



# Factionalized Mobilization: Development Paradigm Shifts and Marginalization in Colombia

Laura García-Montoya<sup>1</sup> · Isabel Güiza-Gómez<sup>2</sup> · Arturo Chang<sup>3</sup>

Accepted: 21 December 2024

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## Abstract

Under which conditions do social movement coalitions factionalize under parallel, and possibly contending, frames? We argue that social movements split along opposing collective action frames when development paradigm shifts create distinct opportunities or threats for factions within the coalition. Rooted in historical marginalization, these shifts impact factions' responses unevenly, shaping how they frame their demands to align with evolving policies. Through a multi-method research design combining critical event analysis and postcolonial historiography, we show that previously united Campesino and Indigenous movements diverged into competing class- and ethnic-based frames in Colombia's 1970s in response to the rollback of redistributive land reform under Pastrana's administration. This evolving policy environment intersected with historical forms of marginalization, which conditioned movements' strategies whereby Indigenous movements embraced ethnic-based land demands while Campesino movements insisted on class-based claims. This article contributes to prior scholarship on class and ethnicity in Latin America by showing that what was previously understood as an awakening of identity politics is better explained by the contingent interplay between movements' strategies, marginalization, and rapid shifts in development paradigms.

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✉ Laura García-Montoya  
laura.garciamontoya@utoronto.ca

Isabel Güiza-Gómez  
dguizago@nd.edu

Arturo Chang  
arturo.chang@utoronto.ca

- <sup>1</sup> Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Political Science and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, USA
- <sup>3</sup> Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

## Introduction

Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, cross-cutting rural mobilization took center stage in Colombian politics. Indigenous and Campesino (peasant) movements coalesced into a broad-based coalition, united by the promise of land redistribution and shared goals of political incorporation and economic redistribution (Zamosc 1986). These movements sought to dismantle the *hacienda* system, which had dispossessed both Campesino and Indigenous communities of land and perpetuated political exclusion. Yet, by the mid-1970s, Indigenous and Campesino movements began to factionalize. While Indigenous and rural-Black movements<sup>1</sup> increasingly adopted collective action frames emphasizing ethnic identity and cultural difference, Campesino movements continued to frame their claims through the lens of class struggle. This instance of factionalization reflects a broader trend observed across Latin America, such as Mexico (Harvey 1998) and Bolivia (Fabricant 2012), where movements generally framed their demands around *either* political incorporation *or* economic redistribution, but rarely both (Archila et al. 2019). Under what conditions do social movement coalitions factionalize under parallel, and possibly competing, frames?<sup>2</sup>

Prior scholarship has explained social mobilization splits as a result of the emergence of global fields of identity politics and radical flank effects. The global field argument contends that social movements fractured due to the growing influence of transnational mobilization centered on ethnic identities across twentieth-century Latin America, allowing domestic movements to push forth ethnic-based demands for land (Brass 2002; Evers 1983; Van Cott 1994). In the Colombian context, this explanation posits that Indigenous movements increasingly mobilized separately from Campesino movements after the mid-1970s as they integrated into a global ethnic field, which offered better frames for articulating their demands for expanded citizenship and cultural recognition (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Albó 1993). Yet, this explanation overlooks that Indigenous movements had long identified as Indigenous Campesinos, sharing a sustained land campaign with Campesino movements well before the observed factionalization in 1975. Furthermore, in the mid-1970s—when social mobilization splits occurred in Colombia—ethnic and racial coalitions had not consolidated into transnational forms of mobilization (Paschel 2018, p.19), suggesting that the observed split is not fully explained by this hypothesis.

The radical flank effects argument posits that mobilization splits occur when more radical factions within a movement adopt contentious tactics, creating tensions with moderate factions (Haines 2022; McCammon et al. 2015). In the Colombian case, for instance, these accounts suggest that Indigenous and Campesino movements broke down into different factions since the latter movements either joined or actively supported nascent rebel groups, while the former movements insisted on

<sup>1</sup> We use the term rural-Black movements instead of Afro-descendants since the former is mostly found in movements' archives under analysis.

<sup>2</sup> We use the terms factionalization and split interchangeably to refer to a partition in the mobilizational approaches of political coalitions. By competing frames, we mean the strategies deployed to communicate demands in ways that are only available to certain members of the coalition.

unarmed mobilization to pursue their land demands despite diminishing opportunities for land reform (Archila 2003; Rivera Cusicanqui 1982). However, this explanation falls short in addressing the timing of social mobilization splits, which we trace to 1975. Some movements had already formed alliances with insurgent groups years before (e.g., CRIC's support for Indigenous self-defense groups in Cauca in 1973 Peñaranda Supelano 2015, p.152) or after (e.g., CRIC's partnership with the Indigenous guerrilla group *Manuel Quintín Lame* or ANUC's collaboration with *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* in the 1980s) movements fragmented into different frames.

In this paper, we propose an alternative explanation for when and how social movements factionalize along competing frames. We argue that movement coalitions split along opposing frames when a political closure materializes into a development paradigm shift, which open distinct opportunities or threats for factions within a coalition. We understand development paradigms as institutional conceptions about how to guide economic development, including objectives and beneficiaries. Changes in these paradigms translate into policies directed to realize newly established goals. Similar to other political opportunity structure factors, development paradigm shifts create incentives or threats for coalition-building among movement factions. Yet, unlike other political opportunity structures, these paradigms do not merely open or close access to state institutions, but rather widen or reduce the space for movements to raise their claims along specific frameworks. These paradigm changes, in turn, impact factions unevenly, depending on their long-standing relationships with the state and their historical roles within the development framework. Development paradigms are deeply intertwined with historical narratives of nationhood and notions of which subjects are deserving of development. These narratives importantly shape citizenship regimes for marginalized communities, setting diverse political standings for the communities within the coalition. Amid paradigm shifts, factions leverage their unique positioning before the state to align their demands with evolving development priorities.

To test the observable implications of our argument, we conduct a case study of rural mobilization and economic policy-making in Colombia from 1960 to 1991. Colombia offers analytical advantages to probe our research question. The country witnessed a nationwide broad-based coalition of rural movements in the 1960s, when Indigenous and Campesino movements mobilized together for land redistribution despite differences in ethnic and racial standpoints. This coalition nonetheless fractured along competing ethnic- and class-based frames. Such divide has not been fully captured by prior scholarship, making Colombia an ideal case to examine how competing frames emerge within social movements. Our study integrates critical event analysis and postcolonial historiography to examine when and how social movements factionalize. Critical event analysis allows us to assess whether a contingent shift in development policies, such as land reform, triggered social movement factionalization. Postcolonial studies helps us further investigate how social movements followed different post-factionalization trajectories by uncovering how shifts in development paradigms impact movement coalitions differently based on their long-term interactions with the state. To these ends, our data repertoire includes primary and secondary sources documenting government policies (e.g., rural policy between 1960 and 1990),

congressional debates, national and local newspapers, archival documents of political leaders and social movements, and the social struggles dataset compiled by the CINEP.

Employing critical event analysis, we demonstrate that Pastrana's 1970 election was a critical event—both contingent and causally important—that factionalized the nationwide coalition movement ANUC (*Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos*) in Colombia between 1975 and 1977.<sup>3</sup> The Pastrana administration yielded significant political costs for social movement coalitions. It not only repressed rural movements demanding land redistribution and integrated landed elites into the governing coalition—conventional institutional factors accounting for shifts in political opportunity structures. It also dismantled redistributive efforts as they were deemed contradictory to a new development model shifting away from redistribution to safeguarding rural elites' wealth. Following this political closure, social movements faced increasing political costs to mobilize for land redistribution along the lines of class struggles. As a result, around 1975, unified rural-poor mobilization factionalized into wings, which henceforth mobilized along class-based and ethno-racial frames.

Through postcolonial historiography, we show that factionalization followed distinct trajectories depending on the different standings marginalized communities had before the state. Although Campesino, Indigenous, and rural-Black movements grappled with land dispossession at similar levels, they enjoyed political rights at varying levels when the critical event happened. Aligned with the myth of racial harmony, Campesino individuals were regarded as ordinary citizens, who were devoid of ethnic and racial status, yet could potentially play a key role in a modern economy. In contrast, Indigenous peoples were only granted partial citizenship, and rural-Black individuals were not acknowledged as distinct political subjects. Drawing upon this prior marginalization, Indigenous and Black movements began employing ethnic-based frames to articulate their demands for access to collective land as a matter of political inclusion and expanded citizenship. However, these frames were not necessarily available for Campesino movements, who enjoyed a *mestizo* political status and organized as a dispossessed group instead of an ethno-racial one. The factionalization of frames was later institutionalized in the 1991 Constitution that granted ethno-racial rights to land for Indigenous and Black communities yet did not enshrine dispositions for Campesino movements.

This article advances existing research on social mobilization by offering a new theoretical account for factionalization. While prior studies have focused on radical flank effects or the emergence of global fields of identity politics, we emphasize shifts in development paradigms as a key immediate factor that opens opportunities or threats for social movement coalitions. Building on prior scholarship on the political economy of social mobilization (Simmons 2016; Kay 2012; Almeida and Walker 2006), we treat development paradigm shifts as one type of political opportunity structures that trigger social movement factionalization. More conventional factors, such as electoral realignments or state capacity to repress dissent, may open or close access to the state for marginalized communities but do not account for the material and ideological priorities that drive state action. Furthermore, we demonstrate that policy backlashes

<sup>3</sup> ANUC organically incorporated Indigenous, Campesino, rural-Black, and women leaders into a broad-based coalition, representing the largest peasant movement in Latin America (Zamosc 1986; Troyan 2008)

lead to splits when they interact with enduring forms of marginalization, impacting factions differently. While prior research shows that government austerity programs and free trade agreements created opportunities for coalition-building (Kay 2012; Almeida and Walker 2006), we show that the rollback of land reform raised the costs of unified mobilization in contexts where previous exclusion unexpectedly allowed movements to reframe their claims in ways less conflictual with development goals.

This intervention also addresses a central theoretical and empirical question on the extent to which social movements can build broad-based coalitions despite existing differences in race, ethnicity, and gender (Collins 2015; Nash 2008). By highlighting the interplay between development policies and legacies of colonialism, we show that intersectionality dilemmas do not automatically emerge when factions holding different standings coalesce around shared political programs. Rather, these dilemmas often arise when shifting conditions have differential impacts and motivate factions to strategically mobilize along narrower frames. Furthermore, this article contributes methodologically to qualitative case study research by introducing a model that integrates causal analysis tools from comparative politics and historiographic methods in political theory. Our empirical analysis represents the first full-fledged application of critical event analysis, underscoring the inferential leverage of counterfactual theories of causation in historical research. We offer a framework relying upon contingency and counterfactual analysis to disentangle the causal effects of short-term processes along long-term factors. This approach treats colonial legacies as active explanatory factors shaping political institutions and marginalized actors' behavior (Adalet 2024; Thompson 2013), rather than as static historical backdrops. By engaging with postcolonial historiography, we operationalize colonial legacies as conditioning critical antecedents (Slater and Simmons 2010), which interact with more immediate variables to shape political outcomes in critical moments.

In what follows, we first theorize why and how social movement factionalization occurs along competing frames ([Development Paradigm Shifts and Social Movement Factionalization](#)). Then, we outline our multi-method approach, which combines critical event analysis and postcolonial historiography ([A Multi-Method Approach: Critical Event Analysis and Post-Colonial Historiography](#)). In section four, we apply our multi-method approach to the Colombian case, where we set the critical antecedents and identify when the critical event emerged ([Historical and Immediate Critical Antecedents: Rural Marginalization, Mobilization, and Development Paradigms in Colombia](#)), trace how this event led to our outcome of interest ([Critical Event: Rapid Shifts in Colombian Land Reform and Popular Mobilization \(1970–1974\)](#)), and examine how such outcome occurred differently among rural movements ([Outcome: Factionalized Social Mobilization Along Class-Based and Ethno-Racial Frames \(1975–1991\)](#)). Finally, we conclude by explaining the article's theoretical contributions and the external validity of our argument.

## Development Paradigm Shifts and Social Movement Factionalization

Under which conditions do social movement coalitions factionalize via parallel, and possibly contending, frames? Prior scholarship focuses on short-term factors to explain why broad-based coalitions factionalize. Environmental conditions mostly involve shifts in political opportunity structures—such as electoral realignments, challengers' access to the political system, or state repression (Tarrow 1998; McAdam 1996)—which intensify internal disputes and lead to factionalization. For instance, Balsler (1997) illustrates how increased police repression in the late 1960s United States escalated tensions between the National Office and the Progressive Labor Party, ultimately leading to the dissolution of Students for a Democratic Society. Internal factors include disagreements on strategies across member cohorts (Sapiro 2020), competing leadership (Asal et al. 2012), and differences in identity among members (Waylen 1993; Van Cott 1994). In Latin America, the New Social Movements literature suggests that splits within popular organizations during the 1970s and 1980s arose from heightened identity consciousness among excluded groups, such as women (Waylen 1993) and Indigenous communities (Van Cott 1994), who found limited representation within the class-based mobilization by labor unions and peasant organizations (Garretón and Selamé 2023; Evers 1983).

While previous literature develops theoretical frameworks for explaining factionalization, most accounts focus narrowly on the immediate factors by either addressing the timing of splits (the “when question”) or the drivers of schisms (the “why question”). These explanations, however, often overlook *how* collective action evolves after coalitions fragment. Moreover, these accounts assign limited explanatory weight to political-economic factors, such as development paradigm shifts, that can trigger divisions within movement coalitions. Finally, these explanations also do not fully capture the varying dimensions of marginalization and political standings that movements hold before the state, which are crucial for understanding how intersectional dilemmas propel either mobilization coalition or factionalization, particularly when those dimensions become incompatible (Nash 2008).

To address these questions, we integrate political-economic and postcolonial conditions as intersecting factors that explain cases in which social movements decide to break coalitions and how they mobilize afterward along competing frames. We understand social mobilization frames as “collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction” (McAdam et al. 1996) through which movement members “perceive their circumstances” (Hurst 2008, 84) and contextualize their grievances (Johnston and Noakes 2005). We argue that changes in development paradigms emerging amid a political closure constitute a specific type of political opportunity structure shift that creates possibilities and challenges for coalition-building among social movement factions. That is, development paradigms help explain *when* movements factionalize into distinct frames. Furthermore, development paradigm shifts impact social movement factions unevenly when these changes interact with enduring forms of marginalization. Marginalized communities hold different standings before the state, which in turn define their roles within policy-making and the frames at their

disposal. As such, previous movement-state relationships influence *how* movement factions respond to changing development policies and which frames they decide to deploy.

We understand development paradigm shifts as fundamental changes in the dominant institutional and ideological frameworks that guide a state's approach to economic development. These shifts determine the objectives, beneficiaries, and strategies for achieving development and often materialize into new policies that realign state priorities. As such, development paradigm shifts represent political opportunity structures, akin to other institutional and political factors—such as challengers' novel access to the political system, the presence or absence of influential allies, (in)stability in electoral alignments, elite splits, and the state capacity's to repress dissidents (McAdam 1996). Like these factors, paradigm shifts alter the political environment in which collective actors mobilize, as they signal which claims align or conflict with development goals, thereby encouraging social movements to adjust their frames accordingly. For instance, a shift toward a neoliberal development paradigm that dismantles land redistribution policies can deepen or provoke divisions within coalitions previously united around land reform. By deeming redistributive goals as contradictory to development, mobilization for redistribution becomes antithetical to development. However, unlike other institutional and electoral factors, changes in development paradigm represent fundamental changes in the state's material and ideological priorities. These paradigms do not merely open or close access to state institutions; they actively reflect material and ideological priorities of the state. For example, while elite splits or electoral realignments may provide movements with access to political power, development paradigm shifts determine which claims are deemed legitimate within policy-making and which are dismissed as contradictory to development goals.

Development paradigm shifts are inherently connected to long-standing conceptions of nationhood and citizenship, which define which subjects are deserving of development and thus play an active role within policy-making. As paradigm changes create growing challenges for maintaining movement coalitions, factions within the unified front leverage their unique social standings to align their demands with evolving development priorities. These standpoints include ethno-racial identities, class, gender, religion, among others depending on their contextual saliency. For example, in the Latin American context, revolutionary land reform imposed class ascription as a main collective action frame at the expense of ethnic framings (Bartra 1985; Rivera Cusicanqui 1986). This trend was reversed in the 1980s and 1990s when land expropriation became politically unfeasible under the Washington Consensus paradigm and ethnic-based claims for collective landholding gained steam among rural movements at the expense of class-based framings in these countries (Yashar 2005).

By approaching factionalization through a political-economic and postcolonial framework, we offer a richer understanding of *when* and *how* coalitions split along different frames. Our intervention addresses central theoretical and empirical questions on the extent to which social movements can build broad-based coalitions despite existing differences in racial, ethnic, and gender standings (Collins 2015; Nash 2008). First, we highlight that frames are not merely a matter of perception or conscious-

ness led by movement entrepreneurs, who produce cultural conventions to fashion a shared understanding of the grievances that motivate collective action (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). Instead, collective action frames result from the dynamic interplay between political-economic factors and long-running political standings of marginalized groups. Second, our argument suggests that intersectionality dilemmas do not automatically emerge when distinct factions, holding different standings, coalesce around shared political programs. Rather, these dilemmas often arise when shifting conditions motivate factions to strategically mobilize along narrower frames that might be unavailable to other members of the original coalition. As such, our approach demonstrates the interactive effects of macro-structural conditions and rapid policy changes for how marginalized groups understand their respective positions within state-building.

## A Multi-Method Approach: Critical Event Analysis and Post-Colonial Historiography

Methodologically, our approach intersects critical event analysis and historiographic tools from postcolonial theory. We use critical event analysis to assess whether rapid paradigm and policy changes map onto movement splits. Critical event analysis is well-suited for identifying and tracing the processes triggered by an event leading to an outcome of interest in case study research (García-Montoya and Mahoney 2023). This method focuses on counterfactual analysis and set-theoretic tools to evaluate necessary and sufficient properties of events. Furthermore, we employ postcolonial historiography to examine how long-standing factors interact with critical events to impact actors to different extents. We pay particular attention to different conceptions of nationhood and varying levels of citizenship among marginalized communities (Adalet 2024; Getachew 2019), which define the strategic opportunities and constraints for marginalized movements to react to contingent policy shifts. As such, we understand long-standing factors as a critical antecedent condition (Slater and Simmons 2010), which interacts with more immediate variables (e.g., rapid development paradigm shifts) to influence social mobilization in critical moments.

A *critical event* is a *contingent* one that is causally important for an outcome in a specific case (García-Montoya and Mahoney 2023). To evaluate if an event is critical, we first need to clearly demarcate its temporal bounds (e.g., an event that corresponds to a clear slice of time and is marked by coherent modes of activity) and identify properties that make the event potentially critical. Examples of well-bounded temporal events include protests, a constitutional assembly, or a presidential election. Second, we need to determine whether the event is contingent. That is, to evaluate the plausibility of counterfactual worlds in which the event does not occur. The level of contingency can be approximated by *the percent of possible worlds in which the event X did not occur*: if this number is equal or greater than 50%, the event is considered contingent. A good example of a contingent event is the election of public officials after a close race. Under these circumstances, there is a possible world in which the



runner-up wins the election instead. Third, we should evaluate whether the event is causally important, that is, if the observed outcome would not have occurred had the event not taken place (highly necessary) or it would not have happened under different circumstances (highly sufficient). An event is causally important if it plays either a *productive and generative* role in setting into motion a chain of subsequent events that culminate in the outcome of interest (sufficiency) or a *permissive or enabling* role for the occurrence of the outcome (necessity). To evaluate these causal properties, analysts identify the chain of events set into motion with the event, examining counterfactual outcomes—or possible worlds.

Critical event analysis requires in-depth knowledge of the case to consider structural factors that may shape the outcome of interest yet do not fully predict it. Preceding factors are conventionally referred to as antecedent conditions (Collier and Collier 1991) or critical antecedents, including “causes of causes,” and conditioning causes (Slater and Simmons 2010). Conditioning causes, in particular, do not directly generate the critical event, but rather influence how the critical event yields different effects across cases (e.g., countries, periods within countries, or key actors). Through postcolonial historiography, we identify long-term historical relations between the state and society as key conditioning cause in critical event analysis. Specifically, postcolonial historiography offers tools to examine how long-term patterns of marginalization persist in postcolonial societies and how these influence the ways excluded actors engage with the state (Thompson 2013). In postcolonial contexts, these patterns manifest as distinct citizenship regimes that shape how marginalized communities relate to the state, relegating them to the peripheries of development. In Latin America, for instance, some communities were granted full citizenship during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., *mestizo* citizens), while others, such as Indigenous peoples, were considered only partial citizens (Paschel 2018; Yashar 2005). These distinct citizenship regimes significantly constrain the choices and strategies of marginalized actors. In moments of contingency, long-term critical antecedent conditions will combine with the causal properties of a critical event to produce differential effects across actors.

Our multi-method approach offers two methodological contributions to case study research. First, it presents the first empirical application of the critical event analysis framework, demonstrating how this method allows for precise assessments of the contingency and causal significance of specific events in triggering outcomes (García-Montoya and Mahoney 2023). This method enhances the inferential power of event-driven explanations in case study research, particularly in identifying the timing and drivers of observed outcomes. Second, this novel approach highlights the intersection between historical antecedent conditions and more immediate causes, showing how these factor interact to produce varying effects. This analysis does not fall prey to the problem of infinite regress (Slater and Simmons 2010). Moreover, it allows to uncover how long-running conditions operate within windows of contingency, which might be missed by solely centering on an individual, immediate event.

We apply this multi-method strategy to the Colombian case from 1960 to 1991. Colombia provides a good case to probe our research question. Similar to other Latin American cases, Colombia witnessed a nationwide, broad-based coalition of

rural movement demanding land redistribution, which factionalized along competing ethnic- and class-based frames. Unlike other Latin American contexts, such divide in Colombia gradually deepened and resulted in significant land conflict among Campesino, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant movements. In what follows, we first examine the antecedent conditions under which a national broad-based coalition among rural movements emerged in the 1960s when redistributive land reform was a key policy by reformist governments. Particularly, we underscore how these movements had related to the state through different citizenship regimes since the early Republic, which functioned as a long-term conditional critical antecedent. Second, through critical event analysis, we evaluate whether Misael Pastrana's 1970 presidential election was a critical event leading to factionalization among rural-poor movements. Specifically, we assess the causal properties of Pastrana's election: his approach to national development as opposed to redistribution, his animosity towards rural mobilization, and his strong ties with landed elites. By employing post-colonial historiography, we demonstrate how factionalization occurred as different factions responded to Pastrana's rollback of redistributive land reform. Previous distinct regimes of political exclusion vastly constrained which collective action frames Campesino, Indigenous, and rural-Black movements had at their disposal to articulate their demands for land access.

## **Explaining Rural Movement Factionalization in Colombia**

### **Historical and Immediate Critical Antecedents: Rural Marginalization, Mobilization, and Development Paradigms in Colombia**

Partially inspired by the success of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, rural mobilization for land redistribution swept through Latin America around the 1950s and 1960s, and Colombia was not an exception. Rural movements coalesced around class-based demands for land redistribution through a national unified movement bringing together rural-Black, Indigenous, and Campesino individuals, which comprised the largest labor force and played an integral role in the economy (Zamosc 1986, p.2). The scope of rural-poor mobilization for land redistribution was extremely threatening for economic and political elites. At the time, reformist governments championed land redistribution as a key policy for rural development in response to growing popular pressure. Redistributive land reform allowed marginalized communities to build coalitions since redistributive demands were seen as legitimate within policy-making despite different ethno-racial standpoints among factions.

While mobilization responded to contemporaneous events throughout Latin America, it also emerged from living colonial legacies underpinning economic development and marginalization. These structural factors operated within both material and social conditions established during Colombia's independence period, when appeals for inclusion based on ethno-racial difference among rural movements diminished in favor of frames that emphasized economic inclusion (LeGrand 2016). This was in

part because appeals to ethnicity and race were viewed as antithetical to national unity by the ruling class through the narrative of “racial harmony,” as Lasso (2007) calls it, that became a cornerstone of mestizo nationhood and development (Barragan 2021; Echeverri 2011). On the one hand, this myth was deployed to centralize creole-elite power and dissuade marginalized groups from staking claims vis-à-vis the state. On the other hand, it also allowed elites to pursue development through the modernization of an imagined homogeneous *mestizo* Campesino class, which sought to mesh into the national economy via agricultural production yet was not identified in racial or ethnic terms. Yet, the myth of “racial harmony” did not homogenize groups. Rather, it produced sharp disparities among marginalized communities institutionalized in varying citizenship regimes. Campesino communities were regarded as “ordinary” citizens and potential rural entrepreneurs within an emergent modern economy (Yie 2018).<sup>4</sup> Conversely, Indigenous peoples attained partial legal status under the category of “savages” to be civilized—as outlined in the 89 Law of 1890. Rural-Black communities were regarded as *mestizo* citizens and were left fighting to be legally recognized as black political subjects (Wade 2010). Notably, these different political standings later interacted with development shifts to constrain movements’ choices over mobilizational strategies at their disposal when development shifts increased costs for unified mobilization.

By the mid-twentieth century, peaceful rural mobilization not only challenged elites during the demise of *La Violencia*, but nascent leftist guerrilla groups relying upon Campesino bases also confronted elite power. Rural resistance sparked fears of spreading communism in the country (Leon-Gomez 2011). Political and economic elites, under the lead of President Lleras-Camargo (1958–1962), viewed agrarian reform as a well-suited tool to discourage would-be guerrilla supporters (López-Uribe 2022). Drawing upon U.S.-backed financial support, the government directed development policies to economic efficiency and the rationalization of state intervention (Perry 2019), following a region-wide trend in furnishing scientific technology, building infrastructure, and implementing legal reforms in land tenure systems (Latham 2011; De Janvry 1981; Berman 2022). Such approach to development was neatly enshrined into Lleras-Camargo’s National Development Plan—or *Plan de Desarrollo (PD) 1961–1970*—which stated as its primary objective “[...] to contribute to ensuring that national [...] efforts in the coming years are oriented towards obtaining a rate of development equivalent to the **optimum compatible with the resources available** and with the indispensable growing participation of the neediest sectors in the benefits of progress” (Departamento Nacional de Planeación 1961, p.3, Emphasis our own).<sup>5</sup> Particularly, this new policy framework emphasized that “uneducated” Campesinos were perceived as a limiting factor for development, a source of social unrest, and lacking the skills needed for modernizing agricultural practices.

<sup>4</sup> In Colombia, Campesino communities attained legal status as a group and political subject until 2023 when a constitutional amendment enshrined collective rights for them.

<sup>5</sup> Translations are our own unless otherwise noted.

This novel development paradigm materialized into the 1961 land reform program aimed at increasing the rural poor's share of land and agricultural production (Departamento Nacional de Planeación 1961; Argáez et al. 2014). The program established a new administrative body (e.g., INCORA), tasked with implementing land reform by allocating land and subsidies to landless Campesinos living in areas chosen by the Agrarian Reform Committee Board (Albertus and Kaplan 2013; Machado 2017).<sup>6</sup> INCORA was charged with extracting unexploited land from economic elites to benefit rural inhabitants while allocating public land allocation to the rural poor. Relevant for Indigenous movements, the 1961 reform forbade individual titling over land traditionally held by Indigenous peoples except for *resguardos*—that is, collective landholding recognized under colonial rule—and allowed for the recognition of new *resguardos* (Triana-Antorveza 1980, p. 60). Nonetheless, the reform conditioned titling on economically productive land, which excluded forests, deserts, and moorland (*páramos*) where most ethno-racial communities had traditionally settled down. Therefore, this policy limited land access for Indigenous peoples compared to Campesinos.

While enthusiastic about land reform, the government lacked political support from the Conservative Party, a faction of the Liberal Party in Congress, and landed elites on the ground. Hence, broad-based support was belatedly viewed as crucial to boosting land reform implementation, which initially was sought out through a state-led, nationwide Campesino platform established in 1967 (e.g., the *Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC)*). Firmly ingrained in rural politics and structured in a hierarchical fashion, ANUC was composed by regionally nested associations relying upon municipal organizations. A year after its establishment, ANUC registered 600,000 members, and 4 years later, by late 1971, this number scaled up to 989,306. Zamosc (1986, p.57). Under such circumstances, rural movements faced a political opportunity structure that not only increased chances for cross-cutting mobilization via official support but also welcomed class-based demands for land redistribution by rendering them legible to the state. Aligned with the project of “racial harmony,” the land reform program and ANUC mainly emphasized rural workers as main targets and drivers of agrarian modernization, blurring ethno-racial differences among Campesino, Indigenous, and rural-Black movements. These movements strategically bought into the state's project of rational economic development, thereby leaving ethno-racial issues in the background and mobilizing for land redistribution under the umbrella of ANUC. Notably, ANUC considered access to land as a matter of both political and economic inclusion, which served as main frames of their shared struggles (Zamosc 1986; Pérez Ortega 2010).

Amid strong opposition by economic and political elites, Lleras-Restrepo administration (1966–1970) continued to support ANUC and introduced changes to the land reform program via the 1968 legal reform, which established compulsory land redistribution for tenants and sharecroppers in hacienda-dominated areas. Relying upon INCORA's legal and technical assistance, Campesino beneficiaries could file a

<sup>6</sup> The Agrarian Reform Committee Board was mostly comprised of local and national elites such as Congress members, armed forces, and the nationwide cattle rancher association. Campesino communities were never allotted two spots as stipulated by the law.

titling request over land plots smaller than 15 ha that they had already been farming. Further, the 1968 policy strengthened legal protection against unlawful evictions by large landowners and reinforced the legal status of tenancy contracts for sharecroppers and small tenants (Semanario el Campesino 1968). Yet, the reform also enshrined an elite backlash against Campesino's thrust for land redistribution by favoring access to credit, capitalization, and modernization of the agrarian sector over redistributive goals (Machado 2017; Zamosc 1986). These political obstacles resulted in what many have termed a "failed reform" (Kalmanovitz 2003; Gutierrez Sanín 2013). Despite significant limitations in land delivery, ANUC initially reaffirmed political alignment with the government's land reform, as voiced Campesino leader Barrios Gómez at the first National Campesino Summit held in July, 1970 (Pérez Ortega 2010). This period was also marked by growing feelings of frustration with land reform implementation, which translated into more radical repertoires of mobilization like land repossession events (Zamosc 1986). In this context, Misael Pastrana Borrero was elected president.

### **Critical Event: Rapid Shifts in Colombian Land Reform and Popular Mobilization (1970–1974)**

Now, we turn to the critical event analysis to show that Pastrana's electoral victory was a critical event, both contingent and causally important, which led to rural movement factionalization between 1975 and 1991. Pastrana's election is a good case to assess whether development paradigm shifts triggered splits since the newly inaugurated government not only brought a political closure to rural mobilization but also dismantled previous redistributive efforts, making class-based mobilization much more costly. One could argue that other relevant events during Pastrana's administration more directly triggered factionalization, including political divides between the President and bureaucrats charged with land reform or the 1973 political agreement between the Conservative party and landed elites to abandon land redistribution. While these events are clearly connected to the outcome, they were all enabled by Pastrana's electoral, which heavily hinged upon contingency. Therefore, these other significant events cannot be understood as critical events.

We claim that Pastrana's election is a well-bounded, contingent event. The narrow presidential election in 1970 suggests that the runner-up could have easily secured office, sparking another chain of events. Pastrana was declared the winner with only 41% of the votes against Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who secured 39.6% of the share and was seen as the favorite candidate to win. Pastrana's victory was highly contested and seen as fraudulent. He won by a tight margin (1.6%), and the electoral result was announced just past midnight on April 19, 1970, following an electric outage that critics regarded as intentional. Data on media coverage collected by Acuña Rodríguez (2015) further confirms the contingency of the electoral win. At 11:45 pm, Rojas-Pinilla was in the lead by 30,000 votes. At 1:30 am (and after the power outage), Pastrana had surpassed Rojas-Pinilla in votes by about the same amount. The toss-up results and the rumors of fraud were seen by President Lleras-Restrepo as threatening to political stability and legitimacy. To contain mass protests led by ANAPO–Rojas-Pinilla's political movement–Lleras–Restrepo issued a nationwide state of emergency

and a curfew in Bogotá. He also established a civic committee charged with overseeing a recount and investigating fraud reports (El Tiempo 1970, April 24th). Thus, evidence suggests that Rojas-Pinilla's potential election was a plausible and very likely road not-taken, which further solidifies Pastrana's win as a contingent event.

The causal importance of this critical event relies upon its sufficiency properties and counterfactual worlds. Our hypothesis is that three properties of Pastrana's election were potentially sufficient and causally important for factionalization: (i) his approach to national development as incompatible with redistributive land reform, (ii) his animosity towards rural mobilization, and (iii) his strong links with landed elites. Although it is empirically challenging to distinguish among these interwoven properties, we treat them separately for analytical purposes to explain why Pastrana's administration turned against Campesino mobilization and betrayed previous land reform efforts via the 1973 counter-land reform. Our account of this causal chain is supported by primary and secondary sources, including newspapers coverage, speeches, congressional debate transcripts, movements' archives such as newspapers like *El Campesino*, *Carta Campesina*, and *Unidad Indígena*, as well as the memoirs of one of the leaders of ANUC, Jesus María Perez. Table 1 in the Appendix provides a list with links and images of the archival evidence supporting our main argument.

The first property entails rapid shifts in the development paradigm away from redistribution during the 1970–1974 Pastrana administration. In the policy realm, this shift translated into depleted financial resources for INCORA, decreased official support for ANUC, increased state repression against Campesino mobilization, and decoupling redistributive measures from land reform. In Bagley's terms, Pastrana "effectively ended all land redistribution and moved to reassert state-control over ANUC" (Bagley 1989). Once in office, Pastrana rapidly weakened institutions tasked with implementing Lleras-Restrepo's land reform. Pastrana rapidly established a commission charged with evaluating existing land reform. In January, 1971, the commission announced that land policy institutions should be reformed urgently.

A month later, Campesino and Indigenous groups led occupations in response to the government's attempts at dismantling redistributive land policy (El Tiempo 1970, February 23). Data collected by Zamosc (1986, p. 74–82) shows that Campesino movements targeted estates and public land under dispute in municipalities mostly marked by land concentration. Mobilization was mainly shepherded by tenants, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, and colonists, who had been dispossessed of either private or public land by rural elites. Similarly, Indigenous communities sought to recover collective land that had been absorbed into estates despite having been legally recognized as their property since the colonial period (Zamosc 1986, p. 82–83; Hristov 2005, p. 47). While targeting different regions, Indigenous and Campesino movements initially acted cohesively as part of a broad coalition and used similar repertoires. However, as Pastrana's administration moved further away from land reform, the coalition ruptured into two factions.

Contingent shifts in development policy-making did not unfold homogeneously within the government. Critical bureaucrats openly opposed Pastrana's dismantling of land reform. Jaime Reyes, a delegate of the Ministry of Agriculture and appointed

to promote Campesino organization, stated that land occupations were an unintended consequence of the 1968 reform since smallholders enjoying precarious rights over land were being expelled from farms by landed elites and left with no means for subsistence (El Tiempo 1971, February 23rd). Reyes' statement aligned with Campesinos' declarations that land repossession was driven by impoverished conditions they were facing in the countryside (El Tiempo 1971, February 25th). INCORA bureaucrats expressed concerns about Campesino livelihoods and pledged the establishment of agrarian committees joined by Campesinos and landowners to come to terms on land disputes (El Tiempo 1971, February 23rd). In a similar vein, Emilio Valderrama, the Minister of Agriculture at the time, asserted that land invasions were inevitable since INCORA could not overcome landed elites' opposition and fell short in implementing the promised reform (El Tiempo 1972, January 8th).

The second causal property rests on the animosity of Pastrana's administration towards rural movements' demands. Pastrana's core administration sought to shield private property from land occupations—or invasions, in their terms—which were urgently curtailed by force. This strategy led to rising tensions between Pastrana and Congressional members, on the one hand, and INCORA's director, Carlos Villamil-Chaux, on the other hand. Some hardliners even suggested that INCORA was behind land invasions (El Tiempo 1971, March 2nd). In an interview to the Associated Press, Villamil-Chaux stated that land invasions were not an act of vandalism, but instead legitimate responses from Campesinos to overcome legal and bureaucratic obstacles imposed upon land reform (El Tiempo 1971, March 3rd). He added that “Campesinos are not destroyers or reactionaries by nature, but they are between a rock and a hard place, between their needs and obstacles to solve them, and that is why they have appealed to this system” (El Tiempo 1971, March 3rd). Two days later, Pastrana removed Villamil-Chaux from INCORA, which many read as a victory of opponents to land reform (El Tiempo 1971, March 3rd). Villamil-Chaux then expressed concerns about land reform's fate due to Liberals' and Conservatives' reluctance to fulfill from-below demands: “There are caveman and confused extremist reactionaries who cannot offer any viable solution to the urgent needs of the people” (El Tiempo 1971, March 21). High-ranking officials subsequently resigned from INCORA in protest.

A few days later, on March 17th, Pastrana's administration announced deep changes to the 1961 land reform seemingly intended to address cattle ranchers' assessment of such policy (El Tiempo 1971, March 17th). Efforts to dismantle redistributive reform eventually inflamed discontent among rural-poor movements, skyrocketing ANUC's radicalism in claims-making for land redistribution (Zamosc 1986, p. 70–84). By June 5, 1971, ANUC leaders distanced themselves from the national government and launched a from-below jump-start for land reform outlined via a so-called “Ideological Platform” (*Plataforma Ideológica*). The “Platform's” 1971 statement underscored that ANUC was “an autonomous organization of salaried, poor and middle peasants,” who fought for “an integrated and economic agrarian reform, demands for the agricultural worker, an improvement in the economic, social, and cultural aspects of their lives, and the full development of their potential.” Further, it stated that their political agenda ought to be pursued “by means of an organized and permanent struggle carried out by

*the peasantry, the working class, and other popular sectors* committed to structural change and the total liberation of our country from all forms of domination and colonization” (Translated by Bagley, 1989 from ANUC’s Ideological Platform. Emphasis added). Social mobilization for land redistribution not only challenged agrarian strata and the status-quo distribution of resources; it also brought questions on political competition to the fore. In rural municipalities, land concentration translated into economic inequality and limited political alternation at the local level since landed elites bought off landless peasants who were dependent on them during electoral cycles, in turn shrinking competition for politicians that were autonomous from large landowners (Faguet et al. 2020).

In July, 1971, the government introduced a bill to Congress that aimed to entirely overwrite Lleras-Restrepo’s land reform. While critics emphasized that such changes would diminish both Campesino livelihoods and the existing institutional framework, government officials endorsed it as a much needed improvement to failed land policy. In response, Campesino movements opposed the bill by claiming that it would hamper redistribution (El Tiempo 1971, July 15th). In a public speech delivered on September 14th, the Minister of Agriculture Jaramillo Ocampo stated that “agrarian policy’s results are not satisfactory due to poor land use and low productivity” and added concerns on food shortages caused by rural migration to urban areas (El Tiempo 1972, September 14th). Miguel Samper—the former Ministry of Agriculture and one of Lleras-Restrepo’s land reform authors—posited that, although Congress members and the government publicly pledged to strengthen land reform, they also “started to object it during implementation” (Declaration of Samper Gnecco September quoted by El Tiempo 1971, September 19th). Following these events, disputes between the government and movements further heightened. In August 1971, drawing upon assistance from the Communist Party and the Socialist Bloc (Ochoa 2022), ANUC drafted the so-called “Campesino Mandate” (*Mandato Campesino*), which translated aspirations outlined in the Ideological Platform into a detailed policy program. Seeking to lead *de facto* land redistribution, ANUC launched local Executive Committees on Agrarian Reform (or *Consejos Ejecutivos de Reforma Agraria - CERA*) tasked with providing operational and legal assistance for land repossession. In October 1971, the government cut off financial support for ANUC’s newspaper, *Carta Campesina*, while ANUC led land repossession over 300 estates in seven departments during October and November (Zamosc 2013, p.73). Around 645 episodes of land repossession took place in 1971 (Zamosc 2013).

Finally, the third property hinges on Pastrana’s close ties to landed elites. As Pastrana’s land reform bill was being discussed in Congress, political elites and news outlets voiced increasing concerns regarding land occupations. A decisive attempt to dismantle previous land policy was enshrined in the Chicoral Pact (*Pacto de Chicoral*), a formal state-landowner alliance that was signed by the national government, renowned politicians, Congressional members from both the Liberal and Conservative parties, as well as landed elites at the *Caja Agraria* headquarters in Chicoral, Tolima on January 6–9, 1972 (El Tiempo 1972, January 2nd). Pastrana belonged to the core of the Conservative Party and was also part of the Society of Colombian Agriculturalists (*Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia*) (SAC), one of the largest, and most repre-



sentative, nationwide landowners associations.<sup>7</sup> As critics noted, Campesino leaders were not invited to join the meeting or to sign the pact. Mario Laserna—a conservative politician, intellectual, large landowner, and signatory on the agreement—illustrates the alliance between economic and political elites in the *Pacto de Chicoral*. Laserna joined the Conservative Party and accused Campesino movements of breaking the rule of law by seizing his estate in the outskirts of Ibagué, Tolima’s capital city (El Tiempo 1971, December 7th). Table 1 below notes that many of the signatories, especially those from the Conservative party, were themselves large landowners or had strong ties with this group.

The *Pacto de Chicoral* was portrayed as a “transcendental political agreement on the Agrarian Reform that would open a path toward better communication and understanding between the Government and Congress” (El Tiempo 1972, January 9th). It primarily relaxed criteria to assess poorly exploited, large land plots that were eligible for expropriation by no longer requiring a proof of productivity over land. Instead, the *Pacto* required average profitability within the local land market in the last 3 years. This shift in criteria posed significant hurdles for reversing property rights over unexploited estates and raised the yardstick for smallholdings, which now needed to reach either similar productivity or profitability of larger farms.

Critiques from diverse social sectors spoke volumes about the *Pacto*’s regressive nature. While interest groups led by large landowners and cattle breeders praised the agreement, Campesinos decried it since they did not have a say in drafting the new reform. Moreover, Campesino movements stated that the agreement was simply an instrument to shield landed elites’ interests. Concerns about Pastrana’s land reform are illustrated by Pepón’s cartoon, published in *El Tiempo* on January 16th, which declared that “The most important executives of the ‘Association to Protect Land Owners’ met in Chicoral to mess with the Agrarian Reform” (see Fig. 1) (El Tiempo 1972, January 16th).

Criticism of the *Pacto* spread beyond rural movements. Miguel Samper, Lleras-Restrepo’s former Minister of Agriculture, claimed that the agreement channeled the interests of politicians, conservatives, and landed elites while diminishing previous land reforms and episodes of rural mobilization. In his words, the *Pacto* was “regressive because there was no talk about promoting and advancing the agrarian reform” and, rather, the agreement sought “to empower the businessmen and give them guarantees and security, very justified indeed, being businessmen who have made efforts and work, but that does not respond in any way to the wishes and aspirations of the peasants for land” (El Tiempo 1972, January 19th). Along those lines, Valderrama, the previous Minister of Agriculture, regarded the *Pacto de Chicoral* as a step backwards and a conspiracy plotted by landowners. Taking a step further, Valderrama called on Campesinos to mobilize against such an elite backlash (El Tiempo 1972, January 19th). Despite strong opposition, the government succeeded in institutionalizing the *Pacto de Chicoral* through Laws 4 and 5 of 1973, which established rules and procedures to

<sup>7</sup> Another example of Pastrana’s connections to landed elites is in his appointment of the head of SAC as interim President during one of his official foreign trips.

**Table 1** Signers of Pacto de Chicoral

Signer	Party/role	Link to landed elites
Victor Mosquera Chaux	Liberal Party, Lawyer, Former Senator, Ambassador	Strong ties and large landowner from Cauca. His estates were seized by Indigenous communities reclaiming colonial rights over land.
Hernando Durán Dussan	Liberal Party	Unclear landed roots. No public information about professional background.
Indalecio Liévano Aguirre	Liberal Party, Lawyer and economist	Unclear landed roots. No public information about professional background.
Alberto Mendoza Hoyos	Liberal Party	Unclear landed roots. No public information about professional background.
Alvaro Uribe Rueda	Liberal Party	Unclear landed roots. No public information about professional background.
Rafael Azuero Manchola	Conservative Party, Large-scale farmer	Large landowner, associate to and president of nationwide farmer associations (Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia - SAC) (served as interim President in replacement of Misael Pas-trana who was on a trip).
Comelio Reyes	Conservative Party, Lawyer	Large landowner, associate to large-scale farmer associations (Fedearroz and Sociedad de Agricultores del Valle del Cauca).
Mario Laserna	Conservative Party, large-scale farmer, and educator (founder of Universidad de los Andes)	Large landowner in Tolima. His estates were seized by peasant communities demanding land access.
Mariano Ospina Hernández	Conservative Party, Mining engineer	Son of former Conservative president Mariano Ospina Pérez. Associate to large-scale farmer associations (Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia - SAC, Comité de Cafeteros, and Fedegan).

Source: (González Toledo 1978)



Fig. 1 The Re-Counter Reform

protect large holding from expropriation by the state. This reform deepened changes in rural policy. Pastrana’s land reform was coupled with poverty-palliative policies like the Plan for Food and Nutrition (PAN) intended to boost efficiency and economic growth instead of redistribution (Departamento Nacional de Planeación 1972).

Our analysis demonstrates that Pastrana’s electoral victory in 1970 was both a contingent and causally important event that drove the factionalization of a broad-based coalition of rural-poor movements through two interwoven processes. In alliance with landed elites, Pastrana attempted to dismantle previous redistributive land reform by depleting budget, staffing administrative bodies with loyal officials, and repressing mobilization. Pastrana’s attacks on land reform sparked a wave of unified rural mobilization led by a coalition of Campesino and Indigenous movements joining ANUC, which pursued *de facto* land reform via land repossession events. Moreover, Pastrana’s approach to development rendered demands for land redistribution illegible and thus pressured movements to strategically frame claims in more appealing terms before the state. As a result, the umbrella movement for land reform broke into two factions emphasizing class and ethno-racial identities, respectively.

What would have happened had Pastrana not won the election? Answering this question involves assessing necessity properties for Pastrana’s election as a critical event. We consider possible counterfactual worlds where either Rojas-Pinilla, Betan-

cur, or Souza had secured office and taken a different road, which we analyze vis-à-vis the aforementioned causal properties. First, Pastrana's development project stood in sharp contrast to *Frente Nacional's* official stance on land reform that was deemed crucial to preventing a violence relapse by both the Liberal and Conservative parties (Karl 2017). Had Rojas-Pinilla sworn the oath of office, he would have maintained redistributive land reform efforts while also shifting developmental policy agenda toward industrialization. Support for this hypothesis is found in Rojas-Pinilla's policy focus on import substitution industrialization (Caballero 2016). This policy goal sharply contrasts with the Pastrana administration, which maintained agro-exports and landed elites at the center of the economy (Urrutia 2016). It also highlights differences between their approach to the state's role in development: while Rojas-Pinilla envisioned the state as an active actor to lead development and redistribution, Pastrana viewed development as mainly a problem of productivity and efficiency where the state had a limited role (Hernandez Rodríguez 2014). Even other *Frente Nacional* candidates such as Souza and Betancur would have likely sided with redistributive reform and rural mobilization had they been sworn in office. For instance, in 1966, Betancur stated that underlying sources of political conflict like underdevelopment in rural areas should be addressed through policies such as land reform for peace to take root and development to take off (Betancur 1966). A few decades later, once in office, Betancur renewed efforts for land reform amid peace negotiation with insurgent groups between 1982 and 1984 (Güiza-Gómez and Sánchez Ramírez 2024).

Second, had any other candidate been elected, it is unlikely that they would have taken as hard of a stance on rural mobilization. Sources documenting Rojas-Pinilla's reaction to land repossession events show that he held an ambiguous position; he neither condemned rural mobilization nor encouraged large landowners' opposition. Indeed, Maria Eugenia Rojas—a central figure in the movement and Rojas-Pinilla's daughter—stated that they saw land repossessions as legitimate and as a symptom of the importance of land reform (Rama 1970). Finally, Rojas-Pinilla, as well as other candidates, distanced themselves from Pastrana and critiqued his close ties to the oligarchy (El Tiempo 1970, April 19th). While Pastrana relied upon landed elites in the presidential campaign, the other candidates rested on middle- and low-income class constituencies. For example, Rojas-Pinilla's electoral base was mostly composed of the urban poor and the industrial middle classes, and he was largely seen as a dissident of the Conservative Party. Although some large landowners supported and even financed Rojas-Pinilla's campaign, his supporters also included key players in the industrial sector, suggesting that he did not depend on landed elites' support solely (Martínez and Izquierdo 1972). During Rojas-Pinilla's administration in the 1950s, most of his policies were faced with large opposition by urban and rural economic elites, including large interest groups like ANDI, FENALCO, and SAC (El Tiempo 1953, September 9th). Had Rojas-Pinilla been elected, his main alliances would have not been with landed elites and instead he would have regarded urban poor and middle classes as his base. Similarly, Betancour self-identified as the candidate of the middle classes (Rama 1970).

## Outcome: Factionalized Social Mobilization Along Class-Based and Ethno-Racial Frames (1975–1991)

Pastrana's approach to development closed the door to redistribution and increased state repression. Thus, class-based mobilization became clearly incompatible with state-sponsored developmental paradigms. In the midst of Pastrana's attempts at institutionalizing the *Pacto de Chicoral* via legal bills, ANUC witnessed splits that surfaced at the II Summit held in Sincelejo in July, 1972. Internal divisions revolved around whether to stay loyal to the government or endorse the Campesino Mandate as guidelines for rural mobilization. Eventually, disagreement translated into an organizational split into two sides. On the one hand, a faction composed of moderate leaders based in Armenia—a coffee-growing area located in the Andean region—supported Pastrana's policies and employed institutional venues to gain land access. On the other hand, a more radical sector based in Sincelejo—a northern coastal city that lately became a main epicenter of land repossession events—upheld redistributive claims and endorsed direct confrontation with the state (Pérez Ortega 2010). Henceforth, ANUC-Armenia mostly aligned with the government and abandoned radical collective action, whereas ANUC-Sincelejo kept using contentious repertoires and framed its land claims around class (see Fig. 2). ANUC divisions were weaponized by the Pastrana administration, which stigmatized Campesino mobilization as insurgency. Radical, rural mobilization was faced with increasing state repression through assassination, torture, and unlawful court-martial trials committed by state officials in collaboration with large landowners and militias (Rivera Cusicanqui 1982, p. 115-125; Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad 2022a, p.95)

Internal dissent on class-based frames in the struggle for land further expanded in the upcoming years, eventually leading to factionalized mobilization among Indigenous and Campesino movements. Initially, from 1971 to 1974, ANUC joined forces in mobilization for land with recently established Indigenous movements such as the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC)—as seen in, for instance, the launch of its newspaper *Unidad Indígena* (see Fig. 3). CRIC emerged as a cross-municipality network that served as a shared platform for an explicitly Indigenous agenda. It was born out of the First Indigenous Summit held in Toribío (Cauca) in February 1971 and convened by Frente Social Agrario (FRESAGRO), which organized not only indigenous members but also Campesino and Black leaders around demands for political and economic inclusion (Troyan 2008, p.174).<sup>8</sup> CRIC mainly pursued the abolition of *terraje*—a type of sharecropping—and other class-oriented claims such as recovering traditional collective land that had been absorbed by estates and state-led land allocation (Troyan 2008, p.174).

Few months later, in September 1971, CRIC held a Second Summit and laid out its main goals, such as reclaiming and expanding Indigenous Resguardos, strength-

<sup>8</sup> Despite being the largest one, CRIC was not the only Indigenous group mobilizing for land in the 1970s. Berglund (1982) documents other Indigenous movements such as CRIVA (Consejo Regional Indígena del Vaupés), UNDICH (Unión Indígenas del Chocó), COIA (Congreso Indígena Arhuaco), and CRIT (Consejo Regional Indígena del Tolima).



**Fig. 2** Carta Campesina, Vol. 33. March 1976

ening Indigenous Cabildos (e.g., governing bodies), implementing Indigenous laws, preserving Indigenous history, language, and customs, as well as training Indigenous teachers to achieve educational goals (Troyan 2008, p.177). Henceforth, Indigenous mobilization continued to emphasize access to traditional land along with cultural difference, as stated by an Indigenous leader: “There, the process of breaking the chains of colonialism around indigenous communities begins, and a very important concept emerges: the reclamation of territory, the revival of their native language, the restoration of their culture, the preservation of their memory, and the recovery of their history” (CRIC 2022, 84).

Although the CRIC’s political agenda remarkably included claims on Indigenous’ rights to communal land and the defense of Indigenous laws, these were initially framed as class struggle. Indeed, CRIC leaders believed that the “pure racial struggle” against the White man was not politically strategic. Rather, the movement seemingly thought that a from-below, joint struggle would more successfully shake state power (Berglund 1982) and increase the prospects of land reform. They also saw themselves as bound with Campesino movements due to their exploitation by a common adversary



Fig. 3 Carta Campesina, Vol 26, May 1974

as follows: “Our fundamental enemies: imperialism, the bourgeoisie, and landowners are the same as the rest of the exploited and oppressed. Alongside them we should fight for national liberation and towards a socialist society” (Berglund 1982, p7). Insisting on land redistribution for the rural poor, CRIC not only carried out land occupations in former *resguardos* that were forcibly integrated into estates by large landowners (Hristov 2005), they also reinterpreted existing rules—especially Law 89 of 1890—to recover *resguardos* under dispute with white landed elites and sought access to new collective land.

In the early years of the Indigenous-Campesino alliance, demands voiced through framings of indigeneity and cultural difference were not seen as an impediment, but rather as a fundamental component of the rural-poor coalition (CRIC 2022, 96). Evidence of such an alliance is found in *Carta Campesina* and *Unidad Indígena*, which repeatedly emphasized that Indigenous mobilization was directed to both recover dispossessed collective land previously recognized by the law and protect cultural difference (ANUC 1974, November). This partnership, however, began to stumble after the Third ANUC Summit held in August 1974. ANUC’s Indigenous Secretariat and CRIC delivered a joint speech acknowledging that “we the Indigenous peoples are Campesinos” and reassuring that Indigenous mobilization found solid ground at ANUC since its ultimate purpose was “to contribute to Colombian people’s liberation, fighting side by side with Campesinos, working class, and others exploited, in agreement with their legitimate class-based organizations.” However, the statement turned to Indigenous agenda setting underscoring that Indigenous peoples were strongly

“rooted” to their territories albeit Indigenous-specific demands were not meant to be divisive.

A year later, distancing between CRIC and ANUC deepened amid acute tensions on decision-making processes, pairwise participation in high-ranked positions, and a movement-to-party transition (ANUC 1975, October, Edition 31; ONIC 1975, July). Conflict between ANUC and CRIC was mainly motivated by competing perspectives of landholding between Indigenous peoples and Campesino communities. Particularly, CRIC stressed that Indigenous views to land were firmly anchored to communal property due to Indigenous long-standing culture as opposed to Campesino perspectives, which were tightly ingrained in private ownership (CRIC 1973, February Booklet, p.5-6). In March 1977, ANUC tried to narrow distancing with Indigenous movements at the Fourth National Summit by commissioning a representative to handle official interactions between these movements (ANUC 1977, April, Edition 37). Simultaneously, Indigenous Guambia peoples delivered a speech at the summit, recognizing themselves as Indigenous Campesinos, that is, landless farmers tilling land for family subsistence who held cultural practices inherited through generations even before the Spanish invasion. As such, Guambia peoples vindicated autonomous Indigenous mobilization that could still partner with ANUC via a broader coalition for land redistribution (ANUC 1977, April, Edition 37).

Through a postcolonial lens, we contextualize how Campesino and Indigenous movements responded to Pastrana’s rollback of redistributive land reform depending on enduring forms of marginalization. After 1977, both Campesino and Indigenous mobilization started to showcase differences in claims-making: one trajectory continued to articulate land claims around a class-based frame under the lead of ANUC and another pathway, shepherded by CRIC, increasingly emphasized ethnic-based demands for land, drawing upon long-standing marginalization and limited citizenship status. Factionalization is clearly observed in movements’ strategies to gain access to land. A key instance is Indigenous legal mobilization to recover collective ownership of land under dispute with landed elites (Jimeno 2021; Rueda-Saiz 2017). As we explained earlier, the 1961 land reform left Indigenous movements with limited maneuverability to access land as collective entities rather than individual Campesinos. Yet, the reform also forbade titling over traditionally held land and, more importantly, authorized INCORA to recognize new *resguardos* (Triana-Antorveza 1980). Indigenous movements reinterpreted these rules to base their demands for land as cultural difference (Rueda-Saiz 2017; Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). For legal strategizing, INCORA mid- and low-level officials were crucial allies and drafted persuasive arguments that changed the meaning of laws initially purported to limit ethnic ownership and reinforce a *mestizo* nationhood (Jimeno 2021, p. 156). In response to emerging requests, INCORA established the Indigenous Affairs Section that was first led by Adolfo Triana—a lawyer and Indigenous advocate. In Triana’s words, INCORA bureaucrats surprisingly realized that Indigenous peoples were also “beneficiaries of the land reform” (Jimeno 2021, p. 161).

Despite lethal violence and state repression (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad 2022b, p.96), Indigenous mobilization gained strength at the national level by



scaling up from subnational networks to a nationwide platform. In 1980, Indigenous movements celebrated the First Indigenous National Summit in Lomas de Hilarco where CRIC proposed to center Indigenous mobilization on political autonomy and advocated for a multi-ethnic state that would establish self-governance not only for indigenous peoples but also for all ethnic and regional groups (CRIC 2022, 113). This national summit paved the way for the First Indigenous National Congress held 2 years later in Bosa (Bogotá) in which around 2500 representatives of 90% of the Colombian Indigenous peoples established the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) to advance claims on cultural difference, political autonomy, and collective land. ONIC marked its first major political victory by forcing the Turbaya administration to withdraw an Indigenous National Statute Bill aimed at retrenching communal property deeds and Indigenous autonomy. In sharp contrast, Campesino movements witnessed fragmented collective action henceforth due to the end of the coalition with Indigenous movements, internal divides about revolutionary action, and rising civil war violence (Archila 2003; Múnera and Molina 1998). In the late 1970s and then mid-1980s, ANUC unsuccessfully attempted to strengthen Campesino mobilization on a nationwide scale, yet Campesino collective action remained fragmented into municipal- and department-level movements (Cely-Forero 2020).

By the mid-1980s, factionalization expanded to rural-Black movements, partially due to increasing legibility of ethno-racial demands to state institutions like INCORA and the Colombian Supreme Court (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009; Jimeno 2021; Paschel 2018, p.29). Although Black Campesinos mobilized *while black*—in Paschel (2018)’s words—for land in the first half of the twentieth century (LeGrand 2016), Black mobilization *as black* only began to emerge in the mid-1970s. In urban areas, particularly, Black movements launched anti-racism campaigns linked to historical and contemporary experiences of injustice, seeking the formal recognition of *negritudes* as a political subject. Indeed, renowned black leaders such as Rogerio Velásquez and Manuel Zapata Olivella coined the term *negredumbre*—roughly translated as the “Black collective”—to characterize Black people as a marginalized collectivity, or “cursed race,” deserving of full citizenship rights (Patiño 2010; Zapata 1997). Competing views of the Black struggles among urban and rural factions encouraged rural-Black communities to explicitly articulate their land demands along the lines of ethnicity in the mid-1980s (Paschel 2018, p. 66).<sup>9</sup> Particularly, disputes between Black-Campesino communities and logging entrepreneurs in 1982 Chocó motivated movements to link their demands with black marginalization framed as limited citizenship for an ethnic group rather than class struggle.

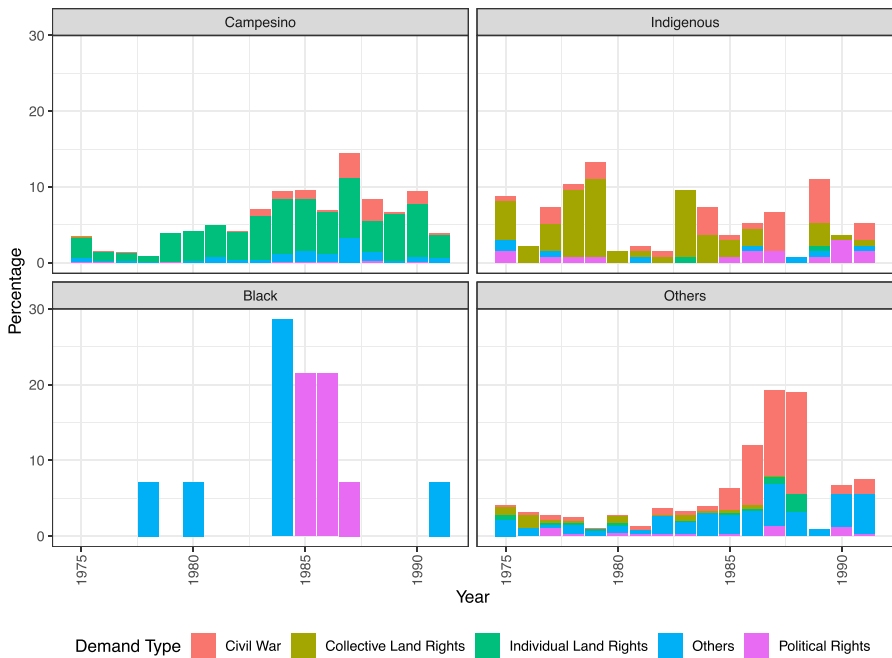
In the early 1980s, rural-Black movements were blossoming under financial, pedagogical, and logistical support from Catholic Claretian missionaries influenced by Liberation Theology. Nascent movements included the Campesino Organization of Upper Atrato and the Campesino Integrated Association of Atrato (ACIA) born out in 1985 and 1987, respectively (Agudelo 2002). ACIA played a pivotal role in coupling

<sup>9</sup> Within-movement disagreements are illustrated by the split of Movimiento Cimarrón—an initially urban-Black movement largely influenced by the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and South African anti-apartheid battles—into an urban faction and a rural line in the early 1980s (Paschel 2018, p.67-68).

rural-Black demands to ethno-racial frames, which was deemed a critical strategy to protecting forests from mining activities. Resisting the Compañía Maderas del Darién's interest in timber activities, ACIA increasingly articulated land claims along ethno-racial arguments instead of class-based ones, paving the way for other rural-Black movements to mobilize along ethno-racial lines. In the First and Second Pacific Campesino Summits held in September and December 1984, respectively, rural-Black movements still saw themselves as Campesino actors organized to keep control over land potentially allocated to logging companies (Castillo 2016, p.121). In December 1985, ACIA realized that individual land titling conventionally granted to Campesino movements could not prevent economic enterprises from dispelling Black communities from their land. Rather, communal land titling—only legally recognized to Indigenous peoples—was more effective in blocking companies' interests in land (Consejo Comunitario Mayor del Medio Atrato n.d., p. 84). This assessment guided ACIA's strategizing for collective land titling and ethno-racial framing henceforth.

In 1987, after its legal launch and relying upon assistance from forest engineers, anthropologists, and agronomists sponsored by the Dutch cooperation (Restrepo 2013), ACIA scaled up collective action to the national level by sending commissioners to state institutions like the National Planning Office (DNP), INCORA, and the Ministry of Agriculture. In June, ACIA compelled the national government to sign the Buchadó Accord that granted the movement 800,000 ha for management, control, and surveillance over natural resources. Notably, the Buchadó Agreement quotes the 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention—only legally adopted until 1989—to support ACIA's demands for collective land titling (Castillo 2016, p.126). The Buchadó Accord was hammered out in the Second Campesino Upper Atrato Summit where the Regional Indigenous Emberá Wounaan Organization assisted ACIA with laying out a political strategy for collective land titling to rural-Black movements in Chocó. Together, ACIA's strategy for collective land titling, the Buchadó Accord's references to the 169 Convention, and Indigenous movements' participation in this process show that rural-Black movements strategically used ethno-racial frames for land claims. Employing postcolonial historiography, we elucidate that ethno-racial frames were available to rural-Black movements due to their limited citizenship status. Moreover, these movements strategically envisioned ethnicity-centered frames as more effective in political contention vis-à-vis the state, as previous Indigenous victories had demonstrated.

By the end of the 1980's, and before the multiculturalist turn enshrined in the 1991 Constitution, factionalization among Indigenous and Campesino movements expanded to rural-Black movements in their quest for land. Figure 4 illustrates rural-poor movements' factionalization along different frames from 1975 to 1991. Since a class-based frame contrasted with a new model development that disfavored redistribution, factions within ANUC followed remarkably diverse mobilization strategies after factionalization in 1975. While Campesino movements remained mobilizing under a banner of material-structural demands like land redistribution, Indigenous and rural-Black movements increasingly started to connect their claims on communal



**Fig. 4** Patterns of rural mobilization by framing 1975–1991. Our own construction based on CINEP (2022). Data are available from 1975. Y-axis displays the percentage of collective action events by type of demand. We coded mobilization events by frames as follows: individual land rights, collective land rights, political rights, civil war demands, and others. The civil war category includes demands for state assistance to displaced populations and calls for ceasefires and peace processes

land to ethnic and racial issues such as expanded citizenship, cultural difference, and autonomy over traditional landholdings.

Factionalized mobilization among Indigenous, Black, and Campesino organizations crystallized in the 1991 Constitution, which gave birth to an inclusionary turn anchored to ethnic identity and multiculturalism (Kapiszewski et al. 2021). Rural movements attained representation at the assembly and specific rights in the new constitutional framework at varying degrees. Indigenous movements secured seats and ethnic citizenship alongside strengthened protection of their land rights, rural-Black movements lacked direct representation albeit achieved rights framed as ethnic identity, and Campesino movements fell short in reaching both direct representation and state’s commitments to land redistribution (Güiza-Gómez et al. 2020; Paschel 2018; Van Cott 2005).

## Conclusion

This article explains why and how broad-based coalitions factionalize into different, and even competing, collective action frames. We demonstrate that development

paradigm shifts represent a critical, yet often overlooked, driver of factionalization. These shifts not only shape the political opportunity structures under which movements operate but also define which collective action frames are deemed legitimate within the broader policy realm. In the Colombian case, changes in the development paradigm involved the dismantling of redistributive land reform, narrowing the scope of legitimate popular claims. Since land redistribution became off-limits in policy-making, broad-based coalitions faced diminished political opportunities to remain united around class-based frames and instead split along competing frames. In other instances, shifts in development paradigms may increase political opportunities, allowing coalitions to emerge or remain united around frames that are praised in policy circles. For example, in Mexico, Cuba, and Bolivia, the social revolution paradigm framed land redistribution as a key policy tied to class-based frames, prompting social movements to coalesce around class framing at the expense of ethnic framing (Yashar 2005).

By integrating political-economic and postcolonial perspectives, this article shows how evolving development goals, alongside long-standing relationships between marginalized actors and the state, explain both the timing and nature of coalition splits. This approach provides a richer understanding of how intersectional dilemmas influence factionalization and underscores the dynamic interaction between historical trends in marginalization and rapid development change, as well as movements' responses, in shaping collective action. This argument also has broader implications for prior scholarship on the quintessential instance of factionalization along the lines of class and identity in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. Such factionalization has been extensively attributed to Indigenous mobilization's attempt to recover distant-past identity and inaugurate an indigenous nation. As the Colombian case illustrates, ethnicity did not go unmarked within umbrella coalitions but instead became a prominent point of contention when development policies shifted away from redistribution. Identity was not merely a strategically deployed characteristic but functioned as a political stance used by factions to enhance claims-making efficacy amid changing development models. Future research might explore whether and how social movement coalitions avoid factionalization and maintain unified collective action frames, despite historical differences in their relationships with the state, particularly during periods of political openness that realign development goals and beneficiaries with movements' agendas. Social mobilization during the XXI-century socialism paradigm in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia could offer valuable cases for probing these questions, as the expansion of social policy interacted with expanded citizenship regimes for formerly marginalized populations.

Furthermore, our analysis follows Collins (2015)'s call for intersectional research that examines the historical and immediate conditions under which social standings emerge and evolve among marginalized communities, and how these standings shape their relationships with the state and popular organizing. In this article, we combine micro-, mezzo-, and macro-scales of analysis to interrogate why and how social movements choose to employ competing frames emphasizing distinct social standings during significant changes in their material environment. At the micro level, we lever-

age movements' archival records to elicit how factions deployed different framing strategies to justify their collective action and present more compelling claims to the state. Through within-case comparison, we identify commonalities and differences in the responses of rural-Black, Campesino, and Indigenous movements to changing development paradigms, offering a comprehensive comparison rarely seen in previous research (Alfonso-Sierra 2019; Richani 2023). At the mezzo level, we trace shifts in development paradigms over three decades to understand what policy goals were prioritized at different times, linking such changes to evolving movements' choices. We combine qualitative analysis with quantitative data to uncover post-factionalization mobilization patterns, demonstrating the lasting effects of these splits. At the macro-level, we draw on postcolonial historiography to connect contemporary movements' strategies to enduring forms of marginalization, illustrating how long-term structural factors intersect with rapid development shifts to create diverse movement trajectories. In doing so, we offer an example of how to address intersectionality dilemmas by empirically grounding them in dynamic state-movement interactions and social inequalities.

Our multi-method approach offers two key contributions to prior scholarship on critical junctures, turning points, and critical events in case study research, as well as postcolonial historiography. First, it highlights colonialism and colonial legacies as active explanatory factors operating at both the macro- and micro-political levels. Rather than a static backdrop, we treat colonialism as a continuously explanatory variable, which interacts with other immediate factors to shape the evolving relationships between political institutions and social movements. More specifically, this framework suggests that colonial legacies can be understood as conditioning critical antecedents, which do not directly trigger the outcome but rather influence how the explanatory factor (be it a critical event, a critical juncture, or a turning point) have different impacts across cases. Second, our approach introduces counterfactual analysis to examine how ethno-racial and economic hierarchies, historically constructed during colonialism, shape contemporary mobilization. This article offers a concrete example of how to analytically exploit plausible roads available under contingent circumstances to uncover the interaction between structural conditions and actors' strategies within windows of contingency. Coupling critical event analysis with postcolonial historiography allows researchers to show that colonial legacies do not predetermine social movements' strategies but rather illuminate how movements exercise agency in response to contingent events. We aim for these contributions to encourage further research, which places political theory and comparative politics in fruitful conversation.

**Supplementary Information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-024-09456-w>.

**Acknowledgements** The authors thank generous feedback from two anonymous reviewers, Nadia Brown, Kim Yi-Dionne, James Mahoney, Sara Niedzwiecki, Anibal Pérez-Liñán, Gary Goertz, Jen Cyr, Karrie Koessel, Diana Fu, Maria Jose Mendez, Adriana Perez, Jessica Neaime, Maria Francisca Granda, Yujia Shi, Ruth Hall, Faustina Obeng, Camilo Espinoza, Sergio Coronado, and all participants at the Sixth Annual Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research at Northwestern University, the University of Toronto Working Group on Contentious Politics in the Global South, the Critical Agrarian Studies in the 21st Century Conference convened by the Journal of Peasant Studies, and the XXII Congreso Virtual Asociación de Colombianistas: "Colombias Diversas: Comunidades al Margen."

**Data Availability** Archival materials are accessible through the online appendix.

## Declarations

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare no competing interests.

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