UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Intersection of Violence and Land Inequality in Modern Colombia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Laurence Gabriel Nelson

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

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This dissertation examines the emergence and endurance of state-sponsored land reform in Colombia. Despite inadequate results from two previous rounds of land reform, Colombia's current president instituted a bill in 2011 that promised to return land to poor farmers displaced by a forty-year conflict that involved the military, anti-government insurgent groups, paramilitary organizations, and narco-traffickers. During the latter stages of this devastating conflict, 57% of Colombian municipalities saw land inequality increase. Even with two state land reform efforts implemented over the course of the twentieth century, the continued lack of success in diminishing rural inequality in Colombia motivates the research question: what factors contribute to the failure or success of land reform to impact land inequality? Drawing from sociological and political science perspectives on development and inequality, I focus on Colombia as a strategic case study. I utilize (1) longitudinal data set of census and cadastral survey data, (2) interviews with legislators, human rights advocates, and journalists, and (3) analysis of newspaper articles from liberal and conservative newspapers. Political institutions are central to the explanatory framework. I find that the Colombian state failed to consolidate the

monopoly of violence during the nineteenth century due to a nexus of geographic and institutional factors, during which time a categorical distinction emerged between landed elites and peasant settlers. In various periods during the twentieth century, civil conflict in Colombia was fought over political affiliation (e.g. during *La Violencia*), and over relationships profoundly changed by commercial agriculture (e.g. strikes by peasant workers on banana plantations in 1928 and the raids by ANUC in 1971-73). Violence changes relations between social classes on its own, irrespective of the penetration of capitalism into rural areas, and shifts alliances between different factions of elite groups. Colombian elites have at various critical junctures been successful in consolidating de facto power by hiring non-state armed forces, and have bypassed changes to the state's institutions. The dissertation therefore delves into one particular dimension of state capacity - its ability to enforce order - in perpetuating rural inequality.

The dissertation of Laurence Gabriel Nelson is approved.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCU- *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* (Peasant Self Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá)- paramilitary group formed in northwestern Colombia that united several smaller paramilitary armed groups. It was formed by two brothers whose father had been killed by the FARC in 1984, and operated mainly in the departments of Córdoba and Antioquia- the ACCU eventually became the national AUC group.
AUC- *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self Defense Forces)- political arm of the paramilitary groups
CEDE- *Centro de Estudios Sobre Desarollo Económico*- group of economists based at Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá that have updated data on landholding, along with IGAC
CEGA- Centro de Estudios Ganaderos y Agrícolas- government sponsored organization that collects information on land usage.
CERAC- *Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos* (Conflict Analysis Resource Center)- think tank based in Bogotá that collects data on violence in Colombia
CODHES- *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Despalazamiento*- human rights organization based in Bogotá that collects data on the internally displaced population.
CTC- *Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia*- worker's rights organization active in the 1930s.
DPS- *Departamento para la Prosperidad Social* (Administrative Department of Social Prosperity)
ELN- *Ejército Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army)- guerilla organizations formed in 1964 in department of Santander (eastern Colombia) by university students that had travelled to Cuba.
EPL- *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (Popular Liberation Army)- a pro- Chinese guerilla group active in the 1970s and 1980s in Colombia.
FARC- *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)- guerilla group formed in 1964 as military wing of Communist Party in the eastern plains and in southern jungles. It is the oldest guerilla organization still active in Latin America.
FEDECAFÉ- *Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia*- coffee grower's lobby group, promoting coffee production and export.
FEDEGAN- *Federación Colombiana de Ganaderos*- the cattle rancher's lobby
FEDEPALMA- National Association of Palm Oil Growers, lobby group formed in 1962
IGAC- *Instituto Geográfico Augustín Codazzi*- geographic institute that collects data on landholding
INCODER- *Instituto Colombiano de Desarollo Rural*- government ministry responsible for rural development, absorbed INCORA and several national rural development organizations in 2001, part of ministry of agriculture.
INCORA- *Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria*- national land reform institute formed in 1961 and responsible for carrying out national land reform program.
INDEPAZ- *Instituto de estudios para el Desarollo y la Paz*- non-governmental organization based in Bogotá that promotes reconciliation and social justice.
INGEOMINAS- *Asociación Colombiana de Geología y Minería*- government mining ministry
M-19- *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19 Democratic Alliance)- a nationalist guerilla force active in the 1980s.

MAS- *Muerte a* Secuestradores- “Death to Kidnappers” paramilitary group formed in the 1980s in Boayacá to act against guerilla groups using kidnapping to extort elite families, supported by drug cartels, politicians, US based Texas Petroleum, and wealthy landowners.
NCFG- National Federation of Coffee Growers
PCC- *Partido Comunista Colombiano* (Communist Party of Colombia)
SAC- *Sociedad de Agricultores Colombianos*- agriculture grower’s lobby, which includes cotton, tobacco, rice, and palm oil interests.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to sit down and thank the many people who have contributed to this study. In particular, I would like to thank several scholars, both Colombian and American, who have shared their knowledge and enthusiasm for such a beautiful and complex country. James Robinson at Harvard University was quite helpful in putting me in contact with colleagues in Colombia, and in thinking about the idea of the frontier. Ana María Ibáñez at Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá was very generous in sharing the recent data on land gini collected by her team in collaboration with the geographic institute IGAC. Andres Zambrano at UCLA was kind enough to put me in contact with several of his colleagues in Colombia, and helped me to secure access to the CEDE-UNIANDES-IGAC data. Oliver Kaplan and Michael Albertus were also very generous, and shared their data on land reform enthusiastically.

The Department of Sociology at UCLA, and Los Angeles more generally, have been my home for the past eight years. The research was made possible by fellowships from the Department of Sociology. My dissertation committee at UCLA has provided me with excellent guidance through what seemed at times an insurmountable process. Vilma Ortiz has been a warm and dedicated mentor, and helped me stick to this project when it felt like it was too hard to continue. Gabriel Rossman has provided incisive comments at each stage, and really helped tighten my thinking on networks and hierarchy, as well as broaden the scope theoretically; his breadth of knowledge is amazing. Mark Sawyer was a great outside member, and really helped me engage more with political science and political sociology, deepening my theoretical framework. My chair, César Ayala, has been with me since I began the program at UCLA, and has seen me through each stage of this process. He has provided encouragement and support throughout all of these stages, believing in me even in the periods when I lost focus. I would also

like to thank several of my fellow graduate students, without which I would not have been able to endure this process: in particular, Alex Huezo, Mateo Schoorl, Anthony Alvarez, and Dwight Davis. I am lucky to have found people I can call good friends while in graduate school.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: to my father, Carl, my mother Carmen and my brother Chris. They have provided me with endless love and support through the years, recharging me on trips home to Boulder with outdoor BBQs on our back deck, tennis games with my uncle Gustavo, hikes to Brainard Lake, ski trips to Telluride, trips to Ten Ten Brasserie and to Jax. My father started a program at UCLA in the Department of Geology in the 1970s. He inspired me to become a better thinker and to approach the world with patience and warmth and thoughtfulness. My mother has been my champion (even when she has embarrassed me), and has constantly shown me how to balance graduate school with the arts, and to become a more complete person. My brother has been an inspiration to me ever since we were little, and has grown up to be a talented artist and brilliant thinker; he continues to inspire me. I would also like to thank a new member of my family, my girlfriend Hyeyoung Oh. She has been a tireless editor, reading drafts and constantly helping me to clarify my writing; she more than anyone helped me clarify what I was trying to say. But she has also given me balance, and filled a hole in my life that I did not even know existed. I could not have made it through graduate school without her, and I am immensely grateful she is in my life.

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Nelson, G. (2013). Colombia's Paper Tiger: The Intersection of Land Reform and Violence. Presented at the *American Sociological Association's* Comparative-Historical and Political Sociology Mini-Conference in New York City, NY.

Nelson, G. (2013). Colombia's Paper Tiger: The Intersection of Land Reform and Violence. Presented at the Section on Peace, War, and Social Conflict Refereed Roundtable at the Annual Meeting of the *American Sociological Association* in New York City, NY.

Nelson, G. (2011). Barriers to Land Reform in Colombia. Presented at the Race and Ethnic Minorities Refereed Roundtable at the Annual Meeting of the *American Sociological Association* in Las Vegas, NV.

Nelson, G. (2009). Remittances and Enduring Inequality in El Salvador. Presented at the Latin American Studies Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

CHAPTER 1- Introduction

En nuestra campaña dijimos que lucharíamos para devolverles a los campesinos la tierra que ellos trabajan con vocación, con entusiasmo y con mucho sudor. Nos comprometimos también a acelerar la devolución de esas tierras incautadas a los criminales, una labor que continuará, porque las seguiremos incautando. Y si el honorable Congreso de la República, querido amigo y honorable senador (Eduardo) Enríquez Maya, nos da los instrumentos, nos da los mecanismos, con mucho más ímpetu que el que tuvieron esos criminales al despojar a los campesinos, nosotros les devolveremos las tierras a todos y cada uno de ellos (Santos 2010).

In September 2010, Colombia's new president Juan Manuel Santos declared that, after a decade of neglect, the government would intensify its commitment to land reform once again. Santos, the former defense minister of the previous president, Álvaro Uribe, promised to return thousands of square miles of stolen land to poor farmers who were displaced during a long, murky conflict. With a significant number of Colombians displaced by rural violence, the government set a goal to return over 19,000 square miles (5 million hectares) of stolen property to landless peasants over the next four years. President Santos claims it can be done with the help of recent legislation that provides land, financial compensation and other benefits to war victims. "We will accelerate the expropriation of lands that are in the hands of bandits," Santos said in a recent speech. "And if the Congress gives us the tools, we will return these lands to the peasants even faster than the criminals stole them" (Santos 2010).

The President's initiative is a renewed effort to redistribute land after several failed attempts by different administrations. During the long-lasting civil conflict known by Colombians as *La Violencia* (which lasted from 1948-64), almost eight thousand square miles of land (roughly the size of New Jersey) were abandoned or stolen according to political scientist Paul Oquist (Oquist 1980). In the 1960s and 1970s, the plundering of desirable land continued, becoming more dynamic in the 1980s as the armed internal conflict escalated. Various armed

groups were involved in this plundering (among Colombians, this process is referred to as *el despojo de la tierra*).

The most thorough data on the amount of land that was either forcibly stolen or abandoned under armed threat comes from several surveys carried out by the *Comisión de Seguimiento a la Política Pública Sobre Despalazamiento Forzado* (Commission for Monitoring Public Policy on Forced Displacement). The third and most recent survey found that between 1980-2010, 6.6 million hectares (25,482 square miles), or 13% of agriculturally viable land, was stolen or abandoned due to threat. This statistic is likely an underestimate because poor data collection resulted in the exclusion of data on land stolen from ethnic minority communities. With only 7.5% (495,493 hectares) of this stolen land returned to its original owners, the *despojo de la tierra* has affected over 400,000 families. Thirty-two percent of survey respondents pointed to the right-wing paramilitary organization known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, or AUC) as the culprit. Another 25.5% of respondents fingered the left-wing guerilla organization known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, or FARC). Another third of respondents could not identify specifically which armed group had been behind the threats, but had felt intimidated by armed actors.

An increase in land inequality accompanied these trends: between 2000 and 2010, 57% of Colombian counties (called municipalities in Colombia) saw inequality in land distribution increase (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). Colombia had one of the highest levels of inequality in landholding in the twentieth century in the world (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; Deininger 1999); the gini index of land inequality was 0.86 in 2011 in Colombia (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). In contrast, Finland's land gini

index in 2000 was 0.27, 0.58 in France in 2000, 0.58 in Chile in 1997, 0.72 in Nicaragua in 1993, 0.77 in Brazil in 1996, 0.78 in the United States in 2002, and 0.93 in Paraguay in 1991 (World Bank 2007).

While it is clear that Colombia's gini index far exceeds the indices of many nations, what is the significance of this value? Land ownership is a key indicator of economic stability in Latin American countries, and an important source of political power and prestige in Colombia. Amidst various national efforts to reduce land inequality, it remains a significant problem today. Social scientists have argued that the persistence of an unequal distribution in landholding is a corollary of a pernicious form of social power where prestige, power and wealth are interwoven (Huber and Safford 1995; Ziblatt 2008). This dissertation strives to explain the enduring land inequality in Colombia by answering the following questions: why has inequality in Colombia's rural regions persisted despite a multitude of policies aimed at this precise pattern? What can explain the utter failure of one of Latin America's longest running land reform programs?

Economic Development and the State

That the state has a profound role in economic development is an empirical reality that is well accepted by most social scientists (Evans 1995; Amsden 2001; Wade 1990). The non-market means of growth have been well documented, not only for economic change in the last fifty years but also in the nineteenth century: states signaled their support for particular products, provided information and training in specific agricultural techniques, encouraged foreign investors to make financial investments, made cheap land available, offered loans, distributed agricultural seedlings to farmers, and ensured a consistent workforce by keeping peasants on plantations through vagrancy laws (Wade 1990; Williams 1994; Mahoney 2002). The expectation of modern nation states to protect certain social and civil rights of their citizens also

grew, and states implemented practices and policies to ensure equal opportunity and the right to a certain level of economic well being (Marshall 1992).

Latin American states have often been characterized as weak states, however, lacking the capacity to foster development in the same manner that highly industrialized countries were able to in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Centeno 2002; Engermann and Sokoloff 1997; Yashar 2005). The role of the state in driving economic growth became of interest to social scientists after a series of books about the "East Asian Miracle" (Amsden 1989; Johnson 1982; Wade 1990). The general argument was that East Asian economies, such as South Korea and Taiwan, had higher levels of economic growth because the state was strong, coercing social classes into cooperating with one another and closely monitoring practices that could threaten domestic industries (e.g. foreign technology imports). Evans (1995) developed a comparative argument that the "embedded autonomy" of the South Korean and Brazilian states in the industrial and commercial classes made them effective at promoting economic development. Conversely, the lack of strong states in Africa and Latin America (excluding Brazil) was linked to their low levels of economic growth (Centeno 2002; Herbst 2000).

State capacity, frequently used as a proxy for the strength of a state, however, is difficult to conceptualize. It is often defined in several different ways: 1) military capacity, 2) bureaucratic and administrative capacity and 3) in the state's ability to raise revenue (Acemoglu et al. 2001; Cárdenas 2010; Engermann and Sokoloff 1997). State capacity as military capacity represents the state's ability to overcome aggressive actions by other nation-states with force, and has been discussed in depth by Michael Mann (1986), Charles Tilly (1992) and Miguel Centeno (2002). This definition emphasizes how rulers engage in war-making to neutralize

external rivals, and engage in state-making to neutralize internal rivals (Tilly 1992). State capacity as bureaucratic and administrative capacity reflects the degree of professionalization of the state bureaucracy (via the presence of state officials), and represents one part of what Michael Mann (Mann 1986, 1993) has called "infrastructural power." This conceptualization also encompasses the presence of legal institutions that support private contracts and the ability of the state to protect property rights. Lastly, state capacity as measured by revenue generation demonstrates the state's ability to tax incomes and other sources of economic activity (aside from foreign trade): a state's ability to generate revenue is often correlated with military capacity. External wars have historically demanded increases in the level of taxation and debt, and have fostered greater military, bureaucratic, and fiscal capacity. These conceptualizations fall short when applied to Latin American states, as internal conflict and civil war (rather than international war) have primarily explained weak state capacity in Latin America (Centeno 2002). Explaining the persistence of weak state capacity in a region with very few international wars becomes a challenge that these definitions do not satisfactorily address, although the region provides a good counterfactual for the European experience of frequent international wars (Centeno 2002).

Colombia's state capacity has been notoriously uneven across its territory (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011; LeGrand 1986; Reyes Posada 2009; Zamosc 1986), reflecting theorists' claims that Colombia is in fact four or five nations putatively referred to as one country (Huber and Safford 1995; Reyes Posada 2009; Safford and Palacios 2002). The territory was difficult to traverse for much of the nineteenth century, keeping regions quite distinct from each other. Bogotá was one of the earliest cities in which the Spanish colonial administration settled; it was the seat of the viceroyalty, located in the eastern region where population density was highest.

Nonetheless, Bogotá's ability to consolidate its political power across the territory was challenged by two critical regions: the West and Cartagena, located in the North. The Western cordillera, which included Medelliín and Popayán, had large deposits of gold, which was the nation's primary export during the colonial period, and Cartagena controlled commercial trade with the outside world (Safford and Palacios 2002). The presence of multiple powerful centers challenged the ability to create a unified, national state, as evidenced by several attempts by inhabitants in eastern Colombia during the nineteenth century to join Venezuela (Safford and Palacios 2002). Thus, Bogotá has often ruled with a weak claim to authority in several regions of the country.[1]

Historians such as Frank Safford, Keith Christie and Marco Palacios have also pointed to the historical lack of state capacity in Colombia (Christie 1978; Oquist 1980; Safford and Palacios 2002). Their work shows how difficult the project of nation-building was in Colombia, which was really several nations joined under one administrative shell known as Gran Colombia. The departments (equivalent to states) of Santander and Norte de Santander had strong family and commercial ties with the neighboring Venezuelan state of Táchira and in the 1850s some influential families from the region tried to separate the northeast and form the independent Republic of Zulia with neighboring Venezuelan states (Christie 1979). The Caribbean coast had a movement for independence in 1840 (Alarcón 1963), while in Antioquia a strong group of Conservatives pushed for a federalist state, in order to protect their region from what they perceived to be anti-Church Liberals who held power nationally during the 1850s through the 1880s (Safford and Palacios 2002). There were even those who talked seriously of annexation to

[1] At various times throughout the colonial period, Popayán and Cartagena claimed to be the seats of national power (Safford and Palacios 2002). Bogotá faced further challenges from Calí, Medellín and Barranquilla, cities that emerged as important regional centers in the nineteenth century.

the United States as a way of escaping the chronic civil wars, local and national, which plagued the country during the nineteenth century (Santos 1965).

Colombia's geography, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, however, has not been the sole barrier to building a stronger state. At various times throughout the nation's history, Colombian political and economic elites have capitalized on, and preferred, a weak state. This configuration of low central state capacity has allowed for local elites to rule over smaller regions relatively autonomously, without significant intervention from Bogotá. Thus, this dissertation argues that the persistence of high inequality and low state capacity in Colombia is inextricably linked to elite control. The mechanisms for the persistence of low state capacity and high inequality are unclear within the literature. Sokoloff and Zolt (Sokoloff and Zolt 2006) emphasized fiscal capacity, arguing that Latin American countries have been locked into a low taxation and high inequality trap where elites prefer low taxes and low investment in public goods. Because Latin American nations had greater political concentration at their outset, tax systems remained regressive because the majority did not have the political voice to reverse the trend (Sokoloff and Zolt 2006). De Ferranti et al. (De Ferranti et al. 2004) argued a similar claim that authoritarian political institutions have not favored investments in education or in land redistribution, and this lack of investment has led to what Charles Tilly has coined "durable inequality" (Tilly 1999). However, the question remains as to how a low degree of centralization in Colombia throughout a good deal of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Control over the territory was never established the way it was in Mexico by the central valley, or in Venezuela, Argentina and Uruguay by coastal cities (Caracas, Buenos Aires and Montevideo respectively). Ongoing violence and domestic strife reflected more than the fiscal capacity of Colombia to tax

its citizens or the administrative capacity to build more schools, it entailed an inability to impose order and establish its authority.

In this dissertation, I expand upon the definitions of state capacity to include a fourth dimension: the monopoly of force within the nation. I look at the impact of state capacity in Colombia on its ability to ensure the welfare of its citizens. Max Weber (Weber 1946) defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory…Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it" (Weber 1946: 78). The lack of state capacity to ensure law and order became increasingly clear during the twentieth century in Colombia, as violence in frontier regions and even in urban areas underwent several transformations and crystallizations. Subsequently, I consider the role of non-state armed actors on land inequality in Colombia. I argue that Colombian elites have invested in de facto power, acting outside of the state's administrative, bureaucratic, and military capacity; elites have used non-state armed groups in order to bolster their local authority. Therefore, the mechanism for the persistence of low central state capacity in Colombia has been the lack of a monopoly of violence, via the use of non-state armed groups.

In order to look at the persistence of low state capacity in Colombia and the link to land inequality, I use cadastral data on land ownership, interview data, and content analysis from several Colombian newspapers, to analyze the relationship between inequality and three institutional contexts:

1. the preference of commercial agriculture over subsistence agriculture in the agrarian sector

2. the influence that various political actors at the local and national levels wield over agricultural policymaking.

3. the de facto power of economic elites manifested through paramilitary groups

The first two factors have figured prominently in theories on the enduring unequal social structure in Colombia (Bagley 1979; Machado 1998; Oquist 1980; Zamosc 1986). I contend that the role of the third factor has been underemphasized: the de facto power of landowners in Colombia have allowed them to act outside the state in order to circumvent land reform, and in some cases commandeer agricultural policy.

I organize the rest of the dissertation in chapters that examine historical and quantitative data to explain the persistence of land inequality in Colombia. Chapter 2 investigates the persistence of a structure of unequal land distribution in Colombia. I evaluate the settling of Colombia's frontier during the nineteenth century, and the success of elites in bypassing the national homestead law in order to gain influence in the land courts responsible for privatizing public land. Despite having a vast frontier, and a law that protected homesteading on public land, Colombian landed elites were triumphant in hoarding land as a resource, a process which facilitated the emergence of a more profitable commercial sector in agriculture. Subsequent laws that portended to increase rural workers' rights, such as the 1936 'land to the tiller' clause and the 1961 land reform law, were effectively detoothed by landed elites. Chapter 2 argues that these de jure political institutions seemed to matter little for outcomes in national agricultural policy in Colombia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because of traditional social power. Traditional social power is a form of power where prestige, power and wealth form a nexus that gives rise to and lends legitimacy to social hierarchy, effectively undermining those political institutions. The term captures the complexity of power that local elites held in Colombia, who

relied on more than just political office holding or landed property, but also on income from commercial ventures such as coffee processing, on military might, and on their ability to garner favor from the judicial system.

Chapter 3 explores the perceptions of inequality in three major Colombian newspapers. I analyze a shift in media coverage of the country's most important redistributive law: the land reform program. While a majority of articles discussed the land reform law as a failed program, a shift occurred in the 1990s. Articles before this shift reported the failed land reform program as an administrative and bureaucratic issue related to the country's poor record of economic growth. Articles after the shift tended to blame the failed land reform program on the armed conflict in rural areas. While articles published in both periods pointed to state capacity as a major factor in the failed land reform program, articles in the first period emphasized infrastructural capacity while articles in the second period underscored the capacity to monopolize violence. Articles in the second period especially focused on the ways in which guerilla activity and paramilitary activity have been closely tied to the lack of a monopoly of violence by the Colombia state.

Chapter 4 examines recent data on land inequality to look at the relationship between land gini and rural violence. This chapter makes use of recent data on land inequality shared with me personally by a team of economists who updated the municipal cadastral records in 2012 for all departments except for Antioquia (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). I found a reverse relationship between land inequality and levels of violence from 2000-05. This demonstrates that there are several regions in Colombia with stable landholding structures that are quite unequal, and points to high local state capacity, and a high degree of traditional social power. I also found evidence of a cyclical nature of violence and land inequality: land inequality was greater in regions with 1) higher counts of violence in the 1970s

and 1980s, and 2) areas that saw more land reform in the 1960s and 1970s. These trends indicate that recent increases in land inequality were relational, a kind of retaliation for land invasions carried out by the peasant movement in the 1970s and for decreased landholder power. Chapter 5 concludes, providing some projections as to what might happen under the new land restitution law, and some policy recommendations for disrupting the cycle of increasing violence linked to rural inequality.

CHAPTER 2- Colombia's Paper Tiger: Land Reform in Historical Perspective

Despite increases in urbanization, educational attainment, and per capita incomes (Robinson and Urrutia 2007) -- all strong indicators of a successfully developing society, how has inequality persisted in Colombia? Political power fails to sufficiently explain the persistence of inequality -- Colombia never fostered a repressive government the way other unequal states in African and Latin America did. To the contrary, the state has primarily held free and democratic elections for the most part since the 1850s (Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013). The explanation that economic policies have largely shaped the unequal development of Colombia also falls short: the state has made concerted efforts to support various forms of economic planning, from protectionism to opening itself to trade (Jaramillo 1998). Despite these policies, levels of inequality changed very little.

One measure of wealth inequality, the gini index of land inequality, saw almost no change at all, increasing from 0.861 in 1960 to 0.874 in 2011 (Berry 2004; CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). In fact, wealth inequality in particular remained stubbornly persistent during the last century in several Latin American countries (De Ferranti et al. 2004; Londoño and Székely 2000). To unpack this dilemma, this chapter provides a historical analysis of the economic and political development of Colombia. I direct sociology's political- institutional turn towards the question of how land inequality has persisted in Colombia. I argue that the following three claims help explain Colombia's enduring inequality: 1) Colombia is actually a conglomeration of several smaller states, a feature that has decreased the state's capacity to ensure the well-being of its citizens; 2) Changes in political institutions, such as the end of Spanish colonial rule and the country's frontier law, have in reality changed very little about the state's governing structure; and 3) Decreased state capacity has proven to be

advantageous to traditional political and economic elites in various periods.

Theory

Two common explanations for the persistence of a structure of unequal land distribution in developing economies are the conditional frontier thesis (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011) and the blocked democracy thesis (Moore 1966). In an oft-cited text, Frederick Jackson Turner (1920) posited that the vast frontier in the United States allowed for democracy to develop. Turner conceptualized the frontier as the line between "barbarism and civilization," and that the process of settling and surviving on free land shaped American institutions towards individualism and optimism, and ultimately towards democracy (Turner 1920). In recent years, scholars have problematized Turner's frontier thesis; similar to the United States, other colonies of the Americas and nations like Russia, South Africa, and Australia all possessed large frontiers, but failed to follow the trajectory of development of the United States (Walsh 2005). Even in the US, had it not been for the North winning the Civil War, the West may have been characterized by latifundia estates and plantation agriculture. Turner's thesis failed to apply in countries with a large frontier that were also dominated politically by a strong oligarchy; the oligarchy was able to hoard land as a resource and manipulate its allocation in order to stay in power (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011). Through structuring land laws, restricting or encouraging selective immigration, and through parceling frontier lands in exchange for personal favors, elites manipulated how the frontier was settled. The Turner thesis held true, however, in those countries where the presence of strong political institutions prevented elites from acting in their own self-interest (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011). Subsequently scholars have updated Turner's original thesis with the conditional frontier thesis, which argues that the effect of the frontier on political development was conditional on a nation's political institutions (García-

Jimeno and Robinson 2011).

Colombia is sometimes discussed, along with Costa Rica, as an example of a Latin American state with strong political institutions. Both countries passed versions of a homestead law, similar to the United States, that gave rights to settlers over the land they produced on (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011; LeGrand 1986; Muñoz 2009). However, Colombia's version of a homestead act was not well enforced other than in the coffee growing regions of the central and Eastern cordillera, and the historic evidence shows that, on the contrary, elites held a good deal of influence in how land was parceled out following independence (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011; LeGrand 1986). Further, it is likely that elites in Colombia used extralegal means of controlling access to land, and did not heed political institutions such as the homesteaders' rights law. Thus, the thesis has mischaracterized Colombia as an egalitarian and democratic nation when it actually had elements of an oligarchical country.

The second explanation of land inequality, often referred to as the 'blocked democracy' argument, is founded in Barrington Moore's canonical book, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966). Moore argued that, contrary to the thesis set forth by modernization theorists,[2] multiple versions of a modern nation state could exist. Moore was one of the first social scientists to argue that there was no overarching continuum from pre-modern to modern nations, as many modernization theorists, such as economist Walt Rostow were arguing at the time (Rostow 1960). Moore's argument was similar to the conditional frontier thesis in that it prioritized the role of social class, but from there the two theses diverged widely. For Moore, the analytic weight fell on the relational power of elites vis-à-vis other elites, and on the role of cross

[2] Modernization theory argued that developing nations, with appropriate economic planning, could follow the same steps towards development that industrialized nations had taken, moving from agriculture to commercial agriculture to manufacturing to heavy industries.

class alliances in political modernization. In Barrington Moore's (1966) original formulation, there were three trajectories to modern nations: 1) a bourgeois revolution leading to Western style parliamentary democracies 2) a revolution driven by elites from above leading to capitalist authoritarianism and 3) a peasant revolution leading to communism. According to Moore, the type of route taken is determined by the relative configuration of power distribution amongst the elites, the economic basis of the agrarian upper-class, the distribution of power between classes, and the states' autonomy vis-à-vis the dominant class. According to Moore (1966), those European countries that witnessed a breakdown of democracy and a transition to authoritarianism were characterized by large landholdings and a powerful class of large landowners that survived into the modern era. These landlords engaged in labor-repressive agriculture and used their political power to secure a cheap labor force.

Moore's theory, however, remains insufficient to explain the case of Colombia and other Latin American nations because of his limited case selection. By focusing mainly on European countries (Moore also attempted to describe Japan and India), Moore examined nations with a long history of independence and with an established system of authority, whereas most Latin American countries were colonial dependencies until 1820-25. No established system of authority existed in Latin American countries after independence, since power had been fragmented between Spanish and Portuguese state officials and colonial elites (Coatsworth 2005). The Spanish and Portuguese colonial states used their authority in the Americas to coerce labor, according to their own needs (Huber and Safford 1995). Colonial elites had little to say over the forms of coercion that were used, and were unable to radically alter the balance of power between colonial officials and themselves. Thus, their field of power as landlords was never as well articulated as that in many European nations, which had transitioned from feudal

arrangements to more market led relationships between rural workers and landholders. It is difficult, therefore, to try and apply the analysis of landowner power alliances that Moore established to the Latin American colonial period.

This chapter will build from Moore's thesis and the conditional frontier thesis and argue that class relations matter deeply towards understanding Colombia's development trajectory. I draw on both theories to look at how political elites have shaped the contours of agricultural policy in Colombia. I consider the hypothesis (from the conditional frontier thesis) that Colombia had political institutions that were able to counteract the ability of elites to manipulate the distribution of land as a resource. I also draw on Barrington Moore's model, extending his thesis to apply to Colombia.

I therefore adopt a relational approach to Colombia's development; I examine how relations among elites shape development policy in the rural sector. As Moore never extended his thesis to Latin American countries, this chapter ventures to do just that. Thus, this chapter builds on a relational model of sequences of events, which is more relevant to Colombia than an evolutionary or functional model of sequences of events (Abbott 1983).[3] I examine the hypothesis (from the blocked democracy argument) that Colombia's landed elites exercised authority through repressive labor contracts, and influenced political development through blocking legislation in the legislature. I argue that three factors are of particular importance to understanding how power came to be exercised in Colombia: 1) the frontier and the challenges posed by national geography 2) Colombian elites and their relationship to emergent political institutions and 3) state capacity.

[3] Evolutionary models assume a continuous sequence of stages to arrive at a singular outcome and neglect any explanation of process, while functional models explain social phenomena by the function they serve, neglecting the various historical contingencies that can lead to the same outcome (Abbott 1983).

Colombia: A Series of Economic Archipelagos

Located in the northwestern corner of South America, Colombia is divided by three branches of the Andes Mountains running from north to south, dividing the country into several zones. In the east lie vast and unpopulated lowland plains (known in Colombia as the *llanos orientales*), and further south are the tropical valleys of Caquetá and Putumayo, which flow into the Amazon River. The highlands of the eastern cordillera have historically been the most populated region in Colombia, and include the country's capital Bogotá. Between the eastern and central cordilleras lie the plains of the Upper Magdalena Valley and the swampy lowlands of the Lower Magdalena Valley, which ultimately let out to the Caribbean coast. Between the central and western cordilleras lies the fertile but isolated Cauca River Valley. In the middle of the central cordillera lies the province of Antioquia, and west of the western cordillera are the isolated Pacific lowlands.

The mountain ranges rise to heights between 10,000 and 18,000 feet, and drop dramatically into deep valleys that have been carved by the Magdalena and Cauca rivers. Although Colombia's latitude places it in the tropics, its climate is determined by altitude. About 80% of the country's area is known as *tierra caliente*, located between sea level and 4000 feet, and is comprised of hot valleys, plains, and dense forests. The temperate slopes known in Colombia as *tierra templada*, lie between 4000 and 8000 feet and have milder temperatures (64-75ºF). The remaining ten percent (highlands) lies above 8000 feet, and is known as the *tierra fría*, with average temperatures between 54-63ºF. Because of its difficult topography, the Colombian economist Luis Eduardo Nieto has referred to the country as a series of economic archipelagos (Galeano 2009). Unsurprisingly, regions within Colombian remained quite isolated from each other well into the nineteenth century (Huber and Safford 1995); even today certain

regions are quite inaccessible. Generalizing about Colombia remains difficult because of this geographic and regional variation (Reyes Posada 2009).

This topography has led to high economic differentiation and regional variation in Colombia (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson 2014; Safford and Palacios 2002). Historically, transportation has been notoriously difficult. Travel accounts from the colonial era through the nineteenth century highlighted the dangerous and treacherous paths that climbed from the river valleys to the highland plain in the eastern cordillera where Bogotá sits. These paths were only traversable via mule, and were the only route to get travelers and commerce from the Atlantic coast or western parts of the country to the capital. However, the mountain ranges also allowed for diverse farming within a small area. Farmers could grow potatoes and quinoa at higher elevation, maize at lower elevations, and yucca, avocado and cacao along the foothills of the mountains. While the mountain ranges made travel difficult, the high degree of complementarity of crops in these ranges made trade less necessary. The end result has been a nation divided by its topography; Colombia's population remained geographically fragmented well into the twentieth century. As such, a national railroad was not economically viable and remained a low priority for the young nation, and transportation around the territory remained difficult well into the twentieth century. Even today, several areas of Colombia are accessible only via airplane, with no road or railroad options for travelers (Safford and Palacios 2002).

Figure 2-1 Map of Colombia

Early Economic and Political Development

The Nineteenth Century- Land Inequality Emerges

The vast frontier in the United States has been cited as an escape valve for social problems and an important engine for the development of democracy in the nation (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011; Turner 1920). Colombia had a large frontier as well before its independence. Many areas were sparsely populated, and lands were not held privately but were owned by the Spanish crown; these lands were passed on to the new republican government after independence from Spain in 1821.

With the increasing demand for tropical and temperate crops on the world market after 1850 (e.g. quinine used for malaria treatments, tobacco, cotton, and later coffee), and the development of transportation networks, many frontier regions in Colombia came to be in high demand (LeGrand 1986; Machado 1977). The valleys in between the mountain ranges, and the middle and lower altitudes, suddenly became more attractive to farmers as the demand for tobacco, bananas, cinchona bark and coffee grew abroad (McGreevey 1971; Palacios 1980). Coffee in particular drove a good portion of the increase in value. It also drove new migratory patterns within the country. Since coffee could be grown in the *tierra templada* region (temperate zones at higher elevations), *campesinos* (or peasant workers) began leaving the southern and eastern regions for the slopes of the central cordillera that would become a productive region of coffee (Bagley 1979).

Coffee was first grown in the highlands of Antioquia, Caldas, and Quindío in the early nineteenth century. Legislative changes promoted the growth of coffee production; between 1827-1917, around 1000 square miles benefiting roughly 7600 families from Antioquia were awarded, a strategy which allowed coffee processors to buy from several small landholders

growing coffee (LeGrand 1986). Coffee production was further stimulated by the passage of a homestead act in 1882, which allowed for *colonos*, or peasant settlers, to inhabit public land (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011). Many small landholders migrated south from the central highlands of Antioquía and began to cultivate coffee and crops like sugarcane on lower mountain slopes, creating an area of wide and equitable landholding (McGreevey 1971; Oquist 1980). The region has often been idealized as a prosperous and democratic area of small family farmers (LeGrand 1986; García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011); this egalitarian pattern of land distribution has often been generalized to paint a picture of Colombia's frontier as democratic.

A later group of researchers, however, have revised this version of history and argued against this egalitarian picture of the frontier, citing the pivotal role of merchants and land speculators in directing the colonization of Colombia's frontier for personal profits (Arango 1977; Christie 1978; LeGrand 1986; Machado 1977). Land entrepreneurs, as the anthropologist Catherine LeGrand (1986) has called them, included a broad cross-section of society, including merchants, lawyers, politicians, shopkeepers and moneylenders. Scholars have argued that in reality the parceling of the frontier for most of the territory occurred according to a two stage process: 1) small farmers moved into frontier areas and began planting crops on the land, without holding a legal title; 2) followed by more well-to do "land entrepreneurs" that converted the former settlers into tenant farmers (LeGrand 1986). This process allowed Colombian elites to establish a labor force on lands that they later claimed ownership to.

The creation of a labor force was critical as elites were unable to develop commercial agriculture because of a poor transportation system and road network, because of uncertainty associated with fragmented markets, and the unpredictable pricing of commercial goods. Further, given low population density in many areas of the country, and the inability to mobilize a

workface because many rural Colombians were already tied to the land as service tenants or small proprietors, elites struggled to find workers for large farms. By claiming tracts of land that had been previously settled by peasant settlers, entrepreneurs were able to secure a workforce[4] by threatening to evict those who had settled the land via the homestead law but neglected to file for an official title (Christie 1978; LeGrand 1986). This practice of claiming land was common because the state, in the face of bankruptcy, encouraged the sale of public lands to private citizens (LeGrand 1986; Oquist 1980). This dispossession was also facilitated by the land courts: landowners were able to set restrictions on access to land through their influence over local judges. By simply filing for the land titles of lands settled by peasants ten to forty years prior, these peasants were forced into labor contracts (LeGrand 1986); without alternatives for employment, rural workers became a cheap source of labor for many landowners.

This process of settling the frontier was further promoted by Colombia's entrance into commercial agriculture and the international market rather than according to homestead legislation. The two-part settling of the frontier was accelerated by the increase in the value of land and by the emergence of larger scale commercial crops. Colombia's national government began to prioritize commercial crops, and subsequently larger farms, as it discovered the profitability of trading on the international market. The manner by which the state joined international trade networks and agriculture became commercialized – prioritizing large sales of land over protecting the rights of settlers – gave a distinct advantage to large landowners.

[4] The generation of a workforce in Colombia stood in stark contrast to the process in European nations. Workers in Colombia tended to understand their work to be for one or two harvests (Kalmanovitz 1976). In European countries, on the other hand, contracts that were enforced by the state ensured that landowners would have a workforce. England, for example, instituted contracts ranging from 9-21 years (Kalmanovitz 1976). Instead, Colombia came to secure a rural workforce via a different mechanism: that of dispossession.

The state remained quite weak at the time, yet its rural development strategy nevertheless shaped the balance of power between landowners and settlers. With titles of public lands obtainable at low cost through the purchase of government bonds (in an effort to increase state revenues), land titles conceded between 1870 and 1890 were captured predominantly by large landowners (Friedemann 1976). Eighty-four percent of all public land grants between 1827-1931 were for land plots over 500 hectares (LeGrand 1986). The requirement of purchasing public debt certificates in order to title land with the state further favored landowners as these certificates could only be bought in the cities where *campesinos* rarely went (LeGrand 1986), and often through a select group of financial houses specializing in land grants. An application for public land involved a surveyor's fee as well, which remained prohibitive for most *campesinos*, in addition to lawyer's fees to file a petition and to register the property with the proper ministries (LeGrand 1986).

Consequently, property rights, an important economic and political institution, became stratified during the nineteenth century. Through the mid-nineteenth century, most of Colombia's land (75%) was in the public domain and owned by a fiscally weak state (Berry 2004; LeGrand 1986). Ironically, the passage of the homestead act of 1882, intended to promote an equal distribution of land, instead accelerated the stratification of land ownership; Colombians of means benefited the most from the legislation (LeGrand 1986; Nugent and Robinson 2010; Oquist 1980). Property rights proved to be weak for poor Colombians in comparison to elite Colombians (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011). In addition, as economic growth in Colombia became increasingly tied to the export of primary commodity crops on the international market (LeGrand 1986; Machado 1977; Safford 1995), the state quickly capitalized on commercial agriculture and sold land to private citizens for revenue generation (LeGrand 1986).

A disparity between large farms and small farms began to emerge through local struggles that were adjudicated in land courts (LeGrand 1986; Zamosc 1986). The democratic frontier with a homestead law protecting settlers that cleared land for their family's use became an illusion, as land entrepreneurs asserted ownership over public lands and deprived peasants and peasant settlers known as *colonos* access to land. These claims to ownership were buttressed by the state, as land courts often ruled without knowing all the details of specific cases (LeGrand 1986). Moreover, landowners were able to use some of their prestige and influence to have sympathetic justices assigned to the land courts (LeGrand 1986; Robinson and García- Jimeno 2010; Zamosc 1986). The consequence was that "contradictory proprietary norms were embodied in Colombian jurisprudence" (LeGrand 1986: 168).

This historical record confirms the hypothesis put forth by the conditional frontier thesis (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011): the landed class in Colombia was able to use land as a resource, and manipulated its allocation according to its own interests. However, Colombia diverged from the thesis in two important ways: the first was that economic institutions also had a significant impact on how the frontier was parceled out than political institutions had. In particular, an economic institution of prioritizing commercial agriculture drove a substantial portion of settlement along the frontier. The second has to do with the fact that there was no clear landed class in Colombia after independence (other than the Catholic Church), land concentration did not begin until the latter half of the century as land courts began to rule in favor of land entrepreneurs (Coatsworth 2005; Huber and Safford 1995; LeGrand 1986). Colombian elites manipulated the allocation of land not through office holding, by dispossessing peasant settlers of land that had been cleared and farmed. Land entrepreneurs took advantage of a weak property rights regime and dispossessed peasants of their land.

Colombian history also reveals some critical differences in how authority manifested in political institutions within Colombia compared to most of the European cases Barrington Moore analyzed (1966). Land did not seem to be associated with wealth until coffee and other crops began to drive the price of land upwards (Huber and Safford 1995). As the prices of primary commodities increased in the world market, and land entrepreneurs saw an opportunity for profit, they sought to enclose peasant's fields (Marx 1990). However, Colombia never became a republic of planters, where coffee growers dominated the legislative bodies (a political structure which better describes countries like Brazil).[5] The landholding class never developed sufficient capacity to form a united voting block in the national and department assemblies during the early nineteenth century, when the state apparatus was being formed (Oquist 1980; Zamosc 1986). Both the Conservative and Liberal parties had large landholders as part of their political base, in addition to credit brokers, lawyers, merchants, and other interest groups; thus no unified front of landholders was formed (Acemoglu et al. 2008; LeGrand 1986).

Once economies of scale in agriculture grew along with export expansion, large landowners became more specialized and organized into politically active interest group associations (Huber and Safford 1995). These interest group associations, such as the *Federación de Cafeteros* (FEDECAFE, the coffee grower's association) *Sociedad de Agricultores* (SAC, or Society of Planters) and the *Federación de Ganaderos* (FEDEGAN, or cattle ranching association) grew to be quite influential and powerful. This influence was administered not through holding seats in the state and national legislatures, but by intensive lobbying and influence over office holders (Acemoglu et al. 2008; Bagley 1979; Zamosc 1986). In contrast to

[5] In Brazil, coffee was grown on large plantations and a 'coffee elite' emerged in Sao Paolo as the national state came to be dominated by an oligarchy overwhelmingly tied to the coffee sector (Skidmore 1967).

Moore's (1966) assertion that a landed elite co-opts the political system, in Colombia, the relationship between landholders and the political regime was fortified only after the nation had begun exporting crops for commercial sale – crops with sustainable markets that were not subject to the same boom and bust cycles of the early nineteenth century (Huber and Safford 1995). In fact, most landowners did not hold political office in the nineteenth century (Oquist 1980; Robinson and García- Jimeno 2010).

The commercial sale of coffee facilitated the accumulation of power among landholders. Throughout the twentieth century, many Colombians had been divided on whether to pursue a development strategy that privileged the expansion of commercial agriculture, referred to as *via terrateniente* (landowner path), or one that advanced more progressive land rights for settlers, referred to as *via campesina* (peasant path) (Kalmanovitz 1976). Interest groups for both strategies were represented in the liberal and conservative political parties, making the decision murky. Opposing the landowner path, many urban factions linked to trade or other sectors in particular felt that landowners depressed economic growth, by keeping land rents high and restricting the expansion of commercial agriculture. However with the rise in coffee prices and the continued commercialization of production between the 1870s and the 1920s, many of these urban voters supported the ability of agriculture to drive economic growth rather than restrict it (LeGrand 1986; Zamosc 1986). The problematic implementation of the homestead act, the fiscally-weak state, the nature of the international market, and land owning practices that clearly benefited Colombians of means set the foundations for an unequal distribution of land ownership that only became exacerbated over the course of the twentieth century.

Growing Land Inequality: Early Twentieth Century

Significant economic growth occurred in the early twentieth century for the Colombian

state: annual government revenue grew almost tenfold from 15.7 million pesos in 1921 to 107.5 million in 1928 (Muñoz 2009). Much of this revenue generation could be attributed to the rise in global coffee prices, which was due to the Brazilian government's efforts to manipulate coffee prices by controlling production (Muñoz 2009). Commercial agriculture consequently had come to be viewed by many Colombians as a more viable source of revenue than the sale of public-owned land. Coffee sales spurred the growth of a labor market that had not existed before, and the state's public works projects (e.g., the railroads) had to compete for workers (Kalmanovitz 1976).

Commercial agriculture continued to dominate the rural sector resulting in a growing inequality among landowners and peasant farmers. Important institutional changes in the 1930s did little to reverse the trend of growing inequality. Land reform legislation to recognize peasant settlers (or *colonos*, referred to pejoratively as squatters)[6] was introduced in 1936 by the administration of Alfonso López Pumarejo[7] (1934-38). The most prominent piece of the 1936 legislation was the "*extinción del dominio*" (proprietary extinction) clause, which technically outlawed the hoarding of unproductive land. Under this clause, private landowners had to prove that their land was in active production; otherwise it would default to become publicly owned land. While this legislation championed the power of homesteaders, it did little but re-enforce the legislation already in place (since 1882) declaring that farmers successfully producing on public land became the land's rightful owner.

[6] The term squatter carries a negative connotation; the fact that the term is used points to how influential traditional social power remains in Colombia. 'Squatters' were in fact protected by the homestead law and had legal right to the land. The dispossession of these settlers by land entrepreneurs profoundly altered their ability to own land, and later to gain credit from local banks, leading to the stigma attached to squatting rather than to the recognition of their crucial role in settling the frontier.

[7] Alfonso López Pumarejo modeled his reformist policies on Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal (Henderson 2001).

Although implemented to expand the social rights of poor rural Colombians, the law accomplished quite the opposite. After 1936, squatters had to prove they had settled on unproductive land for more than five years, what has been called the 'land to the tiller' clause. In retrospect, the law was primarily a procedural tactic, enabling landowners to register legal titles to land and to be able to remove service tenants who might legally make a claim to the same land (Gilhodès 1974). The judicial institutions responsible for declaring whether the land was being used productively were established two years after the law was passed, which gave landowners ample opportunity to forcibly remove anyone off of the land who might have been able to establish legal claim to it (Machado 1998).

The expropriation of unproductive lands was also not well implemented: the criteria for land to be classified as productive was quite low, thus making it easier for landowners to prove that they were using the land at least some of the time. A landowner could prevent expropriation if they could demonstrate that they were achieving minimum standards of production on at least half of the estate, and they enjoyed a ten-year grace period to reach this standard before expropriation was initiated, a period that was later extended to 15 years in 1944 (Grusczynski and Jaramillo 2002). Subsequently, land inequality was exacerbated as vagrancy and squatting increased; in the wake of the 1936 law, small farmers were displaced and driven further into the frontier (LeGrand 1986; Safford 1995).

The Emergence of the Dual Sector

Colombia's early development, specifically the fact that property rights remained weak for settlers but afforded influential Colombians more leniency, resulted in two critical problems: the emergence of a dual sector in agriculture and the outbreak of violence among rural workers (which will be discussed in a later section). As a result of the state's frontier policy in the

nineteenth century, and the poor implementation of land reform in the early twentieth century, agriculture in Colombia began to take on a dual structure[8] in terms of property distribution. Large, flat farms with generally good soil, whose owners tended to be wealthy and well educated, on the one hand, characterize modern commercial agriculture today. Small landholders, or *campesinos*, generally have small farms located on hillsides, with poorer soil and located further away from adequate road networks but where peasant farming has advantages over large-scale production.

The two types of farms operate differently. Commercial farms use modern technology, and hire wage laborers and sell their output on the market. These larger farms tend to specialize in crops (like grains) drawing on heavy machinery or those that require large-scale production and a stage of processing, such as bananas, palm oil and sugarcane. *Campesinos*, on the other hand, are low-income farmers who use older techniques for farming, and dedicate at least part of their output to feeding their own families. *Campesino* agriculture, however, contributed about 50 percent of total agricultural output from 1960-1990 (Berry 2004). This sector also provided the bulk of jobs generated by farming, as well as the majority of food products consumed by urban citizens during the twentieth century (Jaramillo 1998). *Campesino* farmers provided more than 30% of coffee output from 1960-1990: nearly 80% of all coffee farmers were classified as small landholders (Jaramillo 1998).

This dual sector of farming accelerated due to the actions of the state and private sector interest groups. The state demonstrated its preference for the *via terrateniente* by giving tax breaks to the commercial sector. For instance, the beef and cattle industry, which received

[8] The dual sector model describes an economy in terms of a capitalist sector, which produces goods that are capital intensive, and which employs wage workers, and a subsistence sector, which draws on its own labor. Expansions in the capitalist sector will draw workers out of the subsistence sector according to the model.

several protectionary measures[9] from the state, saw its share of the agricultural frontier increase from 12.1 million hectares in 1950 to 26.7 million hectares in 1986 (World Bank 1995). The influence of private sector lobbying groups[10] over agricultural policy expanded greatly during the middle of the twentieth century. Crops linked to powerful agroindustrial interests, such as rice, palm, cotton, oilseeds, sugar, coffee, beef, and bananas all received protectionary measures in the form of price bands or restrictions on foreign imports, which was particularly useful on the international market where prices were volatile (Jaramillo 1998). Large parcels tended to stay in the hands of landowners because it was taxed at a relatively low rate and because it was a good hedge against inflation (Grusczynski and Jaramillo 2002). Frustration among Colombian peasants, however, eventually led to a very precarious situation in rural areas, as the growth of capitalist agriculture created new class conflicts in the countryside (Zamosc 1986).

These frustrations stemmed from the dual sector's pivotal role in (re)producing historically high levels of poverty in the countryside (Jaramillo 1998; Safford and Palacios 2002). In 1992, 31.2% of the rural population was living in extreme poverty, although this number represented a decline (from 38.4%) in 1978 (Jaramillo 1998). In 1992, 24.1% of rural houses lacked sanitation services, and 61% of the population had not finished primary education. Urrutia and Berry (Urrutia and Berry 1975) found a troubling trend of increasing income inequality in rural areas, due in large part to the lack of jobs for rural unskilled workers during

[9] Protectionary measures included setting price bands around commercial crops so producers could control for price volatility in the international market and providing subsidies to agricultural sectors.

[10] The coffee grower's association (FEDECAFÉ- *Federación de Cafeteros*) is one example of a powerful lobby group in Colombia during the 20th century. This association lobbied in the 1940s to allow for sharecropping to continue as a tenancy arrangement after peasant unions had begun speaking out against it (Meertens 1985). According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO/ CEPAL 1958), 20% of coffee land was still characterized by a sharecropping arrangement in 1956, attesting to some success on the part of FEDECAFE's pleas. The de facto political power of the coffee grower's association became more ubiquitous and unchallenged by the 1960s: coffee policy had become its own sphere dictated by FEDECAFÉ's board of directors, which set the domestic coffee price, collected state taxes on coffee sales and issued licenses to exporters (Bagley 1979).

the 1960s and 1970s. Although rural inequality decreased somewhat in the 1990s (gini index of household income decreased from 0.57 in 1991 to 0.44 in 1995), levels of urban inequality increased in the same period (gini index of household income increased from 0.49 in 1991 to 0.53 in 1995), which reveals a pattern of poverty shifts, with rural workers moving to the cities in order to find work, and continuing to struggle to find gainful employment (Morley 2001; Ocampo et al. 1998).

This growing poverty reflected the ramifications of state support for mechanized commercial agriculture on smallholder agriculture, which has squeezed the subsistence sector. The 1964 national census indicated that the net population shift to the cities between 1951 and 1964 was 2.3 million people (Zamosc 1986). Economic growth between 1950 and 1980 was highest in industries like manufacturing and in urban centers, which further accelerated migration trends from rural areas to the cities (Jaramillo 1998). The trend held through the 1980s and 90s, as many rural Colombian workers continued to move to urban areas. At the same time, economic growth in rural areas was largely confined to the modern commercial sector, the sector grew at a high rate of 3-4% per year between 1950-80 (Jaramillo 1998), and has seen steady growth since 1945 (Kalmanovitz and López 2006). The impact on employment, however, was not equitable: between 1950 and 1980, commercial agriculture accounted for only 18% of new jobs in Colombia, while *campesino* farms accounted for 70% of rural employment in 1988 (Jaramillo 1998). Increasing investments in machinery and new techniques led to the sequestering of resources by capitalist agriculture and large agribusiness– over 70% of credit granted by the Ministry of Agriculture went to commercial crops during the 1950s and 60s (Zamosc 1986). Lower taxes were also afforded to the commercial sector in agriculture, affording it a hidden type of protection (Kalmanovitz 1976). Further, cattle ranchers received

special benefits: beef and milk received 82% of total government support conferred on a group of nine commodities for the period between 1980-92 (World Bank 1995). The dearth of new jobs in commercial agriculture in relation to *campesino* agriculture, coupled with the state's support for commercial agriculture, has perpetuated a cycle of inequality in Colombia (Jaramillo 1998; Ocampo et al. 1998).

The previous numbers on employment are crucial. Inequality in Colombia and other developing economies is often discussed as a structural issue. Models such as the Kuznet's curve assume that inequality increases as a country develops and then decreases again as the country becomes more developed. The basic assumption is that countries can be simply and objectively placed onto a continuum of development, and that inequality will change depending on where the country falls on that continuum. Kuznet's curve was based on a very specific period and on one country, yet the model has been grossly extrapolated to a law of inequality in growing economies (Piketty 2014). The period from 1950-90 was one of stagnation for *campesino* income in Colombia relative to other workers (although their absolute income increased due to the greater participation of female household members and a growth in incomes from commercial and service activities (Jaramillo 1998)). This stagnation had less to do with a cyclical wave of inequality, however, than it did with the country's strategy of import substitution industrialization. Unlike other countries that forewent agriculture through import substitution industrialization, the Colombian state engaged in protectionism of its manufacturing sector while also subsidizing its commercial agricultural sector. With this economic model, small landholders in rural regions suffered as growth grew in industrial and urban centers, while rural areas remained relatively poor (Jaramillo 1998). The end result was that rural workers struggled to find jobs due to a weak labor market, rather than due to a structural cycle (Palma 2003).

The 1950s and Rising Rural Conflict

With uneven economic growth plaguing the nation, the assassination of the Liberal Jorge Gaitán, in 1948 marked the beginning of the violent conflict known in Colombia simply as *La Violencia*: during this period 200,000 people lost their lives, mostly in rural areas (Oquist 1978; Wickham-Crowley 1993). Scholars have often linked the period of violence to a conflict between the two political parties (Sánchez and Meertens 2001; Schmidt 1974), although these accounts omit the level of tension in rural areas, due to high levels of poverty and an unequal distribution of land (Oquist 1978; Zamosc 1986; LeGrand 1986). The eminent historian on Colombia, Catherine LeGrand (1986) has argued that the declining wages of service tenants and day laborers were the micro-foundation of the land conflict. In contrast, I argue that the primary reason for the increase in violent conflict in the 1940s was relational, due to increasing inequality in the countryside in the early twentieth century between the commercial and *campesino* sectors (Reyes Posada 2009; Zamosc 1986). This inequality stemmed from state policies, agroindustrial lobbying groups, and the failure of the 1936 land reform law to redistribute prime agricultural land and protect the smallholder (Machado 1998).

During the 1950s, several parts of western Cundinamarca, eastern and southern Tolima, Huila, and Cauca came to be known as 'independent peasant republics,' quasi-independent zones where peasants fled to protect themselves from partisan violence. These republics were formed in areas where the Colombian Community Party (PCC) had gotten involved in the struggles over Indian communal lands, rights of tenant farmers, and public land claims as far back as the 1920s (Gonzalez Arias 1992). A military campaign bombed these areas in 1964 and 1965 (Wickham-Crowley 1993), sending thousands of Colombians into new frontier regions in the *llanos orientales* and into the Southern jungles, but militant activity remained high in the countryside

and frontier areas of the country where state reach was low (LeGrand 2003). Legislation passed in 1968 allowed for citizens to help the government restore normalcy in areas where violence broke out, and current paramilitary groups like the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC or United Self-Defense Forces) trace their roots back to these legalized self-defense groups. The legislation called for the military to provide arms to these self-defense forces, and the military began to work in conjunction with these forces to flush out guerilla activity and their support networks in rural areas (Mazzei 2009). Known as fumigation campaigns, this collaboration found a natural ally in landowners who had a need for, and the means to pay, for the protection of their property.

The State's Response: Land Reform Revisited in 1961

Once revolutionary action had become too drastic to ignore, the Colombian state revisited its policy on land reform in the 1960s. Three successive rounds of land reform legislation (1961, 1968, and 1973)[11] were passed in quick succession of one another. The reforms, however, were largely influenced by private sector interest groups in the commercial agriculture sector, such as the farmer's association (SAC- *Sociedad de Agricultores*) and cattle rancher's association (FEDEGAN- *Federación de Ganaderos*), and less so by party leaders in the Senate and House of Representatives (Bagley 1979). The livestock sector received more state protection than any other crop sector from the 1950s to the 1980s, according to a World Bank study (1995), due in large part to its successful lobbying efforts (Bagley 1979). This was tied closely to the de facto institutional change of agricultural policy: as it became more complex it was driven more by

[11] The 1961 law laid the foundation for a national land reform program, while the 1968 and 1973 laws merely made small changes to the program.

technical expertise of technocrats in the government planning agencies (Bagley 1979).

Similar to the 1882 homestead act and 1936 land reform law, these legislative changes appeared significant yet remained ineffectual in terms of actual institutional change. The nation's most comprehensive land reform bill was passed in 1961, and became known as *La Ley Agraria Madre Colombiana* (Mother Law of Land Reform). The law gave authority to a new land reform institution, *Instituto Nacional Colombiano de Reforma Agraria* (INCORA), to expropriate and redistribute unproductive estates, and to grant titles to state-owned lands. Where the previous land reform law in 1936 had been a judicial endeavor, with land judges responsible for granting land titles and redistributing land, this second round of legislation gave government agencies the responsibility of land redistribution and titling. The state would provide land, technical assistance, credit, marketing and other support required to facilitate the success of beneficiaries. In fact, the redistribution of land was only one of six functions INCORA was made responsible for; other responsibilities, geared towards modernizing the agricultural sector, included funding irrigation projects, creating credit programs, overseeing 'colonization' projects, funding road construction, and regulating land titling (Bagley 1979). Over time, new institutions were created to implement each component of rural development, weakening INCORA by limiting the institution to redistributing land either through titling or purchase. Consequently, between 1962 and 1982, 93% of the land obtained by INCORA was through direct purchase, only 7% was through expropriation (*El Mundo* 7/1/1986).

The inefficient nature of the law could partly be attributed to how it was implemented. The *Ley Madre* passed during the National Front, the period from 1958-74 when the Liberal and Conservative parties agreed to take turns holding the executive office; the National Front institutionalized power sharing between the two political parties and prohibited third parties from

running candidates. This period was associated with exceptionally high institutional barriers against new legislation; laws passed during the period had to garner two-thirds of votes in the national assembly. As such, the implementation of the reform was piecemeal. Only one administration, under Carlos Restrepo (1966-70), actually pursued land reform with any systemic dedication during this period. Between 1962-69, two-thirds of INCORA's budget went to irrigation and credit services, while only 15% went to actual land redistribution (Findley 1972). By the time the next Liberal president Alfonso López Michelsen was in office (1974-78), land reform was seen as a relic of the past and a failed government program.

The fundamental problem with the agrarian reform law, however, was that the law was never intended to redistribute rural property from large landowners to small landowners. In retrospect, it is likely that the *Ley Madre* was able to garner a majority vote in the national assembly because it was not genuinely a redistributive reform. Land reform in the 1960s was implemented most intensely in those areas that were witnessing high levels of revolutionary action (Zamosc 1986). In an attempt to coax peasants and cultivators away from joining guerilla or paramilitary groups, the state accelerated its attempts at land reform in Tolima, Huila and Meta, where revolutionary fervor was particularly high. Members of the Conservative party voted for the reform in 1961 because it was largely a counterinsurgency strategy (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; Zamosc 1986). Half of all projects and 75% of new titles administered by INCORA in the 1960s were in the "red areas" of conflict, and its activities were coordinated with the armed forces (Berry 2004); very little was done in the areas of large latifundia (large estates) where the major redistribution *should* have taken place.

The implementation of the 1961 law quickly hinted at a troubling legacy of institutional failure. According to one estimate, in its first ten years (1961-71), only 1% of Colombia's total

available arable land was affected by land reform (Kalmanovitz 1976). Redistribution happening through direct expropriation did occur through the late 1960s, spurred by an increasingly politicized *campesino* movement (Grusczcynski and Jaramillo 2002), but at a relatively minimal rate. By 1974, only 2.3% of applicants to INCORA had become landowners (Berry 2004). However, in terms of its counterinsurgency strategy, it seems that the reform was somewhat successful; those areas that saw sustained land titling during the span of INCORA eventually saw lower levels of violence (Albertus and Kaplan 2013). The more cynical factions of the Colombian legislature eventually saw their strategy of reducing rural violence borne out.

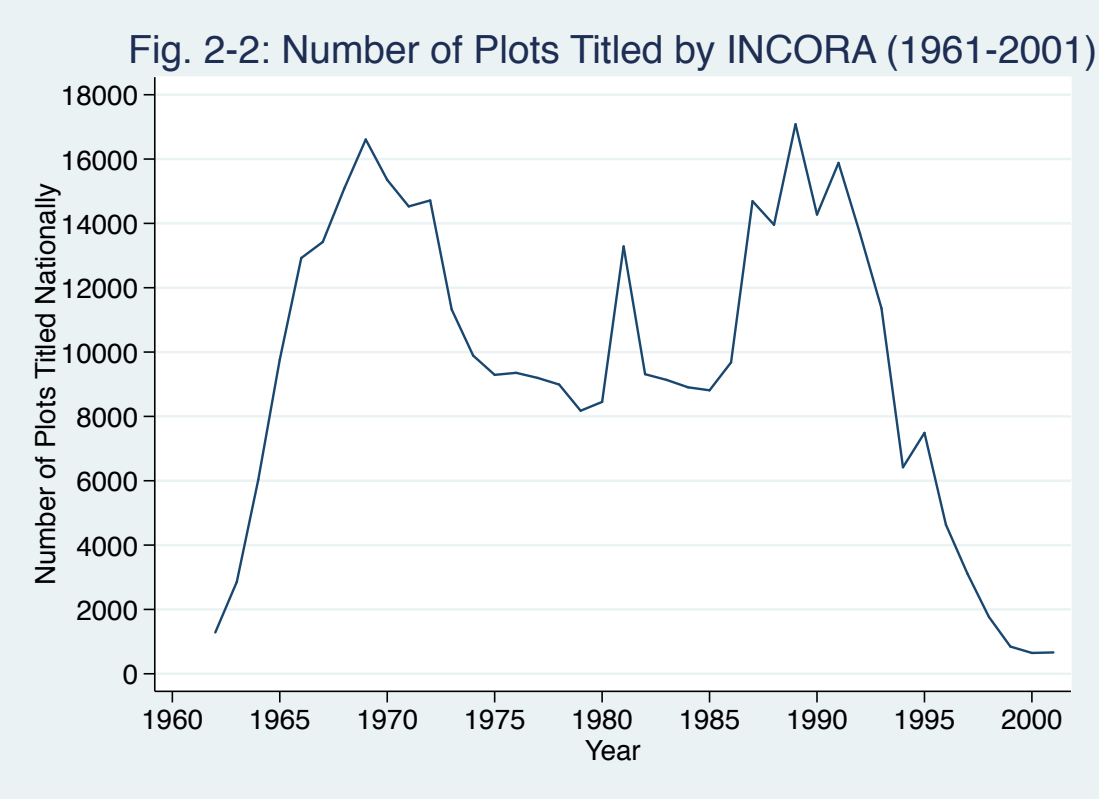
Another troubling precedent in rural development took place during the National Front Period. The peasant organization ANUC (*Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos),* a thorn in the side of the agricultural lobby and the cattle rancher's association for many years, had been created during the second term of progressive president Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-70). President Lleras created ANUC as an institution that allowed for the peasant sector to organize its demands, partly in anticipation of the resistance by elites to Lleras' land reform bill. However, bills passed by the national legislature during the *Frente Nacional* had to pass by a 2/3 majority. In order to get the bill granting ANUC its charter passed, however, President Lleras had signed off on another law in 1968, which prohibited landowners from employing sharecroppers, service tenants and squatters. Rural employment fell quickly: between 1970-75, employment in rural areas fell by 3.9% per year, suggesting that the 1968 law had a major impact (World Bank 1995). Much of the decline in sharecropping was in the coffee sector and along the Atlantic coast, where lands were cleared for cattle grazing (Acemoglu et al. 2014; Coatsworth 2005; Huber and Safford 1995).

The creation of ANUC was a good precedent that gave peasant and rural unskilled

workers an independent avenue to access and lobby the state. The organization grew in membership quickly, and its political objectives sharpened. In response to disappointing levels of land reform, ANUC carried out hundreds of land invasions during the early 1970s; 800 were organized in 1972 (Escobar Sierra 1972). However, during the administration of Conservative president Misael Pastrana (1970-74), a powerful landholder lobby from the Atlantic coast (known as the Costeños) pushed through the Chicoral pact:

> Through the *Acuerdo de Chicoral*, the Pastrana government signaled its complete abandonment of the notion of a social agrarian reform, as it has been projected by Carlos Lleras. Pastrana's emphasis was placed on increasing agricultutral productivity through the stimulation of capital investments in the rural areas. Under such a program, the ultimate fate of the peasantry is liquidation, for they are forced into the cities (Colombia had one of the highest urbanization rates in the world) or they are converted from peasants into salaried workers on large agroindustries. (Bagley and Edel 1980)

The landholding elite agreed to pay higher property taxes, in exchange for an agrarian reform that left the structure of landholding intact, and thus amenable to pursue large agro-business ventures like cattle ranching and palm oil production (Bagley 1979; Elhawary 2010). This change limited most land reform to those plots that were voluntarily offered by landowners, causing a dramatic decline in the rate of land redistribution. Large farms over 200 hectares increased while small farms less than 20 hectares declined (see table 1). The decline in redistribution was further exacerbated in 1982 when purchase prices were made independent of cadastre values (which are typically low, making land a good tax haven)- this dramatically increased the cost of buying private farms for redistribution (Grusczynski and Jaramillo 2002). The following graph shows the fate of Lleras' land reform bill. The effect of the Chicoral Pact is particularly clear, as land reform declined sharply during the 1970s.



After the *Chicorolazo,* as it has come to be known in Colombia, INCORA grew even more ineffective, shifting its strategy from redistribution towards one of colonizing frontier regions. It undertook several programs in the unsettled southeastern plains to distribute baldíos, or unclaimed lands owned by the state, generally considered to be unusable (Marsh 1983). These efforts were accompanied by investments in health, education, transportation, irrigation and crop production, as well as subsidized loans to land reform beneficiaries. However, INCORA was never an effective institution, and most of its projects ended up falling very short of their intended impact.

In addition, it became evident that land reform as counterinsurgency strategy was

inadequate (in a minority of cases, some regions experienced lowered rates of violence) (Albertus and Kaplan 2013). Guerilla groups, paramilitary groups and private armies hired by drug traffickers were responsible for high rates of violence beginning in the 1970s. In 1980, it was estimated that about 8% of the national population and 25% of the rural population had been victims of violent acts committed by left and right-wing groups alike (Bejarano and Reyes 1988). More recently, as drug traffickers bought land and used it as a way to launder money, they gained control of self-defense groups formed in the 1960s, or formed their own; these paramilitary groups often were associated with the military and were financed by business groups and landowners seeking to protect their investments from rural violence.

The Rise and Fall of Land Redistribution Efforts in the Late Twentieth Century

In the wake of a failed 1961 land reform law and the increased use of violent means by landholders in rural regions, land reform in Colombia evolved in a manner consistent with the rise of neoliberalism (see table 5) - towards privatizing land markets. Across Latin America, neoliberal regimes did away once and for all with more class-centric corporatist regimes, reducing Ministry of Agriculture budgets that had helped fund credit programs for poor farmers and agricultural subsidies for smallholders (Yashar 2005). Shortly thereafter, real wages in agriculture began to fall, especially in the 1980s and 1990s (Jaramillo 1998). Land reform programs fell into the pattern of privatizing land markets in several countries in Latin America (in Mexico in 1991, Ecuador in 1994, and Bolivia in 1996) (Yashar 2005).

In 1994 in Colombia, market assisted land reform was introduced by Law 160, which left land reform up to negotiations between landowners and potential beneficiaries. Beneficiaries could then apply to the government for a subsidy that would cover 70% of the agreed upon value; the remaining 30% would be covered by the individual buying the land. This law also

obligated the state to increase the income of *campesinos*, to promote peace in the countryside, and to increase the transparency of obtaining land. Lengthy discussions on implementation procedures dragged on for several years and redistribution continued at a snail's pace, using only traditional direct purchase methods. In fact, as Table 3 makes clear, the number of families benefiting from these programs declined after 1997. By 2000, only 10% of the planned one million hectares had been distributed as part of the new market led reform (Thomson 2011). Unsurprisingly, at least half of Colombia's departments (those with calculations for 1984) saw land inequality increase between 1984 and 2002 (Table 4). Although the percentage of landowners that held large properties (over 200 hectares) remained relatively constant during this twenty-year period, their control of land increased substantially, from 47.1 percent in 1984 to 68.3 percent in 2002 (see Table 1). This pattern is corroborated by data from Colombian scholars as well (Table 2) (though there has been controversy regarding the methods of data collection)[12].

Nonetheless, the general pattern has been one of increasing concentration. Furthermore, pure market mechanisms are unlikely to alter the distribution of land: studies (cited in Machado 1998) have shown that there is an active market of small and medium-sized holdings, and that violence is often a source of pressure to sell (in conflict zones narcotraffickers and INCORA are the only entities buying land), but that large landholders seldom sell to medium or smallholders, and microfundios are often not sold on the market at all. This segmented nature of the sale of land according to pure market mechanisms suggests that land distribution cannot change through a purely market-based rationale.

[12] The Colombian economist Absalón Machado (1998) found that all regions experienced an increase in land inequality between 1984 and 1996, except for in the central west; Heath and Deininger (1997) however found the opposite, indicating that the national gini index decreased from 0.86 to 0.84 from 1961 to 1988. This disparity in numbers motivates complaints about the incommensurate methods of constructing data on land inequality using cadastral data versus agricultural census data (Kalmanovitz and López 2006)

INCORA itself acknowledged (Instituto Nacional Colombiano de Reforma Agraria 2001) that its efforts at redistribution since 1961 were unsuccessful. There is a sense that a large share of beneficiaries of INCORA's land distribution activities have failed in becoming successful farmers and that many of them were not able to lift their incomes beyond poverty levels. As early as the 1970s, signs of discontent were appearing: a study in the department of Cundinamarca found high levels of frustrations among INCORA beneficiaries (Egginton and Ruhl 1974). Productivity levels of land reform beneficiaries were much lower than renters and did not improve over time, suggesting that land reform failed to help farmers increase their levels of production (Deininger, Castagnini, and González 2004). Most beneficiaries planted low-value crops with traditional technologies and faced continued financial difficulties; land reform beneficiaries were on average less productive than other rural farmers (World Bank 2004). Suarez and Vinha (cited in World Bank 2004) estimated that only 5% of households were able to meet the minimum income requirements to qualify for the market-assisted program. This was in large part due to the fact that INCORA historically found it easier and politically more expedient to colonize the frontier than to redistribute land in the country's interior.

Towards the end of the program, land reform had become an entirely different strategy, and one that recalled the nineteenth century's record of dispossession. A national strategy of relocating those farmers who were not able to make ends meet became more and more central to land reform policy, especially after the *Chicorolazo* (Berry 2004). The government moved those willing to relocate, at its own expense, to land that was usually far removed from their own communities. This strategy would put participants in a precarious situation. By encouraging farmers to settle parts of the frontier, where growing crops was more difficult, many turned to growing coca leaf plants. During the 1980s and 1990s, growing coca put farmers in a difficult

situation where they often were exposed to violence or the threat of violence, which became a very common source of pressure to sell or vacate lands in rural areas (Machado 1998). Rather than market mechanisms, the threat of violence came to be a primary mechanism for transferring land. An report in 2011 quotes research done by Colombian social scientists, which found that in 9% of municipalities in Colombia, approximately 60% of farmers had uncertain tenancy over their land. This was found in large part related to being threatened or forcibly displaced from their previous home (United Nations Development Program 2011).

More than a quarter century of land reform has done little to bring about substantive change in the distribution of land (Machado 1998). Scholars have come to recognize that INCORA's mandate was to provide a palliative rather than a restructuring of land distribution (Heath and Binswanger 1996; Janvry and Sadoulet 1990). Recent declines in public spending dedicated to land reform (see Table 5) have only served to reinforce this trend. Land reform received its final blow when INCORA was recently transformed into INCODER, with the merging of several rural development programs and institutes overseeing the agricultural sector into one agency responsible for an integrated rural development effort (with little attention placed on land redistribution).

Conclusion

The stratification of access to land in Colombia deepened in the nineteenth century, and with it emerged stratification in social influence and networks. This phenomenon could partly be attributed to the institution of property rights (LeGrand 1986; Zamosc 1986); property rights were not well protected for Colombian non-elites. Colombia's geography played a critical role in this process: the constant expansion of the frontier allowed for a great deal of dispossession of settlers. In addition, a weakly centralized state could not extend its officials into the whole

territory. Furthermore, elites were able to garner influence over local land judges and were in turn rewarded with larger grants of the nation's sizeable public land chest, which led to a large disparity in landholding. As elites struggled to secure a workforce when trying to enter the agricultural sector as the sector expanded, they capitalized on inadequate land reform laws, laying legal claim to land that had been cleared and coercing peasant settlers already on the land to become their workforce. Land inequality persisted throughout the twentieth century with Colombia's entrance into the international market, the emergence of a dual sector of farming, a series of inadequate land reform efforts, an increasingly impoverished rural population, and the subsequent use of violence by landowners and political elites alike.

Returning to the literature, in this chapter I tested the following two hypotheses: (1) the conditional frontier thesis, and (2) the blocked path trajectory. The conditional frontier thesis argued that countries with both a sizeable frontier and strong political institutions that protected property rights developed into democracies. The blocked path trajectory argued in countries where large estates predominated, landed elites blocked democratization. Colombia represents an interesting paradoxical case for both theories. Cited as a successful case of the conditional frontier thesis (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011), Colombia indeed did develop into a democracy amidst the presence of a large frontier and a liberal homestead law -- in place to protect property rights. While seen as a successful democratic state, Colombia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was rife with tenuous settler rights; landowners often dispossessed peasants of their land, usually with the help of local judicial courts and administrative officials.

In addition, Colombia has emerged as a hybrid political regime: democratic at the national level and authoritarian at the local level. The blocked path trajectory of the authoritarian

state (Moore 1966) characterized certain periods, such as the National Front period, when political elites ruled the presidency and the legislative bodies. However, at several important historical junctures, elites turned to de facto power in order to shape rural policy, such as in the years following the 1936 land reform law and again in 1973, to reverse the 1961 land reform law. Regarding the widening gap between rural workers, politics have mattered, but less so than we might expect. A slow simmering land reform program throughout most of the country, which became a colonization program, hoping to use the frontier as a pressure valve to defuse guerilla recruitment, had very little effect on inequality in land distribution.

National rural development programs had minimal effects on land inequality, perhaps because of the country's difficult geography. However, geographic and regional variability alone are insufficient to explain the widening inequality in rural regions during the twentieth century. The capacity of the state to distribute resources and implement laws remained low throughout this time period. Elites benefited from this arrangement, and capitalized on the fact that the state remained weak relative to local structures of power. Widening inequality and the continued protection of elites reached a tipping point however, resulting in widespread across Colombia – primarily in its rural regions. The mid- to late-twentieth century saw a series of land reform laws instated to redistribute land, but primarily utilized as counterinsurgency tactics.

The use of power (primarily through violence) in Colombia becomes my primary focus in the following chapters. I use Barrington Moore (1966) as an analytical guide to examine the relationship between development and violence. For Moore, the question was how did agrarian systems affect the form of *government* adopted in nation states. In contrast, accounting for the relative youth of Colombia as a nation, I pose the question how did agrarian systems affect the

exercise of *power* through the territory. The next two chapters explore this question, examining how elites came to exercise power in rural parts of Colombia.

Table 2.1: Small, Medium and Large Properties in Colombia, 1984-2000

Size	1984				2002			
	Owners (In thousands)	%	Area (In thousands of Hectares)	%	Owners (In thousands)	%	Area (In thousands of hectares)	%
Less than 1 hectare	765.6	31.2	234.9	0.7	1229.1	34.4	320.9	0.4
1-3 ha	585.5	23.8	792.4	2.2	820.6	22.9	1003	1.3
Total microfundio	1351.2	55	1027.3	2.9	2049.7	57.3	1324.8	1.8
3-5 ha	262.6	10.7	752.5	2.1	362.1	10.1	953.2	1.3
5-10 ha	276.7	11.3	1441.3	4	388.9	10.9	1880.9	2.5
Total minifundio	539.2	22	2193.8	6.1	751	21	2834.1	3.8
10-15 ha	127.8	5.2	1159.5	3.2	180.1	5	1513.5	2
15-20 ha	75.8	3.1	967.1	2.7	107.7	3	1283.9	1.7
Total Small	203.6	8.3	2126.6	5.9	287.8	8	2797.3	3.7
Total small- sized properties	**2094.1**	**85.2**	**5347.7**	**14.9**	**3088.6**	**86.3**	**6956.2**	**9.2**
20-50 ha	190.3	7.7	4526.6	12.6	264.1	7.4	5880.5	7.8
50-100 ha	87.2	3.5	4430.6	12.4	117.7	3.3	5646.8	7.5
100-200 ha	47.9	1.9	4635.2	12.9	60.7	1.7	5420.6	7.2
Total Medium-sized properties	**325.3**	**13.2**	**13592.4**	**38**	**442.6**	**12.4**	**16947.9**	**22.5**
200-500 ha	26.3	1.1	5195.1	14.5	32.4	0.9	5657.5	7.5
500-1000 ha	7	0.3	2821.6	7.9	9	0.3	3707.9	4.9
1000-2000 ha	2.4	0.1	1982.8	5.5	3.4	0.1	3093.9	4.1
Over 2000 ha	1.8	0.1	6861.7	19.2	2.2	0.1	39004.8	51.8
Total Large Properties	**37.4**	**1.5**	**16861.3**	**47.1**	**47**	**1.3**	**51464.1**	**68.3**
Total	2465.9	100	35801.4	100	3578.2	100	75368.2	100

Source: Kalmanovit and López 2006

Table 2.2: Structure of Landownership and Use in Colombia, 1984 and 1997

	By Productive Capacity			
	Area (%)		Units	
	1984	**1997**	**1984**	**1997**
Small (0-2 UAF) [1]	23.15	21.4	89.92	91.11
Medium (2-10 UAF)	30.5	24.8	8.68	7.81
Large (>10 UAF)	46.35	53.8	1.4	1.08
	By Physical Extension			
	Area (%)		Units	
	1984	**1997**	**1984**	**1997**
< 100 hectares	40	34.5	96.9	97.4
100-500 hectares	27.5	20.5	2.7	2.3
>500 hectares	32.5	45	0.4	0.3

1.0 hectare= 2.4 acres

Sources: Top panel from Machado (1998); bottom panel from (Mondragón 1999)

[1] The UAF (unidad agrícola familiar)is the area of land which, at given conditions, can generate an income of three minimum salaries. The extension of the UAF will vary according to the agronomical and environmental conditions and other productive items available in the area, and should be sufficient to provide a beneficiary family with monthly income equivalent to three minimum wages. For a more in-depth discussion of the UAF concept and the difficulties it implies, see Jaramillo (1998); and Grusczynski and Jaramillo (2002).

Table 2.3: Number of Plots Titled by INCORA, 1962-2001

Year	Titles (N)	Hectares	Average Size of Grant (ha)
1962	1,284	105,405	82.1
1963	2,856	146,625	51.3
1964	6,033	234,629	38.9
1965	9,768	282,520	28.9
1966	12,923	332,803	25.8
1967	13,422	454,167	33.8
1968	15,084	375,886	24.9
1969	16,609	320,795	19.3
1970	15,352	420,052	27.4
1971	14,528	330,149	22.7
1972	14,713	355,141	24.1
1973	11,325	238,400	21.1
1974	9,890	183,739	18.6
1975	9,292	322,151	34.7
1976	9,354	291,751	31.2
1977	9,196	297,459	32.3
1978	8,990	278,449	31
1979	8,176	278,414	34.1
1980	8,451	272,336	32.2
1981	13,284	362,234	27.3
1982	9,312	308,927	33.2
1983	9,135	268,219	29.4
1984	8,904	293,319	32.9
1985	8,811	301,677	34.2
1986	9,678	313,521	32.4
1987	14,690	434,109	29.6
1988	13,958	437,859	31.4
1989	17,082	590,693	34.6
1990	14,275	548,891	38.5
1991	15,880	620,357	39.1
1992	13,684	526,615	38.5
1993	11,361	418,479	36.8
1994	6,418	302,105	47.1
1995	7,488	463,651	61.9
1996	4,633	71,616	15.5
1997	3,113	42,527	13.7
1998	1,767	22,879	12.9
1999	845	10,454	12.4
2000	646	7,088	11.0
2001	662	8,167	12.3

Source: Machado (1998) for years 1962-1995 and INCORA (2001) for 1996-2001
1.0 hectare- 2.4 acres

Table 2.4: Gini Coefficient of Landownership Based on Area, Value, and Productive Capacity in Colombia (1984-2002)

Department	1984	1996	2002	
	By Productive Capacity	By Productive Capacity	Land	Value
Antioquia	NA	NA	NA	NA
Atlántico	66.51	67.88	72.25	79.33
Bolívar	72.49	75.2	70.21	75.48
Boyacá	77.89	76.88	77.94	73.1
Caldas	79.56	78.9	80.44	78.84
Caquetá	58.06	88.95	50.32	69.52
Cauca	82.83	85.26	80.86	83.07
César	65.22	73.11	65.25	74.42
Córdoba	74.87	73.66	74.79	75.48
Cundinamarca	76.19	76.19	76.38	79.56
Choco	0	95.13	75.03	76.02
Huila	74.26	74.34	76.39	72.2
La Guajira	68.55	90.24	67.14	73.58
Magdalena	73.16	72.2	68.74	70.84
Meta	88.84	87.17	86.13	78.22
Nariño	79.02	80.41	77.36	73.46
Norte de Santander	75.27	75.83	69.73	69.97
Quindio	71.63	76.45	78.92	67.52
Risaralda	77.92	79.5	77.15	79.61
Santander	78.33	77.26	77.38	74.99
Sucre	74.88	73.81	77.34	76.64
Tolima	76.37	75.29	76.78	77.02
Valle del Cauca	79.82	85.46	83.06	84.57
Arauca	78.7	82.86	78.22	67.86
Casanare	84.01	83.53	80.95	75.93
Putumayo	72.11	89.68	73.97	69.86
San Andres	51.48	47.41	65.6	65.55
Amazonas	NA	83.15	NA	NA
Guainia	NA	36.09	24.64	40.9
Guaviare	NA	NA	43.12	59.67
Vaupes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vichada	NA	NA	40.85	52.77
Nacional			85.38	81.63

Source: Machado (1998), 2002 data from World Bank (2004)

Table 2.5: Public Spending for Land Reform and Related Projects, Colombia Various Years (billion 2000 Pesos)

	1985	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total INCORA Spending	3.1	88.2	130.8	124.3	89.3	69.0
of which technical assistance	19.4%	11.4%	3.0%	3.5%	9.7%	18.6%
of which grants	0.0%	5.7%	52.1%	55.2%	60.3%	20.1%
of which infrastructure	41.6%	12.3%	4.7%	16.6%	1.6%	1.1%
of which titling and cadastre (RA)	29.9%	56.4%	31.1%	16.2%	16.5%	25.7%
Caja Agraria (credit)	5.0	32.1	237.3	197.3	81.6	132.6
INCORA + Caja Agraria	8.1	120.3	368.0	321.6	170.9	201.6
Total Federal Spending	40.3	707.1	1039.2	931.2	891.4	791.3
Spending by municipalities	0.0	435.1	593.3	764.7	967.6	1253.7
Total Ministry of Agriculture	40.3	1142.2	1632.4	1695.9	1859.0	2045.0
INCORA of total central spending	7.8%	7.7%	8.0%	7.3%	4.8%	3.4%
(INCORA + Caja Agraria) of total federal spending	20.0%	17.0%	35.4%	34.5%	19.2%	25.5%
(INCORA + Caja Agraria) of tota Ministry of Agriculture Spending	20.0%	10.5%	22.5%	19.0%	9.2%	9.9%

Source: (Deininger et al. 2004)

Table 2.6: Land Tenure Chronology

Year	Major provisions
1499	Spanish arrive in Colombia
1819	Independence from Spain
1832	Ecuador and Venezuela secede from Gran Colombia
1848	Conservative party formed
1849	Liberal party formed
1886	Republic of Colombia declared (had been a federal state with Panama before)
1899-1902	Thousand Days War b/w Liberal and Conservative parties
1936	Law 200 (Ley de Tierras)- in response to campesino organizing in Cundinamarca and Tolima
1948	La Violencia begins
1949	World Bank begins makes its first recommendations- criticizing Colombia for using land inefficiently esp. in light of livestock grazing
1961	Law 135- Ley Madre Agraria Colombiana passed under Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958-62) administration- very few mechanisms were put in place to carry out reform
1962-66	Valencia administration- INCORA gets slow start
1966- 70	Restrepo administration gives reform a kick start- Ley primera of 1968 made acquiring land easier for campesinos
1972	A new campesino organization is supported by the state in order to weaken ANUC
1970-74	Misael Pastrana Borrero administration vows to terminate all campesino organizations
1973	Chicoral Pact (Ley Cuarta)- makes acquring land even more difficult and costly- minimum levels for production were made uniform
1974-78	Lopez Michelsen administration argues that agrarian development will take care of land distribution problem
1978-82	Gabriel Turbay administration declared that INCORA will lose more administrative reach, would only be in charge of redistributing baldios or uncultivated lands
1985	Ley 103- would reverse ley primera and cuarta and revitalize land reform but not sure if it passed- look into this law- seems to be an opening
1988	Ley 30- more funding given to Fondo Nacional Agrario (FNA) and qualification requirements of large estates was terminated
1994	Law 160- market assisted land reform- after negotiation, INCORA would pay landowner 50% in low-yield bonds, and 20% in cash, and last 30% was paid by a line of credit at a bank
1999	Caja Agraria closes- Banco Agraria asks for 130% of value of agricultural loan as collateral
2010	INCORA closes, folded into Instituto Colombiano Desarollo Rural (INCODER)
2010	Juan Manuel Santos, a former defense minister under Álvaro Uribe, is voted into office, and vows to return to land reform efforts, specifically in returning land to those displaced by rural violence

CHAPTER 3- The Armed Internal Conflict

What are the perceptions in Colombia of the causes of increasing rural inequality? This chapter draws on a unique database of newspaper articles from 1981-2012 to answer this question. I look at the overlap of two conflicts in Colombia: the agrarian conflict and the armed internal conflict. I analyze a shift in the framing of land reform, from one emphasizing a lack of a modern institutional framework to carry out land reform, to one pointing to the armed internal conflict. This chapter argues that the vertical political structure of the Colombian state, and a weakly centralized state, have allowed for the nature of social cleavages to shift from an agrarian conflict into an armed internal one.

Theory

Scholarship on inequality has gone far in uncovering the mechanisms that lead to the creation of an underclass: economic restructuring and the creation of a stratified service sector (Wilson 1987), declining minimum wage and job security for working class citizens (Ehrenreich 2001), decreased union membership (Brady 2009) and spatial segregation (Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1978) have been shown to severely curtail life chances through social stratification via educational institutions (Telles and Ortiz 2008) and neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993). The cases examined under this strain of scholarship, however, have tended to be highly industrialized countries with strong democratic polities. The cases have also tended to look at countries where leftist political actors have held more political influence and succeeded to varying degrees in constructing a welfare state.

In contrast, the contextualization of inequality in Latin America has focused on politics (Collier and Collier 1991; Evans 1995; Huber et al. 2006; Stephens 1989). Recent and influential works on Latin American development have looked to path dependence in order to explain the

contours of institutions and social structures over time (Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2002; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992; Yashar 2005). These works have mined the institutions and social structures underlying economic development, and argued that once an institutional or structural pattern arises during a critical juncture, this pattern locks the country into a particular path of development. Evelyne Huber Stephens (1989) argued that the crucial juncture to consider was the type of national export economy established in nineteenth century South America. Countries that relied on labor-intensive agriculture (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador) became stable but restricted democracies; nations with a mineral based economy (Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela) often led to unstable democracy; and in those states where non-intensive labor agriculture emerged (e.g. Argentina and Uruguay), the political system was characterized by more fully formed democratic institutions.

Mahoney (2001) also investigated the effect of agrarian production on modernization. Emphasizing the role of the state more heavily, Mahoney (2001) made the case that the growth of the central state in the nineteenth century saw a divergence between a more militarized state and a more democratic one. Militarized states tended to coincide with a polarized rural class structure (e.g. Guatemala), while in Costa Rica, a reformist style of liberal ideology sent the country onto a path towards representative democracy. The path to democracy was closed off as an historical possibility in the case of Guatemala and El Salvador, where unequal power relations in the countryside were combined with an extensively militarized state. In contrast, an extremely polarized social structure characterizes the structure of property distribution in the Colombian countryside, yet the state has gone through several reformist periods (1930-1946, and 1960-68) and has remained a liberal democracy for the most part.

Collier and Collier (1991) proposed that whether social rights were instituted by the bureaucratic apparatus of political parties (which tended to be more progressive) or by the state explained the variation in political systems across nation-states. Several Latin American states extended social rights during the mid-twentieth century; regulations ensuring fair working conditions, a minimum wage, and social security were instituted in various countries: in Mexico following the revolution of 1910, in Brazil under the Vargas administration (1930-1945 and 1951-54), in Argentina during the Perón administration (1946-1952), and in Colombia under Liberal party rule (1930-1946). In Brazil and Argentina, a strong populist party emerged (with military support), and successfully implemented numerous social rights. In Colombia, on the other hand, the state met worker protest in the 1930s with a tactic that controlled the mobilizing force of the working class. Because the state institutionalized social rights (limited in scope) in Colombia, Collier and Collier theorize that the effect on inequality was quite static: the oligarchy's hold on the state remained in Colombia and no proto-welfare state emerged, as it did in Brazil under President Gétulio Vargas (1930-45) or in Argentina under Juan and Eva Perón (1946-55). Again, the persistent effect of this critical juncture is emphasized.

Deborah Yashar located (2005) the disappointing nature of social reform in state capacity: Yashar argued that weak social rights are implemented by weak states. Her hypothesis is that the uneven and incomplete state capacity (specifically infrastructural power) leads to the dearth of social rights. Corporatist citizenship regimes defined citizenship as collective (i.e. workers or peasant associations were granted institutionalized channels – often through political parties -- to negotiate with the national government) rather than individualistic. The fact that those same social rights were later redacted during the 1980s and 1990s, as the nation shifted to a neoliberal regime, did not change the trajectory of Colombian inequality. The effect on

inequality of these laws was disappointing, as levels of income inequality in urban and rural areas in Colombia remained high throughout the twentieth century (Jaramillo 1998; Robinson and Urrutia 2007). This dissertation will add to the scholarship on state capacity to argue that in Colombia, the most crucial dimension of state capacity that has been lacking has been the monopoly of violence over the territory. The lack of this monopoly explains a good deal of inequality in rural regions in Colombia.

In looking at media sources as empirical evidence, I also draw on the literature about social problems and frame selection. This research tradition argues that social problems are framed by three factors: the claims made by social actors, media practices, and broader cultural repertoires (Beckett 1996; Benson and Saguy 2005). This literature argues that social activists, state officials, and experts define and frame problems, but national culture and the media sector influence which definition will prevail in the public sphere (Benson and Saguy 2005). This may manifest because specific social problems do not fit within "national cultural repertoires," those "relatively stable schemas of evaluation that are used in varying proportion across national contexts" (Lamont and Thévenot 2000:8). Alternatively, they may be legitimized by institutions such as national laws that provide greater cultural weight to certain cultural meanings (Swidler 2001).

Given the research on inequality in Latin America, my first hypothesis is that media coverage will emphasize aspects of state capacity to explain the failure of land reform. State capacity is usually defined in terms of institutional and fiscal sate capacity. States with high capacity have a professionalized state bureaucracy, the ability to protect the property rights of its citizens, and the ability to raise revenue (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Evans 1995). Thus, I expect to see newspaper articles emphasizing a lack of state officials to carry out a national land

reform program, articles that center on legal issues and institutions supporting private contracts, as well as articles emphasizing budgetary problems with the national land reform institute INCORA. The second hypothesis, drawing on the frame selection literature, is that media reporting on land reform reflected the legal meaning of reform at the time. Since land reform was transformed into a market led reform by the new constitution in 1994, I expect to see news articles adhering to a more neoliberal cultural scheme. In the following section, I provide a discussion of state capacity in Colombia, in relation to the two political states (the central and the local state) that have been present throughout modern Colombia's history. I then present the evidence from the content analysis of three major Colombian newspapers, which is followed by a discussion section.

Institutional Context- Deep party Affiliation

Colombia has a long-standing tradition of dual party rule, and appears at first glance to be one of the only long-standing liberal democracies in Latin America. Colombia's presidents have been popularly elected since the nineteenth century. The one exception, military dictator General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-57), was brought to power by a semi-democratic process: Rojas was appointed via a consensus of the two major parties, and received the right to rule from Congress (Bagley and Edel 1980). However, Colombia's reputation as one of Latin America's oldest democracies masks a more complex reality, one of close and dense networks of political party affiliation with a clientelistic structure. Historically, party affiliation was inherited through family lines: novels such as *La Mala Hora* by Gabriel García Márquez capture the intense localism of party affiliation. Members of the two political parties remained fiercely partisan -- Colombia experienced repeated civil wars throughout the nineteenth century, fueled largely by clientelist differences between Liberals and Conservatives.

Although many of these conflicts were rather small skirmishes (Roldán 2002), several descended into more serious battles, such as the Thousand Days War from 1899-1902. The catalysts for such wars were often larger political issues- the suppression of convents and religious rights or the abolition of slavery, for example - but casualties were fairly low and involved only a small fraction of the country (Roldán 2002). The parties also fostered a deep loyalty from the majority of Colombian citizens; scholars have argued that the political parties emerged directly out of rivalries between local political bosses, or *caudillos*, similar to the case of Uruguay[1] (Collier and Collier 1991). Political parties were the first supra-local institutions that Colombians identified with; the state and a national ideology took form only later (Reyes Posada 2009; Roldán 2002; Safford and Palacios 2002).

Low-intensity violence of a principally class-based nature began to grow in the 1930s, when unskilled rural workers initiated several strikes, most notably on the banana plantations along the northern coast and on coffee plantations in the lower valley of the Bogotá river (Gilhodes 1974; Zamosc 1986). These disputes eventually erupted into the period of civil conflict known by Colombians as *La Violencia* (1948-66). During the Santa Marta strikes in Magdalena in 1928, a crucial leader in the worker's rights movement emerged. Jorge Gaitán, who convened debates in the National Congress on United Fruit Company's role following the strikes, came to represent the country's best chance at a viable populist party representing lower-class Colombians. Gaitán was a spokesman for the short-lived *Unión de Izquierda Revolucionaria* party in the 1930s (Sánchez and Meertens 2001). He would later be assassinated in 1948 after what had been a direct rise to the national political arena and a likely nomination as

[1] Uruguay's two political parties emerged out of the private armies of rival caudillos in the nineteenth century. The country broke out into a civil war between 1843-52 known as the *Guerra Grande,* between the factionalist forces of two former presidents. Party loyalties remained strong throughout the nineteenth century, some scholars have argued that they were stronger than any national allegiance.

the Liberal party's candidate in the 1950 election. In cities like Cali and Bogotá, Gaitán's gained the support of approximately half of urban voters, although it was lower in regions like Antioquia (Sánchez and Meertens 2001).

Between 1948 and 1964, two hundred thousand Colombians died during *La Violencia* (Wickham-Crowley 1993). The sustained period of violence would dramatically change the trajectory of political and economic development in Colombia. The state's response to *La Violencia* was first and foremost to restore order. Military rule was instituted between 1953-57: both the Conservative and Liberal parties, in conjunction with the Congress sanctioned the rule of military general Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. Rojas' dictatorship managed to reduce partisan tensions by pardoning Liberal guerilla groups and removing some controversial Conservative leaders, who had mobilized paramilitary groups against Liberal opposition in rural areas (Roldán 2002). Before civilian rule was re-established in 1958, the Liberal and Conservative parties came to an agreement (in 1956) of institutionalized power sharing. During this period, known as the *Frente Nacional* (National Front), each president would rule for four years, after which the leading candidate from the opposing party was proclaimed head of the executive for the next four years. Unfortunately, *La Violencia* continued to evolve during this arrangement. In 1964, the military was deployed and dropped bombs over Marquetalia, a communist 'independent republic' that emerged in the department of Huila in the central cordillera (Vélez 2001). This region would later see the emergence of the guerilla group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC).

Thousands of Colombians that had fought in *La Violencia* later joined the guerilla movement during the 1960s. Young students who had travelled to Cuba and had been influenced by the Marxist leanings of the Cuban Revolution formed the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación*

Nacional, or National Liberation Army) in the state of Santander in 1964. The group was also shaped by the teachings of liberation theology, and called for a Christian and communist solution to Colombia's history of inequality, poverty, and political exclusion (LeGrand 1986). The FARC also formed in 1964 by members of the national Communist party and with strong support in rural areas that grew coffee like Huila (located in southern Colombia). The Communist party formed independent peasant republics that became areas of social activism and refuge zones for peasants. An early counterinsurgency effort by the Colombian government (encouraged by the United States) beginning in 1959 culminated in a series of bombings by the Colombian military in 1962-64 (including the infamous Marquetalia bombing in 1964) (Wickham-Crowley 1993). Consequently, many peasants and guerillas fled to the eastern plains and southern jungles, and the FARC became more entrenched in these areas.

However, not all of the state's counterinsurgency efforts were military based. During the period of institutionalized power-sharing, a comprehensive land reform law passed through the Colombian Congress (Law 135 in 1961). Land reform became a counterinsurgency tactic insofar as it was aimed at preventing a guerilla war. Recent evidence has uncovered the higher intensity of land reform in regions that had higher levels of guerilla activity (measured by armed actions by guerilla groups against government forces) (Albertus and Kaplan 2013). Zamosc (1986) argued that much of INCORA's scarce resources were dedicated to 'fighting fires,' in areas where there were signs of developing or sustained conflict. In areas where insurgent activity did not threaten elite interests, land reform efforts were minimal (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; Zamosc 1986). The counterinsurgency strategy behind land reform was short lived however, as redistributive land reform was effectively detoothed by the infamous *chicorolazo,* or Chicoral pact in 1973, pushed through by a powerful group of landowners from the Atlantic coast (Bagley

1979; Zamosc 1986). Once the fires had been put out, the land reform program took on a slow and ineffectual simmer into the 1990s.

Meanwhile, other armed groups were being formed by Colombians seeking protection for their assets and their families, by forces targeting guerrilla groups, and by splintering armed groups with military support. Paramilitary groups emerged in conjunction with the security strategy of the Colombian government and military, which encouraged private groups to act in concert with government forces in a united front against guerilla groups. Paramilitary groups were a hybrid phenomenon that blurred the line between the state and civil society. Julie Mazzei (2009) has defined them as

> "political, armed organizations that are by definition extramilitary, extra-state-noninstitutional entities, but which mobilize and operate with the assistance of important allies, including factions within the state. Thus while officially illegal, paramilitary groups enjoy some of the resources, access, and status generally exclusive to the state but which is funneled off by political and military allies" (Mazzei 2009: 4).

In Colombia's case, paramilitary groups were legally sanctioned by the state. In 1968, the legislature legalized self-defense units and laws were passed with no sunset clause, which allowed self-defense forces to persist even after rural unrest had subsided (Mazzei 2009). Large landowners and bands of farmers began providing armed civilian groups with resources (mostly financial support) beyond the armed support from the military.

Accusations that the state had become ineffective and even guerilla-friendly began to permeate conservative circles in Colombia during the 1980s (Mazzei 2009). When the Betancur administration (1982-86) opened peace talks with several guerilla groups (including the FARC), this gesture alienated much of the landowning class (Medina Gallego 1990). Conservatives within Colombia relied on private defenses to confront these guerilla movements, no longer believing that the state had an effective strategy in place to respond to these groups (Mazzei

2009; Reyes Posada 2009). Paramilitary groups were sought out increasingly by wealthy landowners in order to establish control over landed property, and to provide security for large estates (Reyes Posada 2009). At the local level, paramilitary groups came to have a strong political influence in areas where they had a strong security presence. During the demobilization of the paramilitaries under the Uribe administration (2002-10), the leader Salvatore Mancuso estimated that one third of the members of congress were 'friendly' with the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) (Mazzei 2009). Resonating with Mancuso's estimation, Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos (Acemoglu et al. 2013) found that almost one third of legislators in Colombia were either under investigation or had been found guilty of having links with paramilitaries in May 2009. As of June 2012, fifty-three senators and congressional representatives, and nine governors had been convicted by the Supreme Court for their relationships with paramilitary groups (*El Tiempo* 6-4-12).

Methods

In order to investigate the framing of land reform in the popular media, and look at what factors the media has invoked for the failure of land reform, this chapter uses an independently constructed data set of newspaper articles from three major Colombian newspapers (the leading national newspaper *El Tiempo,* a leading conservative newspaper *El Nuevo Siglo*, and the leading daily in Medellín *El Mundo*). Each of Colombia's major newspapers has historically been highly influenced by a political party or party faction (Bagley 1979; Dix 1967). Therefore it was critical to include articles from both major political viewpoints in light of these biases. Articles from *El Tiempo* and *El Nuevo Siglo* were collected using their online archives, while articles from *El Mundo* were retrieved from both their online archives and their physical archives in Medellín.

The online archives for *El Tiempo* and *El Nuevo Siglo* had publications as early as 1990, while the in-house archives of *El Mundo* had publications available since 1981.

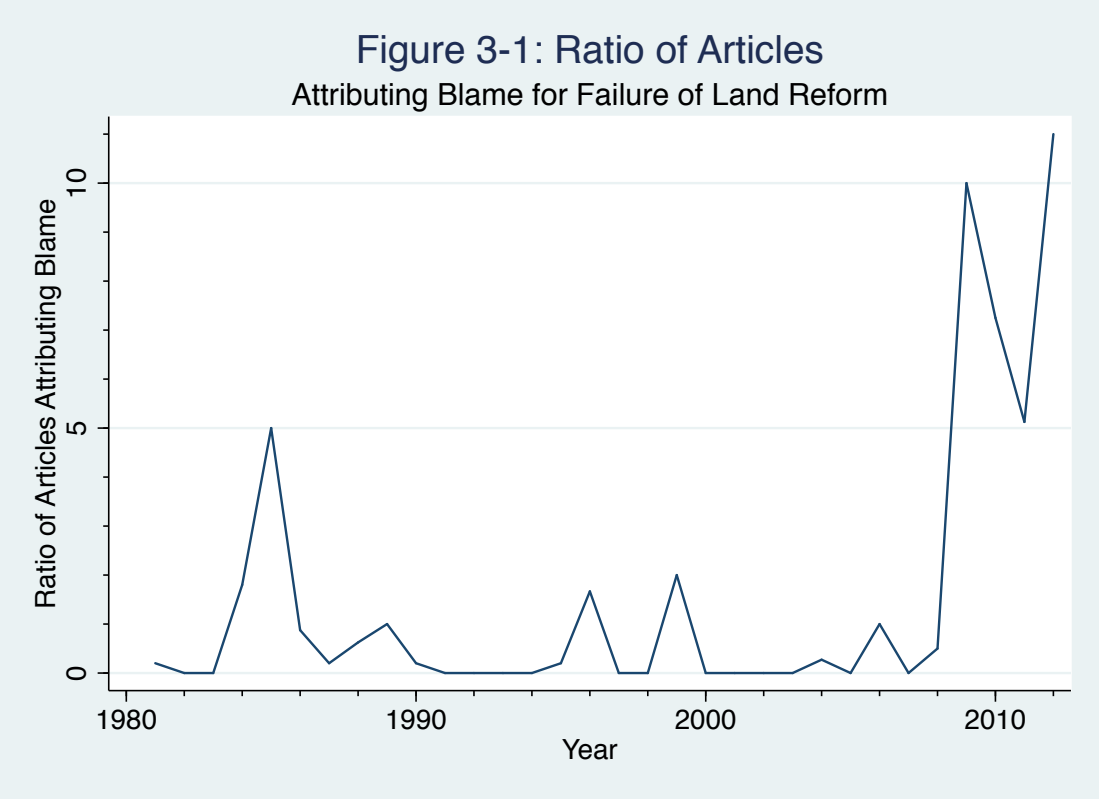
293 individual articles from 1981-2012 were analyzed and coded. Any and all articles that focused on land reform and/or containing the phrase *reforma agraria* were coded. Articles were coded "1" if the article included an explicit mention (by either the journalist or a source quoted in the article) of land reform producing disappointing results, or of problems created by land reform for recipients. Articles were coded as "0" if there was no explicit mention of either problems, or if there were positive aspects of land reform mentioned. If an article mentioned both negative and positive aspects of land reform, it was coded as "1." Problems for land reform recipients included being forced to leave by armed attackers, not generating sufficient capital to pay off loans, and problems creating a profitable farm. Disappointing results of land reform had one of four themes: bureaucratic, political, violent, or economic. I will explain the categories in more detail in the next section.

Results

Figure 1 displays the ratio of articles mentioning land reform that explicitly reference problems or disappointing results of land reform, versus the number of articles that attribute no blame. This ratio of articles changed during different time periods in Colombia. In the earliest period (in the 1980s), the ratio that indicated disappointing results was calculated below 1. A ratio below 1 indicates that the articles that attributed no blame outnumbered those that found blame in the sample. Many of these 'no-blame' articles reported on the number of families benefiting from land reform plots or evaluated the budgetary issues of INCORA (*Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria*). In 1987, the ratio was 0.2 – five articles found blame while twenty-five attributed no blame for problems with the national land reform program. In years

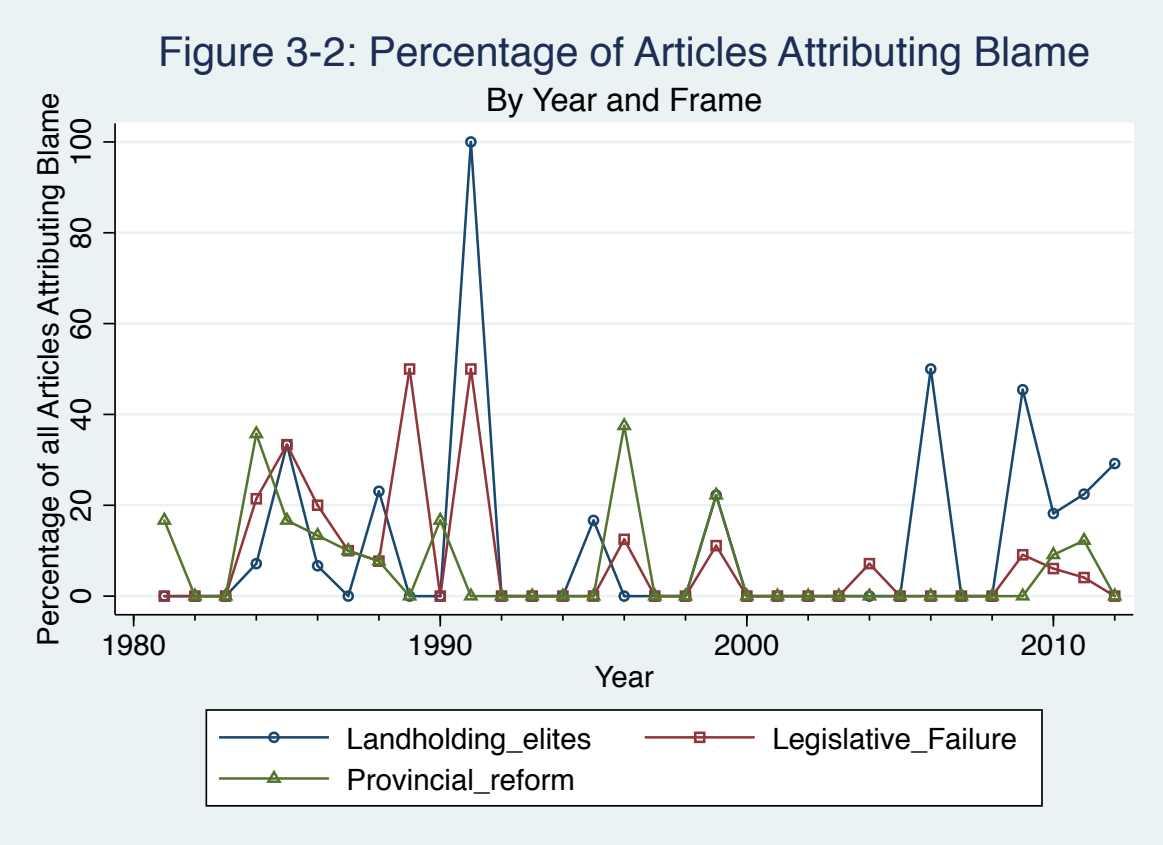
where new legislation was passed or had passed in the previous year, articles that attributed blame increased. In 1988, when Congress passed a minor land reform bill, the ratio increased to 0.625. In 1996, the ratio was 1.67 – more articles attributed blame than not. In recent years, the amount of articles that discussed problems increased significantly, reflecting a tendency in media coverage to frame land reform as being a failed government program. The ratio was 10 in 2009 (ten articles attributing blame and one that did not find fault), 7.2 in 2010 (a ratio of 29:4), and 5.1 in 2011 (with a ratio of 41:8).

The fact that *El Mundo* was the only newspaper sampled for the period between 1981-91 does not appear to affect the data significantly, as the largest shift to articles attributing blame happens in the early 2000s. Further, there were years in the 1980s that did have a larger share of articles attributing blame. Although there does appear to be a higher number of articles attributing blame in the two liberal newspapers in the sample, the conservative newspaper generally was quite disillusioned with land reform as well.



Institutional Failure

Most of the early articles dealing with land reform that reported on disappointing results of land reform pointed to bureaucratic or political causes. Figure 2 shows the percentage of articles that attributed blame, by three different themes: 1) blocked path/landholding elites (political), 2) legislative failure (political), and 3) provincial, or unmodern, reform (bureaucratic). I will clarify each of the categories in the following discussion.



Bureaucratic inefficiency was discussed in several news articles from the 1981-2000 period. These articles blamed the poor results of land reform on the inefficiencies of INCORA, and the lack of an institutionalized responsiveness on the part of the state to meet the demands for land. The following newspaper excerpt reflects these sentiments (translations of newspaper excerpts are mine):

> Due to INCORA's negligence when providing land titles on unused public land to peasants, the Attorney General's office has opened an investigation on all regional managers of INCORA. The attorney general found that 60,000 requests for titles have gone unanswered, as well as finding a backlog of at least one thousand plots of land that have been offered for sale that have remained unresolved since 1967 (*El Mundo* 9-28-96).

Bureaucratic inefficiency was also mentioned in conjunction with the political frame of a blocked path to land reform by powerful landholders. These articles tended to accentuate that INCORA and other government institutes were dragging their feet in regards to land reform.

They often linked this institutional delay to the interests of landowners. One article in 1988 cited the incoming director of INCORA's frustration with the backlog of land available for sale that INCORA had simply not gotten around to.

> The first thing that impressed new INCORA director Antonio Hernández Gamarra was the realization that 30% of the land in Urabá is for sale. Another large amount is up for sale in Sucre. Landowners in the region were only waiting to be bought out, in order to leave the region for good. They want nothing to do with rural life. Gamarra revealed that currently INCORA has 110,000 hectares at its disposal being offered voluntarily (El Mundo 5-8-88).

The trajectory of INCORA director Gamarra's career revealed the nature of the blocked path that he felt he was up against. Gamarra renounced his post in June 1988, after finding himself unable to work alongside the new minister of development, whom he described as one of "the fiercest defenders of the existing structure of land distribution in Colombia" (quoted in *El Mundo* 6-18-88). Gamarra denounced the vested interest that the new minister (Carlos Marulandad) had in several large farms in the department of César – an interest which Gamarra felt determined how the minister voted in Congress. Gamarra resigned in protest, citing an inability for "an effective application of an authentic land reform program" (El Mundo 6-18-88). His frustration was unavoidable as the minister of development had a direct influence on Gamarra's actions – Marulandad determined the credit resources granted to INCORA, as well what regions were to receive the most intense reform.

An article in 1984 echoed the frustration of various politicians with the land reform program. Former president Carlos Restrepo, who had pushed for the *Ley Madre* of land reform in 1961, later spoke out against his successor President López and the ineffective implementation of land reform legislation in the Antioquian newspaper *El Mundo* (7/1/1984). The tenor of the article is best summed up by a quote from former Minister of Justice, Raimundo Emiliani, who is quoted in the article saying that "INCORA es el mayor latifundista del pais" (INCORA is the

largest landowner in the country). In the same newspaper in 1986, a journalist described land reform in Colombia as follows: “la reforma agraria, acosada por trámites dilatorios, continúa siendo un irrisorio tigre de papel, el ‘coco’ de los latifundistas y la frustración del campesino” (El Mundo 8/17/1986) (land reform, plagued by disruptive red tape, continues to be a ridiculous paper tiger, feeding the latifundistas and frustrating the peasantry).

Another salient theme in the articles is the countervailing tension between land reform and economic modernization. Modernists in Colombia emphasized the inability of the program to meet the needs of a quickly modernizing Colombia; it was unresponsive to the needs of an increasingly urban and industrialized economy, and unable to allocate resources to sectors that were poised to capitalize from the state’s assistance. The lack of a strong industrial agriculture sector in Colombia, compounded by the lack of a commercialized internal market with clear distribution networks, were common themes in these articles. One 1984 article complained about the lack of a domestic market able to distribute agricultural products effectively across the nation:

> The current problem in the rural sector lies in the market for agricultural production. With the exception of coffee and milk, which thanks to the cooperative system have demonstrated that there is a possibility, and those products that are able to maintain a profit margin, like bananas, coffee, and flowers, the agricultural market is chaotic. One of the most serious cases is the beef industry, where cattle are brought from the coast to Medellin, to be shipped again to Cali, Pereira, Armenia, Manizales, etc, only to lose between 10-25% of volume due to weight loss and death. This is an absurdity. (El Mundo 6-15-84).

The following article from 1999 called for Colombia to upgrade to a modern agrarian market that could operate at high volume. However, like many articles in this vein, it is quite ambiguous as to the mechanisms needed to stimulate this sort of growth.

> In order to confront the problem and move beyond the peasant subsistence economy, we have to take globalization into account and stimulate domestic and foreign investment in agriculture: that means designing instruments that promote projects that allow us to take

> advantage of areas where we can be competitive; promoting more visionary projects that make use of economies of scale, and democratizing property ownership, in hopes of moving beyond the narrow vision of landed property. (Minister of Agriculture Carlos Murgas being quoted in *El Mundo* 8-8-99).

What exactly is meant by the phrase 'the narrow vision of landed property' is not clarified in the article, but it seems to refer to the peasant economy that views the 'social function' of property as central (a view codified into national law in 1936). A common liberal viewpoint in Colombia espouses universal equality, particularly in terms of a broad landholding class. This theme is often in direct conflict with the modernization theme. The above article fits a prominent frame in the coverage of land reform that emphasizes the almost backwards nature of land reform in reifying a pre-capitalist economy. The act of expropriating land from large landholders well positioned to mobilize large scale commercial farms, in order to distribute land to peasant laborers, is framed as naively trying to meet some archaic notion of property.

An article in 2010 in *El Colombiano* introduced a more political spin on the economic modernization theme:

> After the failure of various land reform programs put into motion by developing countries, massive programs of land reform are no longer seen as politically viable. Even if they were to pass, the magnitude of fiscal resources needed to uphold such a program make it unrealistic. This has led those who study land reform to consider a more ample and comprehensive point of view where different options of granting land are explored that allow for more flexible organizing schemes (Juan Jose Perfetti in *El Colombiano* 4-9-10).

This article also hinted at the fact that land reform does not have a sufficient political consensus behind it in order to pass in the legislatures of modern nation states. The frame of modernization shifts from an economic view of modernity embracing a free-trade economy stimulating those sectors where it has a comparative advantage, to a more political one emphasizing a balance of power shift to more conservative political parties.

More conservative articles also pointed to what they viewed as the ultimate wayward nature of land reform, particularly in the newspaper *El Tiempo*. Articles along this theme tended to be quite disappointed in the results of land reform.

> Visbal (president of the cattle rancher's lobby) remarked that the only thing he can say for certain is that land reform has not had any positive results despite a forty year long attempt, with millions of pesos thrown away on an experiment with no clear objective; he went on to say that he cannot help but ask whether INCORA exists to carry out a land reform program or whether land reform exists solely to justify the existence of INCORA. (*El Tiempo* 11-27-99)

Another article in 1999 echoed this same sentiment:

> However, the original land reform proposal (1961) has gone through a series of transformations, four that are identifiable and another that is on its way. These have been politically motivated rather than driven by functional need, subject to the caprice of the government and whatever administration is in power, and only once has land reform returned any real results; even in this case they were not ideal (*El Mundo* 11-15-99).

Thus, news articles often reflected a clear political standpoint. Regardless of political affiliation, these perspectives tended to converge on a frame of the agricultural sector as a backwards sector that negatively impacted the nation's economy.

These articles echo a more cynical frame (although not necessarily untrue) put forth by an article in 1986 for *El Mundo* by the editorialist Martha Hoyos. Hoyos had framed land reform as a failed strategy that signaled a more pernicious tactical maneuver. Her article hinted that, in order to give the semblance of a national strategy, officials in the ministry of agriculture and other institutions invoked the market as a goal for the nation to move towards. However, these plans were often merely smoke and mirrors for a strategy to adopt a laissez-faire approach to land reform.

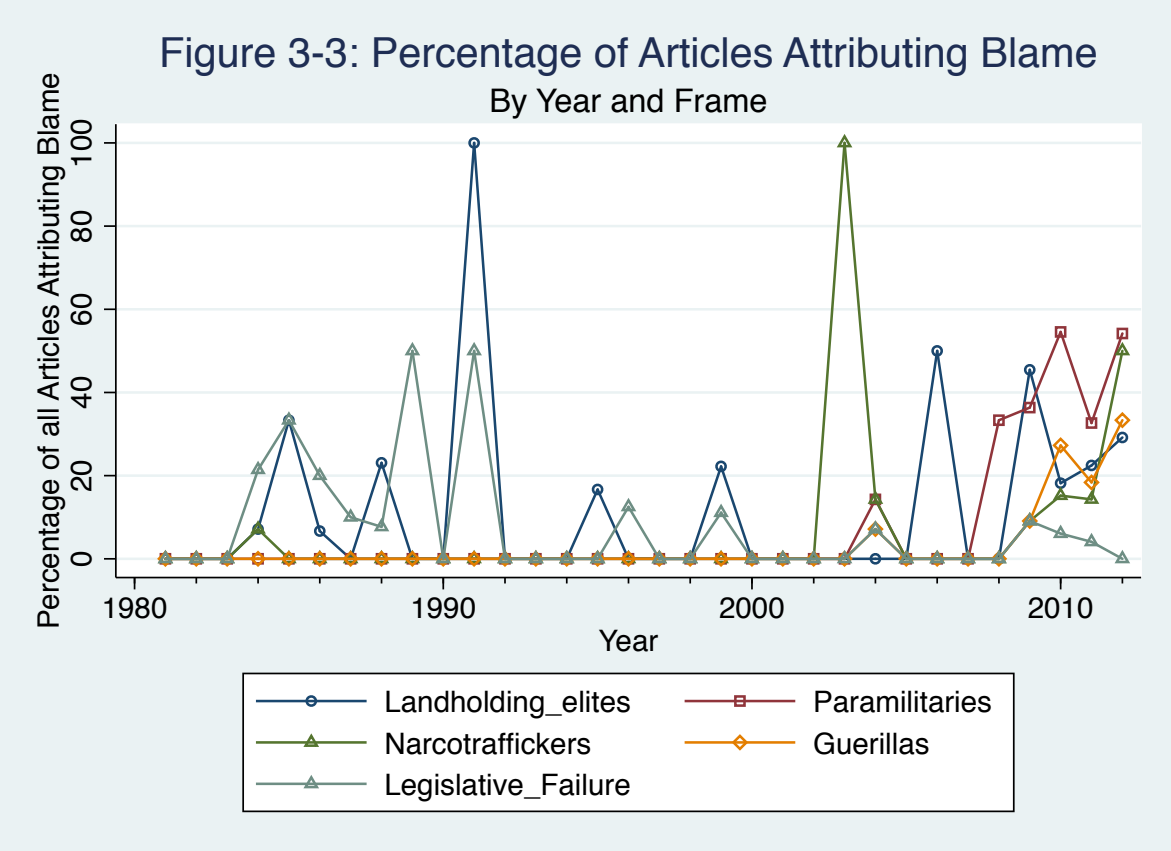
> "Nada seduce más al país que los planes, nada lo defrauda tanto como su ejecución paciente, lenta, en el tiempo y en el espacio. Los quiere cumplidos con solo anunciarlos, si así no ocure, los abandona y pide uno nuevo. Y si tienen nombre proprio, con metas ambiciosas, excita más la imaginación. Y no es raro que algunos bienes concenbiods se utilizen, inclusive por oscuros intereses politicos, para frustrar otro." (*El Mundo* 8-17-86).

> Nothing is more seductive in Colombia than a national plan: nothing defrauds the nation more than its patient and slow execution, over time and across space. We want it to be complete immediately, and if nothing happens, we abandon it and try a new one. If the plan has a proper name, and ambitious goals, it excites our imagination even more. It is not unknown that certain well-conceived plans are used by obscure political interest groups to frustrate other plans. (*El Mundo* 8-17-86).

Hoyos' editorial sums up the land reform project in Colombia from 1961-1990s quite well, in that land reform took on a slow simmer, without having any dramatic effects, other than to provide the semblance of a national strategy. During the mid- to late-twentieth century, the articles published across the nation's 3 most prominent newspapers expressed widespread disappointment in land reform in Colombia. Regardless of political stance, these articles tended to focus on bureaucratic and market inefficiencies as the primary factors that led to failed land reform efforts.

Shift to National Armed Conflict frame

A dramatic shift occurred in the framing of land reform during the late 1990s. No longer focused on bureaucratic inefficiencies and market inefficiencies, these articles invoked rural violence as a distinct cause for the disappointing results of land reform; rural conflict in Colombia became understood in terms of a national armed conflict. Figure 3 presents the percentage of articles that attributed blame for the failure of land reform, by theme. The frames that fall under the violence theme increased substantially, particularly after 2008. Approximately fifty-four percent of articles attributing blame in 2012 argued that paramilitaries were at least partially responsible for the disappointing effects of land reform. Half of articles that attributed blame for the failure of and reform in 2012 also declared that narcotraffickers were at least partially responsible for the failure.



This transition towards reporting on the internal violence changed the nature of the landowning elite/blocked path theme. Articles from previous periods discussed landowners predominantly as those who inherited large traditional latifundia style farms from their forebears. This article from 1986 is one example: "The agrarian reform movement, stymied by bureaucratic delays, continues to be a laughable 'paper tiger,' the 'bogey man' of big property owners and the frustration of the peasantry" (*El Mundo* 8-7-86). The phrase paper tiger borrows from a Chinese phrase, to convey an actor whose 'bark is worse than its bite.' This formulation places landowners, specifically latifundia owners, as indirectly benefiting from the snail's pace that land reform progressed. However, in more recent articles, landowners emerged as willful actors.

Two new types of landowners appeared in articles after 2000: narcotraffickers, and 'señores de la guerra' (warlords) (Duncan 2006). The term 'señores de la guerra' refers to a new

rural elite, comprised of narcotraffickers and paramilitary groups that crystallized into an emergent local power, acting in lieu of the state. The following article, which references a leaked email from the American embassy in Bogotá published after the Wikileaks diplomatic scandal of 2011, discusses this emergent form of landowner in detail. It also reveals the perception that armed non-state actors were behind the national crisis had influenced international aid agencies and foreign diplomats:

> A diplomatic cable sent to Washington in early 2007 revealed a critical situation of rural landownership in Colombia, not unlike the challenge the state will face when it passes the law of restitution now being considered in Congress. The cable disclosed that, according to several studies, self-defense forces and narcotraffickers control up to 10% of land in Colombia…The North American prognosis was pessimistic. The cable spelled out in detail how land had been bought in rural zones along the Atlantic coast by a paramilitary group, including information obtained from the confiscated computer of the paramilitary leader Jorge 40 that chronicled between 2.5 million and 5 million hectares being bought. A similar case of land acquisition happened along the Pacific coast, where paramilitary groups were pushing Afro-Colombian communities off their land with the intention of setting up African palm tree farms…However, the report also warned that returning the lands obtained by illegal means to their rightful owners was going to prove very difficult due to the lack of legal titles. In addition, peasants had already shown that they were quite reluctant to accept land from the government because they feared retribution from the previous owners (*El Espectador* 4-3-11).

Narcotraffickers and paramilitary groups became a nascent form of landowner, displacing the old rural elites along the Atlantic coast known as the Costeños, and those along the Pacific coast. This article from 2003 framed the issue similarly:

> In the past 25 years, property has been moving into the hands of a nouveau riche in the country: narcotraffickers and illegally armed groups that control the most desirable land. This context gives rise to all sorts of conflicts, making life in the countryside uncertain, since the violence and the lack of an integrated land reform program have sowed the seeds of doubt in rural areas, leading to displacement (Alvaro Gonzalez Uribe in *El Mundo* 9-27-03).

This theme, although it had appeared much earlier, became progressively central to the purported causes of the failure of land reform. One article in 1989 anticipated the transition, reporting on the transfer of land into the hands of illicit drug traffickers:

> The newspaper recently learned that the state has mapped the structure of landholding in violent regions and settlements of narcotraffickers and groups of hitmen. INCORA is looking into ways to expropriate three thousand hectares owned by a known narcotrafficker, thought to be one of the biggest patrons of death squads in the department of Córdoba (*El Mundo* 4-27-89).

This article sketched what became a much more prominent theme in the media. However, the frame of a new type of landowner would not become invoked regularly and systematically until the late 1990s and early 2000s (see Figure 3).

Discussion

Delving into newspaper coverage of land reform demonstrates that there was a shift in coverage that re-conceptualized a widespread agrarian conflict, stemming from failed land reform due to bureaucratic and market inefficiencies, to a much more deadly and localized armed internal conflict. This shift in media coverage reflected a change in the underlying social constellation: a new fraction of landowners emerged as drug traffickers bought land in several regions of Colombia, and sought to protect their property from guerilla groups. I found that state capacity was a relevant factor in newspaper coverage of the failure of land reform from 1981-2012. Articles in the early period tended to cite the institutional failure on the part of the national land reform institute INCORA. In the later period, articles cited the lack of state capacity in terms of enforcing the rule of law. Violence became a much more prominent theme in news coverage of land reform, especially after the mid-1990s, regardless of the political leaning of the editorial staff. Media coverage of the agrarian conflict switched course in the early 1990s towards framing armed non-state actors as responsible for the failure of land reform. Given a historically weak state in Colombia, the proliferation of armed groups is not surprising.

I also found evidence of cultural repertoires in newspaper coverage of land reform from 1981-2012. The earlier period cited Colombia's lack of modernization and lack of economic

growth in the agrarian sector. These articles portrayed the agrarian sector as backwards economically and no longer a viable option for development in the country. In the later period, the armed internal conflict came to characterize a majority of newspaper articles in these three newspapers, regardless of their political leanings. A cultural backlash against armed groups characterized this later period. This resonates with the decreased popularity of guerilla groups after Colombians grew tired of their tactics – such as demanding ransoms for political kidnappings and of charging local citizens a tax in exchange for their safety (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Dube and Vargas 2013). A cultural shift towards blaming violent actors rather than an economically backward economic sector can subsequently be gleaned from examining news articles.

Newspaper articles on land reform in the 1980s disregarded rural violence, instead underscoring institutional and political themes like the resistance of landholding elites such as that of the cattlerancher's lobby (*Federación de Ganaderos* or FEDEGAN), and legislative failure for the disappointing results of land reform. Nearly thirty-six percent of articles that attributed blame for the failure of land reform in 1984, blamed the fact that land reform was archaic and unable to stimulate the rural economy into profitability. These articles also focused on the slow and disappointing pace of land reform – in terms of its sheer numbers, as well as its disappointing effects on rural poverty and lack of employment.

Media coverage blamed land reform's failure on a weak state before the 1990s rather than on the armed conflict. The transition to focus on armed conflict may be attributed to a critical change in a key political institution. After 1988, Colombia began to undergo national decentralization, and citizens were allowed to vote directly for mayors and governors – further weakening the central state. While the patronage structure of politics in Colombia was

dismantled, decentralization encouraged vote buying. Recent evidence supports this claim: non-state armed actors such as the paramilitary organization AUC came to deliver votes for several politicians (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Sánchez and Palau 2006). A recent paper from two Colombian social scientists states that armed groups increased in large part due to decentralization (Sánchez and Palau 2006). The mechanism hypothesized was a further decrease in state capacity as regional leaders gained budgetary autonomy and the state lost its ability to administer justice. Articles seem to reflect this shift, as they highlight the state's lack of ability in administering justice after the early 1990s. Whereas articles in the 1980s focused on institutional failure, these later articles highlighted the lack of state capacity in protecting its citizens. This seems to coincide with a shift to an even more decentralized state in 1988, which was reinforced in the new constitution of 1991.

Unsurprisingly, newspaper articles, especially those published from 2006-2012, markedly shifted their framing to focus on rural violence, as armed groups proliferated and after the failed peace talks of the 1980s. The inability of the Colombian state to establish the rule of law over the territory became more central to news coverage, beginning in the mid-1980s, and truly developed as a national crisis in the late 2000s. The simmering violence remaining from *La Violencia*, which precipitated the passing of the 1961 land reform program, evolved into an armed internal conflict. This metamorphosis was articulated by the 'spatial fragmentation' that Safford and Palacios (2002) pointed to as a central theme in Colombian history. In particular, the weakly institutionalized state, with only nominal claims to authority in many rural and peripheral areas, was unable to counteract the emergence of an armed internal conflict in a meaningful way. Colombia's tremendous regional diversity, along with the historically weak central power of Bogotá, have continued to crystallize into a loosely segmented nation.

Conclusion

The shift from corporatist citizenship regimes to neoliberal citizenship regimes in many ways represented a watershed moment in Latin American history. But the moment has been overemphasized. The contrast between the two regimes has been grossly exaggerated. Gabriel Palma has argued that

> the oligarchy uses massive political and economic change merely as a way of reinforcing the fact that they have succeeded in making the region the world's most paradigmatic case of the 'politics and economics of the *gattopardo,*' in which 'everything has got to change, for everything to stay just the same (Palma 2003:148).

Indeed, that land reform was ultimately going to fail to address durable inequality in Colombia could be foreseen by astute observers even in the 1960s. The disappointing results of forty years of land reform might not simply be a reflection of the neoliberal retraction from social welfare programs. Media perceptions of the failure of land reform from 1981-2012 tended to bring up state capacity as a primary reason for its failure. In the early period, institutional failure was emphasized, while in the later period, the failure to enforce the rule of law became more central to media coverage.

The historians Frank Safford and Marco Palacios (2002) highlighted Colombia's "spatial fragmentation…economic atomization, and cultural differentiation" (ix) as central themes in the country's history. These themes have proven to be resilient with their legacy evident even in recent years. As rural violence increased during the twentieth century, the state responded with various programs. Land reform was one such response, enduring a sustained forty-three years of state support from the year that INCORA was formed in 1961, to the year it was dissolved in 2004. The new land reform institute, INCODER, has continued the program, folding several agencies in addition to INCORA into its jurisdiction.

A new class of landowner was able to take advantage of this atomization, emerging in the 1980s when members of large drug cartels bought up land in rural areas. Their interests fused with those of traditional rural elites – both groups sought to protect themselves from extortion and kidnapping at the hands of guerilla groups. Paramilitary groups first began gaining influence in the Magdalena Medio region at the eastern edge of the department of Antioquia. It was in this region that the Castaño brothers, whose father had been killed by the FARC in 1981, formed *Los Tangueros* (Roldán 2002), a precursor to the national organization formed in 1997 known as AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* or United Self-Defense Forces); formed by Carlos Castaño AUC included approximately 90% of existing paramilitary forces (Acemoglu et al. 2013). The AUC's creation coincided with the fall of the Medellín and Cali drug cartels and the decision of the Pastrana administration to negotiate a peace deal with FARC guerillas (Roldán 2002). Even after paramilitary groups were forced to give up their arms in the early 2000s, armed non-state actors have continued to operate in various regions in Colombia's large frontier.

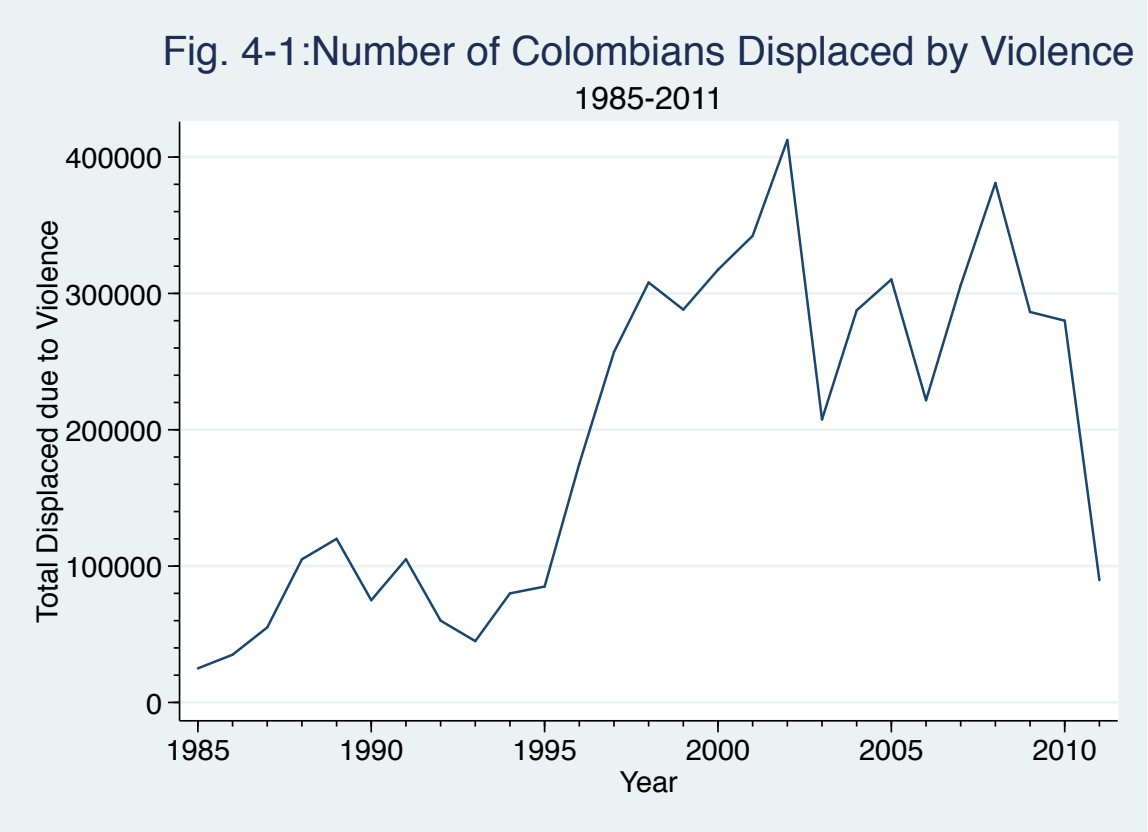
In sum, resonating with the broader literature, this chapter finds that state capacity has undeniably played a significant role in the persistence of inequality in Colombia. Colombia has indeed been characterized by a weak state throughout most of its history. The previous chapter argued that this reduced capacity should be attributed in part to a combination of the nation's difficult geography and the historic regionalization of the territory. This chapter extends beyond *why* Colombia has historically experienced reduced state capacity, and offers another dimension to state capacity that has been largely neglected in the scholarship: the capacity to enforce the rule of law. An in-depth look at news coverage shows how this reduced capacity came to insert itself into a new constellation of the agrarian conflict in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Economic and political elites in Colombia appeared to have impeded democratization not only

allying themselves with the state, as Barrington Moore (1966) hypothesized, but also by forging violence at the local level. The next chapter examines this argument more closely.

CHAPTER 4- Fragmented State, Local States, Land Inequality and Armed Conflict

Introduction

Colombia's twentieth century was notoriously violent, opening with the Thousand Day's War from 1899-1902. The war between Conservative and Liberal landowners was a prescient omen for what lay ahead in the next one hundred years. The latter half of the century was marked by what might be called one long, simmering civil war broken up into several outbreaks. *La Violencia*, Colombia's most deadly civil war, stretched from 1948-1964. The conflict was never resolved, as the violence morphed into a less political but increasingly deadly rural armed conflict between leftist guerillas, right-wing paramilitary groups, the military, and smaller armed groups. By the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Colombians were being displaced by the violence every year. The resurgence of violence called into question the legitimacy of the Colombian state, and the political regime's ability to protect its citizens; indeed, the monopoly of violence that Max Weber (Weber 1946) identified as central to modern nation states was never established in Colombia.



We have come to expect developing states to foster the capacity to enforce law and order, regulate economic activity and provide public goods (Amsden 2001; Centeno 2002; Evans 1995). In Colombia, the capacity to ensure the rule of law and order and the safety of its citizens has been historically lacking since the nineteenth century, during which the country experienced eight civil wars (Archer 1990). Max Weber (1946) defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory…Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it" (Weber 1946: 78). The lack of state capacity to ensure law and order became increasingly clear during the twentieth century in Colombia, as violence in frontier regions and even in urban areas underwent several transformations and crystallizations. Each round of violence incited a subsequent round, as victims of violence took matters into their own hands (Reyes Posada 2009). Once groups found

an organizational structure and institutional space to operate in, they formed new iterations of the armed conflict. Thus, *pájaros* (or hired assassins), *bandoleros* (bandits), guerilla groups, and paramilitary groups, all emerging out of similar social phenomena, were alternative forces to the state.

Both the historic and recent displacement due to ongoing-armed conflict has primarily been in rural areas, as Colombians in frontier zones were forced to leave their land and move to larger cities. Rural inequality in landholding began to grow simultaneously, increasing in 57% of all municipalities between 2000-2011 (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). An extensive Colombian survey in 2009 found that between 1980-2010, about 13% of all agriculturally viable land (6.6 million hectares, or 25,500 square miles) had been plundered or its inhabitants forcibly displaced (United Nations Development Program 2011). Survey respondents pointed to paramilitary groups as the primary culprit (in 32% of cases), while the guerilla group known as the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia,* or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) was a close second, named in 25% of cases (United Nations Development Program 2011). Given the increase in rural inequality in Colombia since the 1990s, and the historical levels of violence, this chapter explores the connection between land inequality and violence.

My findings indicate a negative relationship between land inequality and violence. Areas with more violence in the early 2000s had lower levels of land inequality for the years 2002-05. Further, I find evidence of the reverse relationship: high levels of land inequality from 2000-05 are associated with lower levels of violence in the same period. This suggests a cyclical relationship between state capacity and rural inequality: more violent areas have seen fewer increases in land inequality, and in turn, areas with higher levels of land inequality are associated

with lower levels of recent violence. Using historical numbers of levels of violence, I also find evidence of a long-term process occurring: areas with higher rates of violence during *La Violencia* and during the 1970s were associated with more significant increases in inequality in the 2000s. In what follows, I discuss the existing literature on land and civil conflict and provide a brief history of insurgency in Colombia. I then detail the data and the methodological tools I use, and present the empirical results of the effects of violence on land inequality.

Land and Insurgency- Existing Theory

Peasant support for either an insurgency or for the government is often theorized as emerging out of land tenure patterns and the distribution of land ownership. There are three predominant perspectives in the social science literature on the relationship between rural areas and rebellion. The first theorizes violence as stemming out of poverty, exploitation, and injustice (Stinchcombe 1961), and conceptualizes peasant unrest more specifically as a response to a capitalist market economy penetrating into rural areas. This perspective emphasizes the peasant sector's relationships with the society at large more so than on factors inherent in the local community. Eric Hobsbawm ((Hobsbawm 1960) argued that peasant rebellions in Spain and Italy were fundamentally a reaction against latifundista society[2] as the two countries transitioned into a commercial agriculture variant of capitalism. This perspective, while very relevant to the Colombian case, has however tended to be both ahistorical and overly general. Specifically, it often conceptualizes rural workers in generic, static terms.

In its modern variation, it has tended to portray the choices of rural citizens as shaped heavily by opportunity structures, such as the presence of commodity exports, and fails to take into account the lack of agency these citizens can have over their social surroundings. The

[2] Hobsbawm was referring to a society with large landed estates and an underemployed peasant sector.

modern variant of this perspective has been apt to portray armed activity in Colombia under the guise of a resource mobilization argument. Through this perspective, the FARC is discussed as a profit seeking group merely striving to control diamond and gold mines and oil pipelines, while ignoring the disruptive effects of an extended history of rural violence (LeGrand 2003). Previous research steeped in this perspective has argued that insurgency increases in areas with rough terrain and high population density (where insurgents can more easily blend in with the population), or in areas with primary resource production (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Fearon and Laitin (2003) go as far as theorizing of wages as the opportunity cost of fighting, hypothesizing fighting in an insurgency as a rational choice insurgents make when their job opportunities are scarce.

The second theoretical perspective was developed by social scientists studying Colombia's most notorious civil war, *La Violencia* (1948-66). *Vielontólogos* often linked the civil conflict to intense political animosity, rather than to class relations or economic transition (Berry 1980; Oquist 1980; Pécaut 1987; Sánchez and Meertens 2001). Political affiliation has been described in Colombia as a semi-ascriptive quality inherited at birth and passed down through the family, rather than through party platforms appealing to voters through social programs. Party structures are intimately related to kinship and family relations in Colombia, dating back to the birth of the Liberal and Conservative parties in the 1840s. Sánchez and Meertens (2001) argued that *La Violencia* had profoundly political roots, and that *bandolerismo* (banditry) declined only in those periods when the Colombian government pursued centralization or when its legitimacy was not in question. However, they also concede that banditry was related to the state's incapacity to provide basic services to many of Colombia's frontier regions; an argument which aligns with the first camp of theorists. This perspective, however, best

characterizes earlier rounds of violence in Colombia (e.g. the period of *La Violencia*). In the latter half of the twentieth century, rural violence took on new forms, particularly with the growth of the drug trade; more recent manifestations of guerilla and paramilitary groups departed from the political ideology driving action in the 1960s.

A third lens adopts a relational perspective: peasants act within the context of various power relationships, shaping their capacity for mobilization (Tilly 1974). Eric Wolf (1969) argued that peasant communities that were outside the reach of the state were the most successful in mounting insurrections. This perspective has expanded the analytical focus from the previous one to consider different forms of collective action by peasants, not singularly acts of violence. While the first perspective accepted the traditional/ modern dichotomy, the second complicated this paradigm by demonstrating that a homogeneous peasant society does not exist. The third perspective has examined the intersection of capitalist, semi-capitalist, and pre-capitalist relations of production to coincide, evaluating the different manifestations of economic development that have confronted rural citizens (Mandel 1999). The institutional context is therefore central to the framework; peasants and non-peasants act in accordance with their interests and their perceptions of the institutional and resource-based options *and* limitations available to them.

Theorists have applied all three paradigms to the case of Colombia; each analytical framework has been necessary to unpack why violence has remained such an enduring part of the nation's history. FARC guerillas have indeed tended to be active and impose a tax in regions with gold mining and oil production, but this fails to explain the genesis of guerilla groups, which were founded on a doctrine of social equity; nor does it explain their ongoing social relevance. Thus, the first perspective that armed groups tend to proliferate in zones of mineral

production or of petroleum extraction is true for some areas in Colombia, but does not sufficiently explain the variation across the territory of levels of violence. The second perspective is very useful in explaining cleavages in Colombian society during early rounds of violence, when political affiliation was quite important, but this affiliation became less salient during the 1980s and 1990s when drug trafficking increased (Restrepo, Spagat, and Vargas 2004). Further while *La Violencia* indeed was instigated by intense political affiliations, politics have not been the consistent driving force behind the proliferation of armed groups in later rounds of violence (I discuss three periods of violence in the next section). The influential paramilitary organization ACCU (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*), for example, was started not for political purposes, but by three brothers avenging the death of their father at the hands of the FARC guerillas in the 1980s. On the other hand, political beliefs played a direct hand in the inception of the FARC and ELN guerilla groups in the 1960s. However, politics became less salient for several guerilla groups over time, and this argument is insufficient in explaining the continued social relevance guerilla groups.

While there is merit to all three perspectives, I argue in this chapter that the third perspective is most relevant in explaining the case of Colombia. I assert that (1) there is a retaliatory mechanism at the heart of this ongoing conflict, and (2) that violence itself is a mechanism that allows for the perpetuation of inequality in Colombia. This chapter subsequently evaluates the relationship between land inequality and violence. Countless rounds of violence have unleashed subsequent rounds of violent retaliation from an array of class actors and organizational apparatuses in Colombia.

The distribution of land ownership has remained central to the ongoing conflict. The FARC and several other guerilla groups sought to eradicate rural inequality and create an

equitable rural society when they first formed in the 1960s. More recently, the president has formed a task force to return land to citizens who can prove they have been displaced by violent activity. At the heart of the president's attempt is the hope that a more egalitarian landholding structure will put an end to the persisting rural armed conflict and restore peace. With a dearth of updated data on land inequality until very recently (with the efforts of a team of economists at Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012)), no statistical exploration of this relationship has been possible. Thus, the data allows me to test whether or not there is a significant link between armed activity and land inequality. Given the variation in state capacity across the territory, I hypothesize that there will be several regions with lower counts of violence. These will tend to be areas near the capital and with a strong presence of the central state, *or* they will be regions with a strong local power structure in place. Second, I hypothesize that the state's ability to ensure the rule of law is uneven, with high regional variation, and tied in part to the landholding structure in the region. Third, drawing from a relational theoretical paradigm, I hypothesize that there exists a retaliatory nature to the link between land inequality and violence; I incorporated historic measures of violence nad recent counts of violence, in order to look for a relational cycle to violent events.

Along with these hypotheses, I also test the validity of the modernization perspective. I examine the effect of factors such as mineral production and intense agricultural production on land distribution. Modernization theorists tend to argue that as commercial agriculture increases, landholding concentration will increase because of the need for large economies of scale to develop (Huntington 1968; Paige 1975). I test whether landholding is more concentrated in areas with primary crop production. I also test opportunity structure arguments associated with the modernization perspective: I evaluate whether violence is higher or lower in areas with high

population density, and in areas with commodity crop production (in this case, oil, gold, coal, and coca leaf plants) I find that while modernization arguments are partially valid, a relationship between land inequality and violence exists in Colombia when controlling for opportunity structure factors, and this relationship has a cyclical structure.

Violence in Colombia

Land inequality began to increase in Colombia during the nineteenth century (Grajales 2011; Ibáñez and Querubín 2004). Unequal land distribution emerged as many peasants became caught in between tenuous property rights and a quickly modernizing economy (for a detailed history of colonization of frontier lands, see LeGrand 1986; for a discussion of the *llanos orientales*, see Ruasch 2013). Colombia's failure to extend national citizenship to squatters and an ineffective homestead act exacerbated unequal land distribution, both in the highland regions and the eastern plains (LeGrand 1986; Rausch 1999). Additionally, the protocol to obtain land titles further contributed to land inequality; the process was expensive – often requiring a surveyor's fee, a lawyer's fees to write petitions, and a fee to register the property. Furthermore, court cases contesting land ownership favored landowners who were friendly with the judges adjudicating the cases (LeGrand 1986). Unsurprisingly, Colombians of means, and those with ties to the judicial system, were able to establish property rights in the young nation, obtaining legal claim over land. Colombians who settled land, cleared it for production, but who failed to claim title to the land before the state, unfortunately did not fare well in the emerging landholding structure. The nation refused to extend full citizenship to peasant settlers (*colonos*), whom it never recognized as rightful citizens. The Conservative party restricted the vote to literate male Colombians who owned property after 1886, and there was a trend of continuing privileges and inequalities before the law and the judicial system (Safford and Palacios 2002).

Unsurprisingly, the emergent landholding structure of the nineteenth century, and the conflict between landowners and land squatters, became inexorably tied to land issues of the twentieth century (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; Marulanda 1973). The commercialization of agriculture in Colombia, and the nation's entrance into international markets, exacerbated land inequality and already tense relations among landowners and peasants. The encroachment of the world economy into Colombia was not a smooth process, and the peasant class suffered increasingly more social dislocation over the course of the twentieth century.

Some of the earliest violence in twentieth century Colombia was class-based. A strike in 1928 by banana workers on plantations owned by United Fruit Company in Santa Marta, along Colombia's Atlantic coast, was one of the first incidents to indicate worsening rural inequality. The strike turned deadly after the Colombian military intervened (Gilhodes 1974). Another strike among coffee workers in the lower valley of the Bogotá River (in the regions known as Sumapaz and Tequendama) also demonstrated the gap emerging between workers and landowners in the Colombian countryside, although it was settled more peacefully (Sánchez and Meertens 2001). The first administration of Liberal president Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-38), who modeled his progressive policies on those of President Roosevelt and the New Deal, alleviated some of these tensions. President López's policies, however, had more to do with making concessions to working class voters in order to gain votes, more so than with a real social democratic spirit .

Growing union and worker's movements such as the Confederation of Colombian Workers (CTC) channeled some of the frustrations of working class Colombians into an organized movement for a brief period in the 1930s (Roldán 2002). The emerging working class movement in Colombia was later met with policies of proscription, however. Following the assassination of populist leader Jorge Gaitán (1948), any protest that occurred in urban areas was

declared illegal, companies undertook massive layoffs, and the most vocal labor unions were undermined (Sánchez and Meertens 2001).

Some of the repressive policies were enforced by a variety of emerging non-state actors. Bolívar was one of the first documented towns to use the civilian police forces targeting Liberal officials, known as *contrachusma* forces (Roldán 2002). Labor unions were silenced often through extralegal coercion. Several crystallizations of locally organized repressive forces emerged: the *chulavita* police from a conservative district in Boyacá, hired assassins known as *pájaros* (birds) in Valle del Cauca and Caldas, the *aplanchadores* (flatteners) in Antioquia, and the *puncha ancha* (heavy whip) in Sucre. Although the groups represented a myriad of political beliefs, they were generally united in their stance against the worker's movement. They also hinted at a troubling precedent: the state often turned a blind eye to these groups. The same strongmen or *pájaros* of the 1950s were later employed by local political bosses and large landowners, carrying out assassinations of several peasant movement leaders in the 1970s (Berry 1980).

There was a disorganized and relational nature to the genesis of these armed groups. Groups often formed after experiencing police abuse or attacks from other citizens, and often had political affiliations. Bands of armed groups affiliated with the Liberal party formed in the departments of Santander and in eastern Antioquia (Roldán 2002). Over time, the state gradually institutionalized the use of private security forces. The *contrachusmas*, on the other hand, were deployed by the conservative president Laureano Gómez (1950-53) following Jorge Gaitán's murder; this paramilitary group was frequently used by the Conservative party when it did not want to use the national military or municipal police forces. The governor of Antioquia, Arango Ferrer, distrusted the military for being an armed wing of the Liberal party, and preferred to

allow for the *contrachusmas* to prevail as the primary police force. Antioquia, at the time, was Colombia's most populated and economically influential department and was predominantly conservative. This distrust was echoed in the national government: Ferrer received a letter in April 1952 from the Ministry of the Interior in Bogotá calling for conservative civilians to arm themselves in order to quell violence in peripheral areas like eastern Antioquia (Roldán 2002).

The impetus to form these armed groups would come to encompass more than political affiliations, however. According to the Colombian political scientist Gonzalo Sánchez, *La Violencia* had a first phase (1948-53) that resembled *The Thousand Day's War* (1899-1902), in that it reinforced party affiliations and the strength of local political bosses, or *gamonales* (Sánchez 1976). A less partisan phase followed (1953-57), after armed popular groups in the cattle frontier of the *llanos orientales* split into ones led by Liberals and others led by Communists. The traditional Liberal/Conservative split became less central in the later phases (1953-1964), according to Sánchez (1976). Violence varied regionally as well as temporally: in regions outside the reach of the state, such as the *llanos orientales* (Eastern plains), violence was more likely to shift to more radical objectives led by Communist self-defense forces, while in coffee-growing regions that were well integrated into commercial and political networks (e.g. Antioquia), revolutionary groups did not emerge (Fajardo 1979). Where earlier studies, like that of Paul Oquist (1980), argued that the absence of the state resulted in a vacuum of authority, Fajardo (1979) showed that authority lay in national political networks, but more importantly it intersected with intensely local structures of authority. Accordingly, the state could be simultaneously weak and strong at different institutional levels, as Eric Wolf's (1969) work has shown. In a similar and quite thorough study, Colombian sociologist Carlos Miguel Ortiz (Ortiz 1985) examined how local political arrangements were often dissociated from national politics,

demonstrating that an individual's place of birth, kinship relations, municipal loyalty, and cross-party relationships, in addition to their party identity, shaped *La Violencia's* course. Party affiliation however was not the only seminal factor. Ortiz instead uncovered how local politics co-existed with national politics and created several local states with varying capacity. Oftentimes state authority was high, and its capacity to exact violence quite extensive, but this was a very local state and local form of authority that was divorced from the national capital.

When Antioqueños complained about abuses they suffered at the hands of the police and the *contrachusmas,* there was often little that the state could do. The use of such auxiliary armed forces set a troubling precedent for future generations.

> The seeds of future armed rebellion that eventually came to characterize the daily lives of eastern Antioquia's inhabitants in the 1960s and 70s may be traced to the forcible migrations, expropriations, and indiscriminate abuse exercised by the groups to which the state alienated its 'monopoly of force' in the 1950s" (Roldán 2002).

Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 1960) remarked that mafias could become an institutionalized system outside the realm of official state power when upholding a system of morality and rights parallel to official government forces. As such, *bandolero* squads and *pájaros* existed between the end of *La Violencia* and the 1980s (Sánchez and Meertens 2001). By the mid-1970s, other crystallizations of armed civilian forces had emerged alongside them. Roldán (2002) argued that the political power of the traditional landed elite took on a de facto form of power, via various apparatuses of violence. Paramilitary groups grew to be the most effective apparatus, and their genesis can be traced back to the 1970s, when landowners began amassing private security militias to defend their property against land invasions from the radical peasant movement of ANUC (*Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* or National Association of Peasant Workers) (Grajales 2011; Machado and Meertens 2010; Zamosc 1986).

ANUC became increasingly radicalized after the Chicoral Pact, and undertook several invasions of large landholdings, squatting on the land and demanding an effective land reform program (Zamosc 1986). In 1971, ANUC organized 333 land invasions (Zamosc 1992), using them as a central strategy to influence administrative decisions. The following year, ANUC carried out over 800 invasions in twenty-one departments (Escobar Sierra 1972). ANUC would invade a hacienda or large farm and then ask INCORA to buy or expropriate the land and distribute it among peasant families (Zamosc 1992). During the 1970s, ANUC took control of 120,000 hectares in the province of Sucre (Ronderos 2010). However, despite its effectiveness, the organization was short-lived. The Pastrana administration formed a second, less militant faction of ANUC in 1971, and gradually was able to splinter the movement effectively enough so that it lost its initial vigor (Zamosc 1986). Worker protest was met with a policy of controlling that mobilization, and eventually ANUC faded into obscurity (Collier and Collier 1991).

With the failure of ANUC, and the state's violent response to peaceful resistance, the FARC guerilla movement focused its demands on the implementation of a land reform program administered effectively. Again, the movement was met with a forceful opposition by the elites, however these elites acted outside of the reach of the state. When president Belisario Betancur (1982-86) opened ceasefire negotiations with the guerillas in 1985, those opposed to the negotiations took matters into their own hands; the negotiations were staunchly opposed by the military and a sector of the elites, in particular large landowners, who were angered over the talks (Grajales 2011; Romero 2003).

By the 1980s, however, the configuration of local power structures had transformed, as the state had begun to institutionalize the private use of violence. A law passed in 1968 (Law 3398) allowed for the military to organize 'self-defense associations,' this was intended to deal

with ‘subversive action led by extremist groups’ (quoted in Sánchez and Meertens 2001). Whether or not Colombians were inspired by family politics or by personal wrong, once the use of force had been contracted out to non-state armed groups, the precedent was hard to reverse. Large landowners began forming private militias in the 1970s. In addition, early paramilitary groups, such as the Death to Kidnappers (Muerte a Secuestradores or MAS) movement, emerged in the 1980s as a way to enforce personal and family security through private means. Various local elites and military officers collaborated to form paramilitary groups (Grajales 2011; Medina Gallego 1990; Romero 2003). The province of Sucre along the Atlantic (or Caribbean) coast was one area where paramilitary groups mobilized. The area saw an increasingly militarized peasant movement, and was the seat of the more radical ANUC Sincelejo group. Furthermore, drug traffickers began buying land along the Atlantic coast, and used armed paramilitary groups in order to protect the vital Golf of Morrosquillo, where drug shipments left for North America (Machado and Meertens 2010).

In this climate, President Betancur’s peace talks with the FARC enraged landowners, the military, regional politicians, and cattle ranchers (United Nations Development Program 2011). Spurred on by this frustration that the government was negotiating with the leftist guerilla groups, armed groups aligned with Conservative members of society continued to proliferate. Early paramilitary leaders such as the Castaño brothers were able to organize effectively at the national level. Where traditional landed elites were unable to solve the collective action problem around local security, paramilitary groups became a solution. The Castaño brothers distinguished themselves from traditional landowners in old latifundio areas, for they were able to gather military intelligence due to their connections with military soldiers and officials (United nations Development Program 2011). In 1994, the government allowed the use of assault weapons by

private security firms operating in rural areas, and for training to be provided by the military, after being lobbied aggressively by agricultural lobbies, in particular the Federation of Cattle Ranchers (FEDEGAN) (Grajales 2011). The private security firms came to be referred to as 'Convivir' ('live together'), which was a tragic euphemism for what became a deadly force. In provinces such as Sucre, large landholders and ranchers used the Convivir as their own private militias. A constitutional court declared the use of assault weapons by civilians illegal in 1997, but the trend proved difficult to reverse.

Convivir drew on interlocking networks between political elites and private paramilitary organizations for support. For example, Antonio Guerra de Espriella, former president of the association of palm producers (Fedepalma), vice-minister of Agriculture and former senator of Sucre, created the 'Order and Development' Convivir. The head of this organization was Salomon Feris Chadid, whose brother Jose Luis Feris Chadid was a member of the House of Representatives (Grajales 2011). Paramilitary groups' ties to politicians and direct involvement in politics would only increase. In 1994 Carlos Castaño formed the paramilitary organization *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* (ACCU), or Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá. The ACCU became the national Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC-the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) in 1997, with the goal of uniting all paramilitary organizations under one united front. The cooperation from high level politicians was crucial to the transformation of Convivir into the coordinated front of the AUC (Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013; Grajales 2011). Ex-president Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), who ran on a platform of high security, was later found to be heavily supported by the AUC. A recent study showed that President Uribe received more votes in the 2002 presidential election from areas that had a paramilitary presence in the municipality (Acemoglu et al. 2013). Evidence of a symbiotic

relationship also emerged: an analysis of roll call votes demonstrated that members of third parties voted to allow changes to be made to the Constitution, allowing Uribe to run for a second presidential term in 2006 (Acemoglu et al. 2013).

Although the sources of violence were often cloaked in relative obscurity, the trend in violence in Colombia was clear: in 1980, there were 9100 homicides reported; by 1990 the number had jumped to 24,700, a 170% increase (United Nations Development Program 2011). The armed groups involved in violence in rural areas transformed over this time period as well. There were three stages of violence in Colombia over the course of the mid-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. *La Violencia,* characterized as an intensely political period, marked the *first phase* of violence; armed groups during this time retained their political affiliations. This period extended from the beginning of *La Violencia* (1948) to the inception of the ELN and the FARC in 1966. The *second phase*, what might be called the guerilla phase (1966-86), saw new guerilla groups being formed that challenged the system and strove to work outside the traditional structure of authority. This period ended with the (failed) peace talks launched by the Betancur administration in 1986, although guerilla groups remained quite strong into the early 2000s. The *third phase*, the paramilitary/drug trafficker phase (1986-2006), saw the proliferation of armed groups that specifically targeted guerilla groups. Drug traffickers, who in the 1970s had allied themselves with guerilla groups, often sought to launder or invest their money in large estates, usually cattle ranches in the Middle Magdalena river valley, the Eastern plains, eastern Antioquia, and the department of Córdoba (LeGrand 2003). This change in the drug traffickers' "social location" drove many guerilla groups to turn against them – kidnapping family members of drug traffickers for ransom. In response, paramilitary groups emerged out of the cattle

ranching areas of the middle Magdalena river valley and northern Colombia (particularly Córdoba and Bolívar) (LeGrand 2003; Reyes Posada 2009).

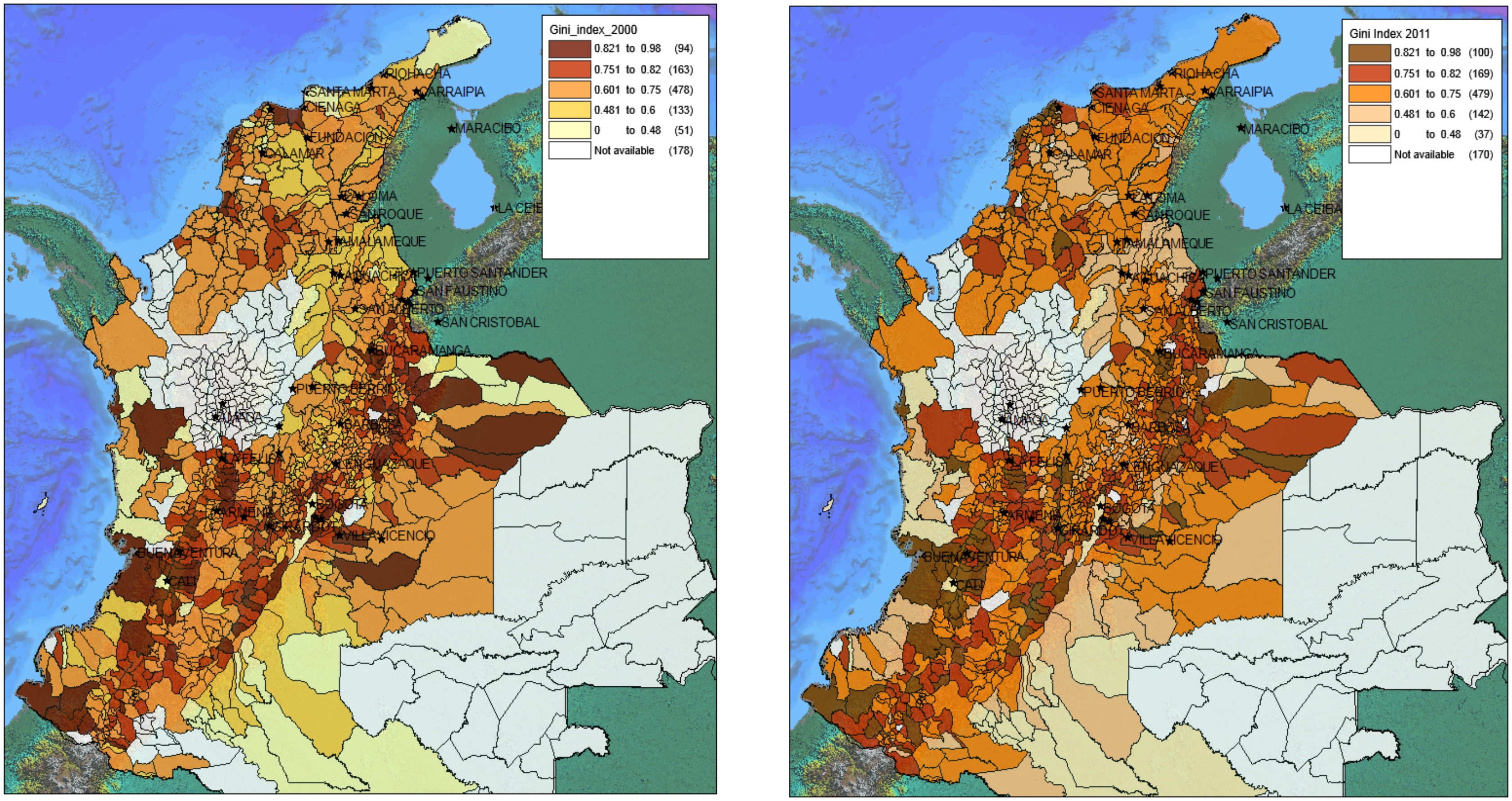
In the 1990s, paramilitary organizations carried out what has been referred to as the *guerra sucia,* or dirty war, against union leaders and peasant leaders (Sánchez and Meertens 2001). One such war took place along the Atlantic coast. Urabá had become the leading banana production region, but when violence between guerilla groups and paramilitary groups escalated, many investors moved their production to nearby Magdalena. Magdalena had seen a recovery in banana production in the 1990s after having been abandoned by United Fruit Company as the primary area of banana cultivation during the 1960s. When union leaders began recruiting workers in Magdalena, this raised suspicion among some Colombians that they were aligned with guerilla groups. Violence against unions grew, targeting leaders and workers (Grajales 2011). Guerilla groups meanwhile engaged in kidnappings among the elite, mainly involving banana businessmen, cattle ranchers and politicians. Those who refused to pay a security tax often saw their plantations burned or looted, and many wealthier individuals were scared to travel to the region for fear of being kidnapped (Grajales 2011). This reactionary activity was not unique to Magdalena. In places like Medellín, narcotraffickers contributed to the violence in the *guerra sucia*, targeting not only union leaders but peasants, journalists, and members of the justice system (United Nations Development Program 2011).

Land remained central to the ongoing conflict in Colombia, not only because it remained as the centerpiece issue for the guerilla movement, but also because rural violence forced many Colombians to flee to less volatile regions. In hopes to quell this violence, the Liberal party had embarked on agrarian reform in the 1960s, after partisan violence exploded across the country. This reformist spirit clashed with the objectives of rural elites who were politically well

represented and opposed to any change. The previous chapter showed the shift in the narrative surrounding land reform, from one stressing the lack of a modern nation in Colombia (and the inefficient use of land), to one stressing the armed internal conflict in Colombia (and the plundering of land by paramilitary groups, guerillas, and narcotraffickers). While violence increased throughout the 1990s and 2000s, land inequality grew as well. Between 2000-10, 57% of municipalities saw land inequality increase (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). The map below highlights gini indices in 2000 and 2011, those areas in brown had the highest gini indices (above 0.8).

This chapter aims to untangle the relationship between these two trends, seeking to answer the following question: do areas with more violence have higher rates of inequality, or do areas with higher inequality tend to have more violence? I hypothesize that, given the unevenness in state presence in Colombia, and the state's institutionalization of violence by allowing for the counterinsurgency to be carried out by private citizens, elites have been able to consolidate their power in particular areas of the country. In these areas, they act in lieu of the state, and reinforce the rule of law. These areas will be the most unequal in the country, as measured here by landholding structure (in part because the cost for entry is higher). In more remote regions of the country, with fewer agricultural resources at stake, the state's capacity will be diminished. I hypothesize that this diminished state capacity will be manifested in more acts of violence committed by non-state armed actors, both guerilla groups and paramilitary groups.

Figure 4-2: land Gini Index by Municipality: 2000 and 2011



Data and Methodology

Data

In order to examine the relationship between inequality and state capacity in Colombia, I constructed a panel data set of land inequality, rates of violence, and other variables. I use the municipality-year as the unit of analysis. The panel data set is constructed using several different sources. Data on land inequality (gini coefficient) for Colombian municipalities comes from a joint project between the Center for Development Studies at Universidad de los Andes and the national geographic institute, Instituto Geográfico Augustín Codazzi.[1] The national cadastre is a property registry of the boundaries of property in Colombia, and contains information on ownership and value of parcels of land. This registry had not been updated in many regions in Colombia since the 1960s, so this effort by economists at the Universidad de los Andes has been invaluable (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). The gini value reported here is based on the size of property (as opposed to value of property, which is used less often in reporting inequality indices).

I use several measures of incidents of violence as proxies for the level of state capacity: the number of attacks, massacres, and kidnappings committed by the national military, guerilla groups, and paramilitary groups. I drew on data collected by a Colombian organization, the Bogotá based think tank Conflict Analysis Resource Center (CERAC) in order to analyze the level of conflict by municipality according to guerilla, paramilitary, and military attacks. CERAC collected data on thousands of events related to the Colombian civil war in over 950 Colombian municipalities since 1988. These numbers are based on media reports published by two Colombian NGOs, the Center for Research and Popular Education/Peace Program (CINEP)

[1] The Center for Development Studies at the Universidad de los Andes (CEDE) recently undertook a large project to modernize the cadastral registry, in collaboration with the national geographic institute.

and Justicia y Paz. These reports are culled from reports of political violence and human rights abuses published in 25 major newspapers, and are supplemented by reports from Catholic priests who reported to CINEP and described incidents of violence in the country, including the more remote regions for which data can be scarce. According to CERAC, reports from the priests are more impartial, coming from a presumably neutral party in the conflict.

CERAC also cross-checked the reports against two other sources, including information collected by the National Police and by Human Rights Watch. CERAC differentiated violent events as 'attacks' and as 'clashes.' A clash involved two or more groups, whereas an attack was carried out by one armed group where there is no armed combat between two groups. Besides attacking with gunfire, attacks also included incursions into a village, killing civilians, bombing pipelines, bridges and other targets, destroying police stations or military bases, or ambushing military convoys (Dube and Vargas 2013). Massacres were also labeled separately, and were defined as the *intentional* killing of four or more civilians in an event. I also used data on the number of casualties of civilians by municipality.

The number of Colombians who reported being displaced as a result of violent events was another proxy for violence in my data set. This measure was compiled from the Department for Social Prosperity (*Departamento Administrativo para la Prosperidad Social*), formerly known as *Acción Social*. This is an umbrella organization that is responsible for instituting social welfare programs, poverty alleviation programs, and a program aimed at documenting the amount of people displaced by the national conflict in the 2000s. CERAC also collected extensive data on the number of Colombians displaced by violence. However, I chose the data provided by DPS because the organization counted the number of people expelled by violence, whereas CERAC counted the number of people that had immigrated into a municipality as a

result of violent events. In order to proxy for the level of conflict, and to provide an alternative measure of violence from the count of attacks by guerillas and paramilitary groups, I chose to use the number of people expelled by violent events.

In order to test the claims that land inequality is tied primarily to the agrarian economy's production output, I included several measures of economic output. These measures were: (1) hectares of land dedicated to growing coffee (data source: 1997 Coffee Census administered by the National Federation of Coffee Growers (NFCG) from 1993-97); (2) oil production (data source: the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)); (3) the internal price of coffee (data source: NCFG); (4) export volume of leading coffee exporting nations (data source: International Coffee Organization); (5) international prices of coal and gold (data source: Global Financial Data); and (6) municipal coal and gold production in 2004 (data source: Colombian government ministry, el Instituto Colombiano de Geología y Minería (Ingeominas)).

I included several dummy variables that summarized the presence of non-state armed groups. Data on the presence of narcoparamilitary groups, guerilla groups, and frontier zones in 2011 came from The Institute on Development and Peace (INDEPAZ). This group collected data on newly emerging armed groups, in particular the *bandas criminales* or *Bacrim*, from local media reports, police reports, reports from the Office of Human Rights of the Vice Presidency, and the Observatory on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration at the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá.

Data on the level of land reform instituted in each municipality between 1961 and 2000 is from two social scientists, Michael Albertus and Oliver Kaplan, who were kind enough to share their data. Albertus and Kaplan spent a few months in Bogotá looking through the archives of the now defunct land reform institute (INCORA), and counted the number of plots titled in

each municipality for the period from 1961- 2000. This data allowed me to test whether the land reform program had a lasting effect on land inequality, and whether its counterinsurgent nature was enduring.

I also included a measure of areas of overuse: these were areas identified by the geographic institute Augustín Codazzi (IGAC) as highly populated and efficient in terms of agricultural production. Therefore, they were unlikely to receive land reform since the land reform institute preferred to distribute plots in rural and remote regions – a strategy to colonize those peripheral areas (Albertus and Kaplan 2013).

I also used two historic measures of violence. One variable comes from the Albertus and Kaplan dataset: it is a measure of how many land invasions were carried out by the peasant organization ANUC between 1971-78. The second is a binary variable reporting whether a municipality was affected by *La Violencia*, based on the comprehensive history of the period by three Colombian social scientists (Guzmán Campos, Fals-Borda, and Umaña Luna 1963). I also included a binary variable of whether or not a municipality was deemed a frontier region fit for colonization by INCORA – this variable draws on designations made by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1985 on whether an area had seen directed settlements in the last 15 years (1970-85) (Lorente, Salazar, and Gallo 1985).

In creating a panel dataset that combined the DPS conflict data with the data on land inequality from CEDE-IGAC, I created a balanced panel of municipal year observations. Subsequently, 7.5% of the 1036 Colombian municipalities that existed in the Albertus and Kaplan data split to give rise to new municipalities, resulting in a total of 1118 municipalities by 2005. In order to account for this, I aggregated new and old municipalities to their original pre 1991 boundaries, as 1991 was the year many municipalities were created in accordance with a

new national constitution. Since Antioquia did not collect data on land gini for the period between 2000-05, I eliminated the 121 Antioquian municipalities from the analysis. I also eliminated the largest 22 municipal units from the analysis; those whose population exceeded 250,000 people. My reasoning to eliminate these cases was because the insurgency and counterinsurgency is concentrated in rural areas. Furthermore, 20 municipalities missing coffee data from the 1997 coffee census, and an additional three municipalities missing rainfall and temperature data, yielded a total of 877 municipalities, and a final total of 5262 municipality-years. I used casewise deletion for those cases with missing data on land gini and counts of violence.

Methodology

I use a Poisson model to assess whether changes in inequality levels in landholding affect the number of people displaced in Colombian municipalities. The linear regression model has been found to produce biased and inconsistent estimates when applied to count outcomes (Long and Freese 2006). Poisson and negative binomial models are better equipped to deal with data that have missing outcomes equal to zero (Long and Freese 2006). Because the majority of migration in Colombia is within the same municipality, the data from Acción Social did not have any municipalities that reported a total of zero people displaced (Acción Social 2012). I corresponded with several Colombian social scientists to ask why the data might be truncated in this way, and the best answer I received is that the majority of migration is intra municipal. So all municipalities had at least one person reported as displaced since the bulk of Colombians moved from rural areas to the nearest city, oftentimes within the same municipality. Standard errors in the Poisson model were clustered at the municipal level to address heteroskedasticity and serial correlation, using the xtpoisson command in Stata.

In this approach, time variation stems from changes in land gini indices. To estimate the impact of land inequality on level of violence, I used the land gini as measured by the CEDE-IGAC research team (2012). Further, the variation was not confined to one region: 46.3% of municipalities in Colombia saw land inequality increase between 2000-05 (for the period between 2000-10, the number is even larger- 57%) (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012).

In order to look at the reverse relationship, the effect of rural violence on land inequality, I used a linear regression model with random effect specifications. Since the gini index is essentially a continuous variable with values ranging from 0 to 1, a linear regression model was appropriate. I use the xt commands in Stata that are equipped to handle the high amount of autocorrelation in panel data sets. In panel data, since each additional year of data is not independent of previous years, a model is needed to correct for artificially low standard errors, which the xt commands correct for.

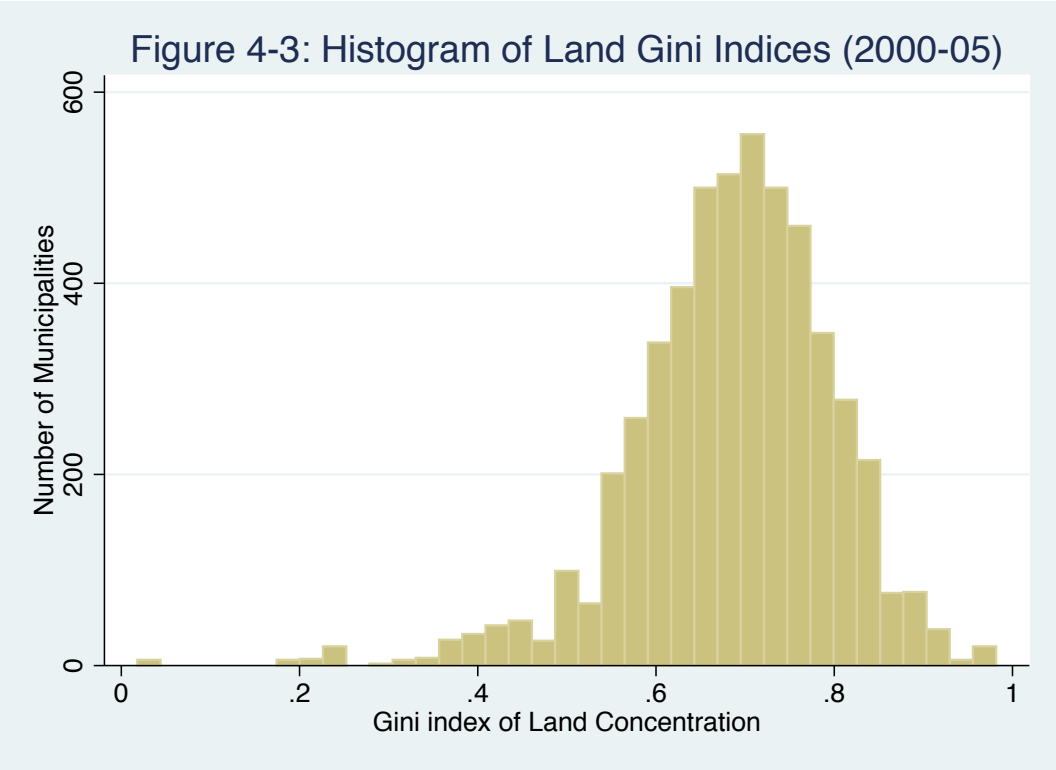
Simple regression analysis with Colombian municipalities likely suffered from several omitted variable problems. Even controlling for demographic variables, such as population and agricultural production variables including whether or not a municipality has oil or gold production, multiple regression analysis is likely to miss important dimensions of violence and inequality. One of these omitted variables is the variation in state capacity that exists between municipalities in Colombia. The capital city of Bogotá has a strong military and police presence, whereas a town in the department of Vaupés can only be reached by airplane, and local officials are far removed from state resources and national politics. Since factors that are likely to influence land inequality are likely to also have an effect on the number of people displaced by violence, such as strength of paramilitary and guerilla groups, I employ a fixed effects model to

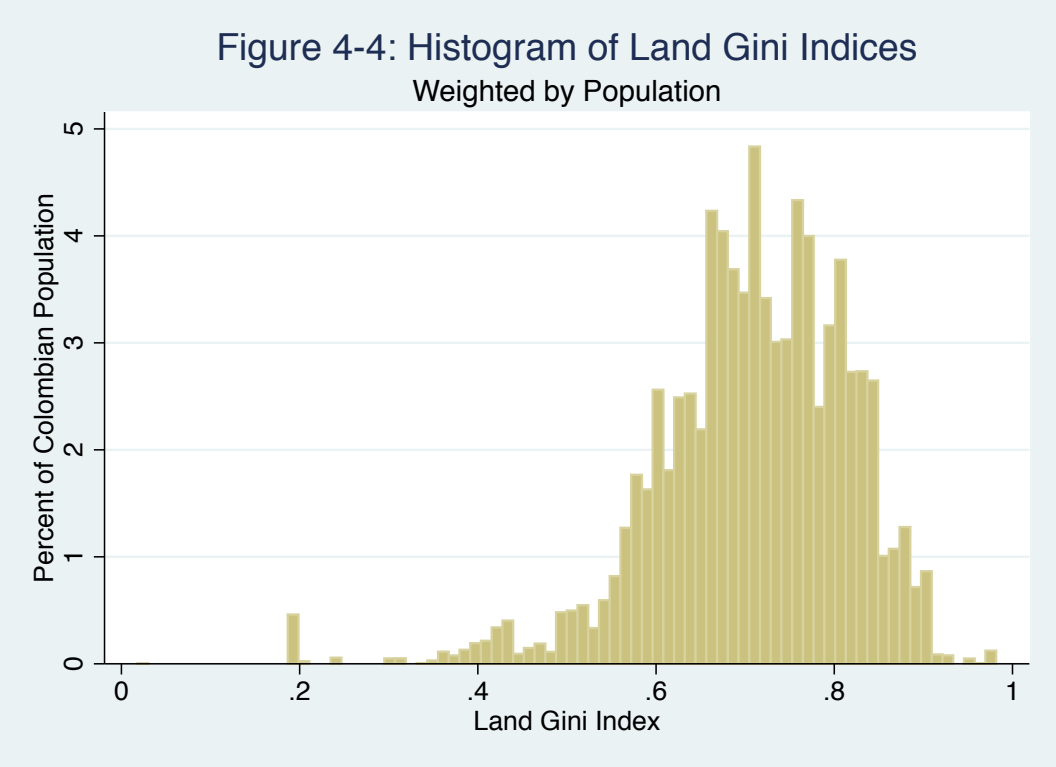
test whether or not violence has an effect on land inequality. This model captures some of those harder to measure variables, like state capacity, by considering the municipality-year as the unit of analysis, and thus capturing some of the variables that are constant over time. I also considered random effects and OLS models, in order to address the effects of variables that are time invariant. Several historical variables, such as extent of land reform, or the level of mineral production in the municipality before the 2000s, or of levels of violence in the municipality in the 1950s and 1970s, were dropped from the random effects model because they did not change in this dataset. I reported estimates from OLS and random effects models in order to consider these effects. To address endogeneity concerns, I consider lagged variables of the effect of violence on land inequality.

Results

Land Distribution. Of 5176 municipality-years with data on land gini, the average Gini coefficient was 0.686. The degree of variation in land inequality was significant, a characteristic which this chapter tries to exploit. Land gini indices ranged from 0.018 in an unpopulated town on the eastern plains called La Salina in the year 2000, to 0.982 in a moderately sized town named Mosquera along the Pacific coast (department of Nariño) in southwestern Colombia (also in 2000). The interquartile range for Gini scores (in the year 2000) in municipalities is 0.14. That range indicates that those municipalities with landholding inequality in the 75th percentile had a gini coefficient about 22 percent higher than a town at the 25th percentile. This range becomes even more pronounced if we compare the 95th percentile (with a gini coefficient of .85) to the 5th percentile (gini of .507). This comparison indicates that those municipalities with landholding inequality in the 95th percentile had a gini coefficient almost 70 percent higher than a district at the 5th percentile, reflecting a significant amount of regional inequality. The second

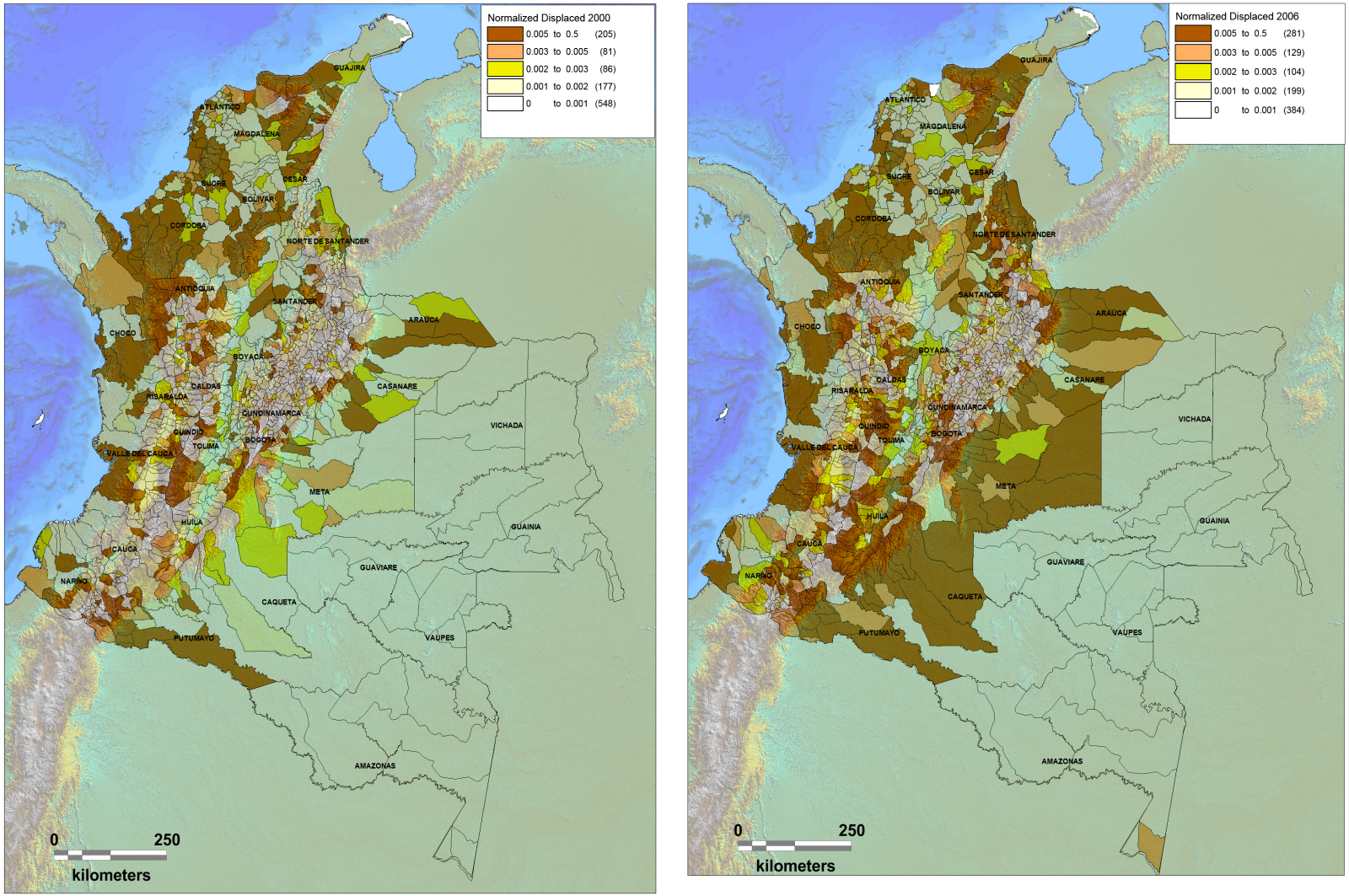
histogram shows the land gini weighted by population, showing the percentage of Colombians that live at different levels of inequality. The vast majority of Colombians live in municipalities with gini indices above 0.6.





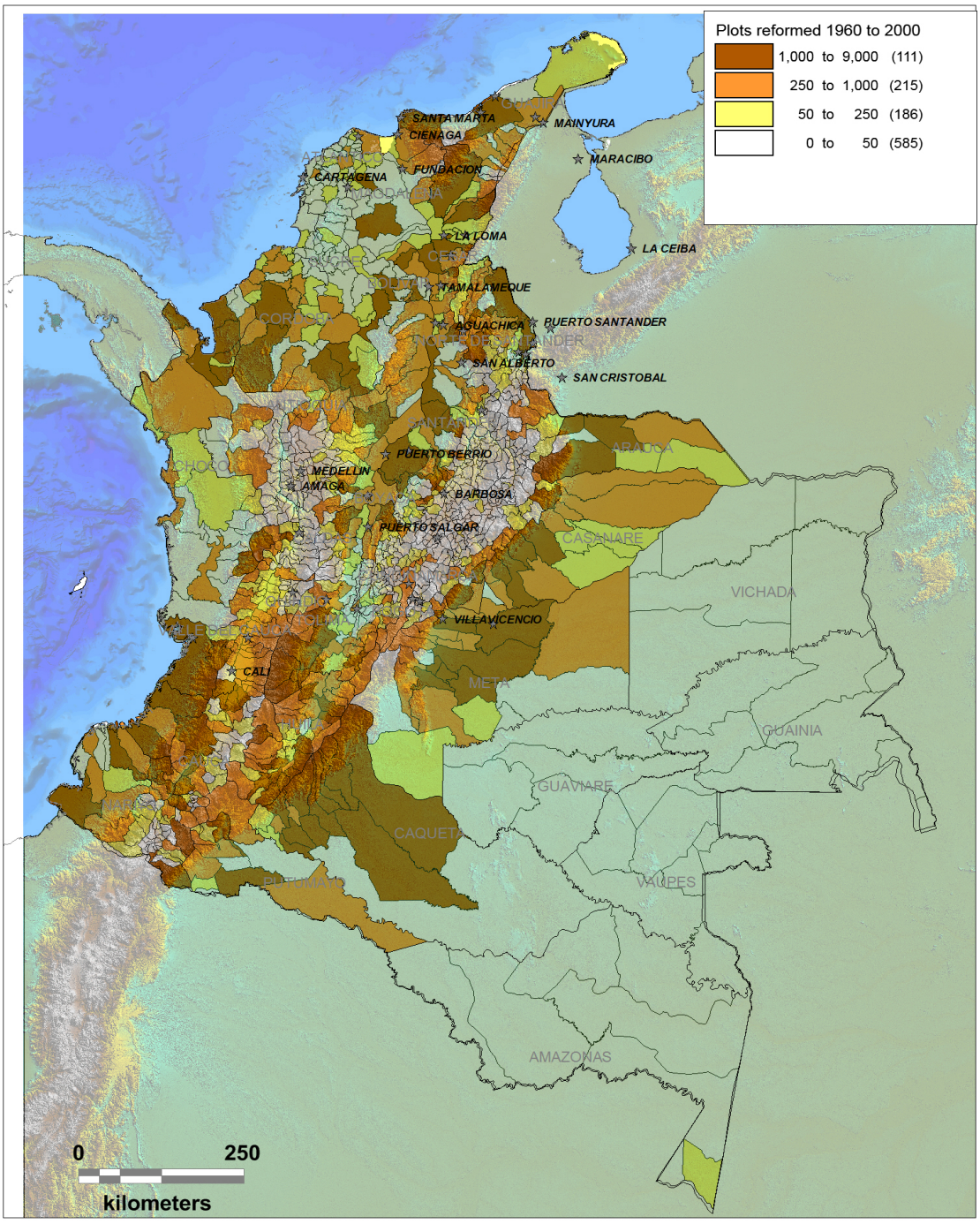
Violence. The average number of displaced citizens among all Colombian municipalities from 2000-05 was 296 people per municipality-year (4409 municipality years reporting). The municipality reporting the highest number of people displaced by violence (20,164) was El Carmen de Bolívar in northwestern Colombia in 2000. El Carmen de Bolívar lies in the infamous Montes de María region, which has been associated with a historically high proportion of indigenous Colombians, high levels of poverty, and very high levels of violence between guerilla and paramilitary groups. The area has been notoriously dangerous, with high rates of displaced people, guerilla attacks, casualties, and clashes since the 1980s. The following two maps are 'heat maps' of the displaced population in 2000 and 2006, normalized by size of population in the municpality. The Montes de María region is the most northern area appearing as orange in the 2000 map. The mean number of violent actions by guerilla groups (which is an aggregate variable counting attacks, massacres, and political kidnappings) was 0.6, and ranged from 0-32. The mean number of violent actions by paramilitary groups was 0.17 (ranging from 0-15).

Figure 4-5: Displaced Population by Municipality Controlling for Population, 2000 and 2006



Land Reform. The scale of land reform varied a great deal. The average number of plots titled in the forty-year period from 1960-2000 per municipality-year was 325 plots. The municipality with the most plots titled from 1960-2000 was San Andrés de Tumaco in southwestern Colombia along the Pacific coast (8864 plots reformed). This is particularly interesting since the FARC has traditionally been strong in southwestern Colombia, and the high degree of land reform in the department of Nariño was likely a product of the counterinsurgent attempt by the Colombian state. This trend resonates with the recent argument put forth by Michael Albertus and Oliver Kaplan (2013) that land reform was most intense in areas where the Colombian state was worried about guerilla recruitment being high. The bulk of land reform implemented by INCORA entailed simply granting official titles to land plots (Albertus and Kaplan 2013), and subsequently failed to become truly redistributive. The figure below shows the trend towards minimal land reform. The variation, however, in the degree of land reform is enormous. A municipality in the 25th percentile of total plots reformed from 1960-2000 had 1 sole plot of land that underwent reform, while the average for the 75th percentile was 366.

Figure 4-6: Land Reform by Municipality (1961-2000)



I first tested a model that examined the relationship of land inequality with agricultural and industrial production, and included variables that affect agricultural production (e.g., temperature and rainfall). I found that land inequality was most closely related to population and temperature, suggesting high regional variation in land gini (see Table II in appendix). Furthermore, I found that whether or not a municipality grew coffee had no significant effect on the level of land inequality. However, a negative and significant relationship existed between land inequality and level of coca growth, although the coefficient (0.001) was very small, such that it did not show up on many gini index measures ($z= -1.96$, $p< 0.05$). More than 10%, or 125 municipalities, reported having coca growth in 2000. The number increased slightly to 136 municipalities in 2005. Popular media reports in Colombia typically represented coca growers as lawless bandits, but this finding shows a more benign association in terms of landholding structure.

There was no significant relationship with the amount of gold production in 2004 (94 municipalities reported having gold production in 2004) or the amount of oil production (35 municipalities) in 1988, and a mildly significant positive relationship with whether or not there was mining in the municipality in 1978 ($p<0.09$). Commodity prices from 2006 (coffee, oil, gold, and coal), which proxy for prices earlier in the 2000s, did not have any significant effect on land gini (covariates omitted in table II). This suggests that changes in land inequality have not been tied to commodity prices in recent years; nor were they related to primary commodity production before the 2000s, with the exception of having a mildly significant relationship to mineral production.

Higher average temperatures predicted reduced levels of land inequality; in hotter climates, land inequality was lower ($z= -7.38$, $p<0.001$). Population was positively correlated

with land inequality ($z=8.66$, $p<0.001$). Dating back to the colonial era, the areas of highest population density in Colombia had been the highlands of the mountains, where cities such as Bogotá and Medellín lie (Acemoglu et al. 2013). These areas were traditional coffee growing regions. Due to the small sized plots of coffee growers in Colombia, historically, this area was associated with lower levels of land inequality. However, in recent years these regions saw an increase in illicit crop production as coffee prices fell, along with a growth in illegal groups and in intensity of violence (Dube and Vargas 2013; Ibañez, Mora, and Verwimp 2013). The data indicates that they also experienced an increase in land inequality.

My second model examined the effect of violent events on land inequality (while controlling for agricultural and industrial production measures). After lagging the counts of violence by one year and focusing on specific years, a strong and significant relationship between violence and land inequality appeared. The numbers of clashes between armed forces, guerilla attacks, and casualties all had negative and significant relationships with land inequality from the years 2002-05 (see Table III). The same was true for government attacks for all years (2001-05), and for the number of people displaced by violence (data only includes 2001-05 for lagged variables). Paramilitary attacks did not show the same consistent relationship with land inequality as the other counts of violence did, except for in 2005.

Thus, in areas with higher counts of violence, land distribution was more egalitarian. Land inequality decreased in the subsequent year in areas with higher counts of violence. These trends suggest that areas with higher counts of violence, and thus areas that suffered from diminished *national* state capacity, tended to also have lower land inequality. Without a local state to ensure local law and order, land inequality had a tendency to decrease. This suggests the

presence of a class war: violent events (directly or indirectly) led to more egalitarian landholding structures.

The variation from year to year in the number of displaced people by violence yielded some interesting patterns. Of the 20.1% of municipalities in the lowest quartile of displaced people, 18.5% reported numbers in the highest quartile in the next year. Of the 13.7% of municipalities reporting numbers of displaced people in the highest quartile of displaced people, 35.2 % reported numbers in the lowest quartile in the next year. These numbers indicate quite a bit of variation across years in terms of the displaced population. There seems to be an episodic nature to the patterns of displacement that are triggered by sudden events. I found very high serial correlation (r=0.94) in land gini from year to year, suggesting a stable pattern in inequality. I found less evidence of autocorrelation in the variable for displaced people (r=0.40), which suggests that there are more external factors involved in displacement, rather than a stable, internal characteristic. This lends credence to the argument that armed actors were instigating violence.

I proceeded to evaluate a more comprehensive model, measuring the effect of violence and resource production on land inequality. Table IV compares the results from an OLS model, a fixed effects model with municipal fixed effects, and a random effects model. This model confirms the relationships borne out by the two previous models. I included the results of the random effects model to show the estimates of several time invariant variables omitted by the fixed effects model. Previous research has shown an association between armed activity and precious metal mining (see (Fearon and Laitin 2003), and the random effects model included a measure of precious metal mining in 1978. Actions by guerilla groups lagged by one year (including attacks, massacres, and political kidnappings) had a negative and significant

association with land gini in all three models. Actions by paramilitary groups (including attacks, massacres, and political kidnappings), however, did not have a significant association with land gini in any of the three models. Coca growth retained its important association with land gini across all three models, as did the effects of logged population and the amount of land deemed as overused by the geographical institute IGAC. Areas of overuse had a negative association with land gini, suggesting that the increase in land inequality has been in agriculturally more dynamic areas and in areas that have been in demand (confirmed by the positive association with logged population and with altitude). This further confirms the findings summarized in Table III that land inequality has increased in areas traditionally associated with greater state capacity.

Historically violent areas (as measured by whether the municipality was affected by *La Violencia* and the number of raids carried out by ANUC in the 1970s) had a positive and significant relationship with land inequality. This indicates that regions of violent activity historically have become regions with higher levels of inequality, even when controlling for other significant covariates including population, altitude, and land overuse. This suggests a cyclical nature to inequality, where those areas that saw more violence in the 1950s and 70s were met with a harsh retaliation, ultimately leading to higher levels of inequality in landholding in recent years. It also hints at a development of consolidated landlord power in areas where this power was tested by ANUC in the 1970s . This consolidation of landlord power presumably began with the Chicoral Pact and the undermining of the national land reform program, and continued in a more discrete fashion with a gradual process of property hoarding, especially in areas with an active presence of the peasant organization ANUC.

Effect of land inequality on violence

I tested the presence of the opposite relationship, whether inequality has an effect on the level of rural violence (using random effects specifications). I used a Poisson regression model, which is better equipped to handle count variables, to evaluate the effect of land inequality on the number of displaced folks from a given municipality. I also used an exposure model in conjunction with the Poisson regression model, adjusting for population (exposure models indicate the number of times the event could have happened). The simple bivariate model predicted that land inequality as measured by land gini was negatively associated with the number of displaced people. Highly unequal zones were associated with a lower number of displaced Colombians. Table V shows the results of the whole model, which controlled for areas that produce precious minerals and resources such as oil (which tend to have higher counts of violence).

Land gini had a negative and significant association with counts of displaced Colombians. This suggests strong local power structures, and hence consolidated landlord power, in areas with high inequality. Given that most of the displacement in Colombia has been within the same municipality, the costs of moving were not very high. The fact that displacement has been low in areas with high inequality, where presumably people would leave in order to seek better employment opportunities (at least in the municipal capital), suggests that citizens were either intimidated to leave, dependent on wage labor jobs that restricted their mobility (binding them to their locality), or they were satisfied that violence was low in these municipalities.

Given the sheer number of Colombians that reported being displaced by violence (4.3 million are reported as internal refugees fleeing from violence – in a country of 47 million), the trend in inequality indicates that citizens of highly unequal regions must be remaining in a region

due to a mixture of fear and security. Areas of high inequality also had lower counts of clashes between guerilla and paramilitary groups, lower counts of attacks by government forces, and lower counts of violent actions committed by guerilla groups (although no significant relationship with actions by paramilitary groups). These trends show that areas with a strong local power structure had lower counts of violence; citizens of these areas may remain due to low levels of violence and a consolidated local power structure.

The number of displaced Colombians was also negatively associated with coca growth (although positively associated with coca growth in 1994). Coca growth in 1994, coffee cultivation in 1997, a pro-paramilitary presence on local councils, yearly rainfall, logged population, and previous land reform all had significant and positive associations with the displaced population. This finding resonates with the literature, which has found a positive relationship between population and extralegal armed activity (Fearon and Laitin 2003), presumably because armed groups can easily blend into the population. This finding also confirms recent findings that the risk of violence and the presence of illegal crops has a negative impact on families' decisions to continue to grow coffee (Ibañez et al. 2013).

I found an increase in the likelihood that a municipality would have the presence of FARC guerillas, ELN guerillas, and narco paramilitary groups, in municipalities with more oil production in 1988 and more mineral production in 1978, which partially confirms the opportunity structure argument. There was also a positive effect of higher rainfall, increased land reform, raids by ANUC, land overuse, and the presence of narco paramilitary groups on the presence of ELN and FARC guerillas in a municipality. Accordingly, the relational nature to the violence was evident: areas with paramilitary groups had a higher likelihood of also reporting the presence of guerilla groups. Further, this presence was not likely to be peaceful: I found a

positive and significant relationship between the amount of oil produced in the municipality in 1988 with the number of violent actions by paramilitary groups and by guerilla groups (no relationship to mining production in 1978).

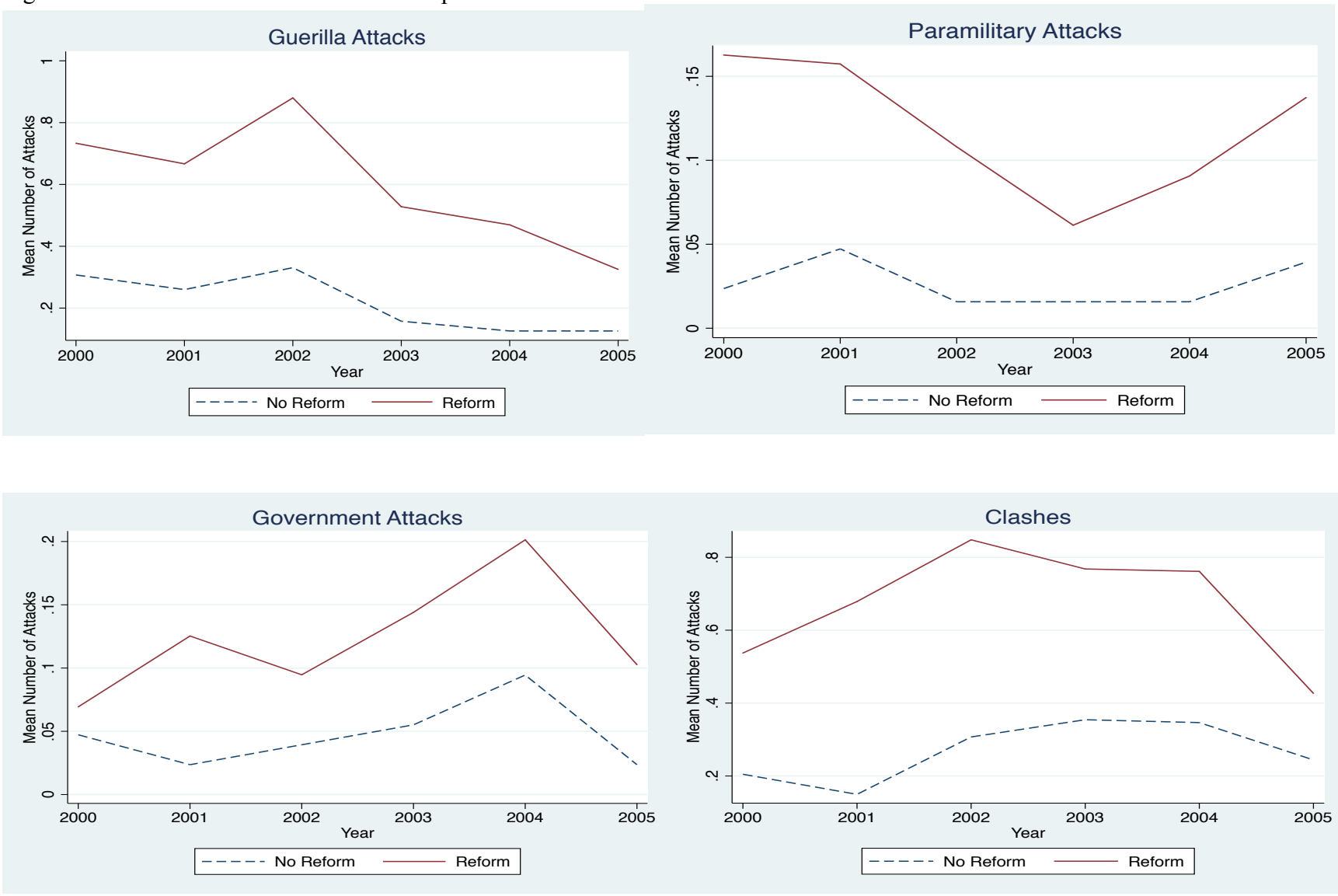
Land reform had the opposite of its intended effect, and displays a positive association with displaced citizens. This relationship also suggests a reverse land reform occurring where land reform recipients had been scared off their land: areas that had more intense land reform have often been the same areas with more displaced citizens in recent years (United Nations Development Program 2011). The following figures delve into the peculiar relationship between previous land reform efforts and guerilla and paramilitary attacks: paramilitary attacks, guerilla attacks, governments attacks, and clashes between armed groups were all significantly higher in areas that had land reform.

Previous land reform had a positive and significant effect on recent guerilla attacks, paramilitary attacks, government attacks, the number of displaced folk, and clashes. For both the Poisson and OLS regression models, these effects were all significant at a 0.01 level. Previous land reform thus had a positive and quite significant effect on the several different measures of violence. Claims of reverse land reform, of armed groups intimidating land reform recipients into giving up their land, resonate with this data. Armed groups employed in areas with lower state capacity have undone forty years of what little agrarian reform occurred in Colombia. Those municipalities that saw more intense land reform had higher levels of counts of violence, demonstrating an unfortunate, destabilizing effect of land reform on violence in Colombia.

I also found that municipalities with more raids by ANUC in the years between 1971-1978 had more land reform between 1988-2000, lending more credence to the argument that land reform was a counterinsurgent program ($z=3.95$, $p<0.000$) (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; De

Janvry 1981; Zamosc 1986). One more raid between 1971-78 was associated with an added 8.47 plots reformed between 1988-2000. Violent events in the 2000s were not an isolated event, but rather were tied more cyclically to patterns of violence and civil conflict in the 1950s and 1970s.

Figure 4-7: Measures of Violence in Municipalities with and Without Land Reform



Conclusion

This chapter strove to quantify the measure of one dimension of state capacity: the monopoly of violence. I used the following measures as proxies to measure the capacity of municipalities to enforce law and order in the territory: measures of violence, guerilla attacks and paramilitary attacks, and the number of people reporting being pushed out by violent events from 2000-05, as well as land invasions by ANUC in the 1970s, and whether or not a municipality was affected by *La Violencia*. I found some very interesting patterns, which I elaborate on below.

First, I found evidence of very strong local states in several regions of Colombia. These areas had low counts of violence and high levels of land inequality, indicating consolidated landlord power. These regions can be characterized by a structure of local authority protecting local citizens from violence, but also marked by high levels of inequality in the structure of land distribution. Two ideal types emerged in the empirical data: what I call 'Strong local states' are municipalities characterized by high levels of land inequality, low levels of previous land reform, and low levels of violence. Municipalities in the highland region of Boyacá, such as Aquitania, Chita, Dutiama, and Sativanorte are examples of this pattern. They were stable in terms of violence and appeared to have a strong local state in place. 'Reverse reform' municipalities are areas of reverse land reform: municipalities with high land inequality that had experienced high levels of land reform, with high levels of invasions by ANUC, and which tended to have higher than average levels of current violence. Municipalities such as San Martín in Meta, El Tambo and Caloto in Cauca, and Tame in Arauca exemplified this type. This type had more social change in recent years, as measured by land invasions and land reform, and experienced class warfare and backlash by landed elites to reconsolidate landholding.

My original hypothesis was that regions with a strong rule of law and heightened state capacity would not see as many clashes and attacks by non-state armed actors, which was confirmed. Weber (1946) argued that one dimension of state capacity is the ability to be sole steward of violence. This dimension is not evenly distributed in Colombia, as this data shows. Some areas in Colombia are characterized by high state capacity in terms of monopolizing violence; these regions also had high land inequality. Areas with high land inequality saw lower counts of violence, especially carried out by revolutionary guerilla groups.

My hypothesis that increasing violence drove land inequality actually proved to have the opposite relationship. I found a negative relationship between several counts of violence and land inequality (see table III). Areas with higher counts of violence in the previous year were associated with lower inequality in the following year. Thus, those areas with more stability and fewer counts of violent events were the areas that saw larger increases in land gini. This suggests that increases in land inequality had been in areas that already had a powerful local state, not in frontier regions associated with lessened state capacity. The bulk of the movement in land inequality was in those high demand, overused areas (as defined by IGAC) that have been historically critical to economic production in Colombia. The trend confirms the presence of an ongoing class war in Colombia: powerful landholders continue to accumulate land in areas where demand for land is high and violence is low. In other words, the increases in land inequality due to land grabs and intimidation tactics primarily go uncontested and do not foment violent events, indicating a wide disparity in social power between the assailant and the victim.

Land inequality was also positively associated with the log of population, and with altitude, which further confirms the strong state/high inequality relationship. The highlands had been well populated since the colonial era, and were the first areas that the Spaniards settled

during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Safford and Palacios 2002). They had been relatively stable and characterized by a strong state infrastructure (Robinson and García- Jimeno 2010), and thus less likely to tolerate non-state armed groups. However, state presence has not been even in the highlands: several regions in Cundinamarca, Tolima and Huila, also at high elevations, saw high levels of violence, especially during *La Violencia.* Inequality levels were well above average in Arauca, which lies in the *llanos orientales* and has a high number of large cattle ranches. Levels were also high in the department of Sucre, which has large sugar plantations, as well as Chocó on the Pacific coast, which has large commercial farms (average gini across the three departments= 0.8). But these areas did not have the same changes in inequality in the 2000s, as the highland regions such as Valle del Cauca and Huila. All of these regions had higher than average levels of land inequality, suggesting the presence of a consolidated local state and local economic elite. However, recent increases in land inequality was more pronounced in the well-populated highlands than in the historically unequal eastern plains and Atlantic coast.

Land inequality in the early 2000s was associated most closely (in order from strongest association to weakest) with the log of population, altitude, being affected by *La Violencia*, coca growth in 1994, number of raids by ANUC from 1971-78, and municipalities with a higher percentage of overused land. The relationship with population and altitude indicates that land inequality has been increasing in the highland areas, which have historically been those areas with a more equitable landholding structure (Nugent and Robinson 2010; Oquist 1980). In areas where land inequality was already high, such as in the states of Sucre, Atlántico, and Magdalena, high levels of land inequality were more stable. Thus, the coffee-growing areas that had a more

egalitarian pattern of parceling land in the nineteenth century (LeGrand 1986) were the regions becoming more unequal.

The relationship of land inequality to whether or not it was affected by *La Violencia*, further, is indicative of another pernicious trend. This relationship uncovers the retaliatory nature of violence in Colombia. Land grabs in the early 2000s appear to have been a backlash against acts of violence that occurred during the 1950s and 60s. The positive relationship with the number of raids by ANUC in the 1970s is further evidence that landowners seized land in areas that had a stronger peasant movement in the 1970s, in a pattern of retaliation for advances made over thirty years ago.

Nationally, land inequality increased (national gini as calculated by IGAC increased from 0.854 in 2000 to 0.874 in 2011): 57% of municipalities saw land inequality increase between 2000-11. Much of this change appears to have been recent. Less than half (46%) of municipalities saw land inequality increase between 2000-05, and there was minimal change to the national gini, from 0.854-0.855 (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). Reports of a reverse land reform and of armed paramilitary groups pushing people off their land through intimidation tactics appear to be particularly applicable to the more recent past. This dataset is unfortunately incapable of extending the tests to this later period, but as data on guerilla and paramilitary activity is updated, this will be an important relationship to study.

The converse relationship was also confirmed by the data: areas with more inequality saw less violence. Areas with higher rates of land inequality, either due to the unequal distribution of land in the land courts from the early twentieth century or to a process of counter land reform in the 1990s and 2000s, tended to have lower rates of violence for the period 2000-05. Higher inequality appears to have reinforced increasing (local) state capacity, measuring state capacity

as the ability to enforce order (and ignoring fiscal and administrative measures). This suggests a pattern of consolidated landlord power in rural regions: those areas with high inequality had fewer violent events. The fact that areas with more raids by ANUC from 1971-78 and areas affected by *La Violencia* are associated with higher land inequality (see table IV) suggests a profound form of class warfare: landlords consolidated their power in areas where they felt their material interests were threatened in the 1970s and 80s. Thus, land inequality appears to be associated with areas of consolidated power and a strong local state, lower counts of violence, and a monopoly of violence.

I found evidence of two more ideal types regarding areas with high levels of violence. 'Pure frontier' municipalities were exemplified by areas with high levels of guerilla actions, paramilitary actions, displaced people, and raids by ANUC between 1971-78, and lower levels of land inequality and land reform. Municipalities in the infamous Montes de Maria region near the Atlantic coast such as El Carmen de Bolívar and San Jacinto in Bolívar, Ovejas and San Onofre in Sucre, as well as areas with a strong presence of FARC guerillas or AUC paramilitaries such as Tibú in Norte de Santander and Jamundí in Valle del Cauca are good examples of this pattern. These municipalities were in decidedly frontier regions: in the foothills of the major cordilleras, and along the mountainous and densely forested Atlantic coast. They have been frontier regions throughout much of the nation's history, and the conflict increased as more Colombians settled and vied for power there.

'Commodity rich' municipalities were seen in areas that have been historically contentious, between paramilitary groups and guerilla forces, such as Tibú and Sardinata in Norte de Santander and Barrancabermeja in Santander in the eastern cordillera, or in areas that paramilitary groups controlled such as Tame in Arauca (along the eastern plains). These areas

were valuable because of the land's natural resources, especially oil, and also the prevalence of cattle ranches in Tame, Arauca and banana plantations in Ciénega, Magdalena. Ciénega has historically been a contentious area; it was the site of the banana massacres in 1928 that sustained the worker's rights movements in the 1930s (Safford 1995).

Finally, this dataset confirms the ultimately class-based nature of Colombia's land reform program. Land reform had no lasting effect on land inequality. Land reform was highest in areas that had more land invasions by ANUC in the 1970s, which further confirms the counterinsurgent nature of land reform (Albertus and Kaplan 2013). After the surge by ANUC in the 1970s, the state responded with greater intensity regarding land reform in those areas that had more land invasions by ANUC. However the program was more ameliorative than redistributive; land reform later declined significantly. Of particular note is that current levels of violence were higher in areas that saw more land reform between 1961-2000. This pattern hints at retaliation for previous land reform in modern day Colombia, and unfortunately, a new round of violence.

Appendix: Summary Statistics and Tables

Table 4.1

Summary Statistics of Key Variables

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel level variables					
Land gini	5176	0.686	0.113	0.018	0.982
Number of people displaced (expelled) by violence	4409	295.733	782.417	1	20164
No. annual violent guerilla actions	5262	0.602	1.682	0	32
No. annual violent paramilitary actions	5262	0.173	0.778	0	15
No. annual clashes	5262	0.612	1.582	0	25
No. annual casualties	5262	2.133	7.119	0	123
No. annual government attacks	5262	0.112	0.511	0	14
Log real municipal capital revenue, millions of 2006 pesos	4927	8.257	0.778	3.217	11.456
Coca intensity, thousands of hectares	5262	0.119	0.849	0	24.507
Log population, millions	5262	-4.35	1.009	-8.488	-1.357

Municipal level variables

Total number of plots reformed, 1960-85	865	266.563	546.579	0	6980
Total number of plots reformed, 1988-2000	865	84.099	160.126	0	1884
Total number of plots reformed, 1960-2000	865	350.662	660.889	0	8864
ELN Presence	877	0.065	0.247	0	1
FARC Presence	877	0.205	0.403	0	1
Presence of narco-paramilitary groups	877	0.204	0.403	0	1
Zonas de Consolidacion 2011	877	0.043	0.204	0	1
Coffee cultivation, thousands of hectares, 1997	857	0.805	1.544	0	10.585
Oil production, hundred thousand barrels/ day, 1988	877	0.003	0.056	0	1.627
Coal production, thousands of tons, 2004	877	1.749	11.899	0	155.518
Coal reserves, indicator, 1978	877	0.323	0.468	0	1
Gold production, hundred thousand grams, 2004	877	0.165	1.371	0	19.388
Precious metal mining, hectares, 1978	877	320.686	1850.339	0	33828.1
Coca cultivation, 1994, thousands of	877	0.08	0.619	0	9.081

hectares					
Cultivated coca, indicator, 1994	877	0.051	0.221	0	1
Coca cultivation, indicator, 1994 and 1999-2005	877	0.223	0.417	0	1
Rainfall, cubed centimeters	877	1826.212	1026.075	160	9200
Temperature, Celsius	877	21.458	5.083	3.9	28.9
Year pro-paramilitary majority on local council, 1994- 2005	877	0.712	1.399	0	9
Annual level variables					
Log internal coffee price, thousands of 2006 pesos, lb	6	0.384	0.131	0.252	0.587
Log coffee exports of top 3 coffee exporters, millions 60 kg bags	6	3.751	0.096	3.555	3.845
Log international price of oil, thousands of pesos/ barrel	6	4.559	0.173	4.335	4.813
Log international gold price, millions of 2006 pesos/ ounce	6	0.004	0.161	-0.2	0.202
Log international coal price, thousands of 2006 pesos/ ton	6	-2.278	0.219	-2.522	-1.849
Log coal exports of top 3 coal exporters, thousands of short tons	6	12.776	0.045	12.731	12.862

Table 4.2
The Effect of Land Usage and Primary Resource Activity on Land Inequality

	Dependent Variable: Land Gini
Coffee Cultivation 1997, thousands of hectares	0.0008
	(0.002)
Coca, thousands of hectares	-0.001**
	(0.0005)
Coca use in 1994, thousands of hectares	-0.034***
	(0.006)
Indicator of coal reserves 1978	0.014*
	(0.008)
2004 coal production, thousands of tons	-0.0003
	(0.0003)
2004 gold production, hundred thousand grams	-0.002
	(0.003)
1988 oil production, hundred thousands of barrels	0.035
	(0.061)
Yearly rainfall	-0.000
	(0.000)
Average temperature	-0.005***
	(0.000)
Log of population	0.034***
	(0.004)
Area	-0.007
	-0.001
Indicator of land overusage	-0.028**
	(0.015)
Observations	4852

Notes: *** is significant at the 1% level
** is significant at the 5% level
* is significant at the 10% level

Table 4.3
Lagged Counts of Violence and Land Inequality

	Dependent Variable: Land Gini (Controlling for Log of Population)				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Guerilla Attacks	-0.002	-0.009***	-0.007***	-0.011***	-0.006**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Paramilitary Attacks	-0.009	-0.004	0.003	-0.005	-0.033***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Casualties	-0.000	-0.002***	-0.002***	-0.002***	-0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0006)	(0.0005)
Clashes	-0.004	-0.010***	-0.008***	-0.011***	-0.005**
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Displaced	-0.0000009**	-0.00003***	-0.00003***	-0.00006***	-0.00008***
	(0.0000004)	(0.0000003)	(0.0000004)	(0.0000007)	(0.00000007)
Government Attacks	-0.032**	-0.035***	-0.053***	-0.021***	-0.015**
	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.006)

Notes: *** is significant at the 1% level
** is significant at the 5% level
* is significant at the 10% level

Table 4.4
Land Inequality and Violence

	Dependent Variable: Land Gini		
	OLS	Fixed effects	Random effects
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Guerilla Actions	-0.004***	-0.0007**	-0.0007**
	(0.001)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Paramilitary Actions	0.002	-0.0002	-0.0003
	(0.003)	(0.0005)	(0.0005)
Government Attacks	-0.009**	-0.0003	-0.0003
	(0.004)	(0.0009)	(0.0009)
Number of Clashes	0.002	-0.0003	-0.0003
	(0.002)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Number of casualties	-0.00007	0.0001	0.00009
	(0.0003)	(0.00007)	(0.00007)
Coffee Cultivation 1997, thousands of hectares	-0.004***		-0.003
	(0.001)		(0.002)
Coca, thousands of hectares	-0.010***	-0.002**	-0.002**
	(0.003)	(0.0009)	(0.001)
Coca use in 1994, thousands of hectares	-0.024***		-0.027***
	(0.003)		(0.007)
Indicator of precious metal mining, 1978	2.60e-6***		1.76*10^-6
	(9.71e-7)		(1.89*10^-6)
2004 coal production, thousands of tons	-0.00007		-0.00005
	(0.0001)		(0.0009)
2004 gold production, hundred thousand grams	-0.002		-0.002
	(0.001)		(0.003)
1988 oil production, hundred thousands of barrels	0.048*		0.029
	(0.027)		(0.058)
Affected by *La Violencia*	0.032***		0.030***
	(0.004)		(0.008)
Number of Raids by ANUC, 1971-78	0.003***		0.003*

	(0.001)		(0.001)
Total Number of plots reformed, 1960-2000	-3.12e-6		-5.18e-6
	(3.04e-6)		(6.18e-6)
Altitude	0.00002***		0.00003***
	(2.06e-6)		(4.45e-6)
Indicator of area designated as frontier colonization zone	-0.017***		-0.020
	(0.006)		(0.014)
Land overuse	-0.038***		-0.036**
	(0.007)		(0.014)
Percent minority, 1985 census	0.016		0.024
	(0.011)		(0.023)
Years of pro-paramilitary majority on local council	-0.002		-0.001
	0.001)		(0.002)
Municipal revenues from mining	-0.013***	0.0001	-0.0001
	0.004	(0.001)	(0.001)
Log of population	0.031***	0.034***	0.024***
	(0.003)	(0.012)	(0.004)
FARC presence	0.0003		-0.002
	(0.005)		(0.009)
ELN presence	-0.002		-0.006
	(0.007)		(0.016)
Narco-paramilitary presence	0.009*		0.007
	(0.005)		(0.010)
Observations	3856	3856	3856

Notes: *** is significant at the 1% level
** is significant at the 5% level
* is significant at the 10% level

Table 4.5
The Effect of Guerilla Activity, Paramilitary activity and Land Usage on Violence

	Dependent Variable: Displaced Population
Land Gini	-0.113*
	(0.055)
New Colonized region	0.529***
	(0.156)
Coca, thousands of hectares	-0.001*
	(0.0006)
Coca use in 1994, thousands of hectares	0.214**
	(0.089)
Coffee Cultivation 1997, thousands of hectares	0.088***
	(0.029)
Years of pro-paramilitary majority on local council	0.062*
	(0.029)
Indicator of coal reserves 1978	-0.256***
	(0.092)
2004 gold production, hundred thousand grams	-0.029
	(0.032)
1988 oil production, hundred thousands of barrels	-0.312
	(0.615)
Yearly rainfall	0.0003***
	(0.00005)
Average temperature	0.117***
	(0.009)
Total Number of plots reformed, 1960-2000	0.00003
	(0.00008)
Log of population	-0.017
	(0.028)
Observations	4092

Notes: *** is significant at the 1% level
** is significant at the 5% level
* is significant at the 10% level

Table 4.6: Sample Size and Sources

	Sample Period	*Sample Municipalities*	*Source*
Panel Level Variables			
Land gini	2000-2005	864	CEDE-IGAC
Number of people displaced	2000-2005	877	DPS
No. annual guerlla attacks	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual paramilitary attacks	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual clashes	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual casualties	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual government attacks	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual paramilitary massacres	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual guerilla massacres	2000-2005	877	CERAC
No. annual guerilla political kidnappings	2000-2005	877	CEDE-Observatory
No. annual paramilitary kidnappings	2000-2005	877	CEDE-Observatory
Log real municipal capital revenue	2000-2005	821	NPD
Log population	2000-2005	877	DANE

Municipal level variables			
Coffee intensity	1997	857	NCFG
Oil Production	1988	877	MME
Gold production	2004	877	Ingeominas
Cultivated coca in 1994 indicator	1994	877	DNE
Coca intensity	1994	877	DNE
Ever cultivated coca indicator	2000-05	877	DNE, UDOC
African palm intensity	2005	877	Ag. Ministry
Precious metal mining	1978	877	Jacome (1978)
Rainfall	1995	877	CEDE
Temperature	1995	877	CEDE
Years pro-paramilitary majority	2000-05	877	Dube and Vargas (2013)
Annual level variables			
Log internal coffee price	2000-05	-	NCFG
Log coffee exports of top 3 coffee exporters	2000-05	-	ICO
Log int'l price of oil	2000-05	-	IFS
Log coal exports of top 3 coal exporters	2000-05	-	US EIA
Log int'l gold price	2000-05	-	GFD

CHAPTER 5- Conclusion

Overview of Main Argument

In various periods during the twentieth century, civil conflict in Colombia was fought over political affiliation (e.g. during *La Violencia*), and over relationships profoundly changed by commercial agriculture (e.g. strikes by peasant workers on banana plantations in 1928 and the raids by ANUC in 1971-73). The social milieu leading to violent events is infinitely complex. This dissertation has looked at one of the primary consequences of violence in Colombia: the link between violence and growing inequality in rural regions. This dissertation hypothesized that violence changes relations between social classes on its own, irrespective of the penetration of capitalism into rural areas, and shifts alliances between different factions of elite groups. Therefore, I have explored a particular dimension of state capacity - its ability to enforce order - in perpetuating rural inequality.

Growing inequality in landholding facilitated an emerging hierarchy in landholding throughout Colombian history. But the hierarchy between landholder and peasant (*campesino)* existed alongside another hierarchy: that of the governing elite. Often described as clientelistic, Colombian politics have depended on a categorical distinction between patron and client. The categorical distinctions between the landholder and peasant, and between the member of the governing elite and their vote-supplying clients have remained central to upholding this hierarchy.

Sociologist John Levi Martin (2009) has articulated how relationships of patronage are often structurally antisymmetric, in that one person gives and the other receives. Relational networks built on hierarchy facilitate the grouping of people along pre-existing categories, such as whether or not they own land, or whether they come from a political family, and these

categories then divide people into potential clients or potential patrons (Martin 2009; Tilly 1999). This model describes Colombia very well.

Martin (2009) also argued that relationships of patronage tend to be present in conditions of inequality that have tendencies towards anarchy. Colombia's history reveals a pattern of traditional social power supporting an implicit hierarchy where landholding, political influence, military power, and clientelistic network capital served elite Colombians well. Political influence and military strength also served to place elite Colombians on top of the social hierarchy. Political scientist Daniel Ziblatt, referring to arguments that specify the mechanisms for the persistence of landlord power, summarized this situation succinctly:

> First, landholding inequality, unlike income inequality, is a proxy for a particularly pernicious and robust form of preindustrial traditional social power in which prestige, power, and wealth are correlated, giving rise to social norms (for example, invidious hierarchy) that undercut democratization. Second, landholding inequality also gives those atop such hierarchies the resources or means to operate unchecked and thus the capability to block democratization efforts (Ziblatt 2008).

However, landholding was not the only dimension of this traditional social power. Strong political power at the local level revealed another dimension of a structure of rural inequality, in this case inequality in access to the state. A weak national state facilitated the persistence of this social power at the local level.

Gamonales, or local political bosses, were important figures in nineteenth century Colombia that mixed characteristics of military leaders and politicians. Also known as *caciques*, they protected a local region, in exchange for votes and military service, and fostered a deep loyalty from their constituents (Archer 1990; Sánchez and Meertens 2001). Clientelistic networks in the national state relied on the political networks of *caciques*, they funneled votes of their patrons up to department level *caciques,* who pledged their support for one of the *jefes*

naturales, a small group of national notable political figures (Pizarro Leongómez 2006). Presidential candidates were then chosen from these figureheads (Archer 1990). Up until 1974, the department's party bosses, or directorate, wrote up the official party lists that determined which congressmen could run for office in the lower chamber of the House and in the department assemblies. Congressmen in turn elected senators from among the party's notables (Archer 1990), so office holding depended in either a direct or indirect way on these networks of patronage. Patrons of each political party existed at the municipal level as well, and if their party won the national election, these were the men who were likely be given the opportunity to serve either as local or departmental notary publics, judges, departmental assemblymen, municipal councilmen or mayors, and at times as substitutes to departmental representatives (Archer 1990).

The political hierarchy grew to coexist with another categorical distinction that began to emerge during the nineteenth century, when the structure of unequal land distribution appeared to grow most quickly (Coatsworth 2005; Tobón 1972; Zamosc 1986). Large estates were not entirely inherited from the colonial period, as some scholars have argued, although of course land distribution under the colonial administration was by no means egalitarian (Engermann and Sokoloff 1997; Reyes Posada 2009). Instead, they were created by a lopsided privatization of public land in the nineteenth century; the notion of Colombia's democratic frontier was an illusion (LeGrand 1986; Rausch 1999). This was not due to the way the nation entered the international market, as dependency theory would argue, but more about how international trade reshaped the domestic class constellation. International trade drove up the price of land, as crops like sugar and tobacco and coffee suddenly had value on the international market. This in turn drove demand for land within Colombia; which created an incentive to turn to other forms of power to claim land. *Colonos*, or homesteaders, were legally protected by a land reform law

passed by the Liberal party in 1882 (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011). However, they did not fare very well in the land courts, which overwhelmingly granted land to more influential and wealthy local landowners rather than to *colonos* (Acemoglu et al. 2008; LeGrand 1986; Zamosc 1986).

Outside of this homestead law, there was little enforcement of property rights for lower class Colombians (LeGrand 1986; Zamosc 1986). Land distribution as a structure was skewed towards wealthier Colombians, who were able to garner the connections and influence over land judges, and also had the money to pay to file for a title in the municipal capital (LeGrand 1986). Alejandro López referred to this struggle as "la lucha entre el hacha y el papel sellado" (a struggle between the axe and the stamped paper) (Safford and Palacios 2002). The saying refers to the struggle between those who cleared land and used it under the homestead law and those who could garner favor and manipulate legal decisions on land ownership to their own favor. It aptly summarizes the extent of political sway that elites had with the state.

The unequal structure of property distribution remains at the heart of the rural armed conflict in Colombia today (Peluso and Lund 2011; Reyes Posada 2009; Richani 2005). Land has come to symbolize a pernicious form of privilege in Colombia. As the demand for land increased with the growth of commercial crops, the resource was distributed in an unequal manner (Machado 1998; Tobón 1972; Zamosc 1986). Once an unequal structure of landholding began to emerge, it gave farmers unequal access to the economic institution of capitalist led development in the agrarian sector in the twentieth century. Of course, it did not appear altogether unequal, since technically *colonos* or squatters had the legal right to clear and work land, and continued to do so in frontier regions. However, the bureaucracy to register and formalize land titles that was instituted eventually but overwhelmingly came to favor Colombians with the wealth, influence

and knowledge to control this resource (Acemoglu et al. 2014; LeGrand 1986; Oquist 1980). Landholding and political influence came to rely on each other, although landed elites did not traditionally serve as municipal mayors or departmental governors in nineteenth century Colombia (Acemoglu et al. 2008; LeGrand 1986; Oquist 1980).

Sociological Insights

Colombian history is infinitely interesting to social scientists. One area where the country challenges existing theory is in the debate around the causes of rural conflict in developing countries. It is obvious that Colombia suffered a crisis in the twentieth century, which led to unprecedented levels of violence throughout a large portion of the territory. Many theorists have pointed to the crisis in Third World countries as that of capitalism penetrating rural areas and disrupting traditional social relationships (Migdal 1975; Paige 1975; Scott 1977; Wolf 1969). Before this disruption, peasants had been in a stable relationship with landowners, exchanging their surpluses in return for security from armed attacks and natural disasters (Migdal 1975). Capitalism transformed these stable relationships into more 'purely economic' relationships that were devoid of the same social commitments, relationships that became more distant and exploitative (Wolf 1969). However, to portray *La Violencia* as a peasant revolution misrepresents the facts, defining areas of violence as primarily occurring in zones of subsistence agriculture. Chapter 4 showed that violence was lower in areas with high land inequality in the early 2000s, revealing that those areas with high landlord power were stable and held the monopoly of violence. The areas with the most violence were regions at the frontier of the Colombian state, outside of the reach of the central state and areas where various armed forces, paramilitary groups, guerilla groups, and narcotraffickers, were vying for control over the

territory. Thus, violence was intimately tied with the tenuous nature of the frontier, and the struggle between various armed forces to install a local state structure.

Conflict over territory, to protect supply routes in the case of narcotraffickers, or to establish routes to move troops through in the case of guerilla groups, or to drive out guerilla sympathizers in the case of paramilitary groups, were not the only impetus for violence. Violence was also a retaliatory and cyclical phenomenon. At the time of *La Violencia*, no guerilla forces existed in Colombia. Peasants had begun settling in remote regions in self-defense zones, largely to escape the violence between Conservative and Liberal police forces. Not until the bombing of self-defense zones in the early 1960s did guerilla groups start to form. When the Betancur administration (1982-86) initiated peace talks with guerilla groups in 1983, this angered several sectors of elite Colombians who felt at once targeted by guerillas and unprotected by the state. Elites then turned to self-defense forces, or early paramilitary groups, to defend themselves. One of the most well-known paramilitary groups was started by the Castaño brothers, whose father had been killed by FARC guerillas in the early 1980s. The battle over territory in remote regions of Colombia between guerilla groups and the paramilitary groups then led to thousands of rural Colombians fleeing and being displaced by violence.

Theda Skocpol (1979) provided an alternative thesis to the peasant revolution thesis: capitalism caused a political disruption to states, rather than a structural-cultural disruption to peasants. Skocpol (1979) argued that peasant revolutions in Japan, China, and France were largely driven by political disruptions caused by the encroachment on the central state by international wars and economic competition with other nations. In other words, instead of viewing *La Violencia* as a response by rural citizens to the encroachment of capitalism, we can see it as a response by the state to the encroachment of capitalism. In the case of Colombia, the

local state mattered more in the day-to-day lives of Colombians. Specifically in Colombia, capitalism changed the balance of power between classes, and precipitated a response by elites to target those areas that had the most active workers rights movement in the 1930s (LeGrand 1986). In the 2000s, as my data shows, elites targeted areas that experienced land reform, and engaged in a reverse land reform to consolidate territory.

Thus, *La Violencia* represented more a crisis of the state than it did a crisis for rural citizens. Embracing local strongmen and armed groups became a way for rural Colombians to reject the central state (Sánchez and Meertens 2001). The state had come to be associated with corruption and with a clientelistic and repressive form of government that did not create opportunities of meaningful employment for many Colombians. Embracing non-state armed actors became a way for local communities to declare that they did not support such a state. Many rural Colombians thus sympathized or cooperated with guerilla forces, not out of ideological sympathy, but because working with guerilla forces was a way to reject the state and the neglect they felt. Conversely, when elites felt unprotected by the state from guerilla forces in the 1980s, when president Belisario Betancur (1982-86) initiated peace talks with the FARC, M-19, and EPL, elites turned to private security forces to fight the guerilla forces (Reyes Posada 2009). As the historian Jacobo Grajales put it, armed actors have been "elements in the process of state formation" in Colombia (Grajales 2011), an alternative to the central state. This has generated a system of armed clientelism, where armed groups act at the behest of wealthy Colombians, serving as private security forces, as groups that can garner votes through intimidation (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Grajales 2011; Pizarro Leongómez 2004).

Colombia poses a second challenge to theories on the development of modern nation states. When looking at Colombia closely, Barrington Moore's (1966) argument does not apply

very well, or it does but with large caveats. Part of the difficulty in adapting Barrington Moore's blocked democracy thesis in Latin American countries is that many Latin American nations were not predisposed to authoritarianism or democracy or communism, because they were not fully formed states (Centeno 2002; Yashar 2005). The intense localism and regional differentiation made forming a state difficult in Colombia (Safford and Palacios 2002). Successfully developing states, such as those of East Asia, had strong states with extensive administrations and highly specialized bureaucracies that fostered domestic growth (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Amsden 1989; Evans 1995). Michael Mann has referred to this type of capacity as infrastructural power (Mann 1986). Many Latin American nations, on the other hand, did not undergo significant nation building following the colonial period, contemporary boundaries even today largely resemble those of the Spanish and Portuguese administrations that left in the early nineteenth century (Centeno 2002). This put Latin American nations in a peculiar position between sovereignty and laissez faire politics. The nations became highly despotic in several cases, but infrastructurally they remained quite weak.

Many states grew stronger through fighting international wars, which forced them to grow fiscally by taxing their citizens and grow their infrastructure in order to build an armed forces (Mann 1986; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1992). The bellicist argument that international wars increase the bureaucratic, military, and administrative capacity of states is well taken. However, Colombia's history is marked by *internal* civil strife such as *La Violencia* much more so than by wars waged against other states. Therefore, the question remains as to what mechanisms allow for high levels of inequality in conjunction with a weak state to persist. I argue that social power at the local level was behind this pattern: a type of power that drew on categorical distinctions between landowner and peasant but also between governing elites and vote producing clients.

A third challenge to social theory presented by Colombia has been on how authority is exercised in young nations without strong states. A good portion of the social science literature on Latin American development has stressed landholding and wealth as sources of power (Engermann and Sokoloff 1997; Huntington 1968; Paige 1975). Colombia's economic and political development shows that power is more multifaceted than this, however. More fittingly, social power includes wealth, prestige, social connections and networks, political influence, and success in solving the collective action problem (Robinson and García- Jimeno 2010). The answer lies in the inability of local elites to heed their authority to a centralized state. It has remained advantageous for Colombian landed elites, political elites, and commercial elites to remain involved and influential over local commerce and local politics. The historian Frank Safford has characterized Colombia's development as having an authoritarian trajectory with a democratic shell (Safford 1995).

Colombia is a paradoxical case of the persistence of landlord power. In Barrington Moore's (1966) influential book, he theorized two mechanisms behind the extraction of surplus from workers by landed elites: 1) agrarian capitalists that earned higher profits in the agrarian sector by relying on technological innovation and investment in mechanized agricultural tools and 2) agrarian capitalists that earned higher margins of profit through labor squeezing and coercion (Brenner 2003; Moore 1966). The second type tended to rely on political mechanisms to extract a surplus from their workers (e.g. through restrictive labor contracts), and so tended to support a repressive state. In Colombia, workers were forced into working under peonage agreements or for low wages because they often had no alternative for finding employment. Landowners were able to effectively usurp land as a resource in nineteenth and twentieth century Colombia, which limited opportunities for smallholders. By laying claim to land that had already

been inhabited by *colonos,* land entrepreneurs both accumulated land and secured a workforce. Without alternatives for employment, *colonos* often had no choice to stay and continue to work the land they had been farming, but as tenants instead of as homesteaders.

The 1920s were one exception, when the state financed more public works projects and workers were in demand, but this did not have any lasting effect on job creation (Muñoz 2009). Landowners did not oppose democratization outright, they did not block the extension of the vote to all males in 1856, for example (Acemoglu et al. 2014). However, they effectively created an obstacle to an egalitarian landholding system by using violence and fomenting instability. As Paul Oquist put it, Colombia had a weak state but a strong structure of social domination (Oquist 1980). Violence became an instrument of control in the hands of elites.

Colombian elites have tended to be a self-aware sort, and solved the collective action problem quite convincingly in several historical periods. They did so not only in the nineteenth century by gaining favor with local land judges in consolidating land, but again after a land reform bill passed in 1936, by circumventing more inclusive squatter's rights to evict tenants before they could lay claim to the land. Thus, they turned to de facto power once again to counteract a relatively socially democratic policy by the state. This showed how the local state mattered the most in the day-to-day lives of Colombians. It also harkened back to a strategy of dispossession, of simply forcing people off the land that was central to consolidating territory throughout Colombia's history.

The model of a "captured democracy" describes a situation where institutions and the distribution of resources depend on the relationship between de jure political power that is allocated by political institutions such as constitutional law; investments in de facto political power are used to influence politics through other means such as lobbying, bribery and extralegal

force (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008). A 'captured democracy,' as theorized by the economist Daron Acemoglu and the political scientist James Robinson, is a specific situation where a democratic regime survives but economic institutions favoring an elite persist (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008). Colombia, with a nearly unbroken record of democratic elections, but with a highly unequal structure of land distribution, and economic institutions that favor sectors with strong agricultural lobbies, such as price bands for commercial crops and subsidies for cattle ranching and commercial crops, is a fitting example of this model.

Acemoglu and Robinson's (2006) theory suggests that if citizens, who always outnumber elites, gain an advantage through a change in political institutions, such as broadening the popular vote or creating a peasant movement, then elites will respond by intensifying their de facto power. Changes in political institutions often did not have very high costs for elites. Most Latin American countries freed themselves from Spanish colonialism, formed republics, and wrote constitutions in the early nineteenth century. During the twentieth century, these same countries experienced several changes in government, ranging from populist presidents to dictators to military presidents. While these changes led to corresponding changes in economic institutions and economic outcomes, oftentimes the structure of economic institutions, especially the structure of land distribution, showed resilience.

Elites intensified their investments in de facto power, particularly in their war making apparatus. Chapter 4 showed how violence increased in areas where the peasant movement had been the most active in the 1970s. Land inequality also tended to increase in areas that were targeted by the national land reform program. Thus, a class war can be said to characterize those regions. The historian Catherine LeGrand hypothesized along this same argument that regions that saw the most violence during *La Violencia* were the same areas that had stronger workers'

right movements in the 1930s (LeGrand 1986). Research suggests that higher levels of inequality prompt more resistance from landholders, because they stand to lose more from changes in political institutions (Ziblatt 2008). In Colombia, this has often taken the form of investments in armed action.

Colombia's national state has remained weak infrastructurally for much of its history. However, I argue that the local state has been very strong, especially when we consider local elites as mini fiefdoms. Therefore, it is not enough to discuss the state as an entity in itself; it is obviously made up of social actors with preferences and agendas and limitations. Various fractions of elites in Colombia suffered several crises, and intervened successfully at opportune times. Elites with access to private police forces, in particular Conservative departmental governors, were able to exact some revenge during *La Violencia* and act against areas that were politically active in the 1930s (LeGrand 1986). Governing elites from both parties were able to pass a vast self-defense law in 1968. Elites tied to cattle ranching along the Atlantic coast intervened in 1973 to detooth the land reform program and render it inconsequential. Members of the Liberal party were present during the *chicorolazo* as well (Callejas 2002), elite responses have tended to be bipartisan.

Elites turned to private security forces in the 1990s and 2000s to protect their property. They did all of this within the context of strong local power, and a weak state. In fact, elites seemed to prefer a weak central state- it afforded them the room to operate in and protect their interests, without much trouble from the government in Bogotá. Democracy was advantageous, as it kept the cogs of the political machinery moving at a slow crawl, and allowed local elites to configure their relationships to their advantage. After the 1936 land reform law and the land to the tiller clause, it took the government two years to set up the land courts that were to try cases

(Berry 2004). This gave local elites ample time to evict *colonos* working on their land, perhaps through a perfectly amicable but 'off the books' agreement, avoiding a legal tangle over the rightful owner of the property.

Of course, a weak central state and strong local authority has not always been entirely advantageous to elites. *La Violencia* was a historical contingency that deeply changed the trajectory of the country's development, but it would have been less devastating if the Colombian state had held the monopoly over the use of violence in the territory. *La Violencia* precipitated the formation of guerilla groups as citizens went on from fighting in *La Violencia* to form these groups in the early 1960s. It forced the hand of the state and forced a redistributive concession in the form of land reform, which was used as a tool of counterinsurgency. And most importantly, it led to the law passed in 1968 that allowed private citizens to arm themselves and fight against subversive forces.

My primary argument in this dissertation is that violence has had the most severe effect on inequality, because it took the teeth out of the primary institution that could counteract it: the state. In the 1930s, the closing of the coffee frontier, and the promise of social mobility that it carried, contributed to *La Violencia*, as thousands of peasants found their opportunities for work and social mobility closing quickly. The pattern of violence begetting deeper inequality reveals a dangerous pattern in Colombia, of elites turning to de facto power and circumventing the state to act in their own interest.

Further Research

More research is needed on the composition of political and economic elites. Elite groups have been made up of political party elites, commercial entrepreneurs, land entrepreneurs, lawyers, merchants, credit brokers, cattle ranchers, and paramilitary leaders at one time or

another in Colombia. Their interests have not always aligned, but the field of authority has remained overwhelmingly local rather than national in scope. An index of overlap between those who held political offices at the municipal level, and those who owned land, for recent years would be an interesting index to construct. This would allow researchers to see if there was a change in the amount of overlap between economic and political elites during the 2000s, when a new political faction that had been excluded from the institution of two strong parties, that of the paramilitary group AUC, entered Colombian politics.

Members of third parties, which were associated with the political arm of the paramilitary umbrella organization AUC, came to hold a large number of political offices. Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos (2014) showed a clear trend in patronage based vote buying: the vote share of third parties, explicitly or implicitly associated with paramilitary groups, increased significantly in areas with a high paramilitary presence. In turn, a high paramilitary presence in areas where senators received a high proportion of their votes predicted how the senators voted on a law that made significant concessions for paramilitary demobilization (including lowering the maximum prison sentence to eight years for human rights abuses), and whether they were arrested for links to paramilitary groups. Paramilitary presence also correlated with the vote share for the presidential candidate Álvaro Uribe, later found to have received campaign funds from paramilitary groups (Acemoglu et al. 2013). Mapping out the networks of these patronage structures would be interesting, to delve further into the nature of resources that are exchanged in clientelistic structures. Were office holders more likely to be landowners before serving in office, or more likely to come from the top decile of income earners? Were they more likely to hold land after they had served, or to increase their annual income? If so, the claim that paramilitary

groups were largely responsible for land grabs in the 2000s (Reyes Posada 2009) would be backed by empirical evidence.

Along the same lines of looking more closely at how networks built on patronage relationships are composed, network research on the field of patron-client ties, starting from the village level, going to the municipal level, to the department level, and on to the national directorates is needed. Clientelism tends to be discussed in Colombia without enough empirical data. It would be interesting to at least visualize some of these patronage networks and what types of reciprocity sustain them.

Also, a closer look at how laws were shaped during the National Front period is needed. With such a high institutional barrier of a majority 2/3 vote for laws to pass, it is surprising that such sweeping legislation passed during the period. The year 1968 in particular was a pivotal year: both the peasant organization ANUC was created, and the self-defense law allowing civilians to arm themselves were passed. Another law that did away with sharecropping arrangements was also passed. Were there bipartisan agreements being made leading up to these two bills? In an interview with an ex-Senator from the department of Antioquia, the senator harkened back to a period when legislation was bipartisan and was more "thoughtfully" implemented; he was talking about the National Front period when the two parties alternated the presidency and the popular vote was suspended (Gaviria 2010). It seems at least some legislators viewed the National Front period as an opportunity to pass laws that were likely to receive more bipartisan support than in other periods.

More interdisciplinary research is needed as well. Work in political science has informed my dissertation especially, and it seems more work in the vein of political sociology is needed. Within sociology, more work on Latin America would also be fruitful, as the region in some

ways appears to have been abandoned as the sociology of development has lost steam. A lot of comparative historical work on Latin America has focused on Central America (Mahoney 2002; Paige 1998; Yashar 2005), yet South American countries present some fascinating paradoxes for applying the work of Barrington Moore and other frameworks. These studies have also unfortunately neglected social class as a dimension of analysis. Further, more work that places Colombia in a broad comparative context is needed in sociology. One such study, the edited volume by political scientist Evelyne Huber and the historian Frank Safford (2002), benefited from extending Barrington Moore's work to Latin American countries, but did not draw any comparisons between Latin American and highly industrialized countries. Oftentimes, comparisons between developed and developing countries draw on implicit comparisons, and sociology would benefit from continuing to make these comparisons more theoretically guided.

Projections

Colombia has adopted a model of rural development that has so far been unable to overcome high levels of poverty, high levels of inequality between rural citizens, nor to resolve the armed conflict. The trajectory of rural development taken by Colombia continues to place rural dwellers in a vulnerable state vis-à-vis the nation. Altering this trajectory is a complex process, because it means transforming a structural and a historic process. As a recent United Nations Development Report (2011) put it, it means institutionalizing more state in the society, and allowing less market intervention in the state. It needs to go beyond that which previous agrarian strategies have done. Market assisted land reform, which allowed for land to be bought and sold at market price with some additional aid from the state is an example of a strategy that has no potential for altering the model of rural development. Likewise, programs that extend credit to small farmers, or technical assistance and education on farming techniques, do not go

nearly as far as they need to in order to disrupt the nexus of violence and inequality that accumulate pressure in Colombian society.

Ongoing collection of data on land use and land concentration, as well as registering formal land titles is needed. The economic department at Universidad de los Andes, in conjunction with the geographic institute IGAC have made a giant step in updating the cadastral registries for most departments, with the exception of the state of Antioquia (CEDE (UNIANDES)-IGAC-Universidad de Antioquia. 2012). Antioquia's cadastral survey has been updated since 2009, data is now available for that department. However, the last agricultural survey was in 1971, and updated data on how land is being used and the breakdown of small, medium and large farms is also needed. This updated registry of land allows for a land tax to be fully instituted. Land has been used as a tax haven, but also as a way to launder money. Therefore, a land tax based on an updated land registry would allow for a progressive tax to be instituted that taxed commercial ventures and larger farms more heavily than small farms being used for subsistence. A progressive tax would tax farms that are not being used according to the most efficient use according to the IGAC survey most heavily. Thus, large cattle ranches that are taking up land that can be used towards smaller, family sized farms or for export crops would be taxed heavily, and hopefully incentivize landowners to sell the land to several farmers.

Several social scientists have pointed to the inefficient use of land in Colombia continues as a significant obstacle to equitable growth in the rural sector (Grusczynski and Jaramillo 2002; Reyes Posada 2009). Disrupting this structure would provide room for a viable smallholder model that supports small farmers, harkening back to the *via campesina* that the country abandoned in the 1950s. Creating a smallholder system would mean a very politically risky move of expropriating some of the land dedicated to cattle grazing that is better suited for

agricultural crops. However, as many drug traffickers and paramilitary soldiers have converted land that was illegally obtained into cattle ranches (Reyes Posada 2009; Richani 2007), the state could start with converting those plots into family farms. This policy would help move towards a smallholder model that seriously backed small farmers and included them in the model of rural development.

However, the armed internal conflict continues to be an ongoing and serious problem in Colombia, and in some ways has deepened after paramilitary demobilization in 2006 (United Nations Development Program 2011). The military strategy employed by Álvaro Uribe and with financial backing from the United States did not significantly alter the web of armed groups operating in rural areas (Elhawary 2010). Without the monopoly of violence, the Colombian state will be unable to institute laws supporting smallholders, and unable to reverse rural inequality. If Colombians continue to take matters into their own hands, the cycle of class articulation and retaliation will continue. In thinking about how to disrupt this retaliatory cycle, the policy of closing the frontier has been proposed. This would mean that all forest areas not currently settled or being farmed should be designated as natural reserves. History has shown that the frontier has acted more as a tool of dispossessing peasant farmers of land more so than an escape valve. Many frontier areas have proven to be poorly suited for growing crops, and have practically forced farmers into growing illicit crops as the only viable options for earning a living.

However, upon further reflection, the land tax for cattle ranches and closing the frontier are policies that are unlikely to have any lasting effect. Elites have been successful in using de facto power at several moments in Colombian history. A strategy of dispossessing peasant settlers in frontier regions has, very unfortunately, remained consistent and effective since the

nineteenth century. Recently, this social crystallization has become even more deadly, as several non-state armed groups have trapped civilians in a deadly struggle. This dissertation has argued that elites are capable of acting around laws passed by the central state, and instituting their own local states. Thus, laws that intervene with the existing landholding structure are likely to incite further violence. Unless the Colombian state can guarantee Colombians their safety and due process before the law, new laws remain dangerous if they alter class relationships.

Colombia has come to accept a rural development model that until now has been inadequate in promoting human development. High rates of poverty in the countryside, a high degree of inequality between the commercial sector and the smallholder sector, the rural conflict, and the weakness of the state in ensuring institutions that address the problems of the rural citizens contribute to a vulnerable segment of society. The recent land restitution law, which passed in 2011 under the stewardship of current president Juan Manuel Santos, is promising, since it addresses the nexus of violence and inequality at the heart of the problem. Given the way elites tend to operate in Colombia, however, the precedent has been made that elites will find ways to act around the legislation and fashion it towards their own ends. Hopefully Colombia is embarking on a new path; the path towards achieving justice in the countryside will be difficult, but with the work of more and more Colombians every year, it is possible.

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