a means to promote rural order, in their implementation such land reforms have in fact further contributed to conditions of unequal land tenure and thus led to on-going conflict, for three inter-related reasons:

- 1) though campesinos demanded the redistribution of large estates, pro-capitalist land reforms left productive plantations intact and to the extent they offered access to lands it was only in frontier areas where the state had little effective control over property rights, thereby aggravating emerging conflicts over land and labour;
- 2) demands for reforms emerged during 'commodity booms', when a bourgeois-peasant alliance in favour of capitalist expansion was possible, but during phases of subsequent crisis and price collapse, agrarian reform was coopted by landlord-bourgeois alliances that pushed the consolidation of larger, more 'productive' holdings;
- 3) the failure of reforms to address popular demands for land contributed to an atmosphere of instability in which reactionary elites use popular unrest as a pretext for repression with the support of international financial and military power.

As I will elaborate in more detail in Chapter 1 below, the theory of passive revolution explains how land reforms have failed to produce greater levels of equality and have even exacerbated instability because the theory accounts for the role of alliance formation among industrial and landlord interests, class conflict between agrarian workers and elites, and the role of international capital in a context of uneven development. Rather than a concept that explains everything and

therefore nothing (Callinicos, 2010), the theory, as I use it here, is offered as an explanation for the propagation of violence and inequality in Colombia, accounting for the failure of land reforms within a context of uneven capitalist development.

In the historical/empirical chapters (2-4), I will argue that state-sanctioned violence has long been a tool for the expansion of capital accumulation. State promotion of capitalist transformation, by reinforcing private property rights, encouraged the monopolization of lands for agribusiness, reinforced inequality, and generated further social conflict (Berry, 2017, 278). Violence and resistance are therefore features of contemporary Colombian social relations because of Colombia's uneven integration with the world capitalist system which favoured the large scale accumulation of land. Colombian landlords were able to form alliances with industrial and financial interests in Colombia to shape state policy in favour of large-scale industrial agriculture in order to expand the labour market and discipline the rural and urban working classes, largely because they were able to maintain the financial, military and ideological support of international capital. Tendencies to use violence in capital accumulation and popular resistance to this violence have been aggravated by the failure of land reforms to address rural inequality. In this light, land reforms themselves are examined in more detail and revealed as components of passive revolution designed to mobilize broader support for capitalist modernization while reinforcing existing hierarchies and inequality. As such, until effective land redistribution occurs, violence will likely continue.

Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical framework which is grounded in Gramsci's theory of passive revolution as an explanation for the tendency toward violent class conflicts in late-developing, peripheral capitalism. Next, I outline Cox's (neo) Gramscian approach to international political economy to develop a framework to analyze the emergence of passive revolutions at various historical stages, including nineteenth century liberal state formation, fascism in the 1930s to 1950s, the peripheral developmental state and the disciplinary neoliberal state. From Cox's analytical framework, I draw three levels of analysis – production relations, power/state and world order – to identify the material, ideational and coercive forces that shape accumulation strategies and constraints on agrarian reform in Colombia

This framework takes into account how uneven development at the level of domestic and international production relations create conditions for reforms but also constrain the substantive

possibilities for reform. I argue that the pro-market approach to land reform is at odds with actually existing conditions where violence has often been a tool for capitalist expansion. The first chapter concludes with a summary of my analytical framework that considers the level of agrarian production relations, power relations in the state and world order in the description of conditions of conflict and resistance prior to land reforms (1920s to 1936; 1950s to 1961; 1980s to 1994). The analytical framework explores the various ideological positions and conflicts between classes in the process of reform (1936, 1961 and 1994). Then the framework allows me to analyze the consequences of the reform process in ensuing years for production relations including land tenure patterns, authority, and conflict (1940s to 1950s; 1960s to 1970s and 1990s to 2012). As the historical-empirical chapters 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate, following phases of uneven expansion of market relations, demands for reform have been submerged in the subsequent processes of passive revolution as the established order is “secured” against popular demands for land with the help of foreign capital and military power.

Through the historical/empirical chapters, I examine the interrelationships between world order, power and production vis-à-vis three concerns:

- a) How global political-economic conditions shape accumulation strategies in Colombia;
- b) How the specific interests of class factions shape state policy in Colombia
- c) How the consequences of ‘passive revolutionary’ land reforms have contributed to the dynamics of capital accumulation and conflict.

Each of the historical/empirical chapters provides context by exploring the conditions that shape the emergence of demands for reform at the level of world order, power and production.

In Chapter 2, during a non-hegemonic world order, Colombia became increasingly integrated within the US imperial orbit based on the combination of smallholder and landlord-peasant coffee production. The 1930s economic crisis was a conjuncture of relative isolation in which opportunities emerged for campesinos to ally with Liberal petty-bourgeois, industrial and financial elites in the push for agrarian reform in 1936. **Domestic hegemony failed to materialize** as landlords reasserted their power during the onset of US hegemony and post-war ideological opposition to communism. Any gains that smallholders acquired in the post 1936 reform moment were lost as landlords and mercenaries asserted their dominance over rural land and the state aligned behind the landlord-interests (**passive revolution**) with support from the

US. The result was industrial and agrarian capitalist expansion alongside **mass murder, displacement and concentration of coffee land** in the 1940s and 1950s.

Chapter 3 describes how the hegemonic US world order under the Alliance for Progress held promise for a domestic peace process. Colombian Liberals passed reforms in 1961 to promote access to land among family farmers; while some family farmers and a middle class of peasant capitalists made gains in the ensuing years, over the longer term the pro-campesino aspects of the reform were undermined by **peripheral developmentalist** policies that supported large-scale commercial farming. The expansion of large-scale capitalist farming undermined small farmers' land rights and prompted mass displacement and urbanization without industrialization. This encouraged campesino radicalism and growth of armed insurgency although the radical movement remained fragmented and regionally diverse. Land concentration and violence were exacerbated by US support for counterinsurgency.

In chapter 4 in the conjuncture of US supremacy and neoliberal globalization, as Colombia faced a security, economic and political crisis due to the rise of narcotics gangs, concentration of property and repression of the democratic movement, **new-constitutional changes** instituted **neoliberal reforms** including **market-led agrarian reforms** (1991, 1994-96). Rather than enhancing access to land among the rural poor, the reforms enabled dispossession on a massive scale by paramilitary groups working for domestic and foreign capital. The final phase of **agrarian counter-reform** saw US imperial, financial and ideological power mobilized against the FARC (**disciplinary neoliberalism**) and in support of conditions to promote neoliberal capital accumulation in Colombia. Over a million people died and 8 million were forcibly displaced during this latter phase of reform and reaction. This case illustrates the devastating consequences of passive revolutions to expand transnational capitalist accumulation.

The concluding chapter explores the implications of ongoing violence and the lack of resolution of the problem of rural inequality for the peace process. I suggest that without a sustained commitment to redistributive land reform, agrarian workers' interests will be once again submerged by efforts to consolidate transnational capital accumulation. This implies, to the pessimism of the intellect, that there will be no peace without land reform.

The task for the dissertation is therefore twofold: 1) to explain the sources of long-standing social conflict in Colombia through the theory of passive revolution 2) to explain why

land reform has failed to address (and possibly aggravated) the struggles over land in consideration of international political economic forces.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis draws theoretical and methodological inspiration from Neo-Gramscian International Political Economy (IPE), particularly from the work of Robert Cox. Cox argues that historical materialist theory offers social researchers the following elements: 1) a dialectical method of explanatory critique that identifies contradictions between theory and history (the method); 2) a philosophical position on the historical necessity of the unity between objective conditions (structures) and subjective forces (class agency) within state-civil society complexes that make transformative political action possible; 3) a description of the historical specificity of capitalist social relations; and 4) a theory of how the uneven territorial development of capitalism shapes production relations at the periphery of the world economy (through imperialism) (Cox, 1981; Gill, 2003). Neo-Gramscian International Political Economy (IPE) provides a historical periodization of the world capitalist economy and explores how dominant modes of production and ideologies influence production relations across politically bounded jurisdictions, creating opportunities and constraints for peripheral economic transformation (see Cox, 1981, 215-216; Gill, 2003, 17-18). In Chapter 1 below, I present in more detail the Neo-Gramscian IPE framework, concepts and definitions including passive revolution, uneven development, peripheral developmental state formation, and disciplinary neoliberalism. For the moment, I would like to clarify the methodological approach that shaped this dissertation.

The historical materialist method of social research – the explanatory critique - involves the dialectical examination of contradictory evidence in light of theory to identify possibilities for social change. A contradiction, according to David Harvey, “arises when two seemingly opposed forces are simultaneously present within a particular situation, an entity, a process or event” (2014, 1). As applied to the study of history, “dialectic is the potential for alternative forms of development arising from the confrontation of opposed social forces in any concrete historical situation” (Cox, 1981, 215). The dialectic method identifies contradictions between theory and empirical evidence and attempts to resolve them through the reformulation of the historical narrative. Moving from theory to praxis, the method points out ways for actually existing social forces to resolve contradictions in favour of emancipation.

In contrast to a problem-solving theory, which examines a narrow range of criteria in a fixed set of variables and parameters, “the critical approach leads toward the construction of a larger picture of the whole of which the initially contemplated part is just one component, and seeks to understand the processes of change in which both parts and whole are involved” (Cox, 1981, 208-209). Using the dialectical method, I develop an explanatory critique of concrete historical instances of agrarian reform. Starting from the observation of contradictions between theory and historical reality at a particular conjuncture, I look back in attempt to explain how the situation came to be. Through the examination of the contradictions and possibilities in the production of the land reform conjuncture, I take a critical look ahead to the transformative and ethical possibilities implied in the resolution of the contradiction.

The core contradiction this thesis seeks to explain is the question of how land reform, which was ostensibly designed to address inequality, historically appears to have exacerbated inequality and aggravated class conflict. The dissonance between the theory of land reform and its outcomes may be resolved through an alternative theoretical explanation for the land reform process. In this case, viewed through the theory of passive revolution, pro-capitalist land reforms were not designed to redistribute land but rather they were intended to alter production relations in favour of agrarian capitalism, thus generating further contradictions, inequality and conflict, exacerbating the grievances of those who demanded reform in the first place.

The dialectic method and explanatory critique can be described as part of the tradition of critical theory and transformative mixed methods research (see Cresswell, 2014; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009). Analyzed through the theory of passive revolution, the sources I use to construct the explanatory critique of violence and inequality in Colombia include archival records, government reports, data sets on land tenure and economic indicators and secondary academic literature. Each of these categories of sources is described in more detail here.

Archival Sources

Colombian archival sources provide context that enable the identification of ideological currents and reveal the publicly stated motivations of various class forces involved in land reform processes. The transcripts of congressional debates on land reform in Colombia’s Congress and Senate, speeches by President Lopez Pumarejo, and op-ed pieces written at the time by politicians involved in the debates, were compiled in:

- Martinez E., Marco A. 1939a. Regimen de Tierras en Colombia: Antecedentes de la Ley 200 de 1936 ‘Sobre Regimen de Tierras’ y Decretos Reglamentarios. Tomo I. Bogotá: Publicaciones del Ministerio de la Economia Nacional.
- Martinez E., Marco A. 1939b. Regimen de Tierras en Colombia: Antecedentes de la Ley 200 de 1936 ‘Sobre Regimen de Tierras’ y Decretos Reglamentarios. Tomo II. Bogotá: Publicaciones del Ministerio de la Economia Nacional.

These archival records of the congressional debates have been extensively reviewed and form the basis for the discussion of the conjuncture of 1933 to 1936 in Chapter 2. This dissertation represents, therefore, a summary of a large body of archival information on Colombian land reform from the congressional records of the 1930s that has yet to be published in English.

Additional archival sources consulted for Chapter 3 were from the John F. Kennedy papers. State Department memos, communiqués and diplomatic communications pertaining to the Alliance for Progress and John F. Kennedy’s meetings with Colombian diplomats provide key insights into the shared support for agrarian modernization between US Democrats and Colombian Liberals (John F. Kennedy Papers [JFK Papers], 2018 (1963)).

Additional Primary Sources

Several other primary sources form the basis for the discussion of the land reform processes in the 1930s, 1960s and 1990s. The original Spanish-language texts of the laws passed by the Congress of Colombia pertaining to land reform and public lands law were consulted, including Law 47 of 1926, Law 200 of 1936, Law 100 of 1944, Law 135 of 1961, Law 1 of 1968, Law 21 of 1991, and Law 160 of 1944 (see Primary Sources section of the bibliography). The 1991 Constitution of Colombia was also reviewed closely and summarized in Chapter 4 (Ministerio de Justicia, 1991). The text of the final peace accord in 2016 is referenced in the concluding chapter (Oficina de Alto Comisionada Para La Paz, 2012; 2016). International agreements and accords have been reviewed and cited, including the Act of Bogota (Organization of American States, 1960) and the Charter of Punta del Este (Organization of American States, 1961).

Reports by government departments also provide qualitative and quantitative information about aspects of the agricultural sector in general and the coffee sector specifically. Some of these sources are Colombian, including reports by the National Federation of Coffee Growers

(FEDECAFE 1933; 2018). A report by the Attorney General of Colombia in 2015 provided an assessment of the transformation of Colombian agriculture and the role of INCODER following the presidency of Alvaro Uribe (Procuraduría General de la Nación, 2015). Other primary economic reports are from international institutions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL, 1958). Reports by the International Monetary Fund provided both information and context for the discussion of Colombia's economy in the 1990s and 2000s (International Monetary Fund, 2006). The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia has released several reports on the status of the peace process since 2016 (United Nations, 2018).

Texts of speeches by prominent politicians provide another primary source for the thesis, specifically speeches by Jorge Eliecer Gaitán (1945), John F. Kennedy (1961), Alphonso Lopez Pumarejo (López 1945 in Fluharty, 1957, 77), Alberto Lleras Camargo (Lleras Camargo 1958 in Karl, 2017b, 3) and Carlos Lleras Restrepo (2012[1989]). Former president López Michelsen's memoir, written in 2003, was consulted to identify some of the ideological orientations of one of the key figures in Colombian land reform from the 1930s to the 1990s (López Michelsen, 2003).

Data Sets

Various statistical sources and datasets have been consulted and are discussed in the dissertation from various domestic and international sources, including the Colombian government, the World Bank and US-government affiliated departments. Data on Colombian economic performance is provided by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE 2014). The same agency also published data on the agricultural sector and the agrarian census (DANE 2016). Development indicators and measures of economic performance are drawn from the World Bank (2008; 2016; 2018) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2021). Statistics on coffee production and prices from the 1930s to 2018 appear in the three empirical chapters and are drawn from FEDECAFÉ (2018). The most comprehensive source of data on land distribution is the Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi – IGAC (2012). Data on the number of victims of violence due to the armed conflict, including conflict-related murders, forced mass displacement and combat deaths are from the Colombian government's Registro Unico de Víctimas (2018). Finally, data on oil, gas and coal production in Colombia is drawn from the US Energy Information Administration (2016; 2018).

Although there are significant gaps in the data, particularly regarding the distribution of real property in Colombia, statistics inform my analysis by providing evidence to support

arguments about the consequences of reforms (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018; DANE 2016; IGAC, 2012). Increased levels of violence are evident in figures on troop numbers, combat deaths and homicides while the distribution of land, however incomplete the statistics, can be inferred by examining land allocations and calculating inequality using Gini coefficients for the distribution of property.³

While it is common in academic literature to see figures of Gini coefficients of income distribution, it is less common to find Gini coefficients of the distribution of property ownership which is what I mostly discuss here. According to Thorp, “the Gini coefficient is derived from the ‘Lorenz curve’, which summarizes the cumulative size distribution of incomes [or land holdings] over the population. It ranges from zero (equivalent to a completely equal distribution...) to unity (equivalent to one household receiving all the national income [or owning all the land] so that a rising coefficient over time reflects a worsening income distribution”(Thorp, 1998, 351). Using the Gini coefficient for the distribution of property holdings provides an indicator of inequality. Rising Gini coefficients of property holdings indicate the concentration of rural property following land reforms. The statistical annex provides more detailed data in addition to figures that are discussed in the text.

Secondary Sources

In addition to primary records, secondary sources have also been consulted to write the historical/empirical chapters. Academic manuscripts and articles provide additional insight, contextual information and summaries of historical events which I have incorporated into the narrative. Some of the notable articles and monographs on Colombian history that I cite include: Bergquist, 1986; 1986[1978]; 1992; 1996; Bergquist, Peñaranda and Sanchez, 2001; Braun, 1985; Brittain, 2005; 2010; Browitt, 2001; Bushell, 1992; 1993; Diaz Alejandro, 1984; Fals Borda, 1965; 1967; Fluharty, 1957; Gilhodès, 1972; Gill, 2016; Hobsbawm, 1963; Hylton, 2014; Jiménez, 1995a; 1995b; Kalmanovitz, 1996; 2003; Karl, 2017a; 2017b; LeGrand, 1986; 1992; Londoño Botero, 2014; McGreevey, 1971; Melo, 1987; 1998; Molina, 1974; Nieto Arteta, 1996;

³ Cadastral record keeping in Colombia is decentralized and registries are operated by private notary publics. This system is prone to corruption, fraud and falsification for money laundering, fronting criminal operations and avoiding taxes. Organized criminal gangs tend to use front men or *testaferos* to hold properties in name only. As such, many estimates of the local concentration of property in a given municipality are inaccurate. Certainly though, the available estimates of property concentration underestimate the actual degree of concentrated ownership, particularly in areas associated with high levels of illegal activity and informal property rights (see Grajales, 2011; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2014; Ibáñez and Muñoz, 2010; Londoño et al., 2016; Salinas Abdila, 2010; IGAC 2012).

Ocampo, 1975; Ocampo Gaviria, 2015[1987]; Oquist, 1980; Palacios, 2006; Rausch, 1993; Rippy, 1931; Roldán, 2002; Safford and Palacios, 2002; Thorp, 1991; 1998; Thorp and Londoño, 1984; Van Ausdal, 2008; Wright, 1981[1980]; Zamosc, 1986.

Notable articles on Colombian land tenure and land reform include: Adams, 1964; 1966; Albán, 2011; Balcazar et al. 2001; Barraclough and Domike, 1966; Berry, 1972; 1973; 2002; 2017; Beyer, 1961; de Janvry, 1981; de Janvry and Ground, 1978; Dorner and Felstehausen, 1970; Duff, 1964; 1966; Eder, 1965; Edwards, 1980; Egginton and Ruhl, 1974; Fajardo, 2002; Feder, 1965; 1969; Findley, 1972; Galvis, 2009; Gomez Jiménez, 2003; Grunig, 1969a; 1969b; Hough and Bair, 2012; Ibáñez and Muñoz, 2010; Kay, 1980; 2001; Londoño et al., 2016; Machado, 2009; Mondragón, 2006; Palacios, 2011; Restrepo, 2002; Salinas Abdala, 2010; Smith, 1976; Suarez Montoya, 2007; Taussig, 1978; Thomson, 2011; Uribe Lopez, 2009; Vega Cantor, 2004; Vertinsky, Geffner and Fox, 1972.

Articles and books on the Colombian conflict include: Carroll, 1994; Chernick, 2007; Dufort, 2008; Flores, 2014; Gamboa, 2001; Goebertus, 2008; Grajales, 2011; 2013; Guerrero Baron and Mond, 2001; Guzman Campos, German, Fals Borda and Umana Luna, 2016 [1963]; Henao Holguín, 2013; 2015; Holmes, Gutiérrez and Curtin, 2007; Hoskin and Murillo, 2001; Hristov, 2005; Marks, 2003; McDougall, 2009; Nagle, 2002; Oquist, 1980; Pécaut, 1997; 2006; Peceny and Durnan, 2006; Petras, 2000; Posada, 1969; Richani, 1997; 2005; 2013; Rochlin, 2012; Saab and Taylor, 2009; Sánchez, 1992; Sánchez and Meertens, 2001; Serres, 2000; Stokes, 2004; 2006; Teicher, 2005; Tokatlian, 1999; Torres Restrepo, 1970[1963]; Van Isschot, 2018; Villar and Cottle, 2011; Villarreal Escallón, 2020; Waldmann, 2007; Walsh et al., 2008; Wolf, 1999[1969]; Wouters, 2001.

Considering the variety of historiographical sources and the variety of theoretical and analytical orientations of the various authors, my reference to a particular article or author does not necessarily constitute agreement or rejection of the argument they are making. Rather, in the empirical chapters where I present my explanatory critique of agrarian reform and violence in Colombia, references to secondary sources are mobilized to provide evidence in support of my overall argument. Where my research refutes certain explanations for violence in Colombia, I make my position clear.

A note on the layout and organization of the historical/empirical chapters is worthy of mention. In his study of the violence of the 1940s to the 1960s in Colombia, Camilo Torres

writes: “to determine the magnitude of a change it is necessary to establish three aspects: (1) the situation before the change; (2) the factors that contributed to the change and the way in which they contributed to it; (3) the situation after the effect of these factors (Torres, 1970[1963], 503). In my case, to analyze how land reform contributed to conflict, in each of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I first describe the context prior to the reform, the conjuncture of forces and structures that led to and shaped the reform, and the consequences of these reforms. This is captured in the organization of each chapter into Context, Conjuncture and Consequences. Additional details on the analytical framework (production relations, power and world order) drawn from Robert Cox and the conceptual framework (uneven development, passive revolution, peripheral developmental state and disciplinary neoliberalism) are provided in Chapter 1 below.

CHAPTER 1: PASSIVE REVOLUTION, UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT & AGRARIAN REFORM

Under threat of military coup in 1944, Liberal President Alfonso López Pumarejo was forced to revoke the pro-campesino elements of his 1936 land reform law. In his resignation speech a few months later, López bitterly denounced the Colombian ‘oligarchy’, so detached from the masses and so self-interested that it undermined the legitimacy of the state:

You may say to me, Gentlemen, that this is nothing new. But it is causing a crisis, because there are new factors of disorder which did not exist before. Such as the active industrial development which is creating interests of such magnitude that they openly defy the force of the laws.... Such as the awakening of a sleeping social consciousness which can turn toward violence more easily when it learns that violence produces concrete results. Such as, finally, the disorganization of the contemporary world, in which it was our lot to see abolished by force, and still not yet re-established (López 1945 in Fluharty, 1957, 77).

In the two decades after that speech, more than 200,000 Colombians perished at the hands of fellow citizens in the fields and coffee orchards. On what he hoped was the other end of that tragedy called “La Violencia”, another Liberal President, Alberto Lleras Camargo, echoed López in a speech in late 1958: “We are situated between two worlds, one dead, the other hardly born, and our fate is chaos for a generation” (Lleras Camargo, 1958 in Karl, 2017b, 3). Both López and Lleras Camargo referred to an impasse described by Antonio Gramsci: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear” (1971, 276).

While the symptoms of an oppressive rural agrarian structure undergoing capitalist transformation were certainly morbid - including rural violence, land grabbing, disorderly urbanization and lagging industrialization - the diagnosis and treatment polarized the Colombian elite, an amalgam of merchants, capitalist landlords, industrialists and financiers. Nervous of both intransigent regionally-seated landlords and an active agrarian workers’ movement, Lopez himself vacillated between alliances with radicals who called for the redistribution of landed property and measures to assist landlords modernize their plantations.

In the wake of the violence that López could not or would not confront, Lleras Camargo spoke of peace, reconstruction and rural reform. But Lleras aligned himself with US hegemonic authority and made a domestic power sharing pact with the fascist-sympathizer and pro-landlord Laureano Gomez (Karl, 2017a; Browitt, 2001, 1067). Rather than incorporating mass demands for redistribution of landed property, Lleras Camargo enacted an agrarian reform in 1961 that favoured large enterprise farms and relegated small farmers to distant frontiers. These decisions

sparked further guerrilla movements that continued for decades. What then was the nature and source of this crisis? As I will argue, the outcomes of the reform process in the 1930s and again in the 1960s represent a form of what Gramsci called ‘passive revolution’ in response to crises of uneven capitalist development. As a late-developing, peripheral state, Colombia was going through an agrarian capitalist transformation that generated urbanization without sustainable industrialization. Instead of seeking consensus for Colombian capitalist development and state formation among urban and rural workers, Colombian elites, including export-producing landlords and nascent bourgeois-industrial interests, sought to prop up their tenuous hold on power by forging strategic alliances with foreign capital. Rather than supporting the emergence of a commodity-producing class of smallholders along the lines of the American or farmer road to agrarian capitalism, the Colombian elite chose a landlord road (Brittain, 2005; for a discussion of the agrarian paths to capitalism, see de Janvry, 1981, 106-08; Lenin, 1977[1899]; Bernstein, 2010, 29-30; Kay, 1980). With access to foreign investment, credit and technology, Colombian landlords sought to adapt to the use of wage labour and economies of scale by modernizing their large landholdings, displacing many campesinos and those without formal property rights.

In this chapter, I develop a Gramscian theory and analytical framework to situate agrarian reforms within the broader context of passive revolution within an unevenly developed and geographically fragmented world economy. In the neo-Gramscian framework, the theory of passive revolution encapsulates how capitalist social relations are imposed upon peripheral producing classes in processes of capitalist state formation within an international context of uneven development (Morton, 2007; Cox 1983). With his emphasis on the combination of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production that are joined by political authority into a social structure of accumulation, I argue that Robert Cox’s framework provides a fulsome account of peripheral state formation and uneven development that can be used to historically situate passive revolutions within transformations in capitalist world order.

In contrast to agrarian political economy debates on how to transform rural property relations to expand mass production (see Bernstein, 2010; Wolf, 1999 [1969]; Brignol & Crispi, 1982; Heynig, 1982), in my Gramscian account, agrarian violence emerges as a tactic of capitalist discipline within passive revolutions. Violence is not simply an intrinsic feature of pre-capitalist production but is rather a method of imposing and maintaining conditions for expanded capital accumulation (Harvey, 2004; van der Pijl, 1998). The theory of passive revolution offers

an explanation for why Colombian elites imposed conditions to expand capital accumulation through various tactics including agrarian reform, forced displacement and counterinsurgency. Passive capitalist revolution was imposed violently, but it also incited massive and sustained resistance among displaced peasants and marginalized workers. Within the theory of passive revolution, despite this level of violence and instability, elites were able to maintain their power because they had ideological and material support from foreign capital.

The Neo-Gramscian framework to analyze world order, state formation and transformations in production elucidates the emergence of violent conflict in the process of agrarian transformation, captured by the theory of passive revolution. Drawing on the Neo-Gramscian method of historical analysis, in this chapter I situate passive revolutions within a periodization of world order. The purpose of this exercise is to identify the peripheral state forms that emerge from passive revolutions at various historical conjunctures of the international political economy. I begin with the peripheral, post-colonial state in the late nineteenth century. Next, I discuss the emergence of fascist ideology and discourse in Colombia from the 1930s to the 1950s alongside passive revolutionary impulses to impose landlord-led agrarian capitalism and crush the agrarian workers movement. The peripheral developmental state of the 1960s emerged from the landlord-bourgeois alliance in favour of limited import substitution industrialization and expanded agricultural export commodity production alongside mass repression of dissent. Finally, the disciplinary neoliberal state of the 1980s to the 2000s is the most recent example of passive revolution that resulted from attempts to expand capital accumulation against popular resistance. At each phase I identify the production relations, class alliances and international political economic features that shape state formation and the emergence of domestic class conflicts.

Finally, I situate agrarian reform as a component of passive revolution within the various historical conjunctures of world capitalism, including in the peripheral Liberal state (tenurial reforms and modernization of property regime), the peripheral developmental state (state-led land reform) and the disciplinary neo-liberal state (market-led land reform). While I discuss examples of passive revolution and agrarian reform measures within historical conjunctures in general terms in this chapter, the focus of the empirical chapters (2 to 4) will be on the manifestation of these tendencies within Colombian state formation and the effects of agrarian

reforms on accumulation (including concentration of land), conflict and resistance. I conclude this theoretical chapter with a brief outline of the empirical chapters to follow.

Based on his reading of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, Robert Cox developed a theory to analyze how world order takes shape as capitalist relations expand internationally, through historic blocs of allied social classes that dominate international civil society and exercise political authority. Capitalist transformations of production relations, especially in larger states, have more power to shape international politics to the extent that these social transformations are more complete and create the material capacity for expanded production, international trade and underpin military power. However, within a context of globally uneven development, transformations in the dominant state reverberate as passive revolutions in peripheral states. Where externally driven social transformations are imported or even 'thrust' upon peripheral societies, landed interests struggle to maintain power and a relatively weak capitalist class fails to establish hegemony (Cox, 1993 [1983], 134). The result is a partial social revolution without widespread popular support. In cases of capitalist revolution without hegemony, coercion becomes the dominant tactic of elites who seek to maintain the capitalist revolutionary impulse.

In his 1987 book, *Production, Power and World Order*, Cox describes how material capabilities, subjective forces, and institutional structures dialectically interact as social classes make history across three levels of analysis: production relations, power, and world order. Cox adapts Gramsci's concept of hegemony to describe the international sphere in which Britain became hegemonic in the 19th century (1845-1873) and the USA in the 20th (from 1945 to 1973).

I am using the term *hegemony* here as meaning more than the dominance of a single world power. It means dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based ideologically on a broad measure of consent, functioning according to general principles that in fact ensure the continuing supremacy of the leading state or states and leading social classes but at the same time offer some measure or prospect of satisfaction to the less powerful (Cox, 1987, 7).

The conditions for peripheral integration (in a hegemonic order) imply an international class interest and the perceived legitimacy of the dominant state among peripheral, would-be capitalist elites (ibid, 8). The hegemony of international capital in the periphery, where capitalist relations are unevenly developed, may have the consent of peripheral elites but not the masses, hence the passive revolutionary tendencies of capitalist transformations in the periphery.

Cox's central thesis is that the emergence of the most powerful state and the expansion of its dominant mode of production relations enable particular historic blocs of allied classes to exercise social power that impact the dynamics of world order (Cox, 1987, 108). His second and

related thesis is “that the emergence of new forms of state is associated with changes in the structures of world order and that these parallel changes have been mutually reinforcing. Both kinds of change – in forms of state and in world order- have to be taken into account to explain changes in production”(ibid). Transformation in the productive process within the leading capitalist states prompts the internationalization of production whereby incipient transnational class interests in peripheral states emerge around export-production, investment and the development of financial systems which promote capitalist transformation.

Cox’s framework provides a theory of uneven capitalist development that accounts for how international social forces shape accumulation (and class conflict) in peripheral states, particularly through strategies to adapt to crises of capitalist production at various conjunctures in the world economy. Transformations in production relations expand the power of the leading state which alters the international system, prompting elites in subordinate states to attempt to transform domestic relations consistent with expanded capital accumulation. The contradictions and consequences of these processes of passive revolution at various historical conjunctures in Colombia are the focus of this study as they are evident in cases of agrarian reforms.

The Theory of Passive Revolution

Passive revolution manifests in particular ways at various conjunctures. However, as I use it here, the concept generally describes the strategies of elites seeking to build the conditions for capital accumulation in the periphery of global capitalism through state action. Gramsci’s concept of passive revolution was both a description of the nineteenth century late transitions to capitalism in Europe and an explanation for the emergence of Italian fascism in his own time (2007, 252-257). It has been further developed by Gramscian scholars of IPE to describe capitalist transformations in the post-war peripheral developmental state under US hegemony and disciplinary neoliberal transformations after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system (Cox, 1987; Gill, 2003; Hesketh, 2017; Morton, 2007; Morton, 2013; Bieler and Morton, 2018). Passive revolution is well suited as a theoretical framework to examine the process of capitalist development in Latin American states in the absence “of any established bourgeois hegemony”(Morton, 2013, 3). Passive revolution is particularly useful as a dialectical concept to examine “concrete historical instances when aspects of the social relations of capitalist development are either instituted and/or expanded resulting in both a ‘revolutionary’ rupture and

‘restoration’ of social relations” (Bieler and Morton, 2018, 10). For Bieler and Morton, passive revolution can refer to at least two inter-related processes:

- 1) a revolution without mass participation, or a ‘revolution from above’, involving elite-engineered social and political reform that draws on foreign capital and associated ideas while lacking a national-popular base. Passive revolution here describes ... how issues such as agrarian reform were ‘a way of grafting the agrarian masses on to the national revolution’(Gramsci, 2007, 257, Q8§35); and
- 2) How a revolutionary form of political transformation is pressed into a conservative project of restoration in which popular demands of class struggle still play some role. It refers here to ‘the fact that ‘progress’ occurs as the reaction of the dominant classes to the sporadic and incoherent rebelliousness of the popular masses – a reaction consisting of ‘restorations’ that agree to some part of the popular demands and are therefore ‘progressive restorations’ or ‘revolutions-restorations’ or even ‘passive revolutions’ (Gramsci, 2007, 252, Q8§25) (in Bieler and Morton, 2018, 11).

Passive revolution can be situated on a conceptual continuum opposite hegemony whereby hegemonic class relations tend to develop within civil society which are then reproduced in the consolidation of state power while passive revolutions are imposed upon society by the state. According to Gramsci, “the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership.’ A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to ‘liquidate,’ or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups” (Gramsci, 1971, 57-58). The dominance of a class may stem from its position within the productive process or its monopoly of military force. When a class exercises intellectual and moral leadership it can be said to have achieved “a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a ‘universal’ plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups” (ibid, 181-182). A dominant group controls the administrative/institutional apparatus of the state; however, hegemony is exercised when a class leads allied or subordinate classes in civil society by consent rather than coercion. A hegemonic class convincingly projects its interest as the general interest.

When a ruling class no longer governs through intellectual and moral leadership of the subaltern classes or has lost its legitimacy because of some organic crisis such as a war or a peasant uprising, the result is a crisis of hegemony and a general crisis of state authority (ibid, 210). Gramsci, in a famous passage, elaborates on the crisis of authority:

If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer ‘leading’ but only ‘dominant’, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis

consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear (ibid, 276).

Gramsci pointed out that compared to the capitalist transformations in Northern Europe, Italy in the nineteenth century had not fully internalized the bourgeois social revolution. While modern capitalist relations were ‘thrust upon them’, aristocratic landed interests remained entrenched within the state in a war of position. The ‘old ideologies’ of landed interests stifled the full transition to capitalism and blocked the potential hegemony of the industrial bourgeoisie in alliance with the working class and the peasantry.

Considering the notion of historical necessity, as Gramsci puts it, “1. No social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; 2. That a society does not set itself tasks for whose solution the necessary conditions have not already been incubated” (Gramsci, 1976, 106); then a full bourgeois transformation could not occur until the traditional aristocratic forces and the developmental potential of the established historic bloc had been exhausted. Passive revolution therefore refers to the tendency of bourgeois interests to pursue state power (which requires an alliance with the aristocracy) in order to dominate subordinate classes (rather than leading them through consensual hegemony) in forging a national state with capitalist industry. This “Piedmont” function describes the political strategy of the northern Italian bourgeoisie as it pursued national state power to unify the heterogeneous social forces in a geographically divided and socially stratified Italian peninsula.

The important thing is to analyse more profoundly the significance of a ‘Piedmont’ – type function in passive revolutions – i.e. the fact that a State replaces the local social groups in leading a struggle of renewal. It is one of the cases in which these groups have the function of ‘domination’ without that of ‘leadership’: dictatorship without hegemony. The hegemony will be exercised by a part of the social group over the entire group, and not by the latter over other forces in order to give power to the movement, radicalise it, etc. on the ‘Jacobin’ model” (Gramsci, 1971, 105-6).

Rather than a dictatorship of the masses, passive revolution identifies the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, or at least attempts at the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie allied with landed elites to impose capitalist transformations via the state, over and against workers and peasants.

In the dialectic of history, Gramsci noted how traditional landed and aristocratic interests tended to coopt and transform bourgeois revolutionary impulses, limiting the scope and extent of transformative action (including agrarian reform). Within this stalemate of landed interests and bourgeois revolutionaries, “one may apply to the concept of passive revolution the interpretive

criterion of molecular changes which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes” (ibid, 109). The continued dominance of traditional elites required bourgeois adaptation, integration and alliance with landed interests as the traditional war of movement and the revolutionary war of position melded into one strategy of passive revolution; however, in the process, the limits of the possible were altered and constrained, hence the revolution-restoration. As the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy struggle for state power, landlord and industrial interests may combine in uneasy alliances to push through capitalist transformations from above (usually liquidating the peasantry).

The concept of passive revolution encapsulates how revolutionary impulses are thwarted and coopted by the dominant classes, however it also suggests the possibility of longer-term, reformist action to shape the existing structures – the ‘passivity’ of the revolution. If passive revolution results in a stalemate between revolutionary and restorative forces, various strategies, either progressive or regressive, can be applied to its rupture. One such situation is Caesarism “in which a great personality is entrusted with the task of ‘arbitration’ over a historic-political situation characterized by an equilibrium of forces heading towards catastrophe” that can take on “both progressive and reactionary forms” (ibid, 219). In crisis moments, “the immediate situation becomes delicate and dangerous, because the field is open for violent actions, for the activities of unknown forces, represented by charismatic ‘men of destiny’” (ibid, 210). Only concrete historical examination can determine whether Caesarism was progressive or reactionary, whether the intervention of the “strong man” broke the equilibrium in favour of the regressive or progressive forces in the revolution/restoration dialectic (ibid).

Chris Harman points out that while Gramsci often compares instances of bourgeois struggles against feudal lords as analogous to the struggles of workers against capital, this can be misleading. “Because capitalist relations of production have as their starting point commodity production, which can develop within feudal society, the bourgeoisie can use their growing economic dominance to build up their ideological position within the framework of feudalism before seizing power”(Harman, 1977 in Callinicos, 2010, 499). Workers, on the other hand, are unable to become dominant until they have taken collective control over the means of production. The takeaway is that landed and bourgeois interests may be at odds, but not incurably so – they can respond to crises in the last instance by uniting behind state efforts to promote capitalist transformation, suppressing mass demands for inclusion.

While Gramsci recognizes the potential for bloody conflict between landed and bourgeois interests, most often, the ‘incurable opposition’ is between the capitalist bourgeoisie and workers: “In the modern world, the equilibrium with ‘catastrophic prospects’ occurs not between the forces which could in the last analysis fuse and unite - albeit after a wearying and bloody process – but between forces whose opposition is historically incurable and indeed becomes especially acute with the advent of Caesarist forms”(ibid, 222). Buci-Gluckmann suggests that Gramsci implied modern Caesarism was a product of the crisis of capitalism in response to socialism. It is a product of the “incurable opposition between bourgeoisie and the proletariat” (1980 [1975], 312). The landed classes and the bourgeoisie, though opposed, can ultimately unite to impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation in a coalition of the oppressors against revolutionary socialist threats from the working class.

Another facet of passive revolution is the tendency of traditional classes to coopt potential revolutionary leaders of subaltern groups (Gramsci, 1971, 58). Passive revolution with *Trasformismo* describes how traditional elites attempt to coopt radical or revolutionary elements. As Webber puts it, “capacities for social mobilization from below in early stages are contained or coopted – or selectively repressed – while the political initiative of sections of the dominant classes is restored. Passive revolutions involve the establishment of a form of domination capable of enacting conservative reforms masked in the language of earlier impulses emerging from below, achieving in this way a passive consensus of the dominated classes” (Modonesi 2012, 143 in Webber, 2016, 1857).

When these efforts of *trasformismo* fail, more overt violence and repression take their place in the dialectic of revolution-restoration. In both Caesarism and *Trasformismo*, the less consensus and moral leadership, the greater potential for inter-class violence. Passive revolution is indicative of the inability of a bourgeoisie to exercise hegemony (Bieler and Morton, 2018, 12). Though unable to exercise hegemony, the bourgeoisie may still have the capacity to dominate the state and exercise power, not through consent but with coercion. The key according to Davidson is to recognize that although the revolution was passive and integrated traditional classes, the outcome of passive revolution is to create a capitalist ruling class and state, hence the element of revolution; passive revolution is still a bourgeois capitalist revolution (Davidson, 2012, 322).

The impetus for peripheral capitalist development through passive revolution has an external dimension that emanates from the international. Gramsci realized the effects of uneven development on political relations in the late-developing state:

In real history these moments imply each other reciprocally – horizontally and vertically, so to speak – i.e. according to socio-economic activity (horizontally) and to country (vertically), Combining and diverging in various ways. Each of these combinations may be represented by its own organized economic and political expression. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations (Gramsci, 1971, 182).

Crucial to Gramsci's take on uneven development are the political possibilities enabled by the external pressures and domestic configurations of class alliances. Uneven development creates opportunities for alliances between peripheral bourgeois interests, landlords and foreign capitalists to expand opportunities for capital accumulation.

Cox's concept of capitalist development focuses on the role of social classes and the forms of state that emerge in both core and periphery from internationally expanding capitalist relations at various historical conjunctures. From Cox's perspective, capitalism is not simply a mode of production, but rather a mode of development that includes accumulation and social reproduction implying consequential structural change (1987, 406). This combination of heterogeneous modes of production relations and mechanisms for surplus accumulation (organized by state authority) is the social structure of accumulation (ibid, 209). The totality of the world economy in which capitalism plays a dominant role creates a transnational social structure of accumulation insofar as its various component parts are structured to channel surplus to capitalists, even if capitalist development is unevenly distributed among its geographically divided components.

For Cox, the conjunction of four factors enabled the transformation from simple reproduction to capitalist development to take place in Western Europe. These four conditions were: (1) accumulation of capital in the hands of people who would invest in the expansion of production for the market (as distinct from old-regime states and ruling classes that invested in territorial aggrandizement to extend the sphere of feudal agrarian relations); (2) expansion of the market for basic necessities of life to the point where production for exchange supplanted production for use; (3) creation of a market in land by 'freeing' land from entailments and the whole range of feudal restrictions and concurrent obligations; and (4) enlargement of the market for labor by separating an increasing proportion of workers from the means of production and

allowing wages to be determined by supply and demand (Cox, 1987, 56-57). In England, the first two conditions were present by the eighteenth century and all four were extant by the first half of the nineteenth century. In peripheral societies including many in Latin America, Asia and Africa, Cox argues that capitalist transitions in agriculture did not occur (or at least become predominant) until the latter part of the 20th century (ibid, 58). In other words, capitalist development has been highly uneven and has created heterogenous production relations within a social structure of accumulation that is dominated by finance capital.

Cox's framework provides an identifiable class interest and concept of agency that unites core and peripheral elites in various states and modes of production through a transnational historic bloc. For Cox then, capitalist development describes the emergence of a social structure of accumulation that is predominantly capitalist, but not uniformly so. It combines classes in various modes of production - subsistence production, petty-commodity producers, landlord-peasant relations and large-scale capitalist agriculture - organized through states and international institutions, to channel surplus to capitalist investors (ibid, 406). Cox's conception of capitalist development describes the combination of precapitalist production with capitalist investment in a world economy that capitalists dominate but which is not uniformly capitalist. In short, Cox provides an account of the consequences of uneven development at the level of production and the state outside the core-capitalist countries, captured by the theory of passive revolution.

The theory of passive revolution emphasizes the "blocked dialectic" of the revolution-restoration of bourgeois and landlord class power in the formation of peripheral capitalist states within a context of uneven development that suppresses mass demands for reforms and democracy. Of interest in this study is the relationship between passive revolution and a particular logic of violence in the imposition of agrarian capitalism, manifest in various tactics including agrarian reform, forced displacement and counterinsurgency. There is a particular logic behind the violence deployed against subordinate classes in passive revolutions. This violence stems from the imposition of conditions for the expansion of capital accumulation through dispossession, capitalist discipline and the forced expansion of capitalist subjectivity through social reproduction (van der Pijl, 1998, 36). There is therefore an inherent violence in the imposition of capitalist discipline, most evident in the expropriation of lands, turning peasants

into landless workers, but violence is also mobilized in passive revolutions to squash political resistance and mobilization during the process of proletarianization.

As Morton points out, one of the achievements of historical materialism is the distinction between feudal or pre-capitalist production and capitalist production. In the latter, direct political compulsion to extract surplus from peasants is replaced by market or economic means to compel landless workers to sell their labour to capitalists, presumably occurring during primitive accumulation in the early transition to capitalism (2007, 43). Marx's take on the origins of inequality between 'primitive' and 'industrial' societies was a searing critique of 'so-called primitive accumulation.' In Chapter 26, Part 8 of the first Volume of *Capital*, Marx describes how Europeans used violent force to accumulate land to establish plantations and mines in the Americas, dispossessing Indigenous peoples and then abducting people from Africa to brutally exploit as slaves. The consequence of this violent stage of history was the accumulation of money in the hands of European merchants and the expulsion of subsistence producers from traditional territories where they had access to land, forests, water, game, and their own tools. As Marx put it, "(s)o called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production"(Marx, 1976, 874-75). It is 'primitive' only in the sense of its relation to capital, in that it plays a role in the pre-history of capital (ibid). Primitive accumulation - the divorce of primary producers from the means of production, the enclosure of commons, the creation of labour markets, the debasement of labour by its forcible competition with slave production – contributed to the expansion of money capital, expanded the reserve army of labour, and set the stage for the transition to large-scale industrial capitalism.

Once the 'original sin' of dispossession had occurred, overt violence supposedly faded into the background. However, examining uneven capitalist development in the contemporary world reveals that capitalist relations have not been universalized and violence has not faded into the background (Morton, 2007, 144-45). Violence continues to be deployed against peasants, indigenous people and petty-commodity producers through an ongoing process of accumulation by dispossession as capitalists seek new territory to resolve crises of over-accumulation (Harvey, 2004). Though global capitalism is unevenly developed, the geopolitical fragmentation of the international order enables state-led participation in the violence of capitalist expansion and dispossession.

Addressing the issue of violence and the peripheral state, Kees van der Pijl identifies three circumstances in which capitalist relations are imposed (by the state) to discipline subordinate labour. “The first is original accumulation—the process in which, by imposing the commodity form on social relations including productive relations, capital itself crystallises as a relatively autonomous social force” (1998, 36). This is the moment of the divorce of the primary producer from the means of production and is usually associated with the early phases of capitalist transition. “The second is the capitalist production process, the exploitation of living labour power, in which the technical labour process and all that it implies in terms of human autonomy and creativity has to be subordinated to the process of expanding value, the valorisation of capital invested” (ibid). Discipline here is deployed to maintain the process of labour exploitation, enforce private claims to property and maintain workers in a state of dependence on the labour market. “The third is the process of social reproduction in its entirety, the exploitation of the social and natural substratum, which likewise has to be made subject to the requirements of capital accumulation” (van der Pijl, 1998, 36). This is the disciplinary function of the state that ensures social reproduction of expanded capital accumulation. This process brings into view state repression of dissent, counterinsurgency and the every-day forms of class-based violence such as racism, sexism and xenophobia.

Violence is used by ruling classes in passive revolutions to impose and maintain conditions for capitalist relations over and against resistant campesinos and workers. These conditions include the monopolization of land, the enforcement of private property rights, the imposition of market imperatives such as indebtedness and the forced devaluation of labour. The lack of hegemony in the passive revolutionary project facilitates the use of state power to enforce capitalist discipline in a project of domination. “Passive revolution is therefore a mode of class rule associated both with ruptural conditions of state development ushering in the world of capitalist production and class strategies linked to the continual furtherance of capitalism as a response to its crisis conditions of accumulation” (Morton, 2010, 332-3). Bourgeois-landlord alliances behind state-led attempts to impose capitalism through violent means do not go unnoticed; passive revolution generates class-based resistance and sparks open class-conflict that can lead to running battles of workers and peasants against landlords.

Gramsci pointed out in his 1920 writings on the Communist Party, “the bewildering and rapid shifts in the position of whole strata of the population throughout the entire territory of

the state and often throughout the entire territory under capitalist domination” has led to a situation where “social classes... acquire a new and clearer awareness of themselves and their own interests”(Gramsci, 1994, 192). This includes the emergence of political party representation for a wide strata of rural interests, from the barons of the latifundio “to the medium-sized landowner, from the small landholder to the tenant farmer, from the sharecropper to the penniless peasant”(ibid, 192-3). The uneven development of capitalism created ruptures which lead to greater class awareness, particularly among the rural strata. However, the passive revolutionary tendencies of dominant classes involved in peripheral state formation tend to liquidate rather than incorporate peasant interests and tend to side with landlords. This generates class-divisions in the rural sector itself: “The great masses of small landowners and peasants were no longer content to be the passive infantry-masses enabling the medium-sized and larger landowners to secure their interests” (ibid, 193). These passive revolutionary tendencies generate bourgeois-landlord alliances in state formation but incite landlord-peasant and landlord-worker class conflicts in the rural sector. Instead of hegemonic politics, passive revolutions subject agrarian working people to dispossession and simultaneously provoke organized forms of resistance.

Passive Revolution and Uneven Capitalist Development

Passive revolutions involve violent tactics to impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation. This violence is not simply a feature of early capitalism but is constitutive of ongoing capitalist expansion in the absence of hegemonic class alliances between ruling classes and working people. Callinicos writes: “The value of the concept of passive revolution remains, as it was in Gramsci’s own work, as a means of analysing definite socio-political processes in which revolution-inducing strains are at once displaced and fulfilled. It is therefore constitutively tied to what he calls the ‘anti-thesis’ – this moment of radical rupture that projects of ‘revolution-restoration’ seek to repress, but that sometimes nevertheless bursts through, blasting apart the existing order”(2010, 505). Here I briefly examine concrete and historically situated phases of passive revolution at four conjunctures of the world economy – nineteenth century peripheral liberal state formation, fascism between the world wars, the peripheral developmental state during the Cold War and the disciplinary neoliberal state after the collapse of the Bretton Woods

system. Each of these phases of passive revolution coincide with transformations in production and world order and each is associated with particular logics of class conflict and forms of state.

One response to these conflicts is the emergence of demands for reforms, particularly to the distribution of property. These reforms are often promoted by their architects as means to resolve class conflict over land distribution and adapt mass interests to expanded agrarian capital accumulation. However, the landlord-bourgeois alliances that underly passive revolutionary processes and the international context of uneven capitalist development tip the scales in favour of the interests of wealthy investors. Those who benefit from agrarian reforms within passive revolution are those who can better compete as agrarian capitalists by acquiring land, enforcing claims to private property, exploiting workers, keeping wages down, and accessing credit and technology from abroad to take advantage of economies of scale and produce export commodities for profit.

Nineteenth-Century Colombian State Formation as Passive Revolution

As a peripheral state on the world capitalist market, the effects of capitalist development through passive revolution can already be seen in the process of nineteenth century Colombian state formation. Economic historians tend to characterize the period from 1850 to 1930 as one of export-led growth in Latin America (Thorp, 1998; Bulmer-Thomas, 2014; Hirschman, 1968). This period, however, was not one of uniform growth, and there were some important structural changes in the international order that had repercussions for peripheral capitalist development and state formation. From 1845 to 1875 British industrial capitalism and naval power underwrote a world order based on elite consensus over free trade, comparative advantage, and the gold standard (Cox, 1983, 135-136). As the value of exports grew faster than the value of goods produced in the local economies, Latin American countries became more dependent on external trade for government revenue. This extraversion subjected them to fluctuations in balance of payments and commodity prices while imports of manufactured goods destroyed artisanal production (McGreevey, 1971; Bulmer-Thomas, 2014; Thorp, 1998).

As primary commodities producers, the Latin American countries suffered during the global commodities gluts and financial depression from 1873 to 1895, although even then, production of exports continued to grow, but not uniformly (Hobsbawm, 1989, 36). As British hegemony was challenged by inter-imperial rivalry after 1875 during the world crisis of overproduction of agricultural commodities, free trade was replaced by protectionism and

governments moved to promote local industrialization or stimulate the economy by printing paper money. In Latin America, elite consensus remained in favour of export-led growth which was tied to the rise of government expenditure from customs duties, but domestic debates raged over liberalism vs conservatism, centralism vs federalism, church-state relations, the question of racial exclusion, and constitutional debates (Bulmer-Thomas, 2014, 54; Bergquist, 1996, 35).

Much has been made in the literature of Colombia's unique place as an outlier in Latin America during the period of export-oriented growth (Bergquist, 1986[1978], 51; Oquist, 1980, 75; see also Rippy, 1930; McGreevey, 1971; Melo, 1987). Colombia had per capita export figures below those of Haiti for 1850 to 1912 (Bulmer-Thomas, 2014, 72). Throughout the 1850 to 1912 period, Colombia's economy was both less productive than other Latin American states, much weaker than the US, and less integrated with the export sector. Following a series of boom-and-bust cycles in tobacco, rubber, quinine, and indigo from 1850 to 1875, Colombia was increasingly dependent only on coffee exports as a source of public revenue. This encouraged ideological intransigence in favour of liberal trading principles among the merchant faction of the elite that was dependent on import-exports, including some export-oriented landlords who produced tobacco, coffee, sugar-cane and beef, and among politicians and bureaucrats who drew from the customs house. The period of late nineteenth century state formation from 1875 to 1902 was thus marked by boom-and-bust cycles for various commodities, intra-elite conflicts, regional divisions and class conflicts, each followed by intensely partisan civil wars in Colombia in 1876-77, 1885, 1895, 1899-1902 over federalism vs centralism, state-church relations, free trade vs protectionism, and gold vs paper money (Oquist, 1980, 44; Melo, 1987).

Thinking through nineteenth century Colombia in a Gramscian way reveals a society wracked by conflict as merchants, artisans, and petty bourgeois interests fought traditional landlords in regional capitals for control of the national state. Among landlords there were stark divisions by region, sector and political party. Due to uneven capitalist development, Colombian industry could not compete with British manufactured goods which flooded the market during the free trade era, destroying artisanal production and delaying the endogenous development of Colombian industrial capitalism (McGreevey, 1971). At the same time, export-commodity production featured a mixture of conservative landlords who had exploited enslaved people until 1851 and thereafter continued to use violence to exploit campesino-tenants and agrarian workers,

modern capitalist investors who looked to accumulate land, employ labour and export commodities, and small-holders in the coffee sector (LeGrand, 1986).

Reforms designed to expand the wage-labour market through emancipation, privatization of Indigenous reserves, expansion of public lands grants, and state-expropriation and sale of church properties were the key modes of state formation and capitalist expansion in the nineteenth century, generally enacted by Liberal governments. But these reforms were each met with armed resistance among conservative landlords (emancipation), Indigenous communities (privatization of the *resguardos*), and the Church (expropriation of “mortmain” property) (McGreevey, 1971; Bergquist 1986[1978]; Nieto Arteta, 1996). Where export-commodity production expanded in other sectors, it depended either on family farm labour (coffee), spatially extensive but labour-saving production (cattle ranching) using large public lands grants, or foreign-owned operations (bananas and later oil). Without endogenous industrialisation and with the development of agrarian capitalism limited to a few export-sectors that usually required only seasonal labour, capitalist relations developed unevenly across the Colombian territory.

The nineteenth century culminated in the bloodiest civil war to that point after the depression in coffee prices from 1896 to 1899, declining rural incomes, and a fiscal crisis of the coffee-export dependent “Gendarme” state (Bergquist, 1978[1986], 109). During the War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902), Liberal guerrillas and the Conservative-controlled army battled at a cost of 100,000 lives, roughly 2.5% of Colombia’s population at the time (McGreevey, 1971, 88; Bergquist, 1986 [1978], 133; Bushnell, 1992, 15). Political upheaval, liquidity crises and civil wars during the period of inter-imperial rivalry indicate the social consequences of the partial integration with an unstable world trading order.

It was only after the War of the Thousand Days that Colombian merchants, financiers and nascent industrial interests realized they could share power with landlords in a national historic bloc based on partial integration with the world market for export commodities along with some endogenous industrial growth in production of consumer goods and simple tools for use in the coffee sector (Safford and Palacios, 2002). This project of elite power-sharing balanced domestic industrial and agricultural interests with those of agricultural exporters from 1902 to 1930. It was enabled by a shared interest in capital accumulation among bourgeois and landed interests but depended on widespread labour suppression to which working people responded

with various acts of resistance, most notably through settlement and expansion of the agricultural frontier (LeGrand, 1986).

Nineteenth and early-twentieth century late capitalist expansion and state formation in Colombia was therefore a form of passive revolution in which capitalist relations were imposed by an alliance of the proto-national bourgeoisie and regional landlords. Rather than looking to expand democracy, this elite class promoted the development of state institutions that enabled landlords and industrialists to exploit a heterogeneous population of subsistence campesinos, Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians and landless agrarian workers.

The Ideological Influence of Fascism on the Dynamics of Passive Revolution

The rise of fascism in Italy prompted Gramsci to deploy his theory of passive revolution, first developed in reference to the nineteenth century expansion of capitalism in the European periphery, to the circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s. “Is not ‘fascism’ precisely a new ‘liberalism’? Is not fascism precisely the form of ‘passive revolution’ proper to the twentieth century as liberalism was to the nineteenth?”(Gramsci, 1971, 119 Q10I§9 in Morton, 2007, 71). Fascism – that “arrogant reactionary movement of capitalism”(Gramsci, 1994, 229) - is an attempt to resolve the contradictions created by the expansion of capitalism through passive revolution in peripheral states. This involves nationalism and corporatism and attracts landlords and the petit bourgeoisie. These classes seek the protection of their interests in the fascist party and nationalist state, although these interests are in contradiction with international finance capital (Gramsci, 1994, 292).⁴ Capitalists, industrialists and bureaucrats tolerated landlord and petty-bourgeois fascists due to their intense opposition to socialism. Capitalists and landlords were united against the growing class consciousness of peasants and agrarian workers (ibid, 227). As such, authorities turned a blind-eye to fascist violence and:

the fervour of the armed offensive prevented any exacerbation of the rift between the urban, petit bourgeois nuclei, which are predominantly parliamentary and collaborationist, and the rural ones, formed by large and medium-sized landowners and the farmers themselves, which are principally

⁴ Morton reads Gramsci’s take on fascism as an attempt by the Italian ruling classes to respond to the uneven development of the world economy through alliances with the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie that emerged from the transformation of the rural economy who could develop Italy’s productive forces to compete with the more advanced economies (Gramsci 1971: 120, Q10I§9; 1978, 350 in Morton, 2007, 71). The fascist political economy was therefore a means to respond to the insertion of Anglo-American financial capital into the Italian economy and to temper its growing power over the Italian state (Gramsci, 1978: 352, 403 in Morton, 2007, 71). Fascism was an attempt to resolve problems in Italian production with violence in the form of exploitation of southern masses at home and the colonial exploitation in Ethiopia abroad (Gramsci, 1978, 352, 371 in ibid).

concerned with the struggle against the peasants and peasants' organizations, resolutely anti-trade union and reactionary in character, and more willing to put their trust in direct armed action than the authority of the State and the efficacy of parliamentarism (Gramsci, 1994, 227-8).

Gramsci observed that the Italian fascists drew most of their support from agricultural producing regions and enjoyed the "protection of the civil and military authorities of the State"(ibid, 228).

Robert Cox extrapolated from Gramsci's analogy of nineteenth century peripheral capitalist development and Italian fascism in the 1920s a theory of the core and peripheral states within the changing international order from the period of British hegemony to the inter-war period. The classic Liberal night-watchman state in the core capitalist countries guaranteed private property, regulated money and enabled free trade in the period of British hegemony (1845-1873) (Cox, 1987, 170). As international hegemony broke down, the welfare nationalist state in the core (1873-1945) united capital, organized labour and the state in attempt to manage the impersonal forces of the world market with internal forces such as inflation, unemployment and profit rates while accepting domestic consensus in favour of market rationality and nationalism (ibid). In contrast, on Europe's periphery, the fascist state established state corporatism where domestic hegemony was absent. This failure of hegemony, Cox notes, happened in Italy (1919-20), Spain during the Civil War, Greece and parts of Latin America in the mid-twentieth century (ibid,196). In those cases, a particular type of fascist authoritarianism appears in the peripheral state which "freezes class antagonisms under a cloak of populist nationalism backed by repression of dissent. It gives the petty bourgeoisie possession of state jobs, turns a blind eye to landlord violence and protects the agricultural interest..." (ibid). Fascism tends to occur when there is a polarization of seemingly irreconcilable interests between an ascendant bourgeoisie and the enduring power of landed interests in control of the state (ibid).

The influence of fascist ideology on Colombian politics in the 1930s and 1940s is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. It must be clarified that the application of the notion of fascism as a form of passive revolution in the Colombian context is not meant to imply that the Colombian state developed the same level of corporatist production relations as Italy, Portugal or Franco's Spain. Rather, the theory of passive revolution explains the emergence of fascist discourse, ideology, and tendencies in Colombia in the 1930s to the 1950s, largely imported from Germany and Spain by the organic intellectual of the Colombian right – Laureano Gomez. According to Short, Gramsci's "premise ... is that while fascism's success in achieving state power was only possible in certain social formations, the global economic crisis was

characterized by the rise of far-right movements more broadly. Indeed, he assessed fascism to be symptomatic of certain specific, but not unique, social formations whose construction had been characterized by the legacy of uneven development, and whose ‘mal-adaptations’ reached a point of crisis”(2015, 114). The legacy of uneven development and the mal-adaptation of mid-twentieth century Colombia proved to be fertile grounds for fascist ideology and discourse which can be accounted for by the theory of passive revolution. What is more, Short continues, “Gramsci examined the crisis of the historically-constituted relationship between the global political economy, state and class structure through the lens of passive revolution”(ibid). Rather than the economic manifestation of fascism, it is the ideological appeal of fascism among the petty-bourgeoisie, both urban and rural, in the context of peripheral underdevelopment that is of interest here in considering fascism as a manifestation of passive revolution (ibid, 116).

In Colombia, as I explore in Chapter 2, an alliance of Liberal financiers, merchants and petty-bourgeois interests joined with communist agrarian workers and populist politicians to construct a popular hegemonic project. The goal was to unite urban and rural working people into democratic institutions in the expansion of capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s but were quickly circumscribed by a counter-hegemonic project of Conservative petty-bourgeois politicians, landlords and an emergent middle class of export-oriented farmers. Inspired by European fascist discourse, this counter-revolutionary surge reached its peak in the 1940s and 1950s and took the form of landlord violence against Liberal and Communist-voting smallholders. Though this fascist resurgence appeared to some as a refeudalization of Colombian production relations (Posada, 1969; Gilhodès, 1972), it is better considered within the theory of passive revolution as an example of petit-bourgeois reaction to ascendant capitalism.

Fascist discourse appealed to family farmers qua rural petit-bourgeois commodity producers insofar as they were vulnerable to foreign capital, but blind to social antagonism, and united behind a crude nationalism. According to Short: “Gramsci characterized ‘fascism’ as a supra-national ideology... incapable of expanding beyond the sphere of that petty-bourgeois stratum which, having no function in production, has no consciousness of social antagonisms,’ a fact he credited Mussolini for understanding, and which explained the fascist attempt to co-opt the working classes by allowing them a small degree of organization but keeping them in check through harassment and repression” (Gramsci, 1978 in Short, 2015, 112). Eventually bourgeois attempts at cooptation and alliance formation with petit-bourgeois interests gave way to

repression of rural workers. As the crisis of the inter-war period deepened into WWII and its effects reverberated in Colombia, capitalist landlord power was violently restored in alliance with nascent industrial interests, merchants and financiers over and against small coffee farming interests with the support of the rising US hegemon in the post-WWII period. The influence of fascist ideology on Colombian politics from the 1930s to the 1950s should not be underestimated, particularly for its role in pushing for state involvement in capitalist modernization, even if empirically the Colombian economy and state did not fully develop along fascist-corporatist lines. Further, the Gramscian reading of fascism as a petty-bourgeois reaction to the crisis of expanding international capital is very pertinent for the Colombian case.

The role of US capital in the expansion of the Colombian developmental state following the failure of democratic hegemony in the 1930s is crucial to understanding how and why Colombian landlords and their industrialist allies so radically opposed meaningful agrarian reforms. Colombian Liberals, divided between loyalty to petty-bourgeois urban classes and some large agricultural exporters, were initially willing to court working class interests and consider agrarian reform to win elections. Ultimately, the strategy adopted by domestic capital and landed interests to modernize the agricultural sector with the assistance of foreign capital involved liquidating the campesino interest. Fascist rhetoric preceded the intensification of dispossession, particularly in the coffee sector where campesinos were politically more powerful than elsewhere in the country's agricultural sphere and in which the worst atrocities of the violence from 1946 to 1957 occurred. Where campesinos had initially gained the most from coffee expansion and public lands settlement was where the most violence was perpetrated against small farmers, peasant communities and Communist enclaves (Bergquist, 1992). Key to this process is the role of fascist ideology and discourse which were adopted by the petty-bourgeois element within the Conservative party and appealed to some segments of the Colombian agrarian petit-bourgeoisie.

Passive Revolution during the Cold War: The Peripheral Developmental State

The domestic promise of expanded consumerism and peacetime employment accompanied the US-led establishment of a new hegemonic order from 1945 to 1973. Under the Bretton Woods system, the post-WWII era featured a relatively free movement of capital, goods and technology between what became the core capitalist counties of Europe, North America and Japan. Exchange rates were stable and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank provided institutional support for the internationalization of capitalist production. The IMF

provided loans to states so they could overcome short-term balance of payments problems and the World Bank financed longer-term development plans. The growing economy and the institutional support for internationalization of production ushered in an era of harmonization of national economic policies (finance, monetary policy and exchange controls) (Cox, 1981, 230). The domestic form of state that underwrote this world order was embedded liberalism.

In contrast to the embedded liberal state of the core capitalist countries after 1945 (Ruggie, 1983), at the periphery of the world economy, “the neo-mercantilist developmentalist state followed the prototype of prewar Italian fascism. It initiated capitalist development as a passive revolution within an authoritarian framework under state leadership for lack of any established bourgeois hegemony” (Cox, 1987, 218). At the centre, where the productive forces were aligned in hegemonic relations domestically, as long as economic growth was on the horizon, support for a liberal international order was strong. At the periphery, where productive forces were less developed, domestic support for further integration into the liberalizing world order was weaker. There, in the peripheral developmentalist state (described as neo-mercantilist by Cox), authoritarian measures became a requisite for expanded capitalist transformations.

As Cox points out (1983, 131), passive revolutions are processes of domestic repression of radical opposition to capitalist and imperialist expansionary tendencies in Colombia, Chile and Mexico in the mid-twentieth century. In these ‘southern’ states, landlord interests encouraged repression of small farmer demands. The consequences were the marginalization of the peasantry but a delayed development of industry due to lagging industrial capacity of late industrializing economies. This imposition of agrarian capitalism without industrialization saw the expansion of a primitive labour market that generated poverty, insecurity, displacement and eventually armed resistance to peasant and worker repression.

Internationalization of production (after 1945) meant that core-country popular demands for better wages, mass consumption of consumer goods, and provision of public services could be met by accelerating the exploitation of third world labour to keep capital accumulation profitable. However, through trade and investment, internationalization also enabled the projection of core-capitalist class power to the periphery. In peripheral states, ruling classes were subject to the pressures placed on them by international finance and competition in the world market, on the one hand, and threats from ‘below’ from popular groups mobilizing for a greater share of state resources. Under these conditions, Cox saw two possible courses of action for

peripheral governments: one was to continue down a revolutionary path toward redistributive development with selective openness to the world market for some commodity exports. “The other is to seek or accept foreign capital and produce for the world market as a means of servicing debt” (ibid, 366). The second option represents the path of least resistance for leaders threatened by popular demands for redistribution in what Cox calls the neo-mercantilist developmental state. What control over domestic development the ruling class gave up to foreign capital would be offset by international political, military and financial power, including *materiel* support for counterinsurgency (ibid, 367).

Rather than using Cox’s term “neo-mercantilist developmental state”, here I use the term “peripheral developmental state.” A peripheral developmental state emerges in Colombia from the 1950s to the 1980s (Chapter 3). Cox’s use of the term Neo-mercantilist and my preference to use “peripheral” capture the element of imperialism that shapes relations between the US hegemonic power and the dominant interests in Colombia, whether merchants, financiers or landlords. A *developmental* logic is present in attempts to expand capitalist social relations, meet some of the elementary popular demands for redistribution (in part through agrarian reform), create opportunities for investment and meet debt service obligations. However, rather than a redistributive developmental logic, the reform process (in 1961) was designed to promote capitalist expansion and the growth of export production for the world market.

This model of growth is predicated on the capacity of the peripheral state to enable landlords and industrialists to exploit low wages in enterprise agriculture on the one hand, or to channel the efforts of small farmers who exploit their own labour to produce export commodities (such as labour-intensive coffee production) into merchant-capitalist social structures of accumulation. Both strategies by the state to promote agricultural export commodity production create competition for available land, one as small farmers compete for viable coffee lands, the other as large-scale capitalist farms attempt to monopolize land to exploit economies of scale, purchase technology from abroad and exploit local workers. Passive revolutionary dynamics in this context of uneven capitalist development and heterogenous production relations tend to favour alliances of landlords with industrial, financial and merchant capitalist elites. Thus emerges the tendency to co-opt the democratic impulses in the agrarian reform process, resulting in further agrarian capitalist expansion without substantive democracy and without self-sustaining domestic industrialisation. In other words, agrarian reform without large-scale

redistribution of property only serves to bolster the power of those who already have large endowments of land and/or are already using wage labour to produce export commodities.

Passive Revolution Post-Bretton Woods: Disciplinary Neoliberalism

The general economic crisis of the 1970s enabled the emergence of a neoliberal transnational historic bloc which had become globally dominant by the early 1990s based on “the growth in the structural power of internationally mobile, large-scale capital” (Gill, 1991, 55-56).

According to Stephen Gill:

Since the early 1990s, the capitalist system has become more universal and as such, the historical structures of the new world order – in politics, law and culture – are being transformed, partly by virtue of the growing power and mobility of transnational capital and associated neo-liberal ideas, ideologies and theories. This has produced movements towards a market civilization configured by disciplinary neoliberalism, new constitutionalism, and extensive and often coercive methods of discipline and surveillance (Gill, 2003, 68-69).

Disciplinary Neoliberalism refers to the set of institutions, ideas and material forces that structure the conditions for a transnational capitalist historic bloc. Neoliberalism is disciplinary in two senses: 1) structural power over institutions; and 2) capillary power over behaviour (ibid, 131).

Institutionally, neoliberalism is expressed through market-based reforms and monetarist policies entrenched in laws that put fiscal regulation out of the hands of democratically elected politicians and into the hands of technocrats, often implicitly endowing corporate capital with the rights of citizenship and subordinating democratic institutions to global financial markets (Gill, 2003, 131-32). The New Constitutionalism is the term used to describe how neoliberal ideology and policies have been institutionalised and inscribed into the very structures of dominance within states and between them (Gill, 2012, 5). Globalized capitalist production and financial capital accumulation have created new imperial hierarchies and potential rivalries between states but have also undermined the power of states vis-à-vis markets, resulting in the expansion of the capitalist heartland, the transnational liberal space, or the market civilization (Gill, 2003, 118).

Disciplinary neoliberalism and the new constitutionalism together represent another iteration of passive revolution in peripheral states. Neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s involved accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2004) and political programmes of privatization of state resources, liberalization of currency and removal of barriers to cross-border accumulation, leading to greater international integration but also debt and crisis. The neoliberal expansion was motivated by a financial logic of power to create outlets for investment. However, over time, the continued expansion of investment opportunities made territorial conquest

necessary. Shunning attempts to construct domestic hegemony among working people (both urban and rural alike) as well as non-capitalist subsistence producers and Indigenous communities, Colombian elites have welcomed neoliberal restructuring as a means to enhance the power of Colombian capital and enlist US military power in pursuit of its internal military struggles for territorial control and dominance. In the neoliberal conjuncture, Colombia faced a profound crisis of internal security, the growing power of illegal armed groups, and a powerful campesino insurgent movement. Rather than democratizing the political institutions of the state and redistributing land, incomes and political power, the Colombian elite (petty-bourgeois politicians, technocrats, industrial interests, financiers, merchants and landlords) chose to unite behind the interests of foreign capital.

Among the contradictions of neoliberal capital accumulation which ideologically favour ‘free-markets’, deregulation and the erosion of the capacity of the state to intervene in the economy to redistribute wealth, is the growing power of the state as a disciplinary force. This force is used to impose and maintain the conditions for expanded capital accumulation including the enforcement of private property rights, the privatization of collective goods and the repression of dissent and organized resistance.

As export-agricultural commodity production has continued to expand globally since the 1970s, climate change, large-scale agribusiness operations, natural resource extraction and austerity policies have prompted land grabs, rapid urbanization and growing insecurity for many people in the global south (White et al., 2012, 627). The crisis-prone global food regime features land grabs in the form of enclosures that are symptomatic of efforts to reconstitute the profitability of global capital in agriculture (McMichael, 2012). The sources of the crisis include broad ecological and economic forces such as climate change that prompt efforts to stabilize the food and fuel regime to ensure adequate supplies and open new sources of profit for global agribusiness. In this context, demands for reforms among agrarian working people, as in other processes of passive revolution, are met with market-based “solutions” (Deininger, 1999; Deininger et al., 2003). Market-led agrarian reforms function not to redistribute latifundio to campesinos, but rather enable the expansion of agrarian-industries that exploit large economies of scale through land monopolization, displacement and labour exploitation.

Agrarian Reform as a Component of Passive Revolution

In contrast to the management of class conflict in societies with hegemonic politics, passive revolutionary states have much more complex class relations, particularly due to the underdevelopment of agriculture, which pose greater obstacles to agrarian reform. “In typical peripheral States, like Italy, Poland, Spain or Portugal ... between the proletariat and capitalism there is a broad band of intermediate classes, which seek to promote (and, in a certain sense, succeed in promoting) politics of their own, with ideologies that often influence broad strata of the proletariat, but that have a particular hold over the peasant masses”(Gramsci, 1994, 298). The uneven development of capitalism creates several layers of classes between capital and agrarian labour that complicates the formation of a coherent and pro-worker agrarian reform. The class heterogeneity of the peripheral capitalist state, with its unevenly developed capitalist relations, particularly in agriculture, is prone to fascist impulses and ideology. When agrarian reforms are implemented as a means to promote capitalist expansion rather than for the redistribution of lands to the working classes, these reforms follow the pattern of passive revolutions in that their outcome bolsters the interests of the wealthy and powerful in control of the capitalist state.

In the twentieth century, the terms “agrarian reform” and “land reform” have been used, sometimes interchangeably, to refer to various measures to alter or transform the agrarian structure including patterns of land tenure of Latin American countries (Bernstein and Byres, 2001, 2; Bernstein, 2010; Bernstein and Byres, 2001; Byres, 2004; White et al, 2012; Akram-Lodhi, 2007; Courville & Patel, 2006). Typically, the goals of agrarian reform are “to transform the agrarian sector from a feudal system to a capitalist one and within the sector, to transfer the control of land from the elites to the peasants” (Ballantyne et al., 2000, 695; for a similar definition see Feder, 1969, 233). Proponents of agrarian reform often assume rural inequality and unrest is due to feudalism remnants which must be overcome by capitalist revolution. They assume that reform means that rural property will be redistributed more equitably. This, however, represents a fundamental misapprehension of the source of rural inequality, rural economic violence and the aims and objectives of agrarian capitalist reforms. Agrarian capitalist reforms are designed to promote capitalist expansion based on the rationalization of factors of production including land, labour and capital to exploit economies of scale, arable land and workers. These reforms therefore favour those who can access land, labour and capital and marginalize those who cannot.

Colombian land reformers have likewise obfuscated the dynamics of capitalist development and the effects of capitalist expansion on extant conditions in rural areas that present as problems of “backwardness.” At various stages in 20th century Colombian history, as I shall explore in Chapters 2 to 4, architects of reforms argued that their task was to convert the pre-capitalist hacienda to a capitalist farm. However, in fact, the feudal hacienda had already transitioned through a bifurcation into peasant capitalism and large-scale capitalist latifundio by the 1930s (LeGrand, 1986, xii; McGreevey, 1971). The modern concentration of property was the result of a heavily contested, partial capitalist revolution in the late nineteenth century characterized by the emergence of agrarian capitalism without a corresponding growth of industrial capitalism, due in large part to the tendency of Britain to flood peripheral economies with cheap manufactures in the free trade era, destroying local artisanal production (Bulmer-Thomas, 2014; Thorp, 1998). This ‘pre-industrial’ agrarian capitalist transition pushed peasants further into the frontiers to establish subsistence farms and petty commodity production.

In part in response to the rise of agrarian populism that demanded “land to the tiller” as well as the mobilization activities of socialist and communist cadres, in 1936, a land reform law was passed in Colombia that attempted to regulate conflict over private claims to land by establishing the criteria for legitimate enclosure (Palacios, 2011). Rather than responding to demands for substantive redistribution of estate lands and latifundio, the tenurial reforms merely rationalized or legitimated the criteria for legitimate possession of land, primarily ‘unoccupied’ public lands. Those landlords and family farmers who were able to assert their rights and legal claims through administrative processes and the courts were best able to take advantage of tenurial reforms (Hirschman, 1971 [1963], 114; Bushnell, 1993, 188; Palacios, 2011, 216; Roldán, 2002, 17). When it became clear that some small farmers had also benefited from the reforms, an aggressive campaign of agrarian counter-reform along with organized paramilitary violence was orchestrated by landlords, wealthy campesinos and Conservative politicians to reconquer the terrain that small farmers had gained in the immediate aftermath of the 1936 reform, as I discuss in Chapter 2.

By the post WWII conjuncture Colombia was in the midst of escalating rural violence and armed conflict over arable farmland and territorial control on the frontiers. As a means to resolve this acute conflict, redistributive land reforms proposed in 1961 seemed to encourage more diffuse patterns of land ownership. Under the peripheral developmental state, these

measures were ostensibly designed to expand access to hacienda land among peasant farmers and break-up “feudal agriculture.” Instead, they favoured large-scale capitalist producers who could better compete in a capitalist world food market and marginalized the poor as I explain in Chapter 3.

In the neoliberal period, market-led agrarian reforms which ostensibly would benefit family farmers with access to credit and land, actually strengthened large-scale capitalist farmers who obtained greater access to land through the consolidation of unproductive subsistence farming units. The resulting concentrations of property and rural displacement were met with even greater demands for agrarian reform from below among grassroots campesino organizations in the 1990s and 2000s which have yet to be addressed by the state. Indeed, the large-scale transfer of land from the poor to the wealthy and the subsequent crisis of mass displacement in Colombia in the neoliberal period has been called the “agrarian counter-reform” (Grajales, 2011; Albán, 2011; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010b; van Isschot, 2018). This process is discussed in Chapter 4.

In Colombia, transformations of agrarian relations generally stem from growth in demand for commodities at the international level. Entrepreneurial landlords look to expand production by expelling peasants and hiring seasonal workers or investing in additional machinery and land to expand commodity production; successful peasants may seek changes to land tenure arrangements with landlords to reduce rents or acquire more land and hire workers. Sustained agrarian conflicts have resulted from these processes of agrarian capitalist expansion. These conflicts disrupt food production, generate insecurity and create crises of authority which become acute at moments of more generalized crises in the international commodities markets (1930s, 1970s, 1990s). Through these moments of crisis, disruption and resistance, new political alliances form behind particular development strategies and various groups demand state intervention to resolve the crisis, often with demands for reform. The dynamics of passive revolution that give rise to these crises, and the substantive nature of reforms proposed as solutions to these crises, I argue, explain the origin and propagation of conflict and extreme violence in Colombia. In the historical/empirical chapters, I construct an analytical narrative to explore how historical periods of land reform in Colombia (1936-1944; 1961-1973; 1991-1994) have articulated with conflict.

I examine the interrelationships between world order, power and production vis-à-vis three concerns that shape the consequences of agrarian reform at the three conjunctures:

- a) How global political-economic conditions shape accumulation strategies in Colombia;
- b) How the specific interests of class factions shape state policy in Colombia
- c) How the consequences of ‘passive revolutionary’ land reforms have contributed to the dynamics of capital accumulation and conflict.

In the following chapters, I argue that competition for land and labour between agribusiness entrepreneurs and smallholders has led to identifiable patterns of conflict over land during phases of expansion in commodity production (usurpation of lands, organized resistance, and armed conflict). At moments of crisis when *campesino* demands for land become acute, factions of the political elite have shown a willingness to entertain land reform as a means to promote rural order (in the 1930s, late 1950s and early 1990s). However, attempts to implement land reforms have actually aggravated the conditions of unequal land tenure and conflict for several reasons. Proponents of reforms overlook the degree to which landlords in Colombia have already adopted capitalist accumulation strategies. Proposals designed to promote the conversion of peasant holdings to capitalist farms therefore favour established capitalist farmers at the same time as they accelerate the processes whereby smallholders become landless. Colombian landlords, merchants, industrialists and financiers have been able to rely on alliances with foreign powers to access credit, establish conditions for foreign capital accumulation and provide export commodities to foreign markets. They have done so through the suppression of demands for democracy and redistribution of land “from below”, displaying a pattern of passive revolutionary domination over subaltern classes. Transnational alliances function to constrain the ideological spectrum, policy options and accumulation strategies available to the Colombian elite such that during crises where demands for reform become acute, redistributive reforms have been dismissed.

CHAPTER 2: LAW 200 OF 1936 & LA VIOLENCIA AS PASSIVE REVOLUTION

Through the processes of agrarian conflict, reform and reaction, a passive capitalist revolution occurred in Colombia between the 1920s and the 1950s. Conflicts began with the emergence of campesino protest movements during the growth of coffee export production prior to the commodities price crash of 1929. The coffee sector was dominated by a combination of eastern highland landlords who exploited agrarian labour on large farms and western coffee smallholders who exploited their own labour in coffee export production (Bejerano Avila, 2015 [1987]). These two regionally diverse modes of coffee production enabled the country to integrate with the world market more deeply than ever before but the historical tendency of wealthy families to claim large tracts of land through public lands grant programs, expansion of the coffee frontier by family farmers, and the interest highland entrepreneurs took in coffee-zones contributed to conflicts between landlords and tenants over labour conditions, rents, access to land and control over production (LeGrand, 1986). When the world market crashed, lost coffee incomes and rising import costs bankrupted some commercial coffee estates at the same time as it sent many Colombian workers back into subsistence production on available agricultural land, further generating conflicts with titular landlords and plantation owners.

Law 200 of 1936 came in the context of increasing demands for land redistribution among the agrarian working classes and was part of a Colombian “New Deal” called the “Revolution on the March”. Those calling for radical, pro-peasant reforms such as Jorge Eliecer Gaitán and young radical Liberals such as Carlos Lleras Restrepo envisioned hegemonic inter-class alliances between family farmers, workers, and industrialists (Braun, 1985). However, in 1936, under pressure from the landlords’ lobby and fascist discourse on the right, Liberal reformers abandoned hegemonic inter-class politics and instead emphasized efficiency of commercial production. This aggravated tension between smallholders on increasingly fragmented plots of scarce coffee land; the war-time shortages of WWII and growing anti-communism saw to it that the moderate gains in access to land following the 1936 law were, in the 1940s, met with counter-reforms and instrumental violence (*la Violencia*). The targets of the violence – largely Liberal and Communist voting coffee farmers and agrarian workers, the economic nature of the violence as a means of land grabbing, and the political identities of its perpetrators and sponsors, rural cliques of politicians, mercenaries and landlords, reveal the violence as an organized assault designed to destroy family farm production and kick-start large-

scale enterprise production (Bergquist, 1992; Brittain, 2005; Kalmanovitz, 1996). I argue here that *la Violencia* was designed to impose capitalist relations upon the agrarian sector and reconstitute the power of landlords and was an extension of the passive revolutionary tendencies inherent in the 1936-1944 reform and counter-reform process.

The consequences of this imposition of landlord control over coffee production reverberated throughout the country, displacing thousands to agrarian frontiers, creating a mass primitive labour market for industry and enterprise agriculture, and setting the stage for the peripheral developmental state (Kalmanovitz, 1996). This was a dynamic of revolution-restoration to impose capitalist subjectivity upon the rural sector from above, restoring landlord power to a sector that had given promise to peasant producers and consolidating control over national production in the hands of industrialists, financiers, and modern capitalist landlords. Politically this ruling class alliance was united in their opposition to the workers movement and were fervently anti-communist, committed as they were to expanded capital accumulation, even though they were divided by region, sector and party.

Context: International Political Economy, Domestic Classes & Conflict Prior to 1936

To provide the proper context for the 1936-44 period of agrarian reform as a component of passive revolution, this section begins with a description of how international political economic forces shaped domestic class and state formation in Colombia (1902-1936). From the onset of US imperial action to separate Panama from Colombia, to the Santa Marta Banana zone, to the oil sector, the actions of the US state, investors and corporations, as bitter as they were to workers and progressives, were largely invited in by Colombian politicians. The historic landlord-merchant bloc that governed through the Conservative Party from 1902 to 1930 consisted of a coalition of political elites that generally agreed on the principles of classic laissez-faire liberalism (free trade, gold-backed currency and comparative advantage). They became increasingly divided in the late 1920s and 30s over the extent of popular enfranchisement, the role of the Church in society, and the necessity of reforms to rural production relations (Bergquist, 1976 [1986]). By that time, new political coalitions vied for control over the national state, one based on a combination of Medellin industrialists, small western coffee farmers, ranchers and sugar producers (mostly affiliated with the Conservative Party); the other based on Eastern highland coffee farmers, merchants, financiers and urban middle classes who initially courted electoral alliances with urban workers (in the Liberal Party).

As before the War of a Thousand Days, there was growth in the production of export commodities on commercial latifundio after 1902, largely in areas of recent colonization. Meanwhile, the growth of export-commodity production created new opportunities for ambitious peasant farmers, free labour, and the expansion of foreign investment in infrastructure. The confluence of imperialism, elite repression and rural displacement prompted mass political mobilization. New class dynamics in the growing cities pushed the electoral balance toward the Liberal Party in 1930 during the world market crash. Rural unrest over access to land, working conditions and landlord repression intensified. Faced with demands for redistributive land reform, high foreign debt-loads and increasing competition for land on the coffee frontier, various land reform bills were debated in Congress for several years between 1933 and 1936.

International Political Economic Forces Shaping Colombian Production Relations 1902-1936

From 1902 to 1929 the interests of Colombian merchants, export-oriented agricultural producers and politicians aligned with US investors in the development of Colombian oil, coffee and bananas. At first under threat of coercion and then with the acquiescence of a bipartisan bloc of Conservative and Liberal politicians, Colombia became integrated with an expanding US social structure of accumulation built on naval power, capitalist investment and strategic trade alliances targeting specific commodities of interest to the US (Bergquist, 1996, 50-56; Bulmer-Thomas, 2014; Rippy, 1931). Although the role of the United States in the territorial dismemberment of Colombia led to accusations of imperialism and negotiations over reparations, Colombian Presidents and foreign ministers consistently sought investment from US firms and markets for Colombian exports throughout the early part of the 20th century (Bushnell, 1993, 165). It is these strategic investments, courted and enabled by Colombian politicians, that indicate a growing class alliance between Colombian merchants, export-oriented landlords, wealthy urban families, politicians and US-based companies and investors.

In 1899 the Boston-based United Fruit Company (UFC now Chiquita) started producing bananas in the Magdalena Department of Colombia for export to the US. “United Fruit has been considered the quintessential representative of American imperialism in Latin America, holding the local governments in its pocket, controlling the local economy of the host countries, and harshly exploiting plantation workers” (Bucheli, 2004, 182). United Fruit took advantage of the railway between Santa Marta and Bogotá to expand its territorial control, expropriating lands

from smallholders along the rail route, bribing police, judges and politicians, and taking monopoly control over rail, water and road transportation and communication networks (Kalmanovitz, 2003, 92-93). As imperialist as it was, the Colombian government sought out investments of this sort in order to expand the railway and maritime transportation infrastructure and discipline radical sectors of the agrarian workforce.

US demand for Colombian coffee grew from 1902 to 1930 and formed the material basis for a transnational, Colombian-US class interest in favour of free-trade consisting of a multinational bloc of merchants, coffee roasters, retailers and bankers (Jiménez, 1995a, 41). Coffee production in Colombia was dominated by eastern highland landlords with large estates, some employing wage labour, others sharecroppers, while western Antioquian coffee production was predominantly controlled by family farmers (Bejerano Avila, 2015[1987]). Initially, Colombian roasters and merchants benefitted from the expansion of trade, but during the 1920s US-based companies took over financing of coffee exports from Colombian firms with the support of North American commercial banks and expanded control over roasting (Jiménez, 1995a, 45).

To promote the export of bananas and coffee, the Urrutia-Thompson Treaty was negotiated and signed in 1915 by Colombian and American delegates, granting reparations and favourable access to the Panama Canal Zone to Colombian exports. Its ratification by the US Congress in 1922 released the \$25 Million of indemnity, in part as a reward for Colombia granting the 300,000 ha oilfield known as the De Mares Concession in 1919 to the Tropical Oil Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey (Rippy, 1931, 113). Lesley Gill describes how the area became an enclave of US capital as the company managed the labour force and regulated social life in Barrancabermeja. “The subsequent development of the oil enclave was tied to the construction of roads and pipelines and the expansion of fluvial transportation that integrated the oil zone more tightly with world markets and the corporation’s North American headquarters than with Colombia”(Gill, 2016, 36).

With the Indemnity funds, access to private loans from Wall Street, and investment in Colombian transportation infrastructure came pressure from the US to reform the banking and monetary sectors. On the advice of the visiting Kemmerer Mission, President Pedro Nel Ospina created the Banco de la República in 1923 to issue currency and to regulate the money supply and exchange rate by adopting the gold standard, ensuring the stability of the domestic financial

sector and making accessible additional US loans (Drake, 1989). After 1924 there was a massive influx of US capital in the forms of direct investments, private loans and expanded trade (Rippy, 1931, 152). Between 1925 and 1930, the United States sent tools, construction materials, and automobiles to Colombia while the US bought almost all of Colombia's coffee harvest which accounted for 65% of the value of all Colombian exports (ibid). The combined actions of US firms in the oil, bananas, banking and coffee sectors prompted perceptions of US imperial overreach (Safford & Palacios, 2002, 269).

As conflicts among agricultural workers and landlords increased over the terms of labour relations on banana plantations and access to scarce coffee lands, heavy-handed tactics characterized state-labour relations in the late 1920s. December 6, 1928 was the date of the massacre of banana workers striking against the United Fruit Company in Ciénaga by the Colombian army as US Marines waited offshore (Bushnell, 1993, 164). The death toll has been given variably as 13 (the army), 600 – 1000 (Gaitán), 1500 (the UFC) or 3000 (Gabriel Garcia Marquez) (Partridge, 1979, 496; Albán, 2011, 338). The massacre indicated the willingness of the Colombian state to use force to serve the interest of foreign companies against agrarian workers and became a rallying point against US imperialism and domestic oligarchic acquiescence in the years that followed.

Power: Class Interests, Capital Accumulation and State Formation 1902 to 1936

Although the 1902 to 1930 period was one of relative peace among moderate Conservatives and historic Liberal elites united around support for free trade, there were competing class coalitions vying for control over the state that threatened to express their differences through armed conflict by the early 1930s. On the one hand was a political coalition of Medellín industrialists and western small coffee farmers, united by Catholic values and the Conservative Party. They were joined in the Conservative Party by regional elites elsewhere in the country who dominated cattle, sugar cane or domestic food production, often deploying strict landlord-tenant production relations based on renting, sharecropping or even debt-peonage. Among these regional landlords were large coffee plantation owners from the eastern highlands.

On the other side of the political aisle was a coalition of some of the more progressive highland coffee plantation owners who employed wage labour, sought foreign credit and believed in free trade. These were joined in the Liberal party by financiers, merchants, artisans, and urban middle class professionals and skilled workers. Meanwhile, employment by US-based

companies in the oil and banana sectors had forged alliances among displaced peasants, transportation workers, tenants on highland farms and some Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities who expressed themselves politically through the trade unions and the Revolutionary Socialist Party in the 1920s, which became the Communist Party of Colombia in 1930 (Gill, 2004, 53). This heterogeneous array of classes, coalitions and parties, fragmented by region and by production relations, created obstacles to the emergence of viable peasant-worker coalitions in the 1930s and instead favoured the formation of elite coalitions of landlords, merchants and industrialists that could take control of the national state by the mid-1940s (Roldan, 2002; Jiménez, 1995b). These obstacles to popular organization stemmed from regional divisions which hindered communications and mobilization among agrarian social movements and split the workers' representatives into socialists, communists and anarchists (Vega, 2004; Gill, 2004); meanwhile the classic Liberal and Conservative party apparatuses had a longer history of political organization at the national level and though they tended to be divided by region, regionally powerful elites who tended to veto redistributive policies predominated the established parties (Uribe Lopez, 2009; Oquist, 1980).

The wealthiest Colombian families, since the late nineteenth century, tended to reinvest agricultural surpluses in import-exports, retail, finance, mining, transportation and real estate, including urban and rural lands, as well as public land bonds. This created a degree of homogeneity of the monied families at the top of Colombian society – the “oligarchy” (López Michelsen, 2003, 13-14; LeGrand, 1986, 34). Between 1902 and 1930, Colombia was governed through the Conservative Party apparatus with a degree of bi-partisan power-sharing in cabinet and political appointments among a landlord-merchant bloc with a shared interest in classic laissez-faire liberalism (free trade, gold-backed currency and comparative advantage) (Rausch, 1993, 221; Roldán, 2002, 15). The oligarchy used its influence over the state to expand the conditions for capital accumulation in Colombia in a variety of sectors including coffee, cattle, bananas and textiles. Where they were unable to finance growth, they sought investment from abroad – in transportation, mining and oil. However, this nationally-oriented oligarchy had trouble creating a mass base of support among workers and campesinos because of the heterogeneity of production relations, labour regimes and inequality across the various regions (Bergquist, 1976 [1986]).

Uneven capitalist development exacerbated regional differences in production relations in the various parts of the country and produced alternative political coalitions that emerged to challenge the classical merchant-landlord bloc. The Antioquian political coalition that was mostly expressed through the Conservative Party consisted of Medellín-based miners, ranchers and industrialists. They were joined in the ranks of the Conservative Party by a class of independent commercial family farmers in Antioquia, Caldas and Risaralda (Roldán, 2002, 31). This industrious class of *Paisa* smallholders provided a market for Medellín-based manufacturers of textiles, processed foods, tools, coffee-processing machinery, jute sacks, canned beverages and liquors. The *Paisa* farmers and industrialists shared Catholic social values and a commitment to work, discipline and capitalism (ibid). The Antioquian small farming class grew out of settler-colonization of frontier areas in search of suitable land for coffee cultivation in the Departments of Caldas, Risaralda and Tolima from 1890 to 1929 (LeGrand, 1986, 13; Kalmanovitz, 2003, 81-82). Frontier settlement brought Antioquian colonists into conflict with Indigenous peoples, Mestizo subsistence peasants, and Afro-Colombians, many of whom were victimized by economic violence in the 1940s and 50s (Roldán, 2002; Palacios, 2006; Henao Holguín, 2015).

In contrast, in the Eastern Cordillera another political coalition emerged from what Jiménez calls the Planter society of the Upper Magdalena River valley, home to proto-capitalist landlords who came to prominence during the first wave of the coffee boom (1995b, 265). Merchant-landlords found commercial success by converting old multi-family colonial haciendas with tenant sharecroppers into coffee plantations employing wage labourers. Success in these ventures prompted them to establish new latifundio on public lands. As wage labour and labour-saving technological adaptations in coffee washing, roasting and packaging expanded, so did urbanization toward Bogotá, stimulating some internal demand for consumer goods and construction materials (Kalmanovitz, 2003, 86). The Eastern coffee barons reinvested coffee profits in the financial sector, proto-industrial activity, real estate and land. The institutions that formed to protect the interests of the eastern highland coffee planters included the national agricultural lobby (SAC) founded in 1904, (a state Ministry of Agriculture formed in 1914), and the National Federation of Coffee Growers founded in 1927 (Jiménez, 1995b, 265).

Eastern highland landlord-merchants come financiers, however, were politically divided between the Conservative and Liberal parties. Some progressive coffee landlords were part of the

Liberal party, committed to free labour and improved working conditions, and were joined in the ranks of that party by artisans, urban middle classes and skilled workers. Others, “lords of knife and noose” Kalmanovitz calls them (2003, 98), continued to exploit traditional landlord-peasant, sharecropping and rental arrangements with workers, taking advantage of local subsistence production to keep wages and coffee production costs lower. These more traditional hacendados were affiliated with the Conservative Party.

According to Jiménez, the coffee planters of the Upper Magdalena had trouble maintaining stable coalitions, either within the Conservative or Liberal parties, because they faced increasing competition from coffee producers in western Colombia including small farmers who had lower production costs. Meanwhile, Upper Magdalena planters faced competition for political and social power from cattle and sugar producers in the Cauca valley who were able to corner a growing share of domestic food markets (Jiménez, 1995b, 264-266). While the various agricultural interests cooperated to promote state investment in infrastructure for communication and transportation, they tended to view economic protectionism in different lights with the sugar, rice and wheat producers favouring tariffs that the pro-trade coffee planters opposed (ibid, 267). The Conservative Party therefore could potentially use nationalist rhetoric to unite Medellín industrialists, *Paisa* coffee farmers, and domestic sugar, cotton and beef producers into the Conservative Party apparatus behind a set of tariffs and produce for the home market with some coffee, mineral and beef exports. Meanwhile, the Liberal Party attempted to unite the more progressive elements of the landlord-merchant bloc, eastern highland financiers and urban middle and working classes. Circa 1930, the country was thus divided geographically along Liberal and Conservative Party lines, with Conservatives in Antioquia and the Cauca Valley, Boyacá and Santander and Liberals in some places along the coast, in the Upper Magdalena and in parts of Cundinamarca, Tolima and the Llanos (eastern plains).

International political economic forces shaped the relations between the political coalitions and altered the possibilities for domestic inter-class alliances, subverting the possibility of democratic coalitions of workers and peasants from substantively shaping the direction of national economic policy and land use laws. After WWI the rate of export-growth took off. Coffee income underwrote the expansion of the state and public works (Bulmer-Thomas, 2014, 483-492). Coffee revenue in private hands enabled capital accumulation and investment and led to a concentration of financial power in Bogotá’s banking sector (Palacios,

2006, 52). In the public sphere, coffee revenues allowed for an expansion of the state bureaucracy. The budget of the Ministry of public works grew from 3.6 percent of the national state budget in 1911 to 20.1 percent in 1920 and 35 percent in 1929 (Bushnell, 1993, 167). By 1916 there were 42,700 public employees - ten times the number in 1875 - employed in public works, post and telegraph offices, transportation sector and the armed forces, education and public health (Palacios, 2006, 52).

Coffee-based export expansion, bananas, oil and infrastructure projects along with an influx of foreign capital ushered in the expansion of the labour market, urbanization and some industrialization. In 1918 the rural population of Colombia was 4,625,000 people (79%) of the country's total population while the urban population was 1,231,000 (21%). By 1930, the urban population was 24% of the national total (1,934,000 people lived in cities) while 76% (or 5,419,000) lived in the country (Vega, 2004, 11). While there was a process of urbanization evident in the 1920s, this urbanization was not accompanied by mass proletarianization due to a lack of sustained industrialization. In 1930 there were 150 industrial entities in Colombia that together employed more than 50,000 workers but which only accounted for 0.6% of the country's population and only 2.6% of the urban population (Wright, 1981[1980], 53). The rest of the urban workforce was employed on public works projects, in small-scale artisanal production, in retail, transportation, in the service sector, or as professionals. The vast majority of the population was still employed in agriculture.

What industrialization did occur was in backward linkages to items of demand in Colombia including "factories to produce agricultural tools, machines to extract coffee beans from their berries, mills for processing sugar cane, pickaxes for small-scale mining – and shotguns for Liberals and Conservatives" (Palacios, 2006, 61). Urbanization in Colombia in the 1920s indicated a process of exodus from overpopulated rural areas. But industry remained underdeveloped, in large part due to free trade policies and agreements with the United States, the UK, Germany and France that kept Colombian borders open to foreign manufactures, stunting growth of industry for all but the most basic necessities.

The international order changed radically in 1929. With the crash of the world market, loans and coffee revenue dried up, undermining the competitiveness of the eastern highland coffee barons vis-à-vis western family coffee farmers. The elections of 1930 featured outbreaks of partisan violence over accusations of electoral fraud but Liberals claimed electoral victory

over a divided Conservative party “amid rumors of fiscal mismanagement and accusations that they sacrificed the lives of Colombian workers to U.S. interests during the 1928 United Fruit strike in Santa Marta”(Roldán, 2002, 16). The stock market crash and the ensuing crisis of capitalism and imperialism had repercussions for heavily indebted agricultural countries.

In response to the liquidity crisis, Colombia’s exporters and merchant capitalists cut their losses, forcing the working poor to adapt to currency devaluations and rising prices of imports through unemployment, wage cuts and a return to subsistence production. Capital imports and investment along with Colombians’ ability to purchase foreign textiles dropped dramatically to the tune of 68% between 1928 and 1932. This prompted a growth of internal production of textiles and other consumer goods, tools, and building supplies (Ocampo, 1984, 121).

Colombia attempted to navigate the uncertain world of the early 1930s by signalling its long-term interests in growth and eventual debt repayment to international creditors while ensuring its short-term interests through expanded production of coffee and gold for export along with state intervention to support local industrialization to replace imports (Safford & Palacios, 2002, 275; Ocampo, 1984, 120; Thorp and Londoño, 1984, 99-101). Meanwhile, tariffs, currency devaluation and then a recovery of the coffee price, coupled with increased exports of gold and oil saw some recovery in the balance of payments after 1932. Gold went from three percent of Colombia’s exports in 1925 to 1929 to 12 percent of its exports from 1930 to 1938 (Safford and Palacios, 2002, 275). Coffee exports went from 2.9 million bags in 1929 to 4 million bags in 1937 (Thorp and Londoño, 1984, 99).

Colombia’s position as a peripheral state in the 1930s had left it dependent upon US capital for loans, on foreign factories for imports and on American consumers for markets for its coffee. Colombia’s economy was vulnerable to instability from commodity price fluctuations and variable exchange and interest rates while its own manufacturing sector was stunted. Further, its economic underdevelopment put it at the mercy of US imperialist tendencies. Nevertheless, the key tenet of this accumulation strategy was the interest of Colombian politicians, merchants, and regional agricultural producers to develop export infrastructure which was predicated on the acquisition of US capital to invest in roads, railways, and maritime transportation infrastructure. Part of this package was the use of political coercion to suppress real wages and accumulate property in the hands of Colombian landlords and multinational corporations to keep the countryside open to capitalist investment. However, the crisis of the 1930s gave Colombian

policy makers some leeway to implement reforms, promote domestic industrialization and flirt with redistributive policies.

Liberal President Enrique Olaya Herrera (1930-34) implemented monetary policy, fiscal measures and foreign exchange controls designed to promote financial stability. Restrictions on imports were put in place to protect the banking and industrial sectors. Interventionist policies included direct taxation, government income redistribution, a series of social reforms, and direct stimulation of heavy industry (coal, petroleum). This ideological position, shared by some members of the Liberal Party, including Lopez Pumarejo, Lleras Restrepo and Eduardo Santos was part of “a larger conception of the need for a type of ‘national capitalism’ conscious of its ‘social responsibilities’”(Ocampo, 1984, 126). This aperture for reformism after a half century of classical liberalism, free trade and the gold standard was enabled by the collapse of the world commodities market in 1929-30, the subsequent depression and nationalist resistance to US imperial action including Colombian Conservative-government complicity in the murder of workers in the banana zone. However, this same collapse created political instability. The old liberal trading order was dying but the new was not yet born and Colombians differed stridently on what shape the new economy would take.

Conflict over Production Relations in the Coffee Sector and Beyond

The dynamics of Colombian coffee production and its effects on frontier settlement are central to understanding the “molecular changes which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes”(Gramsci, 1971, 109). The coffee sector is where agrarian reform was most effective in both dampening and challenging popular demands, amplifying involvement in the market relations in response to international demand, and in violently repressing dissent and worker radicalism.

The coffee sector developed through a dual process that involved the transformation of eastern highland haciendas into commercial coffee plantations (Cundinamarca, Boyacá and Santander) and simultaneously through the rise of a class of self-employed capitalist smallholders in the frontier areas of Antioquia, Tolima and Caldas. From an annual export of 500,000 sacks of 60 kg of coffee in 1904, coffee exports reached two million sacks by 1921 and three million sacks by 1928 (FEDECAFÉ 1932, 127). Coffee, as a percentage of exports rose from 31 percent in 1910 to 69 percent in 1919 and 80 percent by 1925 (Thorp and Londoño, 1984, 83). Colombia was second only to Brazil in world coffee production by the mid 1920s

(Bushnell, 1993, 169). Coffee-based export income and an influx of foreign loans financed the country's transportation network, linking, for the first time, the coffee, banana, coal and petroleum zones via rail and road to the fluvial transportation axis along the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers to the Caribbean port of Barranquilla (Thorp, 1991, 2-5).

Following the War of the Thousand Days, vast tracts of public lands at mid-altitudes suitable for coffee cultivation drew thousands of families from Antioquia south into the coffee frontiers of Risaralda, Caldas, Quindio and the Cauca Valley (Bergquist, 1978(1986), 231). Settling on relatively small plots of land, these family farms featured the efforts of men, women and children in the labour-intensive process of planting, pruning, picking, sorting and drying coffee beans (Bergquist, 1978(1986), 231). Bejerano Avila 2015 [1987], 182). Alongside the coffee bushes on the small farms of these Antioquian settlers were subsistence crops such as maize, plantain, yucca, beans and potatoes with a few pigs, chickens or ducks. These self-sufficient Colombian coffee plots accounted for as much as 75% of coffee production but ensured that Colombia imported much less food than Peru in the first half of the 20th century (Thorp, 1991, 5). From the beginning of the 20th century to the 1930s, coffee production in the frontier/colonization zone of Viejo Caldas (now Caldas, Risaralda and Quindio) grew from 4% of the national total to 40% (Hough and Bair, 2012, 35).

In the Eastern Highlands after the War of a Thousand Days, in the more established coffee zones of Cundinamarca and Santander, coffee contributed to the conversion of some traditional multi-family haciendas into commercial latifundio that employed free wage labourers. Other haciendas maintained the pre-capitalist peasant-lord relations based on webs of personal obligations, semi-servile relations and the use of extra-economic coercion (Bejerano Avila, 2015[1987], 181-182; Vega, 2004, 28; Lleras Restrepo, 2012, 230; Kalmanovitz, 1996, 6; Hough and Bair, 2012, 35). Particularly in Cundinamarca and Tolima, in the early 1900s, haciendas were characterized by a strict internal labour regime which provided tenants with subsistence plots of land in exchange for labour obligations on the hacienda. This kept wages low, but landlords also enforced prohibitions on peasant production of cash crops, coffee or liquor (Vega, 2004, 28). Landlords had recourse to police and militia forces to discipline workers (ibid, 29).

Though many eastern highland haciendas used antiquated and coercive systems of labour control and exploitation, they produced commodities for the export market and adapted innovations to expand production (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 4-5; Bejerano Avila 2015 [1987], 181).

Haciendas in Cundinamarca and Tolima combined agronomic advancements to produce coffee, technology and machinery to dry and roast beans, and used credit and advanced accounting systems. Up until the 1920s, eastern highland landlords retained political control over land and labour which they used to mediate between peasant producers and merchants.

Through the 1920s, coffee workers on the great estates began to demand land, the right to plant coffee, freedom from *corvées*, and abolition of debt peonage. These various tenant and sharecropper arrangements were gradually supplemented by seasonal agricultural labour on many Cundinamarcan estates from the 1910s to the 1930s as production expanded, money circulated and *arrendatorios* became involved in local freighting, coffee and sugar cane processing and marketing (Hough and Bair, 2012, 35; Jiménez, 1995b, 278). Competition often led to conflict: “The tendency of tenants and sharecroppers to act like peasant proprietors –e.g., growing and selling coffee on their own account even when forbidden to do so by the terms of their contracts – led to serious agrarian conflicts in the upper Magdalena Valley/eastern highland coffee estates during the 1920s and 1930s. Those conflicts provide the opening for a fledgling Communist movement to gain a rural foothold in the same areas”(Bushnell, 1993, 173).

Due to the labour-intensive and seasonal nature of coffee production, smaller productive units were more competitive in the long term; small-holders provided for their own subsistence from their land whereas plantation production faced a scarcity of labour in some seasons and high labour costs in others (Thorp, 1991, 7). In the 1920s proto-industrialization (in oil, coffee, bananas and transportation) and migration to cities or to agricultural frontiers created labour shortages that put pressure on both the larger plantations that used wage labour and the more traditional haciendas with their coercive labour regimes. High coffee prices provided income, enabling capital imports and the extension of foreign loans prompted public works projects, the growth of the oil industry, and local industrial expansion which drew workers from the countryside looking for higher wages and who began to organize to protect their rights through various anarchist, socialist and communist movements (Gill, 2004, 53). These factors together undercut the landlords’ ability to dominate labour (Albà, 2011, 334).

The public lands records that LeGrand consulted reveal that there were conflicts involving five or more campesino families 171 times between 1901 and 1917. These were concentrated in areas of more recent public land colonization in places such as Bolivar, Caldas, Magdalena (where United Fruit Company was buying up land), and Valle del Cauca. From 1918

to 1931 there were 304 conflicts, many in the Eastern highlands but also in areas where export production, the construction of railways and the expansion of markets were taking shape. Most significantly, there were 92 conflicts in the banana country alone between 1918 and 1931, up from 16 in the previous period (LeGrand, 1986, 77).

To regulate labour conflict in Colombia under the terms of the International Labour Organization, Conservative President Pedro Nel Ospina oversaw the establishment of the Oficina General de Trabajo (OGT) in 1923. The purpose of the OGT was to “counter the Bolshevik threat” as Jimenez put it and deter communist mobilization (1995b, 271), resolve disputes over land rights or tenancy contracts between peasants and landlords, clarify claims to property in frontier areas, and parcel out abandoned or under-used haciendas to the rural poor (Palacios, 2011, 127). To adapt to the emerging capitalist order, regionally based landlords were encouraged to diversify their investments into cattle, plantation agriculture or local commerce (Van Ausdal, 2008).

As the coffee market expanded in the 1920s, competition for land and labour increased and land title became a political tool used by some larger landowners to impose rents on workers’ subsistence and coffee plots. Workers responded with acts of disobedience such as work stoppages, poaching estate resources, refusal to pay tributes, etc. Landlords launched greater efforts to repress dissent, control workers’ activities, and evict rebellious workers. Those who were evicted responded by moving deeper into the agricultural frontier to set up new farms (Hough and Bair, 2012, 35; LeGrand, 1986, 63; Jiménez, 1995b, 279; Oquist, 1980, 94; Albán, 2011, 334). The means through which landlords pressured *colonos* (settlers) to either leave or to sign tenancy agreements on disputed lands included the use of local police to enforce eviction notices, payment of thugs to intimidate recalcitrant *colonos* or mobilizing armed bands of men to burn crops, destroy homes or damage implements including sugar mills (LeGrand, 1986, 83).

In the 1926 to 1936 period, conflict broke out between settlers, renters and workers and landlords over conditions on the plantations, land ownership and control of labour, in large part due to the activity of Socialists in the Sumapaz district of Cundinamarca (Vega, 2004, 32). Between 1925 and 1930, Vega reports that there were 71 rural conflicts on 59 haciendas in Cundinamarca, 36 of which were in Tequendama and Sumapaz. The OGT (General Labour Office) resolved 53 of these conflicts and 41 haciendas were parceled among the peasants.

In the 1920s then, an awakening of the class interests of the small commodity producers occurred around the acquisition of formal title to land. In the words of Francisco José Chaux the Liberal Industry Minister, “the general development of the country between 1922 and 1930 awoke among the peasants, strongly, the aspiration to work to for one’s own benefit and acquire as a result of one’s own efforts ownership over land” (Minister of Industry, 1933, in Vega, 2004, 18). The state responded with various legal measures to clarify title or require rent-seeking landlords to provide documentation to prove their claims to land. Thus, the first wave of capitalist transformation in the coffee sector threatened the traditional hacienda model, initially favouring larger commercial coffee plantations and family farmers from 1924 to 1929.

In the second half of the 1920s, with investment pouring into Colombia and opportunities to expand coffee-export production, agrarian workers saw opportunities to exploit their own labour and access land for coffee production on the frontiers. Loans to coffee farmers from local merchants and bankers based in New York and London created opportunities for both landlords to expand their estates and for smallholders to convert portions of their household production to coffee (Hough and Bair, 2012, 35). Suitable land for coffee production in the frontier, however, was limited due to climate and altitude. To regulate the frontier settlement, the government of Miguel Abadía Méndez (1926-1930) passed a series of public lands laws including Laws 27, 47 and 74 of 1926. The intent was to promote settlement of public lands by commercial family farmers on 10 ha plots (Londoño et al, 2016, annex, 28; see Law 47, 1926 el Congreso de Colombia). At the same time, underused lands or lands with uncertain titles were up for review by the state which was authorized to purchase properties larger than 500 ha situated close to urban areas through the agricultural mortgage bank so that they be redistributed, a process known as “parcelization” (ibid).

These measures were viewed as pro-poor and were opposed by traditional landed families from older areas of colonial settlement. Law 74 of 1926 was designed to establish clear criteria for private titular claims (Palacios, 2011, 92). Upheld by the Supreme Court after appeal, the 1926 law required claimants to produce the original title to land from the time it was first alienated from the public sphere, dating back to the Spanish colonial era, and all subsequent records of transfer between individuals thereafter. This created uncertainty of title among landlords and raised expectations among colonists and tenants who sought to assert land rights based on occupancy and usufruct (Vega, 2004). Since presenting the original proof of the land

grant from the Spanish crown was so difficult, most claims to private ownership of undeveloped frontier lands could not be substantiated. This meant that the land would now revert to the public realm (see Palacios, 2011, 32). This “Devil’s Proof” emboldened tenants and settlers (Hirschman, 1971 [1963], 107). The uncertainty of titles and interest in land for settlement or commercial activity created new opportunities but also conflicts.

Since landlords were more reliant on credit from foreign sources they were vulnerable to fluctuating interest rates and commodities prices. As such, the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent collapse in coffee prices differentially affected smallholders and large-estate owners. Large plantation owners who were indebted to foreign creditors faced bankruptcy when coffee prices fell and interest rates rose (Hough and Bair, 2012, 36). Some abandoned their coffee plantations. For the urban and rural poor, rising unemployment, high living costs and urban unrest pushed many to seek land for subsistence. This was initially encouraged by the government as migrant workers were given railway tickets to return to their rural places of birth but instead, many flocked to the coffee region of Cundinamarca, Tolima, Caldas and Valle (LeGrand, 1986 107). Demand for land remained high among smaller-scale and subsistence producers throughout the 1930s (Diaz Alejandro, 1984 44; Albà, 2011, 336-337; Smith, 1976, 301). As prices stabilized and the coffee market recovered, entrepreneurs and landlords again took interest in the coffee sector.

As the economic crisis of the 1930s took hold, the terms of conflict between coffee producers and landlords radicalized, and the state took *ad hoc* actions to respond to the grievances of peasants and landlords. The measure applied to larger estates in Cundinamarca was to purchase haciendas from the titular landlord or resident hacendado and parcel them out into family groups. The process of parcelization, however, actually served to reinforce capitalist accumulation through the creation of a market for land, the extension of mortgages and through measures to promote competition (Palacios, 2011, 119; Bergquist, 1986, 342). State redistribution of estate land ostensibly through pro-poor policies, effectively compensated landlords for financial losses during the Depression while shifting the cost of adjustment onto the shoulders of the poor colonos. “For the critics, the parcelizations of the (Agrarian Mortgage Bank) were nothing more than ‘an ingenious system to confiscate the improvements from the renters and later sell them back to their owners; thereby resolving the conflict (for the landlord) and moreover providing him with compensation; it is a scandalous policy, hook, line and sinker,

under the control of the banks”(Claridad, no.128, 15 March 1934, 1 in Palacios 2011, 119). The parcelization program channelled disputes between landlords and renters into conflicts between smallholders, mediated by political party and the bank (ibid, 123).

Since property relations in frontier areas were not fully clarified in law and the state had little effective control over settlement and occupation, the growth of the coffee sector, frontier settlement and “squatting” on abandoned haciendas created opportunities for usurpation and extra-economic coercion. The lack of clarity in the public lands titling scheme was unfavourable to both investors and *colonos*, although it may have enabled dispossession for a particular set of regional agrarian landlords who thrived on the use of force to control land (Smith, 1976, 302). The financial crisis thus saw a further intensification of rural conflict between groups of returned migrant workers who occupied estates and landlords who sought the assistance of local officials and police forces to evict “squatters” (Bergquist, 1986, 338; Albán, 2011, 338; LeGrand, 1986, 121). The agrarian workers responded with organized collective actions and according to Bergquist, “the result was a running battle between the classes on many of the large estates that became more intense, not less, as the Depression deepened” (Bergquist, 1986, 338).

Conflicts of note occurred in the region of Sumapaz near Fusagasuga, where peasants under Jorge Eliecer Gaitain’s populist UNIR party occupied land in protest of landlord-tenant contracts, were met with police repression, and marched on Fusagasuga in January 1934. After 5 were killed and 34 wounded, the government conceded and five haciendas were parceled out to the peasants (Oquist, 1980, 97). In Viotá, Communists organized peasants’ refusal to pay rents, a strike during coffee harvest and several years of protracted conflict featuring violent incidents that resulted in the division of several large properties among peasants (ibid). Similar circumstances in Ibagué in Tolima in 1934 saw clashes between sharecroppers and the Departmental militia resulting in 14 peasant deaths and 3 militia deaths (Oquist, 1980, 97).

The policy of parcelization was an example of a partial government acquiescence to peasant demands for land in the 1930s (Oquist, 1980, 97). The parcelizations, no matter how *ad hoc* and contingent, signalled that the Liberals were willing to make concessions to the growing working agrarian class and won the votes of many agrarian workers who may otherwise have sided with the new Communist Party of Colombia. Meanwhile, the Liberal government’s 1931 labour law allowed for state-sanctioned unions to represent workers, thus channeling the demands of the more militant workers’ syndicates into the *Confederacion de Trabajadores de*

Colombia (CTC), the country's first labour federation and an organ of the Liberal party (Bergquist, 1992, 57). The Liberals actively responded to agrarian radicalism with attempts at cooptation through legislative reform, the expansion of representation, or *ad hoc* parcelization of larger estates. Nevertheless, outside the coffee sector, landlords remained powerful and Liberals still had to contend with merchant-landlord interests within their own ranks, including entrepreneurs who set up cattle ranches, plantations and factories on public lands. Gone were the radical liberal ideas of the 19th century with a commitment to free trade, laissez-faire and the gold standard but individual property was still valued and by then it was clear that the state would have a role in supporting the capitalist revolution (Palacios, 2011, 100).

Conjuncture: Law 200 of 1936

The first phase of what in hindsight can be described as a passive revolution was a partial land reform implemented by Colombian Liberals. Adaptation to the world financial crisis, peasant protests, and conflict over land on the frontier and on eastern highland estates prompted calls for land reform among the agrarian workers' movement and the recently formed Communist Party. Calls for reform were acknowledged by some Liberal party activists and intellectuals. Land reform was at the fore of the national political agenda in 1933 under Liberal President Olaya and the issue was debated in several sessions of Congress and the Senate until late 1936 when Law 200 was passed under President Alfonso López Pumarejo. It was enacted as part of the platform of his "Revolution on the March," but as I shall demonstrate now, the 1936 land reform bill and subsequent land legislation, particularly in 1944, were devoid of radical content and catered to the demands of landlords. Following the pattern of the passive revolution, although land reform responded to some of the elementary demands of coffee producers, its substance and implementation were designed to favour the transition of traditional estates to large-scale capitalist agriculture. The reform, counter-reform and the landlord-led violence they entailed thereby restored the traditional social hierarchies of the rural sector within the new mode of agrarian capitalist production.

In 1933 and 1934, the main demand of the agrarian workers' movement was the redistribution of the latifundio to workers. In response, Conservatives called for the security of land titles for commercial producers, particularly for those who had established estates in frontier areas. The Liberal government ultimately enacted a land reform bill in 1936 that tried to clarify the conditions for legitimate titles to newly settled frontier land for both settlers and plantation

owners. The bill explicitly ignored existing inequalities in established estates and did not countenance expropriation and redistribution, although an *ad hoc* program of parcelization was in place to respond to the most acute conflicts of occupation of estate lands by campesinos. In the 1936 land reform law, however, commercial productivity became the requisite for legitimate occupation and title (Congreso de Colombia, 1946, Ley 200).

As I argue here, the more radical impetus for land reform (demanding widespread and systematic redistribution of large estates for workers) was diluted by Liberal lawmakers who made reformist promises to workers, peasants and the Communist Party. Their actions during Congressional debates and the subsequent draft of the reform bill, however, responded to objections expressed by the landlords' lobby, the Medellin Chamber of Commerce and Conservative politicians who supported foreign investment and strong property rights for commercial producers. Rather than redistributing estates, the land reform bill focused on clarification of titular rights to land by conditioning them on the commercial exploitation of property in frontier areas. Thus, as a passive revolutionary tactic, López's reformist rhetoric obscured the pro-market and ultimately, pro-landlord substance of his reform bill.

The 1926 Supreme Court Decision had increased the burden of proof for titular property – rather than bills of sale, wills or receipts, only the original title deed issued by the state would be accepted as legitimate proof of ownership in cases of competing claims to a plot of land (Hirschman, 1973 [1963], 107). This “Devil's Proof” had emboldened tenants and settlers to occupy estates, and workers had appropriated large coffee estates with the assistance of communists. Landlords' fears of more generalized rural uprisings pressed Olaya Herrera to strike a congressional committee to study the issue in 1933 (*ibid*). The next year, Liberal Alfonso López Pumarejo assumed the office of President (1934-1938).

Educated at the London School of Economics and a banker by profession, López had campaigned for President in 1934 on a reformist platform that promised to enact social security laws, recognize unions, implement a personal and corporate income tax, and reform the constitution. As Afro-Colombian, Mestizo and Indigenous identities articulated with agrarian working class and campesino politics, López notably allied himself with the Indigenous social movement which was tied to the Colombian Communist Party, courting the votes of campesinos and workers who might otherwise have voted Communist (Trojan, 2008). In the 1934 Presidential Elections, the PCC was led by Eutoquio Timote, an Indigenous community leader

and veteran of the land invasions in southern Colombia of the 1920s (Oquist, 1980 92). After winning the election, the following year, López appeared in a May Day ceremony with Communist leader Timote at his side. By 1935 the Colombian Communist party began embracing López's reformism, turning their attention to the common enemy of Liberals and Communists in Colombia – the increasingly fascistic Conservative party.

To Colombian Communists, aware of the underdevelopment of Colombian industrial capitalism compared to Europe and the United States, Lopez' Liberal reformist project was an incremental step out of feudalism, toward capitalism, and eventually to socialism. Colombian Leninists saw him as the proponent of a 'democratic bourgeois revolution' (Palacios, 2011, 142-143; Molina, 1974). This brief alliance of Colombian Liberals with the radical left did not develop further after 1935 as the Colombian Communist Party lost most of its intellectuals to the radical wing of the Liberal Party and López downplayed his ties to the left as anti-communism grew (Palacios, 2006, 111-112; Fluharty, 1957, 56-57).

If Lopez courted radical rhetoric to win the election, once in office, he enacted reforms that mostly buttressed capital accumulation. He reduced government expenditures and with coffee prices recovering, he used a surprise fiscal surplus in 1935 to pay down debts and balance the budget. His tax reform, effective in 1935-1936, introduced personal income taxes and raised corporate taxes (including on foreign firms like Tropical Oil and United Fruit Company) (Ocampo, 1984, 133; Ocampo Gaviria, 2015[1987], 211). This fiscal stance - tax and pay down debt - was geared toward inflation control to keep wages and prices in check while ensuring the value of loans held in Colombian pesos by the domestic financial elite.

Throughout 1935, López continued the policy of *ad hoc* parcelizations that were relatively effective in reducing overt landlord-tenant conflict compared to the previous two or three years (Gilhodès, 1972, 38). Carlos Lleras Restrepo and Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, those who had espoused the more radical views of expropriation and parcelization under Santos were out of the congressional political picture – Gaitán was mayor of Bogotá after the defeat of his populist UNIR movement and Lleras Restrepo had been appointed Comptroller of the Republic (Palacios, 2011, 205). With the more radical voices in Congress coopted with patronage positions, the mandate of the land reform committee under Lopez' direction (and including his son Lopez Michelsen) was now to clarify the criteria for legitimate possession of public lands. Redistribution of latifundio was off the table.

The culmination of the reformist phase of Lopez's political career was Law 200 of 1936. The law "attempted primarily to bring security of tenure to squatters with uncertain titles, to increase the bargaining power of the lower rural classes, and to reduce the number and intensity of conflicts in the countryside"(Hirschman 1973 (1963), 108). It made 'economic utilization' the basis for legitimate title but gave titular claimants to vacant lands ten years (until November 30th, 1946) to put their lands to use lest their titles be revoked. However, Law 200 also had provisions for those who could legally prove their claims to a tract of land with appropriate documentation. Law 200 thus established a 'mixed' title system of land tenure, one based on economic utilization and the other based on a complete abstract of title beginning with the original title of alienation from the public sphere along with documentary evidence of all subsequent transfers of possession (Smith, 1976, 300). Rather than resolve class conflict in the countryside, the law constitutionalized the contradictions of the dual-tenure system, which ultimately sparked mass violence (ibid, 303).

The substance of Law 200 was that all disputes to public lands would be frozen for a period of ten years and the occupant of the land would be considered the legitimate owner, provided he had occupied (or rendered the land productive) within the previous five years. In the case of unoccupied lands, the titular owner of a public title to the land had 10 years to put the land to productive use in order to legitimize the claim. In cases where there were disputes between occupants and titular landlords over the settlement of lands within the five years prior to the law, to prove titular right, the landlord would have to produce valid original titles of alienation from the state and prove that the right had not been extinguished or revoked, or the titular claimant could produce a title issued prior to 1821 (Martinez, 1939a, 124). Rather than threatening revocation of titles of all unproductive lands, the law granted the benefit of the doubt to those who had occupied 'public lands.' It effectively froze the status quo and put the onus on titular landlords to prove "usurpation" by settlers; but it also gave police powers of eviction to titular landlords who could prove their claims with appropriate documentation and who intended to develop commercial plantations within the next ten years (Palacios, 2011, 202).

The key contradiction of the law is that it assumed that public lands (*baldios*) were under the effective control of the state (*ager publicus*) (Palacios, 2011, 27). In reality, much of the land was beyond the control of the state and was therefore not *ager publicus* but *res nullius*. The state was unable to guarantee property rights on frontiers, leaving assertion of property rights to those

who had the wealth to ensure police protection for their operations. The social consequences of Law 200, though not immediate, would be disastrous by the late 1940s when landlords asserted titular rights to large tracts of land; commercial investors established vast commercial plantations; and coffee smallholders, squeezed together onto smaller plots, began to kill one another over property lines.

As it took its final form in the Congress, it was clear that the land reform bill would imply a partial privatization of the public sphere that would lapse after ten years unless lands were made productive. This, some argued, would be a recipe for disaster. The Minister of Agriculture Rodriguez Moya, who was concerned that the law would dissuade foreign investment in coastal banana production thought that “this law would be like a stick of dynamite to the Republic”(in Martinez, 1939a, 297). In an intervention before the House of Representatives, one of the Bill’s most ardent critics, Honorable Representative Sarmiento Alarcon, suggested that the 1936 land law could potentially incite violence as it weakened the position of the state to settle conflicts between land claimants:

It has not been considered that the state would cease to be the litigant – when we hope to see a strong state that would intervene in all; the state would abandon the right of property so that citizens kill one another, because, Mr. Minister, there happens a very curious thing: in those 70,000 properties in Cundinamarca they are sowing criminality because the desire for property is so aggressive that the smallest violation of a property line results in the death of the violator by right (Sarmiento Alarcon, 1936, in Martinez, 1939a, 368).

By recognizing all occupied public lands as private lands, he argued, the state was shirking its obligations as the sovereign arbiter of private property disputes. Sarmiento argued that the Land law would create anarchy, as it would legalize usurpation of landed property by settlers who only had to show occupation for a period of 5 years. Whereas it obliged landlords to prove their ownership based on titles going back hundreds of years that are likely to have been destroyed in the calamities and wars that have plagued Colombia and have left the national archives bereft of proper land records (Sarmiento Alarcon, 1936 in Martinez, 1939a, 333-336).

Former Industry Minister Francisco José Chaux penned in the Bogotá daily newspaper *El Tiempo* in September of 1936 that the law would enhance the powers of local police to evict tenants or squatters in the event of a conflict between a titular landlord and an occupant.

Precisely the misplaced jurisdiction of the police has played a major part in a series of actual conflicts that have been taking place between settlers and renters and those who allege private ownership over uncultivated lands, in a manner such that the written article [in the present draft of the bill] re-establishes and enshrines one of the principal causes of the conflict (Chaux, 1936 in Martinez, 1939b, 125).

To Chauv's chagrin, leaving jurisdiction over conflicts in the hands of local, not national authorities would lead to injustice as he believed local judges in rural villages would side with landlords in disputes with tenants (Chauv, 1936, in Martienz, 1939b, 136). These Articles 7, 15, 18 set the stage for the abuse of tenant farmers by local police which was the main form of violence directed at campesinos in the first wave of Violence from 1946 to 1949.

Despite their fears that the law would authorize squatters to take over legitimate private property, Conservative congressional and senate representatives alike voted in favour. Likewise, despite its pro-landlord and pro-business substance and lack of redistributive mechanisms, left leaning Liberals also voted in favour. Everyone could find something in its mixed title to dislike, but none too much. The Law 200 of 1936 'on the land regime' was given presidential approval and announced by López Pumarejo on December 30th, 1936 (see Martinez, 1939b, 389). In this way, the hopes for agrarian reform in the 1930s were legislated into conformity with the interests of the dominant classes of landowners, agrarian entrepreneurs and the political class.

By most accounts in the immediate aftermath of Law 200 of 1936 and into the early 1940s, conflict was managed through institutional means – through the state-sanctioned labour movement, through political parties, through the courts, and in some cases through voluntary buy-outs of landlords and limited parcelization to mostly Liberal-supporting family farmers (Hirschman, 1973 [1963], 114; Bushnell, 1993, 188; Palacios, 2011, 216; Roldán, 2002, 17; LeGrand 1986, 156; Bergquist, 1986, 348). President Alfonso López Pumarejo had responded to rural unrest and calls for action from the Communist Party with a program of Liberal reforms that was cloaked in the language of revolution and popular democracy. However, the discourse of revolution belied the objectives of the Liberal nationalist-capitalist movement: to salvage capitalism after the manner of Roosevelt's New Deal and reset it within a Colombian context of national economic development supported by the state (Fluharty, 1957, 46).

Land Tenure: Fragmentation and Concentration

The immediate consequence of Law 200 of 1936 was a diffusion of land ownership in the coffee sector and a parallel concentration of land in other sectors. More families acquired land on the frontier as the total agricultural surface area expanded. However, the large estates remained intact, except for a few of the coffee plantations subject to *ad hoc* parcelizations. Further, large land grants for commercial production of rice, corn, and cattle continued. Unfortunately, data on agricultural production (and by extension on land tenure) in Colombia in the 1930s and 1940s is

very limited (Currie, 1950, 85). The most detailed data on the distribution of land comes from the coffee sector where the participation of smallholders was most significant (FEDECAFÉ, 1932). Also available are statistics on public land settlement (INCODER, 2012; Londoño et al, 2016). Due to the lack of comprehensive data, the effects of Law 200 of 1936 on land tenure patterns can be viewed only partially. What is apparent is that the law contributed to both an expansion of smallholding in the coffee sector and in some frontier areas and a consolidation of capitalist landlord power over large estates in recently settled areas.

The coffee census of 1932 provides a baseline of land distribution in the coffee sector prior to Law 200 of 1936. From the 1932 data on the coffee sector as a whole, I estimate a minimum Gini coefficient for the distribution of coffee production in Colombia in 1932 at 0.37 (FEDECAFE 1932, 122).⁵ Another coffee census in 1939 done only in Cundinamarca and Tolima provides an imperfect post-law distribution for comparison. Changes in the patterns of production in Tolima and Cundinamarca between the two surveys thus give some indication of the short-term effects of Law 200 of 1936. In Cundinamarca in 1932, 90.3% of the farms accounted for an estimated 64.7% of the coffee trees and the other 9.7% accounted for 35.3% of the trees. The minimum Gini coefficient for this distribution is therefore 0.25. By 1939, there was growth in the total number of coffee-producing properties, but the most growth occurred among the ranks of smallholders. In Cundinamarca in 1939, 85.3% of the farms accounted for 64.9% of the trees while the remaining 14.7% of farms accounted for 35.1% of trees. The Gini coefficient for the coffee sector in Cundinamarca in 1939 is therefore estimated to be 0.20.

As Bergquist pointed out, there was indeed diffusion of production in the coffee sector of Cundinamarca between 1932 and 1939 where the smaller units took on a greater share of production (1986, 301). In Tolima in 1932, 75.2% of the farms were small farms and these had

⁵ From the 1932 data we can make some inferences. If we equate ownership of coffee trees with output (although not all trees in all areas produce an equal amount or quality of coffee), we can get a rough estimate of the distribution of production by size of the productive unit. The 1932 coffee census tabulated 149,348 coffee farms in the country as a whole. 87% of these farms had fewer than 5,000 trees each. Together, these small farms accounted for about half of the national total of coffee trees. Another 11 % of the farms in the country each had between 5,000 to 20,000 trees and accounted for about a quarter of the country's coffee trees. Large farms with more than 20,000 trees, while representing only 2% of coffee farms, accounted for the other quarter of all the trees in the country (FEDECAFÉ, 1932, 122). A rough minimum Gini coefficient of distribution of coffee production by farm in 1932 is as follows: 87 % of farms produce 50% of the coffee. $GINI = f - u$; If f = the % of all farms and u = the % of production (as a proxy for land). The Gini coefficient for this distribution would be at least $f - u = 0.87 - 0.50 = 0.37$. This same formula for an estimate of the minimum Gini coefficient of the distribution (whether of production, income or landownership) is used throughout the thesis.

47.8% of the trees. The Gini coefficient for Tolima in 1932 was at minimum 0.27. In 1939, 79.9% of the farms were smallholder farms. These small farms accounted for 57.8% of the trees. The Gini coefficient for Tolima in 1939 was thus at minimum 0.22. These figures support Bergquist's assertion that between 1932 and 1939 there was growth in the number of people involved in coffee production, that smallholders drove this growth, and that the result was a relative diffusion of coffee production (Bergquist, 1986, 301).

Table 1: Coffee Properties by Number of Trees in Cundinamarca & Tolima 1932 & 1939

	Number of farms with the following number of trees					Total # of properties
	<5,000 trees	5,001 to 20,000	20,001 to 60,000	60,001 to 100,000	>100,000	
Cundinamarca						
1932	12,474	922	257	68	91	13,812
1939	25,826	3,874	406	76	88	30,270
Tolima						
1932	9,610	2,670	369	62	60	12,771
1939	22,555	5,021	511	68	62	28,217

(Boletín de Estadísticas, FNC, in Bergquist, 1992, 63)

While the data in the coffee sector suggest that participation of smallholders became more important between 1932 and 1939, a period of time that included the passage of Law 200 of 1936, the data is limited to the coffee sector and indicates nothing about the legal status of the owners of the production units. Bergquist argues that this data nevertheless suggests that the degree of concentration of land ownership in the coffee sector was much less than in other agricultural sectors. He argues that through the 1930s, in part because of Law 200 of 1936, thousands of coffee farmers were able to acquire land through parcelization and frontier expansion, and settlement or through purchases of land on the market (1992, 61). While larger coffee estates were subject to labour shortages, fluctuating interest rates, and cash-flow problems, smallholders could compete through the turbulent 1930s and the wartime shortages of the 1940s by relying on family labour (*ibid*).

Figures from the coffee sector suggest that property became more diffuse in the coffee regions after 1936; however, does the same trend hold in other sectors? Comprehensive data on production, farm size and land tenure in other agrarian sectors is not available. However, data on public land grants allows for a different view of the effects of Law 200 of 1936 on the distribution of property, although only a partial view (INCODER, 2012; Londoño et al., 2016). From 1901 to 1931, a total of 1,104,485 ha of public lands were granted to private entities

(individuals and corporations). The average size of private land grants was 224.1 ha. The yearly average of all land grants to private individuals during that 30-year period was 30,300.89 ha. Between 1932 and 1946, however, an average of 43,405 ha was granted to private individuals each year for a total of 654,334 ha (INCODER, 2012; Londoño et al., 2016). So, more land was adjudicated each year under the Liberals. However, the average size of the land grants was 48.4 ha during that 14-year period, which coincides with the initial 1933 debates on land reform and the passage of Law 200 of 1936. Compared to the Conservatives, the Liberals adjudicated more land per year but in smaller plots –indicating the participation of more individual families.

Table 2: Colombian Public Lands Grants by Type 1901-2012

Type Period	Private (Individuals & Corporations)				Public Entities				
	Grants	%	Area (ha)	Avg Size	Grants	%	Area (ha)	%	Avg size
1901-1931	4,929	0.9	1,104,485	224.1	49	4.7	114,210	25.9	2,330.8
1932-1946	13,523	2.4	654,334	48.4	67	6.4	47,948	10.9	715.6
1947-1953	15,399	2.8	782,338	50.8	54	5.2	20,592	4.7	381.3
1954-1957	13,113	2.4	1,004,380	76.6	73	7.0	30,614	7.0	419.4
1958-1961	9,755	1.8	1,143,896	117.3	75	7.2	151,934	34.5	2,025.8
1962-1987	293,105	53.0	10,216,982	34.9	80	7.6	71,802	16.3	897.5
1988-1994	77,263	14.0	3,143,900	40.7	14	1.3	994	0.2	71.0
1995-2012	126,388	22.8	5,031,556	39.8	635	60.6	2,144	0.5	3.4
Total	553,475	100	23,081,871	41.7	1047	100	440,238	100	420.5

(INCODER, 2012; Chaux, 1933 in Londoño et al, 2016 Statistical Annex)

Londoño et al also presented data on the size of the parcels distributed under public land grants. In the 1932 to 1946 period, the total number of grants issued to plots less than 20 ha was 7,979 and the combined area of these plots was 76,488 ha for an average plot size of 9.5 ha. In the 1932 to 1946 period, 64.5% of the recipients received plots less than 20 ha which together accounted for only 12.5% of the land. Public lands grants were therefore highly unequal: 87 grants were made to individuals for a total of 187,959 ha. The average of those larger grants was 2,160 ha. Just 1% of the grantees during the period of Liberal reform received 31% of the total land granted. If I make the same rough calculation of the Gini coefficient for the data on public lands grants and combine all grants above 100 ha, in 1932 to 1946, just 707 grants or about 5% of the total grants in that period accounted for 62.5% of all the land granted. In that case, the Gini coefficient for the public lands program for the 1932 to 1946 period would be at least 0.58 (Gini = $f - u = 0.625 - 0.05 = 0.575$).

The immediate effects of the Land Law of 1936 on the distribution of property can now be assessed tentatively given the gaps in the data. The process of parcelization and colonization saw a relative democratization of access to land ownership in the coffee sector between 1932 and 1939. Meanwhile the frontier lands grants from 1932 to 1946 suggest both the broadening of access to land compared to the pre-1932 period but also that land grants were highly unequal, due to the expansion of frontier latifundio. Law 200 therefore reinforced the dual tenure character of Colombian agriculture with coffee likely being the only sector where small farmers had a significant contribution to production.

Law 100 of 1944 – Agrarian Counter Reform

If demand from the international coffee market spurred the growth of the modern coffee sector in Colombia, it was the articulation of small coffee farm production with subsistence agriculture that enabled smallholders to compete against large coffee plantations through the economic crises of the Great Depression. However, international political economic forces also encouraged a return to more repressive labour practices and land grabbing during the conditions of scarcity and price instability of World War II. Marred by a series of scandals related to the confiscation of property from German nationals that ended up in the hands of his son (López Michelsen), accused of collaborating with the USSR, and facing the ongoing threat of military coup, López Pumarejo faced a coup attempt in July 1944 (Braun, 1985, 177; Fluharty, 1957, 71; Roldán, 2002, 18; Palacios, 2006, 118). Under threat of being deposed, López signed into law what is viewed by many as his agrarian counter reform measure (Kalmanovitz, 1996; Fluharty, 1975; Bergquist, 1986; LeGrand, 1986).

Article 1 of Law 100 of 1944 stated: “It is declared to be in the public interest the growth in cultivation of land and agricultural production via systems that rely on some sort of cooperation in the production, between the renter or landlord and the (direct) cultivator, such as the regional variants on sharecropping ...” (Ley 100, 1944). Article 13 authorized those considered to be owners under Article 1 of Law 200 of 1936 to evict ‘squatters’ from their lands but only if the titular owners had already rendered a quarter of their lands productive (Law 100, 1944). For Kalmanovitz, Law 100 of 1944 was akin to legalizing rent-seeking by landlords: it did away with squatters’ claims to ownership, and effectively legalized backward forms of labour exploitation and sharecropping under threat of eviction (1996, 13). The 1944 reform extended by 15 years the period that landlords had to render properties productive in the case that

they were not under cultivation as of January 1, 1947, the expiration date of title to uncultivated lands set out in Law 200 of 1936 (see Articles 9-13 Law 100, 1944). This simply delayed further the day of reckoning for titular disputes and put further pressure on tenants to prove their claims in the courts, which tended to side with landlords (Fluharty, 1957, 209).

Law 100 of 1944 provided legal protections for landlords against tenants, workers and “squatters” who tried to settle what they thought were unoccupied lands. It also sought to stimulate large-scale commercial agricultural production to resolve the issues of labour shortages in rural areas and food shortages in cities, in part by legalizing the sharecropper relation (LeGrand, 1986, 162). At a time when coffee prices were rising again, the Law empowered landlords to limit smallholder commodity production in sharecropping and rental contracts, and force workers off lands in a timely manner when contracts expired (Bergquist, 1986, 355). According to the *Revista Cafetera*, the official publication of FEDECAFÉ, Law 100 of 1944 “would adequately guarantee the rights of landowners, shielding them from the attempts of would-be squatters, so common before the passage of the law, to make themselves lords and masters of the parcels of land they cultivated”(FEDECAFÉ, 1944 in Sánchez, 1992, 77). Under threat of coup, by signing Law 100 of 1944, López put a stop to the Revolution on the March and gave the fascist right a head start on the agrarian counter-revolution.

In his address to the Colombian people upon his resignation in August 1945, López denounced the oligarchic class within Colombian society which had undermined the legitimacy of the state amid “the disorganization of the contemporary world, in which it was our lot to see abolished by force, and still not yet re-established (López 1945 in Fluharty, 1957, 77). However, as a member of that oligarchy, López’s refusal to further pursue leadership of a social revolution and his compromise with the landlords further set the course for passive revolution as landlords pursued the reconquest of the small coffee farmers’ land gains of the 1930s.

Consequences: Passive Revolution and *La Violencia*

Law 200 of 1936 was implemented during a period of popular mobilization among agrarian workers who demanded access to land and freedom from forced labour obligations. In the eight years after Law 200, the reformist mood changed to one of reaction. Domestic industrialization and a recovery of the coffee sector based on family farm production raised incomes, but agricultural production lagged behind urban population growth, leading to fears of food shortages. While Colombia stayed neutral in World War II, its export sector did suffer from

wartime disruptions. Colombian policy makers responded with legislation to boost domestic crop production, ranching, and industrial output. Meanwhile, during World War II, Liberals were pressured to moderate their more radical positions, cut ties with Communists, and stave off the electoral threat from the reactionary right led by Laureano Gomez.

In this section I discuss the immediate and longer-term consequences of Law 200 of 1936 at the level of property and land tenure, production, political power and resistance. *La Violencia*, commonly thought to be a partisan ideological struggle, was in fact an example of passive revolution driven by landlord reaction to the moderate gains in access to land among some coffee smallholders and the success Communist activists had in mobilizing peasants on the eastern highland farms in parts of Tolima and Cundinamarca. This process featured a violent reconquest of the agrarian sector through a brutal, front-line struggle for land, orchestrated largely by landlords and their allies in the Conservative Party apparatus. The violence, I argue, was an additional tactic of passive revolution that stemmed from the previous land reform laws; the laws themselves, as they were constructed to favour commercial exploitation and granted police powers of eviction, emboldened and even legitimated the use of force by landlords to evict settlers and expand estates into the lands of subsistence producers and small coffee farmers.

Production Relations: Growth of Modern Capitalist Industry and Class Formation

Colombian macro-economic data provides insight into the broader processes of passive capitalist revolution of which Law 200 of 1936 was part. Colombia's recovery from the 1929 crisis was well underway by 1936 when the Land bill became law. While not back to the 1928 levels of 7.3% growth, by 1933 and 1934 macroeconomic recovery was evident with GDP growth around 6%. The deflationary trend and the outflow of gold stopped after 1934 (Ocampo Gaviria, 2015 [1987], 210). The international reserves began to recover from the 1934 low of \$13.7 million US, although they did not return to pre-crisis levels until 1942. In the macroeconomic indicators, there is an apparent bump on the road to recovery in 1937. The land bill became law in December 1936 and the following year GDP growth was down from 5.3% to 1.6%, possibly due to uncertainty among landlords over tenancy contracts in the wake of the new law, the transition from coffee to stock-raising on some large eastern highland estates, and the migration of agrarian workers into frontier areas where they set up their own small farms (Hirschman 1973 [1963], 114). By 1938, however, GDP growth was underway again through a combination of ranching, large-scale commercial corn and rice production, and small-holder

coffee production. During WWII growth rates were markedly lower, ranging from 2.2% in 1940 to 0.4% in 1943 before recovering in 1944 and 1945.

In Colombia, productivity in all sectors suffered from the combined effects of the 1929 crisis and WWII (Ocampo Gaviria, 2015[1987], 227). Mining, industry, construction, transportation and the public sector all grew much more between 1931 and 1939 compared to the longer 1929 to 1945 period. As a percentage of GDP, the agricultural sector declined from 1929 to 1945. In 1929, agriculture accounted for 53.3% of GDP and only 47.0% in 1945, though it was still overwhelmingly the largest sector. Industry grew at the fastest rate. Industrial production was 8.9% of GDP in 1929 and 16.5% of GDP in 1945.

In 1930, coffee was 64% of the value of Colombian exports and oil was the second largest commodity, accounting for 22% of the value of exports. In 1940 coffee was still 62% of exports while oil was up to 29%. By 1950, coffee accounted for 72% of the value of exports and oil was down to 16% (Thorp, 1998, 347). Throughout the 1930 to 1950 period, coffee remained the pillar of the export sector, despite the rise and then gradual decline of oil production relative to the export sector as a whole. Not only was coffee important, but the destination of choice was the USA and to a lesser extent Great Britain. Colombia remained heavily dependent on its bilateral relations with those two countries despite the Depression and WWII (ibid, 349).

Table 3: Macroeconomic Indicators 1928-1945

Year	GDP Growth	International Reserves (\$US millions)	Means of Payment (growth Dec. to Dec.)	Average Annual Inflation Rate
1928	7.3%	64.7	17.0%	0.4%
1929	3.6	37.7	-26.8	-0.4
1930	-0.9	27.4	-20.7	-20.7
1931	-1.6	13.8	-11.5	-13.5
1932	6.6	17.2	19.9	-23.3
1933	5.6	16.8	24.1	5.0
1934	6.3	13.7	19.0	38.8
1935	2.4	18.4	2.5	4.3
1936	5.3	24.1	20.3	6.0
1937	1.6	20.0	3.1	3.3
1938	6.5	27.0	10.7	12.6
1939	6.1	24.2	3.3	4.4
1940	2.2	24.9	8.2	-3.1
1941	1.7	22.5	11.2	-1.4
1942	0.2	61.9	31.8	8.7
1943	0.4	113.4	34.8	15.9
1944	6.8	158.2	30.1	20.3
1945	4.7	176.8	16.2	11.3

(Ocampo Gaviria, 2015[1987], 210)

Table 4: Growth Rates and Changes in the Composition of GDP 1929-1945 (in 1950 prices)

	Annual Growth Rate		Composition of GDP	
	1931-1939	1929-1945	1929	1945
Agriculture	3.4%	2.5%	53.3%	47.0%
Mining	4.8	1.8	4.8	3.7
Industry	12.1	7.4	8.9	16.5
Construction	11.6	5.0	4.7	6.1
Transportation	11.6	5.4	3.0	4.2
Public Sector	4.3	0.8	8.3	5.5
Service Sector	3.7	3.3	17.0	17.0
GDP	5.0	3.3	100.0	100.0

(Ocampo Gaviria 2015 (1987), 227).

As industrial production grew in the 1930 to 1945 period, it buttressed the income and power of the industrial and financial elite. Capital formation in Colombia almost quadrupled between 1939 and 1947, from \$153.5 million COP to \$612.2 million COP. This is despite WWII-related decline in 1942 and 1943. Growth in capital formation in industry and public works was six-fold, but it also quadrupled in agriculture, transportation, mining and construction (Currie, 1950, 39). In the early 1940s Colombia's small but powerful financial and industrial capitalist class saw its fortunes rise. The Colombian bourgeoisie was involved in industrial activity, petroleum, and finance with investments in large-scale commercial plantations of sugar, corn and rice. This accumulated financial capital provided the means for them to dominate Colombian politics after the Second World War. While the relative importance of Colombian manufacturing was growing, manufacturing was excessively concentrated and lacked modern technology. Palacios estimates that 0.5% of all industrial firms operating in the country owned 33% of total capital and assets. Industry was most concentrated in Medellin, Manizales and Barranquilla in the petroleum, alcohol and textile sectors. Roughly half of the country's manufacturing took place in Antioquia, a third in the central and eastern highlands, and the rest on the Caribbean coast (Palacios, 2006, 125).

The high levels of concentration in the industrial sector enabled a small group to profoundly influence government policy through the National Industrialist's Association (ANDI) and the National Merchant's Federation (FENALCO), formed in 1944 and 1945. Along with FEDECAFÉ, the Colombian coffee grower's lobby and the association of bankers, these business associations were the apex of Colombian corporatism which featured "constant tension and negotiation between regional and corporate interests, under the supervision of poorly trained and sometimes corrupt administrators" (Palacios, 2006, 125). Elite divisions were drawn along

party lines between exporting interests (Liberal) and manufacturers and their allies in the agricultural sector who produced sugar and beef for domestic consumption (Conservative).

Conflict and Resistance – La Violencia as a Consequence of Passive Revolution

A key consequence and indeed a continuation of the logic of passive revolution that began with Law 200 of 1936 is the civil conflict known as *La Violencia*. For many Colombians *la Violencia* commenced with the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, although mass killings actually began surrounding the 1946 elections (Roldán, 2002, 16; Safford & Palacios, 2002, 345). The Violence seemed to take on a perverse logic and rationale of its own with murders, retribution, escalation and full-scale armed confrontations, leaving the conflict itself open to a variety of interpretations (see Oquist, 1980, 129 and Peñaranda, 1992, 293 for full accounts). Several authors have pointed to the origins of *la Violencia* in the social, political and economic transformations of the late 1920s, 1930s and early 1940s including urbanization, expansion of the public sector, partial industrialization and popular demands for political inclusion, including demands for property rights in the coffee sector (Guzman Campos, et al., 2016 [1963]; Roldán, 2002; Bergquist, 1986; 1992; LeGrand, 1986; 1992; Sánchez, 1992). Some have argued the violence was a reaction of “feudal” elements within Colombian society to modernization efforts (Gilhodes, 1972; Posada, 1969; Peñaranda, 1992).

I argue here that the civil conflict known now as *La Violencia*, though complex and multi-faceted, is best understood as a part of a passive revolution that resulted from attempts to impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation. If the land reform bill of 1936 attempted to respond to campesino demands for land, it did so by encouraging both campesinos and landlords to modernize their operations. During the crisis moments following WWII, fascist elements within the state accelerated the capitalist transformation by instrumental violence aimed at accumulating valuable land. The violence, then, represents the restoration of traditional hierarchies under the control of a new united national ruling bloc of landlords, financiers and industrialists after the economic crises and social upheaval of the 1930s.

Passive revolution refers to, as Anne Showstack-Sassoon put it, “a conservative strategy of managing change which both transforms society in important ways and conserves many traditional hierarchies as it responds to certain popular demands while pre-empting popular participation” (2000, 100). These elements are evident in the events that followed the reforms of 1936 to 1944. First, the fascist wing of the Conservative Party composed of regional landlords,

party bosses and coffee-producing peasant farmers instigated violence as a tool of political intimidation against Liberal and Communist-voting campesinos. This indicates the anti-democratic and reactionary nature of the violence, not against the expansion of capitalism, but against the radical agrarian workers' movement.

Second, financial elites from both parties demonstrated a willingness to cooperate to re-establish order only when threatened by radical uprisings following Gaitán's death; when this resulted in an escalation of paramilitary violence and prompted the mobilization of peasant-guerrilla self-defence forces, rather than siding with the popular revolt, the Liberal elites momentarily abandoned the political scene altogether.

Third, guerrilla mobilization against the fascist government of Laureano Gomez was met with bipartisan elite agreement on a temporary military junta that pacified Liberal guerrillas with promises of land but ramped up the military offensive and counterinsurgency efforts against Communist regions. In the last instance the elites of both parties united against the popular revolt behind what they hoped would be a Caesarist figure who could restore the political power of the oligarchy atop a new national capitalist order.

Fourth, the effects of the violence and the identity of its victims indicate the economic motivations of the perpetrators. The violence resulted in a concentration of property in coffee country in the hands of landlords and a middle class of commercial farmers, displacement of agrarian workers and smallholders to join the labour market in the cities, and the expansion of the agricultural frontier into marginal areas by displaced campesinos. All of these processes expanded capital accumulation in the country and looked to some like a "great transformation."

Partisan Polarization, Conservative Reaction and the First Wave of "the Terror"

The fascist wing of the Conservative Party composed of regional landlords and coffee-producing peasant farmers used violence as a tool of political intimidation against Liberal and Communist-voting campesinos and agrarian workers. These tactics began during the 1946 election as Conservative-party affiliated politicians mobilized thugs to intimidate rural voters against supporting Liberals, perpetrating killings and rapes of those who resisted, leading to street clashes and mob violence (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 15; Oquist, 1980, 3). Because the productive process in the coffee sector favoured family farmers and because many families were able to acquire land in coffee country from 1929 to 1945, aided in part by the provisions of Law 200 of 1936, a more radical impetus for social change among the agrarian working classes was

pre-empted (Bergquist, 1992, 68). Though organized agrarian workers in the eastern highlands tended to vote Liberal, small and medium-sized landowners in Boyaca, Santander and especially the coffee zones of Antioquia, Caldas and Tolima were drawn to the discourse of the Conservatives with its emphasis on tradition and property rights.

As market forces created competition for land from other producers, rising food prices coupled with rising coffee prices after 1946 caught smallholders in an inflationary spiral that created an existential struggle for land against neighbours and against larger landlords (Bergquist, 1992, 70; 1986, 277-78). The outcome was violent conflict over land, often between neighbours, that was encouraged by pathological elements within the oligarchy (Bergquist, 1992, 72). The angst of small farmers was channelled by the fascist-wing of the Conservative party, primarily by then Conservative-party Senator Laureano Gomez who railed against Liberals, communists and publicly called for a counter-revolution and a return to the Catholic, Falangist values he shared with Franco and Mussolini. He injected partisan and anti-liberal discourse into the class struggles and land conflicts in the countryside through his newspaper. Gomez' allied himself with ANDI the Industrialists lobby group and the commercial lobby FENALCO (Fluharty, 1957, 70). His vision of Colombia was one of a corporatist society dominated by strong Catholic values of hierarchy, property and productivity.

Under the Presidency of Conservative Mariano Ospina who won the 1946 election as Gaitán and Liberal Turbay split the vote, Gomez served as Chancellor but maintained a powerful role within the Conservative Party establishment. It was Gomez who had equated Gaitánism and Liberalism with threats to rural property and it was Gomez who deployed the *Chulavita* paramilitary forces to replace "Liberal" police forces in contested rural areas and enforce evictions of squatters under Law 200 of 1936. Recruited from among the ranks of Conservative peasants from Boyacá, the *Chulavitas* roamed the country, massacring Liberal politicians, workers, and peasants in the 1946 to 1949 period known as "the Terror" (Sánchez, 1992, 79; Kalmanovitz, 1996, 16). The actions of these partisan paramilitaries reveal both the counter-revolutionary nature of the violence, but also the economic motivation of land grabbing. Guzman Campos et al's work indicates that the initial phase of the *Violencia* was perpetrated mostly by small bands of Conservatives, primarily in areas that were previously dominated by small coffee producers (Guzman Campos et al., 2016[1963], 327-337). The violence was not instigated by those who opposed the expansion of capitalism, rather it was a reaction against the radical

agrarian workers' movement by those who sought to create conditions for expanded capitalist agriculture through land concentration. This passive revolutionary consequence of (and reaction to) the 1936 land reform and the 1944 counter-reform became most evident as the "terror" continued and the paramilitary political violence led by the Conservative party cadres against Liberal citizens transformed into state-led violence against organized peasant guerrillas.

The Liberals Abandon "el Pueblo" and the Second Wave of Guerrilla Conflict

The second set of passive revolutionary tendencies during *La Violencia* were the stances taken by elites of both parties toward rural violence. Industrial and financial elites from both parties demonstrated a clear willingness to cooperate to re-establish order when threatened by radical uprisings in response to Gaitán's death, even agreeing to martial law. However, the Liberals took little action when Chulavita mercenaries killed Liberals and Communists and they bluntly rejected an invitation from Liberal guerrillas to join their revolution.

Jorge Eliecer Gaitán won the leadership of the Liberal party after the 1946 elections and began a pacific protest against rural violence orchestrated by the Conservative party apparatus against Liberal and Communist campesinos. As the violence escalated through to 1948, Gaitán held marches in Bogotá that drew as many as 100,000 supporters. The killing of Gaitán as he left his office for a meeting with Fidel Castro during the Organization of American States conference set off days of rioting in Bogotá (*el Bogotazo*) (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 15; Bushnell, 1993, 202). Gaitán's supporters attacked symbols of Conservative rule - government buildings, conservative newspapers and the homes of Conservative politicians including Laureano Gomez (Safford and Palacios, 2002, 319; Bushnell, 1993, 202; Guzman Campos et al., 2016 [1963], 420-424). For a few weeks after April 9th, 1948 it seemed that a window of opportunity for a popular revolution was open.

During the two weeks following Gaitán's assassination, countless Colombian towns and rural districts lived under a formidable inversion of the institutional order. Police were 'at the service of the Revolution' as they put it in the provinces; prisoners imprisoned or executed their guards; those individuals previously persecuted now exercised power in many localities; judges incited subversion; pulpits were silenced and priests either imprisoned, held incommunicado, or killed (principally in Tolima and Cundinamarca); peasants invaded haciendas, expropriated cattle, and gave orders to landowners (especially in the Sumapaz region and in southern Tolima); foreign companies, such as the oil refineries of Barrancabermeja, were seized by their workers (Sánchez, 1992, 83).

In response to the *Bogotazo*, rather than siding with the masses in the streets, Liberal leaders including Carlos Lleras Restrepo, Dario Echandia and some Gaitánist cadres huddled in the

Presidential palace with Ospina and his cabinet. Within days the oligarchs agreed on bipartisan government (ibid, 84).

From mid 1948 to the end of 1949, the Conservative-Liberal coalition united behind attempts to crush the rebellion, eliminate the threat of April 9th and wipe out any possibility for popular revolt by imprisoning unionists, authorizing firms to fire militant workers, ban strikes and attack organized labour (Sánchez, 1992, 84). As Fluharty put it, “The people had risen up and destroyed property. Therefore, protect the propertied classes. Remind the masses that the oligarchy is the source of all good”(1957, 109). Ospina authorized emergency orders and imposed a state of siege. The oligarchy’s efforts to rid the country of Liberal and Communist revolutionaries was an invitation to further bloodshed against Communists and Liberals in the coffee country where tensions were already high due to the struggle for land (Bergquist, 1992, 70). Liberal elite cooperation with Ospina’s government gave the Conservatives enough time to purge the police of any remaining radical-Liberal influence and suppress the popular uprising.

Amid mounting unrest and violence in the countryside during Ospina’s state of siege, the Liberals chose to withdraw from the national elections at the end of 1949, the same day as Liberal peasant guerrillas occupied towns in Meta and Santander under the command of Eliseo Velasquez and Rafael Rangel (Sánchez, 1992, 87). As Kalmanovitz put it: “The Liberals opted to withdraw from the government they had saved, without defending the Liberal population under attack by the government throughout the country” (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 15).

Laureano Gomez acclaimed the presidency in August 1950 (Palacios, 2006, 145). Life magazine reported Gomez’s victory as the loss of the heritage of the liberty-loving Colombian people after “a reign of terror in the interior” during which towns were shot up, 2,000 Liberals murdered, hundreds imprisoned, and thousands displaced to the cities as the army patrolled the streets (Life, December 12, 1949 in Fluharty, 1957, 116). After Gomez took power he extended the state of siege and assured the oligarchy that the government would favour business, develop industry and attract foreign investment (ibid, 118). On his agenda was the establishment of a national oil company – ECOPETROL and a corporatist constitutional reform that would expand representation for the Church, Business Groups and state-sanctioned labour groups.

After the oligarchic faction of the Liberals abandoned the democratic movement in 1949 and with Liberal leaders dead, exiled or in hiding, *Chulavitas* attacked Liberals and Communists with renewed intensity in the countryside, forcing rural communities to defend themselves

(Palacios, 2006, 160-161; Sánchez, 1992, 87). While Liberal guerrilla armies led by peasants from the Llanos were mobilizing around Villavicencio in 1949, the Communist party responded to Conservative attacks in Tolima and Cundinamarca by organizing peasants into “self-defence” units (Safford & Palacios, 2002, 323; Kalmanovitz, 1996, 16; Londoño Botero, 2014, 469-471). The predominant areas of Guerrilla activity were areas of recent colonization such as the Sumapaz region of Cundinamarca and nearby southern Tolima where land titles remained uncertain and the agrarian conflicts of the 1930s had left many open wounds. It was there that the PSR, the Communist Party and Gaitán’s UNIR movement had emerged (Sánchez, 1992, 92).

After 1949, then, the guerrilla war ramped up on several fronts as Liberal and Communist guerrillas defended civilians against Conservative paramilitary/police forces. As the guerrillas became more active, Conservative tactics shifted from paramilitary violence against civilians to army operations against guerrillas and their civilian base. The army attacked the Indigenous resguardos of Ortega and Natagaima in Tolima in November of 1950, burned homes and displaced residents. Yacopi in Cundinamarca was obliterated in 1952. The Colombian army massacred fifteen hundred people in Las Rocas, a rural area close to Libano, Tolima and demolished 1000 homes (Sánchez, 1992, 89; Karl, 2017b, 54). In April 1952, whole Protestant villages in central Tolima, in Ibague, Rovira, and Armero were destroyed (Sánchez, 1992, 89).

As the guerrilla movement sought to unite the diverse regional directorates into a national revolutionary movement and develop a revolutionary platform based around agrarian reform in 1952 (Palacios, 2006, 163; Sanchez, 1992, 95), the Liberal party leadership in exile became uneasy. When the guerrilla leaders offered the Liberals a choice, “either the directorate would lead the general revolt or the guerrillas would do so on their own,” the Liberals declined, issuing the following statement through López Pumarejo: “If this is the last opportunity the Liberal leaders have to fulfill their historic destiny, as contemplated or interpreted by the chiefs of the armed revolt, then we are resolved to lose it! Moreover, if this means a definitive break with the pueblo, as the guerrillas would have it, so be it” (López Pumarejo, 1952 in Sánchez, 1992, 94). The rupture between the Liberal financiers, industrialists and petty-bourgeoisie and the agrarian working people was now complete.

The Third Wave: Caesarism, Counterinsurgency & Land Grabbing

The response to guerrilla mobilization against the fascist government of Laureano Gomez was bipartisan elite agreement on a temporary military junta that attempted to coopt Liberal

guerrillas with promises of land in exchange for disarmament but ramped up the military offensive and counterinsurgency efforts against Communist regions. In July of 1953 the army lost 96 soldiers in an attack by guerrilla leader Salcedo in the plains (llanos). Meanwhile, six police officers were murdered in Tolima; Liberal newspapers and the homes of Liberal leaders Alfonso López and Carlos Lleras Restrepo were burned down and a full-scale military offensive was launched in retaliation. In late 1952 and early 1953, the guerrillas successfully deployed ambushes and targeted attacks against a large-scale military ground force backed up by air support on the eastern plains against a large scale military ground offensive. “The civilian population had to leave everything behind, including their cattle, but the guerrillas only gained in popularity” (Palacios, 2006, 163).

The growing power of the rural resistance forced Gomez into desperation and emboldened his opponents within the oligarchy (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 16). Ospina, his moderate Conservative supporters and their Liberal allies capitalized on political divisions within the military leadership to withdraw their support for the Gomez government and organized a military coup on June 13, 1953 under General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (Kalmanovitz 1996, 16). Tasked by the Conservative-Liberal oligarchy to pacify the country, Rojas Pinilla tried to build inter-class alliances behind a program of national unity and reconstruction. It was in this context that Rojas presented himself as the “Bonaparte of the tropics.” He channeled ‘Christ and Bolivar’ to unite the urban masses and small farmers, giving him an air of autonomy from the oligarchy and landlords (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 16). In this sense, Rojas set himself up to play the role of strong man in the Caesarist tactic of passive revolution, in attempt to unite bourgeois and landed interests behind a national program of modernization.

Rojas had to maintain the confidence of the traditional elites while attempting to convince the warring factions, particularly the Liberal peasant-guerrillas that his pacification efforts were sincere. This he tried to do by offering an amnesty to the Liberal guerrillas, particularly in the eastern plains (Llanos) in exchange for demobilization and disarmament (Sánchez, 1992, 102). While demobilized Liberal guerrillas received land and financial support for reconstruction, the Communist forces continued to face military action, particularly in Tolima and parts of Cundinamarca (Safford & Palacios, 2002, 321).

Support for the military regime among the Conservative wing of the oligarchy waned as it seemed to them that funds earmarked for the victims of the Violence were being used by the

military to maintain the support of demobilized guerrilla leaders (Sánchez, 1992, 108). Meanwhile small farmers occupied former haciendas and landlords fled to the cities from the Sumapaz and parts of Tolima. The presence of Communists in these areas infuriated the landlords who decried “agrarian revolution” (Sánchez, 1992, 112). In response, the Rojas regime abandoned its attempts at pacification and launched a two-pronged counterinsurgency strategy.

First, Rojas tried to court the political loyalty of Gomez’ fascist forces by providing amnesties for political assassins, the *Pajaros* (Palacios, 2006, 135). This unleashed a second wave of terror: “Agents of the secret police, especially those of the Colombian Intelligence Service, used the newly released killers to assassinate individuals who had been amnestied, demobilized guerrillas who had not turned in their arms, and defenseless peasants. The killings were so open that even the army expressed its unease”(Sánchez, 1992, 109).

The second prong of the strategy was militarization. Landlords pressured the military dictatorship to ensure that any peace agreement would result in the return of their properties and eviction of the peasants. Rojas’ military forces responded by attacking communist communities with encirclement tactics to flush out mobile guerrillas. “It thus transpired in the latter half of 1954 that, in what might be characterized as the counterattack of the latifundia against the peasant economy and organization, the government, acting as the armed agent of the landowners, began to prepare a military assault on the region”(Sanchez, 1992, 112). In November 1954, 100 peasants were massacred in the Plaza of Puerto Nuevo in southern Tolima (in the coffee region of the upper Magdalena River valley). In 1954, large numbers of refugees fled to Ibagué following the aerial bombardment of Villarica. Others took refuge in the forests, intending to return to their homes after the bombardments ended, but eventually joined the large-scale exodus of communist peasants who migrated to the Airari region of Meta and Guayabero and Riochiquito in Tolima where they re-established peasant self-defence communes (Palacios, 2006, 164; Safford and Palacios, 2002, 323; Londoño Botero, 2014, 507-512).

Thereafter they became the targets of the military’s efforts at counterinsurgency and encirclement learned by Colombian forces against Communist villages in the Korean War.⁶ On

⁶ Colombia under Laureano Gomez sent an army battalion into combat and a naval vessel to support the US-led war effort in Korea, the only Latin American country to do so, and despite being involved in a civil war at home (Bushnell, 1993, 212-13). Bushnell argues that this was a show of support to the US by Gomez to ensure access to loans and economic and military aid, to reinforce his anti-communist credentials and erase any memory of his discourse in support of the fascist axis forces during World War II.

May 4, 1955, the state declared the Sumapaz region of Cundinamarca a war zone. “From that date ‘pacification’ once more came to be a synonym for devastation, machine-gunning, and bombardment. At least six battalions, around one third of the army’s total force, were involved, supported by a torture center known during the era as the concentration camp of Cunday”(Sánchez, 1992, 112). These attacks on the civilian base of the guerrillas set a precedent for later counterinsurgency efforts to “drain the pond to catch the fish.”

With Communists excluded from the peace process, Rojas Pinilla “cleared the way for those opposed to any agrarian revolution and defended in the last instance the long term interests of the powerful groups”(Kalmanovitz, 1996, 17). Rojas’ military regime established conditions for a restitution of bipartisan rule by the national bourgeoisie (financiers, merchants and industrialists) and powerful regional landlords. “Therefore the government of Rojas achieved the classic role of the Bonapartist regime, to erect itself in absolute form during periods of acute crisis and popular uprising to restore the old relations of political dominance”(ibid).

With Rojas playing the Caesarist role in the passive revolutionary dialectic, the status quo of landlord-bourgeois class power was restored in the face of a rural uprising. The pathway forward to impose capitalism was set. The Liberal guerrillas were demobilized without forming an alliance with the Liberal oligarchy and before they could implement a revolutionary platform while their military leaders were assassinated upon demobilization (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 17). The most powerful members of the Conservative and Liberal oligarchy cooperated to overthrow the fascist forces through the military coup and later re-established bipartisan rule. However, the problem of agrarian inequality, underdevelopment and peasant radicalism remained.

Economic Motivations, Violence and Political Affiliation in the Coffee Sector

The effects of the violence, the identity of its beneficiaries and its victims reveal its economic function as a means to impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation. The violence resulted in a concentration of property in coffee country in the hands of landlords and a middle class of commercial farmers, displacement of agrarian workers to join the labour market in the cities, and the displacement of small farmers into marginal agricultural frontier areas. The beneficiaries of this process were the owners of agribusiness operations in the rice, corn and sugarcane sectors as well as coffee landlords who sought to evict radical workers and take advantage of landless seasonal workers.

The economic significance of *La Violencia* is visible in its effects. Hirschman, who was in Colombia at the time, wrote: “This unrest, serious as it was, did not interfere with the rapid pace of economic growth experienced by Colombia during most of the postwar period. It is possible that, much as did the enclosure movement in 17th and 18th century England, the violent conflicts in the countryside and small towns fed industrialization and the growth of the larger urban centers”(Hirschman 1971 [1963], 116). The consequences of *la Violencia* – mass displacement, urbanization and concentration of property – provide greater clarity on the significance of the Violence. It was a process of open and mass dispossession of smallholders. These effects point to La Violencia as the means to execute a ‘passive’ revolution to expand capitalist-landlord power, particularly through a reconquest of the coffee sector and the liquidation of radical agrarian workers associated with the Communist Party and the radical wing of the Liberals.

Partly on the advice of Lauchlin Currie and Albert Hirschman, in the midst of *La Violencia*, the US provided Gomez (and then General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957) with military, technical and financial assistance in exchange for “counterreformist policies that conveniently served U.S. Cold War policy and greater integration into the American economy” (Kofas, 2002, 20). As violence spread to various parts of the country during Gomez’s tyranny it was business as usual for Colombian manufacturers and exporters who saw economic growth from 1950 to 1953 (Roldán, 2002, 21). The violence, Kalmanovitz argues, was a right-wing policy designed by Conservative extremists to crush the democratic movement. It was orchestrated by the extreme right, but it was tolerated by the state and executed without opposition from the Liberal mainstream. “More precisely, the policy of violence sought to crush the demands for agrarian reform from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat” (1996, 15).

During the transition from military to civilian rule in 1958, a commission was established to study the Violence. Fr. German Guzman Campos traveled through the countryside to interview victims, demobilized guerrillas and active combatants. Sociologists Orlando Fals Borda and Eduardo Umaña Luna later joined Guzman to write up his findings circa 1963 (Guzman Campos et al., 2016 [1963]). They found that in the country as a whole between 1946 and 1963 there were 34 Conservative paramilitary bands (*Chulavitas* and *Pajaraos*) with a total of 756 troops for an average band size of 22 troops. In total between 1949 and 1963 there were

76 Liberal guerrillas with 2,752 troops for an average group size of 36 combatants. Liberal guerrillas were therefore more numerous and larger in size on average than Conservative bands. Communist guerrillas were grouped into 14 combat units of 1,724 troops in total with an average group size of 123 troops, the largest of the three (Guzman Campos et al., 2016[1963], 327-337).

Table 5: Deaths attributed to the Violence in Colombia, 1946-1957, & Coffee Production, 1955, ranked by Department

Deaths attributed to the Violence		Coffee Production 1955	
Department	Deaths 1946-1957	Department	Tons
Antiguo Caldas	44,255	Caldas	117,202
Tolima	30,912	Antioquia	59,600
Antioquia	26,115	Tolima	56,075
Santander (Norte)	20,885	Valle	50,042
Santander (sur)	19,424	Cundinamarca	28,547
Valle	13,106	Huila	15,498
Meta	5,842	Santander (Norte)	10,484
Boyacá	5,359	Santander (Sur)	9,582
Huila	4,111	Cauca	9,464
Cundinamarca	4,037	All other	12,719
Bogotá	2,585		
Cauca	2,236		
All other departments	2,386		
Total	181,253		

(Oquist, 1978, 322; CEPAL, 1958, 25; Bergquist, 1992, 71)

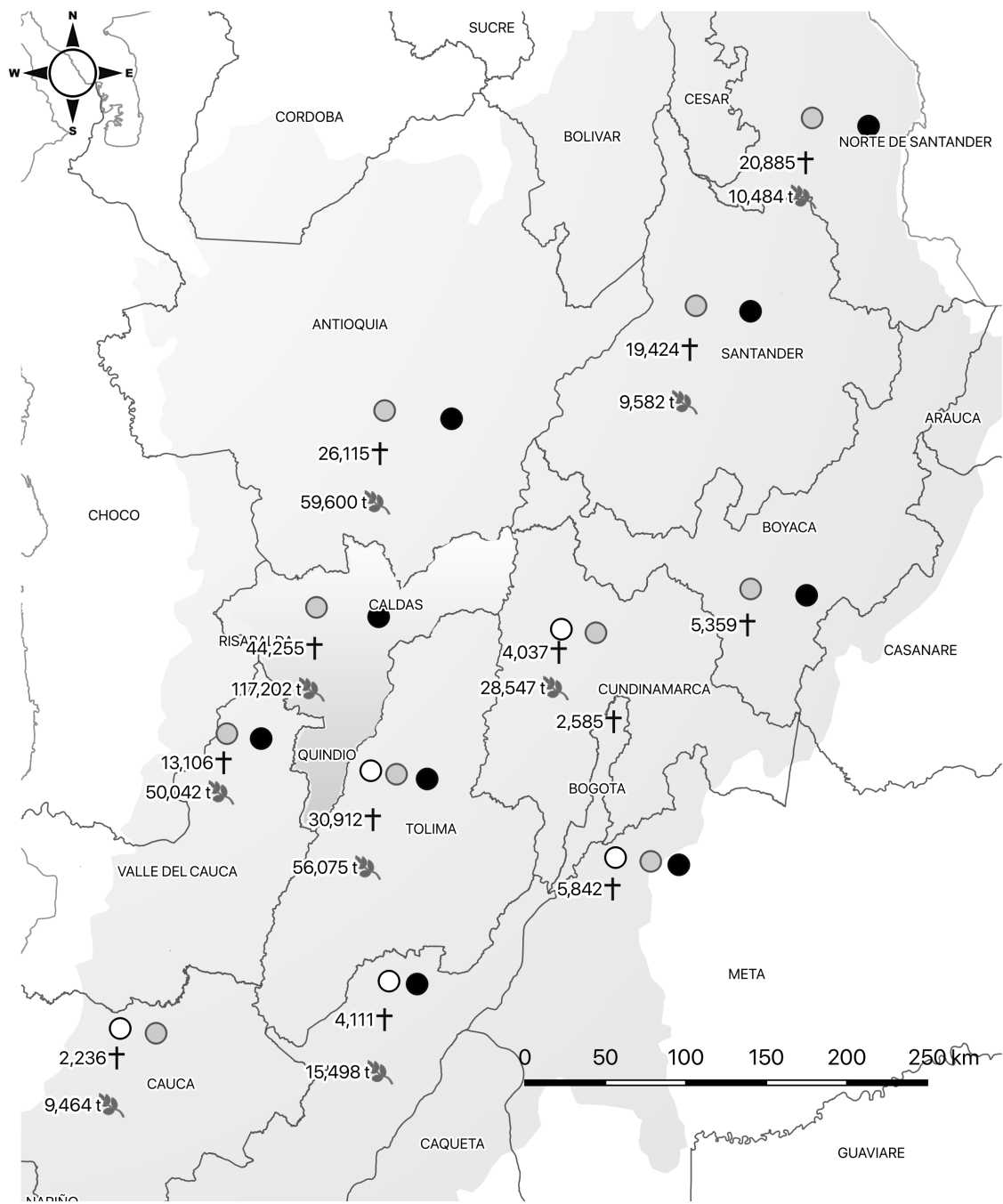


Figure 2: Political Affiliation of Armed Group, Deaths & Coffee Production by Department

- Departments
- Andes
- ☼ Coffee Production 1955
- † Deaths 1946-1957
- Conservative Bands
- Liberal Bands
- Communist Bands
- Antigua Caldas

WGS 84 EPSG 4326
 Scale on A4 - 1:2,750,000
 Sources: ESRI, DANE
 Instituto Geografico Agustin Codazzi,
<https://www.datos.gov.co/>
 Guzman Campos et al., 2016 [1963],
 327-337; Oquist, 1978, 322 in
 Bergquist, 1992, 71
 October 2020 D. O'Connor

From the raw data in Guzman Campos et al, I tallied the total number of armed groups and combatants per group for each department and compared these figures with death tolls by Department (Oquist, 1978, 322 in Bergquist, 1992, 71). There was no Communist presence in Antioquia, Boyacá, Antiguo Caldas (after 1966 divided into Caldas, Quindío and Risaralda), Santander and Valle. In these areas, relatively small bands of Conservatives with 15 to 20 troops were active during the 1946 to 1957 period and they were confronted by slightly larger bands of 20 to 25 Liberals (Guzman Campos et al., 2016[1963], 327-337).

Departments where there was no Communist presence and therefore featured only clashes between these Liberal and Conservative bands were the locations of the most deaths during the *Violencia* (apart from Tolima). There were 44,255 deaths in Caldas, 26,115 in Antioquia, 20,885 in North Santander, 19,424 in Santander and 13,106 in Valle along with 5,359 in Boyacá (all Departments with no Communist presence) (Oquist, 1978, 322 in Berquist, 1992, 71). The most violent places were where Communists were absent and both Liberals and Conservative bands operated.

In Meta and Tolima where all three partisan guerrillas were active, the death toll was also high with 30,912 deaths in Tolima and another 5,842 in Meta. The second most violent places were therefore conflict zones where all three forces were present. In Huila where Liberals were absent the death toll was 4,111. In Cauca and Cundinamarca, only Liberal and Communist guerrillas were active (Guzman Campos et al., 2016[1963], 327-337). There were 4,047 and 2,236 deaths respectively in these departments during the 1946 to 1957 period (Oquist, 1980, 6-9). Overall, Departments without Conservative paramilitary bands experienced fewer deaths. While there are gaps in the data, the figures indicate that the *Violencia* was perpetrated mostly by small bands of Conservatives against Liberal campesinos, primarily in areas that were previously dominated by small coffee producers and where they did not have the protection of Communist self-defence forces. Liberals armed themselves in self-defence and both Conservative death squads and Liberal guerrillas were present during the bloodiest phases of the violence in the coffee producing departments of Caldas, Antioquia and Valle. These western coffee producing areas were remarkable for the prior presence of smallholders, the absence of communist support, the presence of both Conservative and Liberal bands, and the large number of deaths.

Tolima was a coffee-producing region with large numbers of deaths and large numbers of smallholders, but it had been home to some Communist partisans and it became the main theatre

of guerrilla war during the Violence. Tolima thus featured coffee, Conservative-landlord violence and armed Communist resistance. It was, to paraphrase Robert Karl a zone where all of Colombia's problems and contradictions played out (2017b, 8).

This data and the historical narrative accounts of *la Violencia* suggest that Conservative reaction to democratization in the 1920s to the 1950s generated ideological opposition which was channelled through the traditional parties and was expressed as anti-Liberal and anti-communist hatred. In rural areas this consisted of landlord reaction against coffee smallholders and Conservative peasant reaction against Liberal campesinos and workers. This in turn erupted into a guerrilla war as Liberals and Communists mobilized to defend themselves against Conservative violence as the Liberal oligarchs abandoned them.

Land Tenure: The Beneficiaries and Victims of the Violence

The economic logic of *La Violencia* was the accumulation of land and displacement and the attendant social effects, including structural changes to the rural distribution of property (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 18; Sánchez, 1992, 98; Oquist, 1980, 17; Palacios, 2006, 135). As rural elites and absentee landlords took refuge in the cities, the countryside was abandoned to a class of middle managers and wealthy peasants. This group gained control of lands abandoned by refugees, including many smallholders in predominantly Liberal areas who fled to distant colonization zones or joined the primitive labour market in cities. The resulting patterns of land tenure after the Violence varied by region and by sector, but who gained land and who lost and (and where), reveal the motivations of the perpetrators of the violence. Land became more concentrated in the most suitable areas for coffee production while the number of coffee producers in marginal frontiers expanded.

In the coffee sector, there were stark regional variations in the patterns of land distribution that resulted from the Violence. In 1955 and 1956, the ECLA/CEPAL in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) conducted field surveys of coffee production using a representative sample of Colombian coffee farms (CEPAL, 1958). The report and its statistical addendum provide a detailed look at the distribution of coffee production by geography and farm size.⁷ For the country as a whole, the data suggest a minimum Gini

⁷ Figures for each department on 1955-56 include coffee production volumes (tons) and yield (kg/ha) by size of farm, the surface area planted with adult coffee trees, and the number of farms for each size category. These figures

coefficient of 0.31.⁸ Compare the 1955 figures (0.31 Gini) for the country's coffee sector as a whole in the 1932 coffee census (0.37 Gini) and it immediately appears that there was a relative *diffusion* of participation in production between 1932 and 1955 but a close look reveals this was actually an increased *fragmentation* of peasant holdings.

While participation in coffee production was growing in absolute numbers, the size of the smaller productive units was actually shrinking. In the 1930s, the smallest category of farm was less than 5,000 trees, whereas by the 1950s, the smallest category was less than 2,500 trees. This was due to the relative marginalization of the smallest coffee producers who lost land to larger and medium sized producers. Also visible in the 1956 data are stark regional differences in the patterns of concentration of property that suggest violence was used to concentrate land in the most productive regions of the country, forcing smallholders to seek refuge in frontier areas where property distribution was diffuse. A rough Gini coefficient of the distribution of Antioquian production (92.5% of farms account for 57.1% of production) would be 0.35 circa 1955 (CEPAL, 1958, 14).⁹ Compare this with data from the 1932 Coffee Census, which I used to estimate the Gini coefficient for Antioquian coffee production at 0.20 (FEDECAFÉ, 1932, 126).

During the course of the violence, there was a noticeable concentration of coffee production in this important coffee department, which was known as the heartland of smallholder production (prior to the violence). It was in fact, the scene of a violent process of dispossession with coffee smallholders as the victims. In Cundinamarca in 1955, I estimate a minimum Gini coefficient for the distribution at 0.41.¹⁰ In Cundinamarca, property in the coffee sector circa 1955 was more concentrated than in Cundinamarca in 1939 when I estimate that the Gini

provide an indication of the productivity of the coffee sector by farm size, the incidence of the size of each productive units (what % of the total of all farms are a particular size) and the level of concentration of production.

⁸ For the country as a whole, aggregating all Departments (similar to Provinces), 36.3% of all farms were under 1 ha in size and account for only 5.3% of all production, $GINI = f - u$; If $f =$ the % of all farms and $u =$ the % of production, $GINI = 36.3\% - 5.3\% = 0.363 - 0.053 = 0.31$

⁹ In the coffee sector in Antioquia in 1955, 92.5% of the farms were small in size (less than 10 ha) and on average these small farms were approximately 2 ha in size but accounted for 57.1% of the year's production volume. Meanwhile, there was a coffee-middle class consisting of farm sizes of 19.5 ha that accounted for 37.6% of production on 2130 farms (CEPAL, 1958, 14). The Antioquian example suggests that the smallest farms produced relatively less coffee per ha than the largest farms, which were specialized operations and used modern agronomic techniques and agricultural science to enhance yield. These larger, modern coffee plantations were more competitive by 1955 than their smaller counterparts.

¹⁰ In Cundinamarca, all farms smaller than 10 ha accounted for 96.5% of the number of farms but had only 55.4% of the land. At the other end of the curve, only 3.5% of the farms accounted for more than 44.6% of the land.

coefficient was approximately 0.20. Between 1939 and 1955 in Cundinamarca, coinciding with the *Violencia*, there was a clear concentration of property in the coffee sector.

For Tolima, I estimated the Gini Coefficient for coffee production at 0.22 circa 1939. In 1955 there were 26,250 coffee farms in Tolima on a total of 107,319 ha. Farms smaller than 10 ha were 93.8 % of the total and accounted for 65.7% of the land. This would put the minimum Gini for this distribution at 0.28 in 1955. This is higher than the 0.22 Gini estimate for Tolima in 1939 and indicates a greater concentration of property in that Department during the *Violencia*.

If the Land Law of 1936 had prompted an expansion of access to land in the coffee zone that was reflected in a relative diffusion of property ownership circa 1939, this trend was reversed during the course of the *Violencia* from 1946 to 1955, at least in Cundinamarca, Tolima and Antioquia. While overall, participation in coffee production appeared to become more diffuse during *La Violencia* (comparing Gini estimates from 1932 to 1955), nevertheless, in older areas of coffee cultivation (where coffee was most established), there were clearly processes of violent accumulation resulting in land concentration.

Table 6: Number of Colombian coffee farms and production according to size, 1955

Size of farm	# of farms	% of all farms	# of Metric Tonnes	% of all production
< 1 ha (<2,500 trees)	77,245	36.3	19,129	5.3%
1.1 to 10 ha 2,500 to 25,000 trees	123,719	58.1	207,639	57.9%
10.1 to 50 ha 25,000 to 125,000 trees	11,429	5.4	108,637	30.3%
50.1 to 100 ha 125,000 to 250,000 trees	447	0.2	13,734	3.9%
100.1 to 200 ha 250,000 to 500,000 trees	79	-	4,426	1.2%
>200 ha >500,000 trees	51	-	4,996	1.4%
Totals	212,970	100%	358,561	100%

(CEPAL and UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Bergquist, 1992, 64)

Table 7: Estimates of Gini Coefficient for Coffee Sector in Select Departments 1932, 1939, 1955

Department	1932	1939	1955	Deaths in la Violencia (1946-1957)
Cundinamarca	0.25	0.20	0.41	4,033
Tolima	0.27	0.22	0.28	30,912
Antioquia	0.20	--	0.35	26,115

The aggregate diffusion of property in the coffee sector as a whole can be explained by the flight to frontier areas where displaced settlers planted coffee on subsistence plots.¹¹ In departments such as Boyacá, Magdalena and Huila, trees were newer, meaning they were planted in the Post-War period during *La Violencia* (CEPAL, 1958, 14). As competition in the older coffee areas of Antioquia, Tolima, Cauca and Cundinamarca intensified and the struggle for land turned violent, smallholders fled to frontier areas where they planted new trees and subsisted from their peasant plots while waiting the three or four years for the bushes to mature.

The other side of the process of conflict, displacement and concentration of coffee land in Cundinamarca, Tolima and Antioquia is therefore the expansion of the frontier during the Violence. Information on public land grants during the Violence provides some further insight into the patterns of land tenure on the frontier (INCODER, 2012, Chaux, 1933 in Londoño et al, 2016 Statistical Annex). During the first phase of *La Violencia* from 1947 to 1953, 782,338 ha of land were privatized. The average size of each grant was 50.8 ha, similar to 48.4 ha in the 1932 to 1946 period. The pace of grants increased dramatically, however, as the yearly average amount of land granted to individuals or corporations during the first phase of the violence was 127,482.67 ha compared to only 43,405 ha on average per year during the 1932 to 1946 period.

During the military dictatorship of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, from 1954 to 1957 an astounding 1,004,380 ha were granted in average grants of 76.6 ha. That works out to an average of 325,506.67 ha granted per year. From 1958 to 1961 there was an even greater tendency toward larger land grants. The average size of the adjudications in that period of the “peace process” were 117.3 ha and the total number of hectares granted increased to 376,523 ha per year for the 1958 to 1961 period. Land grants continued to grow in size and number during the dictatorship, indicating the adjudication of frontier lands in large parcels for agricultural enterprises and the distribution of public lands to demobilized guerrillas on the Llanos.

¹¹ Evidence for this hypothesis is in the data on the age of coffee trees; in Antioquia the majority of trees in 1955, that is, 63% of the 114,858 hectares of coffee lands in Antioquia were more than 15 years old. These older coffee groves had a yield of 39,114 tons, which was 65.6% of the Antioquian harvest, indicating that coffee plantations were well established but that the productivity of the trees was in decline at a yield of 537 kgs/ha (CEPAL 1958, 2). There was thus motivation on the part of existing producers to acquire additional land or coffee groves to maintain productivity and profit rates. Similarly in Cauca, 70% of the trees were more than 15 years old and in Tolima 61% of the trees were more than 15 years old and showing declining productivity (yield per ha) (CEPAL, 1958, 3-6). More than 15 years prior to the date of the field survey puts the date of planting no later than 1940 and likely earlier.

Londoño et al. (2016) present breakdowns of the size of public lands adjudications for the periods 1932 to 1946 (Liberal rule) and 1947-1953 (Conservative rule during the first phase of *La Violencia*). This data provides an indicator of the degree of concentration in the adjudication of land during these periods of peasant unrest, landlord reaction, displacement and colonization. If I make the same rough calculation of the Gini coefficient for this data on public lands grants as I did for the 1956 data on farm size distribution above, and combine all grants above 100 ha, in 1932 to 1946, just 707 grants or about 5% of the total grants in that period accounted for 62.5% of all the land granted. In that case, the Gini coefficient for the public lands program for the 1932 to 1946 period would be at least 0.58 ($Gini = f - u = 0.625 - 0.05 = 0.575$). For the 1947 to 1953 period, the rough calculation of the Gini coefficient suggests it would be at least 0.60 ($= 0.70 - 0.10$). By these calculations, the Gini coefficient for both periods suggest a concentration of frontier property over the course of the *Violencia* through public lands grants.

The public land grants figures are slightly lower, but generally consistent with the degree of inequality calculated for landed property as a whole in 1956 at 0.64 (IGAC, 2012, 57). This also suggests that the highly unequal distribution of landed property in established areas was reproduced in the process of frontier settlement and public lands adjudication. The conclusions that can be drawn suggest that the main beneficiaries of land grants during *La Violencia* were wealthy Colombians, agricultural entrepreneurs and regionally powerful landlords and not family farmers. The largest grants increased in size by almost 30% during this bloody phase in Colombian history, allowing perhaps a few score of individuals and firms to expand their control over massive amounts of territory - as much as 30% of the total amount of land adjudicated during those violent periods. The poorest people were able to acquire only small plots of land, barely suitable for subsistence production and some coffee cultivation.

The economic logic of the *Violencia* as a collective land grab is visible in its immediate social and economic consequences: between 1949 and 1957 there were 361,800 displaced persons from Tolima, 34,300 homes were razed and 40,000 rural properties of at least 32,000 proprietors were abandoned – affecting as much as 42 percent of all rural residents of Tolima (Sánchez, 1992, 105). The death toll nation-wide Safford & Palacios note, could be anywhere from 80,000 to 400,000 (2002, 345), although most sources use Paul Oquist's figure of 180,000 for 1948 to 1958 and close to 200,000 if 1946-1948 is included (Oquist, 1980, 6-9). Kalmanovitz estimates that between 200,000 and 300,000 people died and between 600,000 and 1,200,000

people were displaced (1996, 16). Palacios puts the death toll at 300,000 (2006, 136). Karl goes with 200,000 deaths and 400,000 parcels of land usurped (Karl, 2017a, 300).

Meanwhile, there was an annual average of 5% GDP growth from 1945 to 1954 and 9% industrial growth on average over the same period (Ocampo Gaviria et al., 2015(1987), 241). Mass murder and forced displacement fed industrial and agrarian capitalist growth. The process of dispossession saw a reconsolidation of coffee property in the hands of regional landlords and aggressive peasant-capitalist farmers, the violent displacement of refugees toward frontiers or the cities, and a consolidation of agrarian capitalism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *La Violencia* was a consequence of the agrarian reform and counter-reform of 1936 to 1944. The violence was primarily directed at smallholders in the coffee sector and restored landlord power. The violence provided a means for landlords to accumulate land, displace peasants and discipline workers and reversed any gains that the popular movement may have won in the coffee sector in the 1920s and 30s. Violence was the means through which agrarian capitalism was consolidated as the dominant mode of agricultural production, displacing peasant smallholders, and attacking organized labour.

Law 200 of 1936 can be seen in hindsight as an effort to coopt revolutionary impulses among rural and urban workers by promising a modicum of inclusion in the national economy through land ownership, but ultimately restoring landlord power within the national capitalist project through Law 100 of 1944. Once it was clear that the Liberals would not fight for campesino interests in the face of paramilitary assaults on Liberal and Communist-voting smallholders, the Conservatives went on the offensive and attempted to eliminate the mass base for the radical wing of the Liberals and their Communist allies.

Through a process that fits Gramsci's description of passive revolution (an abortive, restorative counter-reform), a national industrial, financial and commercial elite and landlord alliance asserted its interest in capitalist development in the countryside through the instauration of a military strongman. The passive revolution "secured" the concentration of wealth and income and expended 200,000 lives. *La Violencia* is therefore the brutal pinnacle of reaction against the democratic movement, a regressive form of Caesarism designed to reinforce capitalist production and restore the old hierarchies within a new, modern form of exploitation.

CHAPTER 3: LAW 135 of 1961, THE PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENTAL STATE AND GUERRILLA WAR

Through the 1950s, US demand for Colombian agricultural commodities grew along with interest in foreign investment. The 1958 National Front was an upper-class alliance of Liberals and Conservatives including landlords, financiers, merchants, industrialists and bureaucrats that sought to enlist US capital to modernize Colombian agriculture and ally with US security forces to suppress communist elements. The peripheral developmental state was a continuation of the passive revolution designed to integrate Colombia further within an internationalized social structure of capital accumulation.

In this chapter I examine the period surrounding the implementation of the 1961 land reform. How did attempts to consolidate large scale capital accumulation in Colombian agriculture to meet rising demands for exports affect production relations? How did international finance, multilateral organizations and the US State department influence the implementation of land reform? Here I look at the role of Colombian and American intellectuals in promoting the modernization of agricultural production through the Alliance for Progress and the resulting patterns of domestic state formation and contestation. I also examine the immediate and longer-term consequences of the 1961 land reform on rural property distribution, production relations and armed conflict.

The consensus position in Colombian historiography is that the National Front brought an end to *La Violencia* and ushered in a new phase of Colombian institutional history (Bushnell, 1993, 223; Palacios, 2006, 170; Safford & Palacios, 2002, 353). I argue that the National Front was actually the political formalization of a historic bloc of industrial, financial and agrarian capitalist interests that had been taking shape since the 1920s. However, characteristic of passive revolution, the accumulation strategy and political power of this bloc relied on infusions of US capital and the violent devaluation of labour. In this sense, *La Violencia* did not end but was institutionalized to expand capital accumulation in the peripheral developmental state.

La Violencia had dramatic consequences for Colombian production relations that set the stage for the 1961 reform including the sharp concentration of land, growth of the reserve army of labour, and the impoverishment of small farmers after coffee prices fell in 1956. This put pressure on the state to deal with rural inequality and renewed calls for redistributive reform. While the rural insurgency had put land reform at the top of its agenda since the late 1940s, the

bipartisan National Front in power after 1958 saw the potential for state-led agrarian reform as a solution for the rural crisis. Agrarian reform had the blessing of US-based technocrats and lenders who saw opportunities for the expansion of accumulation in Colombia in the increasingly polarized context of the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War.

Though on paper the 1961 reform contained pro-campesino elements, in practice it was implemented only partially. Rather than redistribution of large estates, the reform promoted colonization, expanded markets in land, and promoted large-scale modern capitalist production that enabled the further transfer of land from the poor to the wealthy. In a growing international crisis of capital in the 1970s, the more radical elements of the reform were abandoned or reversed. As the failure of the reform became more evident, the radical left in Colombia shifted from its narrow focus on access to land and began to articulate a revolutionary Project. Meanwhile, the state sought US support for counterinsurgency. In the reading I provide here, land reform and counterinsurgency are modes of passive revolution designed to 1) expand capitalist subjectivity by incorporating agrarian workers and campesinos into agrarian capitalist production without mass popular support; and 2) destroy or undermine radical opposition to capital accumulation.

Context: Production, the State and the Post-War International System

Circa 1958, the Violence had disrupted agricultural production and the food supply, weakened the coffee sector, generated mass unemployment and put in question the juridical legitimacy of all landed property (Albà, 2011, 346; Balcazar et al., 2001, 10). In the National Front after 1958, pressure continued to mount for agrarian reform, in part through the platform of the Alliance for Progress. In Lleras Camargo's cabinet, Carlos Lleras Restrepo again proposed a land reform bill in attempt to consolidate modern capitalist agriculture with support for both large commercial farms and small commodity producers. However, lacking a commitment to redistribution of land among workers and campesinos, the reform effort was largely a failure. Still, foreign financial, military and political support were required for the full consolidation of peripheral agrarian capitalism through the developmental state.

US Hegemony, the Alliance for Progress and Colombian Production Relations

In the post-war period of North Atlantic-US hegemony, favourable terms of trade and access to foreign loans saw peripheral governments embark on spending sprees to appease the

“appetites of politically significant domestic groups”(Cox, 1987, 263). When foreign currency reserves were depleted, these peripheral regimes had to face the consequences of articulation with global finance through increasingly cumbersome debt repayment. Multilateral financial institutions ensured that third world countries would meet their debt repayment obligations to lenders from the core capitalist countries and that peripheral economic policies would not impede international capital accumulation (ibid). The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)’s Planning Council imposed strict conditions on peripheral trade, fiscal management, utility regulations and labour laws.

The terms of these loans and their impact on trade, monetary, fiscal and social policy encouraged authoritarian actions on the part of peripheral governments (Kofas, 2002, 21). As Cox points out, the terms of loans from IFIs “also determined internal political structures since they could be met only by regimes willing and able to use force to carry through unpopular economic policies”(Cox, 1987, 263-4). Even during moments of crisis when foreign exchange was tight, governments maintained a commitment to debt repayment. This happened in 1956 in Colombia when falling coffee prices depleted the foreign exchange reserves and reversed the balance of payments, yet Rojas acquiesced to pressure from IFIs and the US to maintain debt service so he could continue to borrow (FEDECAFÉ, 2018; Palacios, 2006, 133-134). The international hegemony of embedded Liberalism in the post-war era encouraged peripheral elites to repress popular demands for alternative development pathways, particularly socialism.

Peripheral states had to expand exports to generate foreign exchange so they could repay debts and maintain creditworthiness. To expand exports, they sought to modernize the agricultural sector so they could compete with other peripheral export-commodity producers. At the same time, peripheral economies had to remain open to foreign investment under the terms of loans, even in the face of domestic resistance. What must be emphasized here is that it was “the ideological and political power of global hegemony (that) restricted the forms of state that were tolerated within this world order” (Cox 1987, 266). Ideological consensus between the centre and peripheral elites was enforced at the periphery (where hegemony was less secure) with the threat of coercion (ibid). From 1945 to 1973 there was hegemony at the centre and passive revolution at the periphery as the embedded liberal states of the North Atlantic projected capitalist power upon the peripheral developmental states of the “south” through the internationalization of production

The US promoted policies in Colombia that would keep the peripheral developmentalist state open to foreign direct investment. The US also regulated and encouraged public and private loans via several institutions and technocratic missions. US-based agencies attempted to ensure that Colombian markets would remain open, loans would be repaid, and accounts settled. Ensuring access to risky markets like Colombia was done by the EXIM bank which was founded by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934 to serve as a lender of last resort to finance foreign purchase of U.S. goods and services (Ex-Im, 2016, website). Research and guidance for US investments in Colombia came from the Committee for Economic Development, a non-profit think tank designed to promote US economic interests (CED, 2016). Along with the institutional landscape, technocratic missions continued to be an important part of Colombian economic development (Palacios, 2006, 133). Together, regulatory institutions, private lending and foreign advisers ensured that economic policy in Colombia would meet the requirements of US capital accumulation.

While access to foreign loans and markets may have enabled authoritarian factions in Colombia to maintain their grip on power during *La Violencia* and the Military Dictatorship, eventually the contradictions of mass repression came to bear upon the proponents of capitalist modernization. Working class and student radicalism, along with pressure from Washington and IFIs encouraged Colombian elites to seek peace and consider reforms. In a discursive sense, the National Front offered reformism as an alternative to Peron-style populism between unregulated liberal capitalism and socialism. Absent were the revolutionary aspirations of the 1930s but there were elements of a reformist discourse designed to adapt Colombian capitalism to the demands of the working and middle classes with a modicum of social justice circa 1958 to 1961 (Kofas, 2002, 21). In practice though, the National Front pursued growth-by-foreign-debt policies that were virtually indistinguishable from previous governments since the 1930s, whether Liberal (López or Santos), Conservative (Ospina), or authoritarian (Gomez or Rojas). Debt-dependent growth was enabled by the IBRD, the Organization of American States and the US State Department.

The Organization of American States adopted the Act of Bogotá in October of 1960. The Act of Bogotá recommended “measures for social improvement and economic development within the Framework of Operation Pan America” (Organization of American States, 1960). The Act consisted of several recommendations to improve “the opportunities of the people of Latin

America for social progress” and included country-specific measures to improve the “conditions of rural living and land use...with a view to ensuring a wider and more equitable distribution of land, in a manner consistent with the objectives of employment, productivity and economic growth”(Organization of American States, 1960). The Act called for policy changes to agrarian credit institutions, tax measures and fiscal policies to encourage more efficient land use (ibid). The catch was that these development initiatives would be funded through long-term loans to Latin American governments (Organization of American States, 1960). The conditions that Latin American loan recipients had to meet under the terms of the Act of Bogotá were inflation controls and monetary and exchange-rate-stability measures to avert balance of payments crises from export commodity price fluctuations. The inflation and monetary controls were intended for states to avoid default on loans, debt crises and foreign exchange shortages.

In an address to Latin American Diplomats and US Congressional representatives at the White House on March 13, 1961, President John F. Kennedy laid out the foundations of the Alliance for Progress. The Alliance for Progress was a plan to raise the standard of living for every American family and to establish “self-sustaining growth” (Kennedy, 1961). Country-specific development plans would ensure monetary stability, stimulate the private sector and establish targets for growth and social development in coordination with the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (ibid). Kennedy announced \$500 million in funding to meet the promises of the Act of Bogotá “to combat illiteracy, improve the productivity and use of their land, wipe out disease, attack archaic tax and land-tenure structures, provide educational opportunities ... to make the benefits of increasing abundance available to all”(ibid). Kennedy concluded his Alliance speech with a call for reform: “For unless necessary social reforms, including land and tax reform, are freely made, unless we broaden the opportunity for all of our people, unless the great mass of Americans share in increasing prosperity, our revolution, our dream, and our freedom will fail”(ibid).

Though only touched upon in Kennedy’s speech, central to the Alliance for Progress was security: “we reaffirm our pledge to come to the defense of any American nation whose independence is endangered”(ibid). The main obstacle to hemispheric security, as Kennedy saw it, was militarism and tyranny, embodied in the Cuban regime (ibid). Later observers have viewed the Alliance for Progress as a program explicitly designed to thwart communist-style guerrilla revolutions of the sort waged in Cuba (Kay, 2001, 165).

Correspondence between Colombian Liberal President Alberto Lleras Camargo and President John F. Kennedy in 1961 indicates that Colombia's Foreign Minister Julio César Turbay Alaya was actively promoting the Alliance for Progress across Latin America (Turbay was later elected President of Colombia in 1978). Ahead of the Punta del Este multilateral meeting to discuss the Alliance in Uruguay, Lleras Camargo outlined potential obstacles to the *Alianza* in a telegram to John F. Kennedy: "Many of the countries think that the terms of the pledge of aid by the United States to Latin America lacks precision, while at the same time the United States requires from them in very precise form radical transformations that they cannot undertake without external aid from the United States"(Lleras Camargo 1961 in the JFK papers). To ensure that his warning was understood as the respectful advice of a close partner, he elaborated on his reasons:

I have thought it desirable to make this preoccupation known to you precisely because of the extent to which our two Governments are identified both in their desire to seek proper solutions to the serious dangers which have been created for the hemisphere by the imminence of the Soviet menace in our own community and on the procedures for achieving those solutions(ibid).

Lleras Camargo had tied the Colombian oligarchy's political and economic fortunes to the Alliance for Progress but Kennedy's government was pleased to have a willing, anti-communist political ally and it seemed other Latin American governments got on board.

The Charter of Punta del Este was signed by representatives of all the members of the Organization of American States (with the exception of Cuba) at a special meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council on August 17, 1961. The Charter laid out the goals, objectives and tasks for the Alliance for Progress. One of its fundamental goals was to "encourage, in accordance with the characteristics of each country, programs of comprehensive agrarian reform leading to the effective transformation, where required, of unjust structures and systems of land tenure and use, with a view to replacing latifundia and dwarf holdings by an equitable system of land tenure"(Organization of American States, 1961). To implement these goals, the Charter recommended credit programs, agricultural technical assistance, research, mechanization, as well as health and education, crop storage and distribution and support for farmers' cooperatives and "community development" (Organization of American States, 1961).

In September 1962, the Colombian Ambassador to the United States Carlos Sanz de Santamaria left Washington to take up the post of Finance Minister in Colombia. Before Sanz

left, he requested a meeting with President Kennedy. The President's staff wrote a memo to convince him to take the meeting.

The Department recommends that, if convenient, the President receive Ambassador Sanz for a short visit. ... Colombia is the best bet for an Alliance for Progress breakthrough. ... The economic and social tasks to be done will be very difficult. In the position of Finance Minister, Ambassador Sanz will have the major role in leading Colombian economic efforts. He needs reassurance that as the Colombians make the necessary difficult decisions the United States will support them. As the leading Latin American partner in the Alliance, we believe some special attention should be paid to Colombia... (Brubeck, 1962 in JFK papers).

Kennedy was suitably impressed to grant the meeting with Sanz on September 27, 1962. Clearly there was an ideological affinity between Colombian Liberals and US Democrats in expanding capitalist modernization through US-Colombian bilateral relations.

The intellectual author of the development policy behind the Alliance for Progress was W.W. Rostow, John F. Kennedy's economic and security adviser. Rostow posited a five-stage theory of economic growth that saw traditional societies overcome barriers to growth, expand production for the market, reinvest in the means of production, reap the benefits of compound interest, and 'take off' toward a phase of high mass-consumption (Rostow, 1960, 12). For Rostow, the pre-conditions for the take-off to self-sustaining growth were "created generally in response to the intrusion of a foreign power, converging with certain domestic forces making for modernization" (1960, 12). With the preconditions in place, the economic take off would play out over two further generations until incomes rose with the widespread adoption of technology, access to consumer goods and services and the establishment of a welfare state for the "increasingly urban – and then suburban – population" (Rostow, 1960, 12). Take off, self-sustaining growth, and modernization were all catch-words of the Alliance for Progress. This top-down imposition of conditions for expanded capital accumulation without meaningful mass input, sponsored by foreign capital, were the stuff of passive revolution. This was not some endogenous process of long term, market driven differentiation of successful campesinos into capitalist farmers and poor peasants into landless workers, then into industrialists and proletarians. Instead, modernization attempted to "skip" steps in the evolution of capitalism, make a great transformation or a great leap forward, literally to "accelerate development" as Currie put it (1966).

The proponents of the Alliance for Progress, informed by modernization theory, assumed that peasant-lord agriculture would disappear with the transfer of technology and capital from the developed world to the periphery "under the sponsorship of the Alliance for Progress and

international organizations” (Heynig, 1982, 119). The main proponent of Rostow’s theories of growth and development in Colombia was Lauchlin Currie (Ocampo, 2008, 49). Further, Rostow corresponded with Hirschman during his time in Colombia (Caballero Argaez, 2008, 176; Adelman, 2008, 12-21). The two most prominent foreign advisers in Colombia in the 1950s (Hirschman and Currie) were disciples of modernization theory and peers of Rostow, the organic intellectual of the Alliance for Progress, although Hirschman’s position was much more nuanced and pro-small farmer. Brittain points out that the notion of “accelerating development” proposed by Currie was an attempt to implement the Prussian or landlord road to capitalism via “the violent dispossession of peasants and the consolidation of a class of large proprietors owning the means of production” (Brittain, 2005, 352).

At the level of analysis of relations of force, the Alliance for Progress combined economic ‘modernization’ with sinister and sophisticated plans to infiltrate dissident groups, identify potential collaborators or informants, and set up counterinsurgency and paramilitary operations. The counterinsurgency element of the Alliance was already in the planning stages at the time of Sanz’s meeting with Kennedy. Doug Stokes cites a communiqué written in 1962 by General William Yarborough, the head of a US Army Special Warfare unit:

It is the considered opinion of the survey team that a concerted country team effort should be made now to select civilian and military personnel for clandestine training in resistance operations in case they are needed later. This should be done with a view toward development of a civil and military structure for exploitation in the event that the Colombian internal security system deteriorates further. This structure should be used to pressure toward reforms known to be needed, perform counter-agent and counter-propaganda functions and as necessary execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents. It should be backed by the United States... The apparatus should be charged with clandestine execution of plans developed by the United States Government toward defined objectives in the political, economic and military fields. This would permit passing to the offensive in all fields of endeavour rather than depending on the Colombians to find their own solution (Yarborough in Stokes, 2004, 242).

Brittain argues that the Alliance for Progress was the first Latin-American counterinsurgency program that involved bi-lateral cooperation with the USA and was the model for all subsequent counterinsurgency programs in Latin America (Brittain, 2010, 65). Essentially, the program was a means to provide institutional reforms, loans and access to repression (ibid, 64).

Power: From Dictatorship to the National Front

In the 1950s, successive Colombian administrations pursued foreign loans and courted foreign investment as a means to promote domestic development. In parallel, they offered partial tariff protection for core domestic industries alongside favourable conditions for investors in

other sectors (Thorp, 1991, 17-18). The social basis for Laureano Gomez's presidency (1950-53) was the support of landlords, bankers, the Catholic Church and the military. Domestically, Gomez used executive power to issue decrees that marginalized trade unions and strengthened industry and commercial farming alongside efforts to attract foreign investment by complying with IMF, IBRD, and U.S. policy to obtain loans (Kofas, 2002, 22). In line with the recommendations Currie made in the report on his IRBD mission, Gomez liberalized trade, provided tax breaks to foreign businesses, and attempted to convert subsistence farms to commercial operations. The Eximbank provided \$30 million in new loans and the IBRD \$64.3 million for Colombia to purchase equipment and raw materials from the United States (ibid).

Gomez' commitment to the interests of foreign capital extended well into the domestic sphere where he implemented anti-inflationary measures, despite the opposition of the Medellin industrialists, and cracked down on the labor movement "in part to send a signal to a World Bank mission contemplating new loans, but largely to placate his own Conservative base"(Kofas, 2002, 23). As a condition of its loan to build the Magdalena railway project that would link Bogotá to the port of Buenaventura in 1951, the IBRD advised Colombia to restructure its increasingly inefficient national railway system. The government responded by firing thousands of railway workers and used both force and legal pressure to squash Liberal and Communist trade unions (ibid, 25).

In July of 1952, the government passed Law 8 to promote foreign direct investment which exempted foreign companies from paying taxes on capital investments for a period of five years provided that 100% of the raw materials they used were from domestic sources and that they did not compete with Colombian firms (Congreso de Colombia, 1952). Between 1950 and 1954, Kofas estimates that \$271 million USD was invested in Colombia's petroleum and manufacturing sectors by multinational firms such as B.F. Goodrich, W.R. Grace, and Standard Oil (2002, 25). Reliance on foreign loans to prop up the economy had its costs and the Gomez regime found itself paying high debt-service ratios. In mid-1953 the foreign debt was over \$270 million and debt service was \$28.4 million and was expected to rise to 1.1% of the national income by 1955. In 1953 before Gomez's ouster, foreign debt was 5.4% of exports and 3.3 % of total government expenditures (ibid).

By 1955, the military dictatorship of Rojas secured additional international loans, brokered peace with the Liberal guerrillas on the Llanos, presided over a period of relative

growth in coffee exports, and had inflation under control (Safford and Palacios, 2002, 322; Bushnell, 1993, 215-216). Rojas' initial success at demobilization of Liberal guerrillas soon broke down amid increasingly heavy-handed tactics against unions and the rural poor, opposition from the traditional political parties, the fall in coffee prices of 1956, and failed social and economic reforms, culminating in the intensification of violence (Bushnell, 1993, 217). Liberals who had supported Rojas as a means to ouster Gomez and end the Violence now saw his presence as an obstacle to the return of constitutional government (ibid, 218). Wealthy Conservatives were dissatisfied with his new taxes on stock dividends and spending on public works programs such as the expansion of the railway, road system, the construction of the El Dorado airport in Bogotá and tourist hotels. All were outraged at Rojas' personal accumulation of tracts of land (ibid, 219).

Macroeconomic conditions put the final nail in the coffin of the Rojas regime as economic crisis, recession, and inflation resulting from falling coffee prices in 1956 and the balance of payment deficits in 1957 saw the suspension of loans from World Bank (Safford and Palacios, 2002, 324). The conditions were aligned for the return of oligarchical, bipartisan cooperation of the sort that characterized the last phase of Conservative rule in the 1920s and the last phase of Liberal rule in the 1940s, before fascist elements took over. Except this time, it was the fascist leader, Laureano Gomez, who would unite with Liberal boss Alberto Lleras Camargo to form a united oligarchic front against the masses (Karl, 2017a; Browitt, 2001, 1067).

Despite Gomez' role in fomenting the Violence itself, after years of exile in Spain and with the guerrilla forces still positioned to defend themselves in rural areas, Gomez had little choice but to form an alliance with moderate Liberals to ensure the survival of the oligarchy itself. The peace accord supported by Gomez and Lleras Camargo established terms for the end of the military dictatorship – a return to elections, power sharing between Liberals and Conservatives, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants into civilian life (Karl, 2017b 30-33). The National Front arrangement, set to last from 1958 to 1978, was a compromise to end the partisan tensions of the Violence but it effectively excluded working class and peasant interests from government while consolidating clientelist politics and state corruption (Browitt, 2001, 1067; Sánchez, 1992, 113). The National Front was alliance of landlords, industrialists, merchants, financiers and bureaucrats looking to impose capitalist modernization upon the

countryside with the support of the US (Browitt, 2001, 1067). Domestically, this was a passive revolution. As Ocampo describes it:

The landholding aristocracy has been forced to accommodate to a certain amount of capitalist development simply in order to survive in an era when they rightfully belong in a museum, or rather, cast into the trash bin of history. For their part, the big bourgeoisie have become subservient to U.S. imperialism in order to guarantee their economic survival and political control, which does not enjoy a firm basis because of the actual level of development of the productive forces in the nation (Ocampo, 1975, 11).

To prop up its own tenuous hold on political power, the landlord-industrial-merchant-financier bloc agreed to overcome their differences and commit to a program of capitalist modernization conjured from its interactions with US ‘intellectuals’ that would imply some form of land reform, opportunities for investment, and anti-communism.

The immediate effect of the National Front was a slowdown in the intensity of the Violence. Especially in Tolima, citizens welcomed efforts at peace and reconstruction, including political pardons, financial assistance for rural departments, and access to agricultural credit for victims of violence (Karl, 2017a,300). However, in the areas of Communist activity including Huila, more remote parts of Tolima, Cauca and Caldas, all connected departments, Alberto Lleras Camargo maintained the state of siege through 1958 that had been put in place there by Ospina Pérez in 1949 (ibid, 301). Peace deals were offered to Liberal guerrillas and Conservative paramilitaries but Communists remained the targets of military operations.

Production Relations of La Violencia: State Capitalism and Agrarian Modernization

The dominant ideological discourse of FEDECAFÉ, which had touted the virtue of the coffee smallholder in the 1930s, shifted in favour of large-scale production by the late 1950s as coffee prices entered a sustained depression (Safford and Palacios, 2002, 278). Despite the Violence in coffee country, the volume of coffee production had been relatively steady from 1949 to 1954. The average annual volume of production was 6.1 million 60kg sacks of green coffee for both the 1945 to 1949 and 1950 to 1954 periods (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2015 [1987], 262). This was almost double the 1931 volume of 3.2 million sacks (FEDECAFÉ, 1932, 137). The volume of coffee continued to grow from 1954 to 1956 as prices rose from \$0.35/kg to a peak of \$1.76/kg over the two years. In 1956 prices dropped from about \$1.50 per kilogram to less than \$1.00 per kilo where they stayed for most of the 1960s and into the 70s. The total volume of coffee produced declined from 6,755,000 sacks (60kg of green coffee) in 1956 to 5,437,000 sacks in 1957 (FEDECAFÉ, 2018). Though production recovered to 7.2 million sacks

in 1958, it hovered around the 7 million mark until 1976. Already facing scarcity of land and capital, lower prices made it difficult for small coffee producers to compete.

Writing in CEPAL's Economic Bulletin for Latin America in March of 1959, Van Teutem describes emergency measures taken by Latin American coffee producing countries to stockpile coffee inventory as a means to stabilize prices in the face of rising production levels and relatively flat consumption levels (Van Teutem, 1959, 32). The underlying causes of overproduction in coffee, Van Teutem argued, were competition from Africa and Asia, excessive new planting, and inefficiency in production in Latin America (ibid, 33). Van Teutem cites the 1955-56 Coffee Census data from Colombia to single out small-scale farms as the source of inefficiencies: "It is extremely difficult to apply efficient techniques on such farms, and many of them yielded reasonable returns only because of the favourable coffee prices prevailing in the last ten years"(Van Teutem, 1959, 36). Van Teutem argued that there was overproduction of coffee in ecologically marginal zones below altitudes of 1000 m where about 10% of Colombian coffee was produced in the mid-1950s. Though Van Teutem does not make the connection, this production was undoubtedly from refugees of the violence establishing coffee minifundio on distant, hot frontiers that were sub-optimal for coffee production (but necessary for survival).

To remedy inefficient coffee production in ecologically marginal areas, Van Teutem recommends "reduction in productive capacity" which implies the conversion of minifundio to farms or ranches. He added, "the elimination of plantings itself and the preparation of the land for alternative agricultural and livestock enterprises would require a new investment which would have to be made at a time when current farm incomes were on the decline"(Van Teutem, 1959, 39). In Colombia in the late 1950s, where thousands of people had been murdered over coffee plants, replacement and suppression of "inefficient" smallholder production only served as an ideological excuse for the dispossession of small farmers and subsistence producers.

The signals from foreign advisers and modernization theorists were quickly picked up by the Colombian coffee elite through FEDECAFE. Though the Federation had touted the virtue of the peasant coffee producer in the 1930s, it was quick to denounce smallholders as inefficient. The Federation now glorified the entrepreneurial farmer who could adopt new technologies and production techniques to compete in the world market, administer land efficiently and serve as a good client of the Banco Cafetero. "This ideology justified the rise of an entrepreneurial, decidedly capitalist, coffee-grower and the displacement of many small cultivators"(Safford and

Palacios, 2002, 278). In the more recent areas of coffee production, land grabs during the *Violencia* saw many of the smallholders from the 1930s replaced by an aggressive coffee capitalist class who had accumulated land during the violence. They took advantage of the National Front to legitimate their properties and fortunes while the dispossessed left for cities, settled new frontiers or stayed in the established coffee zones as workers (Palacios, 2006, 165). In a sector that once promised the democratization of Colombian agriculture, the smallholders were now viewed as obstacles to large scale capitalist development.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, in part based on the recommendations of foreign advisors such as Van Teutem, Albert Hirschman, and Lauchlin Currie, Colombian policy was geared to make agriculture more “efficient.” Modern farming techniques, economies of scale, the use of machinery, the economization of labour, were all applied to cereal crop production, forcing tenants off the land and expanding the primitive labour market (Ocampo Gaviria et al., 2015(1987), 262). It is thus in the 1955-85 period, that is, the ‘post-violence’ period, that the consolidation of modern agrarian capitalism is most evident (Suarez Montoya, 2007, 49).

By the late 1950s, Colombia featured a transitional, heterogenous agrarian complex that was formed by the disintegration of the hacienda system, the emergence of a peasant-capitalist class of family farmers and medium-sized enterprises, and the expansion of large-scale capitalist farms employing wage labour (Barracough and Domike, 1966, 402). This complex whole was a product of both the adoption of commodity production by agrarian workers and campesinos and the expansion of capitalist agriculture that was imposed through the passive revolution that expanded the reserve army of labour during *La Violencia*. Kalmanovitz argues that by the late 1950s, the brutal tactics that the landlords had deployed to subjugate the peasants in the old hacienda system were

reproduced at another level, to impose a more modern system of domination and control. At the social and economic level, there was an immense over-population, caused in part by the monopoly over land given by the equation land without men and men without land, which contributed to the situation whereby capital could pay very low wages across the length and breadth of the national territory (Kalmanovitz, 1996, 3).

This logic of accumulation drove “surplus labourers” out of the countryside, monopolized their land, liquidated rebellious elements and devalued labour in the agricultural sector and in the supply of workers made available to industries in the cities.

Colombia was thrust down a pathway of dependent development that can be described as a passive revolution, which ultimately rested on elite access to foreign capital to impose agrarian

capitalism in frontier areas where the state had previously little control. This process gave rise to new forms of resistance. As Leon Zamosc put it: “by inducing structural changes, redefining old social cleavages, and giving rise to new class contradictions in the countryside, the transformations related to the development of capitalism also create favourable conditions for the emergence of agrarian movements” (Zamosc, 1986, 1). The agrarian movement began in the 1920s and 30s on distant farms and became more entrenched through campesino activism in the 1960s. However, still lurking on the frontier, and prompted by these same structural transformations, were the guerrillas.

Conjuncture: 1961 Land Reform

In response to the hemispheric threat of popular uprising after the Cuban revolution, Latin American governments were encouraged by the US and IFIs to enact land reforms to integrate small-farmers into the capitalist development project (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2005 [2002], 51; de Janvry & Ground, 1978, 91; de Janvry, 1981). Measures included formalization of land tenure and redistribution of plots within the peasant economy based on the idea that campesinos could be more productive (per unit of land) than landlords, as promoted by the ECLA/CEPAL economists (Barracough & Domike, 1966, 391; Brittain, 2005, 340).

Intellectual proponents of the Alliance for Progress, whether at MIT or at ECLA argued that land reform was a component of modernization and would enable more efficient agricultural production to feed urban workers, stimulate domestic industry and flatten rural income distribution (Thorp, 1998, 153). Land reform would promote growth, expand market relations, address popular demands for land, and even control inflation but it would also strengthen external leverage over the development pathway (ibid). The premise was that traditional haciendas were inefficient, inegalitarian and tended toward extensive land uses with low outputs per hectare (think cattle grazing) (ibid, 154).

By the 1950s, the bifurcation of the old hacienda system was well underway. The old multi-family peasant plots organized politically into a landlord-dominated estate (landlord-peasant agriculture) had transitioned into a combination of successful peasant-capitalist farms (employing wage labour) and large-scale capitalist farms “characterized by farm manager-wage labor relationships” (Kay, 1980, 6). The proletarianization of the peasantry and the expansion of capitalist farming was hastened by population growth, the growth of markets for agricultural products and the development of new technologies (ibid). These ‘objective’ conditions created

labour surplus in the rural sector, destroyed the subsistence economy of the old hacienda system, and prompted calls for state intervention to increase food production and exports to acquire foreign exchange (de Janvry & Ground, 1978, 92). The result of these 'objective' conditions was a heterogeneous agricultural sector that resulted from uneven capitalist development and included subsistence producers, self-employed commercial farmers, successful peasant-capitalists and large-scale capitalist farms. Those marginalized by uneven development demanded land reform to correct the inequality of the social structure of accumulation, including landlessness, concentration of property and the destitution of the agrarian workers.

If the agrarian workers movement and the guerrillas were demanding land reform, it was redistributive reform they were after. However, proponents of land reform, whether in Colombia or in the US, tended to emphasize the need to reform "feudal" agriculture or hacienda production and promote commercial production (Lambert 1986 [1967]). The problem is that, though heterogeneous and featuring various combinations of land tenure and production relations, agriculture was already dominated by an agrarian capitalist class - an alliance of landowners, merchants and financiers who were using economies of scale, technology, wage labour and producing for the world market (see Cox, 1987, 56-57). Faced with the reality of a Colombian agricultural sector dominated by an agrarian capitalist class which had consolidated its power through extreme violence, it would be naïve to believe that the beneficiaries of further capitalist reforms would be smallholders and not landlords. According to Cox:

Small farming is a particular case of the precarious status of the self-employed. Often land reforms have been carried through with the aim of 'land to the tiller,' i.e., to give small farmers firm legal title to their land. Very often these reforms have not been accompanied by measures to prevent the market from subsequently undermining this aim. Consequently, small farmers become indebted and either lose their land or lose control of production to others. This leads back to a new form of peasant-lord control by moneylenders or grain merchants or forward toward consolidation of holdings for capitalist farming with innovations in technology and the use of hired labour (Cox, 1987, 54).

As Cox points out, agrarian reforms designed to promote the expansion of market relations through indebtedness, rather than redistributing land to the agrarian working classes, instead favoured those who already had land, could afford new technology, and who already exploited labour to expand production. Such reforms, though cloaked in the language of land to the tiller, do not inherently favour self-employed family farmers. Pro-capitalist land reform is therefore a form of cooptation or *trasformismo*, designed to impose capitalist subjectivity on rural working people and is a key component of passive revolution.

In Colombia, as elsewhere in Latin America, the main thrust of opposition to reform came from landlords and merchants with ties to the agricultural export economy who feared expropriation and redistribution of land as a threat to their interests (Thorp, 1998, 155). There were only two “legitimate goals” of land reform, argued George Jackson Eder, one being to increase productivity and therefore the abundance of food, and the other the enhancement of dignity via the amplification of the population of owners. Confiscation of productive estates would do neither (Eder, 1965, 27). Instead, “a true agrarian reform” would focus on redistribution of public lands and taxation to induce more efficient production on idle estates (ibid). For landlords wary of reform, frontier colonization was preferred over redistribution.

Despite the misgivings of landlords, the social crisis of the *Violencia*, banditry, usurpation, and the presence of armed communes of peasants put land reform on the agenda in Colombia. In Viotá and in the Magdalena banana zone, among cacao farmers, and in Caldas’ coffee zone, smallholders were increasingly mobilized to occupy land and denounce landlord violence (Beyer, 1961, 282). In this context of radical rural mobilization, security was the main rationale invoked to sell Conservative landlords on the need for reform as a means to rural development (Galvis, 2009, 519). The National Front was trying to deal with reconstruction, reconciliation and re-integration of combatants in the wake of the *Violencia* and the related problems of displacement, dispossession and land disputes (Karl, 2017a, 312; 2017b, 106-107). In the international context of anti-communism, pro-capitalist land reform emerged as part of a comprehensive social reform platform that could be accepted by landlords but would also placate popular demands (ibid).

And so, in 1960, against the international ideological background of US hegemony in favour of capitalist modernization, and faced with depressed coffee prices, tentative elite support for reconciliation, and landlord apprehension over peasant unrest, President Alberto Lleras Camargo appointed the National Agrarian Committee to draft a land reform bill. The members of the committee included cabinet ministers, Liberal Party representatives, both the Laureanista (Gomez) and Ospinista branches of the Conservative Party, the armed forces, members of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal* - the guerrillas branch of the Liberal party, the *Caja Agraria*, the SAC, the Catholic Church, and the two labour unions CTC and UTC (Duff, 1964, 49). The second-in-command to the Minister of Agriculture until mid-1960 was Orlando Fals-Borda who left to become Dean of the Faculty of Sociology at the National University where he

worked with Camilo Torres, the Catholic Priest, sociologist, and revolutionary who, by 1966, had joined the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional and was killed in action in his first combat (Guzman, 1969; Guzman Campos et al., 2016[1963])).

Carlos Lleras Restrepo was National Agrarian Committee chair and it was he who drafted the agrarian reform bill. The bill contained similar provisions to earlier reforms designed to clarify conditions for title in frontier areas, but this bill now contained “expanded powers that allowed the state to carry out the paid expropriations of idle estates”(Karl, 2017b, 125-126). Though the bill faced some opposition from Conservatives in the Senate over the provisions on expropriation, after some minor modifications, the bill passed the Senate in June and was approved without further changes by Congress in November of 1961 (Findley, 1972, 888). In December, President Alberto Lleras Camargo signed Law 135 – “Agrarian Social Reform.” The law had several objectives:

- 1) to reform the agrarian social structure so as to eliminate and prevent unfair concentration of rural ownership or the fragmentation of land into uneconomic units; to divide the land into suitable holdings in the small property areas and give land to those who are without it, preferably those who will farm it themselves; 2) to promote the adequate commercial farming of uncultivated or underused lands, in accordance with programs that promote the ordered distribution and use of the lands; 3) to increase the global volume of production of agriculture and livestock in line with the development of other economic sectors; to increase the productivity of farms with the application of appropriate techniques and ensure that lands are used in accordance with their location and characteristics; 4) create conditions under which small tenants and sharecroppers can enjoy better protections and to make it easier for these and other agricultural wage earners to better access land ownership; 5) to raise the living standards of the peasant population ... through the coordination and growth of services related to technical assistance, agricultural credit, housing, marketing, health and social security, storage and preservation of agricultural products, and the promotion of cooperatives (Congreso de Colombia, 1961, Article 1).

Law 135 established the Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute (INCORA) which was authorized to carry out enforcement actions against those who had unlawfully appropriated public lands or had yet to render their claims to public lands productive under Law 200 of 1936 (Congreso de Colombia, 1961, Article 1). INCORA was responsible for clarifying the state of private land ownership, properly identifying public lands, facilitating the legalization of private land claims and creating a national registry of lands.

Articles 12 and 13 provided for the creation of rural prosecutors to represent the Attorney General and the interests of the state in the settlement of disputes arising over the occupancy of public lands or to recover public lands in the name of the state in cases of extinguishment of private property rights due to non-conformity with Articles 6 and 8 of the Law 200 of 1936. The

rural prosecutors were to oversee any expropriations and determine if and when claims to public lands had lapsed due to ‘uneconomic use.’ Under this clause, “uneconomic” use would not only refer to extensive tracts of idle land but could also authorize dispossession of unviable, “non-commercial” subsistence plots occupied by destitute agrarian workers in frontier areas.

Article 22 required all owners of properties larger than 2,000 ha to provide INCORA with a registered title deed and proof that the property was being cultivated commercially (‘economically’) under the terms of Article 8 of Law 200 of 1936. Any land not being used productively for livestock, crops or forestry would be considered to have its private right of dominion extinguished and would become subject to appropriation by INCORA. INCORA could acquire land by purchase, exchange or expropriation and if the land were suitable, it would be redistributed to campesinos for the formation of settlements or cooperatives (Articles 25-27).

Settlement of land was considered by Law 135 to favour Family Agricultural Units (Unidades Familiares Agrícolas - UAF). These were farms of a size that could be worked by one farming family and that would provide for the wellbeing of the family including the provision of enough income to pay back any mortgages or loans taken out on the land. Lands that were settled by Family Agricultural Units under the terms of Law 135 had to be worked for a period of 5 years and could not be sold prior to that time or without full payment of loans or debts. Article 45 indicated that cooperatives could be formed on lands that were designated for Family Agricultural Units (either from parcelization of estates or aggregations of minifundio) and the number of family units participating would determine the size of the cooperative.

Articles 87 to 94 discuss the process of ‘concentration’ of holdings or grouping of holdings. Article 87 stipulated that subdivisions of existing parcels into units smaller than 3 ha would be illegal. In order to restructure rural property into holdings of a size suitable for the Family Agricultural Units, and to limit the fragmentation of parcels into small, unviable commercial farms, Law 135 contemplates ‘concentration’ of smallholdings. In areas designated for concentration, INCORA would do a survey of the lands and through a special committee, would have to obtain the consent of at least 50% of the occupants. Through consolidation of smallholdings and expansion into adjacent unoccupied areas, zones with large numbers of minifundio would be restructured into Family Agricultural Units that would be more viable for commercial production. Unwilling smallholders would be offered the chance to relocate to

Family Agricultural Units in the same department. In other words, they would be obliged to settle or colonize new lands in frontier areas.

The passage of Law 135 with its apparent pro-peasant orientation and language of development created high expectations among agrarian political economists (Hirschman 1963(1974)). Even Feder had to note, that despite his strong criticism of the implementation of the law, Law 135 itself was “complete, relatively well written, and gives the Colombian government and INCORA full opportunity to revamp agriculture”(Feder, 1965, 125). While the letter of the Law 135 appears ‘pro-peasant’ - it promoted access to property for family farmers and places restrictions on large landholdings to encourage productivity - there were some key elements that suggest the Law would undermine campesino interests.

First of all, the provision to concentrate land in minifundio zones threatened to eliminate homesteads belonging to the poorest labourers and combine their parcels into larger agricultural units of a sufficient size and scale viable for commercial productivity. Considering that the majority of agrarian workers lived on these minifundio, the implication was clear: Law 135 would legalize expropriation of the poorest peasants in the name of productivity on larger commercial farms. Adams estimates that at the time of the Agrarian Reform Law in 1961 there were about 600,000 families who subsisted on plots of less than 3 ha and another 500,000 rural families with no land at all (1966, 49). By favouring ‘productive’ farms, that is, commercial farms, the agrarian reform undermined the subsistence economy with direct repercussions for at least 1.1 million poor rural households (Dorner and Felstehausen, 1970, 232).

Another aspect of the Law 135 that undermined agrarian working interests was the composition of the Board. Technical experts in economy, veterinary medicine, and agronomy as well as the SAC (landlords) and the Cattlemen’s Association dominated the Board of Directors of INCORA. Representatives of the rural workers movement were outnumbered. Feder points out that the Board of Directors of INCORA was “composed of representatives of the major political and economic groups – including those which are not sympathetic to land reform or do not fully understand its role in development”(Feder, 1965, 125). According to Duff, the implementation of the Agrarian Reform was “slowed considerably due to potent opposition generated largely by a pressure group of large landowners” (1964, 40). While there is little indication that the few expropriations INCORA actually conducted affected large commercial farmers, opposition from the SAC slowed the implementation of Law 135 and focused the

actions of INCORA away from parcelization and redistribution to “concentration of minifundio” and frontier resettlement (ibid, 40-41).

Law 135 of 1961, argues Albert Berry, was evidently a compromise between the more radical demands for redistributive land reform (from campesinos and some Liberal elites), the wishes of urban elites and industrialists for cheaper food, and the opposition of rural landlords who sought to protect private property, promote investment in the large-scale technological sector, and impose order in rural areas. Though the industrial bourgeoisie wanted reform, landlord power was so entrenched that the compromise position of colonization was favoured as it would not threaten established property (Berry, 2002, 40). Berry points out that while Law 135 was highly controversial, it was nevertheless accepted by both Conservative and Liberal elites, including Álvaro Gomez Hurtado, the staunchly conservative son of Laureano Gomez. As a compromise measure, the law still irked both the largest landlords (for the threats that it posed to large estates) and the radical left because of the inadequacy of its approach to redistribution.

The right-wing opposition to the reform came from SAC along with some allies in the Church and in the media, including a columnist for *El Tiempo* named Enrique Santos Montejó (brother of former president Eduardo Santos and grandfather of Juan Manuel Santos). The gist of the arguments against INCORA was that it threatened to expropriate and parcel land near the cities when it should focus on frontier areas; that adequately exploited lands should be exempt; where expropriations did occur, the compensation should be paid to the landlord in cash; and that parcelization put property rights at risk and deterred foreign investment (Duff, 1966, 76-77).

The left wing opposition to reform “originates with those who believe that the reform has not gone far enough in expropriating private property and has paid too much for the property already expropriated”(ibid, 76). On the left side of the Colombian spectrum in the mid-1960s was the *Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal* (MRL). The MRL was founded by Alfonso López Michelsen, son of the leader of the Revolution on the March, as a counterweight to the National Front and after some electoral success in 1960 and 1962 (in Congress and in the Senate), the movement split into moderate Liberals and radicals, some of whom would go on to form the *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN). Some of the MRL subsequently supported Lleras Restrepo for President in the 1966 election, suggesting to Duff that there was some appetite on the Liberal left in favour of agrarian reforms (1966, 76).

Even as INCORA was established and the agrarian reform implemented, well-placed critics could see that the redistributive aspects of the reform were unlikely to succeed (Feder, 1965; Adams, 1966). One of the key problems with Colombia's 1961 Land Reform, Feder argued, was the contradiction between those who wished to increase agricultural production and those who wished to raise the standard of living of the rural population. "The inconsistencies leave a government open to the criticism that it does not consider seriously either land reform or economic development planning"(Feder, 1965,119). Land reform, by definition, Feder points out, "means the modification of the rural power structure as an absolute prerequisite for rapid growth"(Feder, 1965,120). The success of the reform must therefore be measured based on its political and social effects – whether the reform substantively empowered the rural poor.

Rather than a redistributive reform that appropriates large property and gives it to the poor, Law 135, Feder suggests, was little more than a glorified colonization scheme that left the large plantations intact (ibid, 129). The focus on efficient use of land simply served as a justification for the maintenance of large properties at the expense of smaller agricultural units, even if these larger units were not efficient (ibid, 130). The defense of the latifundio on the basis of 'productivity' is thus based on an ideological 'economism' that precludes the social benefits of more equitable distribution of land as a prerequisite for democracy. As such, Law 135 would simply repeat the process of concentration of agricultural land, colonization and incite another wave of usurpation and resistance.

Feder concludes his prescient article with a footnote. Despite hopes for redistribution to 35,000 families per year, by 1965 the implementation of the reform fell far short:

after more than two years of operation, INCORA has given land to less than a thousand farmers- an insignificant number in terms of the country's needs. The land distribution program now seems to have come to a halt. Furthermore, under the pressures of a growing counter-reform, INCORA claims, without any way of substantiating it, that there is no monopolization of land resources in Colombia and that all previous claims to that effect were in error. This is probably the first time in history that a land reform agency argues away its own case, its own reason for existence. ...Does all this mean that there evaporates one of the hopes of the Alliance for Progress for a rational land reform in a country which was to be the showcase of this inspired program? (Feder, 1965, 134).

In its initial phase of implementation, the political momentum for redistributive land reform was lost. The 'technically sound' Law 135, in practice, became little more than a colonization scheme that left the existing latifundio intact while INCORA became an instrument to compensate landlords, dampen peasant radicalism, and protect the status quo. Should the work of INCORA

and land reform fail, Feder warned, “the opportunities for rational, peaceful land reform may well be exhausted”(Feder, 1965, 126).

The claim by INCORA in its 1963 Annual Report that land concentration was no longer a problem in Colombia also caught the attention of Dale Adams who compiled statistics from the 1960 agricultural census to investigate. It seems that the claim by INCORA was based on an observation that there were ‘only’ 12 ‘private’ landholdings that had more than 100,000 ha of land associated with them but that these were largely inaccessible (Adams, 1964, 78). Adams points out that there was very little data available to evaluate the claim by INCORA, but that despite INCORA’s denial of the extent of “latifundismo” the data “in fact, seem to indicate that large landholdings are extremely important in Colombia, and therefore should be considered as a problem to be treated by an agrarian reform program” (ibid, 86). In a later article, Adams elaborated on his earlier work: the land reform, while necessary, was faced with a lack of funding to fully expropriate and redistribute lands to all of the families in need, there is a lack of reliable data on property ownership, and political opposition to the reform remained strong.

The transition from the Lleras Camargo administration to the Valencia (Conservative) government further hindered agrarian reform as there was a lack of political will in Valencia’s cabinet (Adams, 1966, 52). Ahead of Kennedy’s first meeting with the new ambassador Eduardo Uribe Botero, dispatched to Washington by Valencia in 1962, the President Kennedy’s staff prepared a briefing which betrays the Americans’ opinion: “You might wish to compliment Uribe on the progress his government has made in spite of major obstacles, avoiding the possible implication that one of the obstacles has been Valencia’s ineptitude”(1966, 52). The achievements mentioned by the memo included new tax laws, resolution of labour disputes, military success against “rural banditry” and commitment to the Colombian Development Plan (ibid). In the ensuing years under Valencia’s Conservative administration, commitment to agrarian reform appeared increasingly as a token measure to conform to conditions for IBRD and Alliance for Progress loans.

Findley argues that “the immediate circumstances leading to enactment of Law 135 of 1961 seem to have been apprehension among the political elite as a result of the Cuban revolution, and the related endorsement of land reform by the Organization of American States as an important part of the Alliance for Progress”(Findley, 1972, 904). The National Front realized that some sort of agrarian reform might be necessary, but, as with Law 200 of 1936, the

Conservatives deliberately downplayed its redistributive and pro-peasant potential. “It therefore is not surprising that great accomplishments [by INCORA] were not achieved in 1962-1966 during the presidency of Conservative Leon Valencia”(ibid).

More hopes for land reform emerged by 1966 with the arrival of Carlos Lleras Restrepo in power.¹² As president from 1966 to 1970, on the domestic front, Lleras Restrepo expanded the scope of state action considerably. He oversaw the establishment of several institutions to expand trade, promote growth and increase exports (Caballero Arbaez, 2009, 99). Lleras Restrepo also enacted the 1968 constitutional reform that made state-led economic planning mandatory, the professionalization of the bureaucracy with modern technocrats, and the further implementation of the 1961 Agrarian Reform in his Law 1 of 1968 (ibid, 92).

Article 2 of the 1968 Agrarian Reform stated its purpose: “to promote, support and coordinate organizations that have as their objective the economic, social and cultural improvement of the peasant population”(Law 1, 1968 Congress of Colombia). This foreshadowed Lleras’ support for the agrarian social movement through his alliance with the *Asociacion Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* in 1970. Law 1 of 1968 contained several articles that clarified aspects of Law 135 of 1961 regarding the scope of INCORA’s power to expropriate and compensate landlords (Article 4), adjudicate larger properties without approval by a land judge (Article 9) and prohibit sharecropping (Article 13, Law 1 of 1968, Congress of Colombia). This article targeted the remaining traditional haciendas that had not abolished sharecropping and moved to wage labour during the five-year grace period that Law 135 of 1961 had allowed (Article 104).

At its core, Law 1 of 1968 was very much a technocratic device to clarify some aspects of Law 135 that irked landlords while enabling some leeway for INCORA to more easily adjudicate remote lands for settlement. Yet, it still fit within Lleras Restrepo’s logic of transforming the

¹² A long time Liberal politician, Lleras Restrepo worked on the agrarian question throughout his career. However, he was also an internationalist. At the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946, the first of its kind, Lleras Restrepo had called for solidarity between the developed countries and the underdeveloped nations (Caballero Arbaez, 2009, 95). In 1964, Lleras Restrepo attended the Conference on Trade and Development of the United Nations on behalf of Colombia. He continued to argue for solidarity within the world economy and for the promotion of development through trade, including the need to establish fair prices for basic commodities such as coffee, to promote the export of manufactures from Latin American countries, and to develop trade agreements that did not require reciprocal measures on tariffs on the part of developing countries (ibid). Lleras Restrepo was acquainted with Raul Prebisch and the two attended conferences at the UN and through ECLA/CEPAL. Prebisch named Lleras Restrepo as one of his collaborators in the development of his ideas on the development of Latin America in light of center-periphery relations (ibid, 95; also see Prebisch, 1980).

traditional haciendas to capitalist farms, primarily by phasing out sharecropping. “Following the 1961 redistributive reform, the 1968 legislation in Colombia prohibited *aparceria* (rents in exchange for usufruct of land) and expropriated the land farmed under *aparceria* and distributed it to the occupants”(de Janvry & Ground, 1978, 94). Insofar as Law 1 of 1968 restricted sharecropping, expanded parcelization under INCORA and promoted colonization, it demonstrated Lleras Restrepo’s commitment to capitalist agriculture and contained some pro-peasant elements. But, consistent with Lleras’ approach to Liberalism – create opportunities to expand wealth production without punishing those who are already wealthy – Law 1 did not seriously threaten the interests of landlords who had already transitioned to capitalist agriculture, which was most of them (ibid, 95).

By the end of the 1960s it was becoming clear that INCORA was failing its mandate of redistributive land reform as land remained highly concentrated (Grunig, 1969a, 22; Dorner and Felstehausen, 1970, 222). Grunig points out that between 1961 and 1967, INCORA had distributed only 66,511 titles to 2,234,751 ha of land, 95% of which was public land (colonization) or land that had reverted to the public domain due to lack of use, while there were still 400,000 or 500,000 landless families (ibid). According to Grunig, rather than addressing the politically sensitive issue of expropriation, compensation and redistribution, “INCORA has become primarily a technical agency whose main programs are land reclamation and irrigation, supervised credit, and colonization” (Grunig, 1969b, 4).

From 1962 to 1971, INCORA expropriated only 33 farms totalling 18,703 ha and negotiated purchases of 1,614 farms on 251,800 ha (of private land) (Findley, 1972, 898). Between August 1969 and July 1971, that is after Law 1 of 1968, over half of the negotiated purchases and two-thirds of the expropriations occurred; after July 1971 the expropriations were halted (ibid, 899). During those two years, however, 3,500 families acquired land through redistribution for a total of 52,000 ha. In the same period, INCORA created nine cooperatives on 3,300 ha, established 545 communal pastures totalling about 7,000 ha, established experimental farms on 6,000 ha, and forest preserves on 18,000 ha (Findley, 1972, 899). To understand the sudden uptick on INCORA’s activities and then its abrupt halt, Findley points to some of the political factors in the 1970 election and in the subsequent months.

The 1970 election put on display some of the fault lines in Colombian politics and society. Outgoing as President, Lleras Restrepo supported the *Asociacion Nacional de Usuarios*

Campesinos (ANUC) which was the largest peasant union that operated on a national scale; meanwhile, the *Frente Nacional*'s official candidate, Misael Pastrana Borrero faced a challenge from within his own Conservative party from the former dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla who ran on a platform of reform under the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO). Winning the election by only a narrow margin, Pastrana tried to hold together the *Frente Nacional* by initially maintaining the new pace of parcelization to campesinos set by Lleras Restrepo and Law 1 of 1968.

After Pastrana caved to Conservative demands to slow the pace of land reform, he faced popular opposition during student riots in Cali in February of 1971 along with land occupations by 3,000 peasants on 44 estates in Cordoba, Huila, Sucre and Tolima. The peasants refused the government's demands to withdraw and ANUC released a statement that declared: "the land our comrades have taken belongs to the people. We will not return it to the selfish oligarchic exploiters. The people must defend it"(ANUC in Findley, 1972, 907). Carlos Villamil Chaux, the General Manager of INCORA, put his support behind the peasants and Pastrana fired him. Findley writes that "[t]hese events evoked an unprecedented statement from the bishops of the Colombian Church, calling for widespread social and economic reforms, including accelerated land reform. The total pressure on the shaky government was enormous, and on April 12, 1971 it announced INCORA's impending expropriation of a large number of estates in the savannah of Bogotá, an action that would probably have been politically impossible earlier" (ibid, 907-908).

It was thus during that time in 1971 that there was a brief increase in expropriations in response to mass protest and political pressure from the radical liberals, ANUC and Rojas. This reformist moment did not last. In July 1971, the Minister of Agriculture halted the expropriations on the pretext that food would soon be in short supply because of crop damage from heavy rains. But in addition, the Minister explained his decision was because of "rural unrest over the ineffectiveness of land reform"(ibid, 908). In other words, in response to campesino unrest over the slow pace of reform, Pastrana decided to abandon the reforms altogether.

Pastrana, a Conservative, went about dismantling the agrarian reform, ironically, with the support of Alfonso López Michelsen who was eyeing a run at the Presidency after his return to the oligarchic fold following his split with the Revolutionary Liberal Movement (MRL). Albán describes how Pastrana and López Michelsen, representing the bipartisan Liberal-Conservative bloc, effectively buried the agrarian reform. On January 9, 1972, under the Pastrana government,

the leaders of the traditional parties, the landlord lobby (SAQ) and the government signed the Chicoral Pact that put an end to the agrarian reform and reset the country's agrarian sector in favour of landlord interests including ranchers, planters and banana producers (2011, 348). In exchange for payment of taxes in amounts determined from the assessment of land in the official registry, landlords were assured that redistribution of land would cease, and the state would provide support for large-scale production (ibid). From that point, the government considered the campesino political movement to be subversive and attempted to undermine ANUC. In Congress, Senator Hugo Escobar Sierra denounced the campesino movement and its tactics of 'land invasions' as international terrorism and communism.

A key player in the agrarian counter-reform established by the Chicoral Pact was López Michelsen: "Few caught the ideological continuity that went from the Land Law of 1936 to the Law 04 of 1973, the expression of the Chicoral Pact and less, that López Michelsen had participated in both and was the uniting thread, in flesh and bone"(Palacios, 2011, 225). In a replay of 1933 and 1935 when Lleras Restrepo's more radical proposals for expropriations and redistribution were quickly squashed and replaced by a committee featuring López Michelsen, Lleras' attempt to accelerate the actions of INCORA in 1968 were cut short by the efforts of López Michelsen in collaboration with the Conservative Pastrana and the landlord lobby after 1973, at the onset of a world economic crisis.

Law 4 1973 reaffirmed some aspects of Law 100 of 1936. It began with the proposition that all properties possessed by individuals (regardless of formal title status) are private property and not public lands, provided that possession is qualified by cultivation and the presence of stock that are the work and property of the owner, that is, the possessor (Londoño et al, 2016, annex, 35). This was the famous first passage of the 1936 Law of which López Michelsen helped draft while his father was President. It was designed to support private appropriation of land, but only for productive ends. As Albà describes it, Pastrana's Law 4 of 1973 set production quotas by region and type of crop and imposed tax rates based on potential production values. This was reaffirmed in the Tax Reform of 1974. Law 6 of 1975 under then-president Alfonso López Michelsen reintroduced a system of sharecropping (Albà, 2011, 349; Londoño et al, 2016, annex 35).

Taken together, the reforms of Pastrana, which were continued under Michelsen, served to reduce the possibility of expropriation and redistribution of large estates, undermined the

operation of INCORA, and essentially killed the idea of redistributive land reform (Albàn, 2011, 349; Supelano, 1992, 852). The 1961 Agrarian Reform had stalled. INCORA had become an institutional showcase for piecemeal redistribution projects and colonization schemes. Unfortunately, there was still the strong possibility of violent conflict if the agrarian question was not addressed (Beyer, 1961, 290).

Consequences of the 1961 Land Reform: The Long Guerrilla War

The 1961 agrarian reform law came at the conjuncture of US hegemony in the west, heightened Cold War tensions in the era of the Cuban Revolution, and a new attempt at intra-ruling class cooperation through the National Front. Land reform was halted at the onset of the crisis of US hegemony and international capital accumulation in 1973. The decade of land reform after 1961 was prompted by popular demands to redistribute property. For Liberals and moderate Conservatives, land reform was a means to establish peace. For the modernizers in Washington and in Bogotá, land reform was part of the broader effort to finalize the capitalist revolution. The 1961 agrarian reform therefore held promise for proponents of agrarian capitalism and those who hoped for stability in the countryside. However, the lack of political will among the oligarchy to redistribute land in any meaningful way undermined the democratic potential of the measure.

This section examines the consequences of attempts at agrarian reform in the 1960s for land tenure, production, state formation and resistance. While the reform coincides with the growth of a class of agrarian capitalist farmers who operated units from 50 to 100 acres, for the poorest farmers, the law did little to enhance access to land. Rural inequality continued after the 1961 reform and Colombia remained on a path of highly unequal development. The hopes for a democratic land reform dashed, those in the remaining guerrilla zones shifted their demands from land reform to the overthrow of the oligarchy.

Land Tenure & Property Relations after 1961 – Concentration, Colonization, Urbanization

One of the most remarkable consequences of Law 135 of 1961 was its effect on the structure of agrarian property. The reform largely failed to redistribute land to smallholders, and in fact, appears to have resulted in the redistribution of land from the poorest families upward to the wealthier families. Data on farm size comes from the 1956 National Agrarian Sample and the 1960 and 1970 National Agrarian Census (DANE, cited in IGAC, 2012, 57). This data compiled

by the Augustin Codazzi Geographic Institute provides a glimpse of the trends in land tenure prior to the 1961 reform law (1956 and 1960). This trend serves as a ‘baseline case’ against which I analyse the effects of the 1961 reform using 1970 data as the ‘post-reform case.’ Between 1956 and 1960 the number of farms in the country grew from 820,842 to 1,209,672 suggesting a process of expansion of the agricultural frontier as demonstrated by the growth in the total surface area of farms from 21,397, 000 ha in 1956 to 27,338,000 in 1960. There were only 1,176,811 farms by 1970 on 30,993,000 ha. The 1961 land reform hence maintained the process of colonization and expansion of agricultural land that was already underway prior to the reform, even if the pace slowed somewhat.

Table 8: Evolution of the Number and Size of Farms by Surface Area 1956-1960-1970

Size	No. of Farms			Surface Area (1000s of ha)			Average Size ha		
	1956	1960	1970	1956	1960	1970	1956	1960	1970
<5ha	459,380	756,605	700,225	951	1,239	1,146	2	1.64	1.6
5-10 ha	136,510	169,145	159,659	1,024	1,165	1,088	7.5	6.89	6.8
10-50 ha	165,481	201,020	217,873	3,911	4,211	4,653	23.6	20.95	21.3
50-100 ha	29,943	39,990	47,763	2,246	2,680	3,198	75	67.02	66.9
100-500 ha	25,072	36,010	42,897	7,522	6,990	8,253	300	194.11	192.3
500-1000 ha	2,902	4,141	4,927	2,177	2,731	3,229	750.1	659.50	655.3
>1000 ha	1,554	2,761	3,467	3,467	8,322	9,426	2,231	3,014.13	2,718.7
Total	820,842	1,209,672	1,176,811	21,297	27,338	30,993	25.94	22.60	26.34

(*Instituto Augustin Codazzi, 2012, 57*)

There was evidence of consolidation of properties into somewhat larger units, but this varied by farm size. First, the number of small farms (less than 5 ha) grew from 459,380 in 1956 to 756,606 in 1960, prior to the agrarian reform. From 1956 to 1960, the average size of those farms declined, suggesting both expansion of the agricultural frontier via smallholder colonization and the fragmentation of existing small agricultural units. This process was slowed by the reform: by 1970 there were only 700,225 farms under 5 ha but the average size of these farms remained the same as in 1960.

What is evident is a process of concentration of small units into slightly larger family farms between 5 and 10 ha in size. There was moderate growth in the number of farms but a reduction in their average size from 1956 to 1960, and then a slight reduction in their number, as the average size remained constant to 1970. The 1961 agrarian reform thus slowed down the

fragmentation of the minifundio. At least some of the smallholders may have acquired larger farms in the 10 to 50 ha range, as there was growth in the number, total surface area and average size of farms 10 to 50 ha in size from 1960 to 1970.

A similar pattern is visible in the farms from 50 to 100 ha in size: there was growth in the number of farms and the total surface area of land in farms of that size (while the average size remained stable or declined only slightly) from 1960 to 1970. Within this process, some family farmers no doubt acquired more land and were able to improve their position as the number of farms from 50 to 100 ha increased from 39,990 in 1960 to 47,763 in 1970, but this appears to have reinforced a trend already underway since 1956. In this sense, the reform does appear to have nurtured the growth of self-employed family farmers, though it largely left the property of the largest landlords intact and did little to address the overall inequality in property; those who had small plots of land before 1961 had even less afterwards.

Table 9: Evolution of Farm Size and Distribution of Land 1956-1960-1970

Size (ha)	No. of Farms			Surface area (1000s of ha)		
	1956	1960	1970	1956	1960	1970
0-10	595,890	925,750	859,884	1,975	2,404	2,234
10-50	165,481	201,020	217,873	3,911	4,211	4,653
50-100	29,943	39,990	47,763	2,246	2,680	3,198
>100	29,528	42,912	51,291	13,166	18,043	20,908
Total	820,842	1,209,672	1,176,811	21,297	27,338	30,993
	% of Total No.			% of Surface Area		
	1956	1960	1970	1956	1960	1970
0-10	72.6%	76.5%	73.1%	9.0%	8.8%	7.2%
10-50	20.2%	16.6%	18.5%	17.8%	15.4%	15.0%
50-100	3.6%	3.3%	4.1%	10.2%	9.8%	10.3%
>100	3.6%	3.5%	4.4%	60.0%	66.0%	67.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

(Instituto Augustin Codazzi, 2012, 57)

Among medium sized commercial farms, from 100 to 500 ha, there was growth in the number of farms but a reduction in the surface area used by these farms and their average size dropped dramatically, from 300 ha to 194 ha on average between 1956 and 1960. While the number of farms in this category grew by 1970, the size of these farms remained stable between 1960 and 1970. This suggests that prior to the reform, there was already a process of partition of these ‘middle-sized’ farms, likely from competition for land, land sales, violence and

redistribution among family members. The stabilization of the size of these plots from 1960 to 1970 suggests that the reform supported the maintenance of these ‘middle-sized’ commercial farms (Edwards, 1980, 67).

The number of the largest farms (greater than 1000 ha) grew between 1956 and 1960 from 1,554 to 2,761. These grew again to 3,467 farms of more than 1,000 ha in 1970. The surface area taken up by these largest operations grew from 3,467,000 ha in 1956 to 8,322,000 ha in 1960 and 9,426,000 ha by 1970. While the average size of these large operations grew between 1956 and 1960, it dropped after the 1961 land reform. Thus, the largest farms continued to grow in number until the 1961 reform, but on average decreased in size after the reform. The reform resulted in the expansion of the agricultural frontier and the agglomeration of many minifundio, but it did not result in the dissolution of the latifundio. In fact, there was an increase in the number of latifundio after the reform. The agrarian reform saw the expansion of commercial agriculture at the expense of the smaller farms.

If we take the same IGAC data but combine the two smaller farm size categories into a category of less than 10 ha, and the larger tranches into the category of greater than 100 ha, the unequal distribution of property in 1956 becomes clear: a rough Gini calculation would suggest that from a minimum Gini of 0.564 in 1956, to a minimum Gini of 0.625 in 1960, it is clear that concentration of property was already underway prior to the 1961 Reform. By 1970 this figure was at least 0.631.¹³ From the estimates of the minimum Gini coefficient of these distributions alone, it appears that the 1961 reform slowed but did not reverse the process of concentration of property that was already underway prior to the reform.

Additional sources suggest that after the 1973 “counter-reform”, the process of concentration accelerated. Suarez estimated that by 1984 there were almost twice as many smallholders as in 1960 and suggests a Gini of 0.72 (Suarez, 2007, 49). As José F. Ocampo put it in 1975, “after ten years of activity the various elements of the agrarian reform program, supervised credit and soil improvements, the net social result has been an increase in the concentration of land ownership in the countryside”(Ocampo, 1975, 12-13).

¹³ A rough estimate of the minimum Gini coefficient of distribution used here, as above, is based on calculating the percentage of all farms compared to the percentage of all farmland held by farms of a certain size. $GINI = f-u$; If $f =$ the % of all farms and $u =$ the % of surface area held by all farms of that size, in this case all farms less than 10 ha.

Several other sources support the analysis that I provide here based on the IGAC data. Dorner and Felstehausen claim that the distribution of rural property remained unchanged from 1960 to 1970; in both years, about 70% of rural Colombian families lived on small farms of insufficient size to fully provide for family subsistence and yet these small farms accounted for about two-thirds of the value of agricultural output (1970, 222). Colombian agricultural workers were using their home-plots as a source of supplemental income in addition to wages earned on the farms of others. Albán notes that rather than redistributing land to poor households, the reform saw a redistribution of property into the hands of landlords over the medium term (2011, 348). After eight years of the agrarian reform, Feder noted that: “In Colombia, less than 4,000 families benefitted from land settlement schemes between 1961 and 1968. ... At the rate at which Colombia’s program is carried out, it would take about 1,300 years to give land to three-fourth of the poor families which existed in 1960”(Feder, 1969, 240). By 1974, only 3,902 families had participated in 358 cooperatives, 60,000 families had received some sort of rural credit and technical assistance, and 82,853 people had settled on remote public lands which was in hardly impressive considering there were as many as five hundred thousand landless families who suffered “the gross inequalities of pre-reform land tenure”(Egginton & Ruhl, 1974, 29).

Table 10: Population figures for Colonization Zones 1951-1980

	Llanos (open plains)	Llanos (foothills)	Caqueta	Amazonia	Southwest	Uraba	Central Andes	Total
1951	45,025	17,529	40,950	50,031	98,299	45,473	77,142	374,449
1964	74,504	35,378	103,718	82,645	153,834	127,802	124,393	702,274
1973	119,687	67,135	186,500	106,100	154,759	177,034	159,337	970,552
1980	137,223	128,766	271,754	160,926	155,762	236,545	187,750	1,278,726

(Uribe López, 2009, 94)

To the extent that Law 135 of 1961 did improve access to land for some smallholders it was largely because of frontier colonization. Prior to the reform from 1958 to 1961 there were 9,755 land grants to individuals and corporations that were on average 117.3 ha. 1,143,896 ha of land were subject to these grants (Londoño et al., 2016, statistical annex). In 1962 to 1987 there were 293,105 grants to individuals for a total of 10,216,982 ha. The average size of the land grants during that period was 34.9 ha. The agrarian reform did shift the pattern of colonization of

public lands from one of higher concentration in the years leading up to the reform to a more diffuse pattern of settlement after. Further the rate of grants given out after the reform accelerated, indicating that the Agrarian Reform was indeed a colonization scheme. Population figures show that there was a large shift to colonization zones that coincides with the agrarian reform as the population of frontier areas grew 87% between 1951 and 1964 (Uribe López, 2009, 94). As we have seen, this could be due as much to displacement during La Violencia as to incentives to settle under Law 135 of 1961.

Leaving the largest established estates intact and opening up new frontiers, the 1961 reform effectively projected the existing unequal patterns of land tenure to the frontier:

Colonization, or the settlement of virgin lands, has long been advocated as an alternative to land reform by its opponents, on the argument: Why break up or expropriate large estates which the owners and their forefathers have built up through their imitative and labor efforts when there is still so much virgin land available? ... although it ignores of course everything about how the estate-owners acquired the land in the first place and about whose fruits of labor have been incorporated in the estates”(Feder, 1969, 244-245).

The state used land reform and ‘development’ discourse, Galvis argues, to promote colonization as a means to disrupt peasant rebelliousness by displacing ‘threatening’ subjects to the margins of society. “Many of the places in which land reform colonization took place turned out in the late 1980s and 1990s to be war-torn, reliant on illegal economies or both” (Galvis, 2009, 526). Rather than progress and equality, the colonization schemes simply reproduced marginality on the frontier.

While increased colonization was a consequence of Law 135 of 1961, this process put pressure on the available stock of agricultural land, forests and Indigenous reserves. Between 1950 and 1970, the Colombian state set aside 50 million hectares of land for forest reserve out of about 80 million hectares of public lands. The designation of natural reserves aggravated a problem of agricultural land scarcity described as “too much land and too little labour on the large farms and too little land and too much labour on the small ones”(Dorner & Felstehausen, 1970, 222). In fact, figures on arable land (hectares per person) suggest that there was only 1.9 ha of arable land per person in Colombia, compared to 23.4 hectares per person in Argentina, 4.4 ha per person in Brazil, and 3.4 ha per person in Chile (Dorner & Felstehausen, 1970, 228).

Another major consequence of the 1961 reform was urbanization. Those who were not ‘absorbed’ within the Agrarian Reform through participation in cooperatives, parcelization or colonization joined the ranks of the landless and flocked to the cities. In a comparison of census

data from 1938, 1951, 1964 and 1973, Williams and Griffin studied rural and small-town depopulation and rapid urbanization since 1951 (1978, 14). Taking into account rural population growth, they estimated that from 1951 to 1964 there was a net movement of 2,600,000 people out of declining or slowly growing rural areas (200,000 per year). From 1964 to 1973 there was a net migration of 2,300,000 people or 250,000 per year (1978, 25). National census data shows a decline in the rural population from 8,391,420 people in 1964 to 8,029,170 in 1973 (Procuraduria General de la Nacion, 2015, 19). 150,000 people per year moved to cities from 1951 to 1964, growing to 200,000 per year from 1964 to 1973 (ibid). Agrarian reform therefore augmented the process of urbanization underway during *La Violencia* (Dorner and Felstehausen, 1970, 224).

Colombia's status as a late developer within a more advanced capitalist world system meant that industrialization lagged behind urbanization. From 1951 to 1964 employment in industry grew by only 2.2% per year while the urban population grew by 5.6%. Industrial growth and therefore job creation did not keep pace with urbanization (ibid, 225). The result was growth in the pool of unskilled workers and increasing income inequality in urban areas between skilled and unskilled workers (ibid). Beyer writes, "the safety valves for the discontented rural dweller in Colombia have been and still are the drift to the cities, on the one hand, and to unoccupied public lands, on the other, but these safety valves have not operated to release enough pressure from the old rural areas"(1961, 287). This was primarily because industrialization could not keep pace with the flood of displaced from the country.

In Colombia after the land reform bill of 1961, urbanization was not the product of industrial capitalist development that draws workers to cities in hope of a better life. Instead it was the result of agrarian capitalist expansion that expels campesinos from the country (Torres Restrepo, 1970 [1963]). The rural exodus resulted in a shortage of about 300,000 urban dwellings by 1963 and those without adequate housing formed shantytowns plagued by crime, disease, malnutrition, and lack of services and infrastructure (Eder, 1965, 31; Gilbert, 1981, 657). Astoundingly, from the 1950s to the 1970s, rural exodus to the cities was promoted by Lauchlin Currie, who argued that the displacement of 'inefficient' peasant smallholders to the cities would release arable land for efficient production on large-scale agribusiness-run farms, expand the urban labour force, and generate agriculture-based economic growth (Brittain, 2005, 342). Forced displacement and land concentration were the overt policy goals of the principal 'organic' intellectual of capitalist development in Colombia and this ideology and policy

orientation favoured the consolidation of agribusiness along with mass displacement and armed resistance (ibid).

Inequality, demands for land reform, and repression of rural social movements continued to be features of Colombian agriculture before, during and after the 1961 land reform. Rather than redistributing the highly unequal land tenure patterns, the 1961 land reform projected the contradictions of the agricultural heartland onto the frontier or drove people to rapidly growing cities where they suffered unemployment and poverty (Suarez, 2007, 52; Dunham, 1982, 170). To this list of morbid symptoms, one must add violence, resistance and armed conflict.

Production Relations: Capitalist Modernization as ‘Development’

The 1961 land reform expanded commercial agricultural production, consistent with the peripheral developmental state goal of creating employment and inviting investment in the 1960 to 1963 period under Lleras Restrepo and then Valencia. “State intervention was used to initiate self-sustaining processes with measures such as public investment on infrastructure, financing private investment with development loans, import substitution stimulus, tariff barriers and special licenses for imports, and the creation and funding of research organizations for agriculture and technology”(Supelano, 1992, 849). The modernization of agriculture in Colombia mirrored what occurred simultaneously in many parts of Latin America, Asia and Africa from the 1950s to the 1970s and is now referred to as the ‘Green Revolution.’ It featured “renewed interest in the technification of agriculture, the introduction of agricultural technologies, and the improvement of the supply of food and thus agricultural productivity”(Heynig, 1982, 120). In Colombia, Heynig associates the timing of the Green Revolution within the Alliance for Progress:

The Alliance for Progress promoted a development model which was oriented only towards economic growth (i.e. towards the possibility of obtaining a certain rate of accumulation and increase in the per capita product), and an agrarian reform model which only sought to modernize the latifundista structure and bring about a limited redistribution of land. In the final analysis, its objective was limited to improving the conditions of dependent capitalism (Heynig, 1982, 120).

Faced with the intransigence of the landlords, INCORA focused only on improving productivity rather than on redistribution. At the farm level, modernization focused on the substitution of land and labour for capital, technical efficiency whereby inputs are combined to produce more outputs, and technical change which substitutes previously unknown techniques or technologies for new ones (Janssen & Ruiz de Londoño, 1994, 14). The economic orientation

of the peripheral developmental model focused on expanded export commodity production on modern capitalist farms with only a limited redistribution of productive land to campesinos.

The productivity of Colombian agriculture improved dramatically between 1946 and 1982 which Suarez (2007, 41-44) attributes to the increased use of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and mechanization including the use of machinery in ploughing, planting and harvesting. In 1946 there were 123,000 ha planted with rice for a production volume of 118,212 tonnes and a yield of 0.95 tonnes/ha. In 1982 there were 473,910 ha planted with rice with a production volume of 2,023,261 tonnes, for a yield of 4.2 tonnes/ha. The production yield for potatoes almost tripled over the same period. Sugarcane, barley and cotton production also grew.

Table 11: Production and Productivity of Principal Food Crops (1946-1982)

Crop	1946			1982		
	Area (Ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Productivity (Tonnes/Ha)	Area (Ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Productivity (Tonnes/Ha)
Rice	123,000	118,212	0.95	473,910	2,023,261	4.2
Potato	96,000	460,000	4.79	165,200	2,006,000	12.14
Beans	122,000	60,000	0.49	112,200	92,900	0.82
Maize	668,000	620,000	0.92	636,100	880,000	1.38
Barley	23,320	25,685	1.10	62,600	109,500	1.75
Cotton	63,110	13,607	0.21	150,900	249,500	1.71
Wheat	179,870	119,800	0.66	45,300	62,300	1.37
Sugarcane	18,000	76,456	4.24	94,188	1,318,047	9.04

(Suárez, 2007, 44)

Table 12: “Pure” Labour Share in Agricultural Value Added, Selected Group of Years

1935-39	66-84%
1940-44	56-79%
1945-49	46-57%
1950-54	40-47%
1955-59	34-42%
1960-64	35-43%

(Berry, 1972, 405)

Gains in overall productivity were highly unequal depending on the type of crop, land tenure and production relations. Annual crops such as barley, rice and cotton could be produced commercially using machinery and had lower labour input costs compared to potatoes, maize, beans and sugarcane (Berry, 1973, 216). Perhaps most significant for the politics of land distribution, Berry found that on the largest farms workers received the lowest share of total farm income. While the labour share of farm production was estimated to be about 20% overall, Berry found the share of income that went to blue collar workers on farms over 100 ha was only about

10 to 12 percent on average (Berry, 1973, 227). This indicates both the profitability of larger farms for capital accumulation but also the relative impoverishment of landless agrarian workers.

Previous work by Berry also indicated that landowners appropriated most of the surplus value from the rise in overall agricultural production in the decade after the agrarian reform. Berry estimated that the distribution of income in the agricultural sector in Colombia in 1960 was represented by a Gini coefficient of 0.58 (1972, 403). The top 15 percent of income earners had 60 percent of the agricultural income while the bottom 85 percent had 35-45 percent (ibid).

Berry attributes the inequality in incomes to the uneven distribution of land. The data he presents indicate a trend in declining appropriation of income from agriculture by labour since the 1936 land reform that appears to have been halted (but not reversed) in the first 3 years after the 1961 reform. By then, the labour share in agricultural value added was 35 to 43%, down from the 66 to 84% range in the 1935 to 1939 period (ibid, 405).

Since the implementation of the reform was *ad hoc* and highly variegated by regions, there was some heterogeneity in the outcomes of the reform on local production relations. Reinhardt provides a look at how the peasant economy fared after the 1961 agrarian reform in El Palmar, Department of Nariño. Even in places where campesino families were able to adopt new crops such as tomatoes and green peppers and new production techniques to produce more efficiently on small plots of land, these opportunities for commercial expansion and new production techniques also enabled the expansion of larger farms. She concluded that the survival of smaller units may become increasingly unviable over time due to higher factor input costs or declining food prices (Reinhardt, 1983, 259).

Ramirez Bacca studied labour relations on coffee estates in Libano, Tolima from 1950 to 1965 (2004, 31-32). He indicates that the combination of *la Violencia*, hierarchical landlord-tenant relations on haciendas based on verbal sharecropping arrangements, and new labour laws designed to regulate health, safety and working conditions had quite different effects depending on the class of worker. For seasonal labourers, working conditions and salaries declined as many workers were now considered 'casual labour.' Meanwhile managers, supervisors and permanent workers saw conditions and wages improve slightly. Remnants of pre-capitalist hacienda production lost market share to new techniques of coffee production, the tendency toward sharecropping was undermined, and many coffee families left the estates for the cities (ibid, 32).

In the Cauca Valley, landlords responded to increased demand for sugar following the US embargo on Cuba by violently accumulating peasant land and expanding production of cane sugar. The sugar growers developed new forms of labour contracting which selected a group of permanent plantation workers who received good wages and benefits along with a class of 'contractors' who were given the responsibility to meet production quotas as day labourers with little security and lower wages. These labourers were themselves peasants from local farms who did not have enough land to fully support themselves, migrant workers from other rural areas, or landless local workers (Taussig, 1978, 69-70). Taussig points out that the peasant economy in Colombia did not disappear after 1961 but was instead functionally subordinated by force to serve capital accumulation. Capitalist farmers were able to take advantage of peasant efficiencies because of the inequality of land tenure. "The inequality in the distribution of land is crucial and cannot be seen merely as a symptom of unequal economic efficiencies. For it is by reducing peasant farm size below a certain minimum that gives to the capitalist class the mechanism of accumulating surplus" (Taussig, 1978, 66). Capitalist farmers forced wages down through extra-economic coercion and obliged workers to maintain themselves from the subsistence sector.

In the banana sector, declining prices and the exit of the United Fruit Company saw a restructuring of local land tenure patterns. "Hundreds of former banana laborers, now jobless, initiated colonization efforts both on public lands and on unused estates in the region. The landlords responded in classic fashion by burning down the squatters' huts and turning cattle into their crops"(LeGrand, 1986, 165). On the Caribbean coast, informal colonization was prompted by the expansion of rice and cotton plantations in the early 1960s. "Colonos pushed off their claims and tenants and day laborers thrown out of work by tractors occupied outlying sections of the great properties in squatter groups. Although the accelerated development of capitalist agriculture that motivated such occupations was recent, the squatters' understanding of their situation had been forged through more than a century of conflict"(ibid). Years of struggle generated symbols, mythic figures and rallying points. For instance, a group of peasants that occupied an estate in the Sinu in 1972 named their group after Vicente Adamo in honour of a feisty Italian labour leader who had organized workers in the area in the 1920s (ibid).

Following the Agrarian Reform law of 1961 and the withdrawal of the United Fruit Company in 1964, production relations in the Banana zone reverted in some respects to patterns resembling the region's economy prior to the banana era. Partridge describes how approximately

10,000 hectares of irrigated land were occupied informally by campesinos or had been appropriated by INCORA while the manor houses of the American employees and UFC buildings were empty and stripped of fittings, plumbing and wiring. Powerful landowning families of the region had agreements with INCORA to graze cattle on about 7,000 ha while mechanized rice production was implemented on about 3,000 ha of privately titled land. Only a few hundred hectares were dedicated to peasant cooperatives sanctioned by INCORA (Partridge, 1979, 498). The withdrawal of UFC reinforced inequalities that INCORA did little to address.

In the oil producing zone of Barrancabermeja, Leslie Gill describes the growth of a floating population of insecure workers who migrated in search of jobs in contrast to the more established oil-sector workers who were effectively well-paid public servants after the formation of state-owned Eco-Petrol (Gill, 2016, 16). The position of the relatively well-paid public servants in the national oil sector was in stark contrast to the insecurity experienced by an influx of landless workers to the oil sector in the 1960s. “A new wave of uprooted peasants was washing over the city, pushed out of the countryside by landlord violence and the expansion of large-scale commercial agriculture, but unlike in the past, the newcomers did not find jobs in the oil industry; they erected shantytowns on the edge of town and became part of a floating population of wageless or wage-insecure workers”(Gill, 2016, 16). It was in those shantytowns that new waves of paramilitary violence emerged during the National Front to repress working-class demands for public services, demands for informal workers for union representation and demands among rural poor people for greater political participation and representation (ibid).

This passive revolutionary capitalist development model was only sustainable through greater integration with international capital, export expansion and continued borrowing, but risked debt crisis, inflation and social disorder. In the late 1970s, de Janvry and Ground argued that “Under the domination of the class alliance that includes the dependent bourgeoisie, comprador class, and landed elite, the pattern of accumulation is fundamentally ‘socially disarticulated.’ ... This implies that wages are not a significant source of effective demand and that the logic of capitalist accumulation requires cheap labor and an increasingly regressive distribution of income”(de Janvry & Ground, 1978, 91). Rather than stimulate internal demand and increase the purchasing power of rural workers, the state chose policies that favoured domestic elites and chose to depress wages to maintain the profitability of Colombian agriculture within the world economy (Torres Restrepo 1970 [1963], 515-16).

The main consequence of the 1961 agrarian reform and Colombian participation in the Alliance for Progress was the consolidation of agrarian capitalism as the most dominant mode of production. But to keep wages low, the peripheral, articulated accumulation model continued to rely on frontier colonization and peasant subsistence (de Janvry & Ground, 1978, 91). Elite consensus in the National Front in favour of national industrialisation and export-promotion came on the backs of the rural poor and rapidly urbanizing working classes, evident in “enduring statistics of underclass poverty (especially in rural areas) and huge disparities in income distribution” (Browitt, 2001, 1067). Without wage and employment growth in industry, the “functional” subordination of the peripheral agricultural sector was completely dysfunctional for both rural and urban poor and would eventually become too much to bear.

Table 13: Ratios and Composition of Colombian Foreign Trade 1945 to 1984

	1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84
<i>A. Ratios</i>								
Exports to GDP	21.6%	19.0%	17.8%	16.5%	15.8%	14.9%	15.1%	14.2%
Imports to GDP	16.7	21.4	18.4	16.3	15.5	16.8	16.0	19.1
<i>B. Composition of Exports</i>								
Coffee	72.1%	78.7%	76.2%	68.9%	61.0%	50.5%	57.9%	48.7%
Gold	5.6	2.7	2.5	2.8	1.7	1.8	2.7	6.4
Petrol & Fuel Oil	14.6	13.6	14.3	16.1	13.5	6.9	3.9	6.6
Non-traditional primary exports	7.7	5.0	7.0	9.1	15.0	19.8	16.6	19.0
Manufactures				3.1	8.7	21.0	18.8	19.3
<i>C. Composition of Imports</i>								
Consumer Goods		14.6%	9.4%	7.3%	7.9%	9.9%	13.2%	11.9%
Intermediate Goods		44.4	50.2	45.2	48.0	51.1	46.4	40.0
Combustibles		4.3	3.2	1.9	0.5	0.4	5.6	12.3
Capital Goods		36.5	36.6	44.0	41.9	38.4	34.7	35.8
Others		0.2	0.6	1.6	1.7	0.2	0.1	-

(Banco de la Republica in Ocampo et al., 2015 (1987), 238)

Support for industrialization, particularly among the agro-industrial elite who dominated the export sector, was never very strong in Colombia, and by the end of the 1970s, what support there was for import substitution industrialization had waned (Ocampo, 2008, 58). According to Posada, Colombia’s economy during the phase of import-substitution industrialization – compared to South Korea, Singapore or Taiwan - was too protectionist of some sectors, it

delayed too long in eliminating outdated modes of land tenure, and it failed to transform the rural sector into a more productive agricultural system. Plus, it offered state protection for some inefficient industries due to 'capture' of the state by vested interests (Posada, 2008, 109-110).

Part of the macroeconomic tension was due to the long stretch of depressed coffee prices, the country's continued over-reliance on coffee for export revenue, and the lag in developing other export commodities. One of the most striking aspects of the era of capitalist modernization and agrarian reform in the early 1960s is the decline in exports as a percentage of GDP, from 19.0% during 1950-54, to 17.8% in 1955-59 and then down to 16.5% from 1965-69. This is almost certainly due to the declining export value of coffee which dropped from 76.2% of the composition of exports in 1955 to 1959 down to 68.9% and then 61.0 % by the end of the 1960s. The loss of export values from coffee was exacerbated by only modest growth in oil output after 1960 which then declined as percentage of exports in the 1970s due to falling oil prices (Ocampo et al., 2015 (1987), 238). Domestically, modern agriculture and the manufacturing sector were creating a somewhat more diverse economy with slightly less dependence on coffee, but while imports of consumer goods remained modest, Colombia during the ISI phase, and particularly in the 1960s, remained dependent on foreign sources for intermediate and capital goods.

The contradictions of Colombian peripheral capitalist development were now obvious: modernizing the 'backward' but labour-intensive agricultural sector would produce a mass of landless workers without opportunities for employment in industry. These workers would either retreat to the subsistence sector on the periphery, stick around established commercial agricultural areas to drive down wages and delay the adoption of technology, or migrate to slums in the cities to join the primitive, unskilled and insecure labour market. At the heart of the problem was the articulated position of Colombia as a peripheral commodity producer. It was in competition with other peripheral agricultural countries and subject to domination of foreign capital while it lagged behind advanced capitalist industrial producers. This benefitted only a small elite in Colombia at the expense of the masses.

In addition to the social dislocation and destruction of rural ways of life, the agrarian reform served to reinforce US imperial power and capacity to intervene in Colombia.

One of the more picturesque ways in which this penetration has occurred is through the so-called 'Green Revolution.' The net result of this program has been, first, provision of a market for agricultural inputs produced by imperialist monopolies either inside or outside the country. This includes agricultural machinery, fertilizer, etc. In the second place, this 'revolution' has developed agricultural productivity only in those branches which produce raw materials or food products for

export. Finally, this program has most emphatically not solved the problems of agrarian and rural life in Colombia, has not touched the problems of agricultural production for the Colombians themselves, nor has it affected the precarious situation of the minifundista (Ocampo, 1975, 13).

Ocampo concludes that the “net effects of the agrarian reform have been the strengthening of the imperialist ties with the landholders and the big bourgeoisie, through the development of more markets for capital and commodities while at the same time strengthening monopoly in the land”(Ocampo, 1975, 13). These imperialist ties were both ideological and material and provided loans and markets for Colombian exports in exchange for the purchase of US machinery and technical inputs indicative of an imperial relation between the US and Colombia.

The ideological justifications for capitalist modernization in Colombian agriculture, regardless of how disastrous the results were, were based on the need for ‘development’ and ‘progress’ that drew on ‘modernization’ theory. As Escobar put it: “Development was the name given to the strategy of modernization” (2004, 15). In effect, modernization resulted in the mass displacement of rural people and the enlargement of sprawling and dysfunctional cities (ibid). Contemporary critics of “modernization” and of Lauchlin Currie’s development strategy were already aware of the contradictions:

It is the attempt at one huge leap from the present situation to some such future goal that underlies Lauchlin Currie’s policy prescriptions for rapid Colombian development. But the high capital requirements and the difficult problems of trying to provide urban employment for the increased flood of peasant farmers who would then pour into the cities have made such prescriptions unacceptable (Dorner & Felstehausen, 1970, 232).

Currie’s “great leap forward” to overcome the peasant “problem” and concentrate land in the hands of capitalists (and not cooperatives or family farmers) was an ill-conceived, violent and unethical program that destroyed the lives of rural people in the name of “progress.”

Feder provides his prescient critique of the modernization framework: “most policies and strategies are directed toward improving the ‘performance’ of the agricultural sector without improving its basic structure. This tends to reinforce rather than solve the existing land tenure problems”(1969, 241). While the Alliance for Progress may have contained pro-poor provisions, Feder noted that by the late 1960s, by focusing on ‘productivity’ of labour and land without changing the unequal structure of the rural sector, modernization was *de facto* more beneficial to largeholders. Feder continues: “*Modernization of rural life is therefore the 1969-version of the trickle-down theory applied to agriculture* which says that the rural working classes will benefit from the improved welfare of the well-to-do” (ibid).

The intent and purpose of agrarian reform in Colombia was to placate popular demands for redistribution with reforms that imposed conditions for expanded agrarian capital accumulation. This process displaced primary producers from the best land while offering only marginal lands on new frontiers in return - in the absence of sustainable domestic industrial growth. The failure to implement redistributive reforms and the failure of the peripheral developmental state to incorporate displaced peasants as industrial workers were the source of a litany of grievances that fed into deeper conflicts in the years that followed.

The Peripheral Developmental State, Counterinsurgency and Resistance

The most dramatic consequence of the failed 1961 land reform has been its contribution to armed conflict in Colombia. Underlying the passive revolutionary program of the National Front was bipartisan support for agrarian capitalist modernization and access to US loans and investment. The question of rural unrest, however, divided the elite.

Liberals, who tended to view rural unrest as a result of economic inequality, initially took a conciliatory approach to the remaining communist guerrillas with offers of amnesty, peace and reconstruction while Conservatives, who viewed rural unrest as ‘banditry’ at best and Cuban or Soviet-inspired ‘communism’ at worst, preferred to invoke the hammer of US military power through counterinsurgency efforts such as Plan Lazo (Brittain, 2010; Karl, 2017a; 2017b).

The agrarian reform itself was passed in a moment of optimism that reflected recognition on the part of the oligarchy over the need for some concessions to the rural poor in the name of social order. However, as political will to implement the reform was lacking and the oligarchy deepened its commitment to extraverted capitalist modernization, the hopes for meaningful redistributive reforms were dashed. As the National Front imposed conditions for expanded accumulation on large estates, their tactics incited armed opposition. The political, ideological and military resistance came from the Communist guerrillas (Torres Restrepo, 1970 [1963], 523). What prevented the guerrillas from making common cause with a larger mass of workers and peasants was the fragmented and regional character of Colombia’s agricultural sector. In particular, the urban-rural divide undermined radical political mobilization. As Forrest Hylton argues, the tendency of the Colombian left to focus its mobilization efforts in the rural sector while neglecting urban mobilization, coupled with the tendency of landlords, right-wing politicians and security forces to block or reverse any redistributive land reform efforts was behind the process whereby “government-subsidised agro-industrial development replaced

smallholding”(2014, 67). What needs to be further clarified is that this combination of perhaps flawed left-wing strategy and right-wing counter-reformism was propagated with a great degree of violence, some of it openly sponsored by and at least tolerated by the state.

The National Front’s “process of capitalist modernization sidestepped the deep inequalities and political exclusions that characterized Colombian society, especially the lopsided landholding structure”(Gill, 2016, 17). In rural areas anti-communist rhetoric was used to shut down any rural working class demands for loans or better salaries. “Successive National Front governments, in which the Liberal and Conservative Parties alternated in power, marginalized reformist initiatives and repressed revolutionary demands for more far-reaching political, economic, and social transformations” (ibid). Anyone promoting reform was accused of communist sympathies and vilified, particularly by the regional representatives of the National Coffee Federation. Even Catholic encyclicals written by John XXIII were denounced as ‘international communist’ propaganda (Karl, 2017b, 140-141).

The Communist Party took on the role of mobilizing and arming peasant communities for their own defence in those places where unaligned peasant villages were threatened by Conservative militias or abandoned by Liberal politicians during *La Violencia* (Palacios, 2011, 230; Karl, 2017b, 199). While most of the guerrilla forces were demobilized by 1957, remnants of the so-called ‘Independent Peasant Republics’ remained in parts of Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Huila and Cauca where coffee production and conflict over land were ongoing (Brittain, 2005, 345; Guzman Campos et al., 2016 [1963], 327-337; Karl, 2017b, 8). The gestures toward pacification, partial land reform and support for demobilization in the early years of the National Front raised expectations in rural areas over the possibilities for long term peace and a restructuring of rural landholdings. However, when these benefits failed to materialize, there was a greater potential for political violence (Egginton and Ruhl, 1974, 27).

Criminal banditry was a dangerous problem in Colombia in the early 1960s, and greed, retribution and desperation explain the violent actions and motivations of rural mercenaries and bandits like Sangrenegra and Desquite (Henao Holguin, 2015; 2013; Sánchez & Meertens, 2001). However, Communist fighters in rural areas of Tolima had clear political motivations and turned to armed resistance when other avenues were exhausted. Despite the political motives, condemnation was the fate of “Communist fighters who opted for peace in 1957-58, only to have their forms of collective life branded as ‘banditry’ by local opponents and the regional and

national state”(Karl, 2017b, 184). The assault on banditry by the state was directed primarily against the peasant republics. The most famous example of a demobilized fighter who took up arms again after the failure of the peace process was Manuel Marulanda, a.k.a Pedro Marin, or Tirofijo (ibid, 202).

During Valencia’s term in office (1962-66) offers of concessions to the guerrillas and the Communists were withdrawn and a concerted counterinsurgency effort was launched with the support of the USA. The level of military cooperation between Colombia and the USA was likely motivated by US concerns over the conditions for debt repayment. “By 1964, Colombia was one of the United States’ largest aid recipients, and the World Bank’s fourth largest borrower behind India, Japan, and Mexico. By June 1964, Colombia’s total public debt amounted to \$825 million, and the debt-service ratio to exports of goods and services was about 14 percent in 1965”(Kofas, 2002, 21). In the era of the Alliance for Progress and under the influence of modernization theorists (with Rostow shaping Kennedy’s foreign policy and Currie influencing the Colombians), a convergence of ideology, military power, and Conservative rule attacked peasant-Communist resistance with counterinsurgency.

On the advice of U.S. military personnel, the Colombian army commander Ruiz Nova initiated Plan Lazo (snare) in 1962. It consisted of mobile intelligence and counterinsurgency units to pursue known ‘bandits’ while regular army units provided operational support (Karl, 2017b, 175). The so-called ‘Independent Peasant Republics’ in isolated pockets of Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Huila and Cauca became the targets of military operations in 1964 under the US funded plan which had by then morphed into the Latin American Security Operation Plan (LASO) (Brittain, 2005, 345). One of the first targets was PCC-Guerrilla leader Manuel Marulanda. The Colombian army, in collaboration with US military advisers, launched Operation Marquetalia with the objectives to destroy Marulanda and his guerrilla forces and send a message to peasant-self defence groups throughout the country.

Marquetalia was a communist-stronghold along the border of Tolima with Cauca and Huila and a place of refuge for the communist holdouts from La Violencia that had attracted other peasant refugees in the 1950s and 1960s (Flores, 2014, 22; Brittain, 2010, 12; Pécaut, 2006, 12). Brittain describes how the Colombian army sent 20,000 troops supported by its entire fleet of Iroquois helicopters and bombarded the village and surrounding valley with napalm. Marulanda’s small band of guerrillas managed to evacuate 4,000 civilians from the area and

successfully avoided the army during the invasion. With Marulanda and his fighting forces still alive and the rural population of Marquetalia safe, the impetus for a revolutionary guerrilla struggle gained momentum (Brittain, 2010, 12-14).

After the assault on Marquetalia in 1964, Tirofijo led his forces, by then a group of about 40 seasoned fighters, on a long march through the forests and in doing so, transitioned from a stationary self-defence force to a mobile guerrilla unit. As other communist guerrillas from other areas joined the movement, the links “between previously dispersed Communist pockets began to draw tighter”(Karl, 2017b, 200). While Marquetalia is best remembered as the loci of the origins of the FARC, the events in other Communist ‘republics’ also hardened the resolve of the peasant movement to fight the state. Ahead of the arrival of the army to ‘pacify’ El Pato in 1965, the self-defence guerrilla units undertook an evacuation march into the jungle while the civilian population fled from the army, trekking on foot across mountain and jungle in the rain for weeks to take refuge in Neiva. About 200 civilians perished from starvation and exposure. “When the army announced at the end of 1965 that ‘peace has returned to El Pato’ it was a peace empty of nearly all human content”(Karl, 2017b, 202). Flores surmises the effect of the first wave of counterinsurgency on the resolve of the guerrillas: “The severity of Operation Marquetalia finalized the slow transformation of agrarian groups seeking land reforms into insurgent groups seeking the overthrow of the State” (Flores, 2014, 23).

Following the assault on Marquetalia, the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) invited all leftist and progressive groups to join a patriotic revolutionary struggle of national liberation. Its centerpiece was “an effective Revolutionary Agrarian Reform that changes the core of the Colombian countryside’s social structure” (Programo Agrario de los Guerrilleros, 1964 in Karl, 2017b, 198). The program called for the seizure of U.S.-owned and Colombian latifundio followed by redistribution to campesinos. This revolutionary reform would replace the “Agrarian Reform of bourgeois lies” and establish a new Colombia “free of the violence of class exploitation”(ibid). From the Southern Bloc of Communist Guerrillas from Marquetalia and Riochiquito, at a conference in April and May of 1966, the name Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was adopted and the strategy of mobile guerrilla-style warfare was institutionalized (Pécaut, 2006, 12; Serres, 2000, 194; Flores, 2014, 23).

The key source of grievance in the emergence of the FARC was land inequality, violence directed at campesinos and agrarian workers and the failure of the reform process (Flores, 2014,

24-25; Karl, 2017b, 198). The lack of political will on the part of the oligarchy for meaningful agrarian reform was now clear and its tendency to resort to US military assistance in its counterinsurgency efforts prompted further resistance elsewhere in Colombia, including the formation of the National Liberation Army (ELN) (Gill, 2016, 17). What the guerrilla insurgency lacked, however, was a strong link to the urban labour movement (Serres, 2000, 194).

Popular struggles in Colombia have occurred throughout the 20th century but had failed to create a unified front against the bourgeoisie and the landholding class. Ocampo argues that this is due to the petty-bourgeois character of radical leadership which chooses, either a “revisionist” or social-democratic approach that seeks compromise with elites or an “infantile” stance that chooses guerrilla action (Ocampo, 1975, 13). The shift to guerrilla warfare isolated the radical movement from the masses, making it “impossible for it to mobilize the people against their enemies. This tendency has also taken a ‘peasant vanguard’ position which denies the principle of the proletarian leadership of the revolution of new democracy”(Ocampo, 1975, 14). The problem, Ocampo continues, is the lack of unity among workers, campesinos, petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals to fight imperialism and democratize Colombia. Worse still was the absence of a radical workers movement. The labour organizations that did form in Colombia in the 1970s, Ocampo points out, were pro-imperialist cliques that operated through the national labour federations (UTC and CTC) and were coopted by the state and imperial powers (ibid).

While the grievances over land and rural exclusion were strong and the revolutionary impulse was no doubt sincere, organizational and ideological fragmentation were evident in the proliferation of various radical movements (Browitt, 2001, 1067; Serres, 2000, 195; Ocampo, 1975, 13). The revolutionary forces in the countryside remained fragmented between rural (FARC, ELN, EPL) and urban movements (MRL and M-19) and therefore could not effectively mobilize against ‘the enemies of the people.’ Nevertheless, the presence of an armed insurgency, and a communist one at that, in the era of the Cuban Revolution, the Cold War, and the Alliance for Progress, caught and held the attention of US military advisers.

U.S. Military activities in Latin America in the late 1960s involved three aspects: “furnishing technical advisers, supplying some grant materiel, and sponsoring formal training”(Meyer, 1969, 89). Meyer, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs stated that “one primary purpose of our military assistance program has been and is to help our Latin American neighbors attain socioeconomic development by systematic evolution

rather than in the volatile atmosphere of destructive revolution”(ibid, 90). To this end, the US promoted “broader reform programs in such areas as education, land reform and the like, which are the top priority objectives of our participation in the Alliance for Progress”(Meyer, 1969, 90).

Meyer was willing to accept that a certain level of instability would accompany the implementation of the Alliance for Progress, but he was wary that insecurity would destroy the reform process (Meyer, 1969, 90). This was the motivation behind the shift to counterinsurgency. Meyer continues: “our military assistance program was shifted in the early 1960s, in recognition of changed circumstances, toward strengthening the Latin American national capabilities to counter Communist-sponsored or supported insurgency movements” (ibid). The defeat of Che Guevera by Bolivian army units trained in counterinsurgency warfare by the US, it was hoped, would further deter Cuba from supporting guerrillas elsewhere in Latin America (ibid, 91).

As US political commentators were raising red flags about Colombian dependence on US loans and military assistance, it was clear that there was indeed a reliance on US imperial power among members of the Colombian oligarchy. In a 1969 article in *Inter-American Economic Affairs* an author who used the penname Heliodoro González reported that Colombia had received \$800 million USD which was 11.3% of Alliance for Progress funding while accounting for only 7.8% of the population (1969, 89). While education spending in other Latin American states increased by an average of 45% from 1962 to 1967, in Colombia the share of education spending as a percentage of total government spending actually declined by 24% while military spending increased by 20% (ibid). González argues that social reforms had failed so much that the gap between rich and poor was significantly larger in 1969 than it had been when the Alliance was formed, undermining any GDP gains.

The uneven implementation of the 1961 reform and the subsequent agrarian counter reform of the Chicoral Pact in 1973 prompted another wave of popular mobilization. During the 1970s, peasants adopted the historical tactics of land invasions; organized groups occupied estates and requested that INCORA expropriate the property and redistribute it to the campesinos (Grajales, 2011, 777). A total of about 120,000 ha in Sucre in the late 1970s and early 1980s were subject to successful land invasions, but in many cases, invasions were followed by harsh crackdowns from landlords, police and the military (ibid). After 1976, a growing number of rural working people joined forces in FENSUAGRO, a blanket organization of small-farmers

cooperatives, agricultural farm-labour syndicates, and landless workers unions (FENSUAGRO, 2009). In the 1980s new political organizations were formed including the left-wing Unión Patriótica, A Luchar (Resist), the Popular Front (Frente Popular), and the peasant organizations FENSA and ANTA along with Colombia's largest labour unions - FENSUAGRO and SINTRAMINERCOL. This provides an example of the progressive potential of the rural working class faced with the encroachment of the world market (Brittain and Sacouman, 2008, 68-69; Albán, 2011, 350). However, the repression of campesino mobilization has also polarized the countryside and made opposition to landlord and state power a matter of life or death.

Conclusion

The National Front introduced Law 135 of 1961 within the peace process, ostensibly to end *La Violencia*. Though it had pro-peasant measures, it served mostly to bolster commercial production which favoured larger producers while eliminating the smallest subsistence farms, many of which had been carved out of the forests by refugees of the Violence. Occupants of these farms were forced to either move to cities or settle again on more distant frontiers. Concentration of minifundio into commercial agricultural units and displacement and resettlement prompted urbanization without adequate industrial development, creating unemployment, poverty and social dislocation.

Previous struggles for land in the 1920s and 30s resulted in partial reforms that enabled the acquisition of property on some distant frontiers. During the Violence, landlords reasserted claims to land and displaced smallholders or subjected settlers to tenancy contracts. Landlord violence was used to implement the functional subordination of the Colombian agrarian workforce to peripheral, dependent capitalism. The brutality of this system and the failure of land reform in the 1960s prompted a return to revolutionary armed struggle.

As I have described here, the impetus for frontier colonization, incentives to use violence to accumulate land and displace peasants, and the logic of landlord modernization to expand accumulation in the peripheral developmental state were designed to integrate Colombia with an international capitalist social structure of accumulation. In the context of uneven development, the international sphere emerges as a lateral field of causality for the domestic pattern of passive revolution, deflection of mass demands for agrarian reform, and repression of the social movement (Bieler and Morton, 2018; Rosenberg, 2013; Callinicos & Rosenberg, 2010 [2008])

First, the forces that prompted ruptures in the accumulation patterns of the traditional hacienda system from the 1870s to 1930 were international in origin, including growth in demand for coffee exports and then foreign loans in the 1920s. These international market forces created incentives to expand production under existing landlord-peasant production. However, conflict arose as peasants' demands for land and freedoms clashed with landlords' interests in expanding production. Coffee price collapse in the 1930s put pressure on all producers to adapt leading to urgent demands for land reform.

Second, in the climate of post-war growth and US hegemony in the 1940s and 1950s, the state was propped up by foreign loans while growth in export markets created additional incentives to expand production, accumulate land and displace peasants. It was external support for the Colombian state that encouraged landlords to use violence to discipline workers, stifle dissent and accumulate land to establish large capitalist farms. US-led capitalist hegemony was thus imposed on the periphery in the 1940s and 1950s through a violent landlord reaction to the limited popular gains of the 1930s.

Third, sustained international coffee price depressions after 1956, the internal pressures of violent conflict, and ongoing campesino demands for land prompted renewed demands for reform during the National Front. However, it was the external support for reform in the Alliance for Progress and the threat of the Cuban Revolution that overwhelmingly shaped US support for the 1961 reform. The substance and implementation of the reform favoured the expansion of capital accumulation on properties of concentrated minifundio or on existing large estates.

Fourth, the consequences of the reform - accumulation of land in the hands of medium-sized and large commercial producers, mass displacement, frontier settlement, urbanization and unemployment without industrialization were aggravated by external forces. Agrarian capitalist transformation without adequate industrialization was a direct product of uneven development and the dynamics of Colombian passive revolution.

The ineffectiveness of the 1961 reform reignited the guerrilla conflict and led to a remobilization of campesino revolutionary forces from 1964 to 1966. The injustice of the rural agrarian capitalist order, the complicity of the state and the armed rebellion of the campesino forces did not, however, prompt radical changes to land tenure patterns. Instead, external forces financed the modernization of Colombian agriculture as commercial producers were able to obtain loans, machinery, technology, and even the best land to modernize production while the

state sought foreign loans, aid and military assistance to stifle dissent. The result has been a concentration of rural property, the further fragmentation of campesino holdings on distant frontiers and the entrenchment of armed conflict. These are the consequences of passive revolution imposed upon campesinos by the landlord/bourgeois bloc with the support of the US.

One of the key contributions of this thesis to the Colombian literature is to highlight the role of international social forces in the “domestic” politics of capital accumulation and resistance. However, an additional point of emphasis is the longstanding use of violence to promote capitalist development and the sustained response by campesinos to protect themselves. Demands for land, either through colonization or redistribution, have remained the source of conflict and the goal of the democratic and popular forces. This pushes back the date of the origins of the armed conflict in Colombia, from 1964 as is often believed, to 1949 and possibly even further back, to the landlord-peasant conflicts of the 1920s.

Further, *La Violencia* never ended in Colombia. After the formation of the 1958 National Front, the function of violence was maintained during the alliance of the oligarchy over and against mass impulses at democratisation. The violence of usurpation, resistance, and counterinsurgency established in the process of rural accumulation on the frontier in the 1940s and 1950s was adapted and maintained to discipline Colombian campesinos and workers with violence throughout the 1960s and beyond. The heterogeneity of Colombia’s rural production relations and the violent devaluation of Colombian labour has thwarted popular attempts at democratic, peaceful or progressive change to the established order. The fundamental inequality in land tenure, income and social status that is expressed as violence against the rural poor is not, however, a feudal or pre-capitalist legacy (Posada, 1969), nor is it simply a new feudalism (Hylton, 2014), but is rather a product of integration with an internationally expanding capitalist structure of accumulation.

CHAPTER 4: MARKET-LED AGRARIAN REFORM IN THE DISCIPLINARY NEOLIBERAL STATE (1986-2016)

The imposition of neoliberalism in Colombia involved the intensification of warfare, targeted killings of dissenters, and the use of mass displacement as a means to accumulate land. Neoliberalism was embraced by Colombian elites including landlords, financiers, technocrats and the narco-capitalist class. In this chapter I argue that neoliberalism was implemented through a passive revolution that used similar tactics as previous phases of capitalist expansion including agrarian reform, counter-reform, and counterinsurgency designed to impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation including forced displacement, monopolization of land, and the forced devaluation of labour. As the level of international integration with the global political economy has increased, so has the intensity of violence aimed at rural working people alongside armed resistance.

Scholars have variously described Colombia's late-20th century political economy as a 'war-machine,' 'narco-state' or 'protection-racket state' (Richani, 2013; Villar & Cottle, 2011; Stanley, 1996). As I demonstrated in the previous chapters, violence and capital accumulation predated neoliberalism and the illegal drugs industry. As Oquist pointed out in 1980, "[a] structure of social domination that denies the overwhelming majority of the population access to socioeconomic and political power ... presages the continued maturation of existing social contradictions and the creation of new ones" (1980, 238). These contradictions, he warned, "will have a high potential for violence as the dominated groups in Colombian society attempt to achieve positions of power that the dominant classes will violently deny them" (ibid). The longstanding conflict, though it took on additional dimensions in the 1980s as new armed groups emerged, continued to feature popular demands for land as an expression of agrarian working class revolt against the oligarchy (Kay, 2001, 188). The complexity of the recent phase of neoliberal armed conflict must not therefore obscure the historical continuity of violence in Colombia as a component of uneven capitalist development and passive revolution.

In this chapter I explore how neoliberal reforms articulated with Colombian production relations and examine the consequences for conflict and resistance. I argue that neoliberalism was intended to secure the support of international finance to buttress the legitimacy of a Colombian state in crisis, but it further amplified the existing social conflicts due to the passive revolutionary strategy of Colombian elites. By the 1980s, Colombia had experienced an already

long and bloody passive revolution as the landlord-bourgeois alliance pushed through capitalist transformation and dominated the state without broad popular support. The neoliberal reforms raised the stakes of struggles between landlords and agrarian workers by creating new opportunities for capital accumulation but also new imperatives for resistance.

With the countryside threatening to erupt into all out civil war, Belisario Betancur proposed a reformist path that offered to incorporate guerrillas into the political party system through the *Unión Patriótica* in 1985. In response, reactionary forces at the behest of a narco-landlord-class alliance launched a program of political assassinations that effectively wiped out the entire slate of left-wing candidates. With the country in crisis, the Constitution of 1991 promised minority rights but also constitutionalized neoliberal reforms.

The subsequent liberalization of trade flooded Colombia with cheap cereal, rice, corn and processed foods, putting the rural sector in distress from 1992 to 1997. Agricultural producers demanded support and the government responded with market-led agrarian reform. Market-led agrarian reform amounted to a negotiated bailout of landlords in the midst of an agrarian crisis. Opening up the highly polarized rural sector to market forces subjected the poorest workers to market discipline through the agrarian bank. In the longer run, it enabled further concentration of land.

On the ground, powerful landlords, mercenaries and businessmen went about creating local conditions for capital accumulation by expelling campesinos from lands of interest to investors. Forced displacement was the instrument used to consolidate control over rural land to improve the “security” of capital investments while making society more insecure. In response, the guerrillas expanded their capacity for war and territorial conquest, threatening to cut-off the country’s major cities with a state of siege by the late 1990s. The Colombian state’s survival after 1999 required the support of foreign political, financial and military power. The early 2000s were marked by a deepening of counterinsurgency, guerrilla counterattacks and a large-scale military surge under Álvaro Uribe designed to wipe out the guerrillas and their social base. The goal was to destroy all forms of resistance and fully open the country to large scale capitalist investment in agriculture, oil, gas and mining.

Context – Debt, Drugs, Guerrillas, Paramilitaries, Mass Murder and Neoliberalism

The shift from the debt-dependent developmental model to neoliberalism began as a response to stagnation and inflation in the core capitalist countries, leading financiers to seek outlets for investment in the periphery (Harvey, 2006; Duménil & Lévy, 2011; Gill, 1991). In the periphery, the ‘Green Revolution’ of the 1970s featured new techniques to render agriculture more productive including the use of fertilizers, machinery, genetic modification, crop rotation, and spatially extensive agriculture that maximizes ‘economies of scale,’ all of which favoured large-scale capitalist farming over family farming (Heynig, 1982, 120; Berry, 2002, 46; Teubal, 1987, 316). Squeezed off the best land for export production, campesinos became increasingly focused on traditional food production alongside coffee and, for some, illicit crops like marijuana, coca and poppies.

Meanwhile the national and subnational governments struggled to meet debt repayment obligations, sending the state to the brink of a financial crisis in the early 1980s. The search for new opportunities to court foreign direct investment complicated the existing conflict over rural land, inserting the state and multinational corporations into regions contested by drug traffickers, paramilitaries and armed peasant guerrilla forces. This section explores how the global political economic context shaped Colombian production, struggles for power and class conflict in the lead-up to the neoliberal passive revolution.

Global Political Economy and Colombian Conflicts: Cold War to the War on Drugs

To make up for the low productivity of import substitution industrialization in the 1960s and 70s, inadequate fiscal revenue and low capacity to collect tax, peripheral governments effectively borrowed their way to growth as a means to finance public spending. “The result was a debt-dependent accumulation model, the inequities of which were often enforced by political authoritarianism”(Pastor, 1989, 104). The debt-dependent accumulation model exposed peripheral governments to changing economic conditions in the core, especially when interest rates rose. The Latin American debt crisis came about as a result of heavy debt accumulation in the 1960s and 1970s coupled with the onset of US restrictions on monetary expansion after a decade of stagnation and inflation (ibid, 85). These measures worked as intended – they cut inflation and stabilized the dollar - but they caused a recession in the US. High interest rates

made debt repayment onerous between 1981 and 1983, and investors pulled capital out of Latin American economies whose foreign exchange reserves depleted (ibid).

To avoid economic collapse in the early 1980s, most Latin American governments devalued currencies, refinanced foreign debts, reduced expenditures and restructured their domestic economies under terms established by the World Bank, IMF and the Inter American Development Bank (Harris, 2003, 366). The debt crisis opened the door to increased political and economic ties between peripheral states, the US and international lending institutions. The ‘Washington Consensus’ adopted by the major IFIs and the US State Department since the early 1980s and adhered to by economic policy makers in most of the Latin American countries, consists of a set of measures that include trade and financial liberalization, competitive exchange rates, removal of barriers to foreign direct investment, privatization, deregulation, security of property rights and labour market flexibility (ibid, 368).

The result of these structural adjustment policies was an increase in poverty throughout Latin America – from an estimated 120 million people living in poverty in 1980, to 196 million in 1990, to 221 million in 2002 – about 44% of the population of the Latin American region (ibid, 366). Popular resistance to neoliberalism across Latin America ranged from roadblocks to land seizures to guerrilla warfare and states responded with reactionary police and counterinsurgency measures (ibid, 373). When peripheral governments chose austerity and debt service rather than defaulting on loans and pursuing a more nationalist approach, Manuel Pastor argues that they made a class-based choice to protect the interests of the financial elite, including transnational capital, rather than the masses (1989, 100).

Colombia borrowed heavily from the World Bank and amassed massive debt – as much as \$340 million per year by the early 1970s with \$125.2 million in annual debt service payments alone (Kofas, 2002, 21). Heavily indebted, the debt crisis took its toll: “During the early 1980s coffee prices collapsed, growth stalled, the fiscal situation worsened, and access to foreign credit declined” (Barajas, Steiner & Salazar, 2000, 162). Although Colombia’s financial sector was in crisis and despite high debt-service obligations, the government continued to pay its debts (Kamas, 2001, 137). Booming exports in the 1970s had allowed Colombian commodities producers to acquire large amounts of foreign exchange, which contributed to inflation at home (Supelano, 1992, 849). Colombian economic policy makers, concerned with the protection of capital, took measures in the mid-1980s to pay off foreign debt with foreign exchange reserves

held overseas. Their focus on the exchange rate, money supply, and interest rates maintained the value of foreign assets held in dollars but could not control domestic inflation which hurt purchasing power and industrialization (ibid).

The collapse of industrial activity was felt strongly in Medellin where the food, clothing, tool, chemical and light-industrial machinery industries were most advanced. When these factories shut down in the 1980s, up to 20% of the active population suddenly found itself unemployed, another 30% was underemployed, and all faced the highest cost of living in Colombia (Bedoya, 2006, 93). Once the industrial heartland of Colombia, Medellin in the mid-1980s was rife with unemployment, rising crime and general insecurity. In this context, some enterprising people and disaffected youth turned to the illegal drugs trade.

International demand for high quality ‘Colombian Gold’ marijuana created opportunities for drug trafficking gangs in the 1970s. Colombian drug traffickers and American collaborators (including Vietnam War veteran pilots) established trade routes from Colombia to Miami, often with stops in the Panama canal zone or at Mexican holiday destinations. The same routes were then used in the cocaine trade under Carlos Lehder, Pablo Escobar and others (see Melo, 1998; Thoumi, 2002; Friesendorf, 2005). These networks of buyers, pilots, drivers and hitmen from the marijuana trade were quickly adapted to transport cocaine resulting in the formation of the infamous drug cartels. “They formed well-oiled organisations, with Pablo Escobar’s Medellin Cartel boasting a military wing used to kill off opponents, whether those of rival cartels, or politicians and government officials, especially left-oriented ones” (Browitt, 2001, 1068). Coca produced in Peru and Bolivia was flown to Colombian labs, processed into Cocaine, and then shipped to Panama, Mexico and the USA.

The conjuncture of neoliberalism and violence in Colombia is central to the novelty of this chapter. I argue that the Colombian oligarchy’s commitment to international finance, coupled with the state’s lack of legitimacy vis-à-vis citizens, created a situation in which US support became necessary to ensure the conditions for ongoing capital accumulation. And since the Colombian government was consistently committed to protecting the interests of capital, domestic or foreign, the US was willing to support the oligarchy, despite its problems with legitimacy, insurgents and drug-gangs.

The main ideological force that united Colombia and the United States was a fervent anti-communism in the era of the Cuban Revolution. Stokes notes that “the FARC were portrayed as

Soviet-backed guerrillas, and as a threat to the pro-US Colombian state” (Stokes, 2006, 368). The predominant discourse of US-Colombian relations in the 1970s and 80s reinforced the message that the Colombian government was committed to the fight against communism (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2003, 138-140). Anti-communism again served as a source of ideological cohesion between Bogotá and Washington with the arrival of Ronald Reagan to power and the ‘second Cold War’ (Tokatlian, 1999, 342). Colombia’s adherence to monetarism in response to the debt crisis further signalled loyalty to global capitalism.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as the counterinsurgency efforts against the guerrillas ramped up, Colombia sent military personnel to the School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone and then to Fort Benning, Georgia after 1984 (McCoy, 2005; Gill, 2004). At the school, Latin American military and police personnel took courses on counterinsurgency, jungle warfare, infantry and weapons tactics but there are strong indications that torture of prisoners was taught as part of the curriculum (McCoy, 2005, 62). Military assistance designed to breach the spread of communism encouraged the use of fifth-column tactics to clandestinely infiltrate guerrillas and undermine their social base. The proponents of counterinsurgency in the US successfully garnered support from Congress, US academics and churches in the early 1990s by equating counterinsurgency operations against guerrillas with the war on drugs after the fall of the Soviet Union (Stokes, 2004, 243). The shift from anti-communism to the war on drugs came alongside measures to promote the economic liberalization of the monetary and financial regime (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2003, 140).

US President George H.W. Bush announced his Andean Initiative in 1989 consisting of US military assistance to Colombia, Peru and Bolivia to fight the war on drugs resulting in an increase from \$22.8 million USD in 1989 to \$134.9 million by 1991 (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 102). The United States-led Air Bridge Denial Program (ABDP) was designed to disrupt small planes carrying coca paste from Peru and Bolivia to Colombia for processing into cocaine. In 1990 radar stations were installed in Colombia and Peru to assist in the air monitoring efforts (Friesendorf, 2005, 48). The idea was that aerial interdiction would lower the volume of materials available to Colombian drug labs and disrupt the flow of cocaine to the United States. Various US and South American government agencies participated in the ABDP including the Department of Justice, Defence and the CIA, Naval Intelligence and the National Security Agency. Suspicious flights were forced to the ground by air forces and searched for drugs. “If

the pilots of the suspicious planes did not respond to warning signals, planes would be shot down”(Friesendorf, 2005, 47). Friesendorf points out that the ABDP had the unintended consequence of shifting coca production from Peru and Bolivia into Colombia itself. This provided additional sources of revenue to the FARC from taxation of coca production and allowed Colombian drug cartels to exert more control over production.

The often-violent interactions between drug lords, landlords, peasants and guerrillas in the frontier zones of northwest and southern Colombia were further complicated by the discovery of large oil reserves under the auspices of the Occidental Petroleum Company in the 1980s (Dunning & Wirpsa, 2005, 86). With global demand for oil on the rise, foreign direct investment in conflict-prone Colombia coincided with increased willingness in the USA to use military force to protect strategic energy interests (ibid, 82). The result was an expanded use of counterinsurgency to protect operations from extortion by non-state armed actors (Ibid, 96). As foreign oil companies and agro-industrial firms took an interest in Colombia’s frontier areas, they added a layer of complexity, motivation and money to the existing territorial conflicts between guerrillas, peasants, landlords and drug traffickers.

International relations between Colombia and the US were based on a shared affinity for conditions to support international capital accumulation. However, threats to international capital – from communist guerrillas and illegal narco-capitalists – created the impetus for security cooperation between the US and Colombia. Efforts at suppression of the illegal drugs trade in the Andes shifted production into Colombia. This provoked state action against coca producers, with dire consequences for the security of settlers, some of whom had turned to coca production as an alternative to coffee. With drug traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries competing for control over frontier zones, the potential for conflict was high.

Power: From Developmentalism to Disciplinary Neoliberalism

The dominant ideology espoused by members of the Colombian oligarchy from the 1960s to the 1980s was informed by modernization theory. The Colombian version of the developmentalist state “initiated capitalist development as a passive revolution within an authoritarian framework under state leadership for lack of any established bourgeois hegemony”(Cox, 1987, 218). The Colombian developmental state pushed the stimulation of agricultural and industrial production to meet domestic demand, repressed the organized labour movement, and suppressed agrarian wages (Brittain, 2005, 344-346). The political and economic

objectives of development in Colombia were: to continue the flow of cheap agricultural commodities to the world market (coffee) while keeping wages low and limit anti-capitalist resistance that would otherwise threaten US and Colombian capitalist interests (ibid, 350). To this end, Lauchlin Currie advised the state to ‘dampen’ rural opposition “by either economic or coercive means, a policy that entailed in essence preventing guerrilla and/or other forms of agency from making common cause with peasant communities”...(Brittain, 2005, 350).

The existence of the guerrillas in the 1970s, including the Cuban-inspired and Soviet financed ELN, the Colombian Liberal and Communist peasant self-defence forces of the FARC and the *Ejercito de Liberación Popular*, while a nuisance to the state, could hardly have been construed as a viable threat to Colombian capitalism (Chernick, 2007, 55-56; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2004, 263). The FARC had only 500 fighters in the 1970s and few military resources were dedicated to defeating them (Gutiérrez 2003, 137). If the 1970s were relatively quiet on the military front, Colombia had the highest homicide rate in the world (Kay, 2001, 173). The number of deaths related to the conflict from 1964 to 1985 is estimated to be 129,794 (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). The total number of persons displaced during the same period was 60,185 according to the Colombian government (ibid). The high murder rates and the ongoing crisis of displacement suggest that the pattern of politicized violence targeted at dissidents, rebellious peasants, labour leaders or other ‘problematic people’ established during ‘La Violencia’ in the 1940s were maintained through the 1970s and early 1980s (Kay, 2001, 173). Therefore, it was in the midst of a social conflict of an order of magnitude equal to *La Violencia* that Colombian politicians went about enacting neoliberal reforms in the 1980s.

In the lead-up to the neoliberal reforms, successive Colombian administrations promoted international capital accumulation while suppressing domestic resistance. Under Liberal Julio César Turbay Alaya’s administration (1978-1982) policies included removal of some tariffs and partial liberalization of trade in response to the debt crisis. Amid the fiscal crisis, popular unrest and growth of the guerrillas, Turbay initiated a deepening of state repression of popular social movements (Supelano, 1992, 853; van Isschott, 2018, 122). According to Pécaut, the tactics of counterinsurgency included torture and massacres between 1977 and 1982 which directly preceded greater mobilization by FARC and other guerrillas (2006, 14).

In 1981 the Medellin Cartel funded the operations of a group of assassins known as MAS – Muerte a los Secuestradores (Death to the Kidnappers) under the command of José Gonzalo

Rodriguez Gacha (Pécaut, 1997, 907). Paramilitary groups were also mobilized in the 1980s with the cooperation of then governor of Antioquia, Álvaro Uribe Vélez (Ramirez Cuellar, 2005, 76). The growth of private security firms in Medellín in the 1980s, drug-related crime, paramilitarism and counterinsurgency suggests links between these groups who benefited economically from the general state of insecurity and cooperation with the army (Bedoya, 2006, 121). There was also an international dimension to paramilitarism, as Ramirez writes:

In his confession before the public prosecutor and to human rights organizations, a paramilitary chief nicknamed 'Black Vladimir' stated that in the meetings the paramilitaries held with soldiers stationed with the Puerto Boyacá Battalion, in the Department of Boyacá, there were representatives of the Texas Petroleum Company in addition to ranchers, mafiosos, and small industrialists, and that all of these paid the U.S., Israeli and English mercenaries who trained them (Ramirez Cuellar, 2005, 68).

The FARC responded to the paramilitaries and to Turbay's strong-arm tactics with a vow to intensify its struggle. Philippe Serres writes: "In 1982 ... the FARC declared, at its VII Conference, that given the strong state repression and the growing lack of legitimacy of the Colombian regime, the country was developing revolutionary conditions that had to be accompanied by a transformation of the guerrillas movement"(2000, 196). As such, the FARC vowed to build alliances with other guerrilla and leftist groups to seize power through all pathways of struggle. The guerrillas were strengthened by new sources of revenue in the coca industry (FARC), through illegal taxation of petroleum activities (ELN), through control over the banana trade (EPL) and through kidnapping and extortion (practiced by all) (Pécaut, 2006, 14). The FARC grew from 15 fronts in 1982 (2,000 troops) to 40 fronts in 1990 (8,000 troops) (ibid, 15). The start of the 'modern' phase of the guerrilla war coincides with mass dissatisfaction with the state's response to the debt crisis and the growth of the drugs trade.

In the midst of the debt crisis and with the Cold War heating up, President Betancur (1982-86) turned his attention to the domestic security situation and tried to forge a peace deal with the guerrillas (Supelano, 1992, 853). Betancur believed that the 'objective conditions' of Colombian history had excluded the poor from the political institutions and had given rise to the insurgency. Peace could be established by allowing the guerrillas formal political representation (Serres, 2000, 198). With a tentative cease-fire with the FARC-EP signed at La Uribe in 1984, demobilized guerrillas and communists formed the *Unión Patriótica* (UP) to fight for democracy via the institutional pathway. According to Serres, the La Uribe agreement - which promised agrarian reform, access to education, decentralization of power, protection of human rights and

democracy – represented a victory for ‘reformism’ but irked some guerrillas because reformism was contrary to the revolutionary path they had chosen in 1982 (2000, 198).

The conciliatory stance Betancur took toward the FARC early in his Presidency also sparked reaction on the right, particularly within the army and it prompted the paramilitaries to go on the offensive. Gutiérrez writes: “in remote regions of the country, and partly in response to the government’s peace policy, paramilitary bands funded by traffickers were starting to develop a ‘dirty war’ against the guerrillas, the population that supposedly supported them, and the political left”(Gutiérrez, 2003, 138). Enraged by the state’s conciliatory stance with the guerrillas and attempts by the FARC to extort money from ranchers, landlords and drug traffickers, Escobar’s Medellín cartel mobilized its paramilitary wing against the FARC and the Unión Patriótica (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 103).

The country was again in a crisis in 1985-86. “Guerrilla groups pressured landowners by supporting peasant land invasions and by kidnapping and extortion; landowners increasingly employed private armed groups ... to attack peasants and their leaders” including the assassination of 12 ANUC leaders (Escobar, 2002, 28). According to Carroll:

Starting around 1985, the levels of political violence began to skyrocket. Even excluding drug-related violence, violent repression against legitimate labor, peasant, and human rights activists, as well as amnestied guerrillas, increased dramatically. ... At the beginning of the decade, there were virtually no paramilitary death squads operating in the country. By September 30, 1987, the Colombian Minister of the Interior listed the number of active death squads as 140(Carroll, 1994, 135-136).

José Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha led the ‘reconquest’ of the Middle Magdalena River Valley from his base at Puerto Boyacá which he referred to as the epicenter of ‘Free Colombia’ (Pécaut, 1997, 907). The paramilitary offensive temporarily drove the FARC out of the Middle Magdalena by the end of the 1980s (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 103).

The reformist path had included a means for Unión Patriótica to field political candidates in municipal elections after 1986. Between 1988 and 1990, in frontier areas, export-production zones and areas with narco-landowners, the Unión Patriótica had most of its electoral success as it asserted the rights of campesinos against landlords (Carroll, 1994, 171). In those places where the peasant-Communist alliance enjoyed most of its electoral success, the reaction by paramilitaries was the most extreme with 20,000 homicides annually and around 30,000 people displaced per year (Registro Unico de Víctimas, 2018; Carroll, 1994, 138). Several authors have described as a genocide the systematic killing of Unión Patriótica members in the 1980s and

estimates that 300 Unión Patriótica candidates and possibly 3,000 party activists were murdered by narco-paramilitary death squads from 1985 to 1990 (Dufort, 2008, 109; Chernick, 2007, 62; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2001, 68). The “genocide of the left” was proof that, as Guerrero Baron & Mond put it, “Colombia is the result of a social, economic, and political model that attempted to enter modernity without rejecting violence”(2001, 27). The assault on the demobilized guerrillas and UP activists destroyed the path toward left-wing reformism and radicalized the FARC, strengthening its resolve to continue armed struggle (Dufort, 2008, 109). In 1985 there were 338 incidents of combat involving guerrillas but by 1991 there were 1,285 (Carroll, 1994, 136).

Violence, however, was not only directed at working people and radicals. After Rodríguez Gacha, the second in command in the Medellín cartel was killed by state security forces in December 1989, Escobar launched a terror campaign against the state, bombing civilians, assassinating police officers and judges, and kidnapping upper class Colombians (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 102). Liberal Party presidential candidate Luis Galán was assassinated (likely by the Medellín cartel) on August 18, 1989. President Barco countered by launching a war on the Medellín cartel and Pablo Escobar. An elite police unit was created to capture 20 traffickers, seize their property and extradite them to the US.

Watching the US and Colombian security forces go to war on the Medellín cartel in northern Colombia, the Cali cartel took a lower profile and started shipping Bolivian and Ecuadorian coca paste to southern Colombia in smaller quantities and sponsored the production of coca leaf in Colombia itself. Rather than engaging in open war against the FARC, the Cali cartel paid it taxes and protection money and quietly made ties with the police and army (Gutiérrez, 2003, 139). While the US and the Colombian state were fighting the Medellín cartel, the FARC expanded its scope of racketeering activities in the drug trade of southern Colombia but also established 8 fronts in the Middle Magdalena, taking back territory from the paramilitaries (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 104).

In the closing days of the Barco administration, calls came for a popular constituent assembly to reform the state and end the violence. With the establishment of a constituent assembly in 1990, the new President Gaviria appeared to the domestic audience as a man interested in peace and inclusion, but he was busy establishing the constitutional framework for neoliberalism to reassure the international audience that Colombia was open for business.

Agrarian Production Relations on the Brink of Neoliberalism

During the 1970s and 1980s investment in roads, rail, irrigation and extension of credit favoured large landowners. The implementation of modern agronomic production methods on large farms and the expansion of cattle ranching reduced opportunities for employment (Ibáñez & Muñoz, 2010, 289). While there was an identifiable middle class of commercial farmers with family agricultural units of 10 to 50 ha, agriculture was dominated by large farms with about 1.7 percent of properties accounting for 40 percent of the land circa 1988 (Safford & Palacios, 2002, 309). Although INCORA continued to promote frontier settlement, most *colonos* were unable to acquire formal property titles to their plots. An estimated 3.4 million ha had been colonized by 1980 but only campesinos had only received formal titles to a total of 1.4 million ha (Ibáñez & Muñoz, 2010, 289). Meanwhile the absence of the state in frontier areas put settlers at risk of exploitation as local landlords, mercenaries and merchants subjected *colonos* to tenancy arrangements through debt or threat.

While Colombian peasant families may have been efficient producers of the traditional potatoes, beans, squash, yucca, and plantains and they continued to produce coffee, they were ill equipped to compete with agribusiness in the production of cash crops - corn, rice, cotton, sorghum and soy. Further, even larger-scale domestic producers of cereals had trouble competing internationally (Brittain, 2005, 352). As long as there were tariffs in place, Colombian cereals producers could supply the domestic market, but once these walls came down and grains flowed into Colombia, domestic producers would struggle.

From 1988 to 1994, in the lead-up to the market-led agrarian reform, there was already evidence of a reorientation of INCORA from state-led agrarian reform to promoting neoliberalism through decentralization and tax incentives. These included enhanced efforts to appraise the market value of rural properties (for tax and acquisition purposes) and greater emphasis in *voluntary* participation among landlords in INCORA's land purchasing and redistribution program (Balcazar et al, 2001, 16). Second, Decree 77 of 1987 contained provisions for INCORA to delegate responsibility for adjudication of public lands to municipalities (Londoño et al, 2016, annex, 36). Law 44 of 1990 fixed the range of property tax rates from 1% to 16% of the property value depending on the municipality, the socioeconomic status of the population, and the intended agricultural use (Uribe López, 2009, 99). Considering the local power of landlords in municipalities, authorizing municipalities to set tax rates and

allow large corporate adjudications of public land create favourable local conditions for agricultural enterprises (ibid). Considering the local power of many regional landlords, neoliberal tax reforms and decentralization undermined the capacity of the state for redistributive measures to address property concentration (Fajardo, 2002, 14).

At the same time as the neoliberal reorientation of INCORA toward market-based reforms, additional measures promised protection of minority rights, consistent with the 1991 Constitution. Law 21 of 1991 adopted the International Labor Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention 169 which recognized collective property rights to traditionally occupied tribal lands (Londoño et al, 2016, annex, 35). Decree 1809 of 1993 recognized Indigenous *resguardos* (Londoño et al, 2016, annex 36). Law 70 of 1993 recognized the collective property of Afro-Colombian communities and granted collective title to 6,000,000 ha of land to Afro-Colombian Communities in the Pacific Region and created 157 Community Councils to govern the collective landholdings (Londoño et al, 2016, annex 36). The capacity of these local forces to deal with incursions on their territory and prevent the planting of illicit crops by both outsiders and community members was limited by the lack of local fiscal resources in the spirit of neoliberal decentralization (Vélez, 2009, 82).

Conjuncture: New Constitutional Land Reform

Although the crisis of the 1970s threatened the profitability of US-based industrial capital and disrupted the embedded liberal order, in the ensuing years, the collective actions of a financial capitalist class rebuilt capitalist supremacy through a neoliberal social structure of accumulation that became truly global in scope after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Gill, 2003, 68). Disciplinary Neoliberalism is Stephen Gill's term to describe the institutions, ideologies and material power used by financial capitalists and international institutions to create the conditions for transnational capital accumulation including pro-market reforms and monetarist measures that take financial regulation out of the hands of elected politicians and into the hands of technocrats and central bankers (ibid, 131-32).

The 'New Constitutionalism' refers to how neoliberalism has been inscribed into the very structures of dominance within states and between them. The New Constitutionalist approach examines how investment rules and other supra-constitutional forces impose constraints on national constitutions and serve to insulate economic policymaking from majoritarian politics, facilitating the free flow of goods, capital, services and people across borders (Schneiderman,

2008, 3). The shift from Keynesian regulation and state capitalism (in an embedded liberal order) toward the neoliberal model occurred in part because of the IMF's promotion of privatization of public enterprises in response to the 1980s debt crisis and in part because of the end of the Soviet Union and the narrowing of alternative development pathways (Gill, 2003 159-161). Together, disciplinary neoliberalism and new constitutionalism describe the process of market-led reforms as the latest form of passive revolution in Colombia.

By 1990, the capacity of Colombia's institutions to contain the rise of an aggressive narco-capitalist class and meet popular demands for land, justice and human rights were at their limit. For Colombia's institutions to survive the threats from its dysfunctional social order, change was required. The Constituent Assembly tasked with reforming the constitution in the early 1990s thus found themselves confronted with the same dilemma that the Liberals faced in the 1930s; the country required a radical redistribution of property and social power, but they were limited to constitutional reform. As Marco Palacios put it:

The good political and social intentions of the reformers of the 1930s remained on paper in many substantial respects in the same way that the transformational proposals of the 1990s remained on paper. If in the 1930s the question of democratic representation could have been resolved from which, among others, derives the question of the *res nullius* and the peasant question, then Colombians, as citizens, as families, as a nation, could have avoided the struggle; the mass graves and the pits; the bodies floating in rivers; the displaced, kidnapped and disappeared; Perhaps economic, institutional and social progress would have been less fractured, more egalitarian, more united, more inclined to liberty. Perhaps (Palacios, 2011, 233).

The problem, of course, was the fundamental injustice of passive revolutionary violence deployed to impose and maintain conditions for capital accumulation. The solution proposed by the Constituent Assembly, however, was to constitutionalize the neoliberal model.

Ideologically, neoliberalism fit with the neo-classical economic orthodoxy that espoused the power of private initiative, the transformative potential of free markets, and the value of the open borders - but emphasized the primacy of individual property rights (over the tyranny of the state) (Hayek, 1994). Colombian neoliberalism found a proponent in César Gaviria who believed that "free and open societies and economies reinforce (and resemble) each other. He managed to foster a constitutional process that included both deeply neoliberal clauses, and a genuine and ample proposal of democratization" (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010b, 215). Gaviria hoped that the liberalization of market forces would enable democracy but would require a strong foundation of individual rights, the rule of law and recognition of collective rights for subordinate groups.

The National Constituent Assembly was established as the sovereign representative of the Colombian people in December 1990 with the mandate to reform the Constitution. If the goal of the Constituent Assembly was to create a new social contract for Colombia based on respect for individual rights, the rule of law, and the primacy of the market that would end the political crisis and establish peace, it was in this latter objective that the assembly fell short (Bohórquez Montoya, 2001, 18-19). This was in part because the two principal guerrilla organizations – the FARC and the ELN - did not participate in the Assembly.

Instead, during the first six months of 1991 as the Constituent Assembly deliberated, Gaviria's government returned to the negotiating tables in Caracas, Venezuela and in Tlaxcala, Mexico where the FARC and the ELN negotiated through the *Coordinadora Guerrillera Nacional* (Chernick, 2007, 63). While the guerrillas called for broad social and political reforms (including agrarian reforms), the peace process broke down after a spate of kidnappings and skirmishes between the army and guerrillas. "The government's response to the breakdown of the negotiations was to expand its counterinsurgency strategy while the FARC in particular and the ELN to a lesser extent accelerated their military buildups"(Chernick, 2007, 64). The breakdown of the peace talks prompted Gaviria to decry that the guerrillas had abandoned their Marxist ideals and become drug traffickers (ibid).

Apart from the guerrillas, the Constituent Assembly represented a wide array of ideological positions including: the Colombian Liberal Party, the Democratic Alliance M-19 (that had by now disarmed), various Conservative groups, the surviving members of the Unión Patriótica and another ex-guerrilla group formed from the EPL – now called Esperanza, Paz y Libertad (Hope, Peace and Liberty). Also at the table were the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (PRT)/Revolutionary Workers Party, the Quintin Lame Indigenous movement, and other Indigenous groups (Bohórquez Montoya, 2001, 17).

For the Liberals, the crisis was brought about by the over-reach of the Colombian state in the economy, particularly in the industrial sector with a parallel lack of state action to intervene in agriculture (Bohórquez Montoya, 2001, 25). The establishment of a market-society in Colombia would thus require the state to withdraw from intervention in the economy in all but the guarantee of individual rights and liberties (including property rights) (ibid). For Conservative participants in the Constituent Assembly the crisis was the breakdown of the legal order and the onset of 'anarchy.' The solution was to reaffirm the Catholic foundation of

Colombian society and the state as guarantor of property rights (ibid, 36-39). For the M-19 participants, (including Orlando Fals Borda) the Assembly was an opportunity to establish a new social order based on the expansion of citizenship among all classes and sectors of society. The goal of the new democratic state would be to incorporate the various groups in respect of their economic, cultural and social rights (ibid, 31-35). The various minority groups including those representing Indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, the Unión Patriótica and ex-guerrilleros argued for economic, social and cultural rights and the limits on the private accumulation of land (ibid, 44).

The Constitution that materialized from this process - the *Estado Social de Derecho* – a Social State subject to the Rule of Law - served to legitimize a Colombian capitalist state in a world order that was increasingly neoliberal. Nevertheless, there were clauses that provided a legal foundation for greater equality in access to land, particularly for Indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples (Bohórquez Montoya, 2001, 134). The Constitution therefore contained elements that would offer hope to proponents of democracy based on formal recognition of economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, but by limiting the power of the state, it limited its power to guarantee the protection of these same rights (ibid, 19). The 1991 Constitution, Bohórquez concludes, citing Derrida, was a case of “Democracy for another day” (ibid, 134). Gamboa calls it “leftover democratization” (2001, 103).

Colombia’s new constitutional shift in the 1990s was illustrative of the market fundamentals of the new constitutional approach elsewhere in Latin America (Schneiderman, 2008, 161). Although there are elements of the 1991 Constitution that protect collective and minority rights, establish limits on property rights, and call for the democratization of property, it has been interpreted by the Supreme Court and subsequently modified to protect private capital accumulation and the rights of multinationals (ibid, 168). The Colombian case illustrates how the promises of formal democracy that were offered by the new constitutionalism reinforced in practice the rights of capitalists, foreign or domestic.

The 1991 constitution served to strengthen the power of the presidency to restructure public institutions and ministries, alter public spending, and implement policies and institutional changes without the approval of congress. These changes, Browitt points out, were well suited for the enacting of neoliberal economic policies. The Constitution itself allowed for the privatization of public enterprises in the name of efficiency. The reforms weakened the

redistributive and interventionist arms of the state and enabled the privatization of public utilities and social security agencies, banking and credit, even public housing (Browitt, 2001, 1071). Under Gaviria, “the government also liberalized the financial system, international capital flows, and labour markets”(Kamas, 2001, 133). Tariffs were reduced and other barriers to trade such as import licensing were eliminated. To combat expected inflation rates of up to 30 percent, Supelano notes, Gaviria imposed austerity measures. He cut public spending, squeezed the money supply and let interest rates rise (Supelano, 1992, 855).

With the new constitution in place Gaviria (1990-94) reduced tariffs and import duties from an average of 43.7% to 11.4% and abolished the list of controlled imports, flooding the country with cheap manufactured goods (Browitt, 2001, 1068). The immediate consequence of the neoliberal reforms under Gaviria was the entry of foreign-produced agricultural commodities into the Colombian market (Berry, 2002, 52). The flood of cereals and processed foods from abroad hit Colombian agriculture hard, including large producers of grains and rice, generating a crisis in Colombian agriculture (ibid, 53).

Viewed in consort with the neoliberal reforms, the clauses of the 1991 Constitution that recognized subordinate group rights appear as a smokescreen for the neoliberal revolution (Browitt, 2001, 1071). These reforms legalized a neoliberal passive revolution in which the predominant classes respond to challenges from below by altering the array of forces in their favour, thus deflecting popular demands and restoring existing hierarchies.

Market-Led Agrarian Reform Law 160 of 1994

In his 1989 speech to a conference on Agrarian Reform in front of the Attorney General, Carlos Lleras Restrepo called for measures to address the problems of inequality, rural violence and the cost of land grant and parcelization programs. Agrarian reforms were necessary but campesinos needed support to modernize their operations, adapt new technologies and acquire entrepreneurial skills (Lleras, 2012, 234). The former President acknowledged in this speech that great concentrations of land enabled concentration of power. A successful agrarian reform would entail a transfer of social, economic and political power. However, the former President then argued that the transfer of land was not necessary for this transfer of power. Instead it would suffice to expand the stock of private land for settlement by the poor – through colonization of new frontiers. In Lleras’ view, the state ought to improve the lives of the poorest without prejudice to the wealthy (ibid, 236). As in the 1930s and 1960s, in the neoliberal conjuncture,

Liberals refused decisive state-led redistribution and again tried to deal with the agrarian question through expanded frontier colonization.

The clearest expression of the shift toward market-led agrarian reform in the neoliberal period was Law 160 of 1994 (Fajardo, 2002, 14). The Colombian approach to market-led agrarian reform, once again, consisted of leaving existing private property untouched while extending credit to campesinos to purchase a plot of raw public land and establish a homestead. The categories of lands that would be adjudicated from the public sphere included lands for family farmers (UAFs), collective lands for peasant cooperatives, tribal lands of Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communes and territories, and lands for large-scale agribusiness.

As in the 1930s and 1960s, the impetus for agrarian reforms came once again in response to agricultural crisis. By the close of the 1980s, domestic agricultural prices fell drastically due to a high exchange rate and an influx of foreign investment along with recession and local drought (Berry, 2002, 52). The worst year for Colombian agriculture in more than a century, according to Berry, was 1992. Agricultural production fell by 12% and even livestock production declined by 1%. The flood of cereals and processed foods from abroad after the neoliberal opening hit Colombian agriculture hard. The 1994 market-led reform was therefore designed to respond to the needs of commercial agricultural exporters in the face of crisis (Berry, 2002, 53; Albà, 2011, 351). Landlords demanded reforms to traditional sources of agricultural credit, cuts to the budget of the bureaucratic INCORA, an end to redistribution programs, and expansion of negotiated purchases and sales of land between landlords and campesinos with the *Caja Agraria* providing financing (Albà, 2011, 351). The situation was reminiscent of the 1930s; landlords sought state funds to bail them out of unprofitable agriculture while campesinos who wanted land were offered credit.

The response to the crisis was César Gaviria's Law 160 of 1994 which recognized the connection between rural inequality and social disorder. Article 1 states:

Inspired by the constitutional precept according to which it is the duty of the State to promote progressive access to landed property for agricultural workers and other rural public services, with the end of improving the income and quality of life of the campesino population, this law has the following objective: First: promote and consolidate peace, through the mechanisms developed to achieve social justice, participative democracy and the well-being of the campesino population; Second: reform the agrarian social structure by means of processes underway to eliminate and prevent the inequitable concentration of rural property or its uneconomical fragmentation and to give land to campesino men and women with low incomes 16 years and above that do not possess land, to smallholders, female heads of campesino households and Indigenous communities the

benefits of the special programs established by the National Government; Third: support campesino men and women with low incomes to acquire land by their own means, through credit and direct subsidy; Fourth: elevate the standard of living of the campesino population... (Congreso de Colombia, Law 160 of 1994).

Access to land for marginalized groups was the stated objective of the law but land was to be accessed through market means – the provision of credit and expansion of commodity production. The reform was designed to increase the global volume of agricultural production, forestry, aquaculture and livestock production in an efficient manner (Congreso de Colombia, Law 160 of 1994). Again, overall productivity and efficiency were emphasized.

The National System for Agrarian Reform and Campesino Rural Development established by Law 160 incorporated the functions of INCORA, the National System of Agricultural Credit and the land use planning departments of the National Government. While INCORA was not immediately abolished, its functions in the new system would be to acquire and adjudicate public lands for settlement (See Articles 2, 3 & 4). INCORA was also tasked with redistributing properties that were under-used, illegally settled or abandoned (Article 12, paragraph 20, Law 160 of 1994, Congreso de Colombia, 1994). Extinguishment of title was legislated for lands used for the production of narcotics.

As in the 1961 reform, the stated beneficiaries of the 1994 reform were the UAF – Family Agricultural Units. Adequate access to lands and financing would ease the successful incorporation of the family farm into the commercial agricultural sector. In particular, landless rural families would be provided with access to financing through INCORA and the National Agrarian Fund to purchase land, but once again, much of this land would be in colonization zones, on public lands, or on lands that had been taken over by INCORA including estates expropriated from narco-traffickers. Land would not be distributed freely.

Law 160 of 1994 is then something of a middle ground between the promotion of savage agrarian capitalism and the protection of the various subordinate agricultural communities. It formally recognized access to land for Indigenous, campesino, women, and rural poor families; however the measures were through modified market mechanisms and provision of credit. Campesinos could not simply turn around and sell off land they acquired subject to the new program before the loan had been repaid. Further, the law had measures to promote the protection of zones for campesino, Indigenous and cooperative production as well as containing provisions for environmental protection. In these ways, the 1994 Agrarian Reform creates

protections so certain sectors remained geographically outside the national market for land. Inside these zones, the reform promoted a capitalist farmer subjectivity through the expansion of private title, indebtedness, and commodity production.

Among neoliberals, Law 160 of 1994 was touted as an example of the ‘neo-classic’ approach to land reform that sought to develop pro-poor measures through the consolidation of property rights and the expansion of land markets (Deininger, 1999, 651). Deininger celebrated the advantages of voluntary reforms that unite willing buyers and sellers through market means, rather than obligatory or state-led reforms of the 1960s. For Deininger, the success of ‘negotiated’ land reforms depends on the removal of barriers to land markets, creating opportunities for private investment, reducing the costs to the state of land reforms and supporting economically justifiable programs. However it does not require the “transfer of assets” (ibid, 666). In other words, it does not prejudice the rich. The scheme compensates landlords by monetizing their property but puts the burden of adaptation to land markets on the family agricultural unit.

The neoliberal edition of agrarian reform in Colombia recognized some of the core problems facing the nation: the need for access to land among the rural poor and ethnic minorities; the violent accumulation of property by narcotics gangs; and the risk to rural property in the context of civil war. However, the solutions proposed in the law – to expand access to land through the extension of credit, the extinguishment of property rights to land which had been used for coca production, and the emphasis on the commercial use of land – reflected its pro-landlord orientation and prejudiced to varying degrees the campesinos.

Market-led agrarian reform required that families prove they were creditworthy which was a difficult proposition for the landless rural poor. Further, many of the potential beneficiaries of the law lived in places that were occupied by narcotics gangs who controlled production, and, in the increasingly decentralized neoliberal state, even controlled the municipal tax rates. Expropriations of properties subject to prosecution for involvement in the narcotics trade, while intended to expropriate the estates of drug lords, also threatened peasant property in cases where smallholders were caught cultivating coca. Above all, by focusing on voluntary transactions, the law left large, concentrated property holdings in the hands of the wealthy, and so did not address the issue of rural inequality. Market-led agrarian reform, once again, relegated the agrarian problem to the frontiers which were controlled by narcos, paramilitaries or guerrillas.

Consequences: Disciplinary Neoliberalism, Agrarian Counter-Reform and War

The social consequences of neoliberal reforms, including market-led agrarian reform, are discussed here in two separate (but related) phases. The first phase is from 1985 to 2002 under Presidents Betancur, Barco, Gaviria, Samper and Pastrana and discusses the effects of neoliberal restructuring, the new-constitutional reform and market-led agrarian reforms of 1994-1996. The second phase is from 2002 to 2018 under Uribe and Santos during the phase of neo-conservative agrarian counter-reform.

In the first neoliberal conjuncture, integration with the world market created new opportunities for capital accumulation along with threats to democracy and security. The US and Colombian counterinsurgency against communism was channelled into the war on drugs, directed at the guerrillas and their social base. The grievances, including the agrarian question, that led to the rise of the FARC were now a crime and security problem that would be addressed on the battlefield. The problem of agricultural productivity became a technical question that the World Bank could solve through the expansion of markets and the extension of credit. As the security crisis deepened, the fog of war obscured the territorial accumulation strategy by agents of neoliberal development.

The key political consequences of the second phase of disciplinary neoliberalism were the fragmentation of the traditional political parties and the rise of a neo-conservative alliance of landlords, financiers, army commanders, narcos, paramilitaries and foreign capitalists. The premise that united these various forces was the desire to expand capital accumulation and the need for a military solution to the Colombian conflict, which meant the annihilation of the guerrillas and their social base – campesinos and agricultural workers. The means to implement the neoliberal reforms – involving mass expropriations to clear territory, expand the primitive labour market and devalue wages - have involved mass displacement, murder and organized warfare. The beneficiaries of these policies were those in the financial and service sectors, the extractive industries and the military-industrial complex.

Production Relations: Concentration of Land by Dispossession

In the immediate aftermath of Law 160 of 1994, adjudications of land to family farmers dropped compared to the previous period. From 1995 to 1999, the National Agrarian Fund provided loans for access to 19,397 families totalling 286,939 ha (14.8 ha/family). This was a marked decrease from the 575,756 ha granted to 33,760 families in the 1988 to 1994 period (at

17.1 ha/family) (Balcazar et al., 2001, 16-17). According to Berry, “Law 160 of 1994 ... decreed that future allocations of public lands to private citizens should have an upper limit defined as a family agricultural unit (Unidad Agrícola Familiar – UAF) ... (which was) clothed in the thinking of public welfare and improved equality”(2017, 285). In reality, “the practice differed from the espoused plan, and large holders wound up with much of the land allocated” (ibid). Berry notes that there is a lack of data on the distribution of property between 1960 and 1988 (2002, 52). Nevertheless, estimates discussed by Berry suggest there was a concentration of property over the period that includes Law 160 of 1994. In one study, the Gini coefficient of property distribution increased from 0.84 to 0.88 between 1984 and 1996 (Gomez Jiménez, 2003, 897). In another, the Gini rose from 0.619 in 1988 to 0.644 in 1996 (Richani, 2013, 34).

The combined effects of neoliberal tariff reforms and pro-market land policies in the 1990s were: reduced production of annual crops (corn, barley, wheat and rice); increased production of permanent crops (coffee trees, palm trees, cacao plants, etc); expansion of surface area of land for cattle grazing, primarily on the large estates whose expansion has further pushed small holders to the agricultural frontier (Van Ausdal, 2008); fragmentation of smallholder property; and frontier colonization resulting in deforestation (Fajardo, 2002, 6; Garcia, 2002, 8; Guhl, 2012, 14). From 1984 to 1996, the agricultural area expanded from 35.4 million hectares to 50.7 million hectares (Fajardo, 2002, 6). Fajardo reports that while small farmers with access to less than 5 ha use 38.6% of the surface area to grow crops, on properties of more than 200 ha, only 2.5 % of the surface area is used for crops (ibid). 72.3% of land on larger estates is used for livestock (ibid, 7).

Garcia found that the average size of a coffee farm in Colombia in the mid 1990s was 6.4 ha with coffee accounting for 24% of the surface area (Garcia, 2002, 1). Garcia estimated the Gini coefficient for the distribution of land on Colombian coffee farms to be 0.722 in 1970 and 0.754 in 1993-1997 (Garcia, 2002, 8). He concludes that since the 1970s there has been “a reduction of the size of the smallest coffee units (minifundización) and a concentration of the land in the largest properties” (Garcia, 2002, 18). By the mid-1990s there were more coffee producing farms on a smaller total coffee-footprint than in the 1970s. Andres Guhl describes how the number of coffee farms grew from 301,708 in 1970 to 609,432 farms in the 1993 to 1997 period, but the area used to grow coffee declined, from 1,067,113 ha in 1970 to 1,003,940 ha in 1980-81, to only 869,158 ha in 1993 to 1997 (2012, 14). Coffee farmers with large estates

tended to specialize in coffee production while campesinos planted coffee alongside subsistence crops.

In the 1990s, the influx of foreign goods after the removal of tariffs on rice, sugar, barley, corn, sorghum, soy, wheat and milk, coupled with a relative drop in domestic prices compared to international prices led to a loss of purchasing power of Colombian consumers (Puyana, 2000, 215). From 1991 to 1997, “the rate of growth in agricultural production, cultivated area, crop yields, worker productivity, and income in almost every sector fell in Colombia”(ibid, 206). During the 1990s there was a rise in rural unemployment and farm workers displaced toward the cities were thereafter underemployed, leading to crises of malnutrition. “One of the explanations behind these rural labor-force dynamics is the development of large-scale, mechanized farming practices, as well as the conversion of productive farm land into extensive pasture for cattle”(ibid, 210). Agricultural producers were forced to become more competitive so they shifted into sectors that were less labour intensive or they acquired more land to expand production of ‘flex’ fuels – like palm oil.

This was not simply an economic process forged by market forces. It was a deliberate and violent attempt to impose conditions for capital accumulation through territorial conquest, displacement and the forced devaluation of labour. Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín points out that there was already a long history of interaction between wealthy landlords and paramilitary groups who, by the mid 1990s, had allied behind a strategy of suppression of peasant resistance and eviction of settlers (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a, 234). Armed groups favourable to capital have acquired territory to attract investment from multinational agribusiness firms to establish large banana, palm oil, corn and sorghum plantations in areas previously occupied by smallholders. The narcotics gangs, through legal purchases but also usurpation, may have acquired as much as 10 million ha of land by the 1990s (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a, 233). Richani figures that narcotraffickers bought or usurped more land in the 1980s and 1990s than INCORA had managed to acquire and redistribute during the 1960 to 1988 period (1997, 40). Still, World Bank economist Deininger, continued to argue that the problem of land concentration was simply a lack of stable property rights and that the development of land markets and the expansion of access to credit would address rural poverty and inequality (Deininger et al., 2003, 5). This perspective misses the fact that strengthening property rights in an environment in which

property is already highly concentrated simply reinforces the position of the strong (Ferreyra & Segura, 2000, 21).

Conflicts over land at the micro-level between cattlemen, agribusinesses, or druglords looking to concentrate land of smallholders, Pérez Martínez argues, were extended at the macro-level into conflicts over territory where armed groups competed for control over the producers within a given territory (2004, 65). Mass displacement of campesinos was a method designed to transfer property from the poor to the rich, but the infiltration of the state by paramilitaries put the legal status of property rights and the legitimacy of the state in question (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2014, 5). The methods of paramilitary violence included threats, intimidations, assassinations and massacres of whole villages who were suspected of collaborating with ‘the guerrillas.’ The rent-seeking behaviour of paramilitary groups (directed at peasants), their contribution to insecurity, and guerrilla threats to landlords created opportunities for paramilitaries to establish protection rackets and later private security companies (ibid, 18).

While mass displacement occurred in Colombia during *la Violencia*, it intensified in the neoliberal period. Mass displacement was part of the promotion of large-scale agro-industrial projects such as palm oil production in Uraba.

What started as an experiment intimately linked to banana production, proliferated in the 1990s, and extended to other crops. For example, it has been alleged that the expansion of oil palm in the last ten years has depended on the paramilitaries, who first evict the population and establish a vertical social order, and then ‘invite’ the agro-industrialists to settle. In some cases, this has taken place in territories that the 1991 Constitution reserved for protected communities, be it Native Colombians or Afro-Colombians (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010b, 229).

Gutiérrez Sanín is adamant that the displacement of campesinos by paramilitary groups to make the way for large-scale agro-industrial plantations is a form of neoliberal enclosure - a manifestation of a Polanyian double movement (ibid, 230; Polanyi, 2001 [1944]). He makes clear that the goal of dispossession is to impose capitalist agricultural monopolies. Gutiérrez describes ‘armed neoliberalism’ with forced displacement, enclosure of peasant lands in large commercial farms, and exploitation of displaced workers in foreign enclaves as combined methods to expand capital accumulation (ibid, 231).

From 1996 to 1998, Grajales reports how 17,000 people were displaced from the Lower Atrato River Valley in northwest Colombia by the Colombian military and the AUC during a counterinsurgency operation. By 2005, 12 different firms in the region occupied 26,000 ha of land and had planted more than 5,000 ha of palm trees used to extract palm oil, a valuable

biofuel (Grajales, 2013, 212). Grajales argues that this was not an isolated incident but rather was indicative of the logic of accumulation based on large-scale capitalist development of palm oil plantations and was supported by the state (Ibid, 214).

In contrast to the waves of forced mass displacement during *La Violencia*, the neoliberal wave of displacement has caught the attention of both national and international organizations for its magnitude, the extent of impoverishment among the rural population, the loss of productivity and land, and the crisis of internally displaced persons (Fajardo, 2002, 10). None of this is new to Colombia, but Fajardo points out the difference with the past is that the Colombian army has become stronger with the support of the United States. Insofar as the Colombian army has US military support in defence of North American interests, Fajardo argues, it is increasingly “an army of occupation in its own country” (ibid, 12).

The market-led agrarian reform in the neoliberal era has extended the class conflict between peasants and landlords into the world market. “Such a market, and its ‘globalization’ model, seeks to ‘clean’ territories of ‘inefficient’ people” (Mondragón, 2006, 165). Indeed, violence accelerates the separation of agrarian workers from the means of production. In this light, market-led agrarian reform “is geared not to addressing the causes of the war, but to legitimating its outcome. The Colombian case offers an extreme example of the use of contemporary agrarian reform as a means of entrenching, rather than addressing, inequality” (ibid). In the state of war, pro-market reform legitimates enterprise agrarian capitalism and risks the lives of campesinos who are portrayed as subversive.

Hoarding land for speculative purposes, land grabs by illegal armed groups, the tendency of landlords to turn to cattle production, and the expansion of flex crop production on a massive scale on former peasant lands together created a shortage of land for the rural poor, loss of agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and depressed the purchasing power of the average Colombian in the 1990s (Richani, 2013, 33). The massive shift in land ownership and rural displacement must be kept in mind in order to understand the political, military and macro-economic developments that resulted from the neoliberal era in Colombia, including the war on drugs (Rettberg, 2005; Peceny & Durnan, 2006; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2003).

International Relations, the Colombian State and War

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Colombian governments reformed the constitution and the economy to support financial capital accumulation in Colombia. The US State and foreign

investors remained wary of investing in Colombia for two reasons: 1) the prevalence of ‘narco-dollars’ and illicit financial transactions and 2) the status of internal war involving guerrillas, paramilitaries and the state security forces. Dealing with the first problem would require US police, military and financial support. Dealing with the second problem was more complicated. On the one hand, a negotiated peace and subsequent stability could promote investment, but it would likely involve major concessions to the combatants. Further, the underlying issues that led to the war had yet to be properly addressed and the state and landlord class were unwilling to engage in redistributive land reforms (Richani, 1997, 65). On the other hand, the Colombian state could try to win the war and impose the neoliberal order upon the countryside (Guerrero & Mond, 2001, 25). I argue that Colombian elites were unwilling to address the root cause of the conflict - inequality - because it was the basis of their accumulation strategy. Thus, rather than redistribution of land, the only solution they considered was to deepen ties with the US and push for military victory over the guerrillas.

Decertification and Growth of the Guerrillas and Paramilitaries

Shortly after Samper defeated the Conservative Andres Pastrana in the 1994 presidential elections, US Drug Enforcement Agent Joe Toft released a set of recordings to the press (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 105). The recordings caught Cali cartel bosses - Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela – describing their donations of millions of dollars to the Samper campaign. They outlined their plans to finance electoral campaigns in exchange for impunity and an end to extraditions (ibid). The narco-tapes created a scandal that put international and domestic pressure on Samper to crack down on the Cali cartel. By 1997 a dozen congressmen, the attorney general and defence minister were jailed and Samper faced impeachment. Despite the depth of the scandal, Rettberg argues that Samper was able to stay in office because he had the support of large business conglomerates who wielded unprecedented economic power in Colombia by the mid-1990s (Rettberg, 2005, 33).¹⁴ These *grupos* were the main beneficiaries of the privatization

¹⁴ Grupos are companies united by inter-connected boards, subsidiaries, cross-financing, and family ownership ties (2005, 31). These were distinct from the more traditional industry lobby groups and chambers of commerce including SAC and FEDECAFÉ. By the mid-1990s there were several of these large ‘grupos’ including the Grupo Empresarial Bavaria, Organizacion Ardila Lulle, Organizacion Sarmiento Angulo, and Sindicato Antioqueno (Rettberg, 2005, 38). Together, these groups accounted for about 25% of the holdings of the largest 100 public and private firms in Colombia and about six of the ten largest firms from 1995 to 2005 (ibid). Combined sales in 1998 were worth about 12.5% of Colombia’s GDP (ibid).

process and took advantage of the state's provision of contracts for services, licenses and asset sales (ibid, 40). While Samper managed to stay in office, he faced the wrath of the Americans.

In the months following the release of the narcocassettes, the U.S. government put enormous pressure on Samper to place the Cali cartel leaders behind bars, and also to carry out an aerial fumigation campaign in Southern Colombia. Much of this pressure emanated from the U.S. Congress, as the new Republican majority ... decided to make an issue of President Bill Clinton's weakness in fighting the drug war (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 105).

In response, Clinton's administration decertified Colombia. US military aid to Colombia dropped from hundreds of millions to only about \$30 million USD per year from 1994 to 1997 and did not reach \$100 million USD again until 1998 (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 110). Despite decertification, "the US continued to conduct anti-drug operations together with the Colombian security forces, particularly the Colombian national police" (Friesendorf, 2005, 51). Further, the US demanded reforms to the penal code and a crackdown on money laundering (Gutiérrez, 2003, 141). Article 35 of the Constitution had prohibited extradition of Colombian citizens but after intense pressure from the US, the clause was repealed by Samper's administration (ibid). These constitutional changes took sovereignty over criminal justice away from the Colombian state and authorized the US to prosecute Colombian drug traffickers. The repercussions of the drop in US military aid to Colombia during the 1994 to 1998 period include growth of the guerrillas and a rise in paramilitarism.

To further demonstrate his resolve to cooperate with the US and clear his reputation, Samper went after the Cali cartel, sending 3,000 soldiers on raids of mansions belonging to the cartel leaders and jailing the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 106). The Cali cartel was replaced by perhaps one hundred smaller drug traffickers – the mid-level accountants, money launders and managers who learned from the cartel leaders' mistakes. The FARC took on a greater role as a territorial force in the drugs producing zones, receiving protection payments from the small drug traffickers and peasant coca growers. The growth in coca cultivation in Colombia in the mid-1990s was a response both to US interdiction efforts in Peru and Bolivia and the initiatives of the new drug gangs and the FARC to find cheaper and more accessible sources of coca from Colombian growers (ibid, 107).

With the Cali cartel downsized, the guerrillas now had more freedom to operate in southern Colombia. From 1991 to 1996 there was growth in all three of the guerrillas armies – the FARC, the ELN and the remaining EPL members who did not demobilize, from about 7,600 fighters to 11,215 guerrillas (Richani, 1997, 41-42). Their economic activities were coordinated

through the *Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera* (CNG). The CNG operated Guerrilla businesses, financed combat units, and provided funding for services to areas under guerrilla control. Richani estimates its 1994 revenue at \$600 million USD which exceeded revenue in the state the oil sector (Ecopetrol which earned \$309 million USD in 1994) (Richani, 1997, 46). By filling the vacuums left by the fall of the Medellin Cartel in the North and the Cali Cartel in the south between 1994 and 1996 and with US support momentarily suspended, the FARC were able to expand their territorial power (Pizano, 2001; Friesendorf, 2005; Peceny & Durnan, 2006). While the Colombian army had been engaged in a low-intensity counterinsurgency war designed to ‘maintain public order’ up to the early 1990s, the FARC shifted its tactics from 1996 to 1998 into a full-scale military assault on Colombian Army positions. By 1998 the FARC threatened to surround Bogotá and appeared capable of toppling the state.

Meanwhile, in 1994 at the request of the Federation of Cattle Ranchers (FEDEGAN), private security firms operating in rural areas were authorized to use assault weapons and could obtain training by military officers. In effect, private rural security firms— known as ‘Convivir’ or ‘live together’ were legalized (Grajales, 2011, 778). Alliances between paramilitary groups in various Departments including Sucre, Cordoba, and the Antioquian region of Uraba resulted in the formation of the Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Cordoba and Uraba (ACCU) which became the AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*) in 1997. Although these groups were later outlawed by the Colombian Supreme Court, they continued to operate as private armies and executed land grabbing for the establishment of large-scale palm oil plantations (Grajales, 2011, 779-783).

The emergence of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) was another product of the collapse of the large drug cartels and the shift toward smaller, less organized drug producers and traffickers (Saab & Taylor, 2009, 461). Rather than attacking rebel combat units, the AUC focused on the guerrillas’ administrators, supply lines, and fighters on leave from the front for rest in nearby towns (Spencer, 2001, 6). Some success saw the anti-guerrilla forces grow and landlords began to pay them for protection rather than paying off the guerrillas (ibid). The AUC therefore united three separate groups: the armed wing of the defunct cartels, small and medium-sized drug lords, and regional landlords (Saab & Taylor, 2009, 461). By 2001, the AUC had 8,000 to 10,000 combatants in about 40% of Colombian municipalities (ibid, 461). Saab & Taylor point out that up to 80% of the civilian casualties in the Colombian conflict came at the

hands of the AUC and that the AUC killed far more civilians than guerrillas (ibid). The goal of the AUC, they point out, was to remove obstacles to large-scale agribusiness development by displacing campesinos. The cooperation of paramilitary agents with state security forces and the use of violence to acquire lands makes paramilitarism a key component of Colombian capital accumulation (Grajales, 2011, 771).

Pastrana's Dilemma: Negotiate, Seek US Assistance to Fight, or Both

Andres Pastrana Arango, President from 1998 to 2002 chose to cooperate with the US on drug control measures and sought a peace deal with the guerrillas. Pastrana, a Harvard graduate and former journalist, was a Conservative (and the son of former president Misael Pastrana 1970-74). As President-Elect in 1998, Pastrana met with the FARC leaders and agreed to set up a demilitarized zone as a concession to start the peace negotiations. This “distention zone” is often described as an area the size of Switzerland where military activity was prohibited but was conveniently located in the centre of the country, allowing the FARC to move freely within striking distance of the capital, leading critics to denounce the concession of the distention zone as Pastrana's key strategic failure (Marks, 2003, 81-83; Nagle, 2002, 11; Chernick, 2007, 66).

The agenda for negotiations in May 1999 included terms for a political solution to the conflict, protection of human rights by the state, integral agrarian reform policies, natural resource conservation, economic and social policy reforms, justice reforms, and political reforms (Chernick, 2007, 65). The talks immediately stalled on economic and social structure and the peace process broke down when both sides accused the other of a lack of political will to end the war (ibid, 66). Using the distention zone as cover, the FARC mobilized a massive offensive in 1999 that brought its forces to the outskirts of Bogotá only to be pushed back in fierce fighting with the Colombian Army (Nagle, 2002, 11; Marks, 2003, 83). Major confrontations ensued in 1999 and 2000 (Marks, 2003, 84-88).

Meanwhile, Pastrana argued in favour of a new ‘Marshall Plan’ for Colombia that would lift it out of civil war, which Gutiérrez argues is the origin of Plan Colombia. Pastrana, he writes, “tried to shift attention from trafficking to the political war, ‘de-narcotizing’ Colombia-U.S. relations and internationalizing peace-making all at the same time”(Gutiérrez, 2003, 142). According to Eulalia Sanín, the initial formulations of Plan Colombia in 1999 contained no explicit reference to military aid but instead focused on funding for economic and social reforms. Further, violence and not narcotics was identified as the source of Colombia's problems (and not

rural social structure) (2001, 424). By the time General Barry R. McCaffrey, Director of US Office of National Drug Control Policy presented Plan Colombia to the House of Representatives on February 15th, 2000, it had become a plan for interlocking strategies to promote peace, strengthen democracy, fight drug trafficking, improve human rights, and restore the economy (US Department of State, 2000).

With Samper out and Pastrana in, the US was willing to cooperate with Colombia to address the drug trade, which remained at the top of US concerns. Colombia's drug trade was roughly equivalent to 3% of GDP and 25% of exports by the late 1990s (Steiner, 1998, 1013). Coca production, smuggling and the fact that Colombia was the source of most of the heroine and cocaine consumed in the US put Colombia high on Washington's agenda. "In addition, the US interest in exploiting Colombia's natural resources, and particularly its oil wealth, coupled with the threat posed by ever-stronger guerrilla forces, led to an increase in US aid to the Colombian government, and eventually to Plan Colombia" (Friesendorf, 2005, 54).

Plan Colombia was expected to cost \$7.5 billion USD with Colombia pledging \$4 billion and the remainder in aide and loans from the international community. President Clinton pledged \$1.3 billion (Pizano, 2001, 13). Officially, Plan Colombia promoted peace between the Colombian state, FARC and ELN and prohibited assistance to Colombian army units accused of gross human rights abuses (US Department of State, 2000). What the State Department's official description does not say is that Plan Colombia and the war on drugs provided cover for Colombian and US cooperation on counterinsurgency operations. The dirty work was delegated to the paramilitaries. "The military units that have been working with the AUC to defeat the FARC are increasingly trained and funded by the United States. Thus the U.S. decision to focus its antidrug efforts on funding a counterinsurgency campaign to defeat the FARC has helped generate a powerful new player in the cocaine industry [the AUC]" (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 112). The FARC accused Pastrana's government of complicity and denounced the uptick in paramilitary attacks against journalists, NGOs, and labour activists, which it associated with US-sponsored Plan Colombia (Chernick, 2007, 66).

For the pro-US Pastrana, the dual strategy of obtaining US support for the war on drugs while pursuing a peace deal with the guerrillas came at a time when the guerrillas represented a real and present military threat to the state. During almost three years of peace negotiations, Pastrana was increasingly viewed as soft while the FARC refused concessions, even taking

advantage of the demilitarized zone to launch attacks (Sanín, 2001, 417). There was thus a deadlock that Sanín argues the Pastrana government tried to break by mobilizing US support through Plan Colombia (*ibid*).

Pastrana and FARC commander Manuel Marulanda (Tirofijo) met in February 2001 to establish timelines for peace negotiations and agreed to move toward the manual eradication of coca leaves (rather than aerial fumigation), combat paramilitarism, and have humanitarian exchanges of sick and wounded POWs (Hoskin & Murillo, 2001, 34). Despite these formal commitments, no cease-fire was negotiated and the fighting continued. By 2001 the FARC had at least 16,500 combatants and was allied with another 8,000 to 10,000 local militias. The FARC fighters were deployed in 66 fronts organized into 7 large blocs, still led by Tirofijo – Manuel Marulanda (Marks, 2003, 79). Petras remarked that “with its powerful peasant army and experienced military commanders, [FARC] represents the most formidable challenge to Washington’s neoliberal agenda in Latin America” (Petras, 2000, 135). Despite the credible threat, the FARC was in a difficult position: their growing military power was not accompanied by broad popular support outside frontier areas and their challenge to the Colombian state was less viable with the influx of US materiel support through Plan Colombia (Serres, 2000, 192; Guerrero Baron & Mond, 2001, 20).

Throughout Pastrana’s term in office and during his attempts to negotiate peace, the country was faced with financial turbulence (Kamas, 2001, 134; Clavijo, 2004, 3). A financial crisis loomed in Colombia due to effects from the Southeast Asian crises of 1997-98 which spread to Russia (Clavijo, 2004, 4). Kamas writes: “In 1999, the Colombian economy suffered the worst economic conditions since the 1930s, with GDP declining more than seven per cent between the middle of 1998 and 1999”(Kamas, 2001, 131). After 2000, monetary and exchange rate policies targeted inflation which stabilized around 7% from 2000 to 2004 although unemployment was high and GDP growth was slow (Clavijo, 2004, 3). Colombia also felt effects of the recession of 2001 and 2002 from the September 11 terrorist attacks and the implosion of the Argentine currency regime (*ibid*, 4).

Widespread unemployment - 18.1% in the main cities (Clavijo, 2004, 5), a growing crisis of internally displaced persons (Guerrero & Mond, 2001, 25), internal civil war, violence against the population and the failure of the peace process (Serres, 200, 192; Sanín, 2001, 417) were now coupled with financial crisis and a growing international security crisis (Guerrero & Mond, 2001,

25; Nagle, 2002, 12). The crisis moment was a clear impasse in the Colombian neoliberal revolution. Richani described the impasse this way:

Those in the modern urban sectors fear that a negotiated settlement with the [Guerrillas] could derail the neoliberal program; those in the old, rural, landholding sectors fear that a negotiated settlement ... would mean admitting social and land reform. ... The position of the dominant economic groups therefore coincides with that of the military, the drug traffickers, and the 'hawks' within both the (ruling) Liberal party and the Conservative party (Richani, 1997, 65).

In this moment of crisis and impasse, yet another reactionary Caesarist figure emerged. The Antioqueño, Álvaro Uribe Vélez won the 2001-02 Presidential elections with 53% of the vote on a platform of law and order and the promise to wage a definitive anti-guerrilla war (Nagle, 2002, 12). The peace process was derailed by the intransigence of the traditional elites who refused to make meaningful concessions to the guerrillas. With the pathway to a negotiated peace discredited and the support of the US in place, the focus shifted from negotiations to a military 'solution' to the Colombian conflict.

The Neo-Conservative Bloc and the War on the FARC

Another consequence of neoliberal reforms has been the fragmentation of the traditional party system and the emergence of a neoconservative political coalition. Álvaro Uribe's coalition of conservative landlords, paramilitaries, bankers, and the executive class of the wealthiest conglomerates (*grupos*) brought together the most powerful Colombians from the regions and from the capital. They were joined by those in the middle classes who blame the guerrillas for Colombia's security problems and seek a military solution to the conflict.

Uribe's *Plan Patrióta* was a hardline approach to counterinsurgency that used the euphemism 'Democratic Security' to describe its fifth column tactics. Uribe had ties to AUC leaders going back to his days as a politician in Medellín (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 112). During Uribe's first year in office there were more than 8,000 political murders in Colombia with an estimated 80% involving paramilitary groups (Stokes, 2004, 240). US ambassador William Wood heavily criticized the Colombian government's ties to the AUC at a time when the US had labeled it a terrorist organization and was demanding the extradition of leaders Carlos Castaño and Salvatore Mancuso on drug trafficking charges. Uribe managed to walk the line between the paramilitaries and the US by consistently characterizing the guerrillas as drug traffickers and terrorists which, in the post-September 11 War on Terror, was adequate justification for US-support. George W. Bush's administration continued to send military aid through Plan Colombia

in support of Uribe's 'Democratic Security' program (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 112). As Gutiérrez puts it, "Álvaro Uribe Vélez is a partisan of the internationalization of war"(Gutiérrez, 2003, 142). The shift from the war on drugs to the war on terror had taken effect in the US, and the shift from counter-narcotics to counterinsurgency was complete. After meetings between President Bush and then President-elect Uribe in Washington in 2002, Congress approved the use of Plan Colombia for counter-insurgency (Nagle, 2002, 8).

Under Uribe, with the threat of the guerrilla insurgency spilling into neighbouring countries, the United States committed further resources to Colombia. Rochlin writes: "Between 2000 and 2009, the armed forces doubled from about 130,000 to 260,000, and the national police force was expanded to 130,000"(Rochlin, 2012, 20). In 2005, the US Congress voted to increase the Colombia cap on personnel from 500 soldiers and 300 contractors to 800 military personnel and 600 civilian contractors (Teicher, 2005, 20). Uribe imposed a 1.2% war tax on 400,000 upper income individuals and businesses to support the military effort, removed restrictions on aerial fumigation, created a network of 100,000 civilian informers, and armed 20,000 "campesino militias" against guerrillas in remote areas. He also dedicated a special army unit (Colombian Army 5th Mobile and 18th Infantry Brigades) to defend the Caño Limon-Covenas pipeline and launched a military surge against the FARC into southern Colombia (ibid, 7-9). The Colombian state under Uribe continued the passive revolutionary methods of the dirty war to "drain the fishbowl" and undermine the guerrillas by attacking the peasantry. With the war on terror and the FARC labelled narco-terrorists, Colombian counterinsurgency now had US support (Stokes, 2004, 245).

Human rights activists, opposition politicians, judges, lawyers, community leaders, journalists, trade union leaders, religious leaders and activists in social movements were all targeted for surveillance by agents of DAS – Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad – at the behest of the President's office (Haugaard, Nicholls, Poe & Sánchez-Garzoli, 2010, 1). They were threatened, followed and in some cases were killed or disappeared. There were also cases of illegal surveillance of phones and emails of political opposition by DAS officials reporting to the highest political offices in the country (ibid, 7). The USA provided equipment and technical support for DAS in some of these operations (ibid, 9).

In part due to international pressure, Uribe developed a program to allow the AUC to demobilize and serve prison sentences in Colombia (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 112). Through the

‘Justice and Peace’ Program, paramilitary soldiers were demobilized with only light punishment for gross human rights abuses and were rewarded with assistance with reintegration. Victims of dispossession went uncompensated. Considering the links between paramilitaries, landlords and drug-traffickers, demobilization provided the means to legitimate the fortunes of a new class of landowners, merchants and mercenaries who became wealthy through the use of violence in the large underground economy (Dufort, 2008, 123).

Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín writes of the logic of violence waged by drugs gangs and paramilitaries against the Colombian population: [the violence] “is associated with a complete evasion of responsibility by the victimizer ‘They were killed by the war,’ declares the paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño, referring to peasants who were massacred on his own orders”(Gutiérrez Sanín, 2001, 58). Chernick notes that Castaño disappeared mysteriously in 2004, possibly murdered by his comrades for exposing them to jail time during the demobilization process, or possibly “killed by the war” (Chernick, 2007, 81).

The distinction between the previous phases of counterinsurgency from the 1960s to the mid-1980s is the extent of US involvement in the neoliberal conjuncture. “While the US has been ‘promoting polyarchy’ in Latin America generally, relying more on consent than coercion to maintain its domination, in Colombia it steadfastly supports a state that primarily relies on state terror to crush dissent and popular pressures for reform”(Stokes, 2004, 240). Disciplinary neoliberalism through counterinsurgency is the means to destroy opposition to capitalist expansion and is the latest version of passive revolution. During *La Violencia*, dispossession benefitted regional Colombian landlords and aggressive peasants. In the phase of disciplinary neoliberalism, violent seizures of land have served transnational capital accumulation. “Hundreds of thousands of hectares of land violently grabbed from peasants remain in the hands of paramilitary front men or associates. These spurious properties have been legalized and partly integrated into the global economy via agribusiness and the land market”(Grajales, 2011, 772). This violence was met with organized resistance.

Considering the historic failure of land reform and its ongoing consequences – violent accumulation of land, mass displacement, peasant armed resistance, and internationalized counterinsurgency - the motives and longevity of the FARC have to be reconsidered. The FARC, rather than a drugs gang, a mafia, or neo-feudal lords of an economic war system, are a historic manifestation of organized peasant resistance to landlord-led capitalist modernization. The

“foundational and main ideology of the FARC” is the articulation of grievances around access to land and the need for peasant self-defence (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2004, 275). While the FARC formed in the 1960s, these grievances emerged among peasants in the 1920s and have yet to be adequately addressed by the state. When opportunities for negotiation with the state emerged, the FARC consistently demanded land reform (Bejerano, 2003, 223). Even in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the FARC denounced corruption, capitalism and US imperialism (Holmes, Gutiérrez & Curtin, 2007, 250), it continued to demand peasant inclusion in the democratic institutions of the state and agrarian reform (Chernick, 2007, 61). The broader anti-imperialist position reflected the FARC’s radicalization which must be viewed as a response to the fate of the *Unión Patriótica*, exclusion from the Constituent Assembly, the failure of peace talks with Betancur and Samper, and the intensification of state-sponsored paramilitary violence against labour and rural social movements under Uribe.

The violent means the FARC used to achieve its political goals, however, alienated it from the broader society. While the FARC are a product of peasant grievances, they did not manage to maintain a mass base, even amongst peasants. “[T]he tension between the economic and political dimension of the organization has put an ocean of blood between the guerrillas and the peasants. FARC is a peasant army that lacks a solid peasant constituency; indeed, it often shoots, kills, and bombs country people”(Gutiérrez Sanín, 2004, 280). The FARC, isolated from the masses in the early 2000s, sustained itself with new waves of young and desperate recruits in dangerous frontier zones but remained unpopular with the urban working classes.

Whether one chooses to view the FARC as the vanguard of peasant resistance and a viable threat to the Washington Consensus or as an archaic and violent relic of the past that was increasingly unable to sustain organic links with its rural constituency, I argue that it was the transnationalization of war that broke the stalemate between the FARC and the state. During the second Uribe administration, the counterinsurgency strategy of the Colombian army and US support diminished the size and power of the FARC as a military force (Saab & Taylor, 2009, 456). From 2006 to 2008 the FARC lost as many as 17,274 members including 5,316 through demobilization and the rest through capture and casualties suggesting a large degree of turnover in the organization (ibid, 460). By March 2008 the FARC’s fighting force was down to an estimated 8,000 troops of peasant origin from colonization zones (ibid, 459). Three of the seven-

member Secretariat died or were killed in 2008 including Manuel Marulanda, Raul Reyes, and Ivan Rios, leaving Alfonso Cano in command only to be killed in action in 2011.

The Second Wave of Neoliberalism in the Neo-Conservative Bloc

At the same time that Uribe ramped up the war effort, he also imposed a second wave of neoliberal reforms. By the mid-2000s, the Colombian government had restructured, merged or privatized 150 public entities in the energy, communications, and social sectors (International Monetary Fund, 2006, 3). One of the means it has reduced the state's burden in the economy has been through the use of public-private partnerships (ibid). The consequences of the neoliberal reforms, Gutiérrez Sanín argues, include the weakening of state capacity for economic planning with a shift in power to transnational actors through free trade agreements with the US (2010b, 218). The increase of foreign direct investment has contributed to a growth in the efficiency and competitiveness of Colombian banks, even with competition from the entry of foreign private banks (Barajas, Steiner and Salazar, 2000, 163). Banks have profited from financing oil, gas, mining, coal and hydroelectric energy infrastructure projects (Gordon & Webber, 2008, 77). In the contested countryside, the provision of security for these projects has likewise been big business for private security contractors including US firms, particularly after the Iraq war (Stokes, 2004, 249-50).

The neo-conservative regime in Colombia ushered in a new wave of neoliberal reforms and trade agreements that have insulated capital accumulation from democratic control. Colombia and the United States signed the Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement on November 22, 2006 despite strong opposition from civil society, organized labour and scholars (Ahumada, 2007, 223). The agreement allows US-firms to exploit cheap labour in the South to avoid the tendency of the rate of profit to fall in the core. Colombia facilitated this process through the 'flexibilization' of labour by passing anti-collective bargaining laws, creating tax havens, and allowing mergers/acquisitions (ibid, 226).

In the political sphere, neoliberalism undermined the bi-partisan historic bloc dominated by Liberals and Conservatives that was exemplified by the National Front. Instead, there has been a shift toward a regionalization of politics under Uribe with a focus on private sector representation (Gutiérrez Sanín 2010b, 219). The chosen governance strategy of the neo-conservative alliance in Colombia since 2002 has been one of domination of subordinates and repression of dissent, particularly the campesino social movement. With the formal

decentralization of political and economic power through constitutional reforms, various groups have consolidated local power in the various regions of the country (Restrepo, 2002, 533-534). Luis van Isschot writes, “new political coalitions have emerged to displace the longstanding Liberal and Conservative parties’ stranglehold on politics, both locally and nationally. These ‘economies of violence’ have thus brought the country’s rural war zones under the control of new elites linked to national political power brokers and transnational capital” (2018, 124).

Álvaro Uribe united landlords, paramilitaries, bankers, druglords, multinational corporations and factions of the national bourgeoisie in a political coalition that uses counterinsurgency to liquidate opposition to the second wave of neoliberalism (Stokes, 2004, 247). As Uribe continued to benefit from Plan Colombia for his ‘Democratic Security’ regime, human rights observers in the US decried the instrumental use of murder and displacement to accumulate land and suppress dissent (Isaacson, 2010, 3-4). Transnational capital accumulation and the deteriorating security situation have simultaneously integrated Colombia with the world market and delegitimized the state as control over passive neoliberal revolution shifted from the neo-liberals to the neo-conservatives.

Agrarian Counter-Reform in the Colombian Neo-Conservative Passive Revolution

Neoliberalism allowed the Colombian landlords, business elites and politicians to deflect demands for agrarian reforms from the working poor to the international level. Through Plan Colombia, US military power was channelled to consolidate control over the countryside, without having to make any “meaningful economic or political reforms” and without a negotiated settlement with the guerrillas (Richani, 2005,133). Agrarian counter reform became the focus of the passive revolution as power shifted from the historic bipartisan elite to the neo-conservative coalition of regional landlords, narcos, businessmen and multinational corporations. As Petras and Veltmeyer put it,

it is time, therefore, to remind ourselves of two things: not just that the role of the capitalist state is essentially a coercive one (=the enforcement of *class* rule), but also that in Latin America – historically and currently – the target of this particular kind of non-hegemonic instrumentality has been and remains peasants and workers (2005 [2002], 46).

Proponents of neoliberalism tout the economic success of Colombia as measured by foreign direct investment and GDP growth. However, behind the numbers are devastating acts of violence, loss of life and property. Macroeconomic indicators show an overall picture of growth over the two neoliberal waves interrupted by the crisis in 1999. GDP peaked at just under \$200

billion USD in 1998 prior to the crisis of 1999 when there was a short-lived recession. From 2000 to 2007 GDP growth averaged 4.5% per year. Things slowed down in 2008 and 2009 with the global financial crisis – Colombia’s GDP growth rate was 3.54% and 1.65% respectively - but the economy grew again from 2010 to 2014 at an average annual rate of 4.77% (World Bank, 2018). Growth in the 2010 to 2014 cycle was tied to the expansion of the oil industry (US Energy Information Administration, 2016; 2018).

During the first wave of neoliberal reforms under Barco, Gaviria and Samper, there was an increase in FDI, but beyond the petroleum sector, these figures were mostly foreign purchases of privatized state enterprises. During the second wave of neoliberalization after 2002, net inflows of FDI increased dramatically (World Bank, 2018). Foreigners invested in Colombian agro-industrial production and more than before, the energy and banking sectors (Ahumada, 2007, 232).

Proponents of Colombian neoliberalism could point to macro-economic growth and increased foreign investment as indicators of the success of the neoliberal social structure of accumulation. However, neoliberals thrust Colombia into international commodities markets where it became increasingly dependent on imports, foreign loans and vulnerable to commodity price shocks. Neoliberalism has had a net negative effect on Colombian agriculture. Agricultural production accounted for 25% of GDP in 1965, 15.76% in 1997, but fell to 6% of GDP in 2012 (Procuraduria General de la Nacion, 2015, 16). The peak of Colombian cereal production was 1990 when 1,742,800 ha of land were under cereal production (World Bank, 2018). By the time of the economic crisis in 1999, only 945,227 ha were under cereal production. While there were some increases in cereal production to 1,241,344 ha in 2004 (based on maize and sorghum), the number of hectares dedicated to cereals remained below 1.2 million ha which is lower than average cereal production levels in the 1970s and 1980s (World Bank, 2018). According to Colombia’s Auditor General, “neoliberal restructuring in 1992 hurt Colombian production of banana, soy, barley and cotton. Only African palm, corn and sorghum showed moderate growth in productivity”(Procuraduria de la Nacion, 2015, 16). Through the 2000s, as new free trade agreements were being signed, displacement for large-scale palm oil production continued (Leiteritz, Nasi, Rettberg, 2009; Goebertus, 2008; Ocampo Valencia, 2009).

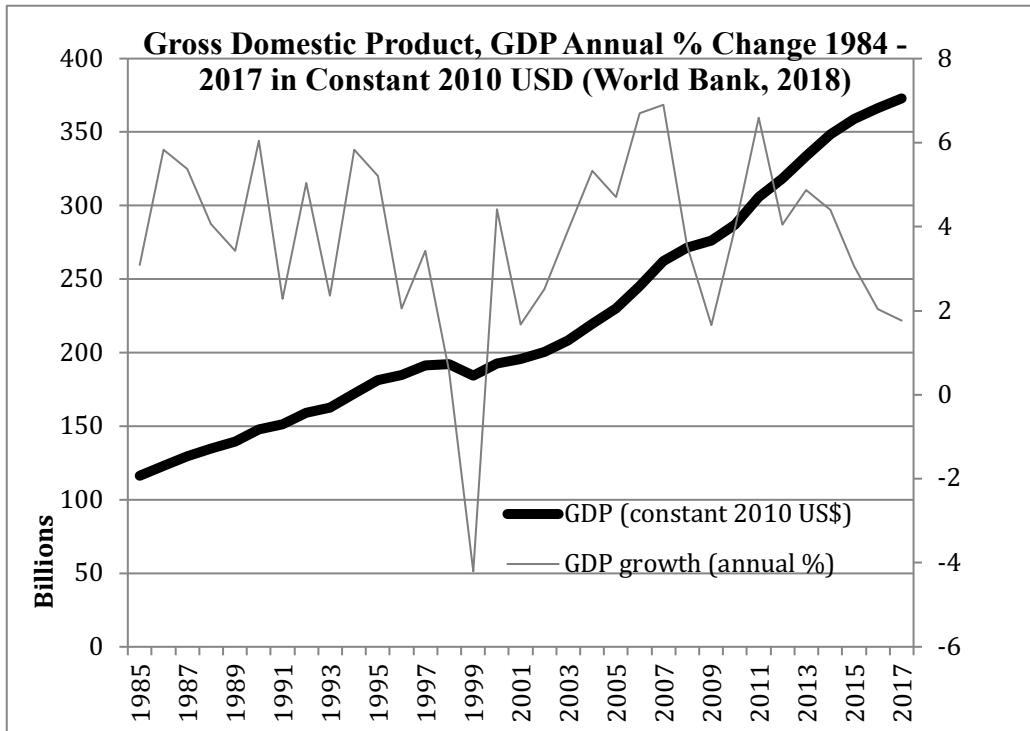


Figure 3: Gross Domestic Product, GDP Annual % Change 1984-2017 in Constant USD

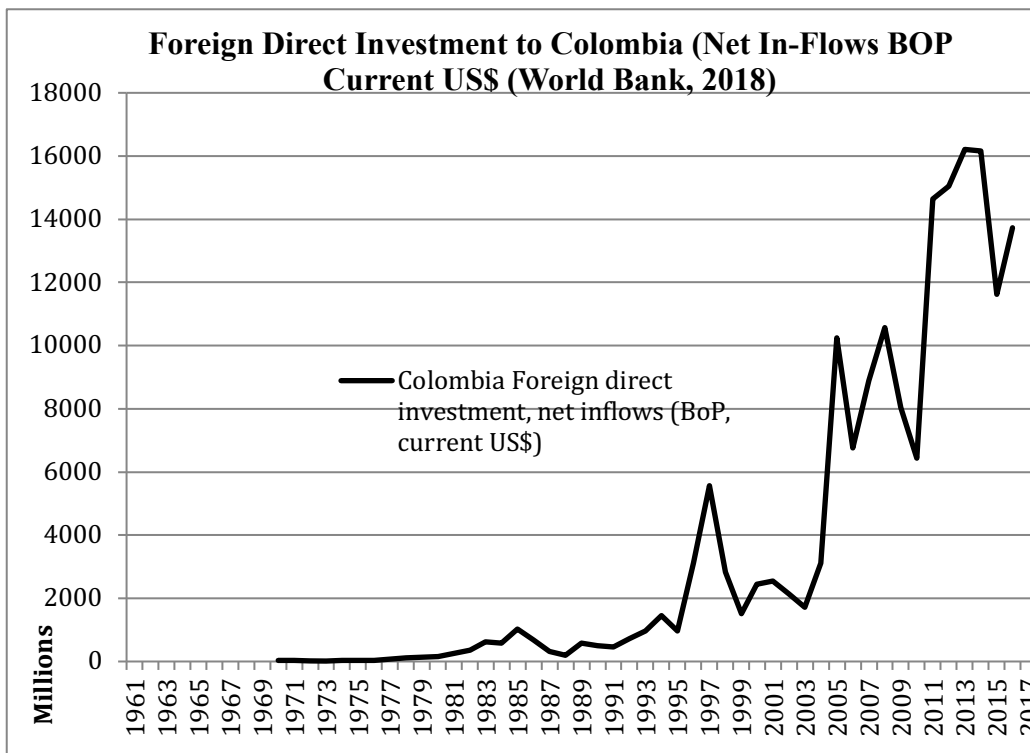


Figure 4: Foreign Direct Investment to Colombia Net In-Flows BOP Current USD 1961-2017

Colombia’s livestock production has been increasing since the 1960s (World Bank, 2018). This points to a longer-term trend of rural investment in cattle, poultry and pork and away from cereal crop production that predates the interest of ‘narcos’ in cattle ranching. While there was growth in both agriculture and stock raising up to 1990, after that, land formerly used for cereal production was converted to grazing lands (Etter et al., 2006, 378). Etter et al found that the beef cattle industry uses the largest spatial footprint of any rural land use in Colombia. It has driven deforestation of biologically diverse ecosystems, replacing them with introduced grasslands with potential for long-term ecological impacts (ibid).

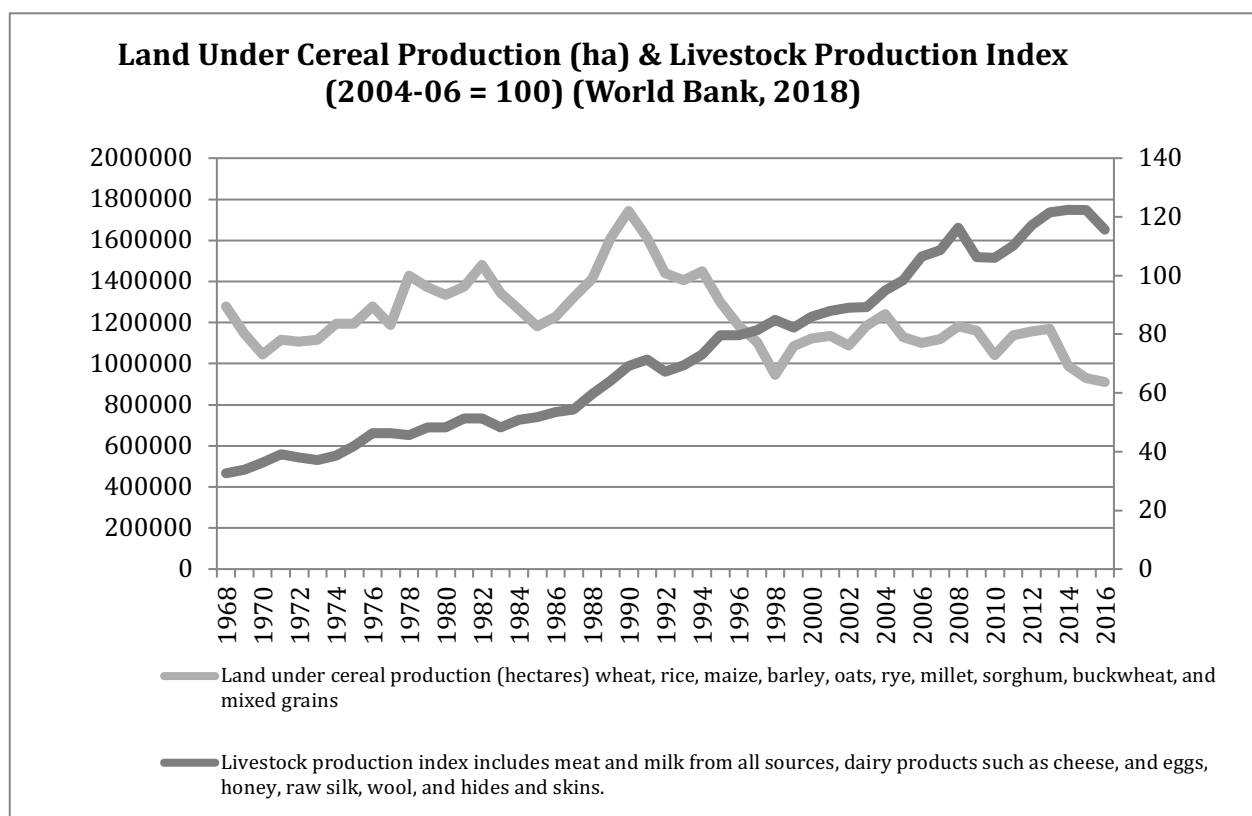


Figure 5: Land Under Cereal Production (ha) & Livestock Production Index

The 2016 National Agrarian Census provides a snapshot of the overall distribution of Colombian territory by type of land use. Of the 111,452,998 ha of national territory, 63,214,574 or 56.7% is natural forest. 43,024,740 ha are designated as agricultural use (cultivation and stock-raising), accounting for 38.6% of the national territory (DANE 2016, 49). The vast majority of land used for agricultural purposes is used for stock raising - 34,400,000 ha (which is 80% of agricultural land) (ibid, 51). In total, circa 2013, there were 8,577,000 ha of cultivated

lands – that is, lands planted with some agricultural product. Out of these 8,577,000 ha of cultivated lands, 35.1% were used for agro-industrial production of coffee, African palm, sugar cane, 22.3% were used for the production of tubers and plantains (including bananas), 16% of the cultivated lands were planted with cereal crops. 14.6% featured fruits (DANE 2016, 236). An additional 481,684 ha (16% of the 3,010,527 ha for agro-industry) were planted with African palm oil (DANE, 2016, 240). This is, as discussed, one of the sectors most closely linked to paramilitary violence aimed at displacement.

Out of the approximately 3,010,527 ha used for agro-industrial production, 30% is used for coffee (DANE 2016, 241). That means that 903,158 ha were under coffee production circa 2013. Compare with the 1980-84 period when 624,000 ha were planted with traditional coffee and another 385,000 ha were planted with modern varieties of coffee for a total of 1,009,999 ha. However, the total cultivated area of agro-industrial land in the country was just 3,859,000 ha in 1980-84 (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2015(1987), 262). The neoliberal period has thus seen a growth in the amount of cultivated land devoted to agro-industrial production, but a smaller share of this land devoted to coffee (formerly dominated by smallholders).

The cumulative effect of neoliberal policies, the expansion of international commodities markets and the expansion of agro-industrial activity has led to what many observers describe as the agrarian counter-reform (Richani, 2005; 2013; Grajales, 2011; van Isschot, 2018; Fajardo, 2002; Albán, 2011). The goal of agrarian redistribution and development has been abandoned, land has been concentrated, and the peasant economy forsaken by the state and replaced in the neoliberal era by extractive industrial and natural resource-based development. Van Isschot writes: “In effect, an agrarian and extractive counter-reform has been carried out in rural areas, with the support of armed action, both military and paramilitary, buttressed by US aid” (van Isschot, 2018, 124). The agrarian-counter reform features the concentration of property, the conversion to cash crops and livestock under market imperatives, and the mass displacement of rural people toward the cities or to larger towns where they join the precarious labour market.

A series of policies, decrees and constitutional changes were implemented by the Uribe and Santos governments to institute, strengthen and sustain the agrarian counter-reform. Soon after he took office, Uribe issued Decree 1300 of 2003 which replaced INCORA with INCODER – Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural (Londoño et al, 2016, annex, 37; Procuraduría de la Nación, 2015, 13). Uribe invoked the need to make agriculture efficient, reduce the bureaucracy

of INCORA, emphasized market forces and avoid ‘uneconomic fragmentation’ of property (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a, 242). INCODER, writes Gutiérrez, “has excluded redistribution of land from its priorities and has actually been charged for aiding and abetting paramilitaries and politicians to take over thousands of hectares”(Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010b, 227). A report published by the Procuraduría General found that the activities of INCODER, were plagued by corruption, malfeasance and cooptation by paramilitaries from 2003 to 2010 (2015, 13).

Salinas Abdala argues that legal loopholes aggravate the ongoing situation of insecure land tenure on the frontier, the prevalence of forced sales and illegal acquisitions of land through the drug trade, losses of land rights due to direct actions by state agencies, and usurpation of lands in ethnic territories (Afro-Colombian communities and Indigenous reserves) (Salinas Abdala, 2010, 316-17). Law 975 of 2005 required that paramilitaries return stolen lands to victims but the law contained no measures for implementation and in practice paramilitaries did not comply (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a, 239). In 2008, the Constitutional Court ordered the return of 17,000 ha of land to displaced persons in Carimagua. The Ministry of Agriculture contested this decision by arguing that operation of farms by poor people in that area would be inefficient. Instead the land was turned over to a group of well-connected entrepreneurs including the uncle of a cabinet minister and presidential campaign donor (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010a, 240). In 2008, a total of 38,144 ha of land in Vichada were to be allocated to internally displaced persons but there were 31 cases of irregular applications including grants of more than a thousand hectares of land each to several members of the executive of the *Uribista Colombia Viva* political party (ibid).

The National Development Plans implemented by Uribe (Laws 812 of 2003 and 1151 of 2007) promoted the production of agricultural commodities that had high export value and allowed for alliances between corporations and peasant producers on a temporary nature, essentially legalizing sharecropping, and ignoring the constitutional mandate to provide rural people with access to land of their own (Salinas Abdala, 2010, 319). Likewise, the 2006 development plan favoured the rights of foreigners to Colombian property over the rights of campesinos as a Constitutional Court challenge stated. According to Salinas “the development plan only revendicates the right to property as a tool to ensure national and international investment, with the aim of achieving targets of economic growth and participation in international markets”(ibid). The court found the development model implicitly assumed the use

of displacement as a strategy on the part of armed groups at the behest of natural resource development firms (Constitutional Court, 2009, Edict 005 in Salinas Abdala, 2010, 319).

Through a series of agrarian laws and decrees under Uribe, a neo-conservative coalition of landlords, financiers, narco-bosses, paramilitaries and multinational corporations have further imposed conditions to expand large-scale capital accumulation in Colombia, primarily through displacement of poor settlers on Colombia's agrarian frontiers.

The Human Costs of Disciplinary Neoliberalism and the Agrarian Counter-Reform

The most tragic consequences of neoliberalism and pro-market land reforms are mass murder, displacement and property theft resulting in ongoing insecurity, rapid urbanization and concentration of productive lands. These atrocities perpetrated in the name of productivity and efficiency have an ethnic and class dimension. Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples and poor Mestizo farmers were all more likely to lose their lives or lands in both neoliberal phases of dispossession by armed land grabs.

The Colombian government has established a national registry of victims of the armed conflict. The registry counts the internally displaced, victims of homicide, and forced disappearances, all linked to the armed conflict from 1964 to 2016. The total number of homicides during the armed conflict and continuing during the peace process (to August 2018) was 1,055,549. The number of deaths related to the conflict from 1964 to 1985 is estimated to be 129,794 (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). From 1985 to 2018 the number of homicides related to the armed conflict was 925,755 (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). Another 181,291 people were made to disappear. Officially, the number of battle-related deaths (of combatants and civilians) from 1989 to 2016 is 19,516 (World Bank, 2018).

The total number of persons displaced during the armed conflict prior to 1985 was 60,185 according to the Colombian government (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). From 1985 to 2018, including during the peace process, there were an estimated 8,175,000 victims of forced displacement (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). Considering the context of civil war and civilian displacement, state repression and political violence including homicide, the figures show that the neoliberal periods were far more violent than "La Violencia" in the 1940s and 1950s. The coincidence of displacement and mass murder indicate that the intent of "neoliberal" violence is the accumulation of rural property.

There are two identifiable waves of neoliberalism evident in the accumulation patterns and in the statistics on victims. The first is from 1985 to 2002 that included structural adjustment, constitutional change and market-led land reform along with mass displacement, murder and intense battles. The second is a phase of neoconservatism that deepened the passive revolution through agrarian counter-reform from 2002 to 2012.

To assess the relations between neoliberal capital accumulation and violence I looked how foreign direct investment (FDI) articulates with homicide and forced displacement from 1985 to 2017. I calculated a simple Pearson's Correlation coefficient for homicide and FDI from 1985 to 2002 and got a modest $r = 0.56$ $n = 18$, though still positive. That is, violence during the first phase of neoliberalism was positively correlated with FDI. However from 2003 to 2017, there is a strong negative correlation between homicide and foreign direct investment $r = -0.83$ $n = 14$. FDI was higher in years when homicides were on the decline. There is a strong positive correlation between displacement and foreign direct investment ($r = 0.94$ $n = 13$) for 1985 to 1997. Forced displacement and FDI went hand in hand. However, after 1997 (until 2017), there was a negative relationship between displacement and foreign direct investment ($r = -0.60$, $n = 20$). The early phase of neoliberalism correlates with an aggravation of violence – both in the homicide rate and in the level of mass displacement.

Homicide and displacement reached all-time highs in the 1997 to 2002 conjuncture that included global financial instability and declining FDI. Displacement continued at levels higher than in the 1990s throughout the 2003 to 2009 period. However, during that time there was a relative decline in violence compared to the historic high during the previous period along with rising FDI. Investors may have been interested in Colombia as Uribe's offer of 'Democratic Security' assured investors that despite the violence (or because of it), their money would be safe in Colombia.

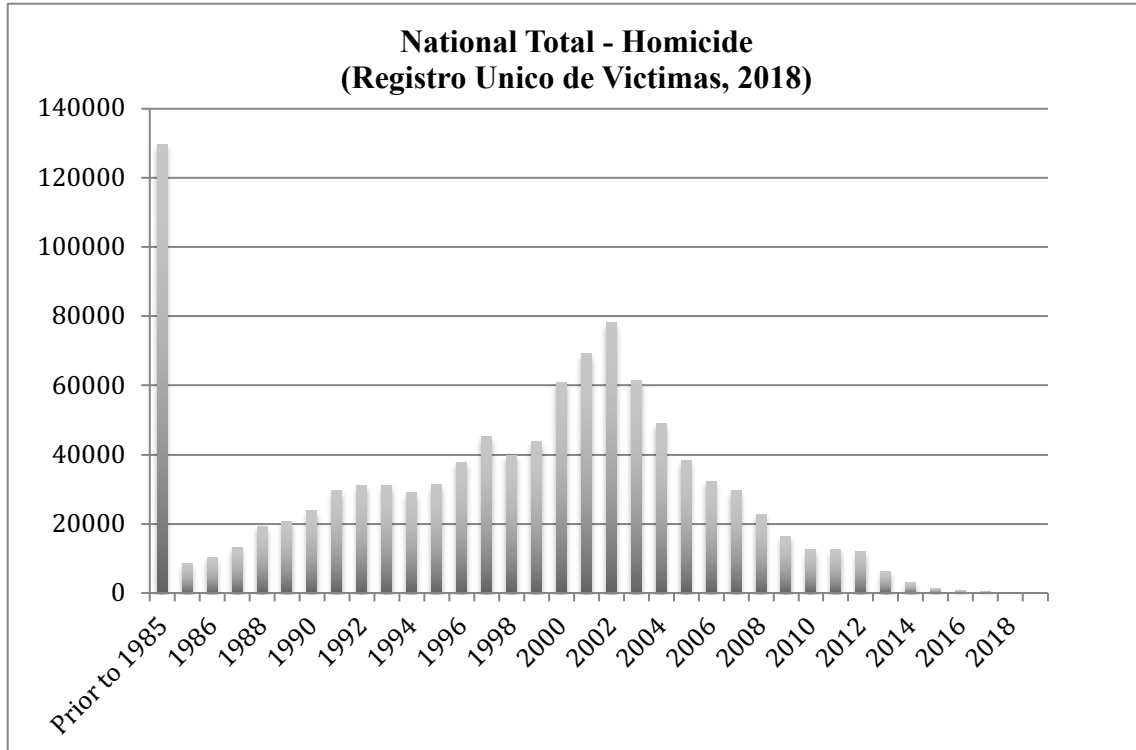


Figure 6: National Total – Homicide 1985-2018

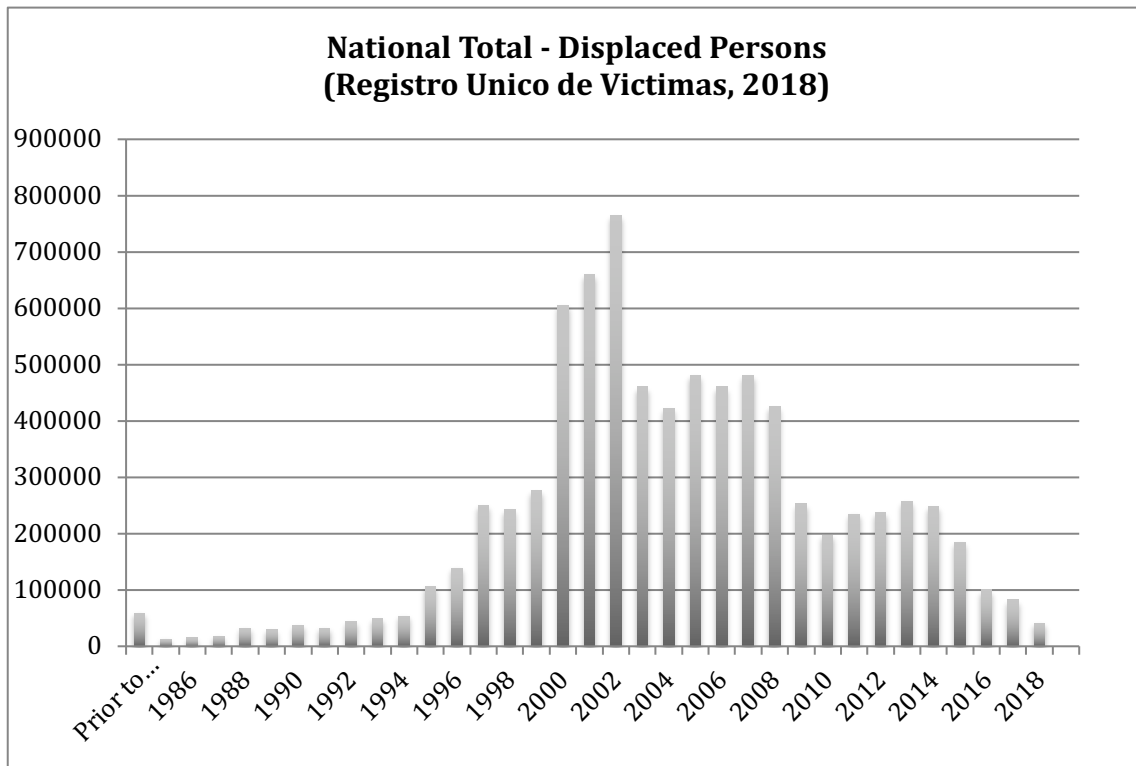


Figure 7: National Total – Displaced Persons 1985-2018

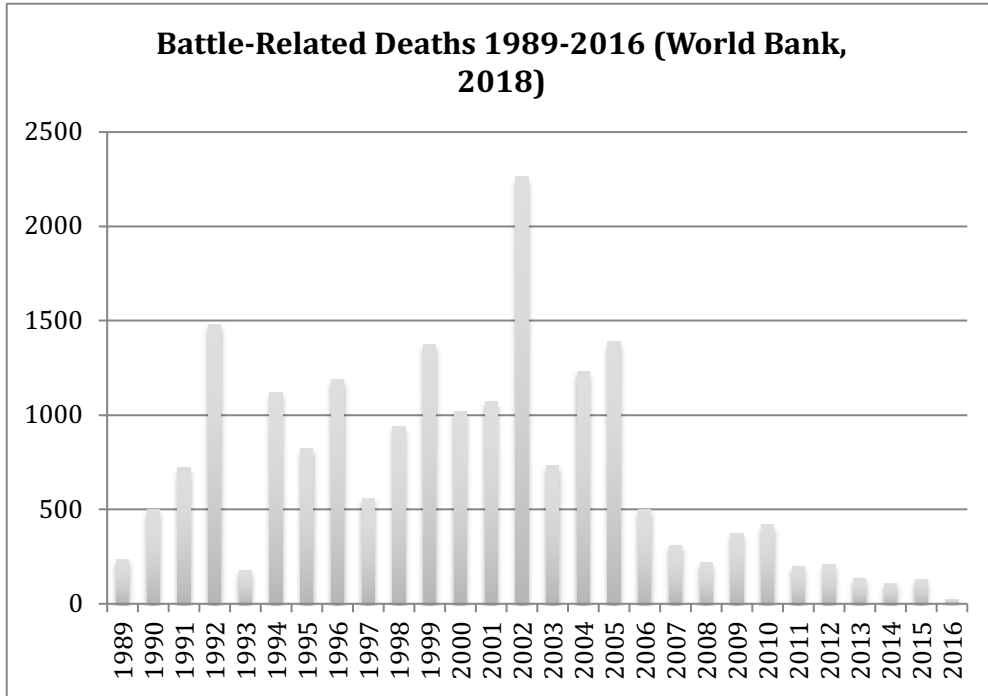


Figure 8: Battle-Related Deaths 1989-2016

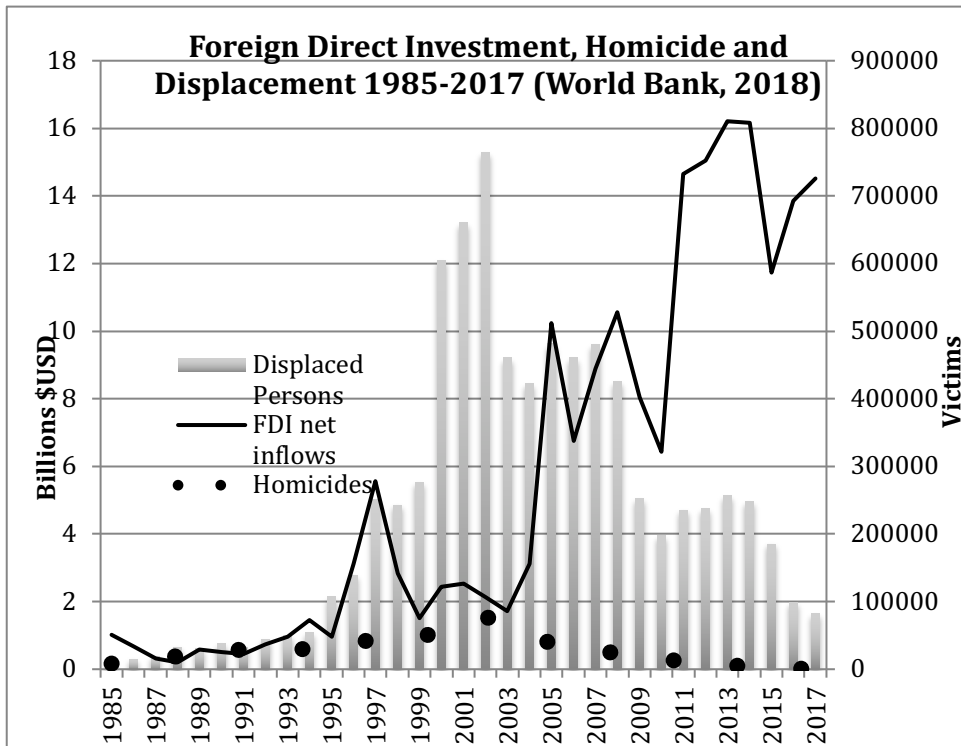


Figure 9: Foreign Direct Investment, Homicide & Displacement 1985-2017

Table 14: Average Annual Public Lands Adjudication to Private Entities by period in Colombia from 1903 to 2012

Period	Grants	Area (ha)	Annual Average (ha)	Avg Size
1903-1931	4,125	848,425	30,300.89	205.67
1932-1946	12,359	607,673	43,405.21	49.16
1947-1953	14,894	764,896	127,482.67	51.35
1954-1957	12,649	976,520	325,506.67	77.20
1958-1961	9,606	1,129,569	376,523.00	117.58
1962-1974	158,445	5,366,722	447,226.83	33.87
1975-1988	146,589	5,303,174	407,936.46	36.17
1989-1995	70,732	3,091,569	515,261.50	43.70
1996-2005	37,630	2,140,039	237,782.11	56.87
2006-2012	82,426	2,465,572	410,928.67	29.91
Total	549,455	22,694,159	208,203.29	41.30

(INCODER, 2012 in Londoño et al, 2016 statistical annex)

The enduring effect of forced mass displacement, often sanctioned by laws that favour capital accumulation and ‘productivity’ over the rights of smallholders, Afro-Colombians and Indigenous peoples, has been a concentration of property in the hands of the wealthy. First, there has been a marked decline in the number of public land grants since 1988. Between 1975 and 1988 there were 146,589 separate grants made to individuals and corporations for a total of 5.3 million hectares. The average size of these grants was 36 ha. Some of these grants were to smallholders (colonos) with some large grants to private corporations. From 1989 to 1995 during the first wave of neoliberalism, only 70,732 grants were made to about 3 million ha of public lands. These were larger on average, about 43 ha. The trend continued from 1996 to 2005. Only 37,630 grants were given to about 2.1 million ha, but again, the average size of these grants was higher – 56 ha. Considering that 15 ha was the size of the UAF sanctioned under the 1994 reform, the larger average size of these grants indicates that many were made to large firms (INCODER in Londoño et al, 2016, statistical annex). A rough Gini calculation for the distribution of public lands from 1995 to 2012 is a minimum 0.739. Small plots of land granted to 99,864 individuals (79.4% of grantees) only accounted for 5.5% of the surface area of land granted (with an average size of property at 2.8ha). The distribution also indicates that 5.3% of grantees acquired 76.6% of the land.

In addition to the inequality in public land grants, there has been a concentration of all landed property. Again, the statistical sources vary methodologically but they point to the same

general trend of concentration of rural property over the neoliberal conjuncture. Albán cites the statistics from the Agrarian Census and estimates that in 1984, the rural Gini coefficient was about .702. In 2003, after the first wave of neoliberalism, the Gini was 0.775 (2011, 341). The Instituto Geografico Augustin Codazzi published its Atlas of Rural Property Distribution in 2012. Using the IGAC data, I calculated a rough Gini figure for the rural property distribution for the 1960s at 0.692. The Gini figure for 1970 would be 0.691, for 1984 it would be 0.670 and for 1997 it would be 0.668.¹⁵ If these figures are accurate, the implication is that the rural property distribution was about the same or tended toward a slightly lower degree of concentration between 1960 and 1997, presumably as a result of the activities of INCORA. However, from 1997 to 2002, following market-led reform, the Gini went from 0.668 to 0.737.

Table 15: Colombian Land Grants by Private Entity and by Size (1995-2012)

Type Size	Individual					Corporation				
	Grants	%	Area	%	Avg Size	Grants	%	Area	%	Avg Size
1-20ha	99864	79.4	276056	5.5	2.8	564	97.2	501	37.7	0.9
21-100ha	19348	15.4	900135	17.9	46.5	13	2.2	451	33.9	34.7
101-500ha	3872	3.1	810622	16.1	209.4	3	0.5	377	28.4	125.7
501-1000ha	1429	1.1	1096977	21.8	767.7					
1001-2500ha	1197	1.0	1583840	31.5	1323.2					
2501-5000ha	85	0.1	253262	5.0	2979.6					
5000ha +	13	0.0	109334	2.2	8410.3					
Total	125808	100	5030226	100	40.0	580	100	1329	100	2.3

(INCODER, 2012, in Londoño et al, 2016 Statistical Annex)

The five years of neoliberal reforms reversed the effects, however marginal, of 40 years of INCORA's settlement and colonization schemes. Symptomatic of a passive revolutionary dynamic, the neoliberal reforms reversed policies designed to promote access to frontier land among small farmers. They were the deliberate actions of a state seeking to strengthen large-scale agrarian capitalist operations, in part through concentrating control over tracts of productive land in the hands of agribusiness firms, many of whom enacted disposessions of small farmers through their ties to illegal armed groups. This was, once again, a violent, top-

¹⁵ The most remarkable trend is the growth in the amount of surface area occupied by the largest farms (those greater than 500 ha). Though these farms account for just 0.4% of all farms, they occupied 29% of the rural property in 1960. The relative share of these large farms remained constant at 29.1% of all property in 1970, but diminished to 23.3% of all property in 1984 and 25.6% of all property in 1997. By 2002, however, the largest farms now accounted for 46.5% of all landed property (IGAC, 2012, 73).

down imposition of agrarian capitalist production. By 2010, observers of the rural property distribution were alarmed:

The high concentration of rural property has been a constant in the history of Colombia. After three failed land reforms in the twentieth century, and decades of armed conflict and public policies that have favored the big landowners, high land concentration persists, with an escalating trend, and now the Gini coefficient reaches a value of 0.86, one of the highest in the world. During the period between 2000 and 2009, rural property became even more concentrated (Ibáñez & Muñoz, 2010, 279).

Throughout the Uribe administration, the trend toward concentration deepened further. Ibáñez and Muñoz compiled detailed information from cadastral records and found that between 2000 and 2009, there was an identifiable increase in concentration of property from 0.85 to 0.86. When they controlled for the acquisition of multiple plots of land in various locations by the same owner, the Gini coefficient for their dataset of distribution of property size by surface area between owners of property rose from 0.86 in 2000 to 0.88 in 2009, indicating a much greater inequality, or rather, concentration of land than previously calculated (2010, 297).

Various studies, by academics, the World Bank and government departments compiled by IGAC consistently show an increasing concentration of property in the neoliberal period, though there are variations between in methods and source data. The figures vary between 0.84 to 0.86 in 1960 to 0.84 in 1970; between 0.83 and 0.85 in 1984; 0.84 in 1988; between 0.80 and 0.88 in 1997; and 0.85 and 0.87 in 2002; and finally, 0.885 in 2009 (IGAC, 2012, 71). All of these studies show an increase in the concentration of land in Colombia in the neoliberal period due to policies that favour large-scale commercial agriculture and large-acquisitions by illegal armed groups and drug-trafficking bands (ibid, 71). The third National Agrarian Census was released in 2016. The rough estimate of the Gini coefficient circa 2016 is 0.846¹⁶ - close to the 0.88 estimate by Ibáñez and Muñoz (2010, 279).

Colombia was violently inserted into the global capitalist system through a process that saw campesinos expelled from their lands alongside neoliberal reforms designed to protect landlords and the owners of capital from mass demands for redistribution. Neoliberal social structures of accumulation, backed up by neoconservative ideology, have allowed a bloc of

¹⁶ The number of agricultural productive units in Colombia circa 2014 with less than 5 ha of land was 1,669, 287 accounting for 70.4% of the total number of productive units on only 2% of the surface area (2,160,347 ha). Meanwhile, 0.2% of all of the units had more than 1,000 ha and collectively occupied 73.8% of the rural farmland (DANE, 2016, 67). The rough estimate for Gini coefficient (which gives a minimum coefficient for the distribution) can be found by adding the percentage of farms in the categories of less than 5ha, 5-10ha and 10-50ha and subtracting the percentage of the total surface area they occupy.

landlords, paramilitaries, drug-lords and multinational corporations to strengthen long-standing hierarchies within Colombian society. It has enabled this elite to accumulate land and wealth by dispossession while reinforcing Colombia's marginal status within the global capitalist disorder.

Table 16: Distribution of land by farm size – Colombia circa 2014

	% of Total Farms	% of Total Land Area
>1000ha	0.2	73.8
500-1000 ha	0.2	3.5
100-500 ha	2.0	8.7
50-100 ha	2.5	3.9
10-50 ha	13.8	6.6
5-10 ha	10.7	1.7
<5 ha	70.4	2.0

(DANE, 2016, 67-68).

In the context of protracted armed conflict, neoliberalism was imposed through the forced displacement of the rural poor from territories of interest for agro-industrial expansion, cattle ranching, and oil and gas extraction. Those displaced to the dangerous urban slums joined primitive labour markets in the service sector. Those displaced to the frontier found themselves subject to exploitation at the hands of drug gangs, paramilitaries or guerrillas.

Table 17: Trends in Urbanization & Rural Depopulation in National Census Data 1938-2005

Census	Population Counted			% of Total	
	Total	Urban	Rural	% Urban	%Rural
1938	8,701,816	2,533,680	6,168,136	29.1	70.9
1951	11,228,509	4,441,386	6,787,123	39.6	60.4
1964	17,484,508	9,093,088	8,391,420	52	48.0
1973	20,666,920	12,637,750	8,029,170	61.1	38.9
1985	27,867,326	18,710,087	9,157,239	67.1	32.9
1993	33,109,840	23,514,070	9,595,770	71.0	29.0
2005	41,489,253	30,846,231	10,643,022	74.3	25.7

(Procuraduria General de la Nacion, 2015, 19)

As I have maintained throughout this dissertation, displacement (resulting in either urbanization or frontier colonization) is a tool to impose conditions to expand capital accumulation. The process of urbanization in Colombia was tracked by the Procuraduria General de la Nacion and published in its 2015 report on the agrarian sector. From 1985 to 2005, the population went from 67% urban to 74 % urban (Procuraduria General de la Nacion, 2015, 19).

What these statistics hardly show is that from 1985 to 2016, Colombia suffered a severe crisis of internally displaced persons. The movement of over 8,000,000 people must not be lost in demographic statistical aggregation, nor should the deaths of more than a million people (Registro Unico de Victimas, 2018). Forced mass displacement (by paramilitaries/landlords, drugs gangs, and armed forces) and mass murder are the most devastating effects of land reforms aimed at neoliberal expansion in Colombia.

Intersections of Violence and the Agrarian Social Movements

In the neoliberal period, as during La Violencia, there are clear intersections between geography, class and ethnic identity. Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples and Mestizo peasants in their traditional territories were more likely to suffer death or displacement during the conflict and become victims of forced displacement for expanded capital accumulation. Despite the violence waged against them and in some cases on their behalf, these same groups have mobilized an increasingly visible and powerful agrarian social movement.

Although there are legal protections in place for Colombian Indigenous lands in the 1991 Constitution and subsequent decrees (Eden, 1994, 61; Hristov, 2005, 101), about 90% of it is concentrated in remote areas whether in the Pacific Littoral of the Choco or in the Llanos (Eastern Plains) and in the Amazon basin (Zuluaga and Jones, 2006, 55). These areas have been subject to the expansion of livestock production through slash and burn agriculture in the forests (Eden, 1994, 57). They have also drawn the interest of foreign oil and mining companies (Zuluaga and Jones, 2006, 55). Further, there continue to be competing interests between traditional Indigenous and Afro-Colombian production and agro-industrial development. The same areas are also contested because of their suitability for the production of illicit drugs. Large-scale mining and hydro-electric power projects further threaten displacement. As such, there is a clear risk to the security of Indigenous peoples and their territories, from illegal armed groups, the state and multinational corporations and their private security forces (ibid, 56). Cristina Rojas points out that in 2002, one third of displaced people were either Indigenous or Afro-Colombian even though together these identity groups comprised only 11% of the population (2005, 210).

The *Controlaria General de la Nacion* estimated that in 2008 Colombian national parks were occupied by approximately 36,695 indigenous people, 47,376 peasants, and 8,325 Afro-Colombians of which only the rights of the Indigenous people to live in the parks were

recognized (Andrade, 2009, 53). Others who occupied areas designated as forest reserves were legally considered to be squatters without rights to the lands they occupied.

Afro-Colombian communities such as those in the Choco have used the opportunity created by the Constitutional reforms to successfully lobby for collective titles to lands. Law 70 of 1993 accorded legal recognition of Afro-Colombian settlement in riparian areas and recognized “the right to collective property in accordance with their traditional production practices”(Law 70 of 1993 translated in Wouters, 2001, 501). The contradiction between the legal protections and the reality was painfully obvious: “On the one hand the country has adopted one of the most progressive and democratic constitutions and legislation in the world; on the other hand, the state, due to its loss of the monopoly of the legal means of violence, is unable to guarantee compliance with those laws”(ibid, 517).

There is also an environmental dimension to the violence. The war on drugs featured the use of glyphosate and other herbicides in aerial fumigation of coca crops. While aerial fumigation was used during the aerial interdiction campaign in the late 1980s and 1990s, it was again implemented as part of Plan Colombia to eradicate coca fields as Colombia’s share of Andean production increased (Peceny & Durnan, 2006, 101; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2003, 144; Huezo, 2017, 376). Aerial fumigation of glyphosate to eradicate coca production “is causing serious environmental, cultural and social damage”(Walsh, Sánchez-Garzoli & Salinas Abdala, 2008, 31). In environmental terms, “aerial fumigation of coca and poppy fields threatens animal and plant life in pristine natural habitats”(ibid, 37). There is also a very obvious social dimension of the ecocidal tactic of aerial fumigation which chemically attacks the primary producers who grow coca as part of a mixed-economic strategy alongside subsistence in the tropical forests (Walsh, Sánchez-Garzoli & Salinas Abdala, 2008, 31). By militarizing the war on drugs and ramping up a military ‘solution’ for the insurgency, the war on drugs became a war on the rural poor, most of whom are Afro-Colombian, Indigenous or Mestizo. Violence and displacement also intersect with gender, putting minority women at risk of war, displacement and gender-based violence and discrimination (Meertens & Stoller, 2001)

Afro-Colombians, Indigenous people, campesinos and allies of agrarian working people have mobilized politically in response to the multiple facets of the violence of neoliberalism. Since the start of the neoliberal era, non-violent demonstrations have been on the rise, even as violence has been orchestrated against social movements (van Isschot, 2018, 124). This may

have prompted greater mass mobilization for popular forces who take safety in the numbers of mass street protests. Statistics from the *Centro de Investigacion para la Educacion Popular* (CINEP) indicate that there were 666 campesino-led civil marches in the 1990s with 107 of these taking place in 1991 alone (in Londoño et al., 2016). From 2000 to 2010 there were 861 demonstrations with a peak of 154 demonstrations in 2010 (CINEP 2013 in Londoño et al., 2016, statistical annex). In 2013 there was a national agrarian strike prompted by the fall in prices for basic agricultural commodities and the high costs of production (Procuraduria , 2015, 40). The campesino movement was represented during the agrarian strike and in subsequent negotiations with the state by various groups which together formed the *Cumbre Agraria, Campesina, Etnica y Popular* including the *Coordinador Nacional Agrario*, COMOSOC, FENSUAGRO among others. These negotiations hold promise but have been hampered as the state takes advantage of regional diversity, competing agendas and divisions within the various campesino organizations (Procuraduria General de la Nacion, 2015, 42).

The rise of ‘new’ social movements including Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, campesino and women’s groups, are articulating their voices against the injustice of 30 years of neoliberalism and 150 years of peripheral capitalism (Jovenes de Buenaventura, 2006, 209-210). Politically the fragmentation of the partisan landscape has resulted in the emergence of new left-wing political parties such as the *Polo Democratico Independiente*, *Alianza Nacional Popular*, and later the *Polo Democratico Alternativo* (Rochlin, 2012, 11-12). Colombian workers and campesinos are mobilizing but the scale of violence deployed against them from Colombia and abroad continues to make resistance dangerous but not futile.

CONCLUSION

As US hegemony gave way to US imperial supremacy that imposed a neoliberal structure of accumulation upon the periphery, Colombia became more integrated with the world economy in two turbulent waves, from 1989 to 2002 and from 2002 to 2016 during which time market-led agrarian reforms (and counter-reforms) were implemented.

Adopting the strategy of passive revolution, the neo-conservative coalition of landlords, paramilitaries and drug lords has taken advantage of class-based connections with foreign capitalists and multinational corporations, facilitated in part through international financial institutions, to consolidate its power. International support for the internal war has been maintained through opportunities for investment, attacking the drugs trade, and through ideas,

language and values of the international order based on market principles. Behind the discourse of “Democratic Security” is a violent logic that exercises power in the name of “efficiency.” Protected behind the new constitutionalism, disciplinary neoliberalism has been imposed as a passive revolution upon Colombians by a neoconservative coalition that governs by coercion and lacks consent, enabled by US imperial power.

Rather than enhancing access to land among the rural poor, the pro-market land reforms enabled dispossession on a massive scale by paramilitary groups working for domestic and foreign capital along with growth in the power and geographic scope of the FARC. The final phase of agrarian counter-reform saw US imperial, financial and ideological power mobilized against the FARC and in support of conditions to promote neoliberal capital accumulation in Colombia. Over a million people died and 8 million were forcibly displaced during this latter phase of reform and reaction. This case illustrates the devastating consequences of deflecting popular demands for redistribution to the international sphere and lays bare the violence of transnational capital accumulation.

While proponents of neoliberalism and Colombian neo-conservatives would like the population to believe that resistance to these brutal capital accumulation projects is futile, the resistance has been sustained and committed. Further, the popular social movement is denouncing violence and refuses to be intimidated, seeking refuge in numbers, including through mass demonstrations, strikes and non-violent resistance.

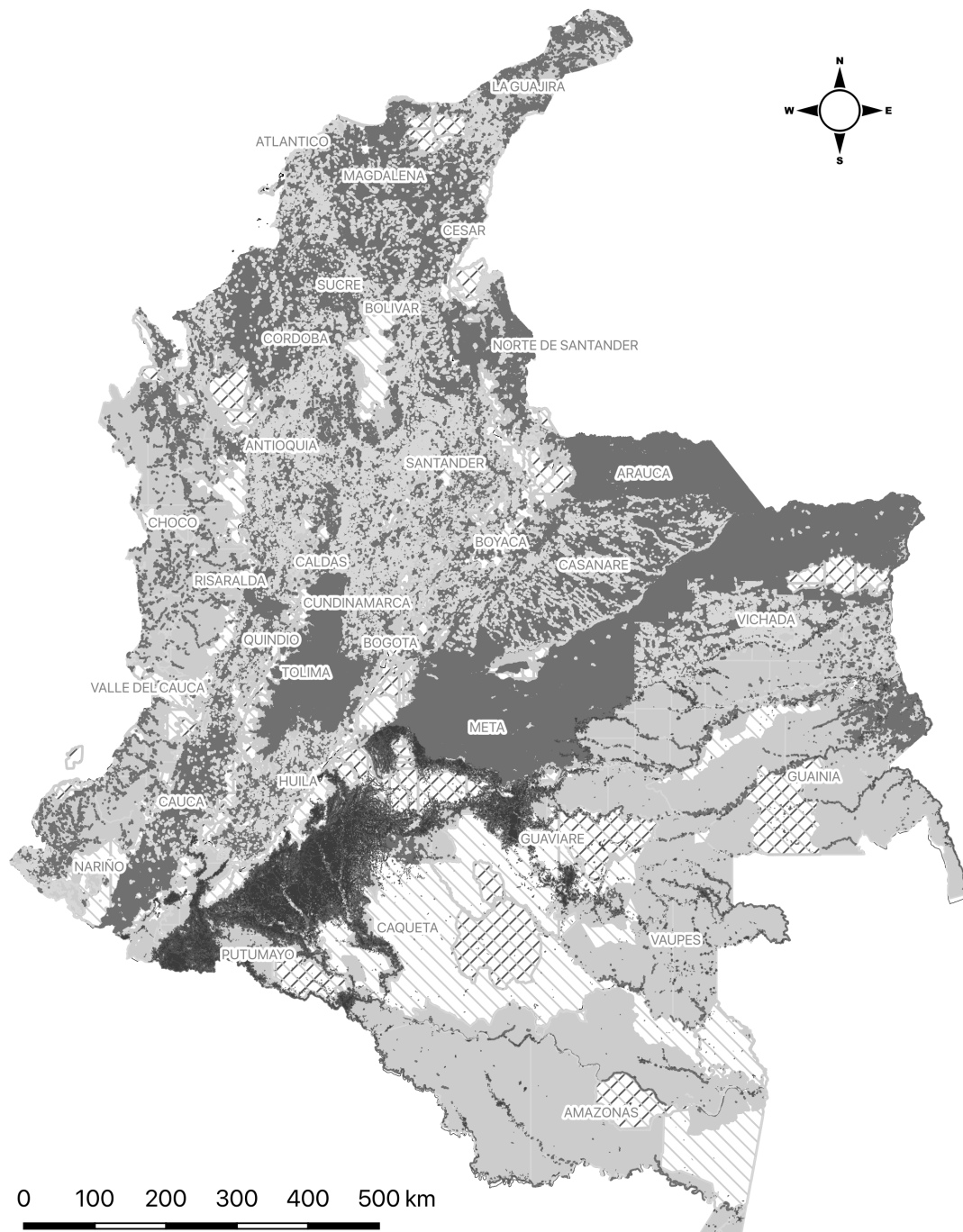


Figure 10: Agricultural Zones, Forests and Frontiers 2007

-  National Park
-  Agricultural Area
-  Natural Forests/Public Lands
-  Protected Areas
-  Agricultural Enclave/Frontier

WGS 84 EPSG 4326
 Scale on A4 = 1:7500,000
 Sources: ESRI, DANE
 Instituto Geografico Agustin Codazzi
 Datos Abiertos, Gobierno de Colombia
<https://www.datos.gov.co/Agricultura-y-Desarrollo-Rural/Frontera-Agr-cola-Septiembre-2019-/y8i3-6rga>
 October 2020 D. O'Connor

CONCLUSION: LAND REFORM AS PASSIVE REVOLUTION

After several land reforms, counter-reforms and contested phases of capitalist expansion, demands for agrarian reform continue to appear at the top of the agenda of Colombian rural social movements (Ioris & Ioris, 2018). The same still holds for the successors of the FARC-EP. The preamble to their 2016 peace accord with the Colombian government contained this statement:

In the judgment of the national government, the transformations that would have to be achieved to implement the present agreement must contribute to the reversal of the effects of the conflict and to change the conditions that have facilitated the persistence of violence in the territory; and that in the judgment of the FARC-EP said transformations must contribute to the resolution of the historic causes of the conflict such as the unresolved issue of landed property, and particularly its concentration, the exclusion of the peasantry and the underdevelopment of the rural communities that affects especially women and children (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2016, 3).

The government's goal for the peace process was the cessation of violence which they attributed to the campesino armed resistance that had destabilized the state. Meanwhile the FARC-EP's concern was the resolution of the historic cause of the conflict which they argued was the concentration of rural property and exclusion of campesinos from the social order.

If the concentration of property is the source of longstanding and ongoing instability, as I have argued, then why have land reforms failed to address (and even aggravated) social struggles in Colombia? The diagnosis of the problem can be traced directly back to the qualitative nature of land reforms designed to encourage capital accumulation which have not resulted in significant redistribution. Instead, capitalist land reforms have contributed to cycles of expansion in the agrarian sector that reinforce and reconstitute class hierarchies and encourage concentration of landholdings, reinforced by ideological justifications based on efficiency, productivity, competition and economies of scale. The theory of passive revolution offers an explanation for this contradiction between land reform, land concentration and instability. The land reforms that have been implemented in Colombia are examples of *transformismo* strategically implemented by the state to accommodate some of the popular demands for land during growth in commodity production. However, in subsequent moments of crisis, the redistributive potential of reforms has been submerged as the state promotes conditions for expanded capital accumulation in agriculture. These conditions include the expansion of commodity production, concentration of land, and the growth of a landless labour force which undermine the democratic potential of reforms, reconstituting old class hierarchies in new phases

of accumulation. As crisis conditions deepen, attempts at consensus-building and mass cooptation break down, leading to increasingly violent methods to impose capitalist transformation, shifting along the continuum of passive revolution from cooptation, to coercion, to sustained wars of movement, to long term wars of position.

The initial phase of expansion of coffee commodity production during the period of nineteenth and early twentieth century state formation created highly unequal and unstable agrarian production relations and saw the concentration of wealth, property and power in the hands of a merchant-landlord elite, even as it contributed to the emergence of a politically conscious agrarian working class and an influential class of family farmers. Through the various attempts at agrarian reform following booms and then crises in international commodity markets which reverberated in Colombia, class hierarchies have been reinforced and agrarian conflicts have been largely left unresolved, leading to escalations in the level of instability. Demands for land reform in the 1930s, 1960s, and 1990s have come from the Communist Party, the radical wing of the Liberals, various populist parties, the *campesino* movement, and the guerrillas. Further, factions of the political elite have shown a willingness to entertain land reforms to promote rural order. However, the implementation of these land reforms has only contributed to exacerbating conditions of unequal land tenure and have therefore contributed to on-going conflict. This has occurred in each of the historical conjunctures for three inter-related reasons – the key features that the three cases of land reform share.

First, though campesinos demanded the redistribution of large estates, land reforms left productive plantations intact and to the extent they offered access to lands it was only in frontier areas where the state had little effective control over property rights, thereby aggravating conflicts over land and labour. Second, demands for reforms emerged during commodity booms, when bourgeois-peasant alliances in favour of capitalist expansion were possible, but during phases of subsequent crisis and price collapse, agrarian reform was coopted by landlord-bourgeois alliances that pushed the consolidation of larger, more ‘efficient’ holdings in part in collusion with international social forces. Third, the failure to enact reforms that sustainably responded to popular demands for land contributed to an atmosphere of instability in which reactionary elites used popular unrest as a pretext for repression with the support of international financial and military power. The cumulative failures of the state to redistribute land during the reform processes at each conjuncture have reinforced the tendency toward conflicting class

positions. These failures foreclosed on the possibility of more progressive class alliances and revealed the role of the state as the institutional structure that imposes conditions for capital accumulation in collusion with foreign capital.

Across the three cases of land reform and the processes of alliance formation, contestation and repression, there have been clear processes of capitalist expansion-resistance-restoration which are consistent with the theory of passive revolution. Each features a period of some elite accommodation of mass demands, capitalist expansion, crisis, reconstitution of class hierarchies and the role of foreign capital in promoting capitalist power, resulting in political instability, violence and resistance. Here, I explore in more detail how the theory of passive revolution explains some of the contradictions of each historical case of land reform.

Colombian State Formation, Law 200 & La Violencia

Landlords and merchant-capitalists in the late nineteenth and early 20th century Colombia united around liberal institutions, free trade principles and the gold standard because of their shared interest in expanding export production of coffee. The wealthiest and most successful landlords, merchants and proto industrialists from the various regions competed with one another for control of the state through the two political parties, first during the nineteenth century partisan wars (1851-1902), then during an uneasy attempt at bipartisan rule (1902 to 1930). During the 1920s, this “oligarchy” faced threats from increasingly organized and class-conscious rural workers. These threats further divided regionally based rural interests and oligarchic elite interests through the phases of crisis in the international order from 1929 to 1945.

Seeking opportunities to benefit from the coffee sector, campesinos in the 1920s demanded better working conditions and access to their own land where they could produce coffee. Meanwhile landlords and merchants expanded accumulation by borrowing heavily and expanding production, in part through public lands acquisitions in frontier-zones. When the commodities market crashed, interest rates rose and the currency devalued, many larger coffee producers went bankrupt, losing their share of control over production to family farmers. In the early 1930s workers flocked to coffee zones and frontier areas to take up land for subsistence and part-time coffee production, aggravating conflicts over land titles. Demand for land among campesinos was high while landlords sought state assistance to bail them out of what were now financially cumbersome coffee plantations.

To deal with the potentially destabilizing consequences of the demands from both campesinos and landlords in the 1930s, the Liberal government passed Law 200 of 1936. This measure and its consequences can be analyzed through the logic of passive revolution. First, while campesinos demanded the redistribution of large estates, Law 200 of 1936 was designed and implemented to promote the transition to capitalist agriculture. It therefore left productive plantations intact and to the extent that it enabled broader access to land for campesinos, it focused on providing new titles to frontier lands for commercial production, mostly in areas that were not effectively controlled by the state. By failing to consider systematic redistribution of concentrated landholdings controlled by wealthy Colombians, the 1936 land reform simply served to legitimate the unequal distribution of land derived from the previous phase of uneven development and projected this inequality to the frontier areas where the poorest campesinos were vulnerable to violence and dispossession by wealthier and more powerful landlords.

Demands for reforms emerged during the 'commodity boom' of the 1920s, when a growing market economy suggested the possibility of bourgeois-peasant alliances in favour of capitalist development. However, price collapses after 1929 led to greater social instability and agrarian reforms took on greater urgency. Agrarian workers demanded land of their own and better working conditions while some entrepreneurs and Liberal landlords wanted reforms to the land and labour regime to open opportunities for investment and labour markets. Rather than countenancing a broad program of redistributive reform, as the economic picture began to improve in the mid-1930s, the momentum for more radical agrarian reform slowed and the Liberal political elite managed to co-opt the leaders of what could have become a broader peasant-worker alliance. The Liberal government promised the workers' movement reforms but in the implementation of these reforms, the Liberal elite allied with pro-landlord groups within the Conservative Party, civil society and the state to promote the consolidation of larger, more 'productive' holdings. Thus, the land reform largely failed as a redistributive measure beyond the coffee frontier zones and thereby aggravated the grievances of campesinos who demanded land.

By initiating capitalist land reform rather than redistributive reforms, the 1936 Law 200 and its aftermath, including Law 100 of 1944, which legalized a return to sharecropping, contributed to an atmosphere of instability in which reactionary elites used popular unrest as a pretext for repression with the support of international financial and military power. This support was forthcoming from the US after WWII in the form of loans and foreign investment. The

violence which Colombia suffered from 1946 to 1958 is thus a symptom of passive revolution whereby force was used to overcome resistance, reasserting landlord-merchant and landlord-bourgeois dominance over production following a period of crisis and mass upheaval. This was a capitalist revolution in agriculture, not via the emergence of a successful class of commodity-producing family farmers, but rather through the conversion of landlord properties into large-scale capitalist farms, largely enacted by the dispossession of campesinos.

In Colombia's heterogenous and fragmented ruling class, the landlords and the bourgeoisie, though opposed in the nineteenth century period of post-colonial state formation, ultimately joined forces. They mobilized modern state power to overcome popular resistance and expanded capital accumulation by concentrating property. *La Violencia* of 1946 to 1958 was a consequence of the agrarian reform and counter-reform of 1936 to 1944 as I described in Chapter 2 – a reactionary attempt to re-establish class hierarchies within the emerging post-war capitalist order. Violence was primarily directed at smallholders in the coffee sector and restored landlord power after some moderate gains in access to land among small and medium-sized family farmers. It provided a means for landlords to accumulate land, displace campesinos and discipline workers and reversed any gains that the popular movement may have won in the coffee sector in the 1920s and 30s.

Law 200 of 1936 can be seen in hindsight as an effort to coopt revolutionary impulses among rural and urban workers by promising a modicum of inclusion in the national economy through land ownership, the limitations of which became evident in the reversals of Law 100 of 1944. Once it was clear that the Liberals would not fight for campesino interests in the face of Conservative assaults on Liberal and Communist-voting smallholders, the Conservative government sent the army on the offensive to eliminate the radical wing of the Liberals and their Communist allies in the early 1950s.

Through a process that fits Gramsci's description of passive revolution, an emergent industrial, financial and commercial elite united with landlords to assert their shared interest in capitalist development in the countryside through the instauration of a military strongman. As this elite asserted its power through the state to impose capitalist relations, the passive revolution resulted in the concentration of wealth and income and expended 200,000 lives. Dispossession and displacement by the Conservative militias, the police and the armed forces in the 1950s created an impoverished and exploitable pool of labourers for agriculture, industry, mining and

urban construction projects. The condition upon which this model of accumulation was predicated was the monopolization of land.

Thus the 1936 agrarian reform, by failing to address land concentration, exacerbated existing class conflicts and resulted in mass bloodshed through a process of elite reaction, counter-reform and violence. *La Violencia* is therefore the brutal pinnacle of reaction against the democratic movement that began in the 1920s, a regressive form of “Caesarism” designed to reinforce industrial capitalist production and restore the old landlord-campesino hierarchies within a new, modern form of exploitation featuring agrarian capitalists and landless workers.

Peripheral Developmental State, Law 135 of 1961 and the Guerrilla war

The contradictions of the conjuncture of reform in the 1960s can also be explained by the theory of passive revolution. The cumulative effects of campesino mobilization, crisis and land concentration from the 1930s to the 1950s persisted, generating new contradictions and old grievances. Throughout the violent period from 1946 to 1956, international demand for coffee remained high and coffee lands served as the focal point of conflicts and the spoils for those armed groups willing to use force to accumulate land. When coffee prices fell dramatically in 1956, the state faced economic, fiscal and political crises during the military dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla. As negotiations between the Liberal and Conservative elites continued behind the scenes to establish a return to civilian rule, Communist and Liberal guerrillas pushed for agrarian reform and land restitution to be included in the peace process. After years of conflict, the heterogenous and bipartisan elite consisting of landlords, merchants, industrialists, and financiers at the helm of the state appeared willing to make some concessions of public lands to combatants in exchange for peace but large plantations and lands suitable for export commodity production were off the table.

Symptomatic of broader patterns of uneven development, Colombia’s accumulation model was predicated on the expansion of agrarian commodity production for export but could not generate domestic industrialization sufficient to absorb surplus rural workers into stable employment. Without opportunities to invest capital in expanded industrial production, political elites maintained their tendency to invest in land and were unwilling to cede their control over property in settled areas. After the fashion of the previous reform, Law 135 of 1961 promoted the expansion of productive holdings while enabling the acquisition of frontier lands for family farming units. However, by discouraging “fragmentation” of the minifundio, the law allowed for

the agglomeration of subsistence plots into larger, commercial farms, effectively legalizing the displacement of the poorest landless families to more distant frontiers.

Echoing the pattern of the previous cycle, demand for coffee lands during the Violence remained high due to favourable coffee prices, creating inflationary pressures that generated competition and direct conflict over land; when the coffee price collapsed after 1956 and remained low, the economic conditions shifted. Displaced campesinos still sought access to land, reparations and titles in frontier zones where they settled. Meanwhile wealthy investors shifted into production of cattle, corn, rice and other cash crops that could be produced using technology, wage labour and economies of scale on large farms. Land remained a source of competition as already lands had been highly concentrated during the Violence. Considering the influence of landlords, Colombian financiers and foreign capital over the peripheral developmental state, in the implementation of Law 135, the most suitable lands for large-scale agro-industrial production would not be touched. Instead, only marginal lands in frontier zones were included within the purview of INCORA and the agrarian reform program. Because the state did not effectively control these areas, conflict-prone production relations were reproduced in newly settled areas.

If the requirements for peace from 1958 to 1961 therefore included land reform and the bipartisan *Frente Nacional* appeared willing to concede to reforms in the interest of stability, the passive revolutionary logic of the capitalist reform nevertheless undermined its transformative and redistributive potential. The qualitative nature of Law 135 of 1961 as legal-judicial device to promote the expansion of commodity production is therefore another example of how agrarian reform was coopted by landlord-bourgeois alliances that pushed the consolidation of larger holdings within a broader process of passive revolution.

In a fraught political context between 1961 and 1964, the failure to follow through with meaningful redistributive reforms contributed to the atmosphere of instability. By 1964, the more reactionary elites within the Valencia administration used popular unrest and ongoing guerrilla mobilization as a pretext for repression with the support of international financial and military power through Plan LAZO, the first US-sponsored counter-insurgency program of its kind in Latin America.

Though they dallied with coalitions of agrarian workers in the 1930s and in the 1960s, the true political bedfellows of Liberals like Lopez, Lleras Camargo and Lleras Restrepo were a

small financial elite within Colombian society who had accumulated enough money to invest in expanded capital accumulation, in part through foreign investments, in part through the usual portfolio of Colombian stocks, public lands bonds, and urban and rural real estate. The Liberal proponents of land reform recognized that stability and peace in Colombia would require some sort of transfer of political and social power to the working people, but they refused to allow this to occur through the transfer of land. Concentration of property was the basis by which the state sought to expand accumulation in an international and domestic context of uneven development because it enabled the devaluation of labour. It deserves repeating therefore, that the irreconcilable conflict is not between landlords, merchants and industrialists who can unite behind a capitalist class interest, but rather between these national capitalist class interests and those of working people, including agrarian workers.

As described in Chapter 3, the impetus for frontier colonization, incentives to use violence to accumulate land and displace peasants, and landlord-led attempts to expand accumulation in the peripheral developmental state were designed to integrate Colombia into an international social structure of accumulation. The forces that prompted ruptures in the accumulation patterns of the traditional hacienda system from the 1870s to 1930 were international in origin, including growth in demand for coffee exports and then foreign loans in the 1920s. In the climate of post-war US hegemony in the 1940s and 1950s, the state was propped up by foreign loans while growth in export markets created additional incentives to expand production, accumulate land and displace peasants. External support for the Colombian state in the form of loans for agriculture and infrastructure created incentives for landlords to use violence to discipline workers, stifle dissent and establish large-scale capitalist farms. Sustained international coffee price depressions after 1956, the internal pressures of violent conflict, and ongoing campesino demands for land prompted renewed calls for reform during the National Front. However, it was the external call for reform in the Alliance for Progress and the threat of the Cuban Revolution that summoned US support for the 1961 reform.

The failure of the 1961 reform to promote land redistribution reignited the guerrilla conflict and led to a remobilization of campesino revolutionary forces from 1964 to 1966. The injustice of the rural agrarian capitalist order, the complicity of the state and the armed rebellion of the campesino forces did not, however, prompt radical changes to land tenure patterns. Instead, external forces financed the modernization of Colombian agriculture as commercial

producers were able to obtain loans, machinery, technology and the best land to modernize production while the state sought foreign loans, aid and military assistance to stifle dissent. The results were the continued concentration of rural property, the further fragmentation of campesino holdings on distant frontiers and the entrenchment of armed conflict. These are the consequences of passive revolution through which a landlord/bourgeois alliance imposed capitalist relations upon campesinos through the peripheral developmental state with the support of the US in the 1950s and 1960s.

Neoliberalism, Law 160 of 1994 and the Escalation of the Conflict

As in previous phases of land reform, the neoliberal manifestation of passive revolution emerged from a context in which agrarian working people continued to demand the redistribution of concentrated property. Despite efforts by the campesino movement to enable the acquisition of lands by family farmers, the focus of INCORA in the 1970s and 1980s remained on land titling in frontier areas. The size of the area of arable land in Colombia expanded but the inequality of power and property ownership was reproduced in the colonization zones. Much of the land subject to new settlement was stolen through the concerted actions of drug lords, cattle barons and multinational corporations to assert control over large territories for illegal activity, agribusiness and oil and gas extraction.

In the 1980s, following the debt crisis, the oligarchy of industrialists, cattle barons, financiers and merchants and its new coterie of regional landlords, oil men, ranchers and drug lords sought a higher degree of integration with international capital. Greater international trade and direct foreign investment have been associated with even more intense levels of violence against rural working people. The expansion of production of coca, African palm and cattle followed the historical precedent set during “La Violencia” of land accumulation during a phase of commodity expansion featuring rapid investment and capital formation. In the aftermath of the 1961 reform, international financial and military support for capitalist development was forthcoming. By the 1980s, integration with the emergent neoliberal order was effectuated through the intensification of repression.

Widespread calls for constitutional reform among most sectors of society were based on the need to end the violence of drug-cartels and paramilitaries against the FARC-EP and the organized left. In addition to an end to violence, agrarian social movements including Indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups demanded greater access to land and political control over territory.

The Constitution of 1991 partially promised to meet these demands but also enshrined the neoliberal character of the state and economy. When neoliberal reforms removed tariff barriers in place to protect Colombian producers, agriculture suffered an economic crisis circa 1992, bankrupting large producers and threatening domestic food producers and consumers with malnourishment.

Within this early-1990s crisis, renewed calls for reform came from those seeking land for subsistence production and petty commodity production and from those landlords and investors who sought state support for a bail-out from failing Colombian agricultural enterprises. Therefore, during the phase of price collapse brought on by neoliberal reforms, agrarian reform was again championed by elite alliances of cattle producers, rice, sugar and corn producers and domestic landlords and industrialists who shared with agrarian workers exposure to a world market in which they were ill-equipped to compete. The qualitative nature of the market-led agrarian reforms, designed to promote voluntary purchase of “unproductive” estates and redistribution through financing, favoured those who had land and good credit. Landlords managed to obtain funds to compensate them for failures while only some family farmers were eligible for mortgages under the terms of the program.

Market-led agrarian reform in the neoliberal and new-constitutional moment of the 1990s contributed to the exacerbation of conflicts over land in the pattern of passive revolution for the following reasons. The illegal drugs commodity boom enabled a small but powerful group of criminals to accumulate millions of hectares of agricultural land, putting pressure on land markets, displacing subsistence producers and creating dangerous incentives among poor people to engage in coca production in the frontier. The instability and violence associated with the rise of the illegal drugs industry in Colombia created opportunities for inter-class alliances in favour of constitutional reforms, including reforms to the property regime. However, the neoliberal orientation of the reforms meant they were not designed for redistribution but to expand capital accumulation, in part through integration with the world market.

In the short term, the neoliberal reforms created a crisis of agriculture by flooding the market with foreign commodities. Additional calls for relief saw market-based solutions which privileged those looking for a bail-out from failing agri-businesses while putting the burden of adjustment to market conditions on family farmers who were extended mortgages in response to demands for land rights. Again, those who were destitute continued to flock to cities or settle in

remote areas where they became vulnerable to predation by drugs gangs, extortion by illegal armed groups or forced displacement by paramilitaries looking to set up plantations on freshly cleared land.

The opportunities for inter-class coalitions to extend and deepen the protection of rights for campesinos including Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples, and women were constrained during the post-1991 crisis brought on by neoliberalism. Because of the passive revolutionary nature of the new constitutional reforms designed to deepen international integration with capital, the promises of rights and democracy were abrogated. In the medium term, the market-led agrarian reform left most concentrated properties in-tact or rewarded those who had accumulated land with negotiated buyouts which did little to address the call for redistributive reform from below. The inadequacy of market-led reforms to address the stratification of rural property, itself produced through previous phases of capitalist expansion through a history of rural violence, contributed even more to the atmosphere of instability. Following the escalation of the guerrilla movement in the 1990s, a reactionary elite coalition of regional landlords, cattle ranchers, drug-lords, paramilitaries and foreign investors used popular unrest as a pretext for repression. This pushed the longstanding patterns of class conflict, rural resistance and counterinsurgency to the point of open war.

Chapter 4 described how Colombia became more integrated with the world economy in two turbulent waves, from 1985 to 2002 and from 2002 to 2017, during which time new constitutional measures, market-led agrarian reforms, and counter-reforms were implemented. In this example of passive revolution, the neo-conservative coalition of landlords, paramilitaries and drug lords took advantage of class-based connections with foreign capitalists and multinational corporations to consolidate its power, facilitated in part through international financial institutions. Rather than enhancing access to land among the rural poor, the pro-market land reforms in the 1990s enabled dispossession on a massive scale by paramilitary groups working for domestic and foreign capital along with growth in the power and geographic scope of the FARC-EP. The final phase of agrarian counter-reform saw US imperial, financial and ideological power mobilized against the FARC-EP and in support of conditions to promote neoliberal capital accumulation in Colombia. Over a million people died and 8 million were forcibly displaced during the neoliberal phases of reform and reaction from 1985 to 2017. Following global economic crises and a downturn in oil prices, the peace accord between the

FARC-EP and the state negotiated between 2012 and 2016 eventually saw the guerrillas disarm on the promise of land reform and rural development. This came after a sustained and brutal military campaign, much of it directed at the constituency of the FARC-EP, the impoverished settlers on Colombian agrarian frontiers.

Land Reform as a Component of Passive Revolution

Each of the three cases of land reform share the following features: mass political mobilization emerges in response to opportunities to expand production; mobilization creates possibilities for consensus-based alliances around agrarian modernization, captured in the legal-judicial content of reforms; economic crises occur due to international market forces; landlord-bourgeois alliances emerge to ensure the survival of existing class hierarchies in the new array of social forces in the expansion of agrarian capitalism. The state, representing the interests of the landlord-bourgeois elite, reinforces large-scale agrarian capitalist development and undermines opportunities for the expansion of small-farm based commodity production, in part through counter reforms.

In these three cases of passive revolution, the historically uneven development of capitalism and the cumulative effects of previous waves of capitalist expansion have stacked the deck against the emergence of a successful class of commodity-producing family farmers. The high levels of inequality at various phases in modern Colombian history have meant that new phases of global commercial expansion generate opportunities for producers that are distributed unequally among agrarian classes, creating more disparity and grievances. When property and resource endowments are unequal to begin with, new opportunities to expand commodity production create incentives for violent accumulation of land, exploitation of labour and suppression of dissent. Subordinate economic groups resist this violence in various ways, including through attempts to escape expropriation and fight for land and territory. Colombian elites were able to maintain high levels of repression of campesinos and the urban working class because of US material, ideational and military support based on a shared interest in expanding capital accumulation in the periphery of Colombia's unevenly developed territory.

My research demonstrates how passive revolutions occur through phases of capitalist expansion, resistance and reform which both transform property relations at the same time as they reconstitute class hierarchies in new modes of domination. Agrarian reform has been a key component of the historically situated examples of passive revolution I have presented. Agrarian

reform appears as a solution that could break the impasse between campesinos and landlords and resolve the instability generated by concentrated property. If reforms had succeeded in transferring large tracts of land into the hands of a successful class of commercial family farmers, Colombia could have followed the small-farmer road to capitalism with a significant population of productive farmers who both generated revenues and created an internal market for capital, commodities and labour, in turn generating endogenous industrialization (see de Janvry, 1981; Lenin, 1977 [1899]). The notion of pro-farmer and pro-capitalist reform appeals to both the rural working poor and progressive elites who seek to free land and labour from coercive production relations and expand capital accumulation through concerted state action. Within the conditions of uneven capitalist development, both globally and domestically, opportunities and constraints operate in the economic and political registers that limit the qualitative aspects of possible reforms, including the pro-poor and redistributive dimensions. Measures to create opportunities for investment, import technology, ramp up export production and exploit economies of scale are the preferred elements of reforms among landlords and domestic and international financiers. Meanwhile measures that countenance the expropriation of landlord property are excluded.

After a period of capitalist expansion, resistance and crisis, and the accompanying political deliberations, the scope of agrarian reform becomes altered to help landlords adapt production to the world market while popular demands for redistribution are dampened. Through the process of passive revolution, intra-elite bargaining limits the scope of agrarian reform to marginal areas and sectors while reconstituting old class hierarchies in new modes of production, in part through the use of the state's regulatory and coercive apparatus. Since the passive revolutionary outcomes of the reform process leave rural hierarchies intact, and because they do not alter the distribution of land, wealth and power, the consequences tend to be further rural instability and resistance. Rather than incorporating the rural masses as property owners into the capitalist order, campesinos become landless workers. Since the capitalist reforms do not placate the campesinos' demand for land, the process tends to generate resistance and aggravate crisis conditions, to which the state responds with repression in attempt to restore order and reinforce class dominance. The passive revolutionary dynamics of uneven capitalist expansion, resistance and reform therefore contribute further to unequal property relations and generate conflict.

Capitalist underdevelopment and passive revolution create an impasse in which rural displacement is not accompanied by full proletarianization and industrialization. This generates overt social instability. In attempt to break the impasse, peripheral elites seek opportunities for military victory against organized insurgent forces through further integration with foreign financial and military power. Globally uneven development encourages peripheral elites to deepen coercion and further integrate the export sectors with the world market by mobilizing support for expanded capital accumulation through the further devaluation of peripheral labour. As long as there are world market incentives to expand accumulation through displacement and exploitation of landless workers under low wage conditions, there will be opportunities and incentives for unscrupulous investors and peripheral political elites. The passive revolution is contingent on international social forces, vulnerable to collapse, and crisis prone. Within this violent structure of accumulation, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear. One of these symptoms is the recurrent failure of agrarian reforms to redistribute property and the hijacking of land reform processes to serve the interests of capital accumulation.

While the dynamics of passive revolution are present in the three historical cases, the ways in which they differ can also be accounted for within the theory of passive revolution, particularly with reference to the level of international integration, the forms of state and the internal level of development of the productive forces of peripheral capitalism. In the analytical framework I have used here, these variables appear at the levels of production, power and world order. I now turn to a discussion of the differences across the three cases to deploy the explanatory critique of land reform and violence through the lens of passive revolution.

For the first case, at the level of production relations, campesino demands for redistribution of the highland estates and reforms to the agrarian labour regime burst onto the agenda in the 1920s and 1930s with a wave of occupations, protests and landlord repression. At the level of power relations, the Liberal governments of the 1930s were prepared to form bourgeois-peasant alliances that would respond to some of the basic demands for reform at a conjuncture where Colombia was less integrated with the world economy (the international level of analysis). The Liberals pursued a strategy of cooptation of leaders of radical social movements, for example in the alliance between Lopez Pumarejo and Eutoquio Timote in 1935 or in the incorporation of Gaitan into the Liberal party after his electoral failures with the UNIR movement (Braun, 1985). As discussed in Chapter 2, in the years immediately following the

1936 land reform, despite its shortcomings as a redistributive program, there was evidence of more widespread distribution of the property franchise. Under the global crisis conditions of WWII and the domestic economic turmoil it had in Colombia by extension, the counter-reform movement led by elements of the Conservative party, the military, the SAC and the landlords pushed for additional reforms that would reinforce landlord power and agribusiness control over the modernization of national economic policy. The key struggle was between traditional landlords against campesinos with the potential for an alliance of the bourgeoisie with the campesinos which was severed as landlord-bourgeois allied interests in capitalist expansion took precedence. The institutional capacity of the state to intervene in the national economy was still under construction as the remnants of the classical liberal state were dissolving and the developmental state had yet to be built. The dynamic in the first case of land reform then is one of passive revolution via trasformismo which broke down into more overt violence and reconquest to reassert landlord power over modernization. This aspect of the theory of passive revolution in the 1930s to 1950s is captured in the concept of the revolution-restoration.

The second case features greater ties between the US and Colombia in the 1960s during the Alliance for Progress at the international level of analysis. These ties constrained and discouraged strong consensus-based alliance formation between bourgeois interests and the more radical campesinos since Colombia could resort to US support for counter-insurgency. There was less incentive to negotiate and seek consensus with the agrarian social movements because these were fragmented by region, by sector and political strategy with many of the more radical campesinos remaining in the armed peasant communes. This tendency also provided additional ideological justification among those on the right to intensify coercion and violence in attempt to liquidate communist and radical elements among the rural workforce. The international ideological context of the Cold War gave additional support for Colombian counter-insurgency and sustained attacks against radical liberal and communist peasant communities. In this perspective, the 1961 land reform with its modernization framework was likely never intended to redistribute land; rather it was only designed to promote the expansion of a commodity-producing capitalist farmer mentality which appealed only to the more successful peasants. By then the more traditional landlords had already transitioned to large-scale industrial farming and bourgeois and landlord/agrarian capitalist interests in the expansion of wage labour were congruent. The class struggle was more clearly aligned as agrarian capitalist/bourgeois interests

against those of campesinos. However campesinos had trouble mobilizing a unified agrarian working class interest because they were a heterogenous mixture of small family farmers, wage labourers and sharecroppers who were divided by region and sector.

Compared to the 1930s, the peripheral developmentalist state in the 1960s featured greater institutional capacity for intervention in the economy, even if it lacked revenue and had nowhere near the redistributive capacity of an embedded liberal state in the core of the world economy. For the mass of minifundistas, the 1961 reform explicitly programmed the elimination of “unviable” and “unproductive” plots and their consolidation into larger farms. The 1961 agrarian reform therefore ostensibly promoted state-led redistribution of land, but in effect, only mobilized state resources for moving unproductive minifundistas to frontier areas. The 1961 reform openly legalized the concentration of the minifundio, a measure that had to be addressed following further mobilization and contestation in the 1968 reform to eliminate sharecropping. This measure was the button that activated landlord and agri-business opposition as it emboldened the agrarian workers movement into occupations and strikes from 1969 to 1972. Rather than attempts at consensus, class conflict and polarization intensified. When the 1968 reform was overturned in 1973 amid a growing international economic crisis, it was accompanied by a continuation of homicidal political violence against radicals under the cover of counterinsurgency and anti-communism. In this case of passive revolution, bourgeois attempts at cooptation and *trasformismo* with some modicum of accommodation of campesinos (as in the 1930s) were replaced by more overt tendencies toward coercion and violence as the state’s capacity to intervene in the economy to promote capitalist modernization increased.

Finally, in the last case of land reform, the differences in the dynamics of land reform and cooptation can still be accounted for by the theory of passive revolution based on an analysis of the shifts at the levels of production, the state and world order. After the end of the Cold War and the triumphant global expansion of capitalism, Colombia’s agricultural sector was exposed more than ever before to international commodity markets. While agricultural prices plummeted, and all producers from the smallholders to the largest landlords demanded state support, assistance came only in the guise of market-led reform. These measures served to bail out bankrupt landlords and force smallholders into debt if they sought to acquire land. In this case of land reform, the redistributive element was submerged within the expansion of a competitive and violent property market where only the strong could acquire land through the use of force.

Without the Cold War justification of anti-communism, the coercive agencies of the Colombian state turned to US support to fight narco-terrorists, the same guerillas who still pursued the strategy of armed struggle, isolated from any broader working class movements in the cities.

Within the theory of passive revolution, the greater economic, ideological and military cooperation between foreign capital and the Colombian landlord-bourgeois class explains the abandonment of alliance formation with subordinate classes. As we saw in the 1990s, the intensification of counter-insurgency and outright warfare were intended to liquidate rural opposition to neoliberal capitalism. Paramilitary activity was tolerated by the state and executed in support of large scale land grabs for industrial farming, mining, oil and gas and hydroelectric development. Whereas in the early cases, the state had little effective control over the enforcement of property rights in frontier areas, leaving campesinos vulnerable to usurpation by more powerful landlords. In the final case, the state became an active agent in extending its political and military power over rural areas where it could through alliances with foreign military power; where it could not, it formed alliances with illegal armed groups such as the AUC to impose conditions favourable to large scale capitalist agriculture. As before, the state still was ineffective in guaranteeing security of life and property for the masses of rural families but now it focused its efforts on securing the interests of foreign and domestic capital. And to that end, it had recourse to US imperial power and foreign direct investment on a scale that was much greater than in previous cases.

The final case of market-led agrarian reform therefore illustrates the power of international alliances of capitalist interests in the context of uneven development. It also shows how the processes of cooptation, revolution and restoration within passive revolutions of capital are reproduced and expand in scale across time. Rather than a *cycle* of passive revolution – because history is transitive and cumulative - the three cases demonstrate a rural order that suffers from the *cumulative effects* of repeated efforts by the state to expand the geographic scope of capital accumulation. By the neoliberal phase, the capacity of the state to intervene in the economy shifted from a discourse about redistributive policies (even if in reality the outcome of previous state-led reforms redistributed land from poor to rich) toward a set of constitutional changes that enshrined the power of large corporations, including multinational agribusiness corporations.

In sum, across the three cases, the theory of passive revolution can account for changes in a diverse set of variables including the level of international integration, the level of development of the domestic productive forces and the institutional structure of the state. Within the theory, shifts across these levels of analysis create conditions for the intensification of violence and the cumulative effect of concentration of land which can be explained by the various concepts within the theory of passive revolution. On the ethico-political and theoretical level, the theory of passive revolution offers an alternative explanation for why conflict and inequality increased rather than abated after periods of land reform. Further, since history is not pre-determined, although shaped by powerful structures leftover from the past, like concentrated rural property, in each of the three cases there were possibilities for alliance formation and hegemonic (or consensus-based) politics that could have redistributed land to campesinos. However, each of these opportunities were foregone through the reassertion of elite and capitalist power during moments of crisis which is characteristic of passive revolutions.

My research therefore sheds light on the violent consequences of uneven development and the violence inherent in attempts to expand and accelerate capital accumulation through capitalist reform. Passive revolution, rather than hegemony, explains why Colombian proponents of capital sought to ally with “backward” rural interests to expand capitalist production. Within the global context of uneven development, attempts to build hegemonic consent with subordinate classes were foregone in favour of alliances of old and new dominant classes – landlords, merchants and financiers, who were able to maintain their power by coercion, backed up by foreign military and financial power. Under these conditions, even popular demands for reforms, which would appear to be benign, are vulnerable to co-optation and alteration as production relations and political power shifts at a ‘molecular level’ to reconstitute class hierarchies and restore old relations of dominance. Capitalist land reform is a key modality of the passive revolution of capital, serving as the legal-juridical structure to promote and sustain the reconfiguration of landed power into agrarian capitalist power. Land reform, under conditions of uneven development, serves as a key component of the passive revolution of agrarian capital within a state dominated by an uneasy landlord-bourgeois alliance.

The Contribution of the Colombian Case to the Theory of Passive Revolution

My application of the theory of passive revolution to explain the origin and propagation of conflict over land is a novel contribution to the literature on agrarian political economy in

Colombia. By examining the relations between the state and civil society and between international social forces in the transformation of production relations, I have been able to identify sources of conflict and inequality that would be bracketed by other frameworks. My work has presented a political economic and class-based explanation for inequality and conflict that goes beyond frameworks that narrowly examine the rational motivations of armed groups, studies of cultural approaches to violence, or those that look only at the domestic conditions that contributed to conflict.

On its own merits, my reading of the Colombian case also contributes to the literature on passive revolution in several important ways. Agrarian reform is a key component of passive revolutions wherein the state encourages the transformation of pre-capitalist production relations into capitalist production which is predicated on the dispossession of rural workers. Agrarian capitalist transformation without domestic industrialization generates mass dislocation, poverty and unrest as surplus landless workers fail to integrate into urban areas. These findings of my research open theoretical space and opportunities for empirical investigation into the agrarian origins of passive revolution and the passive revolutionary character of agrarian transformations, not only in Colombia, but elsewhere. Further, my framework invites comparative study both across regions and within the same geographic spaces across time.

My research also suggests that social movements will continue to demand land reform, despite the failure of previous attempts. This is because rural hierarchy and inequality continue to generate poverty, social exclusion and violence. The qualitative emphasis of land reform is important since capitalist reforms differ substantively from the redistributive and pro-poor reforms that campesinos continue to demand. Clearly agrarian reform is not a panacea and not all types of land reform are equal. But considering agrarian reform as a component of passive revolution could shed light on the failures of agrarian reforms to redistribute land, it could help progressive social movements avoid making the same mistakes in the future, and it could assist with attempts to resolve agrarian conflicts elsewhere.

My findings also show that the role of international capital and imperial power tends to tip the domestic array of class forces away from hegemony and toward domination and conflict-prone class relations. This takes the form of concerted state action to reinforce the capitalist character of domestic political and economic transformations, rather than the democratic dimension. As a case of late capitalist development, the Colombian experience demonstrates how

reforms that are ostensibly designed to reduce conflict can backfire onto working people, resulting in entrenched hierarchies and new forms of domination enabled by elite alliances with foreign capital. Shedding light on how this occurred through various phases of the world economy, as I have done, could lead others to seek ways to avoid passive revolutions as the world transitions beyond neoliberalism. Rather than foregoing attempts at domestic hegemony in exchange for international integration, leaders of would-be hegemonic political coalitions could focus their attention on expanding democratization and less on imposing conditions for capitalist accumulation.

My work has shown that passive revolutions are unstable, incomplete and heterogenous, creating conditions amenable to violent conflict because of the uneven development of capitalism both globally and domestically. Within an internationally integrated social structure of accumulation, citizens and consumers in the advanced capitalist countries are increasingly complicit in the propagation of coercive production relations, inequality and violence against working people in the periphery. Demonstrating how demand for coffee, bananas, oil, and coca has contributed to conflict in Colombia can contribute to the literature that examines the social effects of commodities booms elsewhere including conflicts over mining, coercive labour practices in the production of cell phone components, or in contested land grabs for agri-food expansion, to name a few examples.

In short, the Colombian case reveals the dangerous ethical and political consequences of capitalist expansion without consensus which is fundamental to the theory of passive revolution. The historical examples of land reform in Colombia were fraught with ethical and moral hazards. Each began with uneven capitalist development, which produced class conflicts. Instability generated top-down proposals for reforms that were engineered in part from abroad, which were then implemented in moments of crisis, without a sustained commitment to redistributive democracy. The outcome of these reforms included passive revolutionary attempts to accelerate the process of capital accumulation through political domination and exploitation of rural working people. The ethical imperative now asks how passive revolution can be avoided, particularly in future cases of land reform.

The Implications of Passive Revolution and Prospects for Future Land Reforms

If previous phases of land reform within processes of passive revolution aggravated inequality and conflict because they were designed to accelerate the expansion of capitalist

agriculture, then what are the implications of this thesis for future attempts at agrarian reform in Colombia? A pessimistic conclusion of my research would be that these cases demonstrate how something as seemingly progressive as land reform can contribute to an intensification of conflict. Such a conclusion would raise questions about the desirability of land reform. There are other conclusions to be drawn from my work that provide some cautious optimism for progressive social forces within Colombia seeking more egalitarian production relations.

Despite the failures of previous attempts at reform, and in part because passive revolutionary reforms did not result in the redistribution of concentrated property, Colombian social movements continue to argue for agrarian reform. The stability of the peace process appears to depend in part on the depth of commitments by the national government to address rural inequality. This raises serious ethico-political questions about the possibilities for reform. My research suggests that the problem has not been the idea of agrarian reform *per se* but rather the qualitative nature of capitalist reforms within conditions of uneven development and passive revolution.

The key then is to identify conditions that would promote more hegemonic coalitions in favour of redistributive reforms and avoid conditions that lend themselves to passive revolution. As an alternative to market-led and capitalist agrarian reforms, rural social movements have proposed redistributive land reform to address rural poverty, enhance equality and broaden access to land for subsistence and export production (Courville and Patel, 2006, 18; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2007, 392-394; Martinez-Torres & Rosset, 2010). These demands have been articulated by Colombia's agrarian social movements through various organizations such as the National Association of Peasant Land Users – Unity and Reconstruction (ANUC-UR), the Federation of United Agricultural Trade Unions (Fensuagro-CUT), National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (Fenacoa) and the National Agrarian Coordinator (CNA) (Bohórquez and O'Connor, 2012, 65). Representatives of these and other regional campesino groups demand redistribution of stolen lands to agrarian workers, guarantees of technical support for sustainable rural development, and measures to protect food security and human rights (ibid, 85). However, for such proposals to be taken seriously, broader unity among campesinos and working and middle-class Colombians will be necessary.

Progressive Colombian elites would have to take seriously the idea that concentrated property, including estates of drug traffickers and massive industrial capitalist plantations and

ranches can and ought to be redistributed, collectivized or turned into worker-owned cooperatives. How this could happen within the current Colombian context in which elites have committed fully to transnational, neoliberal capital accumulation requires a stretch of the imagination. For viable, progressive coalitions in favour of redistributive reform to emerge, international political economic conditions would have to shift so that incentives to mobilize foreign financial and military power to accumulate land would be limited. Such a shift could occur in part through the strengthening of transnational solidarity between Colombian social movements and progressive political movements in the US and Europe. The hard work of coalition building in favour of rural democratization, however, will largely be left in the hands of Colombians. Insofar as the Colombian state is dominated by landlord and bourgeois interests rather than a broader, democratic worker and campesino party, the road to democratization will continue to be fraught with conflict.

As I discuss in Chapter 2, agrarian social movements have a long history in Colombia with varying degrees of success and these campesinos movements are often the target of landlord violence (Zamosc, 1986; Vega, 2004; LeGrand, 1986). In the 1950s and 60s, the campesino movement became the target of state-led counterinsurgency efforts as I describe in Chapter 3. During the worldwide expansion of neoliberalism, Colombian agrarian social movements continued to face violence – extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, disappearances and forced displacement (Chapter 4). Still, the agrarian social movement in Colombia has continued to fight for land rights through various forms of struggle and continues to be a force for democratization at the national level (Brittain and Sacouman, 2008). Through the post-conflict conjuncture, the agrarian social movement continues to demand redistribution of concentrated property, restitution of stolen lands and an end to the killings and forced displacement. In order for redistributive reforms to become viable, the Colombian state must end its collusion with non-state actors, landlords and corporations who use violence to accumulate territory. Perhaps before this could happen, the Colombian state would have to come under the control of a coalition that would take a strong stance against corruption and state-sponsored violence and charge political, military and civil society leaders with crimes against humanity for their roles in propagating the recent neoliberal phase of violence.

Passive revolutionary land reforms are regressive, restorative or top-down and unite landlord and bourgeois interests in a process to expand capital accumulation while maintaining

the old hierarchies of class and property ownership. Passive revolution is enabled by uneven capitalist development and produces heterogenous and conflict-prone production relations but is functionally subordinated to an international social structure of accumulation in which Colombian elites participate and benefit. In contrast, democratic agrarian reform implies some basic principles such as equitable access to land for those who seek to work it, support for rural services and infrastructure and guarantees of security of life, property and income of rural workers (White et al., 2012:626). Such reforms, rather than maximizing profit, would be geared toward maximizing the health and well-being of the workers, the environment and the sellers and consumers of agricultural produce. Whether agrarian reform promotes a redistribution of land from large corporations to family farmers, Indigenous or Afro-Colombian communities, or worker-controlled agricultural cooperatives, the key element is the transfer of resources in tandem with guarantees of security of lives and property. If there is any hope for redistributive agrarian reform, it will only come within a broader context of enhanced democracy and peace. One could argue even further, that for there to be peace, there will also have to be some form of redistributive land reform. Above all, the instrumental violence of forced displacement directed against rural people must halt.

As my work has demonstrated, the link between demand for export commodities and incentives to use violence to expand accumulation suggests that more peaceful and equitable production relations would require a reorientation away from dependent-development models based only on export commodity production. Colombians have proven they can produce just about any agricultural product, even in conditions of duress and inequality. Coalitions in favour of redistributive land reform would be less likely to succeed during phases of booms and busts in single commodity markets – whether bananas, coffee or coca. Instead, strengthening the land base that is currently used by campesinos to produce a variety of products for the traditional food basket for the domestic market and select products for export would be more likely to sustain a progressive reformist movement. By putting land in the hands of campesinos, guaranteeing their rights to life and property, and mobilizing the state's collective resources to support campesino production, more opportunities to develop domestic productive forces will emerge. However, if Colombia continues to be flooded with relatively inexpensive foodstuffs from abroad and continues to allow domestic and foreign companies to displace campesinos to produce export

commodities on large-scale monocultural plantations, these opportunities will continue to be thwarted, and conditions of crisis will undermine attempts at redistribution.

Considering the need to redistribute lands stolen from the internally displaced as part of the restitution process (Salinas Abdala, 2010), it is becoming possible to imagine an alternative rural order in Colombia that empowers family-agricultural units, guarantees the protection of their property rights, and provides technical support, access to credit and assistance in transportation and marketing agricultural surpluses. It is possible to imagine the formation of new, farmer-owned, fair trade cooperatives that establish ethical guidelines for trade with consumers abroad while providing sustainable employment income to workers/owners. However, as long as free trade and the security of capital investments are the priorities in Washington and Bogota, such proposals are unlikely to succeed.

The contradiction between land reform and violence is as follows: concentration of land during uneven phases of capitalist expansion is at the root of the grievances that lead to conflict. Agrarian reforms have been proposed to address these grievances. However, those who have accumulated wealth through property concentration have also tended to oppose reforms or enact counter-reforms, producing passive revolutions in which the elementary demands for reform appear to be met but instead are coopted to reconstitute capitalist power with the support of the state. Rather than redistributive reforms, capitalist reforms have aggravated inequality and conflict within passive revolutionary processes. To quell resistance to capitalist expansion, the state security apparatuses have consistently used counterinsurgency tactics to infiltrate and “dampen” opposition. The effects of passive revolution and violence aggregate over time and enable a propagation of hierarchies whereby wealthy and powerful people seek to dominate working people, deny them their basic rights and impose conditions for expanded capital accumulation by concentrating land. The end of this cycle of crisis and violence is unlikely to occur with another attempt at capitalist reform. Rather, to address the causes of inequality and conflict, Colombians will have to develop stable, hegemonic coalitions that unite campesinos, workers and progressive elites within a broader democratic agenda that includes redistributive reform.

The theory of passive revolution has been used in this thesis to explore the origin and propagation of conflict over land in Colombia and the role that capitalist and market-led agrarian reforms have played in aggravating, rather than placating class conflicts that have led to war.

One of the key contributions of this thesis to the Colombian literature is to highlight the role of international social forces in the “domestic” politics of capital accumulation and resistance. However, an additional point of emphasis is the longstanding use of violence to promote capitalist expansion and the sustained response by campesinos to protect themselves. Struggles for land, expressed either through colonization or political demands for redistribution, have remained the focus of the democratic and popular forces. This pushes back the date of the origins of the conflict in Colombia from 1964, as is often believed, to the landlord-peasant conflicts of the 1920s. It also highlights how integration with the international economy at various conjunctures have created opportunities for reform but also constrained the qualitative nature of these reforms.

La Violencia never ended in Colombia. After the formation of the 1958 National Front, the function of violence was maintained in the peripheral developmental state to counter mass impulses at democratisation. The violence of usurpation, resistance, and counterinsurgency established in the process of rural accumulation on the frontier in the 1940s and 1950s was adapted and maintained to discipline Colombian campesinos and workers with violence throughout the 1960s and 70s. The coercive apparatus of the state took on new dimensions and partners to suppress rural democracy and maintain highly unequal property relations, at times in collusion with drugs gangs and non-state armed groups from the 1980s to the present. The heterogeneity of Colombia’s rural production relations and the violent devaluation of Colombian labour have thwarted popular attempts at democratic, peaceful or progressive change to the established order. The fundamental inequality in land tenure, income and social status that is expressed as violence against the rural poor is a product of integration with an internationally expanding capitalist structure of accumulation, whether in the time of US hegemony 1945 to 1973 or in the neoliberal phase.

Today rural property in Colombia is possibly more concentrated than anywhere in the world. This hierarchical agrarian structure, I argue, is at the root of the violent conflict that has plagued the country. This concentration of land is the result of concerted efforts by a fragmented state to impose capitalist subjectivity within a context of uneven capitalist development which is accounted for within the theory of passive revolution. Integral redistributive agrarian reform is now one of the conditions for peace in Colombia. If it is implemented, the prospects for peace and democracy could be strong. However, if the agrarian question is ignored as the peace process

becomes bogged down by ongoing violence against the rural poor by shadowy forces that serve the interests of Colombian capital, then peace could be shattered.

STATISITCAL APPENDIX

The statistics that are discussed in the historical/empirical chapters above are accompanied by tables and figures in-text. However, some of the tables are too large to fit comfortably within the textual discussion. In some cases, statistics are discussed in multiple places so that in the interests of space, the full list of statistics or the tables were not included. This statistical appendix provides more complete datasets to supplement the information described in the text.

EVOLUTION OF THE STRUCTURE OF RURAL PROPERTY IN COLOMBIA 1960 -2002 (IGAC, 2012,73)

Size	1960		1970		1984		1997		2002	
	1000s ha	1000s of Farms	1000s ha	1000s of Farms	1000s ha	1000s of Farms	1000s ha	1000s of Farms	1000s ha	1000s of Farms
<5ha	955.8	737.3	868	678.5	1147.1	987.9	1447.1	1391.9	2189.4	2333
5 to 20ha	1885.9	225.4	1835	219.3	2558.5	336.8	3232.8	444.5	4480.2	651.3
20 to 50ha	1957.1	74.6	2213	84.2	3193.1	136	3810.4	170.9	5623.1	254.3
50 to 200ha	3815.5	52.3	4363	60.2	6430.3	96.6	6758.9	117.3	10360.5	170.2
200 to 500ha	2674.8	11.5	3036	13.2	3714.3	19	3329.5	19.1	5289.2	30.8
>500ha	4606.4	4.8	5054	5.4	5189.7	6.7	6408.6	5.7	24254.1	13.9
Total	15895.5	1105.9	17372	1060.8	22233	1583	24987.2	2149.4	52196.5	3453.5
	Percentages of totals									
<5ha	6	66.7	5	64	5.2	62.4	5.8	64.8	4.2	67.6
5 to 20ha	11.9	20.4	10.6	20.7	11.5	21.3	12.9	20.7	8.6	18.9
20 to 50ha	12.3	6.7	12.7	7.9	14.4	8.6	15.2	8	10.8	7.4
50 to 200ha	24	4.7	25.1	5.7	28.9	6.1	27	5.5	19.8	4.9
200 to 500ha	16.8	1	17.5	1.2	16.7	1.2	13.3	0.9	10.1	0.9
>500ha	29	0.4	29.1	0.5	23.3	0.4	25.6	0.3	46.5	0.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

COLOMBIAN POPULATION BY URBAN & RURAL 1938-2005 (DANE 2014)

CENSUS	Population Counted			% of Total	
	Total	Urban	Rural	% Urban	%Rural
1938	8,701,816	2,533,680	6,168,136	29.1	70.9
1951	11,228,509	4,441,386	6,787,123	39.6	60.4
1964	17,484,508	9,093,088	8,391,420	52	48
1973	20,666,920	12,637,750	8,029,170	61.1	38.9
1985	27,867,326	18,710,087	9,157,239	67.1	32.9
1993	33,109,840	23,514,070	9,595,770	71	29
2005	41,489,253	30,846,231	10,643,022	74.3	25.7

GINI ESTIMATES OF RURAL PROPERTY DISTRIBUTION IN COLOMBIA (VARIOUS SOURCES)			
YEAR	Geographic Focus	Gini Coefficient	Source
1932	National	0.37	FEDECAFE 1932, 122
1932	Cundinamarca	0.25	FEDECAFE 1932, 122
1932	Tolima	0.27	FEDECAFE 1932, 122
1932	Antioquia	0.2	FEDECAFE 1932, 122
1939	Cundinamarca	0.2	Bergquist 1986, 301
1939	Tolima	0.22	Bergquist 1986, 301
1932-1946	Public Lands	0.58	Londoño et al, 2016
1947-1953	Public Lands	0.6	Londoño et al, 2017
1955	Coffee Sector	0.32	CEPAL 1958, 14
1955	Antioquia	0.35	CEPAL 1958, 14
1955	Cundinamarca	0.41	CEPAL 1958, 14
1955	Tolima	0.28	CEPAL 1958, 14
1956	National	0.564	IGAC 2012, 57
1960	National	0.58	Berry 1972, 403
1960	National	0.625	IGAC 2012, 57
1960	National	0.692	IGAC 2012
1960	National	0.84	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 71
1960	National	0.86	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1970	National	0.691	IGAC 2012
1970	National	0.631	IGAC 2012, 57
1970	Coffee Sector	0.722	García 2002, 8
1970	National	0.84	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1984	National	0.67	IGAC 2012
1984	National	0.702	Albán 2011, 341
1984	National	0.72	Suarez 2007, 49
1984	National	0.84	Gomez Jiménez, 2003, 897
1984	National	0.83	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1984	National	0.85	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1988	National	0.619	Richani, 2013, 34
1988	National	0.84	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1996	National	0.88	Gomez Jiménez, 2003, 897
1996	National	0.66	Richani, 2013, 34
1993-97	Coffee Sector	0.754	García 2002, 8
1997	National	0.668	IGAC 2012
1997	National	0.8	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
1997	National	0.888	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
2000	National	0.86	Ibáñez and Muñoz 2010, 297
2002	National	0.85	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
2002	National	0.87	Various sources, compiled in IGAC 2012, 72
2003	National	0.737	IGAC 2012
2003	National	0.775	Albán 2011, 341
2009	National	0.88	Ibáñez and Muñoz 2010, 297
2009	National	0.885	IGAC 2012, 71
2014	National	0.846	DANE 2016, 67

**COLOMBIAN GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN
CONSTANT 2010 USD (BILLIONS) ALONG WITH HOMICIDE AND FORCED
DISPLACEMENT (WORLD BANK 2018; REGISTRO UNICO DE VICTIMAS 2018)**

YEAR	GDP (constant 2010 US\$) Billions	GDP growth (annual %)	GDP per capita (constant 2010 US\$)	Homicides	Displaced Persons	FDI net inflows in 2010 US Billions
1985	116.329486	3.08826465	3751.14975	8698	14404	1.023
1986	123.121141	5.83829241	3887.65431	10406	15977	0.674
1987	129.734602	5.37150681	4013.52856	13495	19686	0.319
1988	135.001594	4.059821	4093.99254	19307	34005	0.203
1989	139.615175	3.41742666	4152.19281	20916	30307	0.576
1990	148.050777	6.04203848	4319.93045	23916	38703	0.5
1991	151.422236	2.2772315	4336.66268	29862	34046	0.4569
1992	159.042829	5.0326775	4472.68628	31094	45035	0.7287
1993	162.805227	2.36565057	4497.98234	31193	50646	0.9591
1994	172.306233	5.83581149	4679.24178	29202	55107	1.44649726
1995	181.270357	5.20243759	4841.36713	31240	107400	0.96836827
1996	184.997012	2.05585471	4862.06805	38011	139901	3.11167659
1997	191.342953	3.43029368	4951.24642	45421	250729	5.56221636
1998	192.433195	0.56978409	4904.74819	39892	243243	2.82882626
1999	184.343274	-4.2040152	4629.49803	43862	276948	1.50790713
2000	192.491234	4.419993	4764.16775	60996	605145	2.43645992
2001	195.721041	1.67789831	4774.97561	69167	660295	2.54194261
2002	200.621857	2.50398047	4825.832	78244	764922	2.13369812
2003	208.482767	3.9182719	4945.95797	61418	460326	1.72049346
2004	219.601199	5.33302207	5139.97663	48967	422014	3.11563587
2005	229.936852	4.70655593	5312.08235	38428	481252	10.235419
2006	245.336908	6.69751526	5596.73474	32502	460493	6.75061803
2007	262.266695	6.90062766	5910.29238	29800	480804	8.88576754
2008	271.568783	3.54680489	6048.09453	22799	426025	10.5641514
2009	276.053875	1.65154925	6078.31546	16487	252787	8.03456581
2010	287.018185	3.9718007	6250.65504	12662	197561	6.42977224
2011	305.931281	6.58951152	6592.40232	12583	235424	14.64678
2012	318.30297	4.04394381	6789.5255	12077	237566	15.0393591
2013	333.817266	4.87406558	7051.04027	6408	257230	16.2092958
2014	348.483889	4.39360834	7291.69187	3113	248092	16.1670228
2015	359.119675	3.05201657	7446.1824	1522	185950	11.7357257
2016	366.456704	2.04305973	7531.98258	1026	99930	13.8489954
2017	372.935922	1.76807178	7600.75914	779	82285	14.518046

COLOMBIAN COFFEE PRODUCTION - MONTHLY AVERAGE INTERNAL PRICE, PRODUCTION VOLUME OF 60 KG SACKS AND EXPORT VOLUME (THOUSANDS), PRICE PER KILO & EXPORT VALUE 1944-2017 (FEDECAFE, 2018)

YEAR	Internal Price of 120 kg of dry coffee (12-month average monthly price) \$COP	Yearly Total Production (1000s of 60 kg sacks of green coffee)	Yearly Total Exports (1000s of 60 kg sacks)	Yearly Average Export Price cents/lb	\$/kg	Export Value \$USD (yearly estimate)
1944	48.25			15.87	\$0.35	
1945	53.16			16.22	\$0.36	
1946	72.91			22.5	\$0.50	
1947	85.28			30.10	\$0.66	
1948	98.23			32.58	\$0.72	
1949	119.23			37.61	\$0.83	
1950	162.04			53.24	\$1.17	
1951	209.71			58.74	\$1.29	
1952	251.47			57.01	\$1.26	
1953	260			59.81	\$1.32	
1954	305.76			80.02	\$1.76	
1955	334.33			64.57	\$1.42	
1956	311.76	6755		73.97	\$1.63	
1957	414.28	5437		63.93	\$1.41	
1958	482.61	7285	5441	52.34	\$1.15	\$376,595,637
1959	414.76	7438	6414	45.21	\$1.00	\$383,514,983
1960	412.71	7173	5938	44.89	\$0.99	\$352,501,282
1961	456.95	7264	5650	43.62	\$0.96	\$325,915,674
1962	475.90	7133	6561	40.76	\$0.90	\$353,695,230
1963	519.04	7461	6133	39.54	\$0.87	\$320,748,025
1964	652.57	8647	6411	48.80	\$1.08	\$413,735,962
1965	724.85	7233	5652	47.44	\$1.05	\$354,607,418
1966	738.38	8663	5564	44.12	\$0.97	\$324,652,145
1967	759.71	7256	6095	41.14	\$0.91	\$331,609,702
1968	839.19	8054	6586	41.32	\$0.91	\$359,927,429
1969	949.23	7843	6478	41.77	\$0.92	\$357,880,116
1970	1173.71	8266	6510	54.01	\$1.19	\$464,962,584
1971	1277.57	7294	6569	46.99	\$1.04	\$408,209,353
1972	1387.23	7535	6527	52.32	\$1.15	\$451,668,987
1973	1772.09	8507	6766	64.29	\$1.42	\$575,307,689
1974	2111.76	6893	6906	67.84	\$1.50	\$619,548,420
1975	2537.47	8375	8175	67.41	\$1.49	\$728,788,938
1976	4364.23	6660	6289	144.74	\$3.19	\$1,203,796,307
1977	6717.85	10657	5325	236.66	\$5.22	\$1,666,548,732
1978	7273.71	11387	9035	164.81	\$3.63	\$1,969,190,501
1979	7282.66	11889	11130	175.52	\$3.87	\$2,583,431,714
1980	8107.61	12073	11102	156.19	\$3.44	\$2,293,143,279
1981	9163.61	13470	9056	130.22	\$2.87	\$1,559,559,533
1982	10470.80	12126	8857	142.05	\$3.13	\$1,663,760,170
1983	12320.23	13746	9211	134.051	\$2.95	\$1,632,833,270
1984	14522.38	11562	10199	146.63	\$3.23	\$1,977,689,355
1985	17901.76	11260	10001	148.04	\$3.26	\$1,957,942,855
1986	30101.57	10712	11380	196.69	\$4.34	\$2,959,995,583
1987	40921.09	12974	11282	116.09	\$2.56	\$1,732,107,815
1988	46227.66	11811	9788	142.93	\$3.15	\$1,850,111,571
1989	57285.14	11066	10826	116.15	\$2.56	\$1,662,838,524
1990	71737.61	14083	13944	95.08	\$2.10	\$1,753,385,659
1991	87606.42	16179	12595	90.79	\$2.00	\$1,512,275,504
1992	93185.57	16094	16569	69.00	\$1.52	\$1,511,939,642
1993	92151.66	13637	13574	76.82	\$1.69	\$1,378,953,747
1994	132117.61	12031	11775	157.27	\$3.47	\$2,448,995,869

CONT.

YEAR	Internal Price of 120 kg of dry coffee (12 month average monthly price) \$COP	Yearly Total Production (1000s of 60 kg sacks of green coffee)	Yearly Total Exports (1000s of 60 kg sacks)	Yearly Average Export Price cents/lb	\$/kg	Export Value \$USD (yearly estimate)
1995	188277.61	13697	9815	162.42	\$3.58	\$2,108,204,347
1996	206409.19	11190	10621	131.48	\$2.90	\$1,846,687,672
1997	281789.57	10704	10932	201.14	\$4.43	\$2,907,823,932
1998	330851.95	12783	11260	146.22	\$3.22	\$2,177,285,779
1999	322681.23	9112	9995	119.12	\$2.63	\$1,574,488,302
2000	341430.33	10619	9206	102.29	\$2.25	\$1,245,290,078
2001	312084.14	10936	9977	71.00	\$1.56	\$936,821,483
2002	288900.76	11614	10273	64.38	\$1.42	\$874,712,244
2003	300338.95	11568	10290	65.45	\$1.44	\$890,722,190
2004	331513.43	11240	10262	81.07	\$1.79	\$1,100,289,288
2005	413780.16	11119	10871	115.95	\$2.56	\$1,666,983,758
2006	457874.62	12079	10947	116.80	\$2.57	\$1,690,964,836
2007	458762.28	12618	11301	125.61	\$2.77	\$1,877,305,992
2008	477408.92	11478	11085	144.57	\$3.19	\$2,119,247,657
2009	584811.45	7812	7894	176.59	\$3.89	\$1,843,456,946
2010	718195.27	8923	7824	224.59	\$4.95	\$2,323,743,511
2011	889753.27	7809	7735	284.30	\$6.27	\$2,908,125,112
2012	789890.94	7744	7170	203.18	\$4.48	\$1,926,548,518
2013	528328.90	10886	9673	148.42	\$3.27	\$1,898,604,433
2014	594437.37	12140	10956	197.07	\$4.34	\$2,855,233,364
2015	725617.45	14175	12714	152.37	\$3.36	\$2,561,938,131
2016	779835.60	14232	12844	155.39	\$3.42	\$2,639,297,574
2017	828441.05	14194	12982	152.67	\$3.37	\$2,621,111,766

CRUDE OIL EXPORTS – COLOMBIA (US ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION 2018)					
YEAR	Thousand Barrels per Day	World Ranking	YEAR	Thousand Barrels per Day	World Ranking
1986	103	29	2002	294	25
1987	146	25	2003	237	29
1988	144	27	2004	223	31
1989	164	25	2005	237	29
1990	192	24	2006	229	30
1991	174	23	2007	239	27
1992	182	25	2008	309	25
1993	197	25	2009	409	21
1994	191	26	2010	538	21
1995	323	23	2011	678	17
1996	328	23	2012	705	17
1997	355	21	2013	817	15
1998	455	18	2014	842	14
1999	528	18	2015	850	14
2000	394	20	2016	745	16
2001	304	25			

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