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Change in organizational fields: the role of peripheral actors within the Colombian coffee industry (1960–2020)

Cristian Armando Yepes-Lugo and Robert Ojeda-Pérez
Facultad de Economía, Empresa y Desarrollo Sostenible, Universidad de La Salle, Bogota, Colombia, and

Luz Dinora Vera-Acevedo
Facultad de Minas, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to evaluate the evolution of the organizational field in the Colombian coffee industry between 1960 and 2020 and explain how peripheral actors influenced institutional change.

Design/methodology/approach – The methods analyze historical processes from a hermeneutical and interpretative perspective. The authors used data collection techniques through interviews, archive data, publications and media reports, embracing an interdisciplinary and qualitative documentary approach. This approach helps the authors unravel the temporal dimensions of the historical discourse related to coffee and the involvement of various actors within organizational structures.

Findings – The authors found that, unlike the literature regarding the change in organizational fields, recently, within the coffee sector in Colombia, the institutional work of peripheral actors (small producers, local associative groups and coffee women, among others) is changing the field as follows: (1) women are changing traditional behaviors moving from hierarchical family structures and lack of gender awareness, to empowered, horizontal and sustained relationships, (2) indigenous people include rituals and other traditional practices in coffee production and (3) ex-guerrilla members are helping to strengthen the peace process implementation in Colombia through coffee production.

Research limitations/implications – The authors did not conduct statistical or computational analysis to simulate the emergence of new organizational forms. Instead, the authors attempted to elucidate narratives and discourses that reflect the tensions between central and peripheral actors from a historical perspective.

Practical implications – This study seeks to help leaders and managers overcome processes or organizational change in which peripheral actors are crucial. From that perspective, allocating resources and capabilities can become more effective.

Originality/value – This paper offers a new perspective of change within organizational fields from the roles of peripheral actors, which are fundamental in change processes within organizational fields, especially in the global south, where tensions between elites and vulnerable people are familiar.

Keywords Change, Latin America, Management history

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Two main trends within institutional theory regarding the change in organizational fields exist. The theory of isomorphism suggests that organizations tend to become similar, and the theory of institutional work indicates that actors create, maintain or eliminate practices within organizations and fields.

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The literature regarding the change in organizational fields has focused mainly on observing institutional entrepreneurs from the midfield, that is, managers, professionals or associations within those fields that enact the change (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Suddaby and Viale, 2011; Reay *et al.*, 2013; Blok *et al.*, 2018) or by cooperation between managers and entrepreneurs (Smolka and Heugens, 2020).

However, there exists in the literature a need to consider the various contradictory and complementary institutional work by the different actors involved in institutional processes (Smolka and Heugens, 2020) and how translocal hinges are forged (Blok *et al.*, 2018). Besides, only some studies have attempted to understand the change in organizational fields in the global south, where the role of actors may differ from the global north, especially regarding the need for more resources.

Therefore, this article evaluates the change in organizational fields, using insights within the coffee industry in Colombia. Within this industry, the peripheral actors distributed horizontally are fundamental, and unlike other sectors in Latin America, the coffee sector in Colombia evolved differently after the economic reforms in the "90s" (Economía Cafetera, 2002). In Brazil, for instance, the National Department of Coffee, a centralized organization, disappeared in 1990 (Saco and Velleda, 2011) after the collapse of ICA. The starting point of this research is the year 1960. Many coffee institutions configuring today's coffee organizational field in Colombia emerged then.

The rich history of coffee finds its roots in a tale dating back to 1834. It tells of the famed priest Jesuit Francisco Romero, the parish priest of Salazar de las Palmas in North Santander, who imposed a unique penance on his parishioners. Legend has it that he required them to plant a specific quantity of coffee trees in exchange for the absolution of their sins (Angel, 2007). This story, while popularized, reflects a critical historical moment in the development of coffee cultivation, where the priest's actions initiated a significant chapter in Colombia's coffee industry. In this well-known narrative, priest Romero, beyond his pastoral duties, emerged as both a conservative politician and an astute land trader, dealing in various crops, including coffee, when its cultivation began in the northern regions of Santander.

Manuel Ancízar, a Granadan writer in 1853, recounted in his book *La Peregrinación de Alpha the* notable endeavors of priest Romero, confirming the priest's efforts to encourage locals to plant thriving coffee trees. Ancízar's account demonstrates how priest Romero, through persuasion and penitence, motivated the community to grow coffee, thus, sowing the seeds for an enduring coffee industry in Colombia.

Furthermore, with the aid of Santiago Fraser, a veteran of the Independence War and later a business partner, priest Romero facilitated the first internal coffee export in 1851, distributing coffee seeds among small farmers in Colombia and Venezuela (Angel, 2007). Ancízar's narration illuminates the rapid spread and profitability of coffee cultivation, depicting stories of prosperous coffee plantations, such as Mr González's, that significantly contributed to the dissemination of coffee as a profitable crop.

For this historical analysis, we established significant milestones in the organizational evolution of Colombia's coffee sector across five periods (Costa and Silva, 2019): namely, 1960–1974: when the Colombian coffee growers' association established several vital institutions and organizations of the coffee business, such as Juan Valdez, the Manuel Mejía Foundation and various cooperatives; 1974–1979: when different actors added value to coffee production by creating the first lyophilized coffee processor; 1979–1989: when the first coffee tastings began; 1989–2002: marked by the fall of the international coffee agreement; 2002–2020: when Procafecol opened the first Juan Valdez store, followed by the international grain price crisis that has generated various mobilizations (Moreno, 2016).

The Ospinas, in association with the Vásquez, ventured into coffee production in Antioquia in the late 19th century, establishing a dozen haciendas dedicated to coffee cultivation. This foray marked the beginning of a trajectory that would turn the Ospinas into a significant coffee exporter for the country.

These historical anecdotes, beginning with Priest Romero's visionary approach to coffee cultivation, symbolize the early stages of the coffee industry in Colombia, marking a pivotal moment in its growth and legacy. This legacy represents a collaborative contribution, shaping Colombia's elite classes and the subaltern peasant communities (Central and peripheral actors' collaboration). However, tensions existed between the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FNCC, by its Spanish acronym), landowners, the government that manipulated finances for its gain and the coffee-farming peasant population. Today, these marginalized farmers hold a more significant role in the organizational landscape, marking a substantial shift in the historical tapestry of Colombia's coffee industry.

In the first part of the XX century, the creation of the FNCC has been subject to varied interpretations by different authors. While some emphasize economic and financial circumstances, others highlight ideological and political aspects (Palacios Rozo, 2010).

First, an interpretation posits that the FNCC emerged as a reaction to social issues perceived by the conservative and liberal bourgeoisie in Medellín and Bogotá, respectively – this coalition, supported by the conservative government, aimed to address problems in Colombia's coffee-growing regions. Notably, Marco Palacios and José Antonio Ocampo present views emphasizing the FNCC's weak and insignificant beginnings until the economic downturn in the 1930s compelled its significance. Palacios underscores the organization's fragility in its initial years, attributing its strengthening to the depression, neglecting the reasons for its 1927 formation.

In contrast, José Antonio Ocampo emphasizes the government's failure to fulfill its promises of financial support. He points to Mariano Ospina Pérez's (Ospina Rodriguez's grandson) appointment as FNCC manager as a pivotal moment and associates it with the organization's expansion. Mariano Ospina Pérez was a crucial actor because his appointment as the FNNC manager coincided with this organization's growth and increasing importance (Seather, 1999). He was a businessman, engineer and conservative politician born in Medellín who held the presidency of the Republic of Colombia between 1946 and 1950. However, Ocampo fails to explain the government's noncompliance and oscillates between attributing the FNCC's extension to the crisis and Ospina Pérez's nomination.

Absalón Machado stands apart by attributing the FNCC's creation in 1927 to unity between commercial exporters and the coffee-growing bourgeoisie against foreign capital threats. Machado's hypothesis responds to the "who" and "why" behind the FNCC's formation, distinct from other scholars. Key political figures involved in the creation include Mariano Ospina Pérez and Abadía Méndez, who were associated with the FNCC's initial years and subsequent development.

These perspectives highlight the FNCC's foundation as a product of politically and economically motivated interbourgeois collaborations involving critical political and business figures. Scholars remain controversial about the reasons for its establishment in 1927, particularly the alliance against foreign interests and internal concerns.

Mariano Ospina Pérez's contribution to the Colombian coffee industry consolidated during his tenure as Manager of the FNCC between 1930 and 1934. During this period, Ospina Pérez implemented crucial measures to strengthen the coffee association. His vision and leadership were pivotal in creating the Agricultural, Industrial and Mining Credit Box, an initiative that received government enthusiasm and support (Toro, 2013). Furthermore, Ospina Pérez was a visionary regarding the possibilities of the Colombian coffee industry in the international market.

His participation in the International Coffee Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1931 demonstrates his clear understanding of the competitiveness of Colombian coffee worldwide (Toro, 2013).

So far, the role of centralized actors in changing the organizational field in the Colombian coffee industry has been reasonable. However, peripheral actors within this field need to be understood. From this perspective, we developed the following research question: How do peripheral actors within the coffee industry in Colombia, such as coffee women, indigenous people and ex-guerrilla members, enact change?

Colombian coffee women have developed high economic and social empowerment levels, which has impacted gender equality, especially in rural areas. For their part, indigenous communities have been qualifying coffee production based on the support of coffee institutions but in dialogue with their traditional and ancestral knowledge. Finally, ex-guerrilla members, starting from the peace process between the FARC guerrilla and the Colombian State, have found a form of livelihood by transitioning to civilian life in the coffee business.

Debates regarding institutional change have addressed social structure as a basis for theorizing about the direction of that change. In that sense, institutions change, seeking to adapt to the structure of social groups such as linguistic groups (Erk and Koning, 2010). Therefore, the direction of institutional change in heterogeneous groups needs to be decentralized, while in homogeneous groups, it needs to be centralized.

For this reason, the perspective of centralization and decentralization in institutional theory is not contradictory but complementary. However, a high level of collaboration and consolidation of processes between agents is required to achieve good levels of governance (Bae *et al.*, 2016). In the case of institutional changes from a political-economic perspective, high levels of conflict over the distribution of resources between elites generate political incentives for centralization. On the contrary, low levels of conflict between these actors favor decentralization dynamics (Demiryol, 2023)

Recent studies have found that centralization decreases the provision of public goods, and this negative effect is more remarkable when those public goods involve more significant local government activity. Evidence also suggests that centralization does not substantially improve the provision of public goods when there is dominance by local elites (Wang, 2024).

Despite the debate regarding centralization and decentralization in institutional theory, most research on the theory of organizational fields focused on centralized actors such as managers, big firms and national governments. Few attempts have addressed tangentially decentralized/peripheral actors (Ansari and Phillips, 2011; Lugo, 2017; Yepes-Lugo, 2019; Sierra *et al.*, 2021; Vargas Prieto and Rojas Mora, 2022). This approach must be revised within the global south context, where centralized organizations have vanished, making peripheral actors crucial in organizational processes.

Similarly, the literature regarding coffee history in Colombia has overlooked the role of peripheral actors. Scholars have focused on the agrarian regime (Palacios, 1983), productivity (Tirado Mejía, 1989; Junguito and Pizano, 1991; Cano-Sánz *et al.*, 2012), social development (Cárdenas and Yanovich, 1997; Machado, 2001), political perspectives (Seather, 1999) and coffee price (Steiner *et al.*, 2015a, 2015b). Only a few attempts have addressed peripheral actors (Machado, 1988; Kalmanovitz and López, 2006), but they have not differentiated their roles and the institutional changes they instigated.

Literature review regarding change in organizational fields

The theories regarding the change in organizational fields emerge from analyzing formal organizational structures generated from reflections concerning rationalized institutional rules (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Afterward, these theories consolidate through the studies on radical changes by which organizations abandon a standardized model to structure

their central activities. Thus, divergent changes depend on market forces, such as proximity to competitors and service disadvantages, among others, and institutional forces, such as state regulation, governance and ownership norms and the imitative nature of divergent change models (D'aunno *et al.*, 2000)

For example, how professional associations play a preponderant role in legitimizing change based on theorization was also observed and understood, as well as how organizational failures are conceptualized and linked to potential solutions (Greenwood *et al.*, 2002). Other studies have advanced in understanding how organizational fields emerge and transform to maintain control over the structuring of these fields (Washington, 2004) and how the fields are recomposed after facing radical changes (Reay and Hinings, 2005).

Seo and Creed stated that it was essential to elucidate the traditional dilemma of institutional theory related to the pendulum between the agency perspective and embedding. For this reason, the dynamic interaction between institutional contradictions and human praxis, in the sense that this praxis, embedded in a totality of multiple levels of interpenetration and contradictions, is a fundamental force of institutional change (Seo and Creed, 2002).

In general terms, research in organizational theory has transformed from the perspective of paradigm-based work to problem-based work. For this reason, an approach focused on organizational fields rather than isolated organizational units is recommended, primarily due to today's significant economic changes (Davis and Marquis, 2005).

Most of these research studies examined the change generated from the center of organizational fields, instigated by managers, owners and great leaders (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Individual social position is a central variable for understanding how actors become institutional entrepreneurs despite institutional pressures. For this reason, attention has recently focused on the role of disorganized actors lacking strategies for catalyzing change (Ansari and Phillips, 2011).

Organizational complexity has also generated interest in the literature related to change in organizational fields because hybrid responses are increasingly necessary, and discussions of their implications for organizational legitimacy and performance are critical (Raynard, 2016; de Aquino and Batley, 2022). Companies respond to social and environmental issues in complex and heterogeneous organizational fields (Buchanan *et al.*, 2023).

Recently, scholars have found that, in competitive environments, the organizational changes to adopt a new technology can undermine organizations. For this reason, exploring the possibilities of further exploiting existing resources is crucial before seeking this type of change (Kim *et al.*, 2023).

Other studies have begun to explore the concept of the organizational field in the international business literature. How to understand how multinational companies in developed markets manage their institutional context in emerging markets (Jacob *et al.*, 2022). Also, scholars have analyzed the role of historical narratives in facilitating change and delegitimizing a dominant logic (Song, 2022), how institutional entrepreneurship unfolds in an already organized world (Staggs *et al.*, 2022), how institutional changes reverse (Awasthi *et al.*, 2022), the nested institutional logics to explain how sustainable technological innovation occurs within heterogeneous organizational fields (Kallman and Frickel, 2019), among other aspects.

There are two main trends regarding institutional change within institutional theory: The theory of isomorphism and the theory of institutional work.

The theory of isomorphism

The elaboration of rules in modern societies and states accounts for the increasing complexity of traditional corporate systems, which, in many cases, tend toward homogeneity, generating isomorphic processes due to the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Organizations have become similar, and rationalization and bureaucratization have shifted from the perspective of market competition to the State and the professions. When a set of organizations emerges as a field, rational and centralized actors make their organizations increasingly similar as they seek transformation. These changes occur through three isomorphic processes: coercive, mimetic and normative; in the first, rules are generated that force organizations to transform. In the second, organizations seek to imitate the behaviors of other organizations, and in the third, organizations change due to new techniques or procedures validated by experts (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; DiMaggio, 1988; DiMaggio, 1991).

In addition, the strategic responses of organizations, which vary between active organizational resistance, passive conformity and proactive manipulation, help configure isomorphism (Oliver, 1991). Also, institutional practices change over time in inter-organizational fields based on conventions instigated by peripheral players facing changing coordination problems and competitive pressures. Once central players adopt these conventions, they transform the organization of the industry from the reconfiguration of interactions, and, in this way, new institutional practices appear (Leblebici *et al.*, 1991).

Legitimacy has been a central concept in the origins of the literature related to isomorphism in changing organizational fields. Suchman (1995) identified three forms of legitimacy: pragmatic, based on the individual interest of the audience; moral, based on regulatory approval; and cognitive, based on understanding and common sense (Suchman, 1995). The processes by which organizations at the individual level retain, adapt and discard models for the organization are also isomorphic, given the institutionalized nature of organizational fields (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996).

Rhetoric is also fundamental in legitimation, as it uses institutional vocabulary and reference texts to expose the contradictory institutional logic embedded in the profession's historical understandings. In addition, theorization fosters legitimacy from the theory of change, by which the actors postulate innovations against models or change scenarios that become homogenous (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005).

Organizational fields also generate issues to the agendas of governments and various types of corporations. Various competing institutions can coexist within fields, and as they evolve, cognitive, normative and regulatory aspects create connections (Hoffman, 1999). However, fundamental changes in actors, relationships, organized players and the relative mix of ecological and adaptive changes accompany each dominant logic. Logic changes occur because ideas strengthen logic, and new actors require a supporting ideological base (Scott *et al.*, 2001).

However, the competing logic within an organizational field has redirected research away from the isomorphism perspective and toward an appreciation of multiple forms of rationality that shape change in organizational fields (Lounsbury, 2007). Organizational fields of a pluralistic nature can develop over time to the extent that multiple institutional logic is established in an organizational field after a dominant logic (Van Gestel and Hillebrand, 2011). For this reason, recently, it has been affirmed that organizational fields are irregular and unequal, incorporating high levels of heterogeneity. Marginal organizations manage to evade pressures concerning homogeneity, generating heterogeneous organizational fields and diverse clusters (Quirke, 2013).

Institutional work

In early 2000, a new emphasis emerged in institutional studies related to understanding the role of actors in generating effects, transforming and maintaining institutions and organizational fields (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This second trend refers to institutional entrepreneurs,

who are central to institutional processes since new institutions emerge when organized actors with sufficient resources see an opportunity to carry out their interests in these institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Battilana *et al.*, 2009). Thus, institutional work refers to individuals and organizations that seek to create, maintain and disrupt institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

This new institutional perspective on organizational fields provides an alternative vision of local configurations. For example, social skills give rise to symbolic interactions, such as the ability to induce cooperation in others. In this way, the actors are essential in constructing and reproducing local configurations.

These actors require institutional entrepreneurs who create, maintain and destroy institutional practices (Practice Work) and the boundaries between sets of individuals and groups (Boundary Work) (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). Many of these entrepreneurs apply discursive devices to convince other actors about the legitimacy of the new practice (Westenholz, 2009).

Actors performing practice work and boundary work operate in recursive configurations that underpin cycles of institutional innovation, conflict, stability and re-stabilization. Likewise, transitions between these cycles are motivated by the state of boundaries, the state of practices and the existence of actors with the capacity to undertake boundary work and practice work of a different institutional process (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010)

Actors, such as social actors, are fundamental in mobilizing resources (financial and social) and using discourse. They identify the idea, mobilize resources and build arguments to support it (Sander and Da Cunha, 2013). Also, institutional entrepreneurs with marginal social positions (peripheral actors) use institutional change to become more relevant in organizational fields (Waldron *et al.*, 2015).

The literature regarding institutional work and institutional isomorphism must fully address the actors involved in institutional processes' various contradictory and complementary institutional work (Smolka and Heugens, 2020; Blok *et al.*, 2018), mainly peripheral actors. Therefore, this article evaluates the change in organizational fields, using insights within the coffee industry in Colombia in which peripheral actors such as women, indigenous people and ex-guerrilla members are becoming fundamental in the process of change within this industry.

Literature review regarding coffee history in Colombia

The literature related to the history of coffee in Colombia has one of the fundamental references in the book "Coffee in Colombia 1850–1970," which points out, among many other elements, the complexity of agricultural regimes. For Palacios, Colombian coffee farming has urban origins, and the haciendas are a consequence. Furthermore, the accelerated coffee production at the beginning of the 20th century allowed the export economy to grow without needing significant capital or technology resources, but a high labor force, including many actors such as producers and gatherers (Palacios, 1983).

For Machado (1988), coffee has widely permeated the rural conflict and the Colombian economy. The possibility of production on small and medium-sized plots has been fundamental for constructing democracy. This economic structure gave some autonomy to peripheral actors because they did not depend on traditional landowners to get jobs and kept a portion of the population relatively prosperous for various historical periods. However, small landowners, financiers and exporters dominate coffee growing (Machado, 1988).

Álvaro Tirado Mejía, in his book "The History of Colombia" (1989), points out that the 1960s were a period of growth and prosperity for the Colombian coffee industry. Coffee

production increased, international coffee prices remained high and the FNCC played an essential role in the sector's development (Tirado Mejía, 1989).

For Junguito and Pizano (1991), coffee was influential in increasing the country's exports and developing transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, in the political aspect, coffee growing had a broad impact on the emergence of historical political central actors such as Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, who, given his experience as a coffee grower, published a pamphlet on coffee cultivation, and General Rafael Uribe, who dedicated his free time to planting coffee and became famous for his phrase Colombians to grow coffee (Junguito and Pizano, 1991).

Cárdenas and Yanovich (1997) analyze the influence of coffee on the socioeconomic performance of the different coffee subregions, which they find positive and in absolute coherence with coffee historiography, indicating that coffee has been fundamental in economic and social development within the periphery of the country (Cárdenas and Yanovich, 1997).

Seather (1999) indicates that the creation of the FNCC was the result of the union between a conservative landowning and commercial bourgeoisie of Medellín, on the one hand, and a liberal landowning bourgeoisie from Bogotá, on the other, "who produced as a reaction to the serious social problems that this bourgeoisie perceived in the coffee growing areas of Colombia and with the enthusiastic support of the conservative government (Seather, 1999, pp. 138–139)." This hypothesis sets aside the assumptions of economic and financial situations. It addresses the ideological and political perspective developed around the coffee figure by the Colombian elite central actors.

The book "Coffee in Colombia at the beginning of the 20th Century" points out that coffee has been the only product that has stabilized economic growth in Colombia due to the generation of employment and the construction of both land and rail transportation routes. Furthermore, in some regions, it allowed the democratization of property, which gave some power to peripheral actors, and, in others, the consolidation of latifundia and production relations with colonial characteristics (Machado, 2001).

Kalmanovitz and López (2006) point out that the FNCC successfully created space for small and medium producers, thus, broadening its political base. This dynamic corporatist explains the mid-20th century coffee transformation, during which the coffee industry entrepreneurs boomed, and the dynamics of the marginalized peasants began to shift. "The dominance of the big producers persists, but endowed from this moment with greater legitimacy" (Kalmanovitz and López, 2006, p. 82).

Other studies analyzed the loss of economic importance of coffee growing at the beginning of 2000. According to Cano-Sánz *et al.* (2012), this loss explains the drop in productivity, which is highly problematic for Colombia, given that coffee production impacts economic growth more than mining activity (Cano-Sánz *et al.*, 2012). However, this drop in productivity gave an impulse to peripheral actors such as social leaders, small entrepreneurs, coffee women and local associative groups, among others, to start claiming better conditions and to explore the production and commercialization of specialty coffees.

Steiner, Salazar and Becerra (2015a, 2015b) argue that the State's financial efforts to stabilize prices could be more sustainable due to the high costs this generates for the treasury. The fundamental problem is that the transmission of external prices to internal prices is high when the external price is high but low when the external price is low. Furthermore, subsidies exclude small producers and do not require improvements in productivity or quality (Steiner *et al.*, 2015a, 2015b).

The prosperity of a portion of the coffee-growing population throughout history, especially those who own small plots, has led to recent organizational changes in Colombia

coffee sector being driven by peripheral actors such as women, indigenous people, small farmers, demobilized people and victims of the armed conflict, among others. Thanks to this small economic prosperity, these actors have expanded their political base, which opposes the traditional economic elites.

Methods

Our methodological approach aligns with the literature regarding change in organizational fields, which focuses on studying these changes through the analysis of historical processes by periods, using data collection techniques from interviews, archival data and media reports (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Reay *et al.*, 2013; Lægreid and Serigstad, 2006; Yepes Lugo *et al.*, 2024).

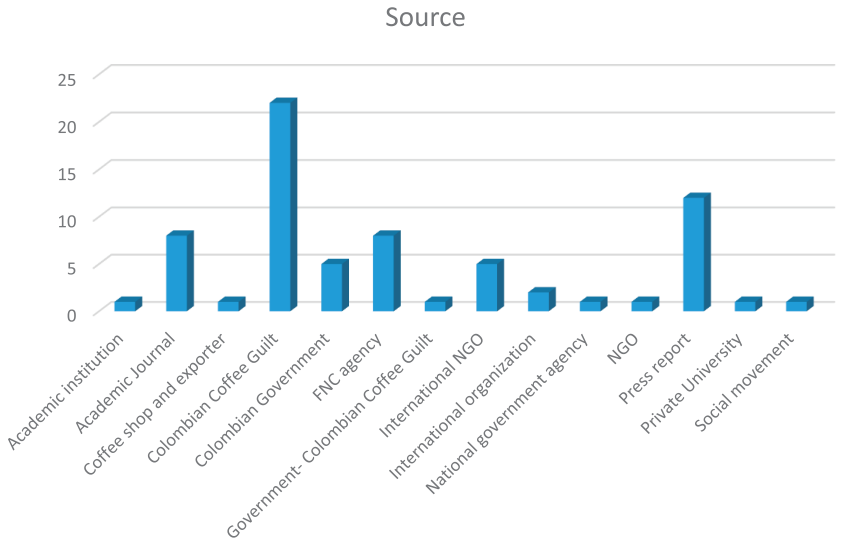
Thus, this article examines the organizational change in the Colombian coffee industry from the analysis of historical processes using data collection techniques through interviews, archive data, publications and media reports (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Lægreid and Serigstad, 2006; Purdy and Gray, 2009; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Reay *et al.*, 2013; Kipping and Kirkpatrick, 2013; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015; Sherer, 2017; Wadhwani, 2018; Smolka and Heugens, 2020). Using primary and secondary sources helps ensure that various eyes examine the same historical event (or historical fact) (Costa and Silva, 2019). Therefore, we analyze 70 documents regarding processes of organizational change in the Colombian coffee industry, which include 23 semistructured interviews with leaders of the coffee industry who are aware of processes of change in the industry and with more than 10 years of experience within this industry.

To narrate history from a hermeneutic perspective, we cannot follow a linear chronological order. Historical events are represented as images or icons possessing specific qualities, allowing the narrative to convey a sense of the story rather than a mere mimetic reproduction of historical facts. Within the context of Stelar History, metaphors act as associative directions, enriching the narrative text with symbols and signs that aid in comprehending temporal events (White, 2003, pp. 125–126). Essential components in Stelar History involve crafting a narrative emphasizing plot, metaphor and the use of time, likened to constructing constellations.

Events in a narrative hold a constellation of meanings in history. Just as the stars in the sky are countless, so too are the events, which, in their multitude, may lack coherence. However, akin to an astronomer discerning patterns in the celestial expanse, the historian's craft lies in identifying narrative patterns from the brightest events or stars. From this vantage point, narratives reconstruct meaningful interpretations of the past. Therefore, the past is a vast celestial vault awaiting interpretation, ready to form a constellation of significance.

Therefore, we analyzed 22 documents corresponding to reports of the FNCC, which is the leading historical Colombian Coffee association, 12 documents from various press reports, 8 documents from FNC agencies, 8 documents from academic journals, 5 documents from international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 5 documents from the Colombian Government, 2 documents from International organizations, 1 document from a coffee shop exporter, 1 document from an academic institution, 1 document published collaboratively between the government and the Colombian coffee association (FNCC), 1 document from a national government agency, 1 document from a national NGO, 1 document from a private university and 1 document from a social movement (Figure 1).

Besides, the documents analyzed consist of one document in 1990, 1 in 1994, 1 in 1997, 2 in 1998, 2 in 2000, 2 in 2002, 1 in 2003, 1 in 2004, 1 in 2006, 2 in 2007, 1 in 2008, 1 in



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Figure 1. Sources of documents analyzed

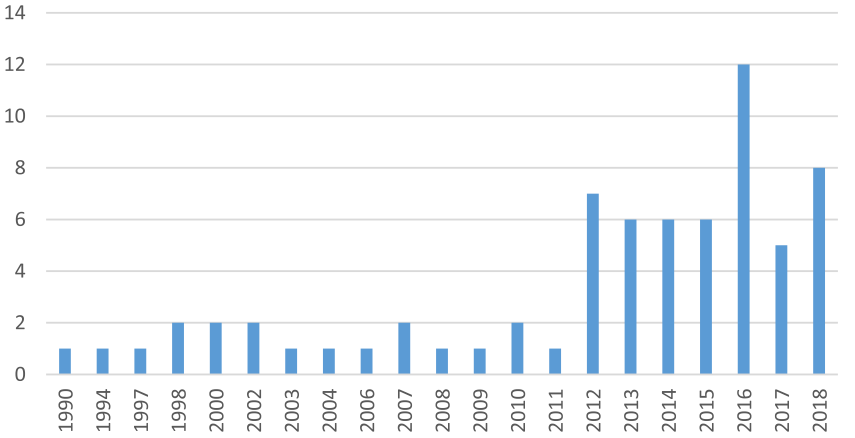
2009, 2 in 2010, 1 in 2011, 7 in 2012, 6 in 2013, 6 in 2014, 6 in 2015, 12 in 2016, 5 in 2017 and 8 in 2018 (Figure 2).

In exploring organizational history, we adopt a historical narrative style and the Stellar History method, which offers an alternative approach to understanding historical narratives amidst societal shifts. The conceptual tool of "stellar history," rooted in theoretical reflections on time and narrative by scholars like Paul Ricoeur and Walter Benjamin, presents an alternative methodological model for historical inquiry. This approach transcends linear chronologies and emphasizes the interplay of past experiences with future aspirations, considering diverse socio-cultural contexts. This methodological perspective facilitates a more profound comprehension of the emergence of problems and their underlying causes and potential solutions (Wadhwani, 2018). Complementing this approach is an explicatory method in organization studies, allowing us to synthesize various social processes by examining historical evidence (Wadhwani, 2018) and critiquing organizational documents (Costa and Silva, 2019).

Moreover, this paper aims to guide organizational scholars in navigating organizational archives, proposing the technique of organizational source criticism grounded in verification and hermeneutics supported by the organization source criticism matrix. This methodological framework acknowledges the diversity of organizational sources and facilitates a nuanced understanding of historical organizations, contributing to the broader discourse on historical research in organizations (Heller, 2023). By integrating these methodological insights, we enrich our exploration of organizational history and its implications for organization studies.

The leaders interviewed consisted of actors involved in processes of change in the coffee industry in Colombia:

- An entrepreneur in specialty coffees, the creator of the Caffinitti brand in Bogotá, Colombia.



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Figure 2. Documents per year of publication

- An administrative and financial director of a subregional committee of coffee growers.
- A consultant and independent academician who has done studies for the Coffee mission.
- An extensionist linked to the FNCC.
- An Administrative and Financial Assistant Director of the Directorate of Sustainable Rural Development at the National Planning Department (DNP by its acronym in Spanish).
- Two trainers of the Manuel Mejía Foundation.
- One Coordinator of the Technical Management office at the FNCC.
- The president of the Association of Small High-Quality Coffee Growers of Santa Rosa de Cabal.
- The sectional Coordinator of rural extension (Santa Rosa de Cabal), Risaralda Coffee Growers Committee.
- The Tax Auditor Association Asociación de Productores Cafeteros de Oiba Santander Association and coffee marketers and producers of Oiba.
- The mayor at San Benito municipality.
- Two coffee producers in the Santander Subregion.
- The sectional Coordinator of rural extension in Santander.
- The manager of the agricultural bank in Santander.
- One coffee student.
- One joint interview with the director of the firm Paisan Coffee Marketer, one Agricultural Banking Coordinator and Two Microfinance Unit Coordinator.

- One Head of zone of a local bank.
- One representative of the Agromezón and Ceiba Small Producers Association.

These interviews provided feedback on the search and delimitation of other documents used for this analysis. These documents consisted of reports from the coffee industry, Colombian Government agencies, NGOs and the press at the national and local levels – 70 documents written in Spanish.

According to Greenwood and Suddaby (2006), we followed a naturalistic inquiry method based on qualitative procedures. Therefore, we analyzed historical processes using deductive techniques, clarifying event sequences and revealing overlapping causal forces. Colombia is a country of regions that have ignored the history of coffee since the 19th century, and this history must be understood in stages and by regions (Appelbaum, 1999).

For this historical analysis, we established significant milestones in the organizational change of the coffee sector in Colombia's five periods (Costa and Silva, 2019). Namely, 1960–1974: The Colombian coffee growers' association created several vital institutions and organizations of the coffee business, such as Juan Valdez, the Manuel Mejía Foundation, and various cooperatives. 1974–1979: Different actors added value to coffee production by creating the first lyophilized coffee processor. 1979–1989: The first coffee tastings begin. 1989–2002: The fall of the international coffee agreement. 2002–2020: Procafecol opened the first Juan Valdez store and, more recently, the international grain price crisis that has generated various mobilizations (Moreno, 2016).

We codified the information based on Saldaña (2013), who states, "A code is a qualitative inquiry, which symbolically assigns a summative attribute, which captures the essence or is evocative to a portion of visual or based data in the language (p. 3)" (Table 1). Therefore, we identified information regarding the previously established periods in each document and grouped them by code families according to the Atlas ti software. Within each of these families of codes, we previously established three thematic axes identified in the literature and referenced in the first chapter of this research – namely, organizational field, change in the organizational field and institutional work. Regarding the organizational field, we coded under the categories institutions, international consumption, internal consumption, exports, production cost, homogenization, imports, dollar price, international price, opportunity, internal price, production and profitability, given that these are recurrent categories on the different documents and are closely related to standards, procedures, interactions, among others. All these are common characteristics of an organizational field.

Regarding the change in the organizational field, we coded the documents under openness, center change, peripheral change, awareness and inertia. In the documentary analysis, we found that these categories have a close relationship with the transformation of the coffee industry. Regarding institutional work, we established codes under institutional entrepreneurs, motivation and practice work (Table 1).

According to Zietsma and Lawrence (2010), we built a chart to carry out theoretical elaboration, which consists of "a process in which the preexisting understanding contrasts with events observed to expand the existing theory (p. 32)." This chart consisted of relevant elements of the previously discussed theory, contrasted with the documents codified in the periods indicated (Table 2).

We also sought to verify emerging dynamics; for example, in all periods studied, the Organizational Field is regulated more through institutionalized government structures than by market effects (Table 2).

Table 1. Code families, codes and number of codes

Code families	Organizational field												
Codes	Institutions	International consumption	Internal consumption	Exports	Production costs	Homogenization	Imports	Opportunity for change	Dollar price	International price	Internal price	Production	Profitability
Number of codes	401	8	10	67	17	32	1	9	8	55	35	87	106

Source: Authors' own elaboration

(*continued*)

Table 1. Continued

Code families	Organizational field	Organizational change							Institutional work			
Codes	Total	Opening for change	Central change	Change in organizational fields	Peripheral change	Awareness	Inertia	Total	Institutional entrepreneurs	Motivation	Practice work	Total
Number of codes	836	35	223	232	78	39	159	766	55	20	256	331

Table 2. Analytical chart for theoretical elaboration

		Period 1960–1974		Period 1974–1979		Period 1979–1989		Period 1989–2002		Period 2002–2020	
	Description	Did we find it?	Evidence	Did we find it?	Evidence	Did we find it?	Evidence	Did we find it?	Evidence	Did we find it?	Evidence
Organizational field	The stable fields are hierarchically distributed by some actors, who exert influence concerning legitimate government norms and behaviors (Purdy and Gray, 2009; Kipping and Kirkpatrick, 2013)	Yes	(Cárdenas, 2004)	Yes	(Cárdenas, 1993)	Yes / no	(Arcila, *et al.*, 2007)	Yes	(Rodríguez, 1998)	Yes / no	(Junguito, 2016; P. Orozco, personal communication. November 15, 2016; J. Garcia, personal communication, December 15, 2016)
Change in organizational fields	Once organizations are consolidated in an organizational field, they begin to generate changes that tend more and more toward homogenization (DiMaggio and Powel, 1983; Ansari, 2011; Sherer, 2017; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015)	Yes	(Suarez, 2002; Silva, 2006; Moreno, 2016)	Yes	(Moreno, 2016; Silva, 2006; National Federation of Coffee Growers, 2013)	Yes / no	(Moreno, 2016)	Yes No	(Lodder, 1997) (Rodríguez, 1998)	Yes No	(Muñoz, 2014; J. Castillo, personal communication, December 15, 2016) (Moreno, 2016; Roldán, 2008, National Federation of Coffee Growers, 2015, A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017; J. Saenz, personal communication, December 16, 2017)
Institutional work, praxis and change	A possible consequence of praxis is deinstitutionalization, i.e. a process in which the legitimacy of an institutionalized practice gradually dilutes due to inefficiencies and interinstitutional incompatibilities	Yes	(Arcila, 2007; Muñoz, 2013; Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 2010, page 17)	Yes	(Cárdenas, 1993; Silva, 2006)	Yes	(Bohman and Harvis, 2017)	Yes	(Rodríguez, 1998)	No	(Roldán, 2008; A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017

(*continued*)

Table 2. Continued

	Description	Period 1960–1974 Did we find it?	Evidence	Period 1974–1979 Did we find it?	Evidence	Period 1979–1989 Did we find it?	Evidence	Period 1989–2002 Did we find it?	Evidence	Period 2002–2020 Did we find it?	Evidence
	(Seo and Creed, 2002; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Duygan *et al*., 2019; Zvolska *et al*., 2019; Smolka, 2020)										
	Deinstitutionalization needs powerful actors who adopt new beliefs and practices (Seo and Creed, 2002; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Zvolska *et al.*, 2019; Smolka and Heugens, 2020)	Yes	(Cárdenas, 1993, Arcila, 2007; Silva, 2006, National Federation of Coffee Growers, 2010 J. García, personal communication, December 15, 2016)	Yes	(Roldán, 2008; Rodríguez, 1998)	Yes	(Moreno, 2016)	Yes	(Rodríguez, 1998)	Yes No	(National Coffee Growers Federation, 2013; National Coffee Growers Federation, 2015; García, 2016; R. Suarez, personal communication, December 1, 2016; A. Morales, personal communication, October 3, 2016) (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 2013; P. Bravo, personal communication, December 12, 2016; R. Barajas, personal communication, December 1, 2016)
	We corroborated the theory regarding change in organizational field Emerging dynamics										

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Results

We grouped the organizational change of the Colombian coffee industry as follows: 1960–1974: The Colombian coffee growers association created several of the key institutions and organizations of the coffee business, such as Juan Valdez, the Manuel Mejía Foundation, and various cooperatives. 1974–1979: Different actors added value to coffee production by creating the first lyophilized coffee processor. 1979–1989: The first coffee tastings begin. 1989–2002: The fall of the international coffee agreement. 2002–2020: Procafecol opened the first Juan Valdez store and, more recently, the international grain price crisis that has generated various mobilizations (Moreno, 2016).

Before pointing out the characteristics of each period, it is good to consider the actors that have influenced the entire history of coffee in Colombia. When the coffee arrived in western Colombia, there was a social transformation, as pointed out by Bushnell (Bushnell, 1993). One of the first processes in which actors appeared was the Antioquian colonization of the Andean coffee-producing regions. According to Marco Palacios, colonization was not a process of migration and selective settlement but inclusive of all social classes. Four historical issues characterized this colonization:

- The capitalist colonizers were made up of family nuclei.
- Absentee landowners, who create commercial companies to parcel out.
- The poor settlers were made up of various types of peasants.
- Independent settlers who do not align with merchants or families (Palacios Rozo, 2010).
- The other actors, including peasants and farmers, are the coffee growers who grow and produce coffee.
- Intermediaries who buy the coffee from the coffee growers and sell it to the roasters.
- Roasters are companies that roast coffee and sell it to distributors.
- Distributors who sell the coffee to retailers.
- Retailers who sell the coffee to the final consumer (Perez, 2016; Ocampo, 1994; Ospina Vásquez, 1976; Caballero Argáez, 1983; Colmenares, 1978).

In the first period (1960–1970), we observed high urgency, shared objectives and deinstitutionalization of obsolete practices. In the second period (1970–1980), changes existed toward homogenization, and establishing and expanding limits existed. In the third period (1980–1990), legitimate practices were created and interrupted based on expanding and undermining limits. In the fourth period (1990–2002), inertia in deinstitutionalization and changes toward homogenization/diversification emerged. Finally, in the fourth period (2002–2020), unstable interactions among participants started to appear, and the interplay between a horizontal distribution of the organizational field and leadership of new civil society associations in the adoption of shared meanings began to be expected (Table 2).

Contemporary coffee is growing, but especially the emphasis on finance, its forms of organization and labor regime in the 19th and 20th centuries are developed by Ramírez (2008a, 2008b), Suárez (1994) and Arango (1982, 1997). Local and regional analyses supported by case studies are necessary variables to delve into these topics.

1960–1974: High degree of urgency, shared objectives and deinstitutionalization of obsolete practices, which reached small producers but fostered armed conflict.

The extension service that FNCC created during this period fostered scientific research, which reached small producers, making them a fundamental element of the deinstitutionalization of the coffee sector (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 2024). Also, Cenicafé, created in 1938 as a

scientific arm of the FNCC, focused on research on production, coffee quality, pests, diseases and environmental conservation. This helped transform coffee growers' practices, especially regarding the planting process.

Colombian small farmers began forming cooperatives in response to the economic challenges and monopolistic control within the coffee industry. These emerging cooperatives shifted from traditional systems to new social and productive organizational forms in rural areas. Particularly in the country's western regions, coffee expansion relied on small-scale parcel production, contrasting sharply with the hacienda system that had characterized coffee production in Antioquia, Cundinamarca and Santanderes in the late 19th century (Baquero-Melo *et al.*, 2024). This transformation facilitated more equitable and sustainable agricultural practices in areas where dense indigenous populations already occupied the land. However, disputes arose due to the establishment of large commercial farms, which displaced indigenous communities (LeGrand, 1988). This displacement facilitated the recruitment of indigenous people by guerrilla movements and other illegal groups.

Within this period, the coffee industry began to consolidate as a stable field with actors distributed hierarchically (Table 2). The FNCC played a pivotal role in this distribution, providing unwavering support to coffee growers in planning and training based on CENICAFÉ's scientific research (Cárdenas, 2004). The role of FNCC manager Arturo Gómez Jaramillo was fundamental since he gave the coffee sector a relatively incipient business perspective. Specifically, he was a great promoter of coffee threshers in Manizales, Pereira and Armenia. Also, he was one of the promoters of the International Coffee Organization (ICO), which is why he is considered the father of coffee diplomacy.

These actions motivated marginalized groups such as women and indigenous people to see an opportunity in the coffee business, primarily through associations promoted by the nascent coffee grower cooperatives.

The coffee industry in 1960–1974 reflects a high degree of urgency due to the articulation of various actors within the field to guarantee certain welfare conditions for coffee farmers in the context of the Cold War. This degree of urgency made this organizational field tend toward homogenization. The large roasting firms such as General Foods and Procter and Gamble established preferential trade deals and lobbying before the US government in favor of the Colombian government at that time (Suarez, 2002; Silva, 2006; Moreno, 2016), which made the practices within the industry to align the interests of the international markets.

In this period, the coffee industry results from a complex environment where logic that competes with each other moves toward institutionalization (Table 2), i.e. the recognition of standards, practices and interactions, among others. For example, the international coffee agreement created in 1962, preceded by the inter-American coffee agreement inspired by the New Deal, sought to leverage the economies of the Americas, influenced by the context of the Cold War. Domestically, competition between industrial firms fosters the production of frozen coffee (Suarez, 2002). Thus, we found a multilateral and collective action based on shared objectives, which started from establishing the international coffee agreement between producing and consuming countries and the coalition between the producing countries Brazil and Colombia.

Regarding institutional work, powerful actors such as Jorge Cárdenas Gutiérrez were crucial during this period. As an auxiliary manager at FNCC, the second most important position within the organization, he fostered cooperativism in the coffee industry (Valencia, 2022). Also, the FNCC and Almacafé led deinstitutionalization because they established, expanded and reinforced the practices (Table 2). Almacafé, created during this period, allowed the industry to incorporate updated logistics processes such as purchasing

management, customs agency, storage, transportation management, specialized coffee services and distribution and shipping.

Besides, he sought to improve the country's crop systems to improve the quality of Colombian coffee, which became an international benchmark. For this purpose, he created the Juan Valdez brand, which allowed Colombian coffee to differentiate from other coffees from exporting countries within the framework of the international coffee agreement. This brand allowed him to open markets in several Asian countries, such as South Korea and Japan (Valencia, 2022).

Thus, thanks to the initiatives led by Jorge Cárdenas, the Colombian State could delegate several of its functions to the FNCC, which generated a high rate of human development in the coffee-growing regions. In this way, small producers, including indigenous and women's groups, will be able to escape poverty and, thus, start some productive projects in their regions. Likewise, the coffee-growing areas saw a decrease in armed conflict compared to other regions, meaning demobilized people entered the coffee business.

The FNCC, based on the Cenicafé research in the 50s, also fostered deinstitutionalization through an extensive program of crop trials under the sunlight in the 60s, which allowed the development of the Caturra variety. They also sought to differentiate Colombian coffee through advertising campaigns as "the richest coffee in the world," since 1959, they have promoted the cooperatives of coffee growers, which are components of FNCC's internal marketing network.

Similarly, Almacafé began to conduct internship work regarding the first deposit activities, focusing on meeting the operational requirements of coffee exports such as purchase and storage. Also, Almacafé assumed the commitment to purchase all coffee produced in Colombia at a support price defined by the FNCC (Arcila, 2007; Silva, 2006; J. García, personal communication, December 15, 2016). This institutional support takes the field practices for granted by most of the actors within the industry, although some inefficiencies exist.

After the Juan Valdez campaign, prominent commercial advertising did not show the living conditions of the coffee families. The smallholder type of production was much more successful in Colombia than the modality of large plantations precisely because it resolved the problem of cost and availability of labor that, at first, the owners of large states despaired (Bushnell, 1993). "The departmental Committees follow the guidelines of the Federation, but they have autonomy. The cooperatives are much more autonomous and grant the purchase guarantee, a recognized institution for the coffee sector. However, it is too extensive and inefficient for the purchase of coffee, which may hinder, as well, the innovation within the sector." (J. García, personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Also, the FNCC highly focused on coffee plantations, leaving behind crucial elements within the coffee supply chain, such as agrotourism, specialty coffees and commercialization strategies for small producers (A. Caquimbo, personal communication, May 17, 2024). This approach did not contribute to the development of an inclusive industry which could help with the incorporation of peasants and Indigenous people in the coffee market, making them less vulnerable to the armed conflict.

Period 1974–1979: Changes toward homogenization and establishing and expanding limits through women as a source labor force and indigenous receiving land titles.

This period consisted of a metamorphosis of a peasant town into a coffee nation: the introduction of capitalism to Colombian rural areas and the simultaneous obstacles of that same rurality to national industrial development. Within this period, women played a crucial role in the Colombian coffee industry as a source of the labor force, often bearing up to 11 children per coffee-farming family and being the gatherers of the coffee grain. These

women's social conditions align with the concept of "the persistence of predatory practices of 'primitive' or 'original' accumulation." Such accumulation involves the continuous subsumption of other modes of producing material life to expand capitalism. Scholars like Federici (2013) argue that this process includes gender exploitation, leading to a new sexual division of labor that devalues women's work, thus, enabling their co-optation and over-exploitation in the current patriarchal order. This continuous devaluation and over-exploitation of women's work underpin the capitalist productive labor system (Sañudo *et al.*, 2023).

Also, despite the implementation of new technologies for coffee production, indigenous people needed help with land titling. Many of them acted as settler-indigenous, occupying vacant lands to later sell them to coffee growers (LeGrand, 1988).

We observed a stable field from 1974 to 1979 to the extent that actors hierarchically distributed, with women at the bottom of the pyramid, exert influence regarding government norms and behaviors (Table 2). The process of improvement in technology, which started in this period, generated that 73% of the area planted was high-yield coffee. Thus, Colombian production went from about 7 million bags in the mid-1970s to about 15.6 million on average in recent years (Cárdenas, 2004).

Also, the changes tend toward homogenization (Table 2) from the 1970 definition of the type of exported coffees by the Quality Control Unit (UCC) linked to the FNCC. They discarded low-acid coffees like those from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. They started tasting coffee raw materials. They finished products by creating the freeze-dried coffee factory in 1971, allowing soluble coffee to be exported to different countries (Moreno, 2016; Silva, 2006). The UCC started exerting control of the physical defects in 1975, the installation of homogenizer and meshes in 1976 for granulometry control, the beginning of the tasting of parchments by origin in the packing and the assignment to threshing by customer profile between 1977 and 1970 and the beginning of quantitative descriptive sensory analysis in 1979 (Moreno, 2016).

Through the freeze-drying factory, the FNCC deinstitutionalized the field by creating practices (Table 2), such as the beginning of tasting raw materials and finished products in 1973 (Silva, 2006). Likewise, the FNCC establishes the limits of the organizational field through the technological process of coffee plantations, by which the Caturra variety was introduced. Faced with a new drop in prices and the impossibility of increasing production volume due to the fatigue of the spontaneous peasant development scheme, the coffee grower went from being the national hero in the 1930s to being the villain of history in the 1960s. He was held responsible for inflation, which was caused by the low productivity levels that required subsidies. In reality, the blow depended on the acute crisis in the balance of payments, the scarce internal resources and the lack of a coherent coffee policy.

Jorge Cárdenas Gutiérrez's leadership as manager of the FNCC permeated the Colombian coffee industry and was crucial in this period. He structured highly fluid communication channels with the Departmental and Municipal Coffee Committees, allowing decentralized leadership. This management style empowered some small and local farmers, and they began to impact the coffee sector (Valencia, 1996).

Period 1979–1989: Creation and interruption of Legitimate Practices through the undermining of boundaries: The appearance of women as leaders within the coffee production.

Historically, men's dominance in green coffee production and marketing has led to a gender gap, with only 31% of Colombian coffee producers being women. Despite this, over 163,000 women started actively cultivating coffee in Colombia, seeking socioeconomic development through associations. In Cauca, 31,467 women, including 3,355 in El Tambo, primarily headed households and contributed significantly to various stages of coffee

production. Their involvement adds substantial value to the industry, showcasing their resilience and determination to bridge existing gaps (Calvo, 2022, p. 53).

Hierarchically distributed actors such as the Commercial Management office at the FNCC exert influence on legitimate government norms and behaviors (Table 2) to the extent that this office holds the UCC (by its acronym in Spanish), which is responsible for verifying the excellence and the quality of the coffee cup. Regarding excellence, the UCC indicated the percentage of humidity for people who wanted to export autonomously (13%) and for those exported through the National Coffee Fund (FoNC by its acronym in Spanish) (12%) (Arcila *et al.*, 2007).

The internal marketing office at the FNCC is highly responsible for creating practices during this period due to the launch of The Gold Cup Circle campaign. The purpose was the mass dissemination of the correct preparation of coffee for both households and public establishments. Thus, the change is institutional, normative and isomorphic both by the Gold Cup Circle campaign and by the fact that the Commercial Management office transfers the application and control of coffee quality to a port inspector. In addition, during this period of coffee history, the dual relationship between peasant coffee growing and capitalist coffee growing does not necessarily involve opposite worlds. Instead, both forms express effective possibilities for the development of Colombian coffee growing, with both integrated into the global system of Colombian capitalism.

Likewise, the actors interrupt legitimate practices within the coffee industry and undermine the limits of this organizational field (Table 2). The member countries that imported soft coffee opposed the constant increase in the prices of this type of coffee compared to the *robusta*, so they sought to redistribute the import quotas to increase the supply (Bohman and Harvis, 2017). Finally, neither coffee producers nor importers reached an agreement, meaning the end of the coffee agreement.

Powerful actors such as the FNCC, Almacafé and the Cooperatives, among others, created legitimate practices within the coffee industry (Table 2). We discovered self-awareness from these actors through the Circle of the Gold Cup campaign, which started to motivate actors such as women to participate in specialty coffee businesses. Also, this legitimization relates to the letter from the commercial management office at the FNCC, which set the UCC (by its acronym in Spanish) as responsible for the quality control of Colombian coffee (Moreno, 2016). These practices seek to improve coffee preparation continuously to be more competitive in international markets.

Period 1989–2002: Inertia in deinstitutionalization and changes toward homogenization/diversification.

The legal framework associated with this organizational field came from powerful actors such as the Treasury, the FNCC and the National Committee of Coffee Growers (CNC by its acronym in Spanish (Table 2). This legal framework reflects Law 9, 1991, which established general rules on international changes. From this law, the government issued Resolution 3156, 1991, indicating the requirements that coffee exporters must meet to register as such with the Colombian Institute of Foreign Trade. Similarly, Resolution 2, 1991, from the National Committee of Coffee Growers, established measures conducive to guaranteeing the quality of export coffee. Finally, Resolution 3, 1991 of the National Committee of Coffee Growers established quality standards for green coffee in almonds, green decaffeinated, soluble and coffee extract (Rodríguez, 1998).

Since the end of the coffee agreement, price volatility has tripled, requiring strong institutions within coffee-producing countries to mitigate the risks of price fluctuations. Strategies such as stabilization funds and futures markets were considered (Cárdenas, 1997), but they did not significantly affect the welfare of Colombian coffee growers.

This period's major coffee production problems were the war and the narcotraffic economy. The coffee market experienced an unfortunate fall in terms of favoring drug trafficking, recognizing that production was close to 16.2 million bags in 1991 – the highest since the seventies – the variable begins to show a decreasing behavior. Although with some ups and downs, reaching 9.1 million bags in 1999, representing a 44% drop in just 8 years (del Corral *et al.*, 2002, p. 3).

In addition, the end of the International Coffee Agreement generated that part of the institutions linked to coffee disappeared (Rettberg, 2010). In later years, the coffee sector managed to recover, "the capacity of the National Federation of Coffee growers to reinvent themselves and, also, the transformations undertaken in the production and marketing structure of coffee seem to have played an important role in preventing more acute deterioration" (Rettberg *et al.*, 2017, p. 49). In addition, tastings support the invaluable prestige of Colombian coffee, which does not underestimate the quality of the product.

Broca, a disease that attacks the coffee grain, the fall of the coffee agreement and the revaluation of the Colombian peso (cop) against the US$ affected the Colombian coffee industry. Therefore, the producers' indebtedness increased, and productivity decreased because of the aging of the coffee plantations. Despite this adverse environment, much inertia existed in deinstitutionalization by traditional organizations within the industry.

In the 1990s, we observed changes that tended toward homogenization (Table 2). The transfer of the Coffee UCC from the FNCC to Almacafé generated a unification of the existing coffee quality criteria in both the FNCC and the Almacafé (Moreno, 2016). This institutional isomorphism is sometimes normative to the extent that experts begin to theorize about good practices for the sector. For example, the ICO held a Seminar on the environment in 1996, bringing experts who discussed scientific, production, trade and roasting issues (Lodder, 1997).

Conversely, the ecological tourism strategy developed in the late 1990s fostered diversification (Table 2). This strategy sought to take advantage of the originality and tradition of the peasants and farmhouses due to the beauty of the landscape in the coffee regions. This landscape includes 18 urban centers within the Andes mountains, where coffee growers have adapted to difficult mountain conditions (Unesco, 2011). Thus, the FNCC supported the creation of the Coffee Ecotourism Cooperative, and the supply of tourism agencies in the region increased (Rodríguez, 1998).

Powerful actors led the deinstitutionalization from 1989 to 2002 (Table 2). These actors adopted new tendencies and practices. For example, at the beginning of the 90s, the FNCC initiated experimental studies to increase physical performance and reduce labor costs and specific inputs from the diffusion of existing technologies in the country. The goal was to reduce labor requirements by 40% and increase productivity.

Despite the initiatives led by the FNCC, small coffee producers felt that there was a delay in coffee policies:

> "There was no development of machinery and technology. There was a lack of transportation mechanisms. The FNCC needs to be consistent with the international market. We do not identify with the coffee institutions. They do not respond to the needs of coffee growers" (A. Caquimbo, personal communication, May 17, 2024).

> "Coffee growers have different needs, such as planting, renewal, and infrastructure. However, the FNCC financed the most planting" (L. Tamayo, personal communication, May 17, 2024).

This inertia in deinstitutionalization reflects the lack of institutional entrepreneurship enacted by women, Indigenous people or ex-guerrilla members during this period. The fall of the

ICO made the coffee industry no longer profitable, which means that these actors did not enact significant changes.

Period 2002–2020: Unstable interactions, horizontal distribution and leadership of new civil society associations.

The organizational field in this period reflects its stability and hierarchical distribution through actors such as the national government, the FNCC and Cenicafé, among others (Table 2). They exert influence regarding legitimate government norms and behaviors. The FoNC framed the regulation in the Administration Contract, which has the administration of this Fund as its objective and recognizes the FNCC as its administrator. This contract between the national government and the FNCC was renewed in 2016 for 10 more years (Junguito, 2016). Likewise, the National Coffee Growers Committee emerged as the Fund's governing body. It comprises government representatives such as the Minister of Finance and Public Credit, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the National Planning Director, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Environment and Sustainable Development (Aguilar, 2003; Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 2016).

During this period, the role of the FNCC manager, Gabriel Silva Luján (2002–2009), is recognized for his push toward industrializing the sector after a period of economic crisis in coffee growing. Its most notable actions were the cuts to investments unrelated to the union and the extensive resources from the national government and international cooperation. These actions allowed small entrepreneurs, such as coffee-growing women and Indigenous groups, to emerge, thanks to the export mindset that he began to instill at the time (Portafolio, 2009).

However, the role of Luis Genaro Muñoz as manager of FNCC (2009–2015) reflected the excessive centralization perspective of this organization. There existed a disconnection between the central managers and the local producers, such as women and indigenous people. This disconnection made social movements such as *Dignidad Cafetera* force Muñoz's resignation through social mobilization (Portfolio, 2015)

From 2002–2020, the Colombian coffee industry has resulted from a complex environment in which competing logics move toward homogenization (Table 2). There existed a recognition of standards, practices and interactions, among others, especially between the FNCC and the missions hired by the Colombian national government to study the competitiveness of coffee. On the one hand, the Coffee Mission 2002 considered it necessary to separate the marketing and regulatory functions of the FNCC and the FoNC.

The 2013 mission suggested "to make regulation more flexible, strengthen the sub-regional committees, eliminate the conflict of interest between market regulation and coffee exports" (Muñoz, 2013, p. 9). On the other hand, the FNCC and Coffee Dignities (a social movement) pointed out that eliminating the purchase guarantee went against a public good that protects coffee growers in a market with few buyers and many sellers. These studies were unaware of the achievements of coffee institutions, such as coffee designations of origin (Muñoz, 2013).

However, we also found that changes tend toward diversification (Table 2) due to resolution No. 3 of 2015 issued by the Coffee Growers National Committee, which allows the export of green coffee with various qualities different from the traditional Colombian coffee quality. Similarly, the FNCC established a program of specialty coffees for crops planted in predefined microclimates, which generated coffees of origin, sustainable coffees and according to types of preparation. Therefore, the FNCC had to allow the import of coffee different from those traditionally recognized for the mixtures at the local level generating

different varieties (Moreno, 2016; Roldán, 2008; Federación *et al.*, 2015; A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017):

> "The country has been presenting a gradual planting of specialty coffees. Before making blends, importing coffee was forbidden, and the Colombian variety was only allowed to preserve the coffee premium. Today, it is also possible to export coffees of different qualities" (A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017).

Deinstitutionalization in this period is not a direct consequence of inefficiencies and the role of FNCC (Table 2). External consumption, new players such as exporters, certifying organizations and NGOs, among others, have generated an expansion of practices and an undermining of the organizational field's limits. For instance, in international markets such as Japan, the inhabitants began to seek to protect their health by carefully selecting the quality of the products they consume, which has consequently brought new firms trying to guarantee the nature of the products' organic components (Roldán, 2008).

Besides, peripheral actors such as coffee women, Indigenous people and ex-guerrilla members became a cornerstone in the industry's development. Also, individual coffee growers and the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank own Procafecol, whose primary purpose is to commercialize Colombian coffee (roasted, ground and grain) and create coffee shops for direct management or through third parties (FNCC, 2013; FNCC, 2015; J. García, personal communication, December 15, 2016; R. Suarez, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

However, powerful actors are crucial in adopting new beliefs and practices (Table 2). The creation of the company Procafecol in 2002 by the FNCC to scale up the coffee value chain and generate more significant income for the industry helped translate the new logic into concrete practices. Procafecol has been crucial in deinstitutionalization recently due to the new perspective of generating a new added-value business. It possesses four business lines: specialized coffee shops, large platforms, an institutional channel and an e-commerce portal. Also, Procafecol recognizes a quality premium to specialty coffees, strengthening the interest in this type of cultivation:

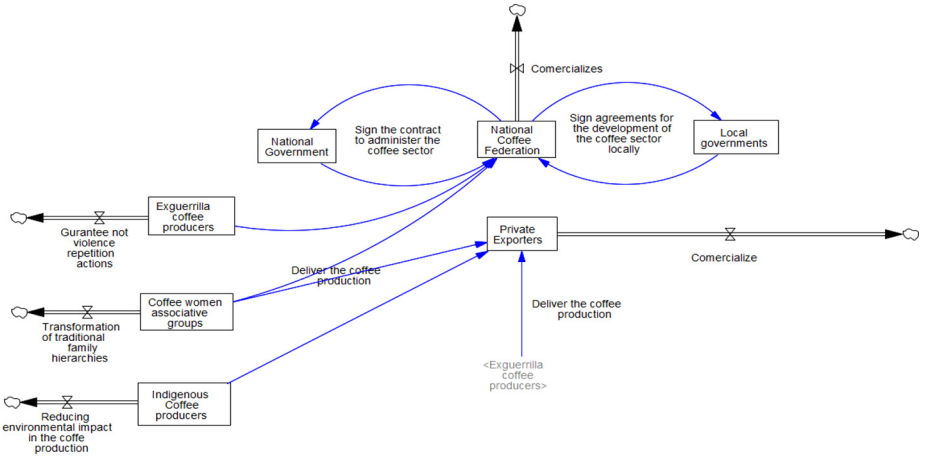
> "In 2002, the first Juan Valdez coffee shop appeared due to the search to increase the production volume and sale of specialty coffees. Therefore, these coffee shops seek to improve bargaining power and increase the coffee income based on various associative dynamics" (R. Suarez, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

Nevertheless, criticism arises because small producers feel they are not improving their livelihood as a result of Procafecal initiatives:

> "The monopoly of the export processes headed by the FNCC is harmful. Small cooperatives compete among themselves. We cannot export in small quantities, and FNCC does little to address small producers" (A. Caquimbo, personal communication, May 5, 2024).

The expansion of boundaries highlights the empowerment of coffee women on issues regarding coffee production, union participation and community leadership. Hence, coffee women have been able to commercialize their coffees, develop their brands, organize themselves in civil society associations, participate in special coffee fairs and sell coffee directly abroad. These changes have transformed women's traditional family hierarchies related to housework, especially in rural areas (FNCC, 2015; FNCC, 2013; J. Castillo, personal communication, December 15, 2016) (Figure 3).

"Coffee women have mainly led various processes of change in the sector because they more effectively transmit cultural traditions. They will lead in the great transformations this



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Figure 3. Role of peripheral actors within the Colombian coffee organizational field

industry requires" (J. Castillo, personal communication, December 15, 2016). On its website, the National Federation of Colombian Coffee Growers talks about gender equality:

In Colombia, almost 30% of coffee farmers are women, and various studies confirm that their role in the family economy translates into greater sustainability. At the FNCC, we are committed to gender equality (since 2006, we have had a program dedicated to it), empowering women and their growing participation in the coffee value chain through producer associations and management bodies unions. For example, in the 2018 coffee elections, women's union representation increased to 15% in Departmental Committees from 8% in 2014 to 24% in Municipal Committees from 16% in 2014 (FNCC, 2020). There is evidence of growth in Colombian women's participation in the country over the past years, with an increase of approximately 7% in the subregions committees after 4 years and 8% in the involvement of municipal committees (Ojeda-Pérez and Garatejo-Pérez, 2023).

Between 1998 and 2003, the Colombian coffee industry faced severe challenges as global coffee prices plummeted by 73%, severely impacting rural livelihoods. This economic crisis coincided with increased armed conflict in Colombia, where rural families heavily depended on coffee production. Research shows that the dramatic drop in coffee prices led many farmers to switch to illicit crops like coca, used to produce cocaine. This shift drew armed groups into traditional coffee-growing areas to control the lucrative drug trade. In addition, the coffee price shock reduced coffee farmers' income and employment opportunities, making them more likely to support or join illegal armed groups. The FNCC also saw a decline in investment, weakening state capacity in coffee-producing regions. This decline created a vacuum that armed groups exploited to increase violence. The combination of economic hardship, reduced state presence and the strategic importance of coffee-growing regions exacerbated the civil conflict during this period. Despite the rise in coca cultivation, the increase in violence in coffee regions primarily resulted from increased poverty and weakened institutional capacity rather than a straightforward substitution to illicit crops (Pizano Salazar, 2003).

Another action in this period was after the announcement of the peace process. The coffee industry has been an indispensable tool for this process. This aspect deepened the integration

of those demobilized from the armed conflict, fostering the coffee associations. The transformative agency embodied by women entrepreneurs is also fundamental in promoting peace, thereby furnishing novel perspectives pertinent to policy formulation, practical implementation and societal metamorphosis within post-peace agreement domains (Pérez-Morón *et al.*, 2023) (Figure 3).

One of the areas where more coffee associations emerged is the Cauca subregion, where "more than 600 ex-combatants from the FARC-EP who resided in this area were participating in the reintegration project with Illycafé" (Facenda, 2019, p. 12). In addition, based on the investigative analysis of Rovis *et al.* (2019), citing Roldán (2013), it should be noted that: in Cauca, four organizations generate employment for the demobilized individuals, with 50% of these opportunities coming from two organizations in the coffee sector. This is primarily because Colombian coffee growers' associations play an essential role in the labor inclusion of the demobilized ex-guerrillas members. The FNCC trains these individuals, giving them skills regarding profitable production and sustainable practices, thus, guaranteeing to prevent the recurrence of violence (p. 32) (Figure 3).

In this process, not only the ARN has been involved, but also the Colombian Association of Small Coffee Growers (ASCAFE) and the FNCC. Likewise, the intervention of companies regarding agreements and investments has been critical within this process (Zambrano Palma and Ojeda Pérez, 2022) (Figure 3).

Finally, indigenous people are also changing the field due to traditional practices and rituals in coffee production. They started to use poultry manure, and most indigenous coffee producers used compost instead of commercial fertilizers. They also applied artisanal techniques while conserving their ancestral traditions and cultures in the coffee production chain. The use of compost shows a minimum environmental impact in the category of climate change and acidification. Finally, poultry manure performed better in the human toxicity and eutrophication categories (Vera-Acevedo *et al.*, 2016) (Figure 3).

Despite all these changes from the periphery, social movements such as Dignidad Cafetera consider the FNCC not democratic enough. So, most of these changes are taking place outside the FNCC, more through private exporters, associative groups and international certifying organizations (Dignidad Agropecuaria de Colombia, 2023).

The FNCC's role is highly focused on production, leaving behind more strategies for small producers to become entrepreneurs through other activities within the coffee supply chain. Roberto Velez, a general manager of FNCC between 2015 and 2022, addressed the management of the coffee sector from the perspective of the coffee crop estimated by 2022 at US$ 3,748m (Agronegocios, 2022).

Third Agreement, as stated by Lopera (2020), is a specialty coffee collective located in Planadas (Tolima), established 23 years ago by various coffee associations in Planadas, coffee-farming families from Gaitania, women leaders from the region and indigenous members of the Nasa Wes'x indigenous reserve. This brand was created through the collective efforts of the Gaitania Technical Coffee Table (Tolima), driven by a firm commitment to local peacebuilding and marketed by former FARC members. The collective is named the "Third Agreement" because the first Agreement was made 20 years ago between the indigenous people and the FARC, the second consolidated at the end of the peace process and the third is the correlation between these actors and coffee (Ojeda and Monroy, 2023).

Discussion and conclusions

This research introduced the notion of change in the organizational field through diversification, inertia in deinstitutionalization and peripheral deinstitutionalization (by

peripheral actors), which the literature has overlooked regarding the change in organizational fields. After isomorphism, mature and stable fields may move toward atomization stages to the extent that new actors emerge and exercise practice and boundary work. Also, inefficiencies do not deinstitutionalize these fields. They can maintain long periods of inertia in which powerful actors reproduce the same traditional beliefs and practices that were useful in the past. However, peripheral and nonpowerful actors deinstitutionalize the field by fostering new beliefs and behaviors.

Unlike the literature regarding organizational change (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Sherer, 2017; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015), we found elements of diversification within the field, especially after the collapse of the coffee agreement in 1989 (Rodríguez, 1998; Moreno, 2016; Roldán, 2008; A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017).

In many cases, the increasing complexity of traditional corporate systems tends toward homogeneity, generating isomorphic processes due to the institutional environment. However, within the Colombian coffee context, the economic structure gave some autonomy to peripheral actors because they did not depend on traditional landowners for jobs. This structure has kept a portion of the population relatively prosperous for various historical periods. This perspective has paved the way for diversification within the industry in recent decades.

Our historical analysis suggests that peripheral actors have fostered the deinstitutionalizations as follows:

From 1960–1974, the institutional work conducted by the FNCC reached peripheral actors, transforming practices regarding the planting process. Besides, small farmers began forming cooperatives, which allowed peripheral actors such as peasants and Indigenous people to participate in the coffee industry through more equitable and sustainable practices.

From 1974–1979, the increase in production required an increasing labor force. Therefore, women became crucial as a labor force source, giving birth to children and gathering coffee grain. Similarly, Indigenous people became fundamental because of the process of titling land, which motivated them to produce coffee.

In the period 1979–1989, women started to be engaged in coffee cultivation, not only as gatherers. They headed households and contributed significantly to many stages of coffee cultivation. Also, campaigns and fairs regarding specialty coffees motivated women to get involved in different stages of the supply chain within the coffee business.

The fall of the ICO generates inertia within the coffee industry. Therefore, 1989–2002 did not mark fundamental changes from peripheral actors.

Finally, the period 2002–2020 became the moment in which peripheral actors became a cornerstone in industry development. Women are now recognized because of union participation and community leadership, which allows them to commercialize, develop brands and organize in civil society associations. These changes have transformed women's traditional family hierarchies.

Legitimacy has been a central concept in the origins of the literature related to isomorphism in changing organizational fields. In addition, the theorization fosters legitimacy from the theory of change, by which the actors postulate innovations against models or scenarios of change that become homogenous. Thus, rhetoric became crucial in the origins of the coffee industry in Colombia when central actors such as Mariano Ospina Rodríguez and Rafael Uribe issued discourses regarding the importance of coffee. Also, the legitimization became crucial regarding the individual interests of peripheral coffee growers who saw prosperity in the coffee regions when prices were high and infrastructure development existed.

The historical changes in the coffee industry and the loss of productivity in recent decades have caused institutional entrepreneurs with marginal social positions (peripheral actors) to use institutional change to become more relevant, primarily through the production and marketing of specialty coffees by women, Indigenous people, small farmers, demobilized people and victims of the armed conflict, among others.

The creation of Cenicafé in the "30s," Almacafé in the "60s," Procafecol in the 2000s and the export of green coffee with various qualities different from traditional Colombian coffee recently fostered the field's deinstitutionalization. Also, the various specialty coffee programs for crops planted in predefined microclimates generated coffees of origin, sustainable coffees and coffees according to types of preparation (Moreno, 2016; Roldán, 2008; Federación *et al.*, 2015; A. Zuleta, personal communication, January 7, 2017).

Regarding institutional work, we found that the praxis led to deinstitutionalization (Seo and Creed, 2002). One example of this praxis is the launch of Juan Valdez coffee shops. However, unlike the literature about change in the organizational field, deinstitutionalization has been inert in recent years despite inefficiencies (Roldán, 2008).

This inertia in deinstitutionalization is mainly because of the changes in external consumption, which has generated an expansion of practices and an undermining of limits. However, we did not observe significant endogenous changes promulgated by central actors in the coffee sector. Furthermore, many inefficiencies exist regarding coffee growers' income, the volatility of international prices and productivity, among others (Roldán, 2008) (Table 2).

Also, deinstitutionalization needs powerful actors who adopt new beliefs and practices (Seo and Creed, 2002) (Table 2). The FNCC has led the distribution of this organizational field, Cenicafé has made the research about the coffee industry in Colombia, the ICO framed the coffee sector until 1989, Almacafé established the first trials of crops under the sunlight, the UCC defined the type of export coffees and Procafecol has scaled up the coffee value chain, among others.

However, we found that recently, not-so-powerful and peripheral actors have become essential in the transformation of the field (FNCC, 2013; P. Bravo, personal communication, December 12, 2016) (Table 2). For example, Coffee women have gained legitimacy because of their differentiated coffee production, union participation and community leadership. FNCC has been losing prominence due to independent actors and organizations such as exporters, producers, entrepreneurs, social movements and associate groups, generating nearly 90% of coffee activities.

The distinction between the current Federación Nacional de Cafeteros (FNCC) and its predecessor in Colombia was marked by the impact of world coffee market deregulation, as highlighted by Jorge Cárdenas Gutiérrez: "25 million sacks of coffee suddenly became available in the market," representing 33% of the total exports in 1989. This surge in supply caused a rapid decline in the value of Colombian coffee on international markets. By the early 1990s, its foreign price had fallen below a dollar per pound and continued to decrease, reaching the lowest prices seen in the previous 15 years. During this period, coffee lost its historic position as Colombia's leading export to oil and coal. The plummeting foreign prices simultaneously reduced the price received by coffee growers, leading to a decline in coffee production in subsequent years and generating a deficit in the FoNC, an instrument established to finance coffee policy.

Consequently, the stability of the ICA years was over, and the free-market turbulence and uncertainty had become the new reality for the FNCC. The Colombian state and the FNCC were attentive to this issue and attempted to create the required conditions to reactivate ICA, but they failed (Tirado Mejía *et al.*, 2017).

In addition, indigenous people are crucial due to the use of ancestral techniques, which are environmentally friendly, for the fertilization of coffee crops. In addition, ex-guerrilla coffee producers are strengthening the implementation of the peace process through their association for production and the training provided by the FNCC. The Colombian coffee industry has undergone significant organizational evolution, primarily influenced by both internal and peripheral actors.

Historically, the FNCC played a central role in stabilizing the industry, but deregulation in the late 1980s exposed it to global market fluctuations. This shift led to a decline in coffee prices and production, prompting a reevaluation of organizational strategies. Other peripheral actors, including local governments, educational institutions and private sector partners, have since emerged as critical contributors to structural changes. Initiatives like the "School and Coffee" program, collaborations with universities and local government support have fostered rural human capital development and diversified the economic base. These efforts have helped stabilize coffee production and introduced new dynamics into the industry's organizational process. By integrating educational and economic opportunities, these peripheral actors have enabled a more resilient and adaptive coffee sector, demonstrating the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement in driving institutional evolution.

Based on this study, our recommendations for policymakers and managers are as follows:

- Design of decentralized policies by the national government and the coffee institutions (e.g. increased training in specialty coffees).
- Participation and decision-making from peripheral actors (producers, gatherers, coffee entrepreneurs and associative groups, among others).
- Thinning of traditional coffee organizations to assign more professionals to work directly with the communities.
- Effective communication channels between actors (top down and bottom up).

We recommend studying the change in organizational fields through institutional work and expanding the analysis of independent organizations such as coffee cooperatives, associative groups and various social movements that influence the change inside and outside organizations. Also, it is necessary to assess the change through bridging or leaving the field, the contribution of associations with the adoption of shared meanings and the stages of organizational fields.

Finally, we recommend studying organizational change through institutional work and expanding the analysis of independent organizations such as coffee cooperatives, associative groups and various social movements that influence change inside and outside organizations. Also, it is necessary to assess the change through bridging or leaving the field, the contribution of associations with the adoption of shared meanings and the stages of organizational fields.

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Corresponding author
Cristian Armando Yepes-Lugo can be contacted at: cryepes@lasalle.edu.co