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**The Colombian agricultural model: from the Colombian political independence until the
nowadays dependence model**

(Research in progress)

1. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural practices of the small peasantry and hunter-gatherer livelihoods have been suffering influences throughout the history of mankind. Nowadays, these livelihoods are also a product of an agricultural model that is gradually more subjugated to the laws of the market that characterizes the anthropocene, conceptualized by other authors as capitalocene. In Colombia, this model has been developed since the independence of the country (from the Spaniards), and today has culminated in an improved agroindustrial and agronomic model, predator of natural ecosystems, and originator of social (and environmental) conflicts that gave origin to the armed conflict that lasted more than a half of a century. Since its formation as an independent Nation-State (1810-1824), Colombia's agrarian policies have been marked by strong environmental, socio-economic, cultural and political implications, especially for local communities such as the Bari who lived in the region. Furthermore, an armed conflict that began in 1964 and ended in 2016 (the peace treaty was then signed in Havana, Cuba) originated from severe inequality regarding land tenure and distribution, which always favored small groups of powerful landowners ("latifundios") and to the detriment of small peasants and local communities such as the Bari, historically excluded by the agrarian public policies of the Colombian State. This political and economic option of the Colombian State, like other states in Latin America, has its origin in a historical subjugation process to multinationals and oligopolies of extraction of raw materials, which had as consequence either the expulsion of local communities from their ancestral lands but also the destruction of the ecosystems that supported their way of life. The Amazonian forest occupies 477,274 km² of the Colombian territory and stands for 10% of the world biodiversity. This forest and its biodiversity have been gradually destroyed by multinationals and oligopolies that extract raw materials (e.g. oil), with the support of the Colombian government.

In a country where 14 million hectares of land are considered arable (13% of the total area of the country), 45% of this productive land belongs to only 0.3% of the population (Ampuero and Brittain, 2008). The majority of the Colombian population is thus excluded from access to agricultural land. Let us recall that Colombia is one of the countries with the greatest inequalities in land ownership; according to the UN, 52% of large properties are held by only 1.15% of Colombians. On the other hand, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Colombia is the country with the largest number of internally displaced persons, estimated at between 3 and 4 million, caused both by selective killings and by indiscriminate killings in the countryside. Furthermore, of the 114 million hectares of Colombian land, only 4 million hectares are used for agriculture, while 30 million hectares are used for extensive livestock farming (see ACVC, Lecture presented by ACVC at the International Conference "The other Davos "). The fertile soil is thus inadequately used, being ostensibly occupied by a few powerful landowners ("latifundio"), narco-latifundios, agro-industry and narco-paramilitarism (the latter, often judicially pointed out by having a strong connection with elected officials in the most important institutions of the country). Land tenure and land use are thus directly related to the exercise of state

power and to the socially and economically dominant classes, being the forestry ecosystem integrated into an organizational socioeconomic model dominated by market and profit oriented (Casanova et al, 2014). If, until the 1990s, agriculture was the most important economic sector in Colombia (Ampuero and Brittain, 2008), since then the Colombian economy has changed towards the extraction natural resources (gold, oil, etc.). It is in this sense that, since the 2000s, oil reserves have increased and that the extraction of those resources constitutes the bulk of the country's exports.

According to Ampuero and Brittain (2008), in the year 2000, 41.5% of total exports were petroleum and coal, with most of the oil exported to the United States. Colombia is the eighth largest oil supplier in the United States (Scott, 2003), which is why the US State has supported increasing production, not only in economic terms but also in military terms. Nowadays, Colombia is a country that is occupied by “latifundios” (a few large but very powerful landowners), occupied by multinationals and transnational corporations, both imposing an agro-export model, reinforced and expanded by narco-traffickers and paramilitaries.

In Colombia there seems to exist a relationship between, on the one hand, the agrarian question and the socio-economic agrarian model, political violence, peasant and ethnic expropriation and the destruction of ecosystems, and, on the other, the armed conflict, which lasted 52 years. The conflicts generated here are similar to the conflicts in other parts of the world, extending to ecosystems that are fundamental for the survival not only of endangered or protected species, but also of the human population itself. The globalization process destroy local and traditional communities and the biodiversity is pushed aside in favor of a global economy whose objective seems to be only the search for profit (Casanova et al, 2014, p.4, Moore 2003, 2010, 2012, 2017 a) and 2017b)).

2. From the Colombian independence till the US imperialism in the XX century

The deepening of the crisis of the Spanish crown and the growing opposition to its rule, especially with the wars of independence of the early nineteenth century, announce the end of Spanish imperialism and the imposition of an agricultural model contrary to the interests of small peasants and native communities. England emerges, then, as the new imperial power among the nascent Latin American republics (Saldanha, 20015a). During the nineteenth century, the socio-political form known as the viceroyalty of New Granada goes through moments of revolutionary war of independence, internal conflict between “castes”, and consolidation of new forms of power in the nascent republics of what will be Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama (Barbas, 2011).

The transformation of colonies (1650-1810) into republics (from 1810) will be the most notorious political feat in Latin America. In spite of this, the intensity of exploitation accelerates, differentiating the new situation from the previous situation, because the local “castes” are then subordinated through the English capitalist market and no longer through political subjection (Barbas , 2011). The established relations of production are now governed by servile, semi-feudal, or pre-capitalist forms. The state

apparatus will then be dominated either by the commercial (and industrial) bourgeoisie, or by a small group of powerful landowners, who are now in conflict (provoking multiple civil wars), or establishing alliances that will allow to safeguard their interests - of which the period of liberal hegemony [1849-1885 (Saldanha, 2015 a)] is an example.

From 1886 until 1930 the presidency of the Colombian Republic was occupied by both the National Party (1888-1900) and the Conservative Party (1900-1930). During this period, a conflict opposes liberals (bourgeois) and conservatives (mainly, landowners) - the Thousand Days War -, after which there is a strong land concentration process.

After the Thousand Days War, a treaty is signed between Colombia and the United States of America. If, in the treaty initially signed, Colombia would lease the Panamanian isthmus to the United States, for 100 years (renewable indefinitely), US trade and strategic-military interests (which included the construction, as soon as possible, of a canal in Central America), and its consequent imperialist policy, fostered the creation of the Republic of Panama in 1903 (Saldanha, 2015 a). The USA interference in Colombian territory extends from the search for geostrategic positions to a control over industry and commerce, with the consequent need for soil and subsoil control.

Another example of the growing influence of the USA imperialism, this time related to the Colombian agricultural and industrial model, is the banana industry, which is difficult to dissociate from the name of a North American company that marked the entire Caribbean region: the United Fruit Company (Saldanha, 2015 a).

The banana exportation business that was produced in Colombia at the end of the 19th century was circumscribed to a region of the Magdalena River, south of the port of Santa Marta, in the department of Magdalena (Saldanha, 2015 a). This region was confined, until the late nineteenth century, to subsistence farming and local consumption. At the beginning of the 19th century, the region's main economic activity was focused on smuggling, although in the second half the port of Barranquilla developed. Such development provided the strengthening of a commercial agriculture that sought to respond to the need to supply the growing population of the port . This was followed by the arrival of the French company of the Panama Canal with its 20,000 workers, which increased trade not only in agricultural products but also in industrial products (Saldanha, 2015 a). After the installation of the United Fruit Company in Santa Marta at the end of the 19th century, it is estimated that at the beginning of the 20th century, between 1925 and 1928, 50,000 people lived in the area where the railway network was passing and 30,000 worked directly and indirectly) to the banana industry [many of them from other districts and regions, in search of better living conditions (Saldanha, 2015 a)]. The Colombian government handed over extensive territories to United, and it functioned as a state within the state (Saldanha, 2015 a).

The increase in population that the implantation of the banana industry provided has made the demand for food grow. Thus, from 1916, United established a system of commerce, through which it

sold imported products and articles, namely of the USA; this system, in addition to a new commercial control, allowed its boats, when they returned from the USA, not to return empty, thus optimizing their fleet. The workers, for their part, purchased the products they needed with coupons that the company paid in exchange for their workforce (which made up a considerable part of the workers' wages), which were only usable at United stores.

In the 1920's and the 1930's, United controlled an important part of the commerce in the Magdalena district, having under its control the landowners themselves. These landowners had large pieces of land and capital to provide for the banana company, the purchase of their crops by just this company. From these landowner families came the ruling class that controlled several regions of the country and the deputies and senators of several districts. These large families concentrated credit, land and capital, which stimulated the dislike of small and medium-sized landowners who could not expand their banana crops (Agudelo, 2011). It is in this context that the strike of 1928 (started on November 12) appears, which got 25,000 workers to face United. In the struggle of the banana workers, in 1929, there were strong student protests. In July 1929, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán of the Liberal Party traveled for ten days to the region where several massacres took place. Back in Bogotá, Gaitán denounces the massacres carried out by the government troops, opening a public and institutional debate on what happened. In this context, protests against conservative political hegemony were growing, with 44 years of political power coming to an end. It is in this environment that the liberal Enrique Olaya Herrera assumes, in 1930, the Colombian presidency, obtaining a triumph that he himself, Enrique Olaya, had not counted (Guzman Campos et al., 1962 [2005]). The assumption of the presidency of the Republic of Colombia by Olaya will inaugurate a new phase of conflicts between liberals and conservatives, which geographically focuses mainly on Santander and Boyacá [there were also some resonances in Cundinamarca and Antioquia (Saldanha, 2015 a)].

The violence escalation, especially in rural areas, is gradually widening, creating a widening gap between the two power parties (Guzman Campos et al., 1962 [2005]). In addition to coinciding with the peak of workers 'and peasants' conflicts, the rise to power of the liberals will also boost the agonistic context. In the districts of Cundinamarca and Tolima there are acute rural conflicts, related both to precarious working conditions and to land ownership and use; says a peasant leader at the time (Navarro, 2014).

3. The first half of the XX century: the strength of USA multinationals

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Colombian agrarian structure was very diverse: there was cattle ranching on the Atlantic coast and in some parts of the eastern plains, coffee farms in different parts of the country (mainly in the departments of Tolima, Cundinamarca, Santander, Antioquia and Caldas - the *coffee axis*), the *minifundio* in Boyacá, Cundinamarca and Nariño and the colonization zones [especially in the agricultural frontiers (Saldanha, 2015 a). However, with the end of the First

World War, oil has become one of the most coveted resources in the world. USA monopolies were among the largest corporations in the world (Escobar, 1982). One of the largest USA monopolies - the Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon) - belonging to the Rockefeller family, acquired after World War II the bonds of the Tropical Oil Company, which had begun in 1921 the work of oil exploration. In 1926, Gulf Oil Corporation (a rival of Exxon) - created by one of the largest USA banks owned by the Mellon brothers - bought the major rights of the Colombian Petroleum Company, which exploited the hydrocarbons of the Barco Concession until 1981 (Escobar, 1982; see also Hernández, 2008). When, in 1931, Henrique Olaya signed the Chaux-Folsom contract, handing Catatumbo's hydrocarbon exploitation to the Americans (where most of the Bari communities were leaving then), one of the contract impositions demonstrates the Colombian submission to foreign multinational corporations: the Colombian government was to assure a law and order by fighting local communities (especially ethnic groups such as the Bari) and to the expropriation of squatter lands. According to this contract imposition, the government would provide the contracting companies with adequate protection (through armed police bodies or public forces) in order to prevent or repel attacks by the Bari and other local communities who inhabited in the regions covered by the contract (Martínez, 2014).

The Chaux-Folsom contract (approved in 1931 by Congress) gave the Colombian Petroleum Company (COLPET) the exclusive domain of Catatumbo hydrocarbons, while delivering to Colpet's South American Gulf Oil Corporation (SAGOC) the construction of the Tibú-Conveñas pipeline. The latter had right of passage in an area of 187,000 hectares, being free to use all the land that it requested for encampments, tanks, warehouses, installations, roads, telegraphs, telephones, dwellings, stones and woods. It could use the land to make enclosures for cattle and service animals and for agricultural plantations, while SAGOC had the usufruct of an autonomous and privileged zone, parallel to the pipeline and its branches, 30 meters long each side of the first and second. According to the terms of the agreement, the public treasury received 10% of the gross product, and the Barco family 3.5% (Escobar, 1982).

The claim of land by the peasant and local communities will be favored with the accession to the Presidency of the Republic of the also liberal Alfonso Pumarejo (1936-1938). During his presidency, López Pumarejo defended a constitutional reform, proposing an Agrarian Reform (which intended to distribute, within ten years, unproductive lands to small peasants), justifying the importance of the social function that the land plays (Duarte, 2005). Pumarejo thus enters into conflict with the Colombian landowners, which deepens the differences between liberals and conservatives. Other sources of violence also arise: while the peasants organize to occupy land, the landowning oligarchy is armed to fight them. The agrarian question has since become one of the fundamental pillars of the conduct of the political practice of the Colombian ruling class, revealing the contradictions of a country, essentially agricultural. The Colombian ecosystems then underwent profound transformations throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century, with institutions not playing a central role either in the protection of local communities, or in the maintenance of forests and their resources. In 1938, liberal Eduardo Santos

(uncle-grandfather of the current President of the Republic), assumed the presidency (1938-1942) and stopped the reforms of his predecessor, namely the Agrarian Reform.

During World War II, fuel transportation becomes increasingly complicated for the Allies. Such situation had repercussions on the Colombian economy, whose oil production in Catatumbo in 1942 was reduced to a quarter of the production of 1939 (Saldanha, 2015 b). Despite this, Colombia exported more than 34 million barrels of refined oil. After 1945, oil extraction was once again accelerated, allowing large monopolies profit margins; it was in the 1950s that the concession reached the highest yield in its history, producing 26,000 barrels per day (Escobar, 1982).

It is in the year 1942 that the first Peasant and Native Organization arises - the Peasant and Native Federation. First included in the Confederation of Workers of Colombia (CTC), the Native Peasant Federation became, in 1947, a Peasant and Native Confederation. The Peasant and Native Confederation will, for the first time, articulate the ethnic and cultural struggles of the native peoples with the one from the peasant struggle. Native and peasant communities (Saldanha, 2016) established an alliance that continues until today.

In the presidential elections of 1942, López Pumarejo was re-elected and initiated a process of deceleration of the reforms that he had promoted in 1938, promoting, in 1944, following what Santos had already begun, a process of counter-reform of the law of Agrarian Reform (Saldanha, 2016 (b)). In this sense, Law 200 of 1944 extended for ten more years the attribution of unproductive lands to small peasants, thus postponing the first attempt to implement an Agrarian Reform. New violent clashes between peasants, peasantry and landowners emerged. In 1945, López Pumarejo resigned from the presidency, which is assumed by Alberto Lleras Camargo, a liberal, close to the conservatives, who deepens relations with the USA and with the oil companies operating in the country.

In the elections of 1946 the conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez was elected, beginning a violence and confrontation period. From then on, great massacres were perpetrated against peasants and native communities fighting for land. The conflict intensifies, and the powerful landowners increasingly used arms to subjugate the peasantry and native communities. During this period, the first paramilitary armies (notably the “Chulavitas” in Boyacá and the “birds” in the northern coffee-growing region) emerge, while the conservative party tries to impose a new hegemony on the strictly political level (Saldanha, 2015 a)).

After World War II, landowners arm themselves exponentially and violence spreads, including to the capital city of Bogotá (Guzmán Campos et al., 1962 [2005]) and the Colombian government signs, in November, a decree that declares the state of siege throughout the Valley (Guzmán Campos et al., 1962 [2005]). Liberal Jorge Eliécer Gaitán publishes in the organ of his movement, the newspaper *Liberal Tribune*, the editorial *No More Blood (No More sangre)*, in which he urges President Ospina Pérez to end the wave of barbarism and violence. The paramilitaries, on the other hand, sow terror in rural areas; the “birds” have caused liberal elements to migrate to other regions, extending, through

violence, a depredatory action of the rural area and causing numerous victims. They altered, as a consequence, the political composition of entire provinces (Guzmán Campos et al., 1962 [2005]).

In 1948, the so-called “Great Violence Period” began. In January 1948, communities in the Cauca (western mountain range) were attacked, while in northern Santander the government declared the state of siege pursuing the Bari communities: several individuals disappeared, were tortured or murdered; in February, Bogotá's municipal workers strike, while in Magdalena the workers face the Tropical Oil Company on a strike that would last 51 days. On April 9, 1948, the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party, with strong chances of being elected, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, is assassinated. When the news of Gaitán's murder reaches the whole country, there are several armed uprisings. The ten days in which conflicts occurred in the capital, when conservatives and liberals clashed, became known as *Bogotazo*; however, in different cities of the country, there were different experiences of popular organization (in Barranca and Cauca, for example). On the other hand, in the eastern, traditionally liberal plains, there are armed groups of peasant self-defence, which gradually turns this Colombian region into an insurgent operational centre. Contrary to this, in the village of Chulavita (department of Boyacá - central-east), the government, through the boyacense police, promoted the constitution of armed groups (coming from the ranks of the Conservative Party), strengthening paramilitarism (Saldanha, 2015 c)). In the eastern plains (districts of Arauca, Casanare, Meta and Vichada), the main economy (as still today) was based on the extensive creation of cattle. The interests were then divided between the owners of large parts of land and, on the other hand, *conuqueros* (agricultural workers who did not own livestock), *vegueros* (agricultural workers who had some animals and a small habitation on the land of the lord), *caballiceros* (wage earners who took care of horses), *vaqueros* (employees who usually own their horses, the saddle and the instruments with which they perform the work) and *caporales* (foremen). All these social strata rebelled against the powerful landowners and the official forces, given rise to several guerrilla groups, mainly liberals (Guzmán Campos et al., 1962 [2005]). The armed forces are involved in these conflicts, in order to protect the *Llaneros*, thus making it clear that economic interests are at the origin of violence. In 1952, the president of the Native Peasant Confederation is poisoned and several political and trade union leaders are massively murdered.

4. The second half of the XX century: the 1961 Agrarian Reform and the beginning of an armed conflict

Between 1953 and 1957 (Presidency of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla) a military dictatorship is established. There is a process of land occupation by the powerful landlords, while the subsequent violence on the peasants compels them to move constantly. Seeking to neutralize the guerrillas, the Rojas government decrees an amnesty, which is followed by a decrease in armed violence. At the end of that period, since mid-1954, the massacre curve has, however, again ascended, with elements of the army continually massacring peasants and native communities. This period of violence was more

barbaric and intense than the previous one (Guzmán Campos et al., 1962 [2005]). The guerrillas of 1949-53 were again persecuted and murdered between 1955-57, and a new phase of the conflict began, in the form of guerrillas, armed, peasants, native people and *campesíndios* (Saldanha, 2016). Meanwhile, the government evicts native groups, land tenants, settlers and peasants, and intense land rights clashes in regions such as Tolima, Córdoba, Middle Magdalena and the eastern plains (*llanos*). The end of the 1950s is marked with the resumption of native and peasant mobilization, in which the demand for an Agrarian Reform becomes the main theme. In 1958, in order to overcome the party violence that they fomented, a political agreement of governmental alternation between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party is established; until 1974, both Parties, alternating power between them, and not leaving the possibility of political participation to other parties, will form four governments [National Front (Saldanha, 2015 d)].

In 1961, an Agrarian Reform (AR) was approved as a result of the convergence and mobilization of the peasantry, and of the Latin American political and historical context (triumph of the Cuban Revolution) and of the national context (an attempt to neutralize revolutionary tendencies, reformist and development orientations of the Commission Economic Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC). At a time when post-war visions began to be seen as ethnocentric and eurocentric, the fruit of capitalist economies that were unable to integrate local knowledge or native knowledge (Casanova, 2014; see also Davies-Case, 2011), the 1961 Agrarian Colombian Reform sought to generate jobs, supply the country with food and overcome violence (Saldanha, 2015 d)). In this way, the Agrarian Reform considers (via legislation) the democratization of land, qualified technical assistance, credit, infrastructures and even co-operative capacity building (Avendaño, 2009), while creating the Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute (Incora).

However, the application of the Agrarian Reform legislation faced strong opposition within the National Front itself, as well as by landowners, who prevented both the redistribution of land and the productive restructuring of the countryside, limiting its application. The State did not applied any Agrarian Reform legislation. Until 1971, only 1% of the land subject to expropriation was distributed, which was mostly public (Ampuero and Brittain, 2008). As there is no effective mechanism for redistribution of land on the one hand, and given the INCORA's failure on this point, conflicts over land are increasing.

Gradually, powerful landowners were systematically and violently expelling peasants, native communities, and other from their land and lives, forcing them to colonize and extend the Colombian agricultural frontier. In this way, the peasantry and native cultures are divided and/or changed, which leads to the formation and expression of new rules and regulations among these strata of the population, who are forced to move constantly. In order for peasants and native communities not to claim the recuperation of their lands, the State proceeded to the titling of squatter lands that had been colonized either by displaced peasants or by native communities, thus legalizing violent expropriation of land.

Government pressure on the peasantry and the *campesíndios* (Saldanha, 2016) increases and the peasant movement is preparing for possible aggression.

On May 18, 1964, the President of the Republic Guillermo León Valencia (1961-1966) launched a violent attack named: Operation Marquetalia. The first combat takes place on May 27, 1964, the date that is given as a reference point for the creation of the FARC-EP. An armed conflict began, which would only end when the peace agreement was signed in 2016 between the FARC-EP on the one hand and the Colombian government under the presidency of José Manuel Santos.

5. The emerging of a new actor in the armed conflict: the drug trafficking

In the 1960s and 1970s, the growing urbanization of cities demanded urgent supply. In urban space, therefore, industrialization policies increase, while in rural areas the importance of land ownership and the extension of the agricultural frontier (Saldanha, 2015 e) are emphasized.

With regard to the production of illicit substances, if, until the 1960s, marijuana was mostly produced, it was from the 1970s that cocaine production began and that the first Cartel was born: the Cartel de Medellín, from Pablo Escobar. The agrarian conflict between peasants and *campesíndios*, on the one hand, and powerful landowners, on the other, will, from then on, know a new element - drug trafficking. This phenomenon will also accentuate the conflict between rural populations and wildlife, with the displacement of those areas to hitherto unoccupied areas. On the other hand, drug trafficking has an exponential need for land (due to the existence of crops), so a strong and unbreakable alliance is established between narco-traffickers and powerful landowners: this alliance marks the birth of a second generation of paramilitaries, giving origin to the creation and strengthening of new armed groups. From the 1970s onwards, drug traffickers took over as an important armed actor, and their military strategy was based on paramilitarism (Saldanha, 2015 e).

The 1970s were also marked by the continuing obligation of peasants and native communities to settle in increasingly remote regions (the so called "agricultural frontier areas").

It is also during the 1970s and 1980s that the paramilitaries, starting from the middle Magdalena, extend to the national level. Nonetheless, peasant and native mobilizations and land occupations are increasing. But these are heavily repressed both by State violence and by parastatal violence.

From the 1980s, the government began to prioritize processes of colonization and titling of the "vacant lands" (land without use/without production). This agricultural public policy was once again aimed at expanding the agricultural frontier and making progress in areas of extreme difficulty (Andean and Amazonian forests). The consequence was the displacement of native communities, peasants and others and the deterioration of their living conditions, since those without any technical or financial support were obliged to install in increasingly inhospitable areas, without infrastructure, in poor soils, limited by access to water and away from local markets.

In 1994, the World Bank promote the introduction a new neoliberal agrarian law (Law 160), which established a National System of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, the establishment of a subsidy for the acquisition of land and a Reform of the Colombian Institute of RA. It is also in this law that the Peasant Reserve Zones (ZRC) are established, which peasants will use, and continue to use, to curb the predominance of large property, the occupation of land by monopolies and transnationals, and the intensive use of monocultures. ZRCs would prove that local regulations, supported by local and traditional institutions, can be effective in managing local resources, since they are legitimately recognized by local communities and are therefore respected (Casanova, 2014:75).

One of this Agrarian Reform objectives was to endow indigenous communities with land to preserve their social and ecological uses and customs, and to improve the quality of life of their members. The chapter XIV, article 85, defines that according to the land needs of the indigenous communities, the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform may restructure and expand colonial reserves (*resguardos indigenas*) through the properties acquired or donated in favour of the community.

It was established that the delivery of land would be free to *cabildos* or to traditional authorities so that they could distribute it equally among the indigenous families. Concerning the Amazon and Pacific forest reserve areas, until 1997 the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform had to protect the indigenous reserves, in accordance with the National Code of Renewable Natural Resources and Environment Protection rules.

The same article defines that hunting, gathering or practicing horticulture in the traditional territories of nomadic, semi-nomadic or itinerant indigenous peoples, established in forest reserve areas, can only be used by those indigenous communities, even if the occupation and use of these lands are also subject to the prescriptions established by the Ministry of the Environment and the current legislation for renewable natural resources.

The article 87 also says that the indigenous reserves are submitted to the social and ecological function of the property, according to the uses, customs and culture of its members.

6. The 1990's economic crisis and the nowadays agricultural model

In 1996, Colombia is going through an economic crisis, as a result of the sudden application of open trade policies on agriculture affected by monopoly conditions of land suitable for production, low taxation and high tariff protection, which resulted in a reduction of more than one-fifth in the planted area, especially seasonal crops (typical of peasant agriculture), causing the loss of more than 300,000 jobs (Fajardo Montaña, 2006). The crisis has had an important impact on illegal economies, especially on the economy of crops for drug trafficking, resulting in an over-supply of cocaine. In coca leaf production areas, affected by their historical lack of social investment and depressed drug prices (Fajardo Montaña, 2006), peasants, “campesíndios” and coca growers, as well as those who depended on the cultivation and commerce of coca leaf, initiated a series of mobilizations in order to demand from

the government actions that compensated their losses. One of the demands of the *cocaleros* was precisely the establishment of Zonal Reserve Areas (ZRC), in application of the aforementioned Law 160 of 1994. Thus, the first steps towards the constitution of these zones are given. The fundamental characteristic of ZRCs is that all the initiatives, during the first phase of the project (land and cattle allocation, technical transfer for production, organization of forest recovery, small infrastructures for schools, etc.), are originated in the communities (Fajardo Montaña, 2006).

During his term in office, President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) will intensify the process of land accumulation. Under the presidency of Uribe, the “Agro Ingreso Seguro” (AIS) program was implemented, which was presented as a system of agricultural subsidies that should benefit small Colombian farmers. In practice, the money that should have been given to peasants and small farmers was diverted to paramilitarism, to the Colombian landowning oligarchy and to multinationals and transnationals operating in Colombia, which fractionated their land in order to benefit from state subsidies (Lewin, 2009). On the other hand, between 2010 and 2015 Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe's former Defence Minister, who was elected President of the Republic in 2010 (and re-elected in 2014), was being pressured by the Havana Peace Dialogue to apply a public policy of land redistribution. However, President Santos (apparently) failed to apply such agrarian policy plan due to the difficulties created during the negotiations to exit the conflict (Saldanha, 2015 f)). In fact, Santos had promised to redistribute land to 160,000 families displaced by violence; however, only 431 families were redeployed, i.e. 0.3% of the total [out of the 12,142 hectares distributed, out of the two million pledged (Saldanha, 2015 f)]. Furthermore, in addition to the government also reducing the budget allocated to the program, several of the refunds corresponded to simple land titling. On the other hand, the government closed its eyes to the illegal evictions of peasant and native lands and by national and foreign monopolies (*Prensa Senado*, 9-12-2014).

Despite this, a part of the Colombian population still survives thanks to agricultural production, often only for mere family subsistence. While homelessness and neoliberal reforms have weakened the cultivation of traditional products such as cassava, coffee, and corn (Ampuero and Brittain, 2008), many peasants and smallholders have, for the last three decades, the coca leaf production.

7. Conclusion

Since the Agrarian Reform of 1961 never materialized, the current process of agrarian counter-reform continues through the use of arms, money, intimidation of the peasant and native movement, and the promotion of subsidies for agribusiness and powerful landowners. It should be noted that Colombia imports more than eight million tons of food per year and delivers the most fertile lands to the production of raw materials for export at low cost (Avendaño, 2009).

USA imperialism, for its part, has been imposed on the region since the late nineteenth century. Nowadays, it controls and dominates the extraction of natural resources, especially oil. Since the late

1990s, 48% of all Colombian exports are directed to the USA, while 42% of imports come from this same centre (Saldanha, 2015 f)). This dependency economic relationship was reinforced with the increase of Colombian oil production in the late 1990s - 80% of this production is now directly sent to the United States of America.

The 1990s saw strong conflicts emerging in the agrarian space. Since both the Magdalena and Santander districts are of special interest to the Colombian oligarchy - not only because of the oil, but also because there are minerals, such as gold and coal, paramilitary violence has become recurrent in these areas.

The drug traffickers changed the structure of land ownership, buying it massively (mainly in the Magdalene district). This is necessary as part of a major money launder, supported by traditional landowners, political clienteles, armed forces and even multinational oil companies. In the case of the Middle Magdalena, these sectors financed, coordinated and directed paramilitary groups, which, in turn, subjugated local populations, creating a State within the State. They persecuted and forced native communities, small producers and other to move, justifying such actions with the need to eliminate the support base of the Colombian guerrillas (FARC-EP and ELN). In reality, an agrarian counter-reform was put into practice, consolidating parastatal territories, with private security systems, economic regulation, political control, tax collection, social policies and parajudicial procedures (presentation given by the ACVC at the International Conference "The Other Davos", 2001). If they did not move to other territories, native communities and small peasants had to subject themselves to the rules and impositions of *latifundiários* (powerful landowners that posses large properties) and paramilitary groups. This way, native communities and small peasants were forcibly associated with the cultivation of monoculture products, such as the African palm tree (*Elae guineensis*), through a system of indebtedness within the peasant palm economy paradigm. In fact, the *latifundio* was permanently provided with raw materials, without peasants and/or peasants having any type of labor relationship with the landowners, who controlled both the processes of elaboration and commercialization and the impoverished peasants (Paper presented by the ACVC at the International Conference "The Other Davos", 2001). In the framework of a rentier and usurious agricultural model, Colombia specialized in large-scale imports, rather than generating food development processes that would guarantee food sovereignty (Saldanha, 2015 f)).

The concentration of land (1.5% of landowners owns 80% of unproductive land) and the opening of new agricultural frontiers - in which peasants and native communities have few alternatives to planting coca leaves or chocolate - transforms Colombia in an importing country that consumes what imports.

This situation implies constant violations of civil, human, social, cultural and environmental rights.

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