Peasant agro-food territories: Agroecology and food sovereignty in response to extractivism in the Colombian Massif

Territorios campesinos agroalimentarios: Agroecología y soberanía alimentaria frente al extractivismo en el Macizo Colombiano

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ABSTRACT

The response of the peasant movement in the Colombian Massif to the exclusionary neoliberal model characterizing the Colombian State—marked by land concentration, dispossession, and the invisibility of rural communities—was analyzed. Peasant Agro-Food Territories (TECAM) emerge as a proposal of resistance against extractivism, promoting social justice, agroecology, and food sovereignty. These rhizomatic and revolutionary strategies aim to reconfigure the territory and challenge power relations, fostering an alternative model of territorial planning and peasant autonomy. The study employed interviews, document analysis, and historical memory workshops to identify key milestones from 1987 to 2024 and to analyze agency strategies using conceptual categories such as rhizomes, lines of flight, and molecular revolution. Data were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti software. The results highlight significant milestones such as the creation of the Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad (Water and Dignity Life Plan), agro-environmental schools, and popular consultations against mega-mining. These findings demonstrate the communities' capacity to organize and confront extractivist and neoliberal policies. TECAM represents an endogenous alternative that challenges traditional power structures and proposes new paradigms of territorial justice and ecological sustainability. It reflects the peasantry's ability to drive profound sociopolitical transformations, prioritizing common goods and dignified life over the hegemonic logic of capitalist development.

Keywords: community self-management; common goods; participatory planning; rural social movements; territorial development; epistemologies of the south

RESUMEN

Se analizó cómo el movimiento campesino del Macizo Colombiano ha respondido al modelo neoliberal excluyente que caracteriza al estado colombiano, marcado por la concentración de tierras, el despojo y la invisibilización de comunidades rurales. En este contexto, emergen los Territorios Campesinos Agroalimentarios (TECAM) como una propuesta de resistencia frente al extractivismo, impulsando la justicia social, la agroecología y la soberanía alimentaria. Estas estrategias rizomáticas y revolucionarias buscan reconfigurar el territorio y disputar las relaciones de poder, promoviendo un modelo alternativo de ordenamiento territorial y autonomía campesina. Se emplearon entrevistas, análisis documental y talleres de memoria histórica que permitieron identificar hitos históricos desde 1987 hasta 2024 y analizar estrategias de agenciamiento mediante categorías conceptuales como rizomas, líneas de fuga y revolución molecular. Se utilizó el software ATLAS.ti para la codificación y el análisis de datos. Los resultados permitieron reconocer hitos clave como la creación del Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad, las escuelas agroambientales y las consultas populares contra la megaminería, evidenciando la capacidad de las comunidades para organizarse y

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enfrentar las políticas extractivistas y neoliberales. El TECAM representa una alternativa endógena que desafía las estructuras de poder tradicionales y propone nuevos paradigmas de justicia territorial y sustentabilidad ecológica, así como refleja la capacidad del campesinado para generar transformaciones sociopolíticas profundas, priorizando los bienes comunes y la vida digna frente a las lógicas hegemónicas del desarrollo capitalista.

Palabras clave: autogestión comunitaria; bienes comunes; desarrollo territorial; epistemologías del Sur; movimientos sociales rurales; planificación participativa

INTRODUCTION

The Colombian state, grounded in a bourgeois hegemony consolidated over more than two centuries, is characterized by the concentration of social, economic, and political power, as well as by the creation of institutions aligned with its interests. This aligns with Therborn's (1979) typology of a "bourgeois social class State," in contrast to a democratic State capable of fully integrating all social agents. Following the consolidation of capitalism, this form of state prioritized neoliberalism as its development model, overlooking ethical, political, and ecological considerations related to Colombia's social diversity and its many community-based territorialities, further exacerbating the impact on ecosystems (Lawson & Zarakol, 2023; Haffner, 2022; Buitrago-Bermúdez et al., 2021).

In this process, the Colombian bourgeoisie strengthened clientelist practices to tighten its control over the state and its apparatus, establishing a social order with two dialectically interrelated facets: on the one hand, a sector that accumulates wealth and wields power, and on the other, a peripheral sector composed of historically dispossessed groups who, though useful for the productive apparatus, remain subordinate to the ruling class. Peasants, Afro-descendant communities, and Indigenous peoples have been targets of contempt, rooted in the Hispanic ideology of ethnic-racial superiority. The struggle over land intensified conflicts with the bourgeoisie and facilitated processes of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2005). Furthermore, the bourgeois view of rural areas as mere suppliers of raw materials and cheap labor underlies the public institutional framework and shapes how peripheral sectors are treated.

In the face of this complex situation, grassroots social movements are emerging to demand either autonomy or political inclusion. The peasantry, acting as a collective political subject, adopts two stances: on one hand, calling for measures to reverse its invisibility and subordination; on the other, formulating autonomous proposals to strengthen its political, social, and territorial capacities (Montenegro, 2016). Dispossession, originally referred to by Marx (1996) as "primitive accumulation," has evolved to the point that it is now legitimized by the State under the banner of "economic development." This has spurred the organization and resistance of peasant communities in Colombia (Navarrete et al., 2023; Márquez, 2024). Montenegro (2016) identifies four key historical moments that shaped peasant organization in Colombia throughout the twentieth century. These include the formulation of the Peasant Mandate by ANUC in the 1970s, a period of land mobilizations and occupations also led by ANUC during the 1970s and 1980s, the convening of national agrarian congresses in the early 1990s, and finally, the issuance of the National Agrarian Mandate in 2003, which articulated the specific rights of the peasantry.

Although the State frequently portrays the peasantry as a uniform social category, in practice, it is composed of multiple and diverse groups with distinct historical trajectories. In Colombia, this internal diversity is intensified

by multiculturalism, which facilitates the emergence of various forms of assemblages. According to Rossi (2018), such assemblages bring together material conditions, discursive practices, territorial configurations, and movements of deterritorialization. These are driven by desire, understood as a dynamic and interrelated set of material and symbolic forces shaped by layered genealogies.

Within this framework, peasant movements have demanded recognition as autonomous entities with multiple rights—rights that are key to the Colombian State's structure, which itself functions as a macroscopic (molar) power structure that is organized and hierarchical, seeking to reterritorialize lines of flight and destabilizing molecular forces to preserve the capitalist order (Ferreyra, 2019; Sicerone, 2018). By demanding rights and redefining territory as a comprehensive living space, peasant movements challenge this structure, showing how lines of flight can strain and transform molar structures.

The search for a site of enunciation requires critically analyzing stratified relationships and identifying when the subject is constrained by homogeneous representations or prompted to deterritorialize. This enables them to break free from the hegemonic territoriality of the modern state and to propose new territorialities (reterritorializations) as autonomous ways of life and thought (Haesbaert, 2013; Herner, 2009). To analyze these peasant reconfigurations, We draw on the concept of the rhizome developed by Deleuze and Guattari (2002), a horizontal assemblage capable of subverting hierarchical arrangements when activated from below, yet equally susceptible to appropriation by capital's own de- and reterritorialising strategies (Culp, 2016). Acknowledging this ambivalence, our discussion centers on grassroots rhizomes that convert connectivity into transformative resilience—the capacity to sustain alternative commons rather than restore prior equilibria—and into forms of inclusivity grounded in locally governed participation rather than managerial tokenism.

Deterritorialization, envisaged as a line of flight, enables escapes from the modern capitalist mesh while generating multicentrifugal nodes. By assuming rhizomatic dynamics, social movements circumvent vertical control and prefigure life projects anchored in reciprocity. Through multiplicity and cross-scale links, these nodes can reshape power relations and, in aggregate, propel a molecular revolution (Deleuze & Guattari, 1985) whereby quotidian shifts in desire and practice erode the molar architectures of state and capital

In the Colombian Massif (Cauca and Nariño), peasant communities have long endured precarious living conditions (Macías, 2020) and have consequently led autonomous efforts to find solutions. This study analyses the socio-ecological ontologies forged in the Territorio Campesino Agroalimentario of the Colombian Massif (1987-2024), showing how CIMA-led and women-driven agroecological networks resisted war, Plan Colombia, and mining, culminating in livelihood recognition via Decree 780/2024 (Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública, 2024).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Location

The research was carried out in the Territorio Campesino Agroalimentario (TECAM) in northern Nariño and southern Cauca, within the Colombian Massif (Figure 1). It encompasses 14 municipalities in the Department of Nariño (Taminango, La Unión, San Pedro de Cartago, La Cruz, San Lorenzo, San Pablo, Colón-Génova, Belén, San Bernardo, Albán, Arboleda, Chachagüí, Tablón de

Gómez, and Buesaco) and three municipalities in the Department of Cauca (Mercaderes, Florencia, and Bolívar)

Figure 1. *Location of the Territorio Campesino Agroalimentario (TECAM) in the Colombian Massif*
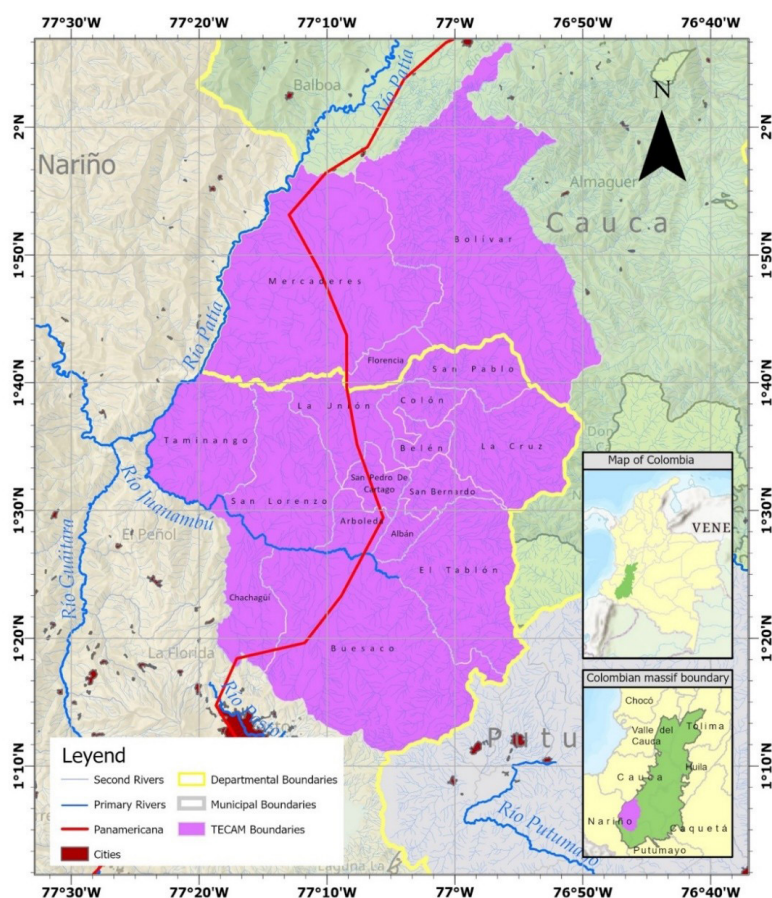
The historical characterization of the trajectory of struggles and processes led by the peasant move   ment toward the creation of TECAM was conducted through a methodological integration of three strategies: interviews, documentary review, and historical memory workshops. A 37-year period of analysis was established, beginning in 1987. This methodology allowed for the identification of the main historical milestones that have shaped peasant mobilization in the Colombian Massif, highlighting achievements, demands, and failures that contributed to the consolidation of TECAM.

Study Population: The study involved the TECAM governing board, comprising 17 members: at least one representative from each municipality. In addition, leaders who, due to their social standing, historical trajectory, and role in the peasant organization's mobilization processes, were recommended by the board as key informants were also included. Their insights were crucial to understanding the historical evolution of the peasant movement in the Colombian Massif.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, consisting of 16 open-ended questions designed to explore key milestones in the peasant organization's history, the social struggle for the recognition of the peasantry as rights-bearing subjects, the popular consultations, and the TECAM proposal within the framework of

peasant territorial planning. In total, 30 interviews were carried out, enabling the attainment of theoretical saturation (Saunders et al., 2018).

Documentary Review

The review focused on analyzing both published and unpublished documents that systematize the historical processes of the peasant movement in the Colombian Massif. The collected material was then refined to retain the texts that provided the most detailed historical information and were essential for reconstructing the TECAM process. In total, 16 sources were gathered and examined: seven books, four undergraduate research projects, one scientific article, and four unpublished documents from the peasant organization, all of which are included in the references.

Historical Memory Workshops

Two workshops were held to reconstruct the life histories of both historical and contemporary leaders involved in the TECAM process. Data collection employed the qualitative timeline technique, which facilitates the tracing of personal, social, or historical processes within a given time frame, taking into account specific sociocultural, political, and economic characteristics (Gokmenoglu, 2022; De Vries, 2017).

Data Analysis

The data analysis focused on identifying territorial processes corresponding to four main conceptual elements: agency, rhizomes, lines of flight, and molecular revolution. The information was analyzed according to conceptual categories (Table 1). For each category, codes were generated to systematically organize the data (Vives & Hamui, 2021).

Table 1. *Categories used for the analysis of documents and interviews*

Categories	Codes
Theoretical	
Territorial Production	"Agro-food peasant territory", "lines of flight", "Territorial planning"
Peasant Resistance	Defense of territory", "Social movements", "Popular consultations"
Territoriality and Power	"Power relations", "Rhizomes", "Cultural resistance"
Alternative Development Model	"Postcapitalism", "Molecular Revolution", "Natural Commons"
Peasant Ontologies	"Biocultural memory", "Worldview of life", "Regenerative agriculture"
Emerging	
Territorial Self-Management Strategies	"Community autonomy", "Local governance"
Transformations in Land Use	"Agroecology", "Environmental protection"
Dynamics of Social Participation	"Popular assemblies", "Collectivemobilizations", "Own education"

For the process of analyzing, categorizing, and coding the documentary corpus, the ATLAS.ti software was used.

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RESULTS

Territories in Motion: Peasant Agency and the Construction of an Agro-Environmental Cognitive Framework in the Colombian Massif

The southern region of the Colombian Massif has been a historical epicenter of peasant struggles. Between 1987 and 1999, the peasantry led mobilizations seeking social redress, greater State presence, and recognition of their ways of life. A key milestone in this process was the 1987 Guachicono mobilization, during which peasants from several municipalities in southern Cauca blocked the Pan-American Highway, a strategic road linking Colombia to South America. This action exposed the region's poor road infrastructure and the lack of access to basic services such as healthcare and education (Macías, 2020; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017; Ó Loingsigh, 2011; Novoa, 2004; Herrera, 2003).

Following negotiations with the national government, agreements were reached that obligated institutions to respond to peasant demands. This event, understood as a line of flight, sparked new processes of regional integration and organization. It positioned social mobilization as a key instrument for collective reflection, proposal formulation, and the defense of rights and livelihoods in the Massif. Crucially, the Guachicono mobilization enabled the construction of a collective framework that linked territorial integration with farming and food production. In the face of continued state neglect, this mobilization evolved into a broader deterritorialization process that addressed structural needs such as healthcare, education, and communication.

However, the unfulfilled promises from Guachicono led peasant communities to resume their mobilizations between 1988 and 1990 through civic strikes, reinforcing their lines of flight in response to governmental inaction. In this renewed context, a peasant coordinator was established to promote popular assemblies aimed at addressing regional challenges through democratic participation (Macías, 2020; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017). As a result of this organizing momentum, the Comité de Integración del Macizo Colombiano (CIMA) was founded on March 31, 1991, with the mandate to foster regional integration, act as a political representative, and address the territory's economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental issues (Macías, 2020; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017; Novoa, 2004).

The establishment of CIMA consolidated it as a key regional political actor in the defense of peasant rights and the promotion of a dignified life. Following the 1991 Rosas civic strike, CIMA evaluated the partial outcomes and, in 1996, called for a new strike, demanding stronger commitments from the government. This time, recognizing the organization's growing capacity, authorities avoided road blockades by initiating a negotiation table in Popayán. During this phase, CIMA strengthened its internal structure, shifting from isolated demands to a comprehensive regional proposal. As a result, funding was secured for the "Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad" (Water and Dignity Life Plan), which positioned water as a foundational resource for sustaining a dignified life in the Massif.

This phase of mobilization showcased the ability of peasant communities to act cohesively, generating rhizomatic networks across municipalities and grassroots organizations. These decentralized connections facilitated rapid and coordinated collective action, such as civic strikes, which challenged the centralized structures of the State and reinforced peasant agency. By making territorial demands visible and exerting sustained pressure, these networks demonstrated the capacity of decentralized organizations to catalyze structural

change. The "Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad" thus became a territorial and political expression of peasant life, grounded in their relationship with land, water, and food production. Nevertheless, in 1999, the arrival of a new government and its failure to uphold previous agreements once again reaffirmed the historical marginalization of the peasantry.

As a result, in 1999, over 45,000 people mobilized on the Pan-American Highway to demand the fulfillment of agreements dating back to 1987 (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017). In response to this unprecedented mobilization, CIMA created a governance school as a space for regional dialogue, aimed at identifying critical issues and developing community-based methodologies to assess environmental and agricultural problems. This effort prioritized the degradation of water sources, forests, and ecosystems, resulting in the Plan de Desarrollo Ambiental del Macizo Sur (PLADAMASUR), which proposed short-, medium-, and long-term solutions. Concurrently, the Plan de Educación del Macizo Colombiano (PLADEMACO) was developed, reflecting the peasantry's commitment to building an autonomous educational model. Both plans were integrated into the broader "Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad," reinforcing the regional vision of a dignified and self-determined rural life as articulated by the peasant communities themselves.

Agroecology and Peasant Women's Networks: Strategies of Resistance against Armed Conflict and Extractivism

During the 2000s, the Colombian Massif was deeply affected by the scourge of war. The proliferation of illicit crops such as coca, poppy, and marijuana rapidly intensified the armed conflict in the region, where State forces, guerrillas, and paramilitary groups vied for territorial control. This situation drew international attention, particularly from the United States, which became involved in the fight against drug trafficking by allocating economic resources and military cooperation to address the issue.

This foreign intervention materialized through Plan Colombia, an anti-drug program that strengthened military presence in coca, marijuana, and poppy-producing areas and implemented aerial spraying with glyphosate (Chomsky, 2000; Tokatlian, 2001). The plan, however, had severe consequences: it contaminated rivers and soils, damaged legal crops, affected community health, and intensified forced displacement due to military expansion and paramilitary activity, further weakening socio-ecological relationships (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017; Muñoz & Bermúdez, 2016; Ruiz, 2011). In response to this crisis, CIMA did not remain passive. Instead, it developed resistance strategies, particularly through the leadership of women in several municipalities of northern Nariño, who mobilized to reaffirm their roles as life-givers and guardians of family, land, food, and territory.

As a result of these efforts, in 2001, women organized cooperative networks such as the Red de Mujeres Maiceñas Las Gaviotas in San Lorenzo (Nariño) and the Coordinadora Campesina de Mujeres y Familias Campesinas San Pableñas in San Pablo (Nariño). These networks focused on defending territory, water, seeds, biodiversity, and the environment, becoming emblematic of collective resistance and empowerment in the face of the threats posed by Plan Colombia.

That same year, these grassroots actions converged with international peace and development initiatives. Through collaborations like the Laboratorio de Paz (Peace Laboratory), supported by the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Dutch government, the Encadenamientos

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Agroambientales project was launched to strengthen peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant economies in southern Cauca and northern Nariño. One of the key outcomes of this initiative was the creation of agro-environmental schools, which soon became the methodological foundation for CIMA's mobilization processes and continue to operate to this day.

These agro-environmental schools were established as non-formal educational spaces where grassroots groups could critically reflect on and transform the agrochemical production model inherited from the Green Revolution. The shift toward organic and agroecological food systems was central. Participants—referred to as escolantes—were trained to become seeders of knowledge, promoting dialogue, generating territorial solutions, sharing knowledge, acquiring skills, and working collectively toward common goals. While participation was open to all, women assumed leading roles, especially due to their focus on food security and agroecological practices.

Thanks to the joint efforts of women and the schools, CIMA's social processes endured the violent advances of armed groups throughout the conflict. Women played a vital role in sustaining the memory and conviction of a dignified life, cultivating political processes from their gardens and shielding their communities from threats and displacement. They devised creative strategies—such as cultural tours of the territory—to nurture the spirit of resistance, reinforce community ties, and secure territorial permanence. These actions revitalized the Massif, attracting new participants, including those with no prior affiliation to CIMA but who shared a commitment to defending life, water, forests, and territory.

However, as communities recovered from the impacts of armed conflict, a new threat emerged: large-scale mining. In 2010, the Colombian government designated northern Nariño as a mining zone, prompting the arrival of transnational gold-mining corporations such as AngloGold Ashanti (South Africa) and Gran Colombia Gold (Canada).

The first company to initiate exploration was Gran Colombia Gold through its Mazamorras Gold project, named after the Mazamorras Creek, the intended site of operations in San Lorenzo and Arboleda (Nariño). The corporation launched a persuasion campaign that emphasized potential economic development, but CIMA responded by activating its grassroots base and agro-environmental schools to counter this narrative and inform communities of the socio-ecological risks associated with the project.

Despite these efforts, Gran Colombia Gold continued exploration despite community opposition, contaminating water sources and reducing flow in key bodies such as La Marucha Lagoon—vital for local aqueducts. After repeated, unanswered demands to halt operations and disclose environmental impacts, on 10 October 2011, CIMA and residents marched in masse to the mining camp to voice their resistance. The intervention of the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad sparked clashes, leaving several injured and causing damage to company's infrastructure. Nonetheless, the mobilization reached its goal: exploration was suspended and the Mazamorras Gold project was permanently cancelled, marking a landmark victory in the peasant defense of their territory.

Post-Extractivist Horizons: Popular Consultations and the Collective Configuration of the Territorio Campesino Agroalimentario

In 2013, a wave of agrarian strikes exposed deep structural tensions in rural Colombia. Coffee-growing communities—hard-hit by collapsing international prices and rising input costs—blocked major highways and presented direct

demands to President Juan Manuel Santos's administration (Cruz, 2013). Because the Colombian Massif is a key coffee region, CIMA and its grassroots base played a leading role, paralyzing sections of the Pan-American Highway between Cauca and Nariño.

The coffee protest quickly became a catalyst for broader rural mobilization. Additional sectors denounced neoliberal trade policies and free-trade agreements that flooded domestic markets with subsidized imports, eroding peasant livelihoods. Simultaneously, the government's "mining locomotive" intensified land conflicts and environmental degradation (Rodríguez, 2017; Salcedo et al., 2013). These convergent struggles showcased the Colombian peasantry's organizational capacity and its demand for a diversified, sovereignty-oriented rural economy.

Although partial accords were signed after 25 days, discontent endured, particularly within CIMA and the Coordinador Nacional Agrario (CNA). Criticizing official intransigence and the looming mining agenda, the organization convened a national assembly in San Lorenzo (Nariño) to diagnose mining policy, state neglect, and rural violence. There, communities reaffirmed territorial defense and articulated a new planning framework: Territorios Agroalimentarios (Agro-Food Territories).

Aligned with CIMA's Plan de Vida Agua y Dignidad, this proposal seeks to shield land, water, biodiversity, and peasant culture from large-scale mining, agribusiness, and genetically modified crops while promoting food sovereignty, solidarity economies, agroecology, ecosystem conservation, and autonomous education (Coordinador Nacional Agrario de Colombia, 2018; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica et al., 2017).

Implementation began with a farmer-to-farmer work plan designed to alert communities to the threats of large-scale mining. Municipal committees soon coalesced around what became the Territorio Campesino Agroalimentario (TECAM) in northern Nariño and southern Cauca—the first initiative of its kind in Colombia. In 2015, peasants visited emblematic sites such as Cerro de La Campana (San Pablo) and Laguna La Marucha (San Lorenzo) to perform pagamento ceremonies, plant flags, and post anti-mining messages, symbolically affirming a territory organized around food production rather than extractivism.

More than one hundred municipal and village assemblies followed, establishing both the guardia campesina and the TECAM Governing Board. Consensus-building produced the mandates for the Life Plan Agua, Vida y Dignidad. On 25 November 2016, over 4,000 participants—chiefly peasants from 17 municipalities—formally proclaimed Colombia's first TECAM in San Pablo. The declaration set three core objectives: self-governance (a 61-member governing board), territorial protection (designated protection coordinators), and dignified living (implementation of the Life Plan mandates).

Since then, TECAM has advanced its agenda, notably by organizing eight popular consultations that categorically rejected large-scale mining (Table 2). These votes demonstrate community commitment to safeguarding water and territory through legitimate democratic mechanisms.
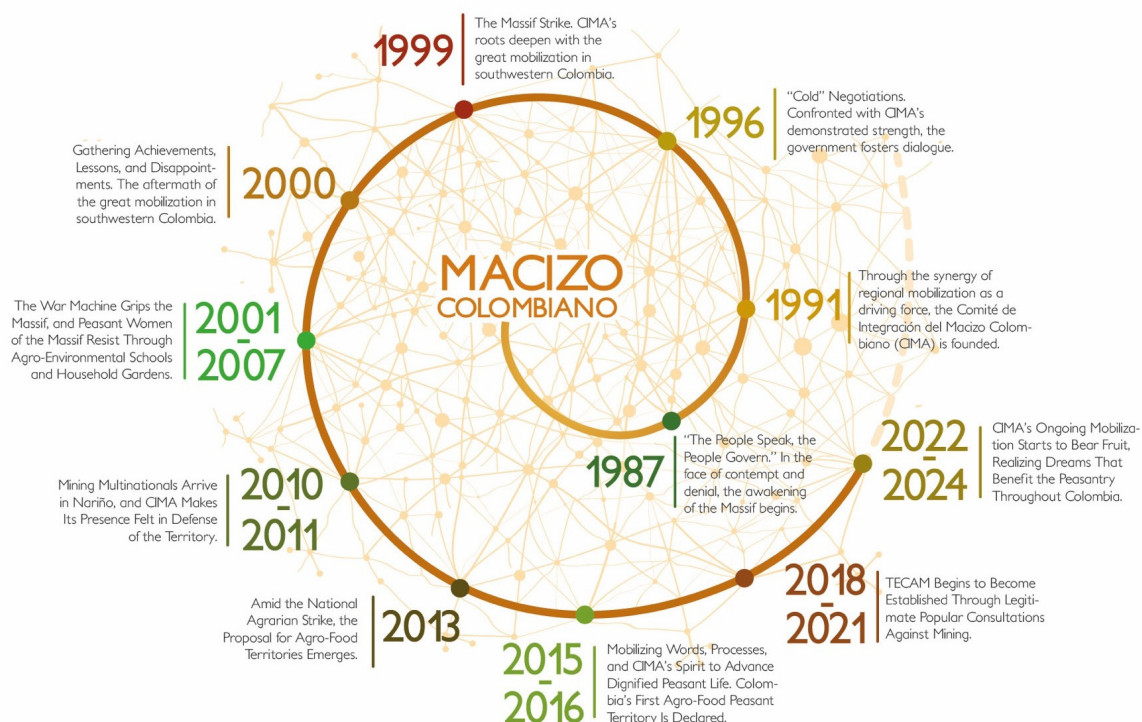
Table 2. *Results of Popular Consultations against Mining Held in the TECAM since Its Proclamation*

N°	Municipality	Year	VOTES			
			YES Votes	NO Votes	Invalid and Unmarked Votes	Total
1	San Lorenzo (Nariño)	2018	53	6660	51	6764
2	Mercaderes (Cauca)	2019	15	8865	0	8880
3	San Pablo (Nariño)	2021	6	5805	10	5821
4	Colón Génova (Nariño)	2021	1	5031	9	5041
5	La Cruz (Nariño)	2021	4	11090	2	11096
6	Belén (Nariño)	2021	3	3090	0	3093
7	Cartago (Nariño)	2021	4	2465	13	2482
8	Florencia (Cauca)	2021	4	2805	1	2810
	Total		90	45811	86	45987

The TECAM process thus constitutes a rhizomatic alternative to hierarchical state planning, centering peasant agency in territorial management. Its success has inspired more than one hundred similar initiatives nationwide (Observatorio de Tierras, 2024).

Political recognition soon followed: in 2022, a CIMA leader won a Senate seat with broad support from peasants, helping to secure legal recognition of peasants as rights-bearing subjects. Two years later, Decree 780 (2024) officially recognized TECAMs, set guidelines for their formation, and underscored their role in bottom-up territorial planning and food production.

Figure 2 illustrates the historical web of struggles and emergent events that have shaped the Colombian Massif into a rhizomatic territory, tracing the lines of flight feeding the agro-environmental and sociopolitical matrix of the TECAM.

Figure 2. *Spiral of Historical Memory of Peasant Struggles in the Colombian Massif Territory*

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DISCUSSION

Rhizomes of Resistance and Lines of Flight: Toward a New Territorial Political Subject in the Colombian Massif

The recent history of the Colombian Massif shows how peasant communities, through rhizomatic micropolitics, have forged a collective subjectivity capable of reshaping the imposed territorial order. From the Guachicono mobilization (1987) to the legal institutionalization of the Peasant Agro-Food Territory (TECAM) in 2024, we can trace an unbroken chain of "lines of flight" that, by escaping hierarchical state logics, enable new forms of community organization and governance (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002).

After initial agreements went unfulfilled, the renewed strikes of 1988-1990 and the creation of the Peasant Coordinator revealed the plasticity of that collective agency. Cabildos populares (popular assemblies) became assembly nodes where local knowledge and social demands converged to craft home-grown proposals, reproducing the principle of multiplicity that underpins autonomous revolutions such as the Zapatista movement (Nail, 2012) and other grassroots experiences of agency in Latin America (Cruz & Fuentes, 2017). The founding of CIMA in 1991 consolidated this political-territorial subject: a body that connects municipalities, negotiates with the state, and designs life plans focused on water, food sovereignty, and peasant dignity.

The Rosas civic strike (1991) reaffirmed the power of these decentralized networks: blocking the Pan-American Highway forced the national government to negotiate and finance the Agua, Vida y Dignidad Life Plan, a direct precursor of the institutional architecture that would later underpin the TECAM. This process confirms that territory operates as an assemblage where struggles for social reproduction and defense of common goods converge, producing a molecular reterritorialization (Foucault, 2008; Deleuze & Guattari, 2002).

These dynamics challenge official planning instruments—POTs and POMCAs—that often overlook pre-existing territorialities and reduce participation to bureaucratic procedures. In contrast, initiatives such as the Instituto Mayor Campesino (IMCA) in Valle del Cauca, with fifty years of rural education, participatory governance, and solidarity economies, show how peasant knowledge generates alternatives to extractivism (Gómez, 2017).

The trajectory analyzed here yields three core insights. First, the rhizomatic self-organization of the peasantry distributes power horizontally, generating eco-political resilience and limiting state co-optation, in line with Saito (2023) reading of post-capitalist territorialities. Second, the legal recognition of the TECAM rescales sovereignty: by accepting bottom-up figures, the state validates community custodianship of the commons within a national legal framework (Escobar, 2015; Wainwright, 2008). Third, these practices reconfigure value beyond formal capitalism, weaving labor exchange, local markets, and reciprocity circuits (Gidwani, 2015) while incorporating female and youth leadership that broadens the political assemblage (Asher, 2017).

Feminized Lines of Flight: Agro-Ecological Networks as Molecular Resistance to Conflict and Extractivism

From their home gardens and native seeds, CIMA's women revitalized peasant organizations and encouraged communities battered by violence to remain resilient in their territory. Their agro-ecological networks—built around the care of water, forests, and food—became lines of flight that overflowed the logics

imposed by armed actors and external interventions such as Plan Colombia's aerial spraying, thereby reshaping socio-ecological relations and peasant lifeways (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002). This trajectory embodies the idea of a molecular revolution: local, decentralized, everyday changes that, once accumulated, alter wider power structures.

The creation of women-run cooperatives—such as the Red de Mujeres Maciceñas Las Gaviotas and the Coordinadora Campesina de Mujeres y Familias San Pableñas—illustrates what feminist political ecology calls the politicization of care and social reproduction (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Agro-environmental schools established with Peace Laboratory support provided a critical agro-ecological pedagogy that challenges the Green Revolution's agrochemical model and positions food sovereignty as a strategy for de-patriarchization and territorial defense (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014; Morales, 2021). In Colombia's post-conflict context, such learning spaces have helped rebuild community ties and bolster eco-social resilience amid ongoing insecurity and environmental degradation (Rivas & Riaño, 2022).

The 10 October 2011 mobilization, when communities and escolantes secured the definitive cancellation of Mazamorras Gold, demonstrates the power of these feminized assemblages to halt gold-mining projects. By blending direct protest, local ecological knowledge, and legal tactics, the women transformed a "territory of death" into a "territory of life," confirming the peasant capacity to contest the capitalist valorization of nature (Gidwani, 2015; Hadad, 2020). Comparable patterns appear elsewhere: Argentina's Movimiento de Mujeres Indígenas por el Buen Vivir, which challenges neo-extractivism from a plurinational horizon (Mendoza, 2020); Mexican assemblies in Ixtacamaxtitlán, which annulled mining concessions through collective action and litigation (Vázquez & Martínez, 2024); and many Latin-American struggles that link large-scale mining to systematic human-rights violations and demand environmental justice (Muñoz et al., 2020).

These experiences confirm that feminist agro-ecology—a praxis combining healthy food production, gender justice, and intersectionality (Quintero et al., 2023)—is a strategic axis of the campesino molecular revolution in the Massif. By shifting decision-making power from states and corporations to communities and women's bodies, these lines of flight rescale sovereignty, build new horizontal institutions, and offer a replicable framework for confronting socio-environmental crises across Latin America (Ouviña, 2020).

Turning Mines into Gardens: TECAM's Molecular Revolution and the Re-Scaling of Peasant Sovereignty in Colombia

Peasant Agro-Food Territory (TECAM) confirms that a "molecular revolution" can emerge from micropolitical practices embedded in a broad peasant rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002). The establishment of more than one hundred municipal and village assemblies, a sixty-one-member governing board, and eight successful popular consultations illustrates those lines of flight that slip outside hierarchical state logics, creating a parallel governance infrastructure—guardia campesina, TECAM Governing Board, and the Agua, Vida y Dignidad Life Plan—that anticipates a political ecology grounded in agro-food sovereignty.

This institutional fabric also embodies the post-development rupture proposed by Escobar (2015). TECAM replaces the extractivist development paradigm with an endogenous territorial ontology in which land, water, and peasant culture anchor collective decision-making. By coupling agro-ecological production with community deliberation, the experience answers to Harvey

(2005) call to reclaim the commons and re-orient development toward social justice. Electoral results from the eight consultations—all rejecting large-scale mining—quantitatively ratify this shift: community majorities chose ecological integrity over mineral rents.

The dialectic with the state reinforces the argument. While Foucault (2008) shows how state power disciplines space, bottom-up pressure transformed that apparatus, first by electing a CIMA senator in 2022 who championed peasants as rights-bearing subjects and later by securing Decree 780 of 2024 (Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública, 2024), which formalized the TECAM model nationwide. This molecular re-territorialization demonstrates that accumulated micro-resistances compel the state to rewrite its legal architecture, integrating rhizomatic forms rather than suppressing them.

Together, these dynamics reveal an eco-political resilience sustained by the horizontal distribution of power: the multiscalar web of assemblies, consultations, and legal reforms mitigates co-optation and confirms by Saito (2023) whit his thesis on post-capitalist territorialities as viable responses to ecological crisis. Such redistribution also re-scales sovereignty; by legalizing TECAMs the state tacitly recognizes that stewardship of the commons is nested—communities exercise primary guardianship while national institutions provide juridical guarantees.

The process aligns by Gidwani (2015) insight that peasant economies reconfigure value beyond formal capitalist regimes, as well as by Asher (2017) analysis of political assemblages forged by rural women in territorial defense, and by Wainwright (2008) critique of colonial geographies embedded in state planning. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that TECAM is not merely a device of resistance but expands the contemporary political imagination, offering a replicable model—over one hundred initiatives are already inspired by it—for other grassroots arrangements such as Peasant Reserve Zones or Indigenous Resguardos.

Notwithstanding its promise, challenges remain. Socio-economic viability demands longitudinal data on household incomes, market access, and agro-ecological yields; the intersectional dimension requires closer attention to the roles of women, Afro-descendant, and Indigenous groups in decision-making; and climate adaptation still needs investigation into how TECAM practices absorb growing atmospheric variability. Addressing these gaps will strengthen a post-extractivist horizon that, rather than anchoring itself in global capital, roots itself in the defense of life and peasant territorial autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS

The case of the Colombian Massif illustrates how peasant communities, through a historical process of agency and mobilization, have built a social and territorial organization grounded in principles of autonomy, decentralization, and resilience. From the 1987 Guachicono mobilization to the recognition of the TECAM, these struggles reveal collective strategies developed in response to state neglect, extractivism, and hegemonic development policies.

Territorial processes in the Colombian Massif show that these forms of resistance are not only aimed at containing immediate threats but also serve as platforms for creating new political subjectivities and alternative development models—ones that pursue objectives other than wealth accumulation. The implementation of agro-environmental schools, the defense of common goods, and the promotion of

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agroecology as a tool for socioeconomic autonomy illustrate a post-capitalist praxis that challenges extractivist logic and opens up avenues for the emergence of socio-ecological justice.

The peasant struggle and organizational process in the Colombian Massif, embodied in the Territorios Campesinos Agroalimentarios (TECAM), not only provides a concrete response to the extractivist and exclusionary logics of global capitalism and its neoliberal state but also constitutes an endogenous territorial planning alternative based on social justice, food sovereignty, and sustainability.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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