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Race, Nation and Gender in Ecuador: A Comparative Study of Black and Indigenous Populations, c.1895-1944.

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PhD History
Abstract

This thesis presents an analysis of the relationship between race, gender, and nation in early twentieth century Ecuador. Specifically, it seeks to explore the racialisation of state structures under the Liberal project developed and advanced in the half-century following the 1895 Liberal Revolution, and the role of racial ideas in the more inclusionary vision of the nation that begin to be articulated in this period. By taking as its central focus the experiences, activities and ideologies of black and indigenous populations who were the 'subjects' of this “re-imagining”, it aims to create a political history from below, which will uncover the hidden histories of groups who have been marginalised within narratives of state and nation, and as such advance a fuller understanding of the nation-building process. By considering black and indigenous groups within an explicitly comparative framework, it aims to advance a more nuanced understanding of the way ideas about race affected the development of national identity, the operation of state and national institutions, and the positioning of subaltern groups in relation to the nation.

The thesis argues for the re-centring of the state as a key locus of nation-building and the process of racialisation. As such, the formation of state policy as a site of contestation and negotiation is taken as the primary focus. The thesis outlines the relationship between race, gender and nation-building in the formation of the Ecuadorian state, before shifting the focus to liberalism and exploring the nature of Liberal ideology as related to race, seen through the lens of negotiations over the extension of citizenship. It then undertakes case studies of three key dimensions of state discourse: the integration of national territory and resources; social policy – specifically education and health and sanitation; and the politics of land. A consideration of black and indigenous responses is integrated into each of the case studies, while a final chapter looks at the issues of liberalism and nationalism more directly from below, exploring how black and indigenous involvement in rural guerrilla movements and uprisings reflected their own conceptions of their role in the nation and their understandings of the meaning of citizenship.
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The aim of this thesis is to construct a political history from below which will uncover the hidden histories of black and indigenous Ecuadorians, and to explore the ways in which the tensions involved in nation-building and state consolidation during the half-century following the Liberal Revolution of 1895 were refracted through the locus of race and the manipulation of racial ideologies. It seeks to explore how state expansion occurred in constant engagement and negotiation with marginalised ethnic groups, and how these negotiations affected the meaning of racial categories, as well as the way in which these operated at the level of lived experience. It will also assess how these shifting ideas fed into contested understandings of national identity. It locates these issues in the shift from an exclusionary form of national identity, to the rise of a more popular nationalism; a period corresponding to the third stage in Hobsbawm's schema.

When this project was first conceived almost five years ago, it was anticipated that it would be stepping into an almost empty field in its intention to explore the interplay between race, gender and nation. During the course of this research and writing, the field has burgeoned dramatically. Where previously the assertion of a connection between race and gender, and between these two categories and national identity, could be presented almost as an original argument, today the validity of this link is fully recognised, such that it is now definitively understood that race and gender are fundamental to and constitutive of the very process of nation-building. This massive outpouring of literature

has been a response primarily to the influence of ethnic mobilisation movements and the increased visibility of race and nationalism as hotly politicised issues in the region.

Until the mid-1980's the relevance of categories of race and ethnicity to understandings of Latin American society were largely denied by scholars, particularly in the social sciences. This was in part a response to the lack of violent ethnic tension in the region, and the absence of a binary system of racial classification along the US model, which allowed elite-disseminated ideologies of "racial democracy" to be taken at face value. The failure to engage with categories of ethnicity and race also reflected the Marxist disdain for ethnicity as a negative factor hindering the development of class consciousness. Anthropological studies which dealt with indigenous and particularly black people largely did so within a field of cultural study unrelated to wider political processes, epitomised by the focus in Afro-Latin American studies during the 1970's and 80's on charting the survival of Africanisms. Historical studies focused on the investigation of slavery with relation to blacks, and on colonial ethnic relations with regards to Indians, and there was little understanding of the relationship between black and indigenous groups and the state. Black and indigenous histories for the most part remained a marginalised sub-section within social history, a genre overlooked by mainstream historians, much like women's "her-story" of the same period.

3 Pierre van den Berghe and George Primov opened their 1977 *Inequality in the Peruvian Andes* by stating that "The problems of "race"... are of only peripheral importance in Spanish America." *Inequality in the Peruvian Andes: Class and Ethnicity in Cuzco* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977) p.3.


The ethnic rights movements that burst onto the political scene in opposition to the Quincentenary of 1992 exploded the myth of racial democracy, and pushed the issue of race to the centre of academic concern. History was placed back on the agenda, with activists locating their claims within the framework of their historical ownership of the land, and the frustration of their rights by republican states. A motto for the 1990’s uprisings in Ecuador declared: “We come from yesterday bringing memories of rebels and rebellions.”6 While black and indigenous communities have preserved their own history in oral traditions, it was increasingly recognised that representations of indigenous and black peoples within national histories remained minimal.7 This contributed to a misunderstanding of the historical underpinnings of these movements, at first erroneously categorised as “new”. Moreover, as indigenous rights movements pushed for the recognition of indigenous polities as “nationalities” within the nation, it was recognised that scholars and policy-makers had little understanding of what happened when indigenous ‘nations’ persisted within the framework of the modern nation-state, nor of how this separation had developed; a shortcoming reflecting the way that studies of nationalism and ethnicity had previously been analytically separated in Latin America.8 These movements created a schism in national identity, such that in many Andean and Central American nations, the ideology of mestizaje which had been dominant for almost a century is now competing with multinacionalidad, “the first emanating from the elite, the second swelling up from the people.”9 This reality has generated a wave of theoretical engagement.

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7 To rectify this efforts were made by ethno-historians to create histories written from the indigenous perspective. In her widely cited analysis Joanne Rappaport started from the assumption that “history is a question of power in the present, and not of detached reflection on the past.” For key examples of this literature see Olivia Harris, ‘The coming of the white people: reflections on the mythologisation of history in Latin America’, *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 14, 1 (1995), pp. 9-24; Jonathan D. Hill (ed.) *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: An Andean Ethnography of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).


Yet, despite the centrality of Ecuadorian black and indigenous movements to these trends, when it comes to the study of Ecuador the field that I am stepping into is still remarkably open. While anthropologists and sociologists have produced a huge volume of work on the meaning and significance of contemporary indigenous activism, historians have been much slower to take up the challenge.\(^\text{10}\) This reflects the underdeveloped nature of the discipline of history within Ecuador. There is a paucity of professional academic historians in Ecuador, and among Latin Americanists working in the United States and Europe the country has been neglected, apparently on the basis of its small size and relative stability. Those accounts which do exist have been polarised between partisan narratives of political elites and over-assertive analysis of class and capital; few have addressed the issue of race. This is a serious omission in view of the demographic prevalence of black and indigenous populations: it is estimated that around 40% of the population is of indigenous descent, while between 5-10% can be classified as Afro-Ecuadorian.\(^\text{11}\) Yet only within the discipline of anthropology have studies of black and indigenous communities been undertaken.\(^\text{12}\) Afro-Ecuadorians have been almost entirely omitted from the historical record, while indigenous populations have fared little better – none of the major compendiums released in recent years in an effort to write the Indian back into Latin American history have included chapters on Ecuador.\(^\text{13}\) Studies of


\(^{12}\) See especially the many works of Norman Whitten Jnr.

Ecuador are also notably absent from Applebaum’s recent edited volume which aims to give an overview of the relationship between race and nation in Latin America.  

In recent years the historiography of Ecuador has begun to strengthen and develop, and a number of important works have been published which have advanced understandings of the relationship between Indians and the state in particular. However, this work has focused on the idea of “ethnicity” solely as related to Indian groups, and the exclusion of blacks continues to be perpetuated. The history of Afro-Ecuadorians remains tied up with slave society, and there are almost no historical studies that deal with Afro-Ecuadorians outside of that context.

This is related to the general imbalance in studies of ‘race’ in Latin America. Work on race as related to black people has developed far less dramatically than that related to indigenous peoples in recent years. While there have been a number of major studies on Afro-Latin American themes, for the most part work on black people in Latin America has been confined to studies of slavery, or countries where people of African descent form the most numerically significant ethnic minority group; most notably Brazil, the

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14 Appelbaum et al. (eds.), Race and Nation.
Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The exceptions have mainly focused on black enclaves within a majority white-mestizo society. There has also been a surge of studies of Afro-Brazilians which have taken US racial classifications and the myth of racial democracy as their starting point, and have sought to underline the discrimination and marginalisation of black people, and draw comparisons with the more obvious racism of the United States in their effect on life chances. What has been lacking have been studies that explore the experiences of Afro-Latin American people within societies where indigenous ethnicity is predominant, and studies which examine the black and indigenous experience in comparative perspective.

This work aims to begin to fill this gap in the literature by looking at the histories of black and indigenous groups in Ecuador in conjunction. It seeks to locate itself in the

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20 The exception is Peter Wade who has consistently sought to compare black and indigenous groups. See especially Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (London: Pluto Press, 1997).
context of recent studies which have shown that both national identity and race are social constructs, defined not by biology or pure, bounded repertoires of culture, but by a fluid and changing history in which official and subaltern representations of national identity vie for hegemony, and which see both as joining gender, class and ethnicity as negotiated phenomenon. As such it will be argued that these issues must be analysed from a constructivist perspective which examines not only the structural dimensions of racial hegemony, but also the ideological. It is also influenced by recent studies which have challenged the idea that national political projects, such as the struggle for independence or the creation of liberalism were merely elite projects which excluded the popular classes, and which have projected instead the idea of political discourses as "fields of force" through which contestation and struggle could be carried out. 21

Because of the centrality of theories of racial and national identity as the conceptual underpinnings of this thesis, it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the key theoretical debates which have informed how core concepts such as race, gender, nation, and the state have been understood and engaged with in the writing of this thesis. This discussion will be located within the framework of Latin America more generally, in order to establish how the key terms can be used within the specific context of Ecuador.

Race and Racialisation

The differences and similarities between black and indigenous experiences cannot be understood without a clear idea of what racial and ethnic identifications involve. This

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thesis adopts the predominant approach among contemporary social and natural scientists in viewing race as a social construction. It starts from the perspective that biologically speaking races do not exist: that the idea of race is indeed simply an idea. The notion that races exist with definable physical characteristics which can be categorised according to a hierarchical scale of superiority and inferiority is interpreted as the result of particular historical processes which have their roots in European colonisation of other parts of the world. However, the fact that race is socially constructed should not obscure the fact that it was experienced in ways which had profound and concrete implications. It is now increasingly understood that the very structures of Latin American society, from the system of political administration, to the land tenure system, cannot be separated from an understanding of racial relations.

While scholars generally reject biological determinism, in one key respect they have not fully moved beyond eighteenth century racial typologies, in continuing to assume that race is something that can be classified according to phenotype or somatic norm image. Ideas about race are not only associated with claims about biological inheritance, whether of physical or intellectual or moral characteristics. As Peter Wade has insisted, biological ideas are also cultural; even during the nineteenth century heyday of scientific racism and eugenics, racial thought included what today would be called cultural influences within its very conception of biology. Thus racial categorisation must be understood as operating not just through biologically deterministic scientific discourses, but also through ideas about culture and the environment. This can be seen especially in ideas of environmental essence, and in ideas of “social hygiene” which became prevalent.

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22 The understandings of race which have informed this thesis have been particularly influenced by the work of Peter Wade, especially Race and Ethnicity in Latin America and Race, Nature and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective, (London: Pluto Press, 2002). The writings of Michael Banton, Paul Gilroy, and Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis have also been important. Anthias and Yuval-Davis, Racialised Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour, Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle (London: Routledge, 1992); Banton, Racial Theories (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (London: Verso, 1993).


24 Wade, Race, Nature and Culture.

25 Stepan, The Hour of Eugenics; Alexandra Minn Stern, "From Mestizophilia to Biotypology: Racialisation and Science in Mexico, 1920-1960", in Appelbaum et al, Race and Nation pp.187-211; Mary
during the eugenics movement. Moreover, culturalist ideas of race, such as *indigenismo*, also included an idea of indigenous essence, that was perceived as innate and inheritable.  

Ideas of race as socially constructed have been strongly linked to and influenced by feminist theory, in particular Joan Scott’s discussion and definition of gender as a historical tool. Scott asserts that gender is both a “constitutive element of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes”, and a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated. Ideas about gender have to reflect the concerns or experiences of the society using them, or they would lose all meaning. Because of this, the social concept of gender has to be constantly constructed and reconstructed in order to adapt to continuously changing social, political and economic circumstances.  

This idea is reflected in Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham’s groundbreaking conceptualisation of race as a “meta-language” through which power relations in society are refracted and negotiated; a concept which is extremely useful for envisioning race as a mediator in all social and political interactions.

This focus on the broader means by which power relations were played out through racial ideas and values can facilitate the development of a more complex understanding of the relationship between race, class, and gender. In recent years reductionist tendencies which had given primacy to race, gender or class in explanations of social relations, rendering the other two invisible, have given way to a significant theoretical reorientation within the social sciences, such that gender, ethnicity, race and class have increasingly been examined simultaneously within comprehensive frameworks of analysis.  

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29 For Latin America, see especially Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood, “Gender and Racism in the Politics of Identities in Latin America”, in Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood (eds.) *Viva! Women and Popular Protest in Latin America* (London: Routledge, 1993). For case study examples of the relationship between race, class and gender, see Caulfield, *In Defence of Honour*; Nicola Foote, “Rethinking Race,
understood that these are intersecting—or, as McClintock has termed it, triangulated-identities, refracted through one another, and shading the way in which particular statuses were experienced on a day-to-day level.30 Gender and class thus operate as the modalities through which race is lived.

The relationship between race and ethnicity is less clearly conceived. The term race continues to be confused with ethnicity, with the latter being used as a less emotive synonym for race, often considered to be irrevocably tainted by racism.31 As Wade has underlined, the difference between the two categories is fuzzy, with both considered to be social constructions that are essentially about difference or sameness.32 The general consensus has been that ethnicity refers to ‘cultural’ differences, whereas race refers to phenotype33; a distinction invalidated if we recognise that the lines between these two categories are themselves blurred. Wade argues convincingly that the key defining feature of ethnicity is that it uses a language of place, with cultural difference spread over geographical space. While it has definite parallels and overlaps with race, to deny the specificity of the term race is to dismiss the particular history by which racial identifications have come to hold such force.34 Certainly, the concept of ethnicity is inadequate to explain the scale and complexity of the barriers between Indians, blacks, mestizos and whites; in which ideas of difference are played out in fields of reference too powerfully embodied to be called anything other than racial, even when they do not make reference to either genotypic or phenotypic differences.35 “Ethnicity” not only fails to capture the physicality and comprehensiveness of “race”; it is unable to avoid the latter’s

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31 Wade, Race and Ethnicity, p.16.

32 Ibid.


34 Wade, Race and Ethnicity, p.17; p.20.


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historical origins and false claims to universality. Perhaps the concept of ethnicity is best used to help us understand categorisation within racially subordinate groups, and their existence as subcultures within the nation as recognisably distinct groups of people substantially embedded in a larger society, whose own cultural traits were recognisable through their interactions with other social groups.

The malleability of ethnic and racial categories in Ecuador (and Latin America more widely) is a point which needs underlining, since it makes the study of race still more complicated. Defining what constitutes an indígena is an extremely difficult task, with Indian and mestizo identity effectively operating on a continuum defined by dress, language, dwelling, food, religious practices, and occupation, and affected by incentives from outside society – note for example the surge of mestizos reidentifying as Indians during the nineteenth century in order to gain access to Indian land following the abolition of the tribute, and the identification of many urban indígenas with a mestizo identity in order to avoid racism and prejudice. Ethnic identity could vary over the course of a lifetime; moreover, an individual might define his or herself as belonging to one ethnic category, while a stranger would assume that he or she belonged to an entirely different ethnic group. It is also important to note that Indians were not unified culturally, and that diverse practices, languages and forms of dress were considered Indian; the most dramatic illustration of this being the division between Andean and Amazonian Indians. While blackness has generally been seen as defined more by phenotypical criteria that could not be manipulated in the same way, blacks were able to become mulattos just as Indians were able to become mestizos. Ethnic malleability was not restricted to Indian identity.

In order to study the multiple ways that race has been constructed without reifying any single meaning, scholars such as Peter Wade and Michael Banton have adopted the term

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“racialisation” to describe the “process of marking human differences according to hierarchical discourses grounded in colonial encounters and their national legacies”.  

The classification has been the focus of a call for a new methodology to be applied to the study of racial and national identities by a recent compendium of work on this subject.

The concept of racialisation has parallels to that of ‘racial formation’ argued for by Howard Winant as providing an appropriate theoretical foundation for studies of race. Through its focus on the process by which racial categories were created and naturalised, it provides a useful framework for studying how racialised identifications, and the racialised social relations that accompanied them, were formed. As such it facilitates a highly necessary move away from studying “races” in the sense of “blacks” or “whites”, even as socially constructed groups, and towards an exploration of the historical processes which generated, articulated and reformed racialised identifications and racialised social relations.

Thus the racialisation approach will provide the primary foundation for this thesis.

Building on the suggestions of Peter Wade, my argument is based on the idea that the most effective deployment of this strategy necessitates the examination of black and indigenous groups in conjunction. As Wade has underlined, the study of blacks and Indians in Latin America has been markedly polarised, with studies of blacks focusing on issues of slavery, abolition and ‘race relations’, and studies of Indians framed generally within the concept of ethnicity. Wade locates this analytical separation within the context of colonial categories, and argues that scholars have failed to decolonise categories of race in Latin America; instead perpetuating and reifying the split created by Spain in the fifteenth century.

The categories created to provide a “simplified, colour-coded map...
for the organisation and exploitation of cheap labour” have been replicated and maintained; creating in the process two distinct peoples with two distinct histories. This conceptual and narrative separation has led to the study of race as associated with individual ‘ethnic groups’, and has undermined our understanding of race as a category and as a process. By “hermetically seal[ing] off the data of the alternative people from analytical salience” it has hidden potentially interesting similarities and differences between blacks and Indians. Thus accounts which draw on ‘racialisation’ theory but then apply this to only one ethnic group, are only telling half the story, and can only create a partial account of how ideas of race were constructed and contested. It is in an effort to explore these links that this thesis will examine black and indigenous communities in conjunction.

Rethinking Nations and National Identities

Nationalism has been the object of research since it was recognised and analysed in the nineteenth century, yet a clear understanding of what it means, how it operates, and even what it is still does not exist. The approaches used to research it have been largely influenced by the political trends of the period and there have arisen deep schisms between different schools of thought. The most profound divisions have occurred in academic debates between “primordialists” or “perennialists” and “modernists”. The crucial point of this debate revolves around the question of the role of ethnic identity; more specifically, the issue of whether present-day nations are best thought of as modern


44 Ibid. As Whitten and Corr point out, this leads to such misplaced debates as whether the Seminole of the southern United States, the Miskitu of Honduras and Nicaragua, the Black Caribs of St Vincent, and the Garifuna of Honduras, Belize, and Guatemala should best be viewed as Indian or “Afro-American”.

45 For works that engage with racialisation theory but with reference to only a single ethnic group, see Appelbaum, Muddied Waters, Chambers, Sanders, chapters in Appelbaum et al, Race and Nation.

varieties of collective identities that have existed throughout history, or whether these are phenomena created only by modern "objective" conditions, such as industrialisation, capitalism, and the development of the bureaucratic state.  

Primordialists argue that the source of the modern nation can be traced back to its earliest history, expressed in the continuity of ancient cultural and ethnic expressions through revivals, revisions, mythologies and art. Anthony Smith is the pre-eminent proponent of this theory, and argues that modern conditions such as revolutions, the state, industrialisation, integrationist policies, and mass education are important factors, but are insufficient to explain the ideological power and appeal to socio-political change inspired by ethno-historical belonging. Smith argues that nationalism as the “ideal of political and cultural independence” is expressed in the modern age through the continuous use of ethnicity manifested in the utilization of the “myth-symbol complex.” The educational system might create citizens, but for Smith the durability of “subjective factors” linked to the cultural past – factors such as “ethnic origin”, myths, symbols, legends, and genealogies – is equally pervasive, given that from this perspective, nationalism is a form of culture. Smith argues then for the power of the collective memory, which allows for the reproduction over centuries or generations of a sense of self in the form of ethnocentrism. The sense of self – subjectivity – consists of “cultural forms of sentiments, attitudes, and perceptions, as these are expressed and codified in myths, memories, values, and symbols.” Thus he underlines the “ethnic origin” implicit in the composition of a modern nation. For him, no nation can emerge and sustain itself without an ethnic “core” or ideology, which form the underlying concepts and symbols of
nationalism. According to Smith, most nations are formed by means of a civic and territorial nationalism, constituted by the integration of a variety of ethnic communities inhabiting the territory of the nation. The process of integration is to “create those myths of descent, those historical memories and that common culture which form the missing elements of the ethnic make up along with a mutual solidarity.” 50

The modernist perspective identifies the role of the state, its corollary integrative policies, and the spread of industrialisation as the major “objective” conditions in the formation of nationalism. Ernest Gellner in particular has emphasised the role of the state in organising and monopolising mass education as a condition for state formation. From Gellner’s perspective, nationalism is induced by the modern state, and detached from the past and its folklore. In the industrial era characterised by anonymity, an increasingly complex division of labour, and standardised literacy, the state has the role of monopolising public education in order to create upward social mobility and literate citizens. Underlying this perspective is the argument that nationalism is conceived as a process of “social engineering”, the main function of which is to create a correspondence of politics, culture, and territory as a single entity. The modernist school argues that the “state creates the nation” and for Gellner in particular, “it is nationalisms which create nations”51.

Benedict Anderson broke away from the stark polarism of this debate between subjective and objective factors, presenting the groundbreaking argument that the nation was best thought of as the representation of an idea – an “imagined community”- rather than an actually existing political entity. Thus the categories conventionally employed to define a nation –ethnicity, language, territorial sovereignty, constitutional statehood and so on – were best seen as functions of how the nation was imagined rather than tangible elements of it.52 The key advance of Anderson’s work was showing that the modern nation is not a historical given, but the product of a socio-historical process, thus placing the nation on

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50 Smith, National Identity, p.84.
the same conceptual terrain as race and gender. "Assessing the form the imagining takes then becomes the primary questions, not whether the nation is "real" or a mere political façade."\(^\text{53}\) Once it is accepted that a nation-state must be "emotionally plausible" as well as "politically viable", the nation itself necessarily becomes an object of negotiation and contestation, for non-elite as well as elite groups.\(^\text{54}\) Where others have condemned nationalism simply as an effect of false consciousness, Anderson redescribes it as a variable cultural artefact that is neither reactionary nor progressive in itself. His comparison enabled the crucial recognition that -like gender- nationality is a relational term whose identity derives from its inherence in a system of differences, and allowed us to recognise that national identity is determined not on the basis of its own intrinsic properties, but as a function of what it (presumably) is not. Thus the nation "is shaped by what it opposes."\(^\text{55}\) Anderson’s ideas have been taken a stage further by postmodernist scholars who have argued convincingly that there is no such thing as a true nation. The best postmodernist work has shown that there can be no "nationalism in general" such that any single model could prove adequate to its myriad and contradictory historical forms.\(^\text{56}\)

Despite this flurry of theoretical activity surrounding nationalisms since the 1980’s, few of the standard theorists and comparative historians of nationalism have commented at any length on Latin America at any length, either ignoring Latin America altogether, or, as Nicola Miller has lamented, "relegating it to an uneasy footnote, acknowledging that it does not ‘fit’ any of their schema, but declining to modify their frameworks to accommodate the region’s experience in any significant way."\(^\text{57}\) This reflects the Eurocentric, or, as Alan Knight has phrased it, Old World-centric nature of conventional

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theories of nationalism.\textsuperscript{58} Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson can be considered partial exceptions, in that their work has at least touched on Latin America; however, their findings have lacked accuracy and a thorough understanding of Latin American specificities, and the details of their arguments have been roundly challenged by regional specialists.\textsuperscript{59} It should be noted that this lack on engagement has not gone in only one direction: there are few broad studies of Latin American nationalism which interact with the mainstream literature.\textsuperscript{60} There are plenty of valuable individual national studies, but these have not, in general, generated usefully comparative concepts or theories.

In view of this lack of engagement, it is not surprising that all of the major theoretical frameworks manifest serious shortcomings when applied to Latin America. The focus of the primordialist school on the relevance and power of pre-modern ethnic ties and sentiments as a formative factor in the creation of nationalism seems to have little explanatory power for a region in which, as Miller has argued, "the only basis for a nation on such a criterion was the united republic of Spanish America envisaged by Simón Bolívar".\textsuperscript{61} Natividad Gutierrez, one of the few Latin Americanists to take a stance defined primarily by primordialist theory has attempted to adapt its core perspectives to advocate for the power of a mythological claim based on imagined ethnic descent, in


\textsuperscript{59} Hobsbawm’s paper on Latin America has been criticised for its down-playing of ethnic tensions and divisions. See Hobsbawm, "Nationalism and Nationality in Latin America". With regards to Anderson’s work, scholars have underlined that his account of the independence wars was based on a very limited number of secondary sources, and his ideas about the role of Creole career bureaucrats and late colonial newspapers do not stand up to the evidence. The most influential critique of Anderson’s work has been made by Lomnitz-Adler, who has argued that Anderson’s schema misses important features of the evolution of Creole nationalism, the most significant being the multiple “bonds of dependence” that modified in practice any notion of a horizontal comradeship. Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, "Nationalism as a Practical System: Benedict Anderson’s Theory of Nationalism from the Vantage Point of Spanish America", in Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves (eds.) Through the Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Sara Castro-Klaren and John Charles Chasteen (eds.) Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth Century Latin America (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

\textsuperscript{60} Exceptions are Samuel L. Baily (ed.) Nationalism in Latin America (New York, Knopf, 1970); Gerhard Masur, Nationalism in Latin America: Diversity and Unity (New York, Macmillan, 1966). These works, however, were primarily concerned with assessing to what extent the resurgence of nationalism in the region represented a threat to US interests.

\textsuperscript{61} Miller, In the Shadow of the State, pp. 35-36.
order to argue for the role of ethnic myth in endorsing the claims to nationhood of
Mexico. But this argument is only plausible with respect to Mexico and Peru, where
established ethnic communities existed before the arrival of the Spanish, and where
nationalist ideology and iconography have drawn substantially on the pre-Colombian
civilisations. The application of primordialist theories make little sense in relation to
Ecuador, as Ecuador lacked an obvious set of ethnic symbols to invoke, with the pre-
Colombian Inca Empire associated overwhelmingly with Peru, a major enemy for the
new nation. The invocation of nationalist myths and symbols started at a visibly later
stage than the process of state-led nation-building. While the primordialists present
ethnicity as a significant causative factor of nationalism, it is perhaps better understood –
at least in relation to Latin America - as a factor that can reinforce nationalism.

If it is true that in most countries of Latin America, national identity was formed by a
state that preceded a sense of nationality, the modernist perspective is also problematic,
in that it has a tendency to overstate the power of the state. In early twentieth century
Latin America, the state still exerted only a tenuous hold over large areas of many
national territories. The state could not assimilate and destroy minority cultures, and
family, local and regional bonds, it had to engage with them. Indeed, as the
contemporary ethnic consciousness movements have shown, at times and in places the
process of state building provided a space for indigenous and black leaders to take
advantage of modern conditions in order to revitalise their ethnic identities and
languages. Moreover, the kind of "ideal" industrialisation that Gellner takes as his central
focus never existed in Latin America; whereas nationalism tangibly did. Gellner in
particular has also been criticised for his over-emphasis on "high culture" and urban
groups; an argument undermined by proof of the existence of "peasant nationalisms", and
nationalism as coming from below as well as from above. More generally, a focus on

63 Miller, *In the Shadow of the State*, p.36.
64 Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*. The need to look at the construction of nationalism from below was also
presaged by Hobsbawm, who sought to integrate a popular dimension into the modernist framework,
arguing for nations as "dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be
understood unless also analysed from below, that is, in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings,
elite actions fails to explain why nationalism become important to ordinary people. Popular identities are complex, and not always subject to imposition from above. Moreover, the establishment of state institutions did not in itself signal a population’s cultural identification with the state—a point powerfully made by the primordialists.

Instead, as Miller has argued, perhaps the most fruitful approach to the question of national identity is to see it as founded "both on a state political project and on a shared culture…. Any approach to the development of national consciousness on Spanish America that emphasises either the political or the cultural components of nation-building to the exclusion of the other will provide only a partial explanation, missing the valid points of the other."65 Such a conflation of approaches would allow a more complex understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and the state in the formation of national identity. The divisions between the two schools have meant that the relationship between these two factors has not always been sufficiently recognised.

Although Anderson’s focus on the imagined qualities of the nation effectively paved the way for a reconciliation of modernist and primordialist interpretations this has not led to a renewed engagement with the relationship between race and state. While his ideas have been useful in modifying the modernist position away from overly structural explanations of the emergence of nationalism as the inevitable consequence of capitalism, industrialisation and the concentration of power in a centralised state, and towards consideration of the more intangible features of national consciousness, which had previously been the preserve of the primordialists it has not lead to renewed engagement with the relationship between ethnicity and the state in the nation-building process. It is telling that one of the biggest criticisms of Anderson’s work has related to his misreading of the complex relationship between race and nation, as well as to the mediating force of gender in shaping both.66 Anderson insists on the autonomy of nationalism and racism,

65 Miller, In the Shadow of the State, p.40.
66 For critiques that addresses both race and gender, see Etienne Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism”, in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities (London: Verso, 1991); Anne McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven: Gender, Racism, and Nationalism”, in Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat (eds.) Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp.89-112.
arguing that: "The dreams of racism have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than those of nation."\textsuperscript{67} While such an analysis purges nationalism of racial sin—essential to Anderson’s interpretation of nationalism as an primary tool in the struggle to redeem colonized peoples from oppression - it denies the fact that nations are imagined in a social and ideological context defined by imagined races. Thus racism and nationalism emerge entwined, as do national identity and racial identities.\textsuperscript{68}

Although recent work on Latin America has underlined the complex interplay of race, gender, and nation, few efforts have been made to link these findings to nationalist theory. An exception is Peter Wade who has argued that the central problem in theorising the relationship between race and national identity is that the dominant theories have not created a space for conceptualising heterogeneity or the contestation and fracturing of national identity. Heterogeneity is not ignored in these approaches, but tends to be conceptualised as either the struggle of one potential nation within another nation, or as a series of residual or resistant traditions set against the homogenising imperative of the modern nation-state. This approach is oversimplified and risks imputing a non-existent strategic intentionality to the elite and/or subaltern. For Wade, one of the central paradoxes of nationalism is that the attempt to present the nation as a unified homogenous whole conflicts directly with the maintenance of hierarchies of class and culture and their frequent corollaries, region and race, that is needed by those who are located in the higher echelons of those hierarchies. The homogeneity which is represented as an ideal by nationalists would in reality entail the obliteration of internal differences of hierarchy, whether based on class, race, or region that nationalist elites themselves struggle to maintain.\textsuperscript{69} In focusing on homogeneity as an essential prerequisite of nationalism, theorists have essentially taken nationalists on their own terms. Thus Latin American elites and Latin Americanist scholars alike have fretted that theirs were “incomplete” or “inauthentic” nations because of the persistence of ethnic groups, with heterogeneity seen as a stigma, a defect to be overcome. Thus David Brading has argued

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\item\textsuperscript{67} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, p.149.
\item\textsuperscript{68} Indeed, it is this relationship that accounts for the distaste many progressives have felt for nationalism as an ideology.
\item\textsuperscript{69} Wade, \textit{Music, Race and Nation}, p.3.
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that: “The persistence and prevalence of ethnic hierarchy ....made a nonsense of any presumption of nationality or nationhood in Spanish America,” an oversimplifying argument based on the assumption that ethnic cleavage precluded the creation of nationalist sentiment.

In contrast, Wade has posited a theory of nationalism which locates the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity at the centre of the construction of (racialised) nationalist ideas. This approach has been fruitfully developed by Appelbaum, Macpherson and Rosemblatt and some of the contributors to their edited collection on race and nation in Latin America. Wade argues that an emphasis on myths of homogeneity within nationalist ideas which centre on the exclusion or marginalisation of races seen as “impure” or “foreign” over-simplifies the true nature of relations, and neglects the particular ways in which marginalised groups are imagined, even as subordinate members of the nation. While the negation and marginalisation of Indian-ness and blackness is evident in Latin America, these categories are simultaneously and actively constructed by nationalist elites, even as they are assigned an inferior position. In particular, while Latin American states have historically opposed indigenous autonomy, they have not always been opposed to Indianness, and have often sought to integrate and rearticulate some of its traits into conceptions of national identity. As Wade has argued, although nationalist elites intentionally seek to discipline diversity, “it is more constructive to say that they resignify a diversity which they also construct; ethnographic diversity is not just “out there” to be imported in a disfigured form; its very existence in the nation is mediated by nationalist representations. In this sense a nationalist project does not just try to deny, suppress or even simply channel an unruly diversity, it actively reconstructs it.”

To theorise this perspective it is necessary to go beyond oppositions between the homogenising dominant class and the heterogeneous people, and look instead at the way

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72 Wade, Music, Race and Nation, p.6.
in which the tension between sameness and difference allows both equality and inequality to be imagined and experienced.\textsuperscript{73} For Wade, it is necessary to see the nationalist project not simply as the obliteration of difference by sameness, but as mediating a tension between these two.\textsuperscript{74}

Any formulation seeking to articulate the relationship between race and nation must also include gender. Gender is essential to an understanding of Latin American nationalism, providing the most powerful language with which to describe national and racial relations. Whether invoked as metaphor, metonym, or allegory, the very idea of nation and national belonging was more often than not expressed using the language of the family. Intimations of fatality and mortality are among the more powerful, if undeveloped, themes running through Anderson’s account of how the nation becomes “emotionally viable”. The family is the site where one’s sense of morality is most immediately negotiated. “Given that the function of a metaphor is to make the emotionally unfamiliar familiar by association with something known, then metaphors of familial relations can mediate the allocation of national roles, rights, responsibilities, and claims.”\textsuperscript{75} It follows that such reasoning could pave the way for the preservation of male dominance as well, with patriarchal power within the family being projected onto the nation. Elites often linked political authority to masculine authority and racial eugenics to the control of sexuality and reproduction. In so doing, they bound private and public realms metaphorically and used that association to justify public regulation of sexual and domestic relations. Central to these regulatory efforts were revamped colonial conceptions of honour, nineteenth century gender norms, and the sciences of hygiene and eugenics.\textsuperscript{76}

Gendered tropes of nation also referred more explicitly to relations among men. Especially in the nineteenth century when civil and international wars plagued relations

\textsuperscript{73} Wade, “Race and Nation in Latin America”, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{74} Wade, Music, Race, and Nation, p.12.
\textsuperscript{75} Thomas C. Holt, “Foreword: The First New Nations”, in Appelbaum et al (eds.) Race and Nation, p.xii
between fledgling nations, national belonging was often portrayed as a brotherhood shaped in the fraternal embrace of battle. Moreover, father-and-son metaphors for the nation not only provided a language of mutual obligation, but also reinforced paternalistic relations between political leaders cast as father figures and their humble “sons”.77

Hierarchical relationships among men were partially rooted in differential control over women’s labour and sexuality. Men’s ability to protect the sexual virtue of their women dependents affected their status vis-à-vis other men, and their stature within the polity. Men in subordinate positions did not reject the notion that their stature and citizenship rights should be gauged by their sexual control over their wives and daughters. Rather, they asserted their masculine propriety, honour, citizen virtue, and implicitly their whiteness, by affirming their ability to control the sexual and reproductive labour of “their” women.78

Gender was also explicitly related to the structuring of ethnic subordination. One of the ways in which national elites defined their own masculinity was by indicating that Indians had inherently feminine traits; with one ethnic group's ideas about women being used to categorise all men. Ideals of patriarchy were also invoked to cast elite white men as father figures who had to guide and teach Indian men. This reinforced the idea that only white men achieve masculine maturity, while Indian men remain forever childlike, never becoming fully masculine. Such notions were used to legitimise new regimes, to undermine indigenous peasant autonomy, or to explain why Indians failed to receive the same rights as whites and mestizos.

An approach based on exploring the mediation of sameness and difference through nationalist ideals refracted through race and gender will be applied here to the nationalist project advanced by the Liberal state, locating the nation as the central framework within which different groups have negotiated their place, and sought to coexist. This thesis will

78 Chambers, From Subjects to Citizens; Caulfield, In Defense of Honor; Eileen Suarez Finlay, Imposing Decency: Race and Sexuality in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999);
look at how nation-building operated in conjunction with strains of political and cultural nationalism, as Ecuadorian elites grappled with the problem of how to demarcate and define national borders, how to achieve political integration, how to inculcate sentiments of nationality, and how to make the new "imagined community" imaginable for ethnically and socially diverse peoples. In Ecuador, nationalism and state-building operated, if not in tandem, then certainly in close and complex relation, even if the capacities of the state always lagged behind nationalist goals.

Foregrounding the State

Such an approach foregrounds the state as the primary arena of contestation and negotiation. While we must be careful of over-stating the power of the state, and wary of the possibility of confusing state-building with the formation of nationalism, it is necessary to explore the process of nation-building through the locus of the state, assessing the ways in which the expansion and strengthening of state institutions was used to foster a sense of belonging and nationhood. The construction of the nation, and its racialisation was done at least in part through state institutions. There is thus a definite need to develop a more complex sense of what the state is, and to centre it in a discussion of the relations between the differentiated groups that composed the nation.

A key problem in theorising such a relationship is the division of labour which has existed between those who studied nationalism as a manifestation of political power, focusing on the state, and those who worked on national identity as a cultural community focusing on society. While the works thus produced have often been extremely valuable, this approach has cemented the discursive separation of the creation and recreation of the idea of the nation and the process of nation-building, and impeded a thorough understanding of how ideas about nationhood were filtered through the institutions of the state. Of course, the linkage of state and nation does not necessarily hold for all places, and indeed, much contemporary political theory has argued that the two have become

separated as a result of globalisation. Yet during the first half of the twentieth century in Ecuador, it does seem that an analysis of the interaction is particularly apposite. The widespread analytical separation seems to reflect serious shortcomings in dominant understandings of the state rather than a deep-rooted theoretical conviction. In recent years, our sense of what society is, and of the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups has become significantly more complex, yet this complexity has not fed into a truly revived sense of what constitutes the state, nor of the process of state formation. Despite a wave of theoretical revisionism, there is still a tendency to see the state a monolithic entity, a "thing", even as the need for deconstruction and re-reading is proclaimed.

It has been noted that the initial efforts to "bring the state back in", which emerged in response to the romanticising tendencies of the "new social history", often "left the people out", lapsing into what Alan Knight has called "statolatry". Although these works demonstrated the importance of the power relations that tie local society and culture into the larger contexts of region, nation, and international economic and political systems, they failed to escape a simplistic dichotomy between "state" and "society". Within the Latin American state-building literature there was until recently very little explicit engagement with theory. Where the state was theorised it was generally as an instrument of class domination, a tendency emerging out of Marxist structuralist analysis and dependency theory.

There were some exceptions, notably the work of Alfred Stepan which represented an important early effort to explore the state from a Latin American perspective as a constantly evolving structure. His definition of the state as "the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure

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80 Examples of this literature include Charles Bright and Susan Harding (eds.) Statemaking and Social Movements: Essays in History and Theory (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol (eds.) Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
relations between civil society and public authority in a polity, but also to structure many crucial relations within civil society as well,” is a useful starting point for conceiving of negotiations between competing elites and discourse as shaping the development of the state. However, it is the work of Joseph and Nugent which has been most influential in developing a 'state formation' approach, advancing the idea of examining the discursive regime or image repertoire of the state through an investigation of the "historical genealogy, archaeology, and origination of those terms as forms". Their work built on advances made by James Scott in relation to peasant resistance Southeast Asia, and by Corrigan and Sayer in relation to state formation as cultural revolution in England in order to advance a framework for understanding the relationship between popular cultures and state building. Shifting the question asked from who rules to how rule is accomplished has generated an expanded conception of the political, which encompasses the political features of all economic, cultural and 'private' relations. These understandings have been reflected in the rejection of an oppositional model of state-society relations, and the replacement of a focus on the conflict between local and national identities with a more nuanced sense of how each helps “create, construct, and enable the other”. A renewed engagement with the state has also been generated by the apparent crisis of the state, as its role as a regulator of social life and a locus of territorial sovereignty and cultural legitimacy came under threat from ethnic mobilisations, separatist movements, globalisation of capital and trade, and intensified movement of people, at the exact moment that the discourse of rights and an expanded conception of

84 Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985); James Scott, Weapons of the Weak : Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1985). Corrigan and Sayer’s work was especially important in showing how the state operated as a generator of cultural processes, effectively laying the foundation for an exploration of the role of the state in defining race, class, and gender.
85 David Nugent, “Building the State, Making the Nation: The Bases and Limits of State Centralisation in 'Modern' Peru”, in American Anthropologist, Vol. 96, no. 2, 1994, p.335. For instances of this approach as related to the relationship between indigenous peoples and the state, see Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer (eds) Nation-states and Indians in Latin America (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1991); Thomas Abercrombie, “To Be Indian, to be Bolivian: “Ethnic” and “National” Discourses of Identity”, in
citizenship placed increased pressure on states to fulfil more duties to its citizens. But while such work has been extremely important in pushing forward understandings of the relationship between the state and civil society, its promise to deconstruct the nature of the state itself, avoiding "abstract characterisations that...metamorphose into reifications" has not been truly fulfilled.

This is despite some promising leads. The work of Philip Abrams, in particular, has made great strides in articulating the ideological dimensions of the state. Abrams identified two primary state functions. There is the state system: "a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centred in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society". The socio-economic make-up of the state system (that is, who is included in the political hierarchy, what specific policies are, and who benefits from them, and what group has the greatest control of government), and the strength of the system can change from nation to nation and over time. There is also the state idea which is a set of ideologies focused on ensuring the political legitimacy of a ruling regime. These two dimensions effectively add up to the "imagined reality" of the state. To analyse the relationship between these two constructs it is necessary to look at both discourse and practice, with law as the defining link, capable of operating as an arena of class struggle, as well as class rule. Abrams' argument that: "the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask....." represented a major step forward in rejecting the conceptualisation of the state as a hidden structural reality. This idea of the state as a form of "social fantasy" circulating among citizens and communities has provided the basis for a closer focus on the ambiguities of the state, and its disaggregation into the "multitude of discrete operations,

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90 Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State", p.82.
procedures, and representations in which it appears in the everyday life of ordinary people."\(^9\)

Yet despite the usefulness and validity of such an approach, it has not been universally accepted. Fernando López-Alvez in his recent overview of state formation in Latin America underlined his explicit decision to separate issues of race, class, gender and culture from the process of state formation, and to focus on the state in terms of the type of institution or regime created.\(^9\) In his effort to assess the validity of Charles Tilly's theory of how revolution and state formation inter-twined to craft the nation-state in Europe to the Latin American experience, he again negated the role of imagined dimensions in favour of the (undeniably important) role of war, conflict and capital.\(^9\) While the elements López-Alvez raises are undoubtedly crucial, he seems to misunderstand the nature of the argument put forward by proponents of the imagined nature of state formation, suggesting that they think the development of the state can be explained by personalities, biographies and philosophies, rather than social or structural processes.\(^4\) Yet the focus on the state's ideological dimensions has centred on the state as an "idea" that projects a certain kind of political philosophy, rather than the state as a "thing" shaped by the ideas and philosophies of those who run it. Moreover, few authors would argue that the structural and political dimensions assessed by López-Alvez are not important, simply that they represent only one part of a dual process of state-formation. Particularly in view of his concern to understand the development of the "nation-state", and the relationship between the patria and the state, an assessment of the ideological dimensions is unavoidable, since the formation of the nationalist dimension of state rule is known to be profoundly ideological. This is not to disregard the importance of López-Alvez's work, simply to question his dismissal of the ideas dimension of the state. By doing so, state-centric scholars run the risk of falling into the same trap that long befell theorists of the nation; focusing on what the state "is" when it is not a tangible thing.


\(^9\) López-Alves, "The Transatlantic Bridge".

\(^4\) Ibid, p. 156.
This also explains why López-Alvez's otherwise excellent work does not fully engage with how the process of state formation fed into the process of nation-building.

This brings us back to the generalised analytical separation of state and nation. Although few of the new engagements muse explicitly on the relationship between state formation and nation-building, many of these new articulations could potentially lend themselves to the analysis of such an inter-relationship. In particular, the focus on the nationalisation of the territory and the institutions of the state through the inscriptions of a history and a shared community in landscapes and cultural practices, as well as on the role of the state in representing the nation as key to its legitimacy alludes to the intertwinedness of state and nation-building practices. This is a point underlined by Sarah Radcliffe in her work on the development of the state in Ecuador which has looked more directly at the relationship between the two, exploring how through the "systematic production of a geographical imagination", the space of the state was domesticated as the proper place of the nation and as the spatial matrix within which local communities could be inscribed, fixed and ranked. This allows a basis on which the racialisation of state structures can be imagined, an argument which will be developed in this thesis, as the relationship between race, gender and nation is examined explicitly through the institutions of the state.

This is not to suggest that the state operated with autonomy in the creation of collective identities; rather, the argument presented here is that in early twentieth century Ecuador the state represented with central sphere within and against which rival political parties, factions, professional bodies and intellectual groupings, as well as competing institutions such as the Catholic Church contended for political and cultural power and dominance. The very weakness of the state - its financial fragility and administrative disorder - made this all the more prophetic, since even as the post-1895 state sought to expand its social and cultural reach and extend its legitimacy though conscription, education and expanded suffrage, the goals it sought to enact could be disrupted and contested at a local level.

95 Sarah Radcliffe, "Imagining the State as a Space: Territoriality and the Formation of the State in Ecuador", in Hansen and Stepputat (eds.) States of Imagination, pp. 123-145.
through acquisition of control over the mechanisms of the local state. The divisions
between the central state and local representatives meant the local elites and landed
interests were often successful in achieving dominance over the state at the local level,
often using the mechanisms of the judiciary to reinforce their position. Thus in many
respects it was the apparent 'weakness' of the state that underlined its validity as the
principal site of contestation for power.

The Liberal Revolution: An Overview

The Liberal Revolution of 1895 which forms the foundation for this thesis represents an
anomaly in terms of wider Latin American periodisation and chronology, in that the
ascendancy of liberalism emerged in Ecuador just as its influence was beginning to wane
in most other parts of the region. Conservatism was the dominant tendency in nineteenth
century Ecuador, and the centralisation of the state proceeded under the ultra-
conservative regime of Gabriel García Moreno (1861–65, 1869–75), in which the
Catholic Church and religious doctrine and iconography were invoked as nation-building
strategies.\textsuperscript{96} Liberalism represented a regional discourse, associated with the coastal
bourgeoisie who were marginalised by a conservative nation-building strategy which was
imagined around highland hegemony. Thus the Liberal Revolution represented a shift in
regional power as well as political ideology. The Liberal state sought to implement a
political project characterised by the development of free market relations, and the
dissemination of the idea of the state as the mediator between equal citizens protected
through legal provisions. This was reflected in such measures as the instigation of formal
military service, the expansion of state secular education, and the opening of the Quito-
Guayaquil railway. As such it represented a significant economic and ideological shift in
terms of the kind of ‘state idea’ being projected.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{96} Enrique Ayala Mora and Rafael Cordero, “El periodo garciano: panorama histórico”, in Enrique Ayala
Mora (ed.) \textit{Nueva Historia del Ecuador} Vol. 7, Época Republicana I (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional,
1983), pp.197-235; Derek Williams, “Assembling the “Empire of Morality”: State Building Strategies in
\textsuperscript{97} For an overview of the Liberal Revolution, see Enrique Ayala Mora, \textit{Historia de la revolución liberal
ecuatoriana} (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional, 1994).
The Revolution was embodied in the figures of Generals Eloy Alfaro and Leonidas Plaza. Eloy Alfaro was the military leader who brought the Revolution to power, a caudillo with huge popular prestige, who had headed the liberal guerrilla struggles that grappled for power during the 1870’s and 80’s.98 Alfaro had immense support among the lower classes; however, his militarism and populist tendencies – particularly his support of the rights of women and racially subordinated groups – generated much opposition to him, and developed intense factionalism within the Liberal party. Most liberal elites supported Plaza, who was considered to be a more ‘conventional’ political leader, and who had kinship ties to the major landowning families of the sierra. Although Alfaro is popularly considered to epitomise radical liberalism, with Plaza seen as the representing the institutionalisation of the Revolution, precisely because of his family ties to established oligarchial interests Plaza was able to undertake more radical policies against Church power.99 This did not forestall the disintegration of political relations between Alfaristas and Plazistas which culminated in the assassination of Alfaro in 1911 and the civil war of 1912 to 1916. The victory of Plazismo was followed by a decade characterised by the dominance of “bancocracy”, as the Liberal state became overwhelmingly associated with financial institutions and interests. This dominance was challenged in 1925 by the July Revolution in which young, radical low-ranking military officers came to power in a bloodless coup d’etat, with the aim of deposing the Guayaquil banking oligarchy.100 This movement was itself overthrown after it descended into dictatorship, and it was followed by thirteen years of political instability, rapidly switching presidents, and ideological incoherence. Although from the mid-1920’s the strength of liberalism was constantly challenged and contested by -among others- workers groups, the left,


feminism, and radical Catholicism, it remained dominant until the May Revolution of 1944.

The conceptualisation advanced here of the Liberal nation-building project as extending from 1895 to 1944 is a controversial one. There has been much debate in the literature as to when the Liberal period can be considered to have ended, and many have insisted that Liberal dominance came to an end in 1925 with the July Revolution.\textsuperscript{101} Certainly, the July Revolution represented a break with the preceding period of uninterrupted Liberal hegemony as manifested in electoral dominance and political power. However, I would argue that in terms of ideology, rather than policies or political personnel, Liberal hegemony remained intact until the 1940’s.\textsuperscript{102} Neither the young, radical military officers who headed the July Revolution nor the series of short-lived presidents, juntas and dictators which followed in a succession of seventeen governments in a fourteen year period of depression, economic collapse, and civil war throughout the 1930’s and early 1940’s were able to articulate any kind of far-reaching ideological programme which could challenge the dominance of Liberal thought. At least from the top-down perspective of the governing elites, liberalism remained the framework within which power and policy were constructed. Not until the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of May 1944 headed by Jose Maria Velasco, a popular nationalist coalition constructed in direct opposition to liberalism, was the wider hegemony of the oligarchic Liberal order fully broken.\textsuperscript{103}

A Note on Sources and Methodologies


\textsuperscript{102} In this suggestion I am building on the argument of Enrique Ayala who has insisted that the Liberal Revolution in Ecuador needs to be conceived as extending beyond its official chronological boundaries as defined by electoral victories and the holding of formal political power, to be seen as the overarching ideological framework for the first half of the twentieth century. See Ayala, \textit{Historia de la revolucion liberal}.

Source material related to early twentieth century Ecuador is characterised by its fragmentation and dispersal. Libraries in the UK hold very little primary or secondary material pertaining to Ecuador, and the majority of secondary research for this thesis was of necessity carried out in libraries in Washington D.C and Texas. Access to historical material in Ecuador itself is no less challenging, with the majority of archives in the early stages of cataloguing, and difficult to access, with documents in a poor state of repair, particularly on the coast where they have been subject to the depredations of insects, humid weather and fire. This is the inescapable consequence of many years of underfunding, which all historians of Ecuador hope will be rectified once economic growth yields new resources to the state. Such frustrations were exacerbated by the weakness of the Ecuadorian historiography alluded to above, which is fragile and fragmented, characterised by localised, politically partisan accounts, written by non-professional historians. There are major exceptions, notably the work of Enrique Ayala which has contributed immeasurably to the development of a coherent historical literature, through his own contributions and the edited collections he has overseen, as well as the work of those writers mentioned above. Although these limitations were compensated for by the unfailing courtesy and willingness to help of the librarians and archivists that I encountered, these realities have affected the research strategies employed in this thesis.

Most notably, in view of the absence of studies for this period that bring together social, political, economic, and cultural issues in the construction of the Liberal state, or which engage with issues of race and ethnicity in nation formation, I decided to situate my analysis firmly at the national level; a decision out of line with the current tendency to undertake a regionalised case study in order to provide a localised lens on the construction and contestation of national policy. I felt that the use of such methodologies in the context of the fragmentary Ecuadorian literature has meant that even the very valuable new research being undertaken has been able to present only a partial picture of the interaction between elite and subaltern groups, with the result that a full understanding of the dynamics of the Liberal state as a whole are still lacking. A national focus, too,
seemed essential to a full understanding of the process of racialisation. Indeed, part of
the reason why blacks have been so marginalised from literature looking at the relations
between Indians as ethnically subordinate groups and the state is that these have focused
on the highlands where blackness is a discourse considered to lack regional pertinence. Thus I decided to concentrate my research in national archives in order to gain a definite
understanding of state discourse as it was articulated at this level. Supplementation of a
national perspective with local case studies would undoubtedly be valuable, and initially I
had planned to undertake research in local archives in Esmeraldas, Chimborazo and
Ibarra (black, indigenous and mixed black-indigenous regions respectively), but this
proved unfeasible due to constraints of time.

The decision to work in national archives shaped the kinds of sources that were used,
with government reports, presidential messages, laws, official bulletins, and newspapers
forming the primary source on the ideals and operation of state policies; on the surface an
overwhelmingly top-down perspective. Restricting my investigations to Quito archives
presented questions regarding the 'representativeness' of my sources, in that the
documents that arrive in central archives reflect only the ultimate stage in the 'trickle-up'
process from local administrations. Court cases present a prime example of this problem,
since patterns of litigation in cases involving Indians followed a particular logic. Most
litigation began with local judges in various towns and villages within the province,
before moving onto the provincial capital if these cases could not be resolved. Only
finally did they arrive in the Supreme Court in Quito. Thus these cases cannot be
presented as a truly representative sample of indigenous court cases. The same is true of
government sources more generally, in that the concerns raised by a provincial governor
in his annual report to a central ministry would reflect only his selection of the issues that
had claimed the attention of the office over the course of a year. However, in view of the
fact that Indians and blacks were not generally considered to be a priority by local state
representatives, the fact that their voices came through at all in certain issues is extremely
significant, and telling in and of itself. Likewise, the legal cases that did end up in the
Supreme Court in Quito were those that had proven trickiest and most difficult to settle.

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104 Derek Williams, personal communication.
Thus a focus on these cases provides an indication of the types of issues that caused most enduring and longstanding tension for indigenous communities. Thus it is to be hoped that the decision to take a national perspective did not inhibit a representative discussion of black and indigenous realities, but rather allowed a closing-in on those issues which were of prime importance.

It must also be underlined that 'official' sources were able to provide much evidence regarding the lives and activities of racially subaltern groups. By reading these documents carefully and asking the right kinds of questions – often taking sources apart and putting them back together several times - it was possible to piece together information on the ways in which state projects had affected black and indigenous groups, and how they had responded to them. Although the muted nature of black and indigenous voices within the official record is a point which must be underlined, a direct window into black and indigenous lives, beliefs and activities did exist in petitions, handbills, collections of oral histories, and judicial records. There were also many other ostensibly 'top-down' sources which yielded important subsidiary information which helped to contextualise my findings. Travellers accounts offered interesting and provocative chronicles of the racial and gender stereotypes in force at the time, while also providing information on customs, practices and everyday responses to state policy. Anthropological studies, indigenista writings and intellectual works more generally played a similar role, while also shedding light on changing ideas about the role of racially marginalised groups within the nation. Novels were also used as a reflection of national ideas, as well as a source of important background information in cases where no other sources existed. Photographs helped to reinforce particular findings. British Foreign Office and US Consular records presented an interesting and useful perspective from outside the state, especially as related to the role of foreign companies in shaping both 'race' and 'nation'. Thus a range of sources was drawn on which allowed for the integration of a top-down and bottom-up perspective that was so central to my understanding of how such an investigation should proceed.
A brief point must be made about the practicalities of locating racially subordinate groups within official documents. In general, Indians are clearly alluded to, marked out by the specificity of the legal and conceptual framework within which they were imagined. Thus references to ‘indígenas’, ‘comunidades indígenas’, and -more pejoratively - ‘indios’ are common within official documents. Blacks were much more difficult to find. Since they lacked a separate legal classification, they were only rarely the focus of ethnicised specification. Thus the strategy I used to uncover Afro-Ecuadorian histories was to base my assumption about ethnic classification on the basis of geographical belonging. If a document identified a peasant as being from Esmeraldas or from the Chota Valley I assumed that they were most likely to be black or mulatto. This brings with it an obvious risk of inaccuracy, and also of misrepresenting racial categories. In particular, I am probably guilty of lumping people of African descent into one generic racial category of “blacks” which cannot take account of the distinctions and oppositions between blacks and mulattos. I have tried to avoid this as much as possible, and to mark the distinctions where they are made explicit in the sources; however, it is not always possible, and it would not be possible to get any information on Afro-Ecuadorians whatsoever without adopting the mechanisms I have used. It should also be underlined that government officials and elites of the time did not really distinguish between blacks and mulattos within Esmeraldas. The distinction was in the category of the montuvio, the coastal peasant of mixed-race, popularly considered to have African blood. This group is considered to be the coastal equivalent of the mestizo and so issues related to it are not discussed at any length here.

It must also be noted that the imperative to narrow my focus to fit with the requirements of a doctoral thesis meant that certain issues important to the understanding of the period had to be omitted from the study, most notably religious tensions, the rise of alternative political nationalisms such as feminism and the left, and changes at the level of representation such as indigenismo and black protest literature. To explore any of these themes effectively would have required - at the very least - a thesis in itself. However, every effort has been made to ensure that the essence of the points presented by such issues has been integrated into the overall analysis.
Outline and Organisation of Thesis

This thesis is an exploration of the racialisation of state structures under a Liberal project, and a case study in the limits of state hegemony. The central focus is therefore the formation of state policy, and the ways in which this served as a basis for negotiation and resistance. Chapter one outlines the nature of Liberal ideology and its relationship with race as mediated through the negotiation of citizenship; as such it provides for the foundation for the rest of the thesis. Chapters two, three and four present case-studies of three core dimensions of state policy: respectively, the integration of national territory and resources; the politics of land; and social policy, with particular reference to education and health care. These issues are all understood to represent key elements in the nation-building process, and as such shed important light on how ideas of race interacted with the expansion of the state. The chapters explore the discourse within which these policies were formulated, and its relationship to wider political and economic factors. The nature of black and indigenous accommodation and resistance to these policies is discussed, in order to read black and indigenous own conceptions of their relationship to, and role within, the emerging nation. Chapter five takes a more direct view from below, and looks at how black and indigenous resistance movements – as distinct to the day-to-day resistance and negotiation discussed in relation to each dimension of policy- were created within the framework of liberalism, and how the gap between rhetoric and reality in fact determined the limits of state hegemony. A concluding chapter situates these findings within general discussions of race, state and nation.
Chapter One - The Liberal Project of Nation-Building, 1895-1944

This aim of this chapter is to explore how the Liberal state which came to power in the 1895 revolution conceived of its black and indigenous populations, in order to set the scene for the closer examination of liberal policies and popular responses to them which will form the main content of this thesis. It begins by locating the Liberal nation-building project in the context of the historical weakness of the nation state in Ecuador, contextualising this through a wider discussion of the inter-relationship between nation-building and racial discourse. It first explores the problems of regionalism and socio-ethnic division in the formation of national identity. It then examines the dynamics of the particular relationship between liberalism and race, emphasising the interaction between international discourse on race and internal socio-economic structures and political agendas. The influence of race on the post-1895 liberal project is discussed here through the medium of citizenship, seen in terms of Marshall's classic triumvirate of civil, social and political rights. Although the franchise remained extremely restricted during this period, with strict literacy and property-holding qualifications, I argue that a framework was laid out for the eventual incorporation of Indian and, to a lesser extent, black populations. This tactic recognition of black and indigenous inclusion granted these groups the agency to express their own interests, and to rally for the extension of political and social rights.

The primary focus of this chapter is on the early period of the liberal revolution, which outlined the core agenda of Ecuadorian liberalism for the following half century. The presidencies of Eloy Alfaro (1896-1900; 1906-1911) and Leonidas Plaza (1900-1906; 1911-1916) between them articulated a far-reaching political and economic programme, which centred on the development of a secular state, fuller integration into

the world economy, and the transfer of power from highland landowners to coastal mercantile and banking elites. An effort will also be made, however, to explore the ways in which subsequent regimes conceived of these same issues of race and national identity and how they built on the legacy of their predecessors.

Region, Race and the Problems of Nation-Building

It has frequently been argued that regionalism has been a more important force than nationalism in Ecuadorian history. Certainly, isolation and division rather than integration and cohesion have been the most powerful forces in the history of Ecuador. Geography has been a major barrier to national integration in Ecuador and has fostered social, political and economic division. This is a country cut in half by some of the world's tallest mountains, and profound cultural differences—in ethnicity, language, religiosity and culture—have developed correspondingly. Disputes over national territory predate even the colonial era: Sebastian de Benalcazar arrived in 1534 to find a contested terrain, with Atahualpa in Quito challenging Huascar in Cuzco for control of the Inca Empire. Such tensions were carried into the colonial system, with the Audencia of Quito constantly shifting between different bureaucratic and administrative structures. Each time Spain altered the lines of demarcation between

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4 The Inca conquest of the kingdom of Quito which correlated roughly with the boundaries of the later republic of Ecuador, and which had risen to a measure of greatness by the 15th century under the rule of the Cara Indians, occurred quite late in the history of the Inca Empire—it is normally placed at around 1487—and the Caras were never fully subjugated by the Incas. The Inca Empire was divided on the death of Emperor Huayna Capac, between Huascar, the oldest son and thus natural successor, and Atahualpa, the first son of the Huayna Capac’s marriage to the Quito princess Pacha, the daughter of the last Cara king. Huascar was to rule Cuzco, and Atahualpa Quito. The arrangement is generally interpreted as Huayna Capac’s recognition of the Inca’s failure to pacify the Caras, and as a concession to a form of “home rule.” For seven years the contest was bitterly fought, until Atahualpa and his Quito legions decisively defeated the forces of Huascar, and Quito was thus liberated from Inca rule. By the time this happened, however, the Spaniards had already arrived. See Federico Gonzalez Suarez, Historia General de la República del Ecuador (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1970 [1890]) Vol. I.

its colonies, the integrity of Quito as a fixed and unified place was fragmented. Disparities between the coast and the highlands were evident throughout this period. Quito adopted an attitude of cultural superiority towards Guayaquil, which generated in the port city a sense of cultural defensiveness, a feeling of "separateness", and a spirit of independence. These divisions were reinforced in 1804 when the crown detached Guayaquil, but not the rest of Ecuador, from the Viceroyalty of New Granada, and attached it instead to the Viceroyalty of Peru. Guayaquil broke away and declared itself an independent city-state between 1820-1822, thus achieving its independence from Spain ahead of the provinces of the Sierra.\(^6\) After the fuddled experiment with the Gran Colombia union, the establishment of the Ecuadorian Republic still did not signify the founding of a cohesive nation. Well into the republican era, three regions based around the major cities of Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca had distinctive cultures and a high degree of political and economic autonomy. The Amazon region, known in Ecuador as the Oriente, was even less articulated than the other regions, and was left to the care of religious communities throughout the colonial period. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1769 led to a further decline in the Spanish presence in the region, and by the nineteenth century the Southern Amazon experienced more influence from Peru than from the Ecuadorian core.\(^7\) Even the very name "Ecuador" was not conducive to nationhood, representing a scientific imposition that to this day garners controversy. The name was given in response to the French scientific expedition led by Charles de la Condamine, which charted the equator in Ecuador between 1736 and 1743, in an effort to link the new Republic with this scientific prestige. The name Quito would have been far more logical, reflecting both the colonial and the pre-Inca heritage.\(^8\) The lack of integration of Ecuador's principal

\(^6\) Kasza, "Regional Conflict in Ecuador, pp.15-20; Pino, Social and Economic Reform, pp.38-39


\(^8\) The name has been a source of long-standing agitation for Ecuadorian intellectuals – during the era of social Darwinist thought it was argued that it associated Ecuador too closely with the "degenerative" tropics, and even today it is held that it leads to the perception among foreigners that the country is located in Africa, or is unseemingly hot, and that it fails to reflect the mountain heritage of large parts of the Republic. Frequent proposals are made to change the name to Quito, which are invariably resisted by Guayaquileños and other inhabitants of the coast who associate the name only with the highland capital, and see it is an effort by the sierra to assert their dominance. However, such perceptions represent the superimposition of current regionalist divides onto historical issues, as the name Quito has a far more neutral and longstanding identity. The first known inhabitants of the region were the Quitu Indians, who gave their name to the area during both the
regions became particularly manifest in 1859 when four governments, based in Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca and Loja, claimed to rule the national territory.

Regionalism, then, was a key tension from the first moment of the life of Ecuador. In some ways Ecuador in the early nineteenth century was made up of regions that were oriented away from one another rather than towards each other. The coast produced cocoa for the world market, the Southern highland’s economy was directed towards Peru, while the North-Central highlands, characterised by large haciendas, were oriented towards Colombia. The circulation of Peruvian currency in the Southern highlands and Colombian in the North reflected this non-national orientation. These three regions operated according to separate economic rhythms throughout most of the nineteenth century. Although highland and coastal elites did share some common interests there was much more separating them, in particular control of manpower - labour was always scarce on the coast - and the maintenance of protectionist customs duties which defended highland textile production but limited commerce. Political elites in each zone worked assiduously to defend their own interests, and if possible to seize control over the national government and use its power and resources to advance them further. Thus, rather than focusing on national politics, political elites directed their energies towards the spoils of office or on obtaining pork-barrel legislation for their home regions. As Ronn Pineo has surmised: “Ecuadorians generally behaved as if motivated by local needs and interests; as a result, the national interest suffered.” Regional fragmentation was exacerbated by the obstacles to communication between the coast and sierra. During the nineteenth century, the difficulties of travel in Ecuadorian territory were summed up by the popular saying that Ecuadorian pathways were “caminos para pajaros”, or “roads for birds”. In 1892, the German geographer Teodoro Wolf argued that “in Ecuador, the trails are so minimally artificial that we could almost consider them to be a natural phenomenon, intimately bound to the topography.” Before the construction of the railway the quickest journey between Cara ascendency and the Inca Empire. After the conquest Spain likewise adopted the name Quito, creating the Royal Audencia of Quito in 1563.

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10 Ibid.
Quito and Guayaquil took three days, and during the rainy season—approximately six months of the year—the roads were almost completely impassable. The account of one of the more distinguished foreign travellers in Ecuador, Freidrich Hassaurek, the US Ambassador to Ecuador during the early 1860’s, of his voyage from Quito to Guayaquil captures the fatigue, inconvenience and sheer terror of a journey which encompassed canoe, steam-powered boat, mule and Indian carrier and where negotiating the muddy trails could be a matter of life and death. His description of his mules guilefulness in particular captures the precariousness and danger of the trip:

There are mules in this part of the country which are trained to slide down slippery declivities. Such animals are held in great estimation, and command good prices. They are sensible of the caution required in these descents, for, coming to the top of an eminence, they stop, and having placed their forelegs in a slanting position, they put their hind legs together, drawing them a little forward, as if going to lie down. In this attitude, having, as it were, taken a survey of the road, they slide down with startling velocity. Their dexterity in following the various windings of the road is really astonishing, for by gentle inclination of the body they turn first to one side and then to another, keeping the most perfect equilibrium, which is the only means of saving themselves or their rider from being hurled headlong forward, or being dashed to pieces by a fall. All the rider has to do is to keep himself fast in the saddle without checking the beast. Any unguarded motion on his part, by disordering the equilibrium of the mule might lead to fatal consequences.

Despite efforts from the Garcia Moreno era onwards to improve and maintain the road network, travel in the highlands and between the coast and the sierra remained almost as difficult in 1899 as it had been before independence. This obviously had extremely negative implications for both national integration and economic development. As Linda Alexander Rodriguez has argued: “Effective networks of communication facilitate commerce, strengthen national governments, and promote national integration. Where they do not exist national markets cannot develop, national governments remain ineffective, and regional loyalties and identity prevail.” Thus it

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15 Ibid, p.25.
16 Rodriguez, Search for Public Policy, p.13.
can be seen that the ineffectiveness of communications reinforced the existence of geographic and socio-economic subcultures.

Such subcultures have been conceptualised as centring around the division between the Sierra and the coast, thus it is imperative to understand the distinctions between the two. The Sierra was predominantly agricultural, and characterised by extremes of land concentration, and the maintenance of conservative and hierarchal social relations. Peasants were tied to the haciendas through the twin system of concertaje and huasipungaje, which required tenant farmers to work most of the week for the landowner in exchange for right to work their own subsistence plot of land; these plots were, however, too small to support the peasant household, and were customarily the least productive land on the hacienda. The isolation of haciendas from the outside world, the use of land-ownership as a marker of social prestige, and the availability of cheap labour hindered the development of market relations. There was some cottage industry, notably the manufacture of straw hats, aguardiente, and textiles, but production techniques were very basic. The social elite was fundamentally conservative, preserving values and attitudes based on the Spanish colonial foundations. The concepts of authority and hierarchy emerging from the landholding system were easily carried into the political arena. The middle class developed very weakly.

The coast had a different pattern of land tenure, based more on small and medium-sized farms run by peasant producers, and even the rapid development of the cocoa industry did not lead to the domination of large plantations. Industry developed much earlier and more dynamically: key manufactures included textiles, beverages, sugar and rice milling, and tobacco products. The coast was much more internally

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18 Martz, Ecuador, p.30

integrated than the highlands, and was the centre of both export and import trades. The coast’s virtual monopoly of exports gave the region and its principal seaport, Guayaquil, great economic and political power, while increased foreign trade prompted the development of sophisticated banking and financial institutions. The Church possessed little influence; perhaps partly as a consequence elites were much more open to social change and new ideas. A key tension between costa and sierra elites was the use of government revenue: coastal elites asserted that the government in Quito spent customs duties raised in Guayaquil - after the abolition of Indian tribute the primary source of government revenue - on projects to benefit the highlands, and there developed a widespread feeling among Guayaquileños that they were supporting Quito’s only business-politics - to the detriment of their own interests. One must of course be wary of over-simplifying coastal-sierra divisions. There has been a tendency among authors to view all tensions simply as a competition between Quito and Guayaquil: indeed, Arthur Whitaker famously described the history of Ecuador as “A Tale of Two Cities.” The fragmentation and divisiveness which characterised economic life, society and politics goes far beyond this, and subcultural variation within the regional provinces must not be overlooked, notably the rivalry between Cuenca and Quito, and between Guayaquil and Esmeraldas. The tendency towards over-zealous dualisation has been particularly apparent in the discussion pertaining to the regional embeddedness of political ideologies of liberalism and conservatism, serving to sustain the popular truism that liberals come from the coast and conservatives from the highlands, which more in-depth studies have shown to be somewhat overdrawn. However, as a general framework for exploring political and economic differentiation, the distinction between sierra and coast continues to possess much validity, not least because so many Ecuadorians thought in these terms.

21 Pineo, Social and Economic Reform, p.4, 36, 45-47.
23 Admittedly, these were often played out through the more central tension between Quito and Guayaquil; this is particularly apparent in the sporadic proposals by elites in Quito to develop Esmeraldas as an alternative port outlet to Guayaquil. See Martz, Ecuador p.4.1, also Jean Paul Deler Ecuador: Del Espacio al Estado Nacional (Quito: Banco Central, 1987) pp.28-29.
This can be seen in particular with regards to issues of racial composition and social structure which bear distinct regional overtones. Since no government took a national census until 1950, any discussion of population size, composition and distribution before that date must be based on estimates, fragmentary municipal or provincial census data, and the civil registry data on births and deaths. The bulk of this material has yet to be collected or analysed by demographers or historians, and the few specialists studying Ecuador’s demographic history have concentrated on the colonial period and the nineteenth century. Therefore any discussion of Ecuador’s population trends must be tentative, and, with regards to race, recognise that disagreements about the relative size of Ecuador’s racial groups continue to this day. An analysis based on 1930 civil registry data divided the nation’s population as follows: 10% white, 41% mestizo, 39% Indian, 5% black and mulatto and 5% other, while a recent US government publication estimates whites to be from 10-15% of the population, mestizos 22%-50%, Indians 39-60% and blacks and mulattos to be from 3% to 10%. The 1950 census did not ask questions about racial identification, only about linguistic characteristics (language preference), which is highly flawed from the perspective of trying to calculate ethnicity. Although disagreements about racial composition remain unresolved, it has been much easier to achieve consensus regarding the geographic distribution of ethnic groups in Ecuador. Observers are generally in agreement that the Indian population is overwhelmingly concentrated in the Sierra, a pattern which can be traced back to the colonial period. Hamerley’s data shows that in 1780 only 2% of Ecuador’s Indian population lived in the region that includes the modern provinces of

25 See for example, Michael Hamerly, Historia social y económica de la antigua provincia de Guayaquil 1763-1842 (Guayaquil: Archivo Historico del Guayas, 1973); Alfredo Costales Sanmiego and Piedad Penaherrera de Costales, Historia social del Ecuador (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1964).
Guayas, Manabi, Los Rios and part of El Oro. Allowing for a few Indians living in Esmeraldas and the Oriente, it can be concluded that at end of the 18th century 95% of Indians resided in the highlands. Travellers and scholars agree that this pattern did not alter significantly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1961 the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Antropología y Geografía calculated that 93.1% of all Indians lived in the sierra, 6.7% on the coast, and 0.2% in the Oriente. Blacks and mulattos have also tended to live in specific regions, generally on the coast. In 1892, Teodoro Wolf found that most blacks were living in isolated districts in the province of Esmeraldas. Post-1950 investigations by the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Antropología y Geografía and, later the Centro Cultural Afro-Ecuatoriano, demonstrate that the majority of Ecuador’s blacks, mulattos and zambos currently reside in the coastal provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabi, Guayas and El Oro. The exception to this is the highland region of Chota, which developed as a slave enclave, run by Jesuits, and to this day remains a centre of black population, with 97% of inhabitants estimated to be of Afro-Ecuadorian descent.

Ideas about race have given a particular slant to the historical consolidation of regional divisions, with racial idioms framing discussions of regional differentiation. Peter Wade has theorised the connection between region, race and moral characteristics in his discussion of what he terms the “cultural topography” of Colombia, in which he describes how the tension between a national project of territorial and cultural integration through “development” and the continued variety of regional cultures (which also have different racial identities), is expressed partly in intertwined sexual and racial imagery attached to given regions and reflecting different cultural patterns. The Caribbean coast for example is seen as “hot” and the Andean zone as “cold,” both climatically and sexually, reflecting popular ideas about the relative religiosity of the

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29 Hamerly, Historia Social, p.80.
32 Wolf, Geography and Geology.
34 Wade, Music, Race and Nation, p.20.
two regions and the “less orthodox” mating and reproductive patterns of the coast.\textsuperscript{35} Michael Taussig has presented a similar argument in his conceptualisation of the “moral topography” which affects the relationship between highland Colombians and the inhabitants of the tropical forest.\textsuperscript{36}

Such formulations can be applied with equal validity to Ecuador. Negative cultural stereotypes between coastal and highland regions which impeded political integration were based largely on ideas of race, and associated cultural and moral characteristics. To the racist whites of the sierra, the swarthy \textit{montuvios} of the coast were a bastard race—part European, Indian and Negro—and living proof of the evils of miscegenation. Into the 1960’s, \textit{serranos} referred to coastal people as “\textit{monos}” or monkeys, and decried their lax religious attitudes and the crass propensity of \textit{Guayaquileños} for making money. \textit{Costeños} replied that serranos were “\textit{longos}”, a term otherwise reserved for obsequious Indian houseboys. They saw \textit{quiteños} as proud and sanctimonious and claimed that the ostentatious piety of the sierra was wrought with hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{37} Such spatialised moral stigmas infiltrated even the lowest sectors of society. Lilo Linke, for example, claimed that although “economically, the \textit{montuvio} farm hand on the coastal plantation may not be much better off, living a hand to mouth existence… he would never consider himself to be on the same rung of the ladder as the Sierra Indian.”\textsuperscript{38} These images were not just elite constructions, and also fed into subaltern identities. In particular, blacks projected the sexualised imagery ascribed to them into the formation of their own identities, as can be seen especially in the black poetry, novels and popular music of the 1940’s and 50’s. The link between racial and regional differences facilitated the reification of both. Jorge Trujillo has argued that because of their connection with physical geographic features, regional divisions have been naturalised in Ecuadorian political thought.\textsuperscript{39} I would add racialised cultural differences to this model of a naturalised regionalism. Ideas of region are difficult to

\textsuperscript{35} The idea of black sexual prolifagy is classic racial stereotype and in Latin America and the Caribbean has often been linked to different mating patterns, which are also spatialised. \\
\textsuperscript{37} Kasza, “Regional Conflict”, pp.21-22. \\
disentangle from those of race and the interaction of the two have created a strong barrier to nation building. This can be seen in particular through an examination of conceptualisations of national identity: those who have tried to define the nature of “Ecuadorianidad” have not been able to avoid the twin issues of race and region. It is to the relationship between efforts to conceive national identity and ideas about race that I now turn.

The Search for National Identity

In Ecuador, as in other countries throughout Latin America, the ascription and reification of ideas of race has played a central role in social formation. During the Colonial period a separate commonwealth, La República de los Indios (The Indian Republic) was established with its own code of laws. While this code allowed native people to remain in many of their traditional settlements scattered across the mountains, it effectively segregated them from the Spanish and mestizo population which resided in the towns and cities; moreover, through the tributary system which required all able-bodied Indian males from 18-50 years of age to provide labour, species or service in kind, Indians came to form the backbone of the colonial economy. In this way, the system institutionalised a legal and social division between Spaniards and Indians which was used to equate power and privilege with racial identification. Differences which distinguished the Indian from the colonizer, such as phenotype, language and religion, were used by the Spanish to substantiate hierarchies drawn between a superior colonial group and an inferior native labouring population. This process was intimately intertwined with gendered ideas, and the definition of gender norms was central to its success. Representations and images of women were used to create and sustain racial stereotypes and race-based socio-economic

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42 Mestizaje, based on sexual encounters was clearly a gendered process, and has even been posited as a female-centred strategy aimed at social mobility, in which indigenous women “used bastardy as a social weapon”; declaring their offspring illegitimate regardless of whether the father was Indian or Spanish in order to ensure the child exemption from mita service and tribute payment, and to gain for themselves the elevated social status associated with the maternity of a mestizo child. See Therese Bouysee-Cassagne, “In praise of bastards: The uncertainties of mestizo identity in the 16th and 17th

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stratification.  This was true of both the Andes and the coast. In the urban slave society of Guayaquil, the polarisation of black and white femininity mediated through ascribed moral characteristics served, as it did throughout the New World, to preserve white male dominance unchallenged. Significantly, although the colonial race system operated as a tripartite system, with white, indigenous and black peoples all occupying different caste positions, it was labelled as a dual one, with blacks written out of the "imagined community" even at this pre-national stage.

In the immediate aftermath of independence racial exclusion continued to be a central feature of national life. The administrative separation of Indians and Spaniards continued into the Republican era, disregarding the high degree of miscegenation which had taken place. Initially at least, Ecuadorian national identity aspired to European patterns and its social orientation was towards the outside. The elite discourse on national identity had more to do with being European, with tracing one's roots to ancestors of European heritage, than with the search for national popular roots linked to indigenous or black traditions. However, the existence of racial divisions within the country could not be ignored. The increased emphasis on the ethnic dimension, or progeny, of the nation which was leading contemporary European writers to employ race as a synonym for nation, with references to the German race, or the English race becoming increasingly common, created a conundrum for would-

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43 The archetypal example is the case of Cortes and La Malinche, in which Malinche has been presented as 'betraying' her race; the emphasis on her 'disloyalty' clearly underlining the implication that the Indian occupies a fixed social position which must not be superseded. Verena Stolcke, "Invaded Women: Sex, Race and Class in the Formation of Colonial Society" in Fiona Wilson and Bodil Folke Fredericksen (eds) Ethnicity, Gender and the Subversion of Nationalism (London: Frank Cass and Co: 1995) pp.7-8. Such themes have unfortunately been extremely neglected in Ecuadorian colonial historiography, thus it is not possible to offer a more immediate case study.


45 This is a point made for Latin America more generally by Peter Wade. See Wade, Race and Ethnicity, p.11.

46 Conner, "A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a....." p.380.
be Ecuadorian nation builders. Anthony Smith has insisted on the importance of ethnic “myth, memory, value and symbol” for nation-state formation, whether as a crucial instrument in the hands of ‘modernist’ nation-builders, or as an impediment to their aims. In 19th century Ecuador, with a large indigenous population and a significant black presence, the latter case can be observed: a particular project of nationhood was pursued by a small Euro-centric elite in the presence of a large ethnic corpus with its own ideas about the significance of independence. In this sense Ecuador (and perhaps Latin America more widely) provides an early and classic example of how in former colonial countries nationalist struggles for independence have necessitated and often demanded the construction of a sense of nation amongst peoples who felt themselves to be ethnically different, in contrast to other parts of the world where nationalism can be prefigured in widely-shared social memories of culturally and ethnically relatively homogenous groups.

Although elites sought to distance themselves from the Indians at one level, Indianness played a critical role in the process of differentiating the Ecuadorian nation from other states, especially Spain, the parent state out of which the new nation was born. Indians could firstly be used as a symbol of Spanish oppression, a reminder that the struggle for Independence had possessed a moral imperative. The effort by post-independence governments to undermine the corporate identities of Indian communities through such means as the abolition of tribute was often presented as an attempt to end the repression of the colonial era. Symbols of Indianness could also be used as a

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48 This is perhaps epitomised by Simón Bolívar’s famous quote: “We are not Europeans, we are not Indians, but a middle group, between the indigenous and the Spanish, Americans by birth, and Europeans by right.” Cited in Radcliffe and Westwood, Remaking the Nation, p.10.


50 Tristan Platt for example has argued that in 19th Century Bolivia, ‘national projects were dreamed and fought for by many different social sectors; the hope of independence was not experienced by creoles alone.’ In Bolivia independence was fought for by many Indian guerillas, and finally received by them with much rejoicing. Indian communities looked to Republican legislation to ensure the curtailment of colonial abuses and to provide guarantees for what they saw as a ‘just’ social order. Thus nationalism was a contested project, and elites had to struggle to impose their hegemony. Platt, “Simón Bolívar, the Sun of Justice and the Amerindian Virgin”, pp.166-167.


52 Mark Van Aken, “The lingering death of Indian tribute in Ecuador” Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 61., no.3, 1981 p. 429. A particularly graphic effort to illustrate the burdens of tribute can be seen in the painting by Juan Augustin Guerrero entitled “Indian from Cotacachi whose parents...
representation of national identity. José Joaquín Olmedo (1781-1847) was one of the first post independence intellectuals to draw on the Inca heritage as a symbol of national pride, with his tribute to Huayana Capac, the last Inca to rule over a unified empire untouched by Spanish conquistadors, in his famous 900-line poem ‘Canto a Bolivar’. The distance between the Inca and the suffering Indians of the nineteenth century was presumed to counter any tendency of Ecuadorians (or Colombians, as they were then) to be ashamed of their Indian heritage. The use of Inca and Cara mythology and symbolism to articulate national identity represented a classic mechanism, used by elites throughout Latin America, of placing the nation’s roots in the Indian past without validating contemporary Indians. Moreover, the focus on the idea of Inca nobility flattered European conceptions of aristocratic races, enabling Ecuadorian elites to insist that they were not just second-class Europeans, but descendants of a noble and aristocratic race.

However, the Indians of the present day continued to be viewed as requiring “civilising” before their incorporation into the nation, as Juan Leon Mera’s classic “nationalist romance” Cumanda, made abundantly clear. Doris Sommer has argued that the Latin American romances of the nineteenth century inevitably involved stories of star-crossed lovers who represented particular regions, races, parties, or economic interest groups who should naturally come together; a metaphor that served to “legitimize the nation-family through love.” Yet the foundational novel was also a mechanism through which the limits of the nation were determined and restricted. In Cumanda, Carlos, an aspiring novelist and wealthy landowner accompanies his father - a missionary priest who had turned to the cloth after his wife and daughter died in a fire caused by an Indian uprising on his hacienda in an act of penitence for his previous cruelty to his Indian servants - to his new posting in the Amazon. There he is mesmerised by the jungle terrain and the innocent Indian people, untouched by put his eyes out when he was a child so he would not have to pay tribute” (c.1852). See Wilson Hallo, Imágenes del Ecuador del siglo XIX: Juan Agustín Guerrero (Quito: Ediciones del Sol / Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1981) Plate no. 97.


33Doris Sommer’s terminology, Foundational Fictions.

"civilisation", and falls in love with Cumanda, a beautiful Indian maiden. The love affair was doomed from the start: Cumanda is actually Carlos's sister, who supposedly perished in the fire as an infant, but had actually been rescued by an Indian woman and raised as her daughter. When Cumanda’s Indian ‘father’ discovers their relationship he forbids her to see Carlos, and has her married against her wishes to a local chief. On the night of the wedding, the chief was mortally wounded, which according to indigenous custom meant that Cumanda, as his most recent bride, had to be sacrificed. Carlos tried to rescue her, but he was attacked and held by Indian tribesmen. Cumanada offered herself in his place and managed to secure his release. Carlos’s father arrived and sought to intervene, but he was delayed administering the last rites to the dying chief, and she was killed before he could find her. Only from a locket that she had left for Carlos which included a picture of her mother did they find out the truth of her identity. The priest declared: “I have saved a soul but lost a daughter.” Carlos died of grief a few months later.56

The story left little doubt that Indians were savages whose only means of salvation (spiritual and social) was their acceptance of Catholicism - a shorthand for white civilisation more generally. Moreover, the love affair can be placed in the paradigm of 'civilisation and barbarism' which dominated nineteenth century Latin American thought. The clear implication was that the tempting simplicity of barbarism – or of relishing Latin America (either its territory or its people) in a state of nature – could not be condoned: the only way forward for the country was to emulate its Hispanic forebears. The many references to the magnificent abundance of nature as a source of growth and development were intended as a call for optimism about Ecuador’s future; the underlying assumption, however, was that this potential would be achieved only when the forces of civilisation (Europe) overcame those of barbarism (native Latin America). The function of the Indians in Cumanda is to confirm the validity of such a formula. The ambiguities in the representation of the Indians in Cumanda, with the beauty of the Indians and their proud love of freedom being counter-posed with the barbarity of their customs, are reflective of the dual role that the Jivaro have historically played in Ecuadorian nationalism, simultaneously being represented as the

56 Juan Leon Mera, Cumanda, o Drama entre Salvajes (Bogotá: La Oveja Negra, [1868]1986).
epitome of savagery and backwardness, and as an ‘indomitable nation’, that reflected the machismo and love of liberty of independent Ecuadoreans.57

Despite the persistence of negative associations with Indianness, it was increasingly recognised that Indians were at the centre of Ecuador’s future, and could not be overlooked in any plans for national development. The liberal intellectual, Juan Montalvo (1832-1889), for example, who consistently emphasised the moral dimensions of liberalism has been identified as a precursor to the indigenista movement of the 1940’s due to his concern with the political and social marginalisation of the Indian population. If mestizaje was not yet asserted as a symbol of national pride, it was at least acknowledged that Indians constituted a significant sector of the population who must be integrated and assimilated: this, then, was mestizaje as a cultural phenomenon, with Indians urged to adopt the customs and values of the dominant society. Black people, however, never featured in any of this early national imagining; rather, early manifestations of nationalism were constructed in opposition to blackness. A key issue in the nationalist uprising against the Flores regime was the blackness of the Venezuelan and Colombian army officers that supported him: Liberal opposition leaders argued that the presence of foreign ‘Negroid’ troops represented a threat to national security. There was no intellectual concern with blacks analogous to that directed at Indians. The first novels to include even the mixed-race montuvios of the coast did not emerge until the 1930’s.58 Thus in Ecuador the formation of national identity was mediated by plans and programmes for the construction of myths of homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity which, to invoke Brackette Williams’ phraseology, assured that “as nation builders, mythmakers …[became] race makers.”59

The race Ecuadorian nation builders were making was a mestizo one: black people were not included.60

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57 Blanca Muratorio, “Nacion, identidad y etnicidad: imagenes de los indios ecuatorianos y sus imagineros a fines del siglo XIX” in Muratorio (ed.) Imagenes y Imagenieros, p.142.

58 See especially, José de la Cuadra, El montuvio ecuatoriano (ensayo de presentacion) (Buenos Aires, Ediciones Iman, 1937); and Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Enrique Gil Gilbert, and Joaquin Gallegos Lara, Los que se van: Cuentos del cholo y del montuvio (Guayaquil: Zea y Paladines, 1930).


60 For an anthropological discussion of the contradiction between mestizaje and blackness, see Ronald Stutzman, “El mestizaje: all-inclusive ideology of exclusion” in Norman Whitten (ed) Cultural
Having explored the way in which regional difference inscribed as racial difference impeded the project of nation building, and how closely race was therefore intertwined with efforts to construct national identity, it is now possible to move on to the core discussion: ideologies of race and the Liberal nation building project. This must begin with a discussion of the contradictions apparent in the strong distinctions that have been drawn between Liberalism and Conservatism in Ecuador. There has been a definite tendency to over-emphasise these distinctions, despite the recognition that, as Ronn Pineo has insisted “personalities, not parties” were the main defining feature of nineteenth-century Ecuadorian politics.61 Liberalism in particular has usually been defined in terms of the Liberal Revolution of 1895, and in relation to the Liberal party that dominated political life during that era. There is a much broader sense of liberalism, however, which formed part of the context in which the national projects of the post-1895 Liberal period were conceptualised and carried out. Ecuadorian liberalism had as its reference point the political changes associated with the French Revolution (including its anticlericalism), as well as the ideas of European political economists about the free movement of goods and people.62 The context set by these ideas, which were certainly not confined to Europe, were an explicit reference point for Ecuadorian Liberal politicians and ideologues, as revealed by their frequent justification of new policies as “what is done in all the civilised countries of the world.”

Taking liberalism in this wider sense, the project on which the Liberal revolution was built, aimed at modernisation and integration, had its roots in earlier nation-building projects pursued by the Conservatives. While progressive policies such as the abolition of slavery and Indian tribute were enacted by Liberal governments against Conservative opposition, wider reforms such as attempts to reform education and to create a national and technical elite, to reform penal codes and develop the prison system, to establish a unitary currency and to improve transportation routes to facilitate the movement of goods and labour were pursued by the García Moreno regime, which is generally characterised as a hyper-conservative, authoritarian
'theocracy'. Modernity in Ecuador was not a liberal monopoly, and the Conservative and Catholic García Moreno pursued an essentially liberal modernising project. García Moreno has been characterised as a caudillo who used the Church instead of the military to ensure the stability of his regime and to force through his policies. Thus, his national project was pursued by bringing church and state together, rather than by separating them, in contrast to many other countries in Latin America where the fundamentals of a secular state were laid down during the nineteenth century. García Moreno perceived that in a country as fervently Catholic as Ecuador, the Church could be employed to dominate opposition to his broad project of modernising the state and forming an internal market. It has been persuasively argued that the church was indeed used as a tool by García Moreno, and that he strengthened it for his own purposes. Power in this period was concentrated in the highlands, and the close association between large landowners and the Church has led to the characterisation of this era as an “estado terrateniente” (large landowner’s state), notwithstanding the points of conflict between García Moreno and local clergy and highland landowners when their control over local indigenous labourers was weakened due to the labour demands of García Moreno’s extensive road building schemes.

The characterisation of the García Moreno regime has particular relevance for the study of state-indigenous relations, as the traditional paradigm of Liberal expansion as a threat to the autonomy of indigenous communities has limited applicability to Ecuador. In marked contrast to countries such as Peru and Mexico, latifundista expansion took place under Conservative rule, with the Church as an ally of the state

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63 Blanksten, Caudillos and Constitutions.
64 Key examples include Mexico’s mid-century Reforma, also later reforms in Chile, Argentina and Brazil.
receiving title to indigenous land, rather than suffering the expropriation of its own holdings. This complicity between Church and state enabled the church to expand its domination over indigenous communities: local clergy were able to consolidate their position as political authorities responsible for the administration of Indian communities, and were able to coerce forced labour and impose extra taxes. This in turn would have consequences for popular perceptions of the 1895 Liberal Revolution.

Military Action and the Popular Classes

The participation of black and indigenous troops in the civil war of 1895 was absolutely central to the Liberal victory, yet this popular effort has largely been written out of histories of the period. This is true even of primary documentation: government records, such as the reports of the Minister for War, mention the bravery of various columns and name them individually, but their ethnic origin is not specified. This pattern is mirrored in first hand testimonies – an account of the 1900 campaign in Tulcan, for example, emphasises the courage and leadership of the “Alfaro” column, but makes no mention of the fact that this section consisted mainly of blacks from the coastal region of Esmeraldas. In view of the regional concentration of ethnic minority populations discussed above, however, it is possible to deduce the ethnicity of soldiers from the information provided in Ministry of War files on the locality from which individual columns are drawn. Black and mixed race peasants in the coastal provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabi had been radicalised by more than a decade of liberal guerrilla activities in their regions: they had suffered personally from the consequences of state repression directed at the guerrillas, and they became convinced of the possibilities that liberalism offered for a radical democratic transformation. Black troops fought in all Liberal battles and formed the core of Alfaro’s army.

Indigenous people had less of a longstanding involvement with Alfarismo, but played a

69 Elias Troco Barba, La Campana de 1900 de Tulcán (capítulo olvidado en la historia del Ecuador y del sur de Colombia) (Quito; Talleres Graficos de Education, 1943).
71 Indeed, the majority of available group photographs depicting the Alfarista military struggles of the 1880’s include blacks. See especially Julio C. Troncoso, Vida anecdotica del General Eloy Alfaro.
key role in the battle of August 1895 in Guamote, Chimborazo, which represented the decisive victory of the civil war, and from whence Alfaro’s troops marched on into Quito. More than 10,000 local Indians were convened, without outside involvement, by the leaders of the major surrounding Indian communities – Pedro Guaman, Pablo Morocho and Alejandro Saenz- and their knowledge of the local terrain and their aid with the transportation of arms, munitions, food and water to troops across the mountain range is recognised to have been vital to the course of the battle. The same Indian communities later turned out to cheer and fete “el indio Alfaro” as he left for Quito. The name had been imposed on him by his enemies in attempt to discredit him; it was, however, adopted by Indians to show their acceptance of him as a leader.

Alfaro confirmed this alliance when he named the three leaders as colonels of his army and pronounced on the spot new rights for Indians, repudiating the territorial taxes and the forced labour programmes. In practice, these rights were not guaranteed by law until much later - the key point, however, is that rights for subordinate racial groups were placed onto the agenda of the Liberal Revolution from its very outset.

This parallels the relationship between women and the Liberal Revolution. While the 'upliftment' of women was recognised, just as was that of Indians, to be a fundamental Liberal duty, it was also placed on the agenda as a result of direct pressure from women themselves, both as intellectuals and activists, and through their role in the military struggles that brought the Revolution to power. Indeed, three women were also named colonels of Alfaro’s army in an act of political symbolism parallel to that invoked on Indian leaders. This symbolic alliance facilitated the implementation of a

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73 Valeria Goncharovo has argued that the nickname intensified the mythology surrounding Alfaro on both sides of the political and social divide, and sent the white highlanders into a panic with the rumour that Alfaro was himself Indian and that he had come to take vengeance on them for the humiliation and inhumane treatment they had inflicted on the Indians. Valeria Goncharovo, “Los indigenas en la revolucion liberal de Eloy Alfaro” in Los Pueblos autóctonos de America Latina: Pasado y presente Moscow: Ciencias Sociales Contemporaneos, Academia de Ciencias de USSR,1984, p.197.
74 Romero, “Lideres”. The power of this alliance is reflected in popular memory. Indigenous oral testimonies recall that it was specifically Eloy Alfaro who confiscated Church-owned haciendas, and implemented other favourable policies. In a collection of testimonies by Indians from Cayambe, Alfaro was remembered as a “runa who desired that we all lived equally.” This description of Alfaro as a “runa” is especially significant: he was considered by Indians to be one of them. See José Yanez
series of important legislative reforms which sought to transform the legal status of
women and facilitate their entry into public life, including the opening of the
universities to women, the legalization of divorce, and the protection of married
women’s rights to work and hold property and, ultimately, female suffrage. 75

So strong was subaltern support for the Liberal Revolution in this early period that
Ayala has suggested the need to characterise the liberalism of 1895 as defined by two
political projects: that of the peasants who fought for the redistribution of land and the
suppression of servile institutions such as concertaje, and that of the coastal
bourgeoisie who sought to consolidate their control over the export economy. Alfaro
himself was the link between the two: indeed the bourgeoisie accepted his leadership
largely because he guaranteed the popular support necessary for military triumph. 76 In
particular, Ayala emphasises the need to view the Liberal Revolution in the context of
the wider ‘revolutionary climate’ in Latin America in the late nineteenth century - the
liberal revolutions taking place in neighbouring Peru and Colombia, and Jose Marti and
the struggle for independence in Cuba – all of which had a strong popular basis and
intriguingly, in the case of Cuba, a definite black agenda aimed at racial equality. 77
Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of this chapter to explore in any detail the
nature of this ‘popular project’: sources do not exist for a detailed study of ‘subaltern
agendas’ within the revolutionary war. But if it is not possible to explore in any depth
the hidden ‘racial transcript’ of the Liberal revolution, it is possible to explore how the
response of the bourgeoisie to the popular agenda was mediated through ideas of race.

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del Pozo, Yo declaro con franqueza/Chashnami causaschcanchic : memoria oral de Pesillo-Cayambe

75 It has been argued that Eloy Alfaro purposely laid the base for women to vote in the Constitution of
1897 by decreeing that the elector must be a literate citizen, aged 21 or over; a clause which replaced
the law requiring the completion of military service prior to gaining suffrage. The fact that no
mention was made of the citizen’s sex left the path open for legal challenges, and due to pressure
from an elite group of women, in 1924 women were allowed to vote in local elections. In 1928 the
Constitution recognised women’s civil rights and they were able to exercise suffrage on a national
level, making Ecuador one of the first countries in Latin America to grant the vote to women. Ketty
Romo Leroux, La mujer: dura lucha por la igualdad (Guayaquil: Imprenta de la Universidad de
Guayaquil, 1983); Mercedes Jimenez Vega, La Mujer en la Historia del Ecuador: Las mujeres
tambien hacen historia (Quito: CECIM, 1998).

76 Ayala, “De La Revolucion Alfarista” p.119, pp.122-123. Ayala, however, takes a class based
analysis to this distinction, he has not analysed the possible racial transcript.

77 Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba; Helg, Our rightful share.
To attempt this we need first to briefly assess the nature of the 'official' Liberal agenda.

*Ideas of Liberalism; Ideas of Race*

The Liberal project was aimed primarily at political and economic modernisation. Crucially, it represented a regional transformation of power, with the coastal mercantile and banking elite seeking to assert a political power commensurate with their economic status. As such, its aims were to transfer state resources away from the highlands towards the coast, secularise the state and facilitate the integration of Ecuador into the world economy. The status of Indians, in particular, was relevant to each of these goals. Indians were perceived to be under the control of the Church and the highland landowners, while the exploitation of their labour – essential to the development of an effective market economy – was constrained by the institution of debt peonage. Moreover, indigenous culture was generally presented as being anti-capitalist: it was asserted that Indians had few needs and were concerned only with the lowest level of subsistence.78

Elites were also forced to contend with the growing influence of Social Darwinist ideas which presented the racial composition of nation states as the determining factor in their success or failure. Racial classifications were certainly a key feature of external perceptions of Ecuador. The *Handbook of Ecuador* produced by the International Bureau of the American Republics, for example, defined the inhabitants of Ecuador as being broken down into five classes which were explicitly racialised: “1) The white natives; 2) The pure Negroes; 3) The pure Indians; 4) The mixed races; 5) The

78 Indeed, Pedro Fermin Cevallos postulated the absence of material values as one of the core ‘moral values’ of Ecuadorian Indians. Pedro Fermin Cevallos, *Resumen de la historia del Ecuador*, (Ambato: Ilustre Municipio de Ambato, [1887]1985), p.155. The idea of Indians as “anti-market” has been a common stereotype (and justification for oppressive legislation) since the colonial period, yet recent studies in historical anthropology have shown how this was applied to them precisely as a result of efforts to extract them from the market economy. For example, in the aftermath of conquest, Inca merchants in Bolivia did extremely well economically, leading the crown to pass legislation against their participation in markets in order to circumvent the threat they posed to Spanish traders. See Olivia Harris and Brooke Larson, *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. (Durham : Duke University Press, 1995). In more recent times, such discourse has been at odds with activities of indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly the Otavaleños.
foreigners." While the whites were described as "respectable, progressive, intelligent and thoroughly cultivated", the other 'classes' were presented as a serious impediment to Ecuador's development. The indigenous inhabitants of the Amazonian region, for example, were good for nothing apart from walking long distances tirelessly – "for everything else they are extremely weak and lazy, and form a very inactive factor, almost entirely negative, in the civilisation of the country." The passivity of the highland Indian male, whose "individuality and manliness, if ever he possessed such qualities, have all being ground out of him," was seen as an obstacle to the creation of a strong and virile nation; while the "hot blooded and restless" montuvios (the product of black, white and indigenous mixing on the coast) were presented as the fount of Ecuador's political instability. Thus, the provision in the constitution prohibiting all illiterate blacks and Indians from the exercise of the franchise represented "the only means so far known to mitigate barbarism and to turn it into civilisation." Such ideas were replicated by foreign travellers who consistently described the Indian population as "savage" and "primitive", and lamented the laziness and economic backwardness of blacks. Where blacks or Indians were discussed favourably, the appreciation was purely physical, "the taut muscles" of the black canoeist or the "proud nose" of the indigenous tribesman, consistent with the idea of "inferior" races as animalistic and non-intellectual.

Liberal intellectuals in Ecuador were also susceptible to such ideas. The influence of science as a component of political thought in Latin America is well-known, and the social Darwinist model that we now understand to be "bad science" nevertheless had a strong impact across the continent where it was used to filter ideas about who would constitute the nation. Scientific thinking was particularly attractive to the modern, secular liberal intelligentsia who viewed it as symbolising the very essence of Western material and cultural authenticity, and as representing a form of progressive knowledge; an alternative to conservative, religious views of reality, and a means of

establishing a new form of cultural power. The power of scientific racism had an
obvious impact on discussions of the kinds of political structures that would be
appropriate to the Ecuadorian reality and was central to the conflicting pressures of
incorporation and control that structured liberal discourse as related to black and
indigenous populations. Its influence was also enduring, and lasted almost until the end
of the Liberal period, transforming its focus, and merging into the discourse of
“degeneration” which emerged in the 1920’s and 1930’s and the focus on the social ills
accumulated by the “unhygienic” and “dirty” practices of the “ignorant” and “unfit”
black and indigenous poor, as well as the rise of eugenics with its strong racial
overtones. Yet this tendency was always in conflict with efforts to reinterpret the
nation’s racial heritage in more optimistic ways, especially after the work of Franz
Boas and other anthropologists began to generate a shift in international racial
assumptions.

The interaction between popular pressures and elite national and international
discourses about race in determining Liberal attitudes towards blacks and Indians is
best discussed through an examination of attitudes towards citizenship for subordinate
racial groups. Citizenship was key to the liberal project. Political liberalism is
characterised by an emphasis on the equality of citizens before the law, the dissolution
of corporate groups, the separation of state and civil society and the establishment of
law rather than privilege as the fundamental principle governing peoples interactions.
Kim Clark has argued for the post 1895 Liberal project as conceived minimally along
twin strands of economic and political liberalism with the focus on both the economic
integration of the national territory to ensure the free movement of goods, labour and
capital, and “the dual individualisation and universalisation of people as citizens rather
than as members of inherently unequal and separate corporate groups.”81 Despite this
strong ideological framework, however, it was always apparent to Liberal politicians
and ideologues that not all Ecuadorians were equal. The next section explores how
ideas about biological and sociological difference were used to address this paradox at
the heart of the liberal project.

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Immigration and Citizenship: 'Empty Lands' and 'Racial Danger'

It is with regards to the issue of immigration that the effects of Social Darwinist racial ideas on the negotiation of citizenship are most evident. Immigration in Ecuador was discussed in terms of a civilising discourse, intimately related to social and moral upliftment. It was argued by government ministers that the inhabitants of other nations would come to "share and modify their traditions, to communicate and diffuse scientific, artistic, industrial and agricultural knowledge, and at the same time increase the number of producers and consumers."\(^\text{82}\) At one level, then, immigration was viewed as a tool for economic development; a means of increasing the population, allowing the development of more effective markets and facilitating the settlement of unproductive regions. This was particularly true with regards to the colonisation of the Amazon, which was seen as an unoccupied, 'empty' space: the indigenous populations that continued to live there following their traditional hunter-gatherer way of life were not considered to be 'legitimate' inhabitants because their particular system of resource management and their low population density meant that they were not considered to be economically 'productive'.\(^\text{83}\) Colonisation programmes began notably early in Ecuador—even during the nineteenth century governments were spending scarce resources on the settlement of colonies in the Amazon region. This prioritisation of Amazonian settlement can be interpreted in part as an effort to civilise a region which was intimately tied in national imaginings to savagery and wildness—both of nature and of the indigenous people who lived there.\(^\text{84}\) But this link of immigration to civilisation was envisaged as contributing to much more than just Amazonian development.

\(^{82}\) Anexos del Informes de los Gobernaciones al Ministro de Justicia, Estadistica y Culto in Mensajes e Informes, 1902, ABFL.

\(^{83}\) This can be seen in the annual reports of Provincial Governors in the Amazon region who consistently presented their reports on population with the Indian population defined separately from the number of inhabitants; for example "we are 78 inhabitants, 72 white and six blacks. There are also 556 Indians, mostly from the Zaparo tribe" Jefatura Politica del canton Curaray al Senor Gobemador de la Provincia de Oriente, Junio 1, 1911, in Informes de las Gobernaciones al Ministro de Instruccion Publica,1911 Mensajes e Informes 1911, ABFL. The representation of Amazonia as empty and uninhabited has been common throughout South America, and continues to form part of governmental discourse to this day. See for example Marianne Schmink and Charles Wood (ed.) Frontier Expansion in Amazonia, (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1984) and Steven Nugent, Big Mouth: The Amazon Speaks (San Francisco: Brown Trout, 1994).

\(^{84}\) This link between the wildness of nature and the 'savagery' of the Indian people who populated the region has been discussed above with relation to the book Cumanda. See also Jorge Trujillo, "La Amazonia: Region Imaginaria" Ecuador Debate, Vol.3, 1983. Special issue, 'Nacion, Region y Participacion Politica' p.154.
Alfaro, in his Presidential message of 1908 described immigration as the “magic wand that will lift up the people and elevate them to the heights of greatness.” Implicit in such formulations was the idea of social whitening. It was hoped that increased immigration would bring white Europeans who would help “dilute” the disadvantageous strains of indigenous and negro blood, and thus help to uplift the population as a whole: a process many Ecuadorian intellectuals, rather over-optimistically, argued was already underway. This idea of increasing the moral worth of the population through mixing with white blood was a typical response across Latin America to social Darwinist ideas.

Certainly, successive Ecuadorian liberal governments went to great lengths to attract European immigrants, granting extensive land rights, paying the cost of their passage from Europe, making concessions regarding the practice of religious and cultural traditions, and passing legislation allowing European colonies a significant degree of autonomy over their own municipal jurisdiction. At the turn of the century there was a flurry of contracts agreed between the Ecuadorian government and Austrian, German and Italian entrepreneurs, with the government paying businessmen to bring parties of up to 20,000 families to settle various parts of the national territory. Very few came to fruition, indeed most failed spectacularly, yet there were calls from the Liberal press for further liberalisation of the immigration laws, and for the establishment of immigration agencies in cities such as Berlin and Vienna. The idea of social whitening was at the fore of all of these debates. Discussing the need for a project to encourage

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85 Eloy Alfaro, Mensaje del Presidente al Congreso Nacional de 1908, Mensajes e Informes 1908, ABFL.
86 See for example Thomas Skidmore, Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) It is significant, and perhaps ironic, that whitening was a strategy already employed by Ecuadorian blacks themselves, as is evident from novels by Afro-Ecuadorian authors raised in this period, such as Adalberto Ortiz, and Gonzalo Ramón, where characters consistently seek to marry a white in order to have children of lighter complexions than themselves.
87 The average contract was for the importation of 2-3000 families, but the terms of the contracts became increasingly ambitious as enthusiasm for the project rose.
88 The most obvious example of this failure was a contract made with an English gentleman, Mr Weatherley, to bring 20,000 German families to settle along the banks of the Rio Napo, after he had already made similar arrangements with the Peruvian government which had fallen through. Such were the levels of tension with Peru regarding the Amazonian territories that it was interpreted by the Ecuadorian government as something of a coup to achieve a contract with Weatherley at the “expense” of Peru. Predictably, after much expense on the government’s part, it became clear that the
the immigration of German and Spanish-Basque families, *El Tiempo* insisted that: "The individuals of both nationalities are the best elements for colonisation, as much for the purity of the race as for their habits of morality, their sensible tastes, their pacific temperaments, their proverbial honorability, their habits of work, and the extremely recommendable trait of the high affection in which they hold the land, which allow them to achieve prosperity through the toil of their own hard work, while never failing in their duties by the state."\(^{89}\)

This racially filtered moralism played directly into discussions surrounding Europeans and citizenship. It was imagined that these apparent traits of attachment to the land and responsibility to the state could be transferred from the immigrant’s homeland to Ecuador through the granting of citizenship. It was always explicitly assumed that European settlers would be granted citizenship: in the congressional debates surrounding one of the few successful instances of European settlement in Ecuador, a colonisation project which saw 5000 Italian families established in the Oriente, the core issue was at what point the settlers could reasonably be considered to be national citizens, in view of the threat they would pose to national security if they did not quickly adopt an Ecuadorian nationality.\(^{90}\) Considerations of national sovereignty were key, and these debates must be viewed in the context of the growing conflict with the neighbouring countries of Peru, Brazil and Colombia over national boundaries. Ecuador’s national boundaries were not secure: the year after the Italian debate took place in congress a large tract of Amazonian territory was lost to Brazilian aggression; cessations to Colombia and Peru followed in 1916 and 1941 respectively,\(^{91}\) and it had long been recognised by politicians and the press that leaving the Oriente “unpopulated” was allowing these countries to extend their influence unchecked. Thus terms of the contract were not going to be fulfilled. See, *El Grito del Pueblo*, Guayaquil, 27 Abril de 1900; Mensaje del Ministro de lo Relaciones Exteriores, 1902, *Mensajes y Informes 1902*, ABFL. \(^{89}\) *El Tiempo*, Guayaquil, 22 de Junio 1901.

\(^{90}\) ‘Nacionalidad y Ciudadana’ in Leonidas Plaza Galo, Mensaje Presidencial 1903, *Mensajes e Informes, 1903*, ABFL. See also Miguel Valverde, Memoria de Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Justicia, Beneficencia, Higiene, Inmigración, Comercio, Industria y Minas, 10 Agosto, 1903, pxx. *Mensajes e Informes, 1903* ABFL.

\(^{91}\) The 1941 war with Peru was particularly catastrophic for Ecuador, which was obliged, as part of a war settlement laid out in the Rio Protocol, to cede 386,500 square kilometres –more than half her national territory –to the Southern Republic. Until the early 1980’s Ecuadorian governments refused to accept the boundaries laid out by the Rio Protocol and continued to lay out maps marked as
considerations of national sovereignty informed Ecuadorian conceptions of citizenship in a way that was perhaps less applicable to other Latin American countries where national boundaries were less at risk. The cost to the central government of having to provide for their administration was also a consideration: if the settlers were considered to be citizens they could staff their own judicial and administrative functions. However, there was still an additional racial aspect to this debate. Although there was wariness about extending them Ecuadorian nationality and citizenship too quickly, because of the inability to send undesirables back if they began to manifest pernicious behaviour once they had been declared nationals, the question was always when, not if, European settlers would be granted citizenship. Such concessions were not made for those in a similarly strategic location who were of a race considered to be undesirable: for example, the West Indian labourers who were recruited, often via Colombia and Brazil, to work on the rubber plantations during the rubber boom.

This is an important distinction because, despite the government’s efforts, ideals of social whitening through immigration were not to come to fruition. Rather than the hoped-for Europeans, the main immigrant groups attracted to Ecuador were Chinese labourers and black West Indians. The prominence of these groups in the larger coastal cities, particularly in Guayaquil, is apparent from criminal, hospital and cemetery records. Chinese and Jamaicans far outweighed any other non-Latin American group in classifications of foreign populations. The city census taken by the Governor of Guayaquil in 1899, for example, counts 642 Chinese, 175 Jamaicans, 9 Trinidadians according to pre-1941 divisions. The issue remains unsettled to the present day and border clashes continue.

92 A similar pattern can be seen, however, in Mexico following the war of 1847 in which large tracts of national territory were lost to the United States. Efforts to increase foreign immigration to secure the now reduced frontiers against further invasion were reinforced ideologically by the idea of reinforcing ‘weak’ national blood. See Charles Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in late 19th Century Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) pp.234-236.

93 ‘Nacionalidad y Ciudadana’ in Leonidas Plaza Galo, Mensaje Presidencial 1903, *Mensajes e Informes, 1903*, ABFL.

94 This was a key issue in the debate surrounding immigration and citizenship in the countries of the Southern Cone, where workers often arrived radicalised by the socialist and anarchist ideas which were emerging in early 20th Century Spain and Italy. See Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism in Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970).
and 5 Martiniqueans, as against 161 Italians, 35 French and 7 Danish. No efforts were made to extend citizenship to these groups, in fact efforts were made to prevent black and Chinese immigration altogether: the contract for the construction of Quito-San Lorenzo railway in 1905, for example, specified that no workers of the black or 'yellow' races could be used. The difference between the rhetoric of immigration as a boon to national development and the treatment accorded to the Chinese and black arrivals is striking and reflects the contradictions of the pro-immigration policy, as well as the centrality of racial concerns to this discourse.

Chinese immigration had been a longstanding preoccupation in Ecuador, as in other countries in Latin America where Chinese workers were seen as a threat both to racial integrity and to the profits of native merchants. Viciously racist anti-Chinese articles had been appearing in the Guayaquil city press from the 1870's onwards, and a law was passed in September 1889 banning Chinese immigration. The law however, was not always effectively enforced, and was not considered by many influential figures within the government to go nearly far enough. The Governor of the coastal province of Los Rios described the Chinese presence as “a cancer” which “soon will produce within our race...a weakening and immense corruption” insisting that “the only way of saving our race from this conflict is to pass a law that rids the Republic of the Chinese.” If this was not undertaken soon, “it will be impossible to erase the Chinese race and culture from our territory, as our people will have been overwhelmed by their pernicious vices.” So severe was the threat to Chinese people and property from the hostile attitudes directed against them that the British Consul was forced to intervene.

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95 Censo de Guayaquil, 1899 in Sección Cuadros, Mensajes e Informes 1900, ABFL. It is also likely that European populations were largely represented by sailors and merchants who tended to be more transitory.
96 'El Ferrocarril de Esmeraldas’, Seccion Contratos, Mensajes e Informes, 1905, ABFL. Hostility towards black immigration predated the Liberal era. During the Garcia Moreno administration the United States Ambassador Friedrich Haussareck put forward a series of proposals for colonisation schemes to settle North American blacks in Ecuador in the aftermath of the U.S Civil War. The logic behind the schemes was similar to that put forward for later European immigration schemes—that the immigrants would develop natural resources and contribute towards national wealth. Garcia Moreno rejected the scheme because of deeply-held ideas about black violence and restlessness. The extent of his opposition was such that he passed a presidential decree prohibiting the disembarkation of black North American at Guayaquil, despite the fact that it violated legislation passed to encourage white North American immigration. See James Worley, “Negro Colonization Schemes in Ecuador, 1861-1864” in Phylon, Vol.25, 1964, pp.307-312.
97 Informe del Gobernacion de Los Rios al Ministro de Instruccion Publica etc, 1911, Mensajes e Informes, 1911, ABFL.
on their behalf, informing the Ecuadorian government that should any act of violence committed by the authorities or the mob against the Chinese come to his attention, he would not fail “to take immediate steps in order to afford them the fullest protection in our power.”98 This did not prevent the tightening of legislation relating to Chinese immigration in 1909 and again in 1923, which aimed at enforcing the prohibition of 1889 and regulating the activities of those who did possess authorised residence.99

It is likely that the competition Chinese merchants posed to Ecuadorian merchants on the coast underlay anti-Chinese policies. This is implied by a 1920 publication promoting commerce in Guayaquil which stated that: “all the territory of Ecuador offers a broad field [for investment] for all the races (with the exception of the Mongolic);”100 Most Chinese were involved in commerce and their businesses were often the largest commercial establishments in their locality. Moreover, Chinese success was often represented as being the result of unfair competition: Chinese merchants were consistently accused in the Guayaquil press of cheating their customers and were scapegoated as the cause of everything from a regional salt shortage to the deteriorating quality of butter. Kim Clark has underlined how elites argued that the liberal principles of free trade did not apply to the Chinese because they were “unfair traders” – it was alleged that they limited their own living expenses to such an extent that they undercut merchants who operated under “natural conditions.”101 This discourse was fuelled by racial mythologies: a poem published in La Sanción entitled ‘Los chinos no tienen nervios’ suggested that the Chinese were able to work so hard, and thus to make so much money, because they had no feelings and were immune to hunger, pain and fatigue.102 Despite these qualifications, it was clear that the prohibition of Chinese immigration represented a clear contradiction of liberal rhetoric emphasising the importance of the free movement of goods and labour,

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98 St John to FO, October 31st 1897 in FO25/88/34. It is not clear from this account why the British were so keen to protect the Chinese.
99 The Chinese were widely accused of getting round the ban on immigration by sharing copies of their resident permits and other official documents among unauthorised friends and family, presumably taking advantage of the racist inability of the Ecuadorian authorities to distinguish between individual Chinese. See Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Policia, Beneficencia, Obras Publicas etc a la Nación en 1909. Mensajes e Informes, 1909, ABFL.
101 Clark, The Redemptive Work, p.90. 
as well as the conceptualisation of immigration as a boon to the development of the nation.\textsuperscript{103} There was also a clear irony in that the Chinese were being persecuted for doing exactly what is was hoped the granting of citizenship would encourage Europeans to do: make their permanent home in the country and establish successful enterprises.\textsuperscript{104} The paradox was resolved by invoking racial danger, centred on the alleged vices of opium smoking, prostitution and gambling which were argued to cause the degradation of Ecuadorian workers.

In his report to the Minister of the Interior in 1914, the Guayaquil Chief of Police lamented the effect on the health and “spiritual faculties” of the popular classes of the vice of opium smoking, the blame for which he laid firmly on the Chinese.\textsuperscript{105} He also raised the fear that the example was spreading to “the sons of influential families” as opium smoking became something of a fashion craze. The British Consul interpreted the efforts to tighten restrictions on the Chinese as a direct response to the growing problem of opium and morphine trafficking by Chinese merchants.\textsuperscript{106} Likewise, the US Consul at Guayaquil emphasised how the Chinese community were subject to constant police persecution as even the most innocuous of their traditional games came to be seen as constituting a form of gambling.\textsuperscript{107} A similar formula was applied to West Indian workers whose importation to work on the Quito-Guayaquil railway line was vigorously condemned by the Guayaquil press, and who were widely blamed for the violence, gambling and alcoholism that was endemic among workers along the line.\textsuperscript{108}

As the work spread to the highlands the Chief of Police of Pichincha blamed black immigration for the wave of drunkenness in the provinces, and singled out black immigration as a threat to the customs and even the “life itself” of the national

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\item[102] \textit{La Sanción}, Quito, 29 de Octubre 1898
\item[103] Clark, \textit{The Redemptive Work}, p.90.
\item[104] There is evidence to suggest that many Chinese did go to great efforts to integrate and be accepted, with reports in the Guayaquil press of Chinese being baptised in the Catholic faith and of joining in local religious celebrations. These efforts, however, were always reported with contempt, or at best, mocking humour.
\item[105] Informe del Intendente General de Policía de la Provincia del Guayas al Ministro de lo Interior, 1914. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1914}. ABFL.
\item[106] Urquhart to FO, 27th March 1921, in FO371/8452/A2570.
\item[107] Bading to Secretary of State, August 31st 1926, doc no 226360. US State Department records, University of Texas at Austin Microfilm Collection, FILM 23,623, Reel 4.
\item[108] \textit{El Grito del Pueblo}, 6 de Noviembre, 1900; \textit{El Grito del Pueblo}, 10 de Diciembre, 1900.
\end{footnotes}
Much of this was due to the fear of the consequences of West Indian influence on Ecuadorian "blood" if miscegenation occurred: as an article in the Grito del Pueblo put it, "It is said that crossing invigorates the races, but . . . not with these "blacks fishes" [(sic) English from the original text] with their malicious restiveness, . . . and their big rolling eyes."  

This idea of racial danger was applied with equal vigour to Ecuadorian blacks. Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, one of the pioneers of Ecuadorian sociology, who was strongly influenced by Social Darwinist thought, summarised the general contempt in which the black population was held thus:

> There is no point in even studying the psychology of the black race, as it has been thoroughly undertaken by other authors and all sociologists are in agreement in pronouncing against the bad influence of their mixture with other races in the constitution of South America, which has brought only the most inferior psychological characteristics and mental qualities. This influence is notorious and has been felt in the distinct regions in which blacks exist in Ecuador . . . A servile race, created in slavery, and that has enjoyed liberty for only two or three generations, but is nonetheless the most restless and most excitable of groups . . . is the least suitable for incorporation into civilisation.

Not only would any black influence bring undesirable attributes to the race mixture, it would also slow the whitening process down. Espinosa argued that in contrast to "cholos" (his term for the product of first generation Indian and white mixture) who could easily assimilate the "anthropological characteristics" of the white race, mulattos were said to take on a lot of the characteristics of the negro race, and it was only after three or four generations that African blood could be eliminated. Pedro Fermín Cevallos made a similar case when he insisted that the worst of all race mixtures was that between an Indian and an African, which "does nothing to improve the Indian, except leave him tainted with the ugly form of the negro." Blacks and mulattos were also consistently blamed for the country's political instability, with one writer even positing the importation of African slaves in the colonial era as having "disrupted the

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109 Informe del Señor Intendente General de Policía, Provincia de Pichincha, May 10, 1901, in Informes de los Gobernadores al Ministro de lo Interior, 1901, Mensajes e Informes 1901. ABFL.
110 El Grito del Pueblo, 9 de Diciembre de 1900.
111 Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, Psicología y sociología del pueblo ecuatoriano (Quito: Banco Central del Ecuador, 1979[ 1918]) pp.166-167.
112 Pedro Fermín Cevallos, Historia del Ecuador, tomo VI (Guayaquil: Imprenta de la Nación) p.91.
course" of Ecuadorian history due to the "bloody and war-like ways" of the blacks. Other writers emphasised the laziness and indolence of blacks and their alleged tendencies towards criminality as a source of racial danger. It is notable that in 1901 the Office of Anthropometry, Crime, and Statistics began to compile figures on the "race" of offenders in crime statistics: evidence that a clear link was being posited between race and criminality. The constant complaints of West Indian workers to the British Consul protesting their wrongful imprisonment highlight how these ideas worked their way into lived experience for many black people.

Blacks were also presented as a corrupting influence on the Indian population. In 1903 the Governor of the Province of Esmeraldas wrote a report to the minister of the interior, insisting on the need to separate the Cayapa Indians, who lived along the River Cayapas, from the neighbouring black population whom he saw as a threat to the "intelligent, honest, egalitarian and noble" Indians. This was a sentiment supported by Dr Antonio Metalli, an Italian missionary working with the Cayapa, who in a series of newspaper articles written to gain support for his evangelisation programme asserted that blacks were encroaching on Indian land, stealing their possessions and even corrupting them with their magical beliefs and fervent anti-missionary sentiment. Both Metalli and the Governor argued that this group of Indians possessed such qualities as to make them ideal candidates to become "citizens of a truly democratic republic", and that to preserve these characteristics for their eventual integration into "civilisation" they must be separated from the "degenerative influence" of the black population. As a solution the Governor proposed that blacks be prohibited from

113 Hans Heiman Guzmán, Los inmigrantes en el Ecuador: Un estudio histórico (Quito: Casa Editora Liebmann, 1942), p.50.
114 It is ironic then, that the first set of statistics reported less crime in Esmeraldas, the black province, than in any other region of the country. See Informe del Gobernacion de la Provincia de Esmeraldas al Ministro de lo Interior, Policia, Obras Publicas etc, 1902 Mensajes e Informes 1902, ABFL.
115 The experiences of West Indian migrants will be discussed in chapter two.
117 It is ironic that the demonisation of blacks was perhaps even stronger among the Cayapa than it was amongst white officials and missionaries described above. The Cayapa referred to Afro-Ecuadorians as juyungo, howler monkey or devil, a result of rivalry emerging from competition for land, in which the Cayapa accused blacks of resorting to witchcraft to 'spoil' their land - an interesting parallel with white views of the Chinese who were believed to get ahead through using an unfair advantage. Blacks were seen as barbaric and even cannibalistic- Cayapa folk-stories tell of blacks feasting on Cayapa bones, and Cayapa tribes would shout "Comecayapas" ('Cayapa-eater')
entering Cayapa territory and urged their expulsion from lands they had previously settled and their relocation onto unoccupied (and probably infertile) land.118

Significantly, the Governor insisted throughout that the blacks in question were Colombian. This was possible: the fluidity of the border population between Colombia and Ecuador is well known. However, it seems more likely that it represented an attempt to negate the national identity of Ecuadorian blacks. This construction of blacks as Colombian, not Ecuadorian, was seen repeatedly in discussions of issues surrounding blacks – the reportage of crimes in the province of Esmeraldas for example.119

This can be viewed as part of a wider effort on the part of elites to deny the legitimacy of black populations within Ecuador. Advocates of social whitening were always keen to predict the elimination of black populations. Historian Pedro Fermin Cevallos insisted that the “negro element in Ecuador is scarcely worth computing” since the black population was merging so quickly into the mixed class due to the “influx” of white European and American immigrants –an assertion clearly more grounded in wishful thinking than in factual analysis.120 While the ‘Indian problem’, as it was conceived, was recognised by elites, who devised strategies to tackle it, blacks were simply ignored. This can be seen clearly in the national marginalisation of Esmeraldas. The region was simply not part of the national imaginary. As an ex-maroon community, which had maintained its centrality to the black population in the large-scale movement of freed slaves to the area in 1854, it was always neglected by the government. The government in Quito regarded the province as backward and defiant whenever blacks approached. There was also a gendered dynamic to these tensions: hostilities centred around indigenous fears of black men raping Cayapa women. See Constance Garcia-Barrio, “Blacks in Ecuadorian Literature” in Whitten Jr. (ed.) Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity pp. 551-552; Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo: historia de un negro, una isla y otros negros (Buenos Aires, Editorial Americalee, 1943).

118 Luis Tello, Informe del Gobernador de Esmeraldas al Ministro de lo Interior y Policia, Julio 18 de 1903, Mensajes e Informes, 1903. ABFL.
119 The association of blackness with Colombia was a longstanding issue. Blacks were seen as being in Ecuador as the result of Colombian slavery; in other words that they had arrived in Esmeraldas fleeing from a non-Ecuadorian reality. Gerado Maloney F. “El negro y la cuestión nacional” in Enrique Ayala Mora (ed.) Nueva Historia del Ecuador, Vol. 13, Ensayos Generales II. (Quito:1995) p61. Part of the reluctance to accept the reality of a black presence can be attributed to the refusal to associate the Ecuadorian nation with slavery.
and was reluctant to allocate funds for the needs of the area. As late as 1900 there were neither paved roads nor hospitals in the provincial capital of Esmeraldas. Less than a dozen schools existed, and recurring epidemics had wiped out a considerable number of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{121} Esmeraldan blacks had more in common with the blacks of the bordering coastal region of Colombia than with the rest of Ecuador.\textsuperscript{122} As demonstrated earlier blacks have been excluded from national mestizo identity from independence onwards; it should not be surprising that this continued at the level of imagination in the Liberal period despite the practical importance of black troops to the revolution. This may have been due to the weight of anti-blackness within international racial thought: there was simply no way of reconciling the negative conceptions of blacks within such thinking with the national self-image, so it was easier to simply ignore their presence.

**Indigenous “uplift” and equality before the law: Ideas about Indian citizenship**

With regards to the native Indian population of the highlands, Liberal thinkers and politicians found ways to challenge the fatalism of Social Darwinist thought regarding the racial composition of nations, with the result that the discourse surrounding indigenous citizenship was notably different. Rather than the biological ideas put forward about Chinese and blacks, Indians were considered to be incapable of participating fully in the nation because of their history — a history of oppression by the Catholic Church, highland landowners, and local officials. Therefore liberal discourse on the Indian focused on the need to free him from abuse and transform him into a being capable of participating in national life. As Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo framed the question: “How can we blame the poor backward Indian for his misery and ignorance, when it is we, the Republic, who have created it. His servilism is the direct result of his long centuries of slavery, his cunning and dissimulation a way to defend himself against


\textsuperscript{122} Whitten and Quiroga, “Ecuador”, p.79. Norman Whitten has earlier conceptualised Esmeraldan blacks as belonging to a greater ‘Pacific Lowlands Culture Area’ consisting of Panama, Ecuador and

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the greed of his masters, while distrust and suspicion has increased in him only through
the efforts of those who have tried to enrich themselves at his expense."123

The emphasis on the historical oppression of the Indians was reflected in wider
political thought, perhaps most pertinently in the Historia General del Ecuador of
Federico Gonzalez Suarez, the Archbishop of Quito, which caused a scandal within the
Church due to its unsympathetic depiction of the colonial regime and its description of
the abuses committed against indigenous communities by the Crown and the
Church.124 Thus as the Liberal period progressed, the universalising ideology of the
equality of men was combined with paternalistic statements and led to the argument
that Indians deserved special consideration and protection from public officials. As the
Minister of Justice insisted in 1897: "It is shocking to see the lamentable situation of
the Republic’s most unfortunate group: the Indians. Their complete ignorance and lack
of cultivation of their intelligence does not allow them to manage their commitments
with discernment, resulting in their perpetual slavery, and the endless accumulation of
their labour obligations. Thus it is necessary that officials of the liberal government
make an effort to rescue this neglected race from its prostration and barbarousness125

“National pride” and “patriotic duty” were routinely invoked by ministers in an attempt
to convince their colleagues to follow their lead in working for the uplift of the Indian
population. This was institutionalised in the 1897 Constitution which established the
state as the protector of the “miserable” Indians.126

The policies formulated to ameliorate the situation of indigenous peoples were centred
around the idea of fitting them for integration. Unlike the black population, Indians
were seen as fit subjects for integration. As Espinosa Tamayo asserted “it has been
shown that simply learning the Spanish language and being put in communication with

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123 Espinosa Tamayo, Psicologia y sociologia p.152.
124 Gonzalez Suarez, Historia General. Because of the critical position taken towards the colonial
Church, this key text was received, like many of Gonzalez Suarez’s later writings, much more
warmly by Liberals than by Conservatives, and has been posited as one of the key precursors of the
later indigenista movement.
125 Informe del Ministro del Justicia al Congreso Nacional 1897, Mensajes e Informes, 1897. ABFL.
126 Andres Guerrero, “Una imagen ventrilocua: El discurso Liberal de la “desgraciada raza indigena”
a fines del siglo XIX” in Muratorio (ed.) Imagenes y Imagineros, p.242.
the white and mestizo population has greatly improved their moral condition."\textsuperscript{127} Indians, in other words, had the capacity for \textit{cultural} assimilation, and unlike blacks, this could be a prelude to, rather than a consequence of, biological assimilation. This cultural assimilation would be achieved primarily through education. Education was viewed as a key source of progress by the liberal government, which was keen to extend its concept of "positive education"\textsuperscript{128} in the hope that it would harness the energy of the people to the masses. Eloy Alfaro’s presidential message of 1899, for example, instructed his ministers to make every effort to bring the "light of education" to the lowest strata of society.\textsuperscript{129} An emphasis was placed on the need for a moral education to be directed at the indigenous population, which would be appropriate to their "mental conditions" and adapted to their "particular psychology".\textsuperscript{130} This focus became particularly significant in view of the constitutional provisions linking citizenship (in terms of political rights) to literacy.

The idea of Indians as suitable subjects for citizenship, but at some unspecified point in the future, after cultural and moral education had transformed them, was embodied in the institution of military service. Indians continued to be listed alongside the clergy and the physically incapable as the only adult males exempted from military service.\textsuperscript{131} Military service is thought of by historians as one of the key mechanisms by which the state asserts its authority over marginal populations and instils in them a sense of national identity. In Ecuador, however, Indians were excluded because they were considered to be bad soldiers. They were held to be too short in stature to make a good fighting force; and to lack initiative, intelligence, and fierceness of character. These beliefs are exemplified by a remarkable document published in opposition to the universalisation of military service to include Indians in 1938, written by Leonardo Chiriboga, the Minister for the Armed Forces, in which he asserted that Indians made such poor soldiers that in order to defend the nation effectively, the demographic composition of the national race must be “improved” to dilute the numeric influence of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{127} Espinosa Tamayo \textit{Psicologia y sociologia} p.149.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Informe del Ministro del Educaci\'on 1911, \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1911}. ABFL.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Eloy Alfaro, Mensaje Presidential, 1899, \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1899}. ABFL.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Espinosa Tamayo \textit{Psicologia y sociologia}, p.150, p.155.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Ley de Reclutas y Reemplazos, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Cultos, Justicia etc., 1903 \textit{Mensajes e Informes 1903}. ABFL. Código Militar, 1905, \textit{Mensajes e Informes 1905}, ABFL.
\end{enumerate}
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the indigenous population. Drawing on pseudo-scientific discussions of human psychology and physiognomy, he outlined in extravagant detail the reasons why national defence should not be entrusted to Indian forces, arguing that Indians were too small and weak to carry even the same loads as the average European; that their muscles had been selectively developed for agricultural work, not marching and carrying weapons; and that their circulatory and respiratory systems prevented them from working quickly, insisting that Indian music, dance and song were all reflections of their slow and monotonous physiological state. He also focused on the unhygienic living conditions in which Indians subsisted, asserting that these resulted in high rates of tuberculosis, malnutrition, skin diseases, intestinal infections, syphilis, and parasites, all of which made them unsuitable for military activity, and that even if their social environment could be improved it would be several generations before the stunted growth and dwarfism which had been passed on genetically as a result of disease could be bred out of the population.132 So strong was the grip of eugenics and scientific racism on his thinking that he concluded that the biological condition of the Indians demonstrated that they were in a most advanced case of racial degeneration, such that they would cease to exist as a group within three generations.133 He suggested that, in the meantime, to avoid the army being overwhelmed by unsuitable Indians, racial quotas be imposed to reflect the superior capacities of whites and mestizos. Those Indians who were enlisted should be used as support, transport and technical columns rather than on the frontlines. While Chirboga’s ideas were never converted into government policy, officers in the armed forces remained extremely reluctant to recruit Indians, despite the shortage of forces in the 1930s and 40’s, repeatedly arguing that indigenous people should keep doing their agricultural jobs to ensure the economic health of the country during times of war. Other commentators opposed indigenous military service on more paternalistic grounds, arguing that Indians were too weak and child-like to withstand the rigours of military activity.134

133 Ibid, pp.600-602
134 El Comercio, Quito, 10 de marzo, 1925.
The marginalisation of Indians from the military contrasts strongly with the prevalence of blacks within the institution. A North American musicologist travelling in Ecuador during the 1920's recounted seeing black boys as young as 8 or 9 in Esmeraldas dressed in soldiers uniforms and carrying rifles. Soldiers could earn much more than ordinary labourers, and the military provided a key opportunity for social mobility for coastal blacks; indeed, many of the officers in Alfaro's army are known to have had black or mixed race blood. During the 1941 war with Peru, black 'macheteros' from Esmeraldas were considered to be Ecuador's "secret weapon", and were sent in large numbers to fight when it became clear that the regular Ecuadorian forces were no match for the Peruvian army. So mythologised had black fighting skills become that it was imagined (hoped) by the government that a few hundred men with machetes could overcome a modern military force armed with machine guns and a trained air force squadron. The contrast highlights the flip side of the "non-imagining" of blacks within the national community; that because of their lack of status as a particular legal or sociological group they could be more easily be fudged into the generalised classification of "the masses". One of the key ways in which the nation is constructed is through military service, in other words through the pact that all men must be prepared to go out and fight and be prepared to die on its behalf. The exclusion of Indians from the service must be read as part of the feminisation of the indigenous population; an attempt to construct them as subjects not citizens under the paternalistic, benevolent wing of the state.

Examples of this paternalistic sentiment towards Indians are evident in the policies formulated to ameliorate the situation of indigenous peoples. Nowhere is this clearer than in the debates surrounding concertaje. Concertaje was the contract system by which the landless Indian labourer would commit himself to work on a hacienda for all

136 For a fictionised account of the role of black Esmeraldans in the 1941 war see Ortiz, *Juyungo*, pp.189-211.
137 Peter Wade has argued with regards to contemporary Columbia that the black civil rights movement has suffered from a tendency to regard blacks as citizens, but second class ones. Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture in Colombia* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).
or part of the year. The obligation extended to the peasant’s entire family, the members of which were expected to provide labour for certain agricultural tasks and periodically to work as domestic servants. In exchange for these services, the peasant received an advance in wages, grains or animals (the *suplido*); a parcel of land (the *huasipungo*) to sustain his family; a monthly or trimestral ration of grains; and yearly, a few items of clothing. The peasant was also allowed access to the hacienda’s water supply, and to collect wood from the owners forests and graze animals on the *hacendado*’s pastures. While a daily wage was mandatory, Indian indebtedness frequently ensued as a result of the *suplido* system, or because of penalties incurred for alleged damage to the patron’s crops, or the death of animals in his charge. If the peasant died, his family continued to live on the *huasipungo*, and when the children grew up, they were expected to assume the obligation to pay off the original debt. The facility in the civil code allowing imprisonment for debts further contributed to the oppressive nature of the system, since it allowed the patron who felt that his *concierto* was not fulfilling his responsibilities to demand the imprisonment of his employee until the debt was paid or until the peasant “repented” of his transgressions. The institution of *concertaje* was key to representations of the *Sierra* as backward, archaic, and barbaric, and as standing in the way of capitalism, progress, modernity and civilisation.

Eloy Alfaro himself manifested a strong personal opposition to *concertaje*, proposing in his first presidential message measures to overturn *concertaje*, or at least improve the situation of the peons. However it was his Minister for the Interior, Abelardo Moncayo, who turned the stance against the oppression of the Indian into a political crusade. His *Concertaje de los indios* of 1895 reads like a veritable manifesto, describing *concertaje* as “the absolute abdication of liberty, the expropriation of free will and intelligence, the death of personality itself”, which had left the Indian brutalised, timid, and without feeling or emotion; “a sarcasm against civilisation” which had polluted the character and spirit of the nation. His vehement opposition to

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139 Efforts to emasculate racially subordinated males has been a regular part of gendered social stratification in all racially divide societies, and the sexual abuse and rape of black and indigenous women by white men in colonial Latin America and the Caribbean can be read in this way.


concertaje was shared by many other liberal intellectuals and policy makers, who drew a distinction between Liberal, Republican ideals and the situation of Indians; asserting that so long as concertaje existed, Ecuador did not have the right to call itself a republican, civilised, Christian country. Opponents highlighted the paradox of independence: that Liberals had fought to throw off the chains of servitude but had kept Indian enslavement intact. The Guayaquil newspaper *El Progreso* challenged the right of Liberals to even describe themselves as such in view of the situation of the Indian population: “It is logical that the Conservatives, who pride themselves on being the descendants of men of ‘pitchfork and blade’ would feel that they have the right to oppress the descendants of the Inca, but for Liberals to feel the same way is truly shameful…. The Liberal party is obliged to fight for the rights of all men, and on matters of principle there are no half measures.” 142

A key part of the Liberal critique of concertaje was the association made with African slavery. The fact that the institution was far more widespread than black slavery had ever been was presented as a source of national shame. The intellectual and novelist Luis A. Martinez drew specifically on the anti-slavery article of the constitution, arguing that the clause “there are not, nor will there be, slaves in the Republic of Ecuador” effectively meant “there will not be white or black slaves, but there will be Indian slaves - the Indian conciertos.”143 The analogy of debt peonage with slavery often contained a veiled anti-black racism, and was used to regret the fact that Indians had somehow fallen “below” blacks -their alleged social inferiors - on the ladder of social stratification. The Bishop of Guayaquil, for example, in a presentation to Congress, declaimed: “It is now acknowledged that the Indian is more intelligent than the Negro, yet he remains a slave all his life.”144 Yet this counterposing of Indians and blacks overlooked the fact that many black peons were also victims of debt peonage, and that their support of the Eloy Alfaro revolution was largely based on his commitment to dismantle the system of concertaje. Carlos Concha, during his time as Governor of Esmeraldas under Eloy Alfaro, was the only politician to publicly

142 *El Progreso*, 6 de Octubre, 1899.
143 'Conferencia dada por el señor Don Luis A. Martinez a la Sociedad Jurídico-Literaria, el 8 de diciembre de 1904' in Rodolfo Agoglia (ed.) *Pensamiento Romántico Ecuatoriano* (Quito: Banco Central: 1980) p.413.
144 Contained in Lawrence to FO, April 2, 1896, in FO 25/81.
recognise this connection, and he did much during his Governorship to draw attention to the plight of black peons in the province. However, the issue was not taken up by the ministers that succeeded him, and mention of even the existence of black conciertos completely disappeared from later reports.

Arguments against concertaje also had a strongly gendered dimension and were framed in the language of domesticity and femininity. Opponents deplored the way in which the wives and daughters of Indian children were forced to work to pay the husband’s debt, insisting that this undermined the institution of the family and the respectability of Indian women. It was expected that personal services within the hacienda, known as huasicama, be undertaken by women of the huasipungera family. Many young Indian girls were sent to the hacienda owner’s city homes, away from their family and community, to undertake domestic service. Women were also expected to undertake various jobs on the hacienda in exchange for hacienda resources, and they fulfilled any extra obligations that might be imposed as punishment on the family by the hacienda owner. None of these activities was renumerated and were carried out in addition to their labour in the family home and their child-raising duties. Women were subject to institutions such as the ponga, by which the labour of younger women in the family was transferred from the hacienda to the convents of local priests in exchange for nothing more than a smattering of Church teaching. Indian women were also subject to routine sexual abuse. In many parts of the Sierra the right of ‘pemada’, roughly translated as seigniorial rights, continued to exist well into the 20th century, by which the sons of landowners were considered to have the privilege to begin their sexual lives with the young Indian girls that worked in their houses.

This was a concern to Liberal reformers only insofar as it impinged on the masculinity of Indian men. The Chief of Police of Chimborazo, for example, expressed his concern at the “daily insult and dishonour” suffered by Indian men due to the ill-treatment of their wives and the violation of their daughters. The honour of the man, rather than the well-being of the woman, was paramount here. It was implied that Indians were being deprived of true manhood -a key component of freedom -so long as they did not
have complete and autonomous authority over their wives and daughters. Elite concern also reflected ideas about femininity and male protection, in that the situation of Indian women was seen as doubly bad because they could not be protected, cosseted and provided for as the dominant gender ideologies assumed that women should be. *Indigenista* novelist Jorge Icaza stated in his most famous work on the situation of Indian debt peons that: “There is nothing bleaker than to be an Indian woman in Ecuador,” a statement which followed a description of women's myriad economic obligations.  

The first legal action against *concertaje* came in 1899 with a decree issued by Eloy Alfaro, which began efforts to regulate the liquidation of debts. This was typical of Eloy Alfaro’s approach to the problem, with which he sought to gradually reform the legal foundations of the institution, rather than to abolish it head on. Further reforms were made in 1904 and 1906 in amendments to the *Codigo de Policia*, stating that the *hacendado* could not demand the services of the wife, children or relatives of the bonded peon, and that he could only receive the labour of the peon in exchange for wages, and for a fixed, relatively short, period of time –not for life as had traditionally been the case. The *Ley de 5 de Agosto 1911* further decreed that a contract for the hire of a day labourers services could be terminated by the police authorities if it was discovered that the contract had been unilateral, in other words, that the peon had been forced into it unwillingly. As thinkers and activists on the emerging Left picked up on the issue as one affecting rural workers, it became an increasingly intense topic of debate in Congress. Intellectual groupings such as *La Sociedad Juridico-Literaria* became concerned at the absence of legal protection for Indians, and began undertaking studies into the foundations of the problem. The most influential of these was by Dr Victor Manuel Peñaherrera of the *Academia de Abogados* who in 1916 undertook a study on the *Ley de Jomaleros* in which he insisted on the need for the abolition of personal compulsion in the creation of contracts; for the free dismissal of

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147 Decreto Presidencial de 12 de Abril 1899, Eloy Alfaro. *Mensajes e Informes, 1899,* sección decretas. ABFL.
existing contracts which did not comply with the laws surrounding labour contracts; for the abolition of the transmission of debt by death; and the establish of provincial juntas to regulate local proceedings.\textsuperscript{149} Imprisonment for debtors represented the juridical foundation of concertaje and as such it became the focus of an important Congressional debate between 1916 and 1918. This led finally to the abolition of imprisonment for debt and as a result the Liberals claimed a victory in abolishing concertaje; with President Baquerizo Moreno (1916-1920) proclaiming the abolition of the institution as the key achievement of his regime.\textsuperscript{150} However, the abolition of debt imprisonment was a mere formality for the Indian peasant who continued to be imprisoned with the collaboration of the teniente políticos who remained subordinate to the authority of the local patron. Moreover, all other elements of the concertaje contract remained unaltered, to the extent that haciendas continued to be sold with their Indian peons included well into the 1940’s.\textsuperscript{151}

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of the Liberal efforts, the apparent preoccupation of the party with improving the situation of the Indians gave the Liberals an important victory in enabling them to present themselves as the “uplifters of the masses”; the party of the people. By framing the debate surrounding concertaje in terms of oppression, misery and salvation, Liberals achieved a moral advantage, such that even opponents of abolition were forced to locate their arguments within the same framework. Conservatives who argued that efforts to reform and improve the social conditions of Indians were based on complete ignorance of their culture and customs, that they were too miserable and backward to deal with their own freedom, and would be left landless and destitute, presented the hacienda as a civilising institution, which stopped the Indian stealing and drinking, and exposed them to Christian, moral values.\textsuperscript{152} A similar pattern can be seen with regards to the Church, which was also forced to situate itself in the same field of debate as the Liberals. Federico Gonzalez

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, pp.325-6.
\textsuperscript{150} Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1920, Mensajes e Informes, 1920. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{151} Concertaje was only fully abolished with the Agrarian Reform Law of 1964, which called for the deliverance of all huasiipungos to the peasants working them, thus freeing them from the obligations that had formally tied them to the hacienda.
\textsuperscript{152} Nicolás Martínez, La condicion actual de la raza indígena de la provincia del Tungurahua (Ambato, 1916) Reprinted in Trujillo (ed.) Indianistas, indíanofoilos, indigenistas, pp.207-245.
Suarez, for example, published many documents supporting Liberal ideas regarding *concertaje*, insisting that the conditions the Indians were forced to live in prevented them from living a moral and Christian life.\textsuperscript{153}

However, even as the Liberals gained the moral high ground and achieved a virtual monopoly on the ability to speak in the name of the oppressed, their fundamental stance regarding the Indians remained unchanged. The very nature of the debate ensured that they were creating a framework for intervention which also ensured that the Indians remained excluded from citizenship until they had been “improved” enough to warrant it. Debates surrounding *concertaje* always invoked the Indian “character”, often explicitly describing them as children, not men. Andrés Guerrero has argued that the depiction of Indians as childlike and infantile was deliberate: an infant is a person who under the constitution possesses the characteristics of adults - discernment, free will, force, and full citizenship - but have not yet developed or obtained them fully. The Indian as ‘*hombre niño*’ was thus at a lower level of maturity and not yet deserving of his citizenship rights.\textsuperscript{154} The apparent paradox that the ‘defenders’ of the Indians pushing for their freedom were those invoking the stereotypes of Indians as childlike, ignorant and incapable of understanding their own situation can be understood in terms of the Liberal political project: transforming the masses before granting them citizenship.

This was typical of Liberal Indian policy more generally, where reforms enacted were always consistent with wider political goals. Laws were changed ostensibly to protect the Indian population, it is clear, however, that the Liberal government was legislating the status of the Indian to fit with their own wider agenda. Provincial governments were urged to clamp down on police abuse, and to punish the army for misdemeanours against Indians. Changes were made to the administration of indigenous communities to prevent local clergy and landowners from being able to consolidate their power over Indians through the bribery of corrupt officials, or through obtaining access to these position themselves. Efforts were made to regulate the activities of *tinterillos* (informal lawyers or scribes) who were accused of exploiting the Indian’s lack of education.

\textsuperscript{153} Guerrero, “Una imagen ventrilocua” p.235.
charging them extortionate fees for work not properly completed. These policies do at one level seem to have been formulated out of a genuine concern for Indian well-being and a commitment to the principles of legal equality. In other contexts, though, it is possible to see that the wider goals of the Liberal state were filtered through the effort to “uplift” the Indian. For example, Church power was attacked by stripping the priests and clergy of the privilege to require Indians to work for them in rotating services known as the ponga and the doctrina, as well as of their customary role as local political officials with responsibility for indigenous communities. Contribution of tithe and first fruits was made voluntary – these were decreed to be “anti-economic” taxes. Attempts to restrict the hold of landowners over Indian workers through restricting the institution of debt peonage correlated with the efforts of coastal elites to facilitate the movement of labour to the coast. The people presented to be at fault in Indian mistreatment were invariably hacendados and local priests; and there are clear parallels between the way in which the Indian had been used by post-independence Liberals as a symbol of all that was wrong with Spanish colonialism, and the way in which they were used by post-Revolutionary Liberals to highlight all the failings of the Conservative party. It is significant that Liberals targeted only hacienda Indians in their efforts at upliftment and transformation. The aim was transforming what Guerrero has referred to as the system of “ethnic administration” which had served to localise and privatise the governance of the indigenous population, allowing hacendados, the Church and other power groups virtually uncontested control over “their” Indians. There was no concern with the wider system of indigenous oppression; rather, the imagery of the Indian was used to give substance to a strategy of power which required the redefinition of the functions of the state in Ecuadorian society.

It is notable that indigenous groups themselves did not always welcome the reforms meant to help them. The British Consul describes a rebellion in 1898 by villagers from the highland village of Guano unhappy at changes in the tax system, which aimed to redistribute income away from the Church, but which the Indians interpreted as an

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155 Guerrero, La semántica de dominación.
156 Guerrero, “Una Imagen Ventrilocua”, p236.
attempt by local officials to increase the burden on their resources.157 A similar uprising was reported in Otavalo the following year.158 There was a tendency for Liberal officials to dismiss such protests as the result of church “rabble-rousing” and Indian ignorance. The evidence, however, suggests that some Indian communities valued their strong ties to the Church and preferred to support the Church through their taxes than a state they continued to perceive as distant and arbitrary. Likewise, the abolition of debt peonage was not universally welcomed by Indian groups. There is a tendency on the part of current observers to view all Indian debt as “bad”, and to equate it with oppression, exploitation and servitude. This was a habit shared by contemporary Liberals who could rarely resist the temptation to frame the debate in terms of suffering and coercement. However recent analysts have emphasised the variation in perceptions and institutions of concertaje highlighting the fact that many Indians viewed “debt” as “credit”, actively pressing for the extension of credit to pay for their share of the fiesta complex or for important lifecycle ceremonies such as marriage or funerals.159 Many foreign travellers also noted the fact that Indians valued the close personal ties to their patron that the debt relationship could bring, such as in this –admittedly extremely reactionary - observation from the Protestant missionary Mrs Orley Ford that: “In most cases the Indians are willing debtors as the patron often lends his influence to keep them out of jail after drunken sprees or gives them money to celebrate some feast.”160 Equally, the tinterillos who were so demonised by politicians and intellectuals were often Indians themselves, who had achieved a degree of education and who operated as informal lawyers. In may respects, the anti-tinterillo prejudice reflected a dislike of Indians perceived to be ‘above their station’, and a fear of the opportunities they possessed to challenge the power system.161 Thus it is clear that Liberal “Indian policy” was not always consistent with Indian desires, and reflected both a paternalistic impulse vis-à-vis the indigenous population, as well as a

157 Suderstrom to FO, March 4, 1898, in FO 25/93/14, and Suderstrom to FO, March 18, 1898 in FO 25/93/15
158 La Sanción, Agosto 2 de 1899.
159 Bauer, "Rural Workers in Spanish America"; Guerrero, La semántica del dominación.
160 Mrs Orley Ford In the High Andes (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association 1932) p.115.
161 This is exemplified by Nicolas Martinez, who contrasted the Indian tinterillos of the big cities, with a free landowning Indian from his own parish who, despite being rich, still lived in the same shack and wore the same clothes as when he had been a jornalero. La condición actual de la raza indígena, p.228.
desire to shape their legal status according to the needs of their political and economic project: that is, to create a mobile labour force, with allegiance to the central state rather than to the community or to the Church.  

The Restrictions and Opportunities of Liberalism

The racial tensions within Liberal nation-building ideologies must be viewed in terms of the inherent contradictions of liberalism. While political liberalism argues that individuals are equal (before the law), economic liberalism implies the continual production of inequality, associated as it is with the emergence of a society divided into classes - in this case based at least in part on race. However, political liberalism should not be seen as simply masking the inequalities promoted by economic liberalism. Indeed, classically, rather than representing a conspiracy to fool subalterns about the class nature of the bourgeois project, the equality of individuals as assured by law was essential to creating conditions of equal economic competition. In the particular arrangement of forces that characterised early 20th century Ecuador, the Liberal national project implied economic changes which entailed class conflict, but at the same time provided precisely the political and discursive mechanisms to deal with these conflicts.

Thus the language in which reforms relating to the Indian population were discussed acquires a central importance. All policies relating to Indians were framed in the liberal discourse of equality and universality, and this discourse created the "field of force" within which different social groups were constrained by the actions and projects of others, as informed by each groups perceptions of what social relations should be. Arguably, Liberal discourse laid down a framework of equality for all within which

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162 It should be underlined here that this did not necessarily change with the development of indigenismo from the 1920's. Although generally considered to be a counter-hegemonic discourse, associated with the left, the government was able to appropriate much of indigenista discourse as part of Liberal nation-building ideologies, and many of its findings are arguments were used as a basis for government policy. This was possible because both shared the same paternalistic,integrationist underpinnings.


blacks and Indians could negotiate for position. Its very universalising tendencies allowed individuals who were only partially or marginally perceived as members of the community to adopt its inclusive language to make claims for equal treatment and represented a way in which black and indigenous communities could engage with the nation. This point is crucial, because it presents the relationship between liberal citizenship and cultural authenticity in a new light. It has generally been argued that citizenship for Latin American blacks and Indians has required giving up integral elements of their cultural identity. Liberalism in particular, as a universalising discourse, with its overwhelming emphasis on assimilation and integration, has been seen as a negative force and has even been equated with ethnocide by one well known Andeanist in an early attempt to look at the issue of incorporation from an Indian perspective. However, the evidence suggests that in Ecuador, at least, Indians did not necessarily see liberalism in those terms. Liberal legislation and debate can potentially be seen as laying down a framework for an eventual citizenship, a framework which the state hoped would be used to shape the incorporation of Indian populations according to its own ideals, but which also provided a basis for negotiation and resistance by non elite communities: effectively it laid down the terms of the discussion for each group to interpret in their own way. The rest of this thesis explores the extent to which blacks and Indians were able to use this liberal framework to advance their own rights, according to their own conceptions of what these rights should be, and the different capacities each group had for doing so.

165 E. P Thompson's phrase.
166 Platt, "Liberalism and Ethnocide"
Chapter Two: The Politics of National Integration: Roads, Railways and the Penetration of Foreign Capital

I begin this effort to explore how black and indigenous people were able to interact with this Liberal framework in formatting their response to the Liberal nation-building process, with an examination of what is termed here the ‘politics of integration’ – those infrastructural projects aimed at consolidating and expanding state control over national territory and resources. The integration of the national territory is a key feature of nation-building. Modernist literature on the development of nationalism and the nation-state consistently emphasises the creation of roads and railways as a crucial stage in bringing outlying parts of the country under state control, and through movement and connection between regions establishing a sense of belonging and shared identity. However, such studies have focused very little on the racial dynamics of this process, which were marked in Ecuador. The expansion of the road and railway network, the development of primary resources such as oil, rubber and gold, the establishment of large-scale foreign enterprises, and the intensified penetration into the Amazon rainforest had particular implications for black and indigenous populations. It was black and indigenous peons that provided the labour force for these projects, whether as forced labour co-operatives that formed their ‘contribution’ for the public works programmes, as conscript soldiers on the roads, as debt peons on the expanding haciendas and in the rubber enterprises, as part of the communal mingas, or as wage labourers. Indeed their use in this capacity often formed an undercurrent to government enthusiasm for such projects; it was hoped that in addition to integrating national resources, they would also integrate the indigenous population in particular into the wage labour force. Moreover, it was generally the territories habitually occupied by black and indigenous communities that were being ‘integrated’ by the roads and railways, and on which the vast majority of mineral resources, oil and rubber were located. The result was that black and indigenous traditions and lifestyles were often profoundly affected by these developments. This chapter will explore the meaning of projects of national integration for black and indigenous peoples, and their responses to the changes and challenges they presented. It will highlight the competing racial ideologies that affected the trajectory and

1 See especially Breuilly, Nationalism and the State; Gellner, Nations and Nationalism.
outcome of these projects, and explore how ideas of race at times impeded wider state goals.

The development of a communications network: 'integration' and 'civilisation'

Efforts had been made throughout the Republican period to improve Ecuador's communications network, and to form some kind of effective link between the Andean region and the coast. Efforts to establish a route from the Northern highlands to the sea dated back to the colonial period; indeed it has been argued that Ibarra was chosen for settlement specifically because its location made the building of the shortest possible route to reach Panama practicable. Proposals for an effective route to the Oriente also stretched back to the colonial period, with Jesuit and Dominican missionaries pushing for a road which would facilitate their work. For a quarter of a century prior to the Liberal Revolution, Ecuadorians had been trying to build a railway between Guayaquil and Quito, and the governments of Gabriel García Moreno and Jose María Placido Caamaño (1884-1888) had both made significant efforts to begin work on this project. The government of Eloy Alfaro brought a renewed fervour to the development of Ecuador's communications network, and this was largely due to the personal commitment and political will of Alfaro himself. As he insisted: "A nation without railways, highways or paved roads is a country dead to progress."\(^2\) His greatest passion was famously reserved for the construction of the Quito-Guayaquil railway. Even as the final battles of the Liberal Revolution were being fought in 1895, he sent a team of Ecuadorian engineers to initiate railway exploration in the Alausí region, and in 1896 he began to solicit railway contractors, before he had even received approval from the constituent assembly scheduled for October.\(^3\) A contract was signed with the US railway entrepreneur Archer Harman in June of 1897, and Alfaro continued to support the work passionately through all the problems it encountered until its completion in 1908. His feelings towards the railway are summarised in a speech he made to Congress in 1898: "Without a railway I have always thought that any revolution is ephemeral, inefficient and laughable; any endeavour for progress, and thus my dream, my delirium, my only project is

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\(^2\) Eloy Alfaro, Mensaje del Encargado del Mando Supremo de la Republica a la Convencion Nacional de 1906, Mensajes e Informes, 1906, ABFL.

\(^3\) Clark, The Redemptive Work, p.35.
concentrated in this single word: Railway!"  

His conviction was shared by the overwhelming majority of Ecuadorian Liberals, as well as many other groups, who saw the railway as an ‘obra redentora’, or ‘redemptive work’; the cornerstone of a broad project of economic, political, social and even moral reform.  

The railway in this period was a great symbol of modernity throughout Latin America, and in Ecuador it was hoped that it would stimulate activity, encourage initiatives, and broaden the field of resources and relations in everything from commerce, agriculture and industry, to science, the arts and “all useful manifestations of human activity.”

The Quito to Guayaquil railway was unusual in Latin America in being specifically envisioned as a means of national integration, connecting the two most important population centres, in contrast to railways in neighbouring countries that were generally built to move export products directly from their zone of origin to a port. This was typical of Ecuadorian communications policy more generally. The Quito to Guayaquil railway was meant to be the spinal column of an extensive system of railways, and although most of them were never built, it did become the hub of a network of footpaths and horse and mule trails. Archival sources for this period are filled with reports of bridges being built and paths being opened, although until the 1920’s there was little attention to building roads that could support vehicular traffic, and even then it was concluded that roads should serve as a supplement to the expansion of the railway network. However, this emphasis on the creation of small paths, while undoubtedly in part a response to Ecuador’s chronic fiscal problems, was significant in its insistence on creating roads all over the country and not just focusing on “la gran carretera”, and suggested the aim of improving communications for ordinary people rather than simply making commercial connections. As the Governor of the Province of Imbabura insisted in 1911: “No-one can deny the importance of routes of communications for small towns for their economic, social and political progress, and especially in the three elements, agriculture, industry and commerce that

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4 Eloy Alfaro, Mensaje Especial del Presidente con referencia al Ferrocarril Guayaquil a Quito, 1898, Mensajes e Informes, 1898, ABFL.
6 El Comercio, Junio 25, 1908.
7 The love affair with railways was slow to end in Ecuador, and despite the financial crisis created by the Quito-Guayaquil Railway - described by a correspondent for the London Times as “Ecuador’s Old Man of the Sea” - and the delays and inconveniences encountered in the building of other major rail routes, the myriad debates held throughout the 1910’s, 20’s and 30’s on the benefits of rail versus road consistently concluded in favour of the creation of more railways.

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constitute public and private wealth." This concern with the connection of even the smallest hamlets was the result of a communications policy centred around the idea of national integration.

One of the key motivations for the development of transportation links was to secure national territory. Ecuadorian sovereignty - particularly over the Oriente, the Galapagos Islands and the province of Esmeraldas - was constantly under threat from the encroachment of neighbouring countries and from the efforts of world powers such as Great Britain and the United States to purchase important tracts of land. It was believed that if land could be effectively settled and administered this threat would be decreased. These aims were dependent upon the improvement of communications with outlying regions. "Effective defence of the Peruvian border" was consistently invoked as one of the key reasons for the establishment of roads and railways in the Oriente, as is highlighted by the surge of plans and proposals each time border tension flared. Such a formulation also possessed a strong moral dimension, with "effective control" of territory equated with the "civilisation" of black and indigenous populations, and the arrival of white settlers and colonisers. This paradigm is clearly apparent in the discourse surrounding the construction of routes to the Oriente and to Esmeraldas.

Control of the Amazon region was a key aim of the Liberal government, for the region was seen as a source of unlimited riches. As the British Consul wrote in a report on a trip to the Oriente in 1923: "It is almost second nature for Ecuadorians to talk and speak in the press of the Oriente as a land flowing with milk and honey, and the magic words 'riqueza del Oriente' quoted on all possible occasions would convey the meaning that untold wealth in petroleum, gold, platinum etc is awaiting the fortunate discoverer." Yet it was recognised that, as one writer asserted: "the

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8 Informe de la Gobernacion de Imbabura, Ibarra, Mayo 23 de 1911, Informes de las Gobernaciones al Ministerio de lo Interior, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1911, Mensajes e Informes, 1911, ABFL.
9 It is still suggested today that had the construction of the railway to the Amazon been successful Ecuador would not have lost territory to Peru because the railway would have led to the creation of cities whose inhabitants would have defended their patrimony. See for example Benigno Muñoz Rodas, Vida, Pasión y Muerte de los Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianas: Un Drama Trágico que huele a miseria nacional (Guayaquil: Universidad de Guayaquil, 1990) p.12.
10 Mitchell to FO, 23rd April 1923, FO371/18453/A3145.
Ecuadorian Oriente is a foreign country to us. It is the myth of our nationality.”11
There was little effective government, and the small administrations that existed were
chronically under-funded and isolated, with mail from Quito sometimes taking as long
as six months to arrive, and police and judicial functions practically non-existent. It
was accepted that the core problem was the absence of communications links. As the
Governor of the Oriente insisted in 1909, the biggest problem facing his administration
was that they still lacked a route that could be called a road - “even a bad road, even
the worst road ever.”12 In a similar vein proponents of the Quito-San Lorenzo railway
consistently cited the German geologist Theodore Wolf who asserted that: “The
province of Esmeraldas is a powerful rival on climate, timber and agricultural
products, fertility of the land and gold washing sites, to the province of Oriente or the
Amazon River, and has the added advantage of proximity to the ocean, making
exportation easier and more practicable,”13 arguing that the province would have a
portentous future if only a way could be found to exploit these riches intelligently.

In both cases it was argued that the best way to achieve this exploitation was through
the construction of road and rail links that would make settlement by white colonists
viable. As Abelardo Moncayo insisted while installed as Minister of the Interior, until
reliable communications were in place what the government was demanding of
colonists was “not patriotism but matrydom.”14 Despite Moncayo’s emphatic
insistence that the project of Amazon colonisation was not about “improving the
race”15, this was explicitly a civilising discourse, epitomised by Federico Gonzalez

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12 Informe de la Provincia del Oriente al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc., 1909. Informe
del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc. al Congreso Nacional de 1909, Mensaj es e Inform es
1909, ABFL.
Estudio presentado al Muy Concejo Cantonal de Esmeraldas, por su representante en la Junta Central
del Ferrocarril de Esmeraldas a Quito, al cesar en sus funciones. Quito, 23 diciembre 1923. (Quito:
Imprenta Gutenberg, 1924) p.I.
14 Abelardo Moncayo, “Problemas del Oriente Ecuatoriano: Explotación, Construcción de Vías Férreas,
Colonización de la Región Oriental etc., según el contrato de 1902’ In Abelardo Moncayo:
15 Moncayo was scathing of those who suggested – as in fact of majority of contemporaries did – that
the settlement of the Amazon was about “improving the race”; indeed he argued that the ‘race’ was not
the problem holding back Ecuador’s development, rather it was a lack of civic virtue which slowed
down the development of essential services and facilities. He insisted that the settlement of the Oriente
should not be described in terms of ‘conquest and colonisation’, but rather the effective occupation of
the land, and the development of its riches, a problem faced by many modern nations. He argued that
Ecuador should learn from the example of England which had discovered during the establishment of
the British Empire that a land was not fully conquered until deserted regions had been developed
Suarez's representation to the Junta Patriotica de Tunguruhua in support of the construction of a railway from Ambato to Curaray in which he asked: “Why do we want the Oriental territory – in order to leave it in a state of abandonment or to civilise it? We must decide whether we want to bring progress or civilisation or to remain in a state of backwardness.” Amazonian populations were denounced as “savages or adventurers,” with Amazonian Indians stereotyped as aucas and savages engaged in “barbaric and bloodthirsty” wars, outside the control of government and ecclesiastical authorities, and their ‘upliftment’ through contact with white-mestizo civilisation was proclaimed as an urgent priority. The Quito-San Lorenzo railway was likewise consistently emphasised as an aid to the immigration and settlement of Esmeraldas, which in a direct parallel with representations of the Oriente was generally viewed as an ‘empty’, ‘unsettled’ space, despite the obvious presence of black peasants and indigenous tribes. Colonisation was presented as a national priority: as one handbill in support of the railway put it, “The railway to San Lorenzo will resolve an urgent social problem: the colonisation of the extensive and fertile zone found between the Northern provinces and the town of Esmeraldas.”

This same civilising dialogue was also employed, with the Provincial Board of Imbabura insisting to the Kemmerer mission in 1926 that “the interior of the country undoubtedly requires the service of a fast and adequate route to place it in contact with the rest of the civilised world.” As in the case of the Oriente the posited ‘civilisation’ had a clear racial dimension, a link made most explicitly by the Minister of Public Works in 1919 when he stated that “This railroad may be compared with an enormous bridge carried on the shoulders of a whole nation to be erected between two

through occupation and cultivation, and he suggested looking to the example of the United States, Argentina and New Zealand for successful methods of achieving this goal. See Ibid, p88-89. In this formulation, however, he was making the same assumptions made by those he criticised, and continuing to view the Oriente as ‘unsettled’ with no regard for the rights of the Indian groups who had inhabited it for centuries.

16 El Comercio, 2 de Septiembre, 1910.
17Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia del Oriente al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc. 1909, Informes de los Gobernadores, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc. 1909, Mensajes e Informes 1909, ABFL.
18Informe de Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Telégrafos, Oriente etc., 1915, Mensajes e Informes, 1915, ABFL.
20AHBC, Fondo Kemmerer, Kemm.132.9.2. ‘Consultation of the Provincial Board of Imbabura to the Kemmerer Commission in Connection with the Quito-Ibarra Railway, Ibarra, December 21st’, 1926.
areas and two civilisations"²¹ – implicitly the black and indigenous culture zone of Esmeraldas itself and the ‘whiteness’ represented by ‘civilised’ Quito and the white immigrants it was hoped the railway would attract. Proponents of the Quito-San Lorenzo railway also emphasised its value as an aid to the security of the province of Esmeraldas. This again had racial dimensions, with blacks posited as the cause of regional instability.

The strength of this commitment to investment in the development of transportation and communications was such that even in the face of severe financial penury during the civil war of 1913-1918 and again following the depression in the 1930s, the construction of roads and railways continued to be articulated as a governmental priority, even if in reality lack of funds and political and regional conflict prevented the vast majority of schemes coming to fruition.²² Even after the severe criticism of the government’s “reckless and improvident” public works policy made by the Kemmerer Commission in 1927, the development of transportation links continued to be a proclaimed government priority.²³

Oil, Rubber and Gold: Foreign Capital and the Integration of National Resources

The corollary of the development of transportation links was the effort to maximise the yield of national resources. Ecuador possessed rich mineral deposits in Esmeraldas, Zamora and the Oriente, as well as oil and core primary products such as quina, curare, rubber, and tagua, all of which remained largely untapped.

The development of resources in the Oriente in this period largely possessed its own momentum, occurring within a series of boom-bust cycles, stimulated by a sudden

²¹ J.M Ayora, Informe del Ministro de Obras Publicas al Congreso Nacional de 1919, Mensajes e Informes, 1919, ABFL.
²² Of the three major categories of public works – communications and transportation, sanitation, and municipal buildings – in practice government buildings were always prioritised over projects that would benefit the population; it would seem that in situation of limited funds ministers and municipal councils voted in line with their self interest, whatever their proclaimed commitment to the development of a transportation network.
surge in external demand for a particular product; a pattern which characterised the quina boom of the 1870’s and 1880’s, the rubber boom of the 1890’s to the 1910’s, the gold rush of the 1930’s and the oil explorations that began in the 1940’s and peaked in the 1970’s. The extraction economies of the Oriente were, almost by definition, outside of the control of the government, based on operations deep in the forest far outside the range of authorities in Archidona and Macas, and run by brutish individuals who controlled the Indian peons they encountered with a combination of bribery with trade goods and trinkets, and sheer force and terror. This was due to the isolation of the regions in which such produce could be found, as well as the nature of the crops themselves. This was exemplified by the case of rubber, where the nature of the rubber trees found in the Ecuadorian Oriente profoundly affected the development of the industry. The *hevea* trees typical of the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon which grew grouped together over and allowed “gardens” of trees to be established by rubber producers did not exist in Ecuadorian territory, and only the wilder, more scattered *castilloa* trees that grew singly, dispersed throughout the forest could be found. These could only be tapped by moving across a vast range of territory, necessitating a semi-nomadic, unstable lifestyle that proved highly disruptive for *caucheros*, the environment and Indian communities alike.\(^{24}\) It also meant a non-sustainable method of production was employed, as the pressure to obtain as much sap as possible from a single tree resulted in trees being cut down and destroyed rather than simply tapped. Despite government efforts to preserve the trees through the establishment of rubber plantations, rubber production remained out of government control. The result was that by 1906 virtually all the rubber plants in Napo had disappeared and those in Curaray were severely depleted, with profits from the industry largely going to the rival nations of Peru and Brazil.\(^ {25}\)

The government faced a different set of problems with regards to the development of mineral resources. These industries required the use of sophisticated machinery and extensive capital investment, both of which Ecuador lacked. Ecuador was alone among Latin American nations with important mineral resources in not having developed a significant mining industry. Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Colombia all

possessed far more advanced mining economies than Ecuador, yet during the colonial period the mines of Zamora had achieved fame throughout the Spanish Empire and were considered to be the equal of those of Potosí.²⁶ The fact that they were never developed during the colonial period was due in large part to the absence of labour; the result of a conflict between hacendados and mining interests over the control of indigenous labour, where the strength of the hacendados meant that they won out, starving the mining sector of workers.²⁷ Although a small number of African slaves were imported to fill the void, Zaruma was too far from the major slave trading networks to make the importation of workers in any significant number viable.²⁸ In the aftermath of Independence, mining, like most Ecuadorian industries, fell into disarray caused by mismanagement and lack of funds. Mines were for the most part left in the hands of local black and indigenous communities, who combined small-scale panning with subsistence farming and were later blamed for the industry’s underdevelopment. Interest in reviving and expanding the mines did not increase until the late nineteenth century, when Theodore Wolf underlined the importance of mines and their potential. However, it was not until foreign investment was assured that the development of the mines could really begin. In 1880 the British-owned Great Zaruma Mining Company was formed for the exploration of all the mines of Zamora, which later became the Zaruma Mining Company. The Playa del Oro Mining Company was also formed in Esmeraldas in the 1880’s. This first English advance reactivated the mining works and installed the primary equipment, but there were many problems with labour and transportation which affected profits. It was left to the U.S South American Development Company which formed in 1896 to fully develop mining in Zamora, and the company transformed the economies of El Oro, Loja and Azuay. A subsidiary, the Cotopaxi Exploration Company also established large-scale mining in Cotopaxi and Latacunga. Significantly, foreign investment was often encouraged specifically as a means of taking control of the mines out of the hands of Indian communities, who were blamed for the failure to develop the mines to their full potential. A report of the Governor of Azuay, for example, lamented how the

²⁵ Memoria de Secretario de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc. a la Convención Nacional de 1906, Mensajes e Informes, 1906. ABFL.
²⁶ Federico Gonzalez Suarez, Historia General de la República del Ecuador, p.427.
Indians of Sisig who controlled the majority of the region's mines did not have the capacity to develop them for their own benefit, and refused to permit outsiders to visit their rich deposits, suggesting that contracts be granted to foreign companies to develop these smaller mines as well.29

Oil drilling was another enterprise notoriously dependent on foreign capital. The Santa Elena Oilfields situated on the coast just south of Guayaquil were the most longstanding oil drilling enterprises, and it was alleged that records existed of the use of pitch from the petroleum obtained from this district by the Incas and the Spanish.30 By 1921 these were producing a total of 4000 barrels a month, although most of the oil was extracted in a very primitive fashion in hand-dug wells.31 In an attempt to modernise the system, a contract was signed with the Anglo-Ecuadorean Oil Company in the same year granting the complete transfer of oil rights for a five year period.32 By then attention had already shifted to the Oriente, and the geologists of the Royal Dutch Shell Corporation and Standard Oil of New Jersey both began their geological mappings in the 1920's. Exploration proved difficult because maps of even approximate accuracy did not exist. There was an absence of trained labour in the region, and often not even local Indians would venture outside the locality familiar to them, and there was growing cynicism that significant oil deposits even existed.33 The growing desperation of the government to uncover these resources led to the granting of a concession of eight million hectares - most of the Ecuadorian Oriente - to Royal Dutch Shell in 1937, for the purpose of exploring for petroleum.34

31 Wilson to FO, October 11th 1921, FO371/5567/A9026.
32 Wilson to FO, January 7th 1921, FO371/5567/A201.
33 As the British Vice-Consul concluded of his trip with an expedition organised by the Royal Engineers on behalf of the Anglo Persian Oil Company: "..."We had found two things in abundance, namely jungle and mud, especially the latter, but in no place had we struck oil." Mitchell to FO, 23rd April 1923 in FO371/8453/A3145.
The government deflected criticism that the formation of such contracts was anti-national, insisting that there were also strong nationalist arguments for the advantages brought by foreigners in terms of civilisation, productive capacities, and capital. It was felt that the natural resources of the country could not be developed without foreign investment. However, it would appear that it was not simply in terms of capital that foreign companies were believed to offer an advantage; there was an almost mythological conviction that foreigners, particularly North American, had an innate entrepreneurial knowledge and a capacity to achieve success which eluded most Ecuadorians. The reverence in which Americans were held can be clearly seen in the account written by F.W Up de Graff about his experiences in attempting to establish a business venture in Ecuador. An under-qualified drifter and self-confessed adventurer who had moved through four or five different careers in the space of three years after graduating from college, Up De Graff arrived in Ecuador in 1895 to visit his former fraternity brother, the son of an influential Conservative landowner, with only $100 in his pocket, all of which he had spent by the time he arrived at his host family's residence. He admitted that his trip to Ecuador was motivated by "the sheer love of adventure for adventure's sake" and that the main aim of his trip was to visit the infamous "head-hunting" Jivaro tribe of the Amazon. Despite these inauspicious credentials and an avowedly brash and flippant manner, he was deluged with offers to establish business partnerships and enterprises:

If my finances were not very complex, the innumerable machinations of my business acquaintances and the never-ending stream of get-rich-quick proposals with which I was delayed certainly were. I remember how we were going to put up a furniture factory, start a modern sugar plant, clear fifty acres of forest and plant coffee, build a new road over the Cordovez holdings to Bodegas, put a service of mule teams for transporting produce to and from the interior, light Quito by electricity, irrigate the arid lands of Riobamba with the snow from Chimborazo, erect a tannery to be run with the bark of the Cordovez trees, bore for oil, distill fine old scotch whisky, and follow up one hundred other projects which our veritable minds conceived.

Eventually he settled on developing a salt mine owned by the family in Salinas, which was a modest success until the lure of adventure overwhelmed him and he continued

35 Eloy Alfaro, Manifesto del Presidente de la Republica a la Nacion, 1907. Mensajes e Informes 1907. ABFL.
36 F W Up de Graff, Head Hunters of the Amazon: Seven years of Exploration and Adventure (New York: Duffield and Co, 1923) p.xvii.
37 Ibid, p.18.
on his journey to the Oriente. Apparently it was believed that the mere fact of Up de Graff’s nationality endowed him with the attributes to succeed in business, a reflection of the Ecuadorian elite's fixation with whiteness and particularly Anglo-Saxon descent as a mark of civilisation and progress.

The abuses committed by foreign companies of the privileges granted to them have been well documented, as has the emergence of a strong ‘anti-yanqui’ anti-imperialism from the 1930’s. The racial ideas and ideologies that informed the labour strategies of these companies have been the focus of far less attention, yet there is evidence that these had a profound effect on the character of labour recruitment and organisation, and on the shaping of racial attitudes in ways that were often at odds with the proclaimed aims of the Liberal government. The next two sections explore the impact of projects aimed at national integration on black and indigenous labour.

**Recruitment and Resistance: Black and Indigenous Labour in the Development of the Nation**

Black and indigenous peons formed the major part of the labour force for bringing the ambitious road and rail schemes into reality, as well as for the expansion of mining, oil drilling and rubber tapping. Indians had long formed the core labour force for government public works programmes and it was assumed by policy makers that they would continue in this role, an assumption based on racial stereotyping about the suitability of different ethnic groups for particular types of work. The Governor of Chimborazo exemplified this thinking when he insisted to the Minister of the Interior that mestizos and whites were totally unsuited to labour on public works projects because they were accustomed to “another means of life” and were less strong in their constitutions, and thus would not “stoop” to be involved in manual work. 38 This was despite concerns about the quality of indigenous work: the same Governor in his report of the following year argued that work on the Quito-Guayaquil Railway as it passed through Guamote had proven that “work trusting in the hands of Indians who lack meticulousness and precision must suffer from defects in its duration and

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38 C. Luque Plata, Informe del Gobernador del Chimborazo al Ministro de lo Interior, Riobamba, 7 de Julio 1902, Informes de los Gobernaciones al Ministerio de lo Interior, Mensajes e Informes, 1902, ABFL.
solidity.” Indeed, the very presidential decree passed in December of 1895 which abolished the forced recruitment of indigenous labour known as trabajo subsidario (the subsidiary labour tax) allowed municipalities to create a substitute contribution for the construction of public works.  

The normal means of financing roads and railways was through the tax of ‘cuatro por mil’ on landowners, and the contribution of two days wages for all other inhabitants. Those who could not afford to pay were required to give two days labour. Recruitment for this labour was carried out through the enganche system, whereby the teniente político of each parish compiled a list of able-bodied males who were required to give work, and then passed this list over to the collector of taxes who would ensure that all men gave the required labour. Significantly conciertos were not exempted from the requirement, highlighting how Indians were expected to comply with the duties of citizenship before they had obtained the rights associated with it.  

The system was open to abuse, with complaints frequently submitted to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Works about abuses by certain collectors who were making peons work more than the two days jornal ordained by the law, aided by the ignorance of the majority of contributors as to how many days labour were expected of them. The government made efforts to clamp down on these abuses, passing legislation which required that formal records be kept for the recruitment and discharge of workers. The continued complaints made by workers suggested, however, that corruption continued, since records could easily be falsified and provincial governors were generally far less concerned with cutting down abuses than was the central government. Moreover, for conciertos the requirements often led to an increase in their debt, since the hacendados would not pay them for the days spent on the railway or road construction; indeed, many would fine them for not turning up to work.

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39 Informe del Gobernador del Chimborazo, Riobamba, 1903. Informes de los Gobernaciones al Ministerio de lo Interior, Mensajes e Informes, 1903, ABFL.
41 It is also notable that concierto peons from the haciendas were listed in government records by the name of their patrons, not by their own name, highlighting a near total absence of change in the way in which debt peons were perceived during this period.
42 Circular de Ministro de lo Interior, Abelardo Moncayo a las gobernaciones, 26 de marzo 1901, Sección Circulares, Mensajes e Informes 1901, ABFL.
On top of this forced labour requirement, Indians also engaged in wage labour on many of the road and railway programmes. Wages on the roads and railways were generally much higher than in the agricultural sector. Workers on the road between Ibarra and Esmeraldas in 1899 could earn up to 50 cents a day; by 1912 this had gone up to one sucre and ten cents. 43 Adverts requesting labourers for the Quito-Guayaquil railway advertised the work on the basis of how well paid it was. There was a severe shortage of labour for such work, as the majority of Indian peasants preferred—or were forced by debt obligations— to remain on the land, and this forced wages up. The company contracted for work on the Sibambe-Cuenca railway line was forced to increase the wages of workers by 5% in 1917 to ensure that the work would be completed more quickly 44, and in 1921 the Junta in charge of the Quito-San Lorenzo railroad increased the daily wage to a price “which could be considered exaggerated”, prompting protests from the agricultural interests in the zone who claimed that they were unable to compete, and that their crops were suffering through lack of labourers. 45

As noted above, these wages did not necessarily go directly to the peons that worked for them. The *enganche* system was generally used for the recruitment of Indian labour, whereby the political administration of the canton ordered the political lieutenants in the parishes to name day labourers with the help of indigenous authorities, who were compensated for each worker they helped to enlist. The system was open to abuse and meant that the high wages the rail and road companies offered did not necessarily reach the workers themselves. In her study of day workers on the Quito-Guayaquil railway line in Alausí, A. Kim Clark found that the majority received only half of the promised 1.20 sucres per day; the remainder distributed among a series of intermediary links in the labour recruitment chain. 46 In addition, some large landowners sent their peasant labourers out to work on the line and pocketed the wages themselves. Many rail and road companies established elaborate systems of fines and discounts which prevented workers from claiming their full wage. On the Curaray Railway, for example, peons were docked wages for leaving

43 Informe del Gobernador de Imbabura al Ministro de lo Interior, Ibarra, 21 de Junio de 1899, Mensajes e Informes, 1899. ABFL. Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Policia, Obra Publicas etc. a la Nación en 1912, Mensajes e Informes, 1912. ABFL.
44 José María Ayora, Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1917, Mensajes e Informes 1917, ABFL.
45 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921, Mensaje e Informes 1921, ABFL.

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work early, for lost tools and the disappearance of materials, as well as for more subjective offences such as "badly carried out" jobs. This generated much protest, but the railway authorities discounted workers' complaints, insisting that the system was fair and that penalties only applied when "the worker has not legitimately earned a full day's pay." There was also a harshly regimented system of collecting pay: workers had to turn up to the work headquarters at 8am on a Sunday morning — the one day of rest in the working week — to receive their wages, and if they did not arrive, they were simply not paid for that week. This would seem to have been part of an effort to control workers and to prevent the use of alcohol on weekends; the result, however, was that many workers continued to be exploited by labour on government public works. Experiments were made with using other groups such as soldiers as labour on public works programmes, especially during the 1920's when the regular armed force outweighed the country's peacetime needs, but these were quickly abolished, as the salary of soldiers was much higher than the average day-worker, resulting in tensions with labourers who insisted that they deserved to receive equal pay for doing the same job.

There are regular examples in the archival sources of labourers being forced to work without pay. In one of the most striking examples workers laying two roads in the Oriente in 1898, that from Archidona to Quijos, and from Loreto to the hamlet of Chontacocha, were paid in linen rather than cash. The Sub-inspector for the Southern Highway described how 2000 rods of linen were passed out among the workers in lieu of pay, and argued that this was the mark both of a desperate economic situation and of "the patriotism of the humble but noble people." Although it was clearly implied that workers were accepting payment in linen out of patriotism, it is likely that the reality was very different, and that use of force was involved. One North American traveller visiting Otavalo in the early 1940's recounted the incident of a tourist who

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46 Clark, The Redemptive Work, p.87.
47 Informe del Superintendente Inspector del Ferrocarril al Curaray, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1915. Mensajete e Informes 1915, ABFL.
48 Informe del Ferrocarril al Curaray, desde su inicio hasta el 4 de Junio 1916. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1916, Mensajete e Informes 1916, ABFL.
49 Bading to Secretary of State, August 4, 1926, dispatch no 776, UT Microfilms Collection, FILM 22,623, reel 4.
50 Informe del Subinspector del Carretero del Sur al Ministerio de Obras Publicas, Agricultura etc., Quito, Julio 5 de 1898, Informe del Ministro de Obras Publicas, Agricultura etc. al Congreso Ordinario de 1898. Mensajete e Informes 1898, ABFL.
saw the police rounding up Indians and was told that they were being gathered to work on the roads. When the tourist asked why they had to be rounded up he received the surprised reply: “Because there is no pay, Señor.”

Workers frequently sought to resist such compulsion. Strikes were common, where whole labour groups refused to work en masse, causing delays in construction. The Minister for the Interior in 1913 lamented the delays to work on the Curaray railway caused by the reluctance of native peons to work, and explained how the “co-operation of the authorities” – or, the use of tenientes políticos to force workers out on the line - had been necessary to retain even a reduced number of workers. But Indians used the same legislation put down by the Liberals with the aim of forging a labour market to refuse to participate in it. Indians presented petitions to Congress insisting on their right to a legal contract with a fair and stipulated wage, and took out legal action against provincial authorities who attempted to force them to work against their will. This led many provincial authorities to question the legal dispositions passed in favour of the Indians. A critique by the Governor of Chimborazo in 1902 is particularly telling, and worth citing at length.

There is no doubt that this intention has been laudable, but it has achieved nothing other than making them insolent towards whites and has set them on the wide path to idleness, vice and fraud, until eventually they have lost their habits of work... It is certain that the bad faith, greed and even cruelty of certain landowners motivated these laws, but this could have been done without punishing those who were the victims of the Indians; this way justice would have prevailed, the guilty would have received their deserved sanction without dealing a fatal blow to agriculture and to public works....Today the Indian believes in the pleasure of all the rights, all the guarantees and even all the immunities; but he doesn’t believe that he has duties or obligations to comply with, if one excepts those that emanate from the fiestas, dances and orgies that he has dedicated himself to with ever greater tenacity and frequency; nor does he even suppose that it is he who must cultivate the land, when he has it; no señor, it is the woman, it is the children who must do this, while he wanders dissipated by his wild and boisterous merry-making...In this state, the Indian, at the first insinuation of work on public works, lacking the respect owed to the Police Authority, reaches for a lawyer of ‘bad law’ [un abogado de mala

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52 There is an interesting description in El Grito del Pueblo, 23 de Marzo 1900 which describes the strike of labourers on the road from Baños to the Oriente.
53 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1913, Mensajes e Informes, 1913. ABFL.
This was fairly typical of the opinion of local elites. When Indians used the law to push for the implementation of rights that had been assigned to them they were considered to have got above themselves; to be focusing on their rights at the expense of their duties – ‘duties’ with which only Indians had ever had to comply. The focus on the ‘immorality’ of Indian desires and endeavours was also common; the accusation that left to their own devices Indian men would choose to partake in a constant round of fiestas and drinking rather than do any work. Forcing Indians to work therefore became a civilising strategy, ‘saving’ Indian men from a life of degradation and sin and freeing Indian women from the ‘unfeminine’ burden of work in the fields. Also significant is the assertion that Indians had too much power under the new legislation, such that whites had become “victims” of the Indians. This is the classic elite response of fear when subordinate racial groups take the first steps towards legal equality and opportunity. As Luque added at the end of his report: “Where there are rights there are corresponding obligations, señor Minister, and I do not find it reasonable that you have established privileges of race in a country which is completely democratic like our own.”\(^{55}\) This highlights the irrationality of concerns over indigenous rights: efforts to end the oppression of Indians were interpreted as the establishment of racial privileges.

While the central government was more sympathetic than local authorities to Indian claims, ultimately force had to be used to ensure that indigenous people gave their labour on public works programmes. While superior political authorities expressed high ideals in extolling the persuasive powers of wages alone, local authorities used force and imposed fines on those who declined to work, as well as on the lower authorities directly responsible for recruiting. Discussing these issues for the canton of Alausí, Clark has argued that force was needed because the peasants had not yet been separated from the means of production. While wages of around one sucre per day as compared with 10 to 20 centavos on the haciendas should have dictated a rational

\(^{54}\) C. Luque Plata, Informe del Gobernador del Chimborazo, Riobamba, 7 de Julio 1902, Informes de los Gobernaciones al Ministro de lo Interior, 1902, Mensajes e Informes 1902. ABFL.

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economic calculation, peasants were still tied to the agricultural cycle, and no amount of money would induce them to leave the fields at peak periods.\textsuperscript{56} Thus they went to work on the line at their own convenience, rather than in accordance with the needs of any road or railway project.

Indians were also the main labour force used in the rubber industry, and it is here that the issue of forced recruitment came most obviously into play, and where there was much less room to resist compulsion. Debt peonage was at the core of labour relations in the Oriente, and the rubber boom served only to intensify this link. The usual procedure was for a \textit{cauchero} to ply Indians with machetes, axes and so-called ‘trade guns’ – the name given to a muzzle-loading weapon which had been constructed so that it would be worthless after about 40 or 50 shots. These were constructed by German manufacturers specifically for the Amazon rubber trade, the aim being to compel their owners to start working again immediately for the possession of a new one. As F.W Up de Graff, who experimented with rubber trading during his time in the Amazon surmised, “Once in possession of a high grade gun, no Indian would ever have worked rubber again.”\textsuperscript{57} Indians were engaged for a period of six months, and had to repay their debt in arrobas of rubber according to a recognised scale of exchange. A trade gun was held to be worth three arrobas of rubber in the case of a single-barrelled gun, six for a double-barrelled. The British Consul at Iquitos detailed a similar system outlined to him by a merchant involved in the rubber trade, whereby a clearing would be made in the forest and planted with maize, from which an intoxicating liquor was manufactured. This would be taken to Indian settlements who would be supplied with liquor against rubber to be delivered later.\textsuperscript{58} Both mechanisms reflected a new take on the debt peonage system to take advantage of the naivety of Amazonian Indians and their lack of familiarity with the concepts of wages, credit or the value of labour.

Michael Stanfield has drawn attention to the complex motivations affecting indigenous participation in the Amazonian rubber economy, highlighting the networks

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{56} Clark, \textit{The Redemptive Work}, p.86.  
\textsuperscript{57} Up de Graff, \textit{Headhunters of the Amazon}, p.57.  
\textsuperscript{58} Huckin to FO, Iquitos, August 8\textsuperscript{th} 1913, FO371/1736/41713.}
of hierarchy and privilege that existed within indigenous communities, the violent nature of Amazonian society, and the technological and cosmological issues that affected Indian interpretations of debt peonage transactions, and has emphasised in particular the need to move away from conceptions of the Indians as “innocent martyrs”\textsuperscript{59}. However, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the majority of Ecuadorian Indians engaged in the trade had been forcibly recruited against their will. Monsenor Jorge Rossi, a Dominican missionary working with the Quechua-speaking ‘Yumbo’ Indians of the Napo Valley,\textsuperscript{60} described how rubber merchants, cascarrillos, gold traders and aguardiente dealers all obliged the Indians to engage in forced labour. He claimed that “whether they like it or not, whether they need to or not, they are made to take the machete or shotgun they are offered. In exchange they are forced to intern themselves in the forest for months at a time, to search out and bring back exorbitant quantities of aloe, gold, rubber, cascarailla or balata, that is worth ten or twenty times as much as the object they receive.” If the Indian returned without the quantity of species demanded by the collector, they were subjected to punishment and torture, and sometimes even executed, “with the acquiescence, if not the co-operation of the authorities, who can always be purchased.”\textsuperscript{61} There were also regular allegations of the “sale” of Indians at “slave markets” in Iquitos and Manaus. Rossi described the “hundreds of Yumbos, like herds of animals, sold at auctions held by the rubber merchants in Iquitos and Manaos” being taken downriver, huddled together on rafts.\textsuperscript{62} The Minister for Education and the Oriente explicitly described such


\textsuperscript{60} The term yumbo Indian is used by Ecuadorians to refer to the Quichua speaking Indians resident in the Oriente. It in fact refers to two separate groups of Quichua-speaking Indians; the Quijos Quichua who seem to have what Norman Whitten Jnr describes as “\textit{a montana} cultural hearth” and have moved East at various times as the tropical forest Indians were pushed back, enslaved or obliterated by disease, transplanted by hacendados and priests; and the Canelos Quichua, the result of Zaparo and Jivaro intermarriages and alliance where the Quichua language, borne by missionaries and traders, served as a mediating language. The lowland Quichua have been the subject of the most intense missionary activity in the Oriente, and have been oppressed by the Church and hacienda serfdom since the late colonial period, and have been used as a source of pliable labour ever since. For a discussion of Yumbo Indians see Edwin N. Ferdon, \textit{Studies in Ecuadorian Geography} (Santa Fe, N.M, School of American Research and University of Southern California, 1950) pp.4-5, and Norman Whitten Jnr, \textit{Sacha Runa: Ethnicity and Adaptation of Ecuadorian Jungle Quichua} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976) pp.5-7. The term is considered to be pejorative by the Indians in question, who will be referred to here as Amazonian Quichua, except where the classification used by contemporaries must be specified.


\textsuperscript{62} Ibid, p.140; p.242.
Indians as “slaves”, arguing that their “ignorance and docility” had allowed them to be treated as “a species of exchange in the natural products markets in the region.”

A major scandal broke out in 1909, when a group of Dominican missionaries came together to accuse Jaime Mejia, a well-known Colombian merchant with extensive land interests throughout the Oriente, of trafficking Amazonian Quichua for sale to the rubber interests in Iquitos. A letter from a missionary based at Napo to Eloy Alfaro stated that Mejia had sold over 1000 Indians to Peru, and that pueblos such as Aguarico, Santa Rosa and Loreto had been depopulated as a result of his activities. It alleged that scarcely 600 Indians remained along the banks of the Napo as a whole, from a previous population of more than 10,000. Those that had not been sold had fled. Petitions were lodged with the government, handbills were issued condemning Mejia, and newspapers published a series of enraged editorials, condemning the complicity of local authorities in the “torture of innocents”. These declamations were framed in extremely emotive terms: “There could not be a worse crime than to abuse the innocence of a savage, to make him a victim in this way. The tears of the savage will claim their vengeance in heaven.” Yet the concerns of those involved in petitioning also reflected vested and economic interests: the missionary was concerned that funding would be cut to his diocese in the absence of population, while among those who provided evidence in the letter to Eloy Alfaro was a prominent rubber merchant listed in a foreign office report as one of the major caucheros in competition with Mejia for labour. This helped Mejia to deny the charges, insisting that he was accused by his enemies who resented his wealth and business success. He was never tried on the charges, and it is likely that his influence in the Oriente was too great for the government to risk bringing him to justice.

Whatever the truth behind the allegations of slave trading lodged at Mejia, it is indisputable that large numbers of Ecuadorian Indians were trafficked and sold as slaves in Iquitos. In April of 1912 a deputation of Indians from Archidona arrived in

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63 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc, 1916, Mensajes e Informes, 1916, ABFL.
64 Miguel A. Román, missionary, to General Eloy Alfaro, Río Napo, Archivo Nacional Histórico, Sección Indígena, Caja 178, 1909.
65 Ibid.
Quito to present a complaint before the government against two white merchants whom they accused of trafficking indigenous people in the Napo region. They stated that they were being hunted “like wild animals” and taken in their “hundreds” to Iquitos, from whence they were shipped to the Madre-de-Dios region of Bolivia. The conditions during transportation were such that the majority died before they reached their destination. This drew the attention of the British Foreign Office which ordered the British Consuls at Quito, Lima and Iquitos to undertake an investigation of these allegations. The Consul at Lima stated that at least 400 Ecuadorian Indians had been brought through the Iquitos in the past two years and that “these are …slaves in a as much as they are practically the absolute property of rubber hunters, but they are not necessarily ill-treated or unhappy.” Instead, building on more general contemporary ideas about the patron-peon relationship, he asserted that they saw the cauchero as a father-figure, an idea doubtless propagated by the rubber traders themselves. The Consul at Iquitos went further, alleging that: “in many cases his [the Indian worker’s] lot is a much happier one, or at least his material welfare greater, than it would be in the freedom of his native forest.” Such a viewpoint reflected ideas about the backwardness of nomadic indigenous lifestyles, and was clearly at odds with the account presented by the Indians themselves in their representation to Quito.

There is also clear evidence that Ecuadorian Indians were sold to work on the notorious rubber plantations of the Putumayo, the site of the scandal of 1907-1914, and where instances of slavery and abuse were so prominent that they could not be swept under the carpet of debt peonage and ‘traditions’ of patriarchal relations. The scandal broke in 1907 with allegations in the Peruvian press that the leading rubber company in the Putumayo, the Casa Arana, was employing a system of torture and terror against its mainly indigenous workforce, and intensified in 1909 with the publication in the periodical Truth of further allegations by British adventurer Walter E. Hardenburg, supported by the Anti-Slavery Society. It was asserted that Indians were bought and sold at market and worked day and night, that they were kept in nakedness, deprived of food, and beaten, tortured, mutilated and even murdered as

67 Jerome to FO, May 14th, 1913. 'Slave dealing on the Napo', FO371/1736/26488.
68 Des Graz to FO, Lima, August 7th, 1913. FO371/1736/36687.
69 Huckin to FO, Iquitos, August 8th, 1913. FO371/1736/41713.
punishment or for the amusement of sadistic caucheros; while women and girls were raped, children’s brains were dashed against trees, and old people were killed when they could no longer work. Roger Casement, the British Commissioner sent to investigate the allegations, sustained the worst accusations, describing the flogging, starvation and torture of those considered not to be good workers, and the murder of 30,000 Indians in the course of a single decade. Casement, who had previously investigated the enslavement of rubber workers in the Congo, considered the Putumayo to be the most depraved and abusive labour system he had ever borne witness to, and it is widely held that his experiences here radicalised him and began his conversion to anti-imperialistic thinking. Outrage at conditions in the Putumayo was strongly gendered and centred around the imagery of the ‘harems’ of naked Indian girls kept by officials of the Casa Arana, as well as the beating and mutilation of female labourers.

Events in the Putumayo are considered by contemporary observers to classify as a case of genocide against the indigenous Huitoto, Andoke and Bora peoples of Peru. While the Putumayo was nominally claimed by Ecuador during this period, there is no question that in practice it was far outside the reach of Ecuadorian authority and that the Ecuadorian government exercised no control there whatsoever. The region effectively belonged to Peru, as recognised by international authorities engaged in mediating the scandal, who consistently referred to ‘slavery in Peru’ and placed pressure on authorities in Lima and Iquitos to resolve the problems. Despite its obvious regional importance, the Putumayo cannot be considered to be an Ecuadorian scandal, thus it will not be considered in any great detail here. However, it is important to note that many Ecuadorian Indians were sent into these conditions,

71 Correspondence respecting to the Treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians Employed in the Collection of Rubber in the Putumayo District. Presented to both houses of Parliament by Command of H.M, July 1912 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1912); Mitchell (ed.) The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement.
72 Indeed, it is widely considered that Ecuador was the most ambitious of the three countries competing for territory in terms of its efforts to pass legislation to protect Amazonian Indians precisely because it knew there would be no chance of these regulations being enforced.
precisely as a result of government lack of control in the Oriente, some as slaves, others enticed by promises of improved conditions and high wages. The result was the depopulation of large areas of the Ecuadorian Oriente, notably Curaray and Napo, which became a key concern of the government, who recognised it to be a severe blow to their goal of establishing large population centres in the region, and of missionaries, who lamented its effect on their religious programmes and fretted about its impact on the position of the Church. It is significant that there was little concern about the collapse of Indian communities, which were severely weakened by introduced diseases, and forced to retreat deeper into the forest to escape the rubber industry, beyond the implication for these varying vested interests.

However, it must be underlined that not all Indians were affected in the same way by the development of the rubber industry, and that some groups, notably the Jivaro, did have the capacity to resist and defend themselves, meaning that they were less likely to become victims of rubber incursions. There were constant reports of Jivaro attacks on groups of rubber workers, but an event of particular note took place in April 1913, when the Peruvian garrison on the River Morona was massacred by Jivaro Indians. 35 soldiers along with two women who were visiting the garrison were killed, and because there were no survivors, the event remained undiscovered until the army steamer came to drop off provisions the following week. The event was reported in the press as a revenge attack planned after some of their number were carried off by Peruvian caucheros. The attack was extremely significant in showing not just that the Jivaro resisted such incursions, but also that they recognised the national status of the different caucheros, and made their attacks on the representatives of these nations, as opposed to rubber workers more generally. While it would be an extrapolation too far to suggest that the development of the rubber industry inculcated a sense of national identity in Amazonian indigenous groups – in fact it would be more accurate to see such attacks as a rejection of outside penetration into their territory – the specifically national nature of the attack suggests that the industry generated a recognition that different national entities did exist, and that these were related to the economic interests that were having such a tremendous impact on their territory. Such events also shaped and reflected the ideas of government elites about the role of such

73 El Comercio, 22 de abril, 1913. See also Jerome to FO, Quito, April 26th, 1913, FO371/1736/26674.
groups within the nation. To start with the press was sympathetic, and although condemning the attack, noted that the Indians had been severely provoked by Peruvian authorities, in particular asserting that the Jivaro had been forced to retaliate for the rape of their women by marauding caucheros. However, as the attack began to reflect negatively on international imagery of Ecuador, with the Peruvian government asserting that the attack had been instigated by Ecuadorian authorities, press condemnations became more ferocious, as the authorities sought to dissociate themselves from Jivaro 'savagery'. While they were happy to see a defeat imposed on their traditional enemy, this could not outweigh the need to distance the central state from the backwardness and barbarism of Amazonian Indian populations.

Jim Crow and Social Stratification: The Racial Dynamics of Foreign Penetration

The arrival of foreign companies had particular consequences for black and indigenous people, who, as outlined above, formed the major part of the labour force for the kinds of enterprises on which North American and European capital was engaged and who had traditionally utilised the mineral resources which were located on their lands as an adjunct to a subsistence economy. Black and indigenous people were thus simultaneously the groups most likely to be co-opted into working for the North American and European companies, and those who were most likely to suffer the encroachment on their land and the transformation of their tradition ways of life.

North American and European companies brought with them particular ideas about the nature of the Ecuadorian labour force, often rooted in the social Darwinist and positivistic thinking in vogue in those countries at the time. While some investors were positive about the potential of Ecuadorian labour, with a representative of the British-owned Pearson Oil Company describing the native workman as "intelligent, willing and a hard worker", and a publication assessing the potential for investment in rubber production in the region describing Indian workers as "robust, muscular and

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74 *El Comercio*, 23 de abril, 1913.
75 *El Comercio*, 26 de abril, 1913.
capable of very considerable physical effort"\textsuperscript{77}, more common was the attitude found throughout Latin America of distrust for the capacities of the native worker and the strong desire to import workers from home or elsewhere. Across Latin America, foreign enterprises consistently considered native talent to be insufficient, and believed that Latin American countries could not maintain the managers, engineers, accountants or clerks, much less the men to drive the trains and maintain them or to operate expensive mining equipment. This outlook is typified in a dispatch from the chairman of the Zaruma Gold Mining Company, the British owned predecessor to the South American Development Company, to the British Consulate: "Another drawback to successful operations is the difficulty in obtaining efficient native labour, thus necessitating heavy expense in sending out English miners." He noted that at one time thirty-six Englishmen were employed on the property, despite the consequences for the financial health of the enterprise. "Consequently, although it is true that gold worth from £800 to £1000 per month has been produced, nearly the whole of this has been spent in wages and expenses at the mine, and no dividend has been, nor could have been paid, however small the capital might be."\textsuperscript{78} This dependence on foreign labour was one of the key reasons for the collapse of the Zaruma Gold Mining Company. Yet despite such inauspicious examples, the expatriate system became one of the core features of US and European owned enterprises during the Liberal period.

In all of the major foreign enterprises that were established in Ecuador during the Liberal period, a division was always made between the native and foreign workforce. The Quito to Guayaquil Railway company is a prime example of this system. This is a particularly pertinent example because of the coexistence of three distinct categories of labour: white North Americans, black Jamaicans and indigenous peons, who were all kept segregated in terms of both housing and work organisation. The use of black West Indian labour came about because of an acute shortage of labour to work on the railway construction. The institution of debt peonage and the opposition of conservative highland landowners to what was considered to be a personal project of Eloy Alfaro assured that the use of indigenous labour would be problematic. Social Darwinist ideas about the suitability of different ethnic groups for particular types of work also came into play: North American contractors felt that Indians were

\textsuperscript{77} William L. Schulz, \textit{Rubber Production in the Amazon Valley} (1925) p.340.
unsuitable for the heavy work of rock breaking, and that they were too docile to carry out technical work at the necessary speed. There were also concerns about how highland Indians would respond to the semi-tropical climate of the lowlands; a concern shared by the Indians themselves for whom even the promise of high wages could not overcome fears of the tropical forest perceived to be full of malaria, ferocious animals and snakes. Experiments were made with mestizo peons, but these were considered to be unreliable, perhaps because they were less amenable to extremes of coercion. Initially the James P. MacDonald Company, which had been contracted by the Guayaquil and Quito Railway Company to provide workers, had hoped to import Chinese labourers to overcome this problem; however, the extent of anti-Chinese sentiment within the Ecuadorian elite made this politically inopportune. MacDonald himself had close ties to Jamaica—he was the same contractor who had built the Port Antonio extension of the Jamaica Railway—as a result it was logical that he would turn to them for this work in Ecuador. A contract was made in 1900 with the Jamaican government for the importation of 6000 labourers to work on the Quito-Guayaquil railway, and the first group of 118 arrived at Guayaquil in February of that year, followed by a second group of 232 in March. By August of 1900 there were 2000 Jamaicans at work on the line. Each group arrived accompanied by small numbers of foremen, and a handful of women to serve as laundresses and domestic helpers in the camps. However, all mechanics and engineers were white North Americans.

In parallels with the Gold-Silver system on the Panama Canal and the organisation of the United Fruit Company banana plantations in Costa Rica and Honduras, North American overseers on the Quito-Guayaquil Railway attempted to replicate a Jim Crow-style system of segregation, with a strict division being imposed between white foremen and black and indigenous workers in terms of housing, medical facilities and allocated tasks. North Americans were paid cash salaries in US dollars on a 'gold basis'. They lived in 'house-type' accommodation, with toilets and bathing facilities, and space provided for the accompaniment of their families. By contrast, Jamaican blacks and Ecuadorian Indians were paid a maximum of 1 sucre 20 cents per day, which was found by the British commissioner sent to investigate the conditions of

78 Durham to Roseberry, 23rd November 1892, FO25/95.
West Indian workers in 1901 to be insufficient even to provide for their subsistence in the camps.\textsuperscript{80} In violation of the conditions of their contract, which had promised them "hotel accommodation", Jamaican workers were housed in open-sided tents, exposed to the elements, with beds made from sticks and bamboos cut from the adjoining forest piled one on top of the other with a three foot gap in between. The workers were appalled by the conditions they found themselves in, one stating that "these so-called camps would not be used for a dog-house in Jamaica."\textsuperscript{81} The inadequate housing led to health problems, because the workers were not protected from the damp, chilly, misty weather of the rainy season which began soon after their arrival, and which meant that chills, fevers and stomach complaints were exceedingly common. However, hospital facilities for workers were extremely substandard, with only two hospitals, situated at either end of the track. Those taken ill or involved in an accident at one of the central camps had to be taken a distance of 25 miles along some extremely precarious trails. The result was that large numbers of men laying ill from fever dysentery and chills in the camps, camps that were unfit even for the well. The hospitals themselves were also of substandard conditions; moreover, workers were not given food or subsistence if they could not work through illness or accident, and many would have starved were it not for the generosity of their peers. This stood in stark contrast to the medical facilities and sick pay benefits offered to North American workers who were treated by US-trained doctors in purpose-built residences.\textsuperscript{82}

A similar system was in place in the mines belonging to the South American Development Company in Zaruma, with the mining camp at the headquarters in Portovelo divided into three clearly delimited sections that housed the living accommodations of three different categories of worker.\textsuperscript{83} The general manager was housed at the top of the camp in "El Castillo", and surrounding him were the North American employees in individual houses shared by their families. The housing of the

\textsuperscript{79} El Grito del Pueblo, 16 de Octubre de 1900.
\textsuperscript{80} 'Report on the Condition of the Jamaican Labourers employed under contract with the government of Jamaica by James P. MacDonald on the construction of a railway from Guayaquil to Quito in the Republic of Ecuador', February 1901, CO 137/618/14477.
\textsuperscript{81} 'Precis of Complaints received from Labourers versus the MacDonald Company.' CO137/618/14477.
\textsuperscript{82} Alfredo Maldonado Obregón, Memorias del Ferrocarril del Sur y los hombres que lo realizaron, 1866-1958 (Quito: Talleres Graficas de la Empresa de Ferrocarriles del Estado, 1977).
\textsuperscript{83} Ricardo A. Paredes, Oro y Sangre en Portovelo: El Imperialismo en el Ecuador (Guayaquil: Talleres Graficos de Editorial 'Claridad', 1970) pp.11-12, 32-33.
North American employees had its own hygienic services, such as running water, toilets and baths inside the houses and was located next to the Hospital de Curipamba which had been built for the American employees in 1917 and was considered to be one of the best hospitals on the continent. The American camp was considered "sacred" and Ecuadorians could not enter without offering precise reasons. The camp for Ecuadorian workers –mainly mestizos, but also including some Saraygüyo Indians and a smaller number of Ecuadorian and Jamaican blacks- was much less generous in its provisions. They were housed in communal houses, divided into "minuscule rooms" with the dimensions of 3m by 3m, linked by narrow corridors. There were communal bathrooms and toilets in separate houses, which were cleaned only once a week by the SADC appointed Sanitation Police, and which workers claimed were always in a deplorable condition, constantly dirty and with their waste running straight into the Rio Amarillo that provided the drinking water for the camp workers. Workers were provided with meals at a cost of one sucre per day, for which they received coffee with milk and one sugar for breakfast, and soup and a plate of rice with a small strip of meat a side of beans for both lunch and dinner, the quantity and the quality of which was considered completely inadequate to provide the necessary nutrients for such heavy work. Ecuadorian workers were not permitted to attend the Hospital de Curipamba until after the strike of 1935.

In both enterprises the disciplinary regime employed was perceived to be excessively harsh both by workers and many contemporary onlookers, with corporal punishment routinely applied. Yet it was only in the case of the Quito and Guayaquil Railway that this crossed the line into systematised personal violence against workers, and this was due directly to the racial ideologies that North American overseers brought with them to the control of black workers. Beatings and shootings of black workers by North American whites were almost daily occurrences and this treatment appears to have had its roots in racial ideas. The North Americans on the project came from a system of Jim Crow segregation and regarded blacks as subhuman and inferior beings. As the Jamaican official investigating the workers complaints surmised: "The average American of the class selected as foreman regards the Negro labourer as a mere means to an end, that is, a beast of burden from which he must get as much work as

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84 Murillo, Zaruma: Historia Mineria p.82.
possible, and to attain this end, if a kick or a poke from a stick will bring it about, these means are looked upon as quite the usual method of procedure.

Jamaican foremen recalled being given orders to knock down or shoot the labourers if they did not obey orders, the only restraint on their behaviour being that they should not kill the worker. However, Jamaican labourers, now two or three generations removed from slavery, had a strong sense of personal dignity, and would not acquiesce to physical violence against them. As the same inspector put it: “Now the Jamaican labourer may sometime withstand a good round oath if he thinks he is deserving of it, but an interference with his person he regards as an assault, and in Jamaica of course would resort to the courts for redress. Not having these resorts in Ecuador he threatens to retaliate with his pick and shovel or any handy weapon, and the foreman, considering his life in jeopardy, draws his revolver and shoots.”

While the majority of such incidents were indeed explained by the Americans in terms of self-defence, it seems that physical violence was used simply as a means to assert American authority: witnesses described men being beaten with pickaxe handles and revolvers for “cheeking” their supervisors. Violence was also used against men exercising legitimate demands, such as refusing to work on a Sunday in order to attend church, or presenting valid complaints. One labourer, on complaining to the American Chief of Section about having received only 12oz of sugar when he had paid for a pound, had his head smashed open with a stick. It appears, furthermore, that some individual Americans sought to brutalise West Indians for their own entertainment. One complaint lodged with the British Consulate pleaded: “They are shooting us like birds. An American called O’ Brian is calling the people out of the camp and shooting them.” In the rare cases that Jamaican workers were able to take the perpetrators of such crimes to court, it was invariably ruled that the shootings had been in self-defence; evidence of how justice in Ecuador operated on the principles of ethnicity and status. There are obvious and ironic parallels here with the shooting of Indians for sport by Peruvian caucheros in the Putumayo that the

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85 Paredes, Oro y Sangre en Portovelo, p.10.
87 ‘Precis of Complaints Received from Labourers vs the MacDonald Company’ CO137/618/14477
American authorities protested against with such horror, and that they took such efforts to distance themselves from.\footnote{In his letter transmitting the findings of the US investigation into the Putumayo affair to the House of Representatives, President William Taft stated that “The bluebook shows that in this immense territory which Peru professes to govern the worst evils of plantation slavery which our forefathers laboured to suppress are at this moment equalled or surpassed,” clearly attempting to present slavery - and the brutal treatment associated with it - as evidence of backwardness and to distance the US from it, presenting it as something from their distant past. William H. Taft to the House of Representatives, Washington D.C, February 7, 1913. \textit{Slavery in Peru. Message from the President of the United States transmitting the report of the Secretary of State, with Accompanying papers, concerning the alleged existence of slavery in Peru.} (Washington, DC: House of Representatives, Doc. No. 1366, 1913).}

The North American authorities on the Quito-Guayaquil Railway consistently sought to defend their actions by seeking to invoke two of the key racial stereotypes of blackness: laziness and criminality. Much was made by railway officials of how the Jamaican workers in Ecuador included many known criminals, and the danger posed by these men was cited as a reason for their carrying guns at all times.

It is significant that the Barbadian workers on the Peruvian-run Casa Arana in the Putumayo did not in general suffer such treatment; indeed, the roles were somewhat reversed, and the Barbadians were those enacting brutal punishments on the Indian workers. While in some ways this represented just as much of an oppressive imposition – these were for the most part roles that had been imposed on them against their will and which they carried out as a form of self-preservation\footnote{See Roger Casement, \textit{Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of British Colonial Subjects.}} - it highlights the extent to which the roles allocated to West Indian migrant workers were dependent on the stereotypes of blackness held by those in charge of them. Jamaican workers suffered in Ecuador from the white North American conceptualisation of blacks as little more than beasts of burden; in Peru it would seem that a different set of stereotypes were in play, of blacks as cruel, violent and dangerous, and this led them to be constructed as the ideal overseers in a context where the aim was to inflict terror on the Indian population.

The primary West Indian response to the brutal treatment and the harsh living and working conditions on the Quito-Guayaquil railway was to leave the camps and look for work elsewhere. This was a common practice from the arrival of the very first shipment of West Indians: less than two weeks after their arrival in early 1900
Jamaican names began to appear in the listings of "fugitive workers" who were under contract to the railway in the Guayaquil press. Many went to work on the sugar plantations surrounding the railway line, the proprietors of which were very keen to take on West Indian labour. Others drifted into Guayaquil, where some ended up begging. This strategy of resistance was a way in which West Indians were able to assert their dignity and regain some autonomy; in this sense they were drawing on a long-rooted history of Caribbean maroonage, reflective of the 'search for freedom' out of which their migration emerged. However, the MacDonald Company were not prepared to accept this desertion and an agreement was made with the police whereby they would paid 8 sucres for each peon they returned to the camp. The means that the police used to achieve this were uncivilised and evoked memories of slavery. The runaway peons would be chained together in gangs, and marched back bound and gagged, where they would then be placed at the "Convict Camp", the punishment camp, surrounded by an armed guard of 30 men to stop them from re-escaping, and where they were forced to work out the remainder of their contract.  

The issue of 'desertion' eventually provided the MacDonald Co with an excuse to close off the camps completely and to assert total control over the workers. Armed guards were placed at either end of the line to prevent anyone leaving, and efforts began to prevent post from leaving the camp in an attempt to close off any communication with the outside world and to impose a sense of total isolation. Such strategies were supported by the Ecuadorian government, and in November 1900 a Presidential Decree was issued by Eloy Alfaro, explicitly prohibiting the recruitment of Jamaican workers under contract to the Railway Co by hacienda owners or any other individual or body in the national interest. The decree authorised the provincial governors to order the immediate capture of Jamaican workers who broke with their contracts, and enacted a fine of 500 sucres for landowners defying the ruling. This can be interpreted as an effort by Eloy Alfaro to clamp down on the power of the highland landowners - his whole political project represented an effort to transfer power away from the conservative, clerical interests of the highlands to the liberal, mercantile elites of the coast- as well as a reflection of his personal obsession with

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90 'Report on the Condition of the Jamaican Labourers employed under contract with the government of Jamaica by James P. MacDonald on the construction of a railway from Guayaquil to Quito in the Republic of Ecuador', Feb 1901, in CO 137/618/14477.
finishing the railway. However, it effectively granted the railway company the right to establish a police state within the country, allowing them to operate martial law on the construction sites. There were direct parallels in the operation of the South American Development Company in Zamora, which was also run as a police state. Striking workers in 1935 described the territory of Portovelo as a “Yankee colony... in which there is no other authority nor other law than the supreme will of the foreign company.”

A handbill urging support for the strikers explained how “the company provides its own police, it has its own prisons, dispenses its own arms, imposes taxes on businessmen for its own benefit, issues its own money...To maintain their domination the Company employ the most diverse methods: espionage, terror, the corruption of national chiefs and authorities.” Although it is considered that the SADC police were unusually liberal in comparison with those of other mining companies in Latin America, the result was still the severe oppression of workers.

The response of workers in the mines of the SADC was to strike: major strikes in 1919 and 1935 were brutally crushed. West Indian workers on the Quito-Guayaquil railway employed a different strategy open uniquely to them: an appeal to their status as British subjects. West Indians in the South and Central American Diaspora always possessed a strong faith in the ability of the British government to protect them, and consistently turned to them when in trouble. The physical isolation in which the West Indians found themselves in Ecuador, combined with the dismissiveness of the Consul in Guayaquil, who had links with the MacDonald Company, contracting with them to provide dynamite, appear to have prevented the workers from following the strategies of resistance that they repeatedly followed in the Canal Zone and on the banana plantations of Central America of appealing in person for Consular intervention against abuses. However, they did manage to get their complaints to the attention of British authorities by means of representations made by the workers.
relatives in Jamaica. In letters that they did manage to smuggle out of the country through traders, travellers, and departing workers, they included protests to be taken to the Jamaican police. Wives, girlfriends, and mothers of men working on the railway went directly to the colonial government themselves and lodged protests on their men’s behalves: a definitively gendered form of protest and pressure that was used throughout the Caribbean Diaspora. Jamaican newspapers picked up on the reports, and printed outraged articles denouncing the abuses and the fact that the government was allowing a system of neo-slavery to continue, resulting in protests and riots in Kingston.96

Popular agitation and unrest reached such levels that the Jamaican government commissioned Judge Edmund Leach to undertake a Commission to investigate the worker’s complaints. Judge Leach was extremely thorough in his investigation, visiting every camp on the line, examining every shelter, interviewing the men and attaining detailed information on issues ranging from the price of foodstuffs and the payment of wages, to the treatment of men by the American foremen and the employment of armed soldiers and policemen to bring deserters back to the camp. He upheld all of the workers complaints and concluded that: “From what I have seen and heard while on my visit to Ecuador, the conclusion to which I have come is that Ecuador as a field for labour under the provisions of the MacDonald contract as it is at present interpreted and carried into execution by the contractor is not a fit one for the Jamaican labourer.”97 Ecuador was declared a “non-proclaimed country” by the Jamaican government, meaning that emigration was subject to special restrictions, and notices were placed in the ‘Government Notices’ bulletin and in the Jamaican press detailing the unsatisfactory working and living conditions. Although conditions were tangibly improved in the aftermath of the Leach Commission, with wages increased, and accommodation and medical facilities improved, the treatment of labourers was much more difficult to reform, perhaps because the system was based on deep-rooted assumptions and ideologies. Problems remained with abuses by police and foremen, and the shootings recommenced.

There was a significant absence of moral outrage on the part of Ecuadorian elites and authorities regarding the treatment of West Indian blacks; indeed a report by the Grito del Pueblo about conditions in the camp seemed to rejoice gleefully in it, describing in awed and breathless tones the assertion of the North American Superintendent of Construction that the Jamaican migrants included a number of known criminals, but that they had no reason to fear because he would use his revolver to control any trouble. The abandonment of railroad works by Jamaicans unhappy with their treatment was also described in scandalised tones as a “danger to the country”, with it being argued that the “fugitives” would turn to banditry to support themselves, in spite of all the evidence suggesting that, on the contrary, they were doggedly seeking work on the neighbouring haciendas. Newspaper reports also regularly described the nuisance Jamaican workers caused to their local neighbourhoods with their drinking, fighting and gambling, all of which contributed towards the demonisation of West Indian blacks and increased the likelihood of their plight being ignored. It is significant that no major newspaper reported on the arrival of the Leach Commission and its subsequent findings, nor does it appear to have been discussed by government officials. Ecuadorian commentators and historians have also ignored the issue; Roberto Crespo’s Historia del Ferrocarril del sur published in 1933 for example glosses over the problems experienced by the Jamaicans and the British intervention with a medical explanation, claiming that the migration of Jamaican workers was discontinued because of a smallpox epidemic which broke out in Jamaica in 1901.

This neglect highlights the extent to which black workers were considered to be undesirable and unimportant.

Forms of Payment: Cash Economy or ‘Nuevo Converteje’?

One of the principal aims of inviting foreign capital was to advance the development of capitalist relations in the country, and to bring black and indigenous peasants into the market economy. However, there is evidence that far from integrating peons into the cash economy, European and North American companies sought to establish a

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97 Ibid.
98 El Grito del Pueblo, 6 de diciembre 1900.
99 El Grito del Pueblo, 24 de noviembre 1900.
separate form of labour relations outside of the national economy, which in many respects bore a greater resemblance to the system of concertaje operated by the highland landowners than to the modern system of contracted, capitalist labour relations that the Liberal government sought to introduce.

One of the key complaints of the Jamaican workers on the Quito-Guayaquil railway concerned the payment of wages. While the contracts signed by workers with the MacDonald Company offered generous cash wages to be paid fortnightly, in practice wages were paid late or not at all, and workers were instead issued with tokens redeemable only in the Company Commissariat where prices were extremely inflated and where false weights and measurements were routinely used. The same system was applied to indigenous and mestizo peons also working on the line. The Ecuadorian government was deeply concerned by the system and lodged complaints with the management on several occasions about the provisions system, which they felt manipulated the price of goods to force workers to spend all their money in the Company stores to ensure that they were not able to save and move on, with the consequence that the rest of the Ecuadorian economy was not able to benefit from the conversion of peons to wage labour. The Company simply deflected these criticisms, stating that no restrictions were imposed on foodstuffs and that workers were at complete liberty to do their shopping wherever they pleased. In his response to a complaint lodged by the Agente General de la Empresa in Guayaquil in 1899, John A. Harman, brother of Archer and the Director-General of the Company insisted that all the Company had ever done was to “facilitate the acquisition of whatever they [the workers] could need by means of our grocery stores, which are well-supplied with national and foreign provisions,” adding that “it is well known that we supply all our camps with fresh bread and meat daily, which we vend at a price lower than cost, with the sole aim of favouring our peons and other workers, and to conserve their health.”

The Guayaquil and Quito Railway Company was by no means the only foreign enterprise to resort to such tactics to ensure their workers dependence on their authority. Both the British owned Playa del Oro Mining Company in Esmeraldas and

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100 Roberto Crespo Ordonez, Historia del Ferrocarril del Sur (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1933) p.88.
the South American Development Company in Zamora also employed a system of tokens redeemable only in the Company Commissariat. An article in *El Bien Social* of Esmeraldas in 1902 reported how wages had not been paid to workers in the Playa del Oro mines for several months, with the Company Director, Daniel C. Stapleton insisting this was because he had not received money from New York. The newspaper was scathing both about his excuses and his intentions:

>Senor Stapleton has permitted the most prohibited means of exploiting the work of the unfortunates to defend his capital, and counting on his impunity vis-à-vis the government, is paying wages using pieces of inconvertible metal which they are obliged to use as money; and with this there is nothing they can buy to survive other than the groceries sold at high prices by the shops and stores of the Company....When anyone demands that they make an advance or pay the whole installment of the salary in legal currency, the manager considers such action an offence, and assumes a most tense and aggressive attitude, prevailing on his authority as though he were the owner of the workers, to whom he does not recognise any other right than to wait patiently and indefinitely for the syndicate in New York to release the money, which up until now has not arrived... The harm that has been caused by this regime is incalculable, these pueblos have been reduced to nothing.¹⁰²

By the date of the article pieces of metal had been handed out to replace wages to the value of $4000. In a similar vein, striking workers in Zamora in 1935 also drew attention to the irony of workers being paid in “cardboard bills in the land where workers extract gold from the mountains.”¹⁰³

The link made by *El Bien Social* between the system imposed by the Playa del Oro Mining Company and slavery in the accusation that the manager treated the workers as though he was their owner is very significant, hinting at tensions between elite and subaltern conceptions of free labour. In her analysis of the West Indian experience in Costa Rica, Aviva Chomsky has argued that part of the reason why West Indians engaged in wage labour as migrant workers when they were not prepared to on the Jamaican plantations was that freedmen resented what she terms the Jamaican planters’ “ideological resistance” to free labour; in other words that in their attitudes and the practices they imposed it was clear that the planters continued to view the

¹⁰¹ *El Progreso*, Quito, 21 de Diciembre, 1899.
¹⁰² *El Bien Social*, Esmeraldas, Febrero 2 de 1902.
workers as nothing more than serfs, a status they were not prepared to accept, no matter how they were compensated for it. She also makes some important points regarding the Jamaicans reasoning in being in South and Central America in the first place: the aim was to save money to return to Jamaica and buy a small plot of land to enable them to establish themselves as small peasant farmers, a status they equated with true freedom. Thus the kind of renegement on the agreed contract whereby cash wages were replaced with tokens of some kind unhinged the worker's plans while undermining their own conceptions of the kind of wage labour they were prepared to engage in. This analysis could fruitfully be applied to West Indian labourers in Ecuador, and it is likely that there are parallels in the outlooks and experiences of Afro-and indigenous Ecuadorians as well. Workers sought wage labour to escape from the status of conciertos. Working for foreign companies was aspirational, and was considered to be a passport to a better life. Thus workers were not prepared to accept the same conditions as they had been used to on the haciendas. Yet foreign employers were reluctant to fully implement wage labour, seeing the use of Commissariats and tokens as a way to cut the costs of labour and thus increase their profits.

The tensions generated by this can be seen in the discussion surrounding a later instance of non-cash payment on the Quito-San Lorenzo Railway in 1939, where the railway authorities experimented with including food as part of payment for workers of all levels. This proved extremely unpopular with workers, and a report by the head of the railway recognised that this had been a mistake and that the food had been both bad and unpopular, proving to be a source of constant complaints as well as a barrier to workers participating effectively in the rest of the economy. The report also suggests that the real concerns at the heart of these tensions were class based, when it explained how the biggest problems were with the technical and skilled workers who refused to eat such "bad food" as the mess provided by the Railway Company and had taken instead to eating at neighbouring haciendas. It would appear that part of the problem was about the symbolism of being in a poor, black area eating local food, and of being paid partly in provisions, a status associated with slaves and conciertos.

It must be underlined that the government was steadfastly against such practices, since they undermined the core goals of the Liberal project in terms of creating a free and mobile modern labour force. Consistent efforts were made to clamp down on such practices, and later contracts made with foreign companies always specifically included provisions for payment in cash. However, the power of the companies was such that the practice continued well into the 1940's.

Enthusiasts or saboteurs?: Subaltern attitudes towards projects for national development

If the predominance of black and particularly indigenous workers as the labour force in the construction of the new roads and railways and their prevalence in the foreign companies charged with the development of national resources is indisputable, the attitudes of these subaltern groups towards the expansion of the communications network is much more ambiguous. Elite and popular groups have often been presented in the literature as manifesting equal enthusiasm for the expansion of the communications networks, with the imagery of people of all social groups coming together in "noble patriotism" to transform the country prevailing. However, the profusion of petitions and collective letters forwarded to governments and newspapers pressing for railways and roads to run through particular towns, villages and hamlets, and the organisation of mass meetings and processions to support these causes is often at odds with concurrent evidence of the forced and contested recruitment of black and indigenous workers for labour gangs, and the sabotage of railway lines by local peasants. This section will seek to explore the reality of black and indigenous attitudes towards roads, railways and the other indicators of national development.

There is definite evidence that some peasant and indigenous communities actively sought access to roads and railways, often against opposition from neighbouring haciendas. El Grito del Pueblo reported on the efforts of the inhabitants of Pujilt to acquire a road to neighbouring Saquisilí, whose weekly market was the main centre of

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local commerce. The protagonists insisted that they would not be able to develop the wealth of the community without it.\textsuperscript{106} The report noted that they had sent countless petitions to Congress requesting the road, and that they believed their request was not being granted because of the repugnance felt by elites for the inhabitants of Pujili, hinting at discrimination against them on the basis of their status as an Indian community; an irony in view of the stereotype of Indians as holding back the country’s development with their reluctance to engage in capitalist development. In 1906 the residents of the predominantly indigenous towns of Calpi and San Juan in Chimborazo presented a petition signed by 150 people to Congress, requesting help in the construction of a highway from the pueblo of Lican up to the city of Guranda. In their petition they told how, inspired by the recent government legislation which they felt highlighted its desire to “improve the lamentable situation of the pueblos that, like this one, have been forgotten by the Republics of days gone by”, they had worked voluntarily, without any government or other funding to open up the route and that they were now hoping the government would help them complete the work by providing the necessary funds.\textsuperscript{107} Hacendados often sought to obstruct such developments. The Jefe Político of the canton of Mejía, for example, complained of how the proposed road to link the parish of Pintag to Aloag, crossing the haciendas of Tesalia, Guiteg, Pedregal, Patichubamba, and El Carmen, was being delayed by the refusal of landowners to pay their contribution. He attributed this refusal to the jealousy of hacendados over their control of their workers, and their reluctance to encourage any initiative which would increase the freedom of Indians and peasants.\textsuperscript{108} There are countless other examples in government records of the construction of roads being obstructed by the refusal of landowners to pay their contribution. Such defiant opposition suggests that the initial impetus for the construction of such roads could not have come from the local elites, but must rather have come from local peasants and other popular groups who saw a way to benefit through increased trade.

Other petitions, however, clearly bear the mark of elite interests, even as they claimed to be written in the name of “the people”; this was particularly true of those calling for

\textsuperscript{106} El Grito del Pueblo, 18 de Septiembre, 1900.

railways to pass through their towns and parishes. Elites were in general extremely keen to acquire railway lines, often organising exhibitions and parades to encourage popular support. Some of these were rather elitist in terms of form and content: the Inter-provincial Exhibition organised by the Junta Imbaburena del Ferrocarril Quito-Esmeraldas in 1928, for example, essentially represented an opportunity for the big haciendas to demonstrate their wares, with competitions being held for Friesian cattle, horses, and agricultural products, while the arts sections held exhibitions of drawings, paintings, sculpture, photography, classical music and the graphic arts, with no space allotted for indigenous traditions such as textiles or panpipes. Others, however, did demonstrate higher levels of popular involvement. Events organised by La Sociedad de Propaganda Ferroviaria de Loja in particular always involved both women’s and worker’s groups, as well as social clubs, trade unions and artisans guilds, and efforts were made very explicitly in their promotional material to reach out to all levels of society, with handbills and flyers portraying it as the “moral duty” of all members of the community to become involved and demand a railway. It was certainly the case that elites were keen to represent the arrival of railways as the basis for community unification. The inauguration of the Quito-Guayaquil railway was even described by some segments of the press as the impetus for the formation of cross-regional, inter-class links between workers, with the worker’s receptions presented by one newspaper as “the manifestation of the affection and solidarity that exists between all the artisans and workers of the Republic.”

This romantic picture of unquestioned popular support for elite sponsored rail schemes is, however, challenged by the weight of evidence suggesting pockets of peasant resistance to the railway, which coalesced particularly around the issue of labour recruitment. The history of labour on the important roads and railways has been very strongly romanticised and focuses disproportionately on the famous ‘mingas’ that contributed to the construction of the Quito-Esmeraldas railway and the

108 Jefatura Política del Cantón Mejía al Señor Jefe Civil y Militar de la Provincia de Pichincha, Machachi, 22 de Junio 1906. Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Policía, Obras Publicas a la Asamblea Nacional de 1906. Mensajes e Informes, 1906, ABFL.
109 Exposicion Interprovincial promovida por la Junta Imbaburena del Ferrocarril Quito-Esmeraldas, con motivo de la llegada de la primera locomotora de Ibarra (Ibarra: Tipografía ‘El Comercio’: 1928)
111 El Imparcial, Quito, 1 de Junio 1908.
Northern highway, with the proclamations of the contemporary elites about the “glorious patriotism” of the masses often accepted at face value. Certainly, newspaper reports and government documents for the period 1910-1930 are filled with accounts of thousands of workers arising ‘voluntarily’ and ‘spontaneously’ to offer their labour without recompense. President Baquerizo Moreno, for example, in 1920 praised the “noble attitude” of the people of the northern provinces, and the patriotism “which has been an example to us all” with which they have lent their manpower by the thousands, “helping the government at every opportunity with enthusiasm and efficacy, to remove the soil, along which, one day not so far away, a locomotive will pass rapidly and with sovereignty, and it is with this triumph in mind, aware of the greatness of the work, that they have given such effort and constancy.”

The idea of the ‘minga’ as a basis for government policy seems to have first gained popularity with the parade of 10 August 1917 held to inaugurate the beginning of work on the embankments from Ibarra to Quito. “On this day thousands of Imbaburenos gathered for one of the most emotional ‘mingas’ and for a parade which has gone down in the annals of Ibarra.”

Ceremonies, fiestas, dances and banquets were held along the course of the line, then on the initiative of the Archbishop of Ibarra, Monseñor Alejandro Pasquel, the famous oath of the ‘nortenos’ was made, “to work tirelessly until the railway arrives on the beaches of the Pacific.” Volunteers were organised into contingents consisting of several hundred individuals and assigned to a particular part of the line on which they were instructed to work for three or four days. In a period of nine months thirty kilometres of embankments were laid at virtually no cost. Mariano Suarez Ventimilla described “thousands upon thousands” of Carchenses, leaving their homes and comforts, and giving themselves to the railway camps, taking their own food and tools, to work for four consecutive days without any renumeration. In keeping with the minga’s church-based origins, its successes were described in almost spiritual terms by government officials: “Just as religious faith makes miracles happen, it seems that the faith of the people in their

112 A. Baquerizo Moreno, Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1920, Mensajes e Informes, 1920, ABFL.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid
115 AHBC, Quito. Fondo Mariano Suarez Ventimilla, ADQ.46, Caja 13, Carpeta 114. Documentos del Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo, 1941-2. Doc no.15, “El Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo: Breve resena historica de sus antecedentes y de su construccion.”
country is bringing a glorious future to the province. Imbabura must be proud of what happened here.”

The *mingas* were generally seen as a communal undertaking, the coming together of people of all social classes and ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, the very term ‘*minga*’ was adapted from the Quichua word referring to the ‘pleasure of giving’ and reflecting on the fact that there are no activities that can be carried out without group solidarity. The *minga* also formed an important institution in indigenous peasant society. The appropriation of the term suggests an explicit effort on the part of elites to present the *mingas* emerging from a popular, indigenous origin. As the Governor of Imbabura put it: “the rich and the poor, the landowner and the day-worker, the magistrate and the industrialist, the cleric, the women and the children, all, all of them, have been the pride of civilisation, have shown the ardent love of their soil, surging forward without respite, without rest, in this work justifiably called ‘the great national work’ for the benefits it will bring to the Republic.” His words were seconded more than a decade later when President Abelardo Moncayo praised the “enthusiastic behaviour of the brave and self-abnegating sons of Carchi…. all the sectors of the province and with men, women, adults and children all taking part with their tools, without demanding any other thing than a little bit of help with money to live and sustain themselves during the days of work, without remuneration; it is the example of the individual effort for the common good.”

However, it is clear from a careful reading of the language surrounding the *mingas* that such work efforts were not as spontaneous as they were made out to be. Religious authorities were at the centre of organising the first *mingas* in Ibarra and Carchi, and they seem to have used their moral authority to persuade people to give their labour

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116 Informe del Gobernacion de Imbabura al Ministro de lo Interior, Ibarra, 8 de Mayo, 1918. Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1918. Mensajes e Informes 1918. ABFL.
118 Ibid.
119 Mensaje que el Señor Encargado del Poder Ejecutivo, Doctor Don Abelardo Moncayo, presenta al Congreso Nacional de 1934, Mensajes e Informes, 1934. ABFL
for free. While photographs of mingas in these provinces show both black and indigenous workers in clear evidence, it is not clear that all of these workers were there on a voluntary basis. Regional histories, for example, suggest that both peasants in their forced labour co-operatives and conscripted soldiers were employed as part of the mingas, with police employed to use force against those who refused to work and possessions taken and fines imposed upon dissenters.\(^{120}\) And while much was made of the “inter-class co-operation” that was alleged to form a key part of such work programmes, it seems clear that it was black and indigenous peons that provided the bulk of the labour. The Minister of the Interior in 1918 called for an end to the “decorative” aspect of the mingas, suggesting that the enthusiasm of some of the higher ranking peoples was purely for show.\(^{121}\) Photographs of the mingas show people of all social classes present during the festivities for the inauguration of a munga, however, pictures of work under way generally include only black and indigenous labourers (see figures one, two and three). A munga features prominently in the famous indigenista novel Huasipungo, and makes the argument very forcefully that Indians were forced to undertake the most dangerous tasks, and were subject to hugely inferior conditions to the whites and mestizos who also laboured on the project.\(^{122}\) It is also significant that thanks and praise from the provincial government consistently went to those who ‘provided’ their workers, rather than to the workers themselves, with provincial ‘notables’ singled out for praise for their role in organising the collective works. This was typical of the racist assumptions underlying the mingas, with the assertion often being made that such results would not have been achieved if left in the hands of local, and especially black, populations. The Central Board of the Quito-San Lorenzo railway suggested that the “moral and material support and co-operation of the people....would have been impossible had the work been started at the other end in the forsaken jungle of Esmeraldas.”\(^{123}\) This stands at odds with the participation of blacks in the mingas throughout the Chota Valley.\(^{124}\)

\(^{120}\) Alvaro San Felix, Monografia de Otavalo, p21; German Patricio Lema A., Los Otavalos: Cultura y Tradiciones Milenarias (Cayambe: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1995) p23, p113

\(^{121}\) Informe del Ministro de lo Interior 1918. Mensajes e Informes 1918, ABFL.

\(^{122}\) Icaza, Huasipungo, pp.89-129.

\(^{123}\) Report of the Central Board of the Quito-San Lorenzo Railroad to the Italian syndicate 1921-22. Cited in ‘Consultation o f the Provincial Board of Imbabura to the Kemmerer Commission in Connection with the Quito-Ibarra Railway’, Ibarra, December 21\(^{st}\), 1926. AHBC, Quito. Fondo Kemmerer, Kemm. 132.9.2.

\(^{124}\) For clear photographs depicting the role of blacks in mingas in Carchi, see Oficina de Información y Propaganda Anexa a la Secretaria de la Presidencia, La Carretera Rumichacha-Babayhoya (1930).
It is clear that the government came to regard the mingas as a tool for the acquisition of public works on the cheap. The success of the mingas in Imbabura and Carchi led to a virtual abdication of responsibility on the part of the government with regards to its public works project. The Minister for the Interior and Public Works in 1920 stated that the emergency situation of the government had meant that only works “for which there is real public passion and willingness to sacrifice” would be achieved\(^1\); in other words, that unless citizens were prepared to undertake labour themselves, roads and railways would not be constructed. It seems that the mingas, proclaimed as the glorious uprising of the people in the advancement of the national good, became just another way of obtaining black and indigenous labour for free, a replacement in effect for the subsidiary labour tax.\(^2\)

With regards to peasant enthusiasm for the railway itself, it is clear that some groups sought to sabotage the railway, or at least to use its materials to their own advantage. On a journey from Quito to Guayaquil in 1901, José Peralta, the Minister of Foreign Relations, recounted how in the Indian canton of Tigsan people were pulling out the pegs of localisation and erasing any trace of the work so that the engineers were obliged to begin their work again.\(^3\) This may have reflected a desire to remain isolated from the modernising effects of the railroad, particularly the implied threat to their lands. Other Indian communities, however, embraced the new commercial opportunities offered by the road. During the construction of the Quito-Guayaquil railway, Indians came to the railway camps to sell chickens, eggs and produce to the Jamaican and North American workers, who embraced the opportunity to add to the rather meagre provisions offered by the Railway Company.\(^4\) Peasants also welcomed the railroads as a useful aid for driving their cattle to market and for herding their animals more generally. This infuriated officials who were faced with significant repair costs for the damage to the tracks caused by animal’s hooves, and

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\(^1\) Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1920, Mensajes e Informes 1920. ABFL.

\(^2\) This is certainly how the mingas have been remembered within some indigenous communities, with oral histories reflecting on how the fact that the mingas were used to advance the interests of the state, to construct roads, bridges and public buildings at a lower cost, and that they in no way benefited the communities who continued to pay taxes, tithes and tolls, and still did not receive the schools and health care facilities they desired. See Lema, Los Otavalos, p.113.

\(^3\) El Tiempo, 27 de Marzo, 1901.

\(^4\) El Grito del Pueblo, 9 de Diciembre, 1900.
repeated prohibitions were passed to outlaw foot traffic on the line but to little
effect. Travellers in the 1920’s and 30’s noted Indian children who were carrying
out tasks such as gathering wood jumping on and off the back of the train to enable
them to search for materials further down the track. Indian vendors were also
noted to be selling goods at stations, generally women who would come alongside the
carriages selling fruit and a range of cooked foods and snacks to passengers (see
figure four). They were not always able to benefit from this arrangement however, as
Protestant missionary Mrs Orley Ford described: “Buyers have only ten minutes in
which to eat the food and return the dish, and often it takes all that time for the
customer to find the money and pay for what he has bought, or at other times he eats
and then expects to pay, but more often it ends up that the poor women has spent ten
minutes squabbling over the price of food with her customer, and when the train pulls
out of the station she is left with neither food nor money.” It would appear that the
mainly white, male passengers took advantage of their class, race and gender status to
cheat the Indian women out of their earnings. However, Indian traders did not seem to
be put off by such potential pitfalls and are described by travellers traversing the
nation on the back of the rail and road network, the Indians of Otavalo and Cajabamba
in particular being sighted all across the coast and highlands selling textiles, utensils
and products made of fired clay. They would often exchange their goods for animals,
skins and grains which they would then sell at market or in their own cities,
highlighting the way in which Indians continued to resist complete conversion to the
cash economy, even as the railway expanded their entrepreneurial opportunities.

Many Indian groups also seemed to welcome the long-term economic opportunities
that the roads and railways presented. The arrival of a highway or railway link
brought an economic boost to local economies, and black and indigenous
communities were able to benefit from some of these. The Junta Directora of the
roads from Ibarra to Esmeraldas and from Quito to Tulcan, for example, invited the
“fathers of poor families” to become guards and overseers on the new roads, offering

129 Contestación de la Compañía del Ferrocarril de Guayaquil a Quito al Informe de los Ingenieros
Paez y Navarro. Marzo y Abril de 1911 (Quito: Imprenta y Encuadernación Nacionales).
130 David Clarence Desmaret An Adventure at Three Score and Ten (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1937)
p.60.
131 Lillian Gertrude Ford, In the High Andes (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association
1932) p.51.
them a two-storey house, between five and twenty cuadras of cultivable land and a selection of work tools in exchange for maintaining a stretch of 15 kilometres of road, carrying out small repairs, and alerting the Inspector in the case of more serious damage. They were also required to provide food and lodging for passengers who requested it. Although there were strict regulations preventing the guards from taking advantage of their position, with those found to be absent from their post to be punished with imprisonment and the forced return of all the items he had received, including his land and anything he had planted there, it does appear that many low-income families – including some blacks – were able to benefit from these schemes. Indian workers were also able to benefit from a similar arrangement on the Quito-Guayaquil railway, where peons were allotted permanent responsibility for the care and repair of a small section – generally one kilometre - of road in return for a regular monthly income. In some instances black and indigenous people were able to achieve even greater opportunities. The Guayaquil Grafico of May 1926 shows photographs of the mechanical team on the Quito-San Lorenzo railway which included two blacks, highlighting how some were able to progress through the hierarchical ranks, despite the prevalent racism. There is also evidence of black stationmasters working on the Quito-Guayaquil railway line in the 1940s. It seems that some indigenous and black communities took great efforts to register their appreciation for these opportunities. One collection of oral histories relating to the railway explains how the Indians of Colta integrated the railway into their traditional festivals, such that the fiestas to celebrate their patron saint, the Virgin of the Snows, by the 1950’s included dances and ceremonies for the railway line, in gratitude for the multiplied earnings presented by the affluence of work that it had provided for their home town.

With regards to the development of mineral and Amazonian resources, there were fewer obvious benefits for black and indigenous people and consequently opposition to the new developments was more sustained and uniform. Nomadic Indian tribes such as the Jivaro and the Huaroni fiercely resisted encroachment on their territory,

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132 La Junta Directora de los Caminos de Ibarra a la costa de Esmeraldas y de Quito a Tulcán. Anexos al Informe del Señor Director General de Obras Publicas, 1900, Mensajes e Informes, 1900. ABFL.
133 Guayaquil Gráfico, Abril/Mayo, 1928.
134 Guayaquil Gráfico, Mayo 1926.
135 Maldonado Obregon, Memorias del Ferrocarril del Sur p.203.
often with violent means, showering intruders with spears, and stories abounded of sightings of the famous tsantas, or shrunken heads, with white skin and blond hair. Occasionally this resistance manifested itself in tragic episodes like the massacre of 77 mestizo placer miners in 1939, which led to the government sending in troops to take their revenge on the tribes concerned.137 Ethnologist Samuel A Barrett described the great care he had to take when beginning his field research with the Cayapa Indians of Esmeraldas to convince the Indians that he was an anthropologist and not part of an expedition secretly prospecting for mining properties, and that there was no danger of interference with their lands and liberties, highlighting the tensions between the Cayapa Indians and the foreign owned mining enterprises.138 Certainly, the penetration of foreigners into indigenous territory as entrepreneurs and explorers had obvious negative consequences for local populations: Indians were still used as 'pack horses' by foreign travellers, and were objectified and exploited for their knowledge as well as their labour.139 Their territory was encroached on by travellers to an amazing degree: Up de Graff and his companions even went so far as to move into the villages of uncontacted Indians who fled on his arrival, a method they adopted as a strategy of exploration on their path through the Amazon.140 Indians were also forced to relocate as the frontier of white/mestizo settlement spread ever further east. Blacks suffered from this development in a different manner; they were often used as forced labour in settlement schemes. In 1908 the Governor of the Oriente recruited a dozen blacks from Esmeraldas to establish a colony in the Amazon. The language surrounding discussion of this project in newspapers and government reports, which consistently speak of the blacks being ‘brought’ and ‘transplanted’, suggest that this was not necessarily something they had volunteered for themselves.141 It also highlights how cultural stereotypes about blacks as suited to hot climates and difficult

139 See in particular, Richard Gill, White Water and Black Magic (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1940). Gill was the scientist who discovered the curative uses of curare, used as a poison in hunting by the Jivaro and later developed as a treatment for spastic paralysis, schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis. He described pertinently the way in which Indian knowledge was seen as another resource. "In all the fieldwork the Indians are the primary tools. Without them there would be nothing with which to work...Every possible aspect of their ethnic structure and culture which might conceivably be turned, one day, into practical civilised use is chased down, ferreted out, and 'put in the safe'.” P.59.
140 Up De Graff, Headhunters of the Amazon, p.88.
living conditions structured Afro-Ecuadorians involvement in Amazonian development.

However, there is also evidence that blacks and Indians were able to shape some elements of this encroachment to their own advantage. Many used the new opportunities in gold mining to escape the burden of debt peonage and plantation labour. British traveller E. E Loch, for example, described the “havoc” wrought along the Napo by the high price of gold which had led to Indians were refusing to work in the agricultural sector, choosing to pan instead. This highlights how Indians could use a direct means of participation in the new economy to extend their own autonomy. Many saw the advantage to be had in working for foreigners who could be relied upon to pay cash, and actively sought out travellers and explorers to work for as an alternative to traditional employers. If they considered their treatment to be unsatisfactory or if they sensed a better opportunity elsewhere, they would simply abandon their charge in the middle of the trip and head off, usually in secret at the dead of night. Even the macabre tourist trade that grew up in the sale of tsantas or shrunken heads, while damaging from the perspective of contributing to the trivialisation and demonisation of indigenous culture, was significant in that it showed that Indians could profit from the unwanted impositions on their territory. It is important to note that blacks and Indians experienced this penetration differently. Blacks were often able to benefit from the expansion of mining, and the first placer miners to arrive in the Amazonian province of Sucumbios in the 1930s were blacks from the Chota Valley. They achieved an improved standard of living and managed to escape the ex-slave plantations of Chota, but in doing so they displaced the Cofán from their traditional territories. We have seen how black West Indian

141 El Imparcial, Quito, 2 de October 1908; Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia del Oriente al Ministro de Instrucción Pública, Oriente etc, 1909. Mensajes e Informes, 1909, ABFL.
143 G.M Dyott, On the Trail of the Unknown in the Wilds of Ecuador and the Amazon (London: Butterworth, 1926).
144 E.E. Loch describes in an interesting anecdote how a single Indian who wished to leave the group could create havoc among the rest of the group by making up stories about the evil intentions of the expedition’s white leaders. “A few subtle lies here and there are sufficient to start a wholesale desertion, and what lies these were! That I would beat them, that I would steal their women, abandon them to the Aucas; and in one instance it was actually said that I ate babies!” Loch, Fever, Famine and Gold, p.88.
migrant workers were able to advance in status at the expense of indigenous people in the rubber industry in the Putumayo, and this was also the case for other sectors of Amazonian industry. There is evidence that blacks prospered in commerce in the Oriente, often hiring out Indian peons to offer transportation for travellers. Blacks were also used to police the Oriente, an extension of their role in the national army.

A Catalyst for Cultural Transformation? The Consequences of National Integration for Black and Indigenous Lives and Traditions

The development of a communications network, and the railway in particular, had a definite impact on black and indigenous lives bringing them into closer contact with the central authorities and with mainstream national realities. While the effect they had may not have been as dramatic as the authorities had hoped, the railways undoubtedly did help to generate a labour market. Firstly, they employed black and indigenous labour at significantly higher wages than those available in local agriculture or municipal public works and thus helped create a desire for waged employment within poor communities. They also stimulated labour migrations in a number of ways. They encouraged agricultural modernisation in the highlands, which often involved either the release of workers from the haciendas with the mechanisation of production or pushed Indians off their land with hacienda incursions into indigenous lands. The railway also offered an efficient and rapid means of transportation, even for those who could only afford to walk the line. While it is generally agreed that until the 1940’s the majority of migrations to the coast were white or mestizo, there was a gradual increase in indigenous migrations throughout this period, particularly among communities that achieved “privileged proximity” to the coast with the construction of the railway line. As a result, Jorge Trujillo has argued that the actions of the railway constructors may have been more effective in ending concertaje than government legislation. The expansion of the communications network was also significant in allowing the penetration of national news into rural hamlets, and this allowed Indians to gain a knowledge of legal

146 Loch for example hired the Indian peons who guided his expedition from a black entrepreneur. Loch, Fever, Famine and Gold, p.30.
147 Clark, The Redemptive Work, pp.95-96.
149 Jorge Trujillo, La hacienda serrano, 1900-1930 (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1986) p.222.
developments at the national level which they were often able to use to push for their rights vis-à-vis local authorities. There is also evidence that representatives from some Indian groups were able to visit Quito to lodge their grievances with state officials in person, suggesting a heightened recognition of their relationship to the nation, and of the issues that concerned them as national ones. However, it is likely that in many cases, the arrival of the railway also served to intensify the feeling of community belonging and solidarity within Indian and black groups: this is suggested by the way in which communities operated as a group to pressure for the diversion of roads and railways via or away from their lands, and the way in which they co-operated to resist labour recruitment and encroachment on their lands. These sentiments were not of course necessarily mutually exclusive - a sense of community belonging could also be combined with an increased understanding of the relationship of the community to the national collaborative. However, it is likely that a heightened sense of existing as a community outside the sway of the nation would have been particularly strong for those communities who found themselves outside the path of the major roads and railways and thus even more isolated from the national reality.

The railways could also have disruptive consequences for black and indigenous communities in terms of the dislocation of traditional order and hierarchy. Maldonado Obregon describes how the man who returned to his highland village after working in Guayaquil was not the same Indian who had left: “His coloured poncho and his white sombrero do not return, and if they do, they return inside comfortable suitcases and in second or first class.”150 While Maldonado seems to think the change that occurred was an overwhelmingly positive one, it is likely that the abandonment of indigenous traditions by migrant workers generated tensions within Indian communities. The destructive impact of national development on indigenous life is most clearly highlighting in regard to the Oriente. Here, Indian communities were destroyed by disease and loss of territory, and whole tribes vanished entirely. The disappearance of the Zaparo in particular became during the 1920’s and 30’s something of a cause celebre for travellers and explorers. The Zaparo had previously been a large and prosperous tribe, famous for their pottery and their knotless hammocks woven out of the fibre of the chambira palm. They used to wash gold,

150 Maldonado Obregon, Memorias del Ferrocarril del Sur p.117.
which they would bring into Napo town to sell or barter. In the late 1920's they suddenly ceased to come into Napo, and were never seen in the region again. Explanations for their disappearance included theories that they had been destroyed or driven away by sickness, that they had migrated to higher páramos to avoid the onslaught of settlers and miners, or that they had been wiped out by the Shuar, a rival tribe. Sightings of Zaparo or "signs" of their existence such as the frames used by them for drying meat became a part of traveller lore, a staple to be found in almost every account. One anthropologist investigating the matter in the 1940s found a small group of Zaparo to be living in the Rio Chimbo Valley just above the town of Bucay, having migrated after nearly being wiped out by warring neighbours. He asserted that "in an effort to save the few remaining members of the band some enterprising Ecuadorians took them out of the Oriente and settled them on the Western coast."1 They had apparently recreated the norms of their traditional community, living in a typical jivaria surrounded by small agricultural fields.

Whatever the truth of the situation regarding the Zaparo, the exacerbation of war between longstanding rival tribes was a common consequence of penetration into the Oriente, caused by increased competition for resources and the acquisition of more sophisticated weaponry. Powerful local interests also capitalised on violence between tribes, and many developed their own armed gangs of Indians to kill off enemies and rivals. There were frequent allegations against the Colombian rubber baron, Jamie Mejia, discussed above in relation to the trafficking of 'yumbo' Indians, of training Indians to murder those who opposed his activities, and then protecting them from going to jail.152 It was a frequent allegation that the arrival of such compromised agents of 'civilisation' served to corrupt Indian tribes: one traveller asserted that the indigenous people of the Amazon had decided that "civilisation meant trickery, fraud, deception and all conceivable forms of imposture and chicanery."153 However, the association of the Jivaro and Huaroni tribes with violence and war-making led to the further destruction of their culture. Miguel Angel Caboderilla has written about the dangers of the legends applied to minority cultures being taken at face value, and considered by outsiders as historical fact and human reality. This has had dangerous

151 Ferdon, Studies in Ecuadorian Geography, p.3.
152 El Imparcial, 8 de Octubre 1908, 3 de Octubre 1908, 11 de Setiembre 1908, 18 de Setiembre 1908.
153 Loch, Fever, Famine and Gold, p.29.
real-life consequences when applied to the Amazonian Indians, with neighbouring villagers believing them to be marauding savages and using violence against them, believing it to be a “pre-emptive strike”. The same depictions of Amazonian Indian groups as dangerous cannibals were also used as a justification for the mistreatment of Indians during the rubber boom, with it being argued that their anthropophagic tendencies made them less than fully human.

Conclusion: The Racial Dynamics of National Integration

The politics of national integration were strongly racialised. Underpinning virtually all state projects in this regard was the goal of civilising blacks and Indians, and integrating them — as well as the resources they controlled — into the nation. However, the ideal of ‘uplift’ implicit in such formulations was undermined by the fact that these policies operated within a racial ideology that perpetuated the idea of blacks and Indians as servile labour, exemplified by the North American companies that sought to separate and stratify labour according to ethnic classification. Effectively the state was forced to choose and prioritise goals, with economic development by whatever means considered to be more important than the ideals of legal equality, wage labour, or the enactment of free contracts. This sheds light on the relationship between race and class and demonstrates that the operation of race was not just ideological, but also influenced by material factors, with racial ideas informed by political and economic relations and their associated labour systems.

It is notable that different groups had different capacities to resist, engage with, and accommodate the politics of integration in different ways. Thus the consequences of these policies for black and indigenous groups were extremely variable. Some Indian and black communities were brought closer into relationship with the centres of power, while others became ever more isolated; some through their own actions, others as a direct result of government policy. While certain groups found opportunities to increase their income and autonomy, others came under ever tighter controls of exploitation and oppression. As would be expected, responses differed

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154 Miguel Angel Caboderilla, Los Huaroni en la historia de los pueblos del Oriente (Barcelona, 1994) p.5.
according to the exact nature of the project: roads and railways were often welcomed, except where land was at risk, while the development of mines and the intensified penetration of the Oriente were more uniformly resisted and opposed. This underlines the fact that state power was not conceived by subaltern groups in uniform terms. Where certain forms of state intervention were loathed and resisted, other forms of governance, perceived to be more benign, were often intensely desired and pursued.

Subaltern conceptions of liberalism also played an important mediating role in the politics of integration, and many black and indigenous groups sought to engage with Liberal ideals in order to assert their own rights. Sometimes this centred around the invocation of Liberal principles of equality, as seen in the use of the Liberal focus on free wage labour in protests against public works programmes, and non-cash payment by foreign enterprises. Other times it was the discourse of dependence and protectionism, invoked especially by the Amazonian Quichua and their supporters in their struggle against the depredations of rubber gatherers. The variations in the capacity of different groups to resist the coercive labour strategies that were employed by such projects, and to forestall their most disruptive impacts, depended on the strength of their community organisation, their knowledge of the law, and their relationship to the land, with conciertos and the Amazonian Quechua being most vulnerable to extremes of exploitation, while some highland Indians and black groups were able to benefit from such projects and advance their own interests. Nationality and race at times intersected in determining how these policies were experienced: most notably in the case of West Indian blacks who were subject to a double layer of discrimination, and were ultimately forced to rely in British protection. Black and indigenous groups were conceived by the state as the passive objects of policies aimed at the development and integration of national resources; however, both groups confounded this expectation, and consistently asserted their own agency, even in cases where they enjoyed only limited success.

155 Stanfield, Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees. This is despite the fact that there is no sustainable evidence for any of the Amazonian tribes in Ecuador having ever practised cannibalism.
The politics of integration were intimately linked to the issue of land. Land is understood to be a central tension at the heart of Latin American liberalism. As such it is of key importance for understanding the impact of the Liberal nation-building project on indigenous and black communities in Ecuador. Although Ecuador represents somewhat of an anomaly in the wider regional paradigm in that the major attack on Indian communal land in the 19th Century came under the mantle of Conservatism during the regime of Gabriel Garcia Moreno, the Liberal Revolution did continue this preoccupation with the dispossession of communal landholders. This was manifested principally in the appropriation of Church land, but also through an ideological concern with the privatisation of Indian holdings and the extension of individual land-title as an aid to the modernisation of agriculture. Land rights in this period were further drawn into focus by the development of the communications network and the discovery of extensive mineral resources in Esmeraldas and the Oriente, with land rights threatened by mass expropriations along the course of major roads and railways and the land speculation that accompanied the development of resources. The liberal emphasis on the integration and utilisation of national resources, and the desire to attract foreign immigrants also led to a renewed effort to settle and distribute public land, the ‘tierras baldas’, which in many instances had been habitually utilised and settled by black and indigenous peasants, and which were overwhelmingly concentrated in the province of Esmeraldas and the Oriente. Land was also a key source of tension between black and indigenous communities, with black-indigenous tension in Esmeraldas coalescing around black encroachment on Cayapa land along the Rio Cayapas and the Rio Onzole in Esmeraldas.

Access to land has been recognised as one of the key domains in which citizenship struggles have been played out in Latin America, and a focus on land rights highlights the extent to which citizenship was profoundly gendered, played out through ethnic categories and always a matter of degree. It also brings into focus the tension between citizenship and subjecthood in the peasantry’s relationship with the state. The
different dimensions of citizenship have been discussed in an earlier chapter, but it must be underlined that property rights constituted a core dimension of the economic rights involved in the extension of citizenship, and that they are embodied in the classic liberal definition of citizenship.² It is understood that the nature of property rights determined the relationship between the individual and the state, and thus between the individual and the rest of society. Whether individuals or groups could own property therefore greatly determined the nature of a social system. Citizenship based on economic individualism and private property was central to liberal democratic understandings of citizenship; yet Ecuador was a country with a long history of collective rights embedded in a liberal system, and during the early twentieth century had to grapple constantly with the paradoxes this presented. The reformist agrarian measures that began to be applied in the early twentieth century thus greatly influenced everyday forms of state formation, and had important implications for the understanding of racial categories and the relationship between ethnically subordinated communities and the state.

Although it is not within the bounds of this study to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Liberal policies on rural society, it is still necessary to engage with the issues surrounding the impact of Liberal land policies on ethnic relations. This chapter therefore aims to explore the strategies blacks and Indians used to defend their rights to land, and the legal obstacles they faced in doing so, highlighting the way in which legislation aimed at protecting the rights of peasants was abused by elites and local authorities. It also assesses the responses of the state to these issues, emphasising how responses to peasant demands often led to the compromise of Liberal ideals. A central focus will be the meaning of community status and how this affected the divergent strategies of blacks and Indians, exploring reforms in legal procedures relating to indigenous communities which centred around the issue of individual rights versus community status.


² Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class.
Roads, Railways and Land Speculation

Land first became an issue affecting the relationship between the Liberal government and black and indigenous populations as a result of efforts towards the integration of national resources. The development of communications networks, and the intensification of mining and agro-export enterprises had a profound impact on the way in which land in the surrounding vicinities were valued, with marked consequences for structures of land tenure. This was a common pattern throughout Latin America. Railways in particular pushed up the value of land in their immediate vicinities, and led to expropriations, fevered land speculation and greater concentration of landholdings. In Ecuador the expansion of haciendas was not encouraged by the development of railways in the same way, principally because the railway network was intended primarily to integrate national territory rather to modernise the agricultural system, and in contrast to Porfirián Mexico or post-1880 Argentina proceeded under a regime concerned with dismantling the power bases of the highland ‘landocracy’, rather than one which ruled on behalf of the landed elite. However, the same issues emerged regarding shifting land valuations, and battles over land ownership.

The first consequence of railroad development was that land within a set distance along the length of the track was expropriated and turned over to the possession of the development company. This first occurred during the construction of the Quito-Guayaquil Railway line. According to article 14 of the Quito-Guayaquil Railway contract, all land within forty metres of the railway was to pass into the ownership of the company to ensure right of way, and to enable the construction of stations, offices and worker residences along the full extension of the line. The government was

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legally obligated to facilitate the expropriation of lands that were individually owned.⁴ A procedure was established whereby details of the contract were published and notices put up in the towns and parishes affected by the railway, so that landowners could present their titles to their respective local governments, who would compensate them for the expropriation. Owners were given two months to comply with this obligation, after which time the government agreed to adjudicate in favour of the Quito-Guayaquil Railway Company (RCO).

The first expropriations took place during the construction of the section between Chimbo and Simbambe, and there was much controversy surrounding the way in which these proceeded. The Quito newspaper El Progreso published a series of articles critical of the way in which land was being expropriated for the railway and arguing that Harman was ensuring that his firm obtained the most valuable land, at the expense of Ecuadorian agriculture and the national interest.⁵ A petition presented on behalf of the RCO to the Minister of Justice noted that residents along the Chimbo – Simbabe extension who had been asked to present property titles were refusing to comply with the demands. The RCO requested the aid of the government in securing the expropriations.⁶ This highlighted the extent to which the Company was dependent on government support. In particular it requested aid in taking a financial audit of the land to be expropriated which did not take account of the land speculation that had pushed up prices around the site of the railway. The RCO’s attorney implored the Minister of Public Works to ensure that the valuation of lands focused on “the meagre values which they have cost, likewise the circumstances in which the titles of deserted and mountainous places were acquired.” He requested the minister to use the valuation to demonstrate that “the idea that the railway will increase the value of land is not, nor can it be, a reason to elevate the price of a valuation; since if it is true that these lands arrive at a very high value when the railway is in service, it is certain that in actuality there is no more intrinsic value that legitimately corresponds to them in the conditions in which we find them today, with only the prospect of railway which still has not been constructed. The increase in value that farms reach by reason of the railway when it is constructed, is today nothing more than mere speculation and

⁴ Archer Harman to the Minister of Public Works, 23 October 1899. Printed in El Progreso, 27 de Octubre, 1899.
⁵ El Progreso Various issues Sept 1899- April 1900.
expectations and hopes have never constituted a right, nor do they establish any actual or effective value." The company was clearly attempting to fix the system so that it could pay lower prices for land, and not be affected by speculation and the value that their own arrival added to the land that they desired. Their argument that no real value was added to the land until the railway moved from being a potential asset to a reality was rather disingenuous in view of the fact that the land was being expropriated precisely to build the railway. Yet the government was under intense pressure to comply with the company’s demands, despite opposition from the press and opposing political parties.

This created bitter struggles between landowners, the state and the RCO regarding dominion over land. *La Patria* of 1909 described the ongoing struggle between the hacienda ‘El Recreo’ in the province of Guayas and the railway company regarding the ownership of land, which was still ongoing one year after the railway had finally opened. Law court records highlight how communal lands were particularly vulnerable to non-compensated expropriation since they often lacked official title. The community of Ilishquino in Chimborazo presented a claim that they had been dispossessed without compensation or explanation despite three hundred years of settlement, since their land was in the zone needed for the development of railway facilities. They argued that the law stated that communal lands could not be subject to individual purchase, and that the railway should not be an exception. The supreme court rejected this claim, asserting that land was being expropriated in the “national interest” and that the law stated that those without individual title would not be compensated. This highlights how government commitment to the construction of the railway, for which they were completely dependent on foreign capital, pushed them to collude in the acquisition of land by the company, despite its consequences for the dispossession of indigenous populations.

The efforts of the government and the railway company did not prevent the practice of land speculation. Newspapers from this period are filled with legal struggles between elites over land, with many different individuals asserting ownership over the same

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6 *El Grito del Pueblo*, 10 de Marzo, 1900.
7 Ibid.
8 *La Patria*, Guayaquil, 1 de Mayo, 1909.
pieces of land bordering the railway; highlighting how as prices were pushed up struggles for the ownership of land became more intense and more unscrupulous. These often involved foreign entrepreneurs, highlighting the role of foreign capital in exacerbating land speculation. The arrival of foreign companies also in many cases led to the concentration of land in foreign hands at the expense of local populations, generally on the pretext of developing national resources. Esmeraldas is both a prime example and a special case; the result of the existence of the Ecuador Land Company (ELCO), a British-owned consortium dating back to 1854, which was granted extensive and controversial land concessions in Esmeraldas in exchange for a portion of the national debt. Disputes between the ELCO and Ecuadorian governments over the terms of this agreement had a profound impact on the black peasants who were at the centre of a tug-of-war for possession of lands they claimed to have occupied for centuries. The greatest impact was on residents of the town of San Lorenzo, since the ELCO refused to accept their right to occupy the territory and made every effort to terrorise them, setting fire to houses and property, and expelling peaceful citizens through the destruction of their homes.10 Carlos Concha, as Governor of Esmeraldas, repeatedly sought government intervention in these matters on behalf of the population, but without success.11

This mistreatment led to popular unrest against the ELCO. The Chairman of its subsidiary, the Pailon Company, complained in 1896: “During the whole of the present year our manager at San Lorenzo has been subjected to constant inconvenience, insult and annoyance. Fences which have been put up by the Company have been torn down, and the native Ecuadorian population has been stirred up against the company.”12 There were also reports of the theft of tagua nuts and timber from the estate, in apparent acts of sabotage, while the Commander of a British naval ship reported intercepting peasants in a large canoe laden with ELCO property.13 The ELCO complained that such actions were making the company

10 Gómez de la Torre to Saint John, Quito, May 14, 1898, FO177/230, no.211.
11 See Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia de Esmeraldas al Ministro de lo Interior, 1898, 1900.
12 Charles Cheston, Chairman of the Pailon Company, Ltd, to RH Marquis of Salisbury, HM Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London, 14th September, 1896, FO25/114, p.140.
13 Bishop to FO, 30th October 1905, FO25/114, p525-527; Macvey Napier, Commander, HMS Wild Swan to Rear Admiral H. St. L. Bury Palliser, Guayaquil, 15 August 1896, in MacGregor to FO, 9th October, 1896. FO25/100/7880.
increasingly unprofitable and debarring it from carrying out its day-to-day business. Such resistance was encouraged by nationalist measures on the part of the government, such as the establishment of a Commission which measured ELCO lands and gave out sites to local inhabitants to build houses on, and the renaming of San Lorenzo as Puerto “Vargas Torres”, after the important Liberal revolutionary who had a huge popular following in Esmeraldas.14

This has interesting reverberations for the issue of black citizenship, since, at least in the case of San Lorenzo, the government made their claim to the land on the basis of the national citizenship of those living there, and thus their inalienable right to the territory on which they settled. The ELCO dismissed the settlers as squatters, with its manager stating that “the disputed land which members of the Commission call a town (población) consists merely of one block of buildings: the houses of our site holders, with those of seven squatters, and in the legal sense no such place as a town exists, nor so far as I can gather, ever did exist.”15 He insisted that Ecuadorian people did not have the right to reside on ELCO land, and suggested that the land in San Lorenzo be let out as a business premises, preferably to foreign merchants. It is extremely significant that in these circumstances the Ecuadorian government was determined to recognise the (presumably black) settlers as nationals and citizens, when such a status was normally denied to them officially due to considerations of race and ethnicity. Yet the reality of government efforts to dislodge the ELCO for black peasants often simply meant encroachment from all sides as lands were re-titled and issued at will by the government, encouraging land speculation and the acquisition of land by large landowners. For example, the Secretary of the Pailon Company informed the British Foreign Office that applications for sites held by the ELCO had been made by merchants from Esmeraldas, Los Rios and Guayaquil.16 Peasants were often simply displaced as the ELCO and Ecuadorian merchants and speculators competed to fence land off and bring it under cultivation.17 This is

14 Ibid; Thompson to the Secretary, Pailon Co Ltd, San Lorenzo, August 1st 1896, FO25/114, p.161.
16 Thompson, Manager, ECLO to the Secretary, Pailon Co Ltd, San Lorenzo, August 1st 1896, FO25/114, p.162.
evidenced by the migration of peasants from San Lorenzo to the more central parts of the province. Those populations that remained ultimately became subservient to and dependent on the ELCO in the same way that peasant groups elsewhere were affected by the large haciendas. The President of the Quito-San Lorenzo Railway Junta in the 1920's described the company as dominating like a feudal lord, with absolute control. “The presence of the teniente político and his judicial functions are a mere smokescreen – a figurative decoration – instead, the company governs through imposition.” 18

The conflicts between the state, the ELCO, local elites and peasants encouraged the tightening of land titling procedures at an earlier stage in Esmeraldas than elsewhere. A major revision of land titles took place in 1902 when the municipal procurator asked all owners of land to exhibit their titles, and to accredit when and how they had acquired them. This edificatory measure found the majority of titles held to be invalid; typically the owners had documents of sale and purchase, but lacked the original titles listed by the municipality. The law stipulated that where full title was lacking, the property would automatically pass back into the dominion of the municipality. Those without title who had enjoyed customary residence for more than thirty years – the time stipulated by the law as bestowing legal ownership – could acquire through the mediation of a judicial ruling full legal title to their land. 19

However, it is likely that the black peasants who were the least likely to have correct title to their land, were also those with least access to judicial procedures through which they could obtain a ruling of customary possession. This highlights another negative consequence of land speculation and the arrival of foreign enterprises for the black peasantry in Esmeraldas.

Colonisation, Public Lands and Black and Indigenous Peasants

The distribution of public lands – a key part of government immigration and agricultural policy – had a similarly disruptive effect on peasant populations. The majority of ‘tierras baldas’, far from being “empty lands”, were habitually settled or

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18 Presidente de la Junta Provincial para el Ferrocarril de Esmeraldas a Quito al Ministro del Interior. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Obras Publicas, 1921-1922, Mensajes e Informes 1922, ABFL
19 El Bien Social, Esmeraldas, 13 de abril, 1902
utilised by black and indigenous communities, particularly in Esmeraldas and the Oriente where the majority of such lands were located, and where grants of up to 150,000 hectares were routinely allocated during the early twentieth century. The distribution of *tierras baldias* was conceived by the government as a way to encourage the development of small land ownership at the expense of the hacienda, and of solving the problem of land ownership among the peasantry. This was seen as central to the modernisation of agriculture. Agricultural studies were cited which demonstrated that peasants working on land they did not own retarded agrarian development, neglecting the rotation of crops, and omitting to plant trees or crops which did not yield their fruit immediately, thus slowing the course of agricultural development. Colonisation of public land was also seen as key to the integration of national territory. As the Minister of Government insisted: “countries without population are only expressions of geographic areas… without population every advancement is impossible.”

The foundation of Liberal public land policy was laid in the legislation of 1875. This law was concerned with the development of agricultural communities more generally, seeking to prevent land speculation by laying out a provision requiring that those allocated a portion of land cultivate at least one fifth of it within a ten year period. It also required that between every two plots sold, an intermediary plot be reserved for later distribution. The aim of this policy was to ensure that lands continued to be held in the hands of the state to facilitate the provision of future state services. However, this clause simply generated disputes as landowners spread over the boundaries of allocated land and claimed the right to land alongside through cultivation.

Under the law of 1875 the distribution of lands proceeded through the system of *denuncias*. This allowed the interested party to search out and discover available land in a location convenient to them, and then petition the state to adjudicate the land. This system had many flaws. Most irksome from a state perspective, it precluded the

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systematic distribution of land, and meant that ownership was transferred without any way of knowing what remained in the hands of the state, and without any norm being established for setting a fair and realistic price. The system also encouraged monopolisation and land speculation as claimants sought to situate themselves alongside the route of public works in project or execution, while lands which were more distant remained ignored and unclaimed.

The weaknesses of the system can be seen from an examination of the Registro Oficial throughout the period 1890-1935, which in every issue contained denunciations of Tierras Baldias. They all followed the same pattern and layout. First, the claim itself which followed a set pattern: a declaration of intent — “Mr President, I desire to obtain ownership of a small plot of land”, followed by a statement of the boundaries of the land, and an agreement to accept the expenses of planning and surveying. This was followed by a response from the governor of the province in which the lands were located which asked the teniente politico of the parish to confirm that the land was truly baldio, that the boundaries given were correct, that the lands in question did not belong to “any nation, municipality or any other third party”. It requested that announcements of the claim and the corresponding governor’s report, together with the signature of two witnesses, be fixed for a period of fifteen days in the location of the claimed land, and in two of the public places adjoining the plot. This in turn was followed by the report of the teniente politico of the parish which confirmed that the land denounced was indeed baldio, and that its adjudication would not cause harm to “municipality, treasury or third party”; that the land had not previously been denounced by any other person; that the specified boundaries were correct, and that the notices been posted for fifteen days in the relevant parishes. It also replicated the announcement that was displayed. The potential for corruption in these proceedings was clear: it was the teniente politico who was charged with confirming the validity of the claims, and he was generally in the thrall of local elites and could easily be bought off.

A case in the Registro Oficial in May of 1920 highlights how vulnerable peasants were to land corruption and the problems of titling under the old system. It included a denuncia placed by Doroteo, Francisco and Juana Pata, residents of parish of Rioverde in Esmeraldas who requested ownership of 100 hectares of land in point
named ‘Lluve’. Their petition stated that for more than thirty years the land been occupied by their father Manuel Pata, who had also made a denunciation with the intention of obtaining ownership of the land. However, in spite of having kept up with his monthly payment and of having paid the treasury the corresponding value of the land, he could not obtain the title of compra-venta, “perhaps due to the little energy of our father, or perhaps because of the many civil wars that have enveloped this countryside”. They were careful not to blame the government and encourage disfavour, suggesting instead that the situation was the result of circumstances outside of their control. However, this highlights how vulnerable peasants were: in this case, they had paid and had followed all the rules but they still did not obtain the title to their land. The children denounced the land again, and insisted that they would forgo no expense in obtaining the respective titles; there are not records as to whether or not they were successful.  

Strikingly, most of the people making denunciations in Esmeraldas (where the majority of baldios were situated) were not residents of Esmeraldas but ‘Ecuatorianos’. This suggests that people were moving in from outside and possibly displacing black peasants. This may also reflect land speculation by foreigners: a great deal of the claimants identified themselves as Colombian. Denunciations printed in the Registro Oficial and articles in the press also make clear that often the same plot of land was claimed by more than one individual.

A letter sent to El Comercio by an American businessman complaining about the problems he had encountered trying to purchase some public lands and to organise colonisation programmes on tierras baldias sheds light on the situation faced by black and indigenous peasants. Seeking to create sympathy for his case, he allied himself discursively with the poor peasantry, and deplored the way in which he and they were prevented from gaining access to land by the corruption of local elites, and the machinations of tinterillos. He accused tinterillos of denouncing lands “in their own names, the names of their spouses, children, their good friends, the good friends of their peons”, with the result that “soon, there will be no land to distribute”.  

\(^{22}\) Registro Oficial, No. 1084, May 7, 1920.  
\(^{23}\) El Comercio, 28 de octubre, 1925. Similar arguments are made in an article by the same author published in El Dia, 29 de Julio, 1925.
points to the extent to which land was being adjudicated illegally, with elites paying lawyers to circumvent the law. It is interesting that a foreign land entrepreneur should seek to associate himself with the peasantry and invoke the phantom of the hated tinterillos in order to gain sympathy for his case. This highlights the extent to which government concern regarding this issue was considered to centre on the peasantry and the assurance of their access to land, despite the clear reality that the distribution of public land did not have beneficial effects for peasants.

In addition to elite claims and denunciations, peasants also suffered from the usurpation of public lands by land speculators and hacienda owners. The appropriation of public lands occurred in many areas of Ecuador in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The illicit conversion of public lands into private property was most prevalent in areas undergoing intense economic growth. Given the covert nature of such activities, it is impossible to say exactly how much land was lost to the public domain. Qualitative sources, however, suggest that the amount of land illegally transferred to private use equalled and probably surpassed that allocated in government grants. The widespread usurpation of public lands contributed significantly to the consolidation of new latifundia in developing regions.24 A typical tactic employed by grantees was to extend de facto control over adjacent public lands by monopolising water resources and road access. Officials took note of this practice and deplored the “common abuse” of individuals seeking very long, narrow grants, often along the base of mountains, in order to appropriate the uplands as well.25 Other landowners enlarged the boundaries of their haciendas to encompass adjacent public lands. Deficiencies in traditional surveying practices considerably facilitated such manoeuvres. Colonial deeds rarely fixed clear property boundaries. Given this imprecision, hacendados whose lands bordered on baldios found it possible in later years to “clarify” boundaries to their own advantage. With each sale and each inheritance, the owners gradually extended their property limits. The name on one river was attributed to the name of another kilometre or two further up, one mountain ridge was said to be another ridge, one marker stone another stone. Barring an on-the-spot inspection, these changes could not be detected in the

property deeds. Other usurpations lacked even the legal guise of land grants. In many places land entrepreneurs simply claimed and later sold public lands with no lawful grounds whatsoever. Such practices were especially common in the Oriente, where public officials were few and land values low. In Esmeraldas tierras baldias were also purchased by entrepreneurs to establish agro-export businesses. As tagua came to gain more importance as a generator of income for the national economy after the collapse of the cocoa industry in the 1920's, many of the big ‘taguales’ or tagua plantations were established in Muisne on the site of public lands.  

Legislators occasionally deplored the usurpation of public lands but never set any criminal penalties. The government did establish some procedures to reclaim land stolen from the national domain, but the land entrepreneurs used these procedures instead to sanction their appropriations. Those most aware of what was going on were, of course, the peasant settlers inhabiting frontier regions. The privatisation of land had a tremendous impact on their lives, signalling in effect, the loss of their land claims.

The Ley de Tierras Baldías y Colonización of 1936 sought to resolve some of these problems. The law of 1936 governed everything related to the tenancy, possession, ownership, reversal and handover of lands under state ownership. It defined those lands that belonged to the state as those falling “outside the boundaries of the territory of any other owner”; those which had reverted to the state because a previous adjudication had expired; those which had been left uncultivated; those abandoned by the landowner; those expropriated by the state for whatever legal reason; as well as those which lacked adequate titles. Although municipal and common lands were exempted from the rule regarding titling, this highlights that peasants (especially Afro-Ecuadorians who could not claim communal landholding) were actually at risk of losing their lands as a result of the law. The law of 1936 represented a clampdown on land ownership, with all those who had claimed public lands under the provisions of previous laws granted six months to present to the government detailed specifications as to the location and boundaries of their lands, proof of cultivation and

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25 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1922. Mensajes e Informes, 1922. ABFL.
of the construction of buildings, in addition to written titles if possessed, and a record of the date of inscription on the relevant land registry. These were to be examined by the Attorney General, who had ultimate authority and power of intervention in all cases related to the new law. 27

In an effort to ensure that the land granted was cultivated, it was expressly stated that land was granted only provisionally, and that failure to cultivate at least one quarter of the land granted within a five year period would lead to the forfeit of the land which would return to the hands of the state. It was also decreed that provisional land could not be transferred among the living; in others words, it could not be sold, only inherited. Certain lands were not to be given out. These included public lands that contained known deposits of salts, minerals, soft coals, or hydrocarbons, as well as those that were sources of thermal, mineral or medicinal waters. Dominion of such deposits was to remain always with state, which would allow special contracts for the renting of such deposits or sources. 28 This would have implications for Afro-Ecuadorians settlements in Esmeraldas that were centred around gold mining areas.

One of the core problems related to the administration of public lands was that of proving ownership. The Minister of Social Provision noted that successive governments had granted tracts of land to their supporters, leading to cases where more than one person claimed ownership of the same tract of land, while others were left with claims that were at best only formal, in that they had title to the land but had never made any attempt to settle it. Such problems were most intense in regions which had acquired a significant increase in value, such as along the route into Oriente-Baños, Merida, Puyo and those of Saloya and Santo Domingo de los Colorados, where public lands had been crossed by major roads.

This reflected another major problem: the absence of comprehensive maps or plans of public lands, which exacerbated problems such as the repeated adjudication of the same plot to different individuals. This lack of precision and concrete knowledge impeded the development of an effective system for the valuation of public land. Thus

27 Informe del Ministro del Gobierno, 1935-36. Ley de Tierras Baldías y Colonización. Mensajes e Informes, 1936. ABFL.
28 Ibid
the Minister of Social Provision called for the creation of an Office of Engineering, annexed to the Department of Public Lands, in order to begin to draw up geographic, topographic and climatic maps of the lands under state ownership.29 This never materialised, a result of the absence of sufficient personnel with the capacity and experience to carry out this task. Another fundamental shortcoming was that none of the laws pertaining to public lands offered a fixed definition of the meaning of such terms as "baldia" and "cultivation". The imprecision of underlying concepts was a significant obstacle to effective policy making. This was a problem recognised by some government officials, but calls for revisions to the law which would present a clearer definition of core concepts were resisted.

There were some provisions which sought to encourage the access of peasants to public land. Most notably, the law stated that when lots were sold to persons who possessed no other land the Ministry of Public Lands could concede the right to pay in instalments, paying ten percent of the total cost up front, and the rest in eighteen annual payments, the first due two years after the agreement of sale. This right applied only to those with no previous land, and it was a condition of the contract that the lot could not be sold while they still owed on the price. However, the fact that sales were made on a first-come, first serve basis would continue to place peasants at a disadvantage, while ten percent of a plot's value would still be beyond their means in the majority of cases.

This problem was recognised in a 1940 amendment to the law. The Minister of Social Provision noted that while the policy of handing out land to those who were previously landless had been beneficial from an individual perspective, it had not assisted national development in the way envisaged, since those who lacked the initial capital to purchase a plot outright also lacked the funds to effectively cultivate it. "The transformation of these public lands into forces of produce needs, besides human effort, sufficient initial capital... If adjudications are made precisely to those who lack property, it is evident that work on the land will be realised in a very deficient form, if they are able to effectuate it at all."30 This led to efforts to establish

29 Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. Mensajes e Informes 1940, ABFL
30 Ibid.
a Caja Agraria, a rural bank that could provide credit to the rural poor to accompany their adjudication.

The legislation was also concerned with the allocation of land for colonisation programmes. This was initially aimed at encouraging the long-desired European immigration, with the same discourse about the need to improve the ethnic composition of the nation being propagated. The Minister of Social Welfare insisted that immigration was entirely necessary “because of the vast expanses of uncultivated land and the country’s ethnic character.” Immigrants would bring new moral and economic values, as well as helping to develop the economy, while the social and economic dislocations suffered throughout Europe in the aftermath of World War One were used to present a humanitarian justification for immigration. Thus foreign settlement programmes were renewed, with immigrants able to benefit from loans provided by the Banco de Préstamos not available to the Ecuadorian peasantry.

However, as immigrants finally began to arrive in the 1940’s, pushed by the international situation, the government began to recognise that this measure was not the universal panacea that had been envisaged. The Minister of Social Provision noted that “a fundamental error regarding the adjudication of state lands was that of conceding them to people who had never been, nor would ever be, farmers”, but who, because of their immigrant status, had easily attained ministerial adjudication. “A consequence of these facts has been that the majority of adjudicated lots have been maintained unproductively, since the recipients, in place of working them, prefer to wait tranquilly for the land to rise in value, through the work of time and the efforts of the state. It is evident that professionals, profiteers, and functionaries will never leave the comfort of the city to face themselves with the nature of the hard struggle that is necessary to make these lands productive.” Thus during the 1940’s tests were introduced in an attempt to ensure that the only immigrants accepted into Ecuador were “farmers and industrialists”. However, immigrants found it easy to lie to gain access, and the majority of immigrants received continued to be businessmen and merchants.

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31 Ibid.
32 Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo presenta a la nación, 1941, Mensajes e Informes, 1941. ABFL.
These concerns spurred a renewed focus on internal colonisation, aimed at distributing land to the peasantry. Efforts were made in particular to establish settlements alongside the course of major road and railroads, a logical extension of government concern with preventing land speculation. Documents regulating the construction of the Quito-San Lorenzo Railway explicitly stated that the Railway Junta was to support the establishment of populations and agrarian colonies. Land was to be divided into plots ranging in size from two to 200 hectares, and priced by the Junta according to location, topography, quality and land conditions, and to be granted for exploitation for periods of up to fifteen years. Priority was to be granted to organised colonies and groupings of railroad workers, highlighting the fact that efforts were being made to grant land to those involved in the construction and maintenance of the line. \(^{34}\) In a similar case in 1941 lands along the Quito-Guayaquil railway in Guamote were expropriated to be parcelled among the inhabitants of the parish. \(^{35}\)

However, in the case of the Quito-San Lorenzo contract it was also stated that "large businesses will be granted concessions in special conditions agreed on in each case by the Junta;" effectively legislating for large companies and landowners to gain access to land at will. Likewise, a provision in the contract classifying the grazing of cattle and sheep as constituting "cultivation" highlighted the potential for land to be handed over to absentee landowners at the expense of the peasantry. \(^{36}\) Moreover, provisions were also passed allowing the Junta to take the "necessary means to prevent the "unwarranted occupation" of the lands belonging to the railway, suggesting a determined effort to prevent the poor inhabitants of the region from settling the land. \(^{37}\)

This was typical of land legislation in this period, which was often ostensibly

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\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) AHBC, Fondo MSV, ADQ.46, Caja 13, Carpeta 114, Documentos del Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo, 1941-42. Doc. no. 16, 'Reglamentos para la explotacion de tierras adjudicas al Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo.'

\(^{35}\) Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. Mensajes e Informes, 1941. ABFL.

\(^{36}\) AHBC, Fondo MSV, ADQ.46, Caja 13, Carpeta 114, Documentos del Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo, 1941-42. Doc. no 16, 'Reglamentos para la explotacion de tierras adjudicas al Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo.'

\(^{37}\) AHBC, Fondo MSV, ADQ.46, Caja 13, Carpeta 114, Documentos del Ferrocarril Quito-San Lorenzo, 1941-42. Doc. no 17, 'Departamento de colonización, Memoria'.
designed to promote peasant colonisation and small-scale settlement, yet always included a loophole that could benefit the large landowner.

It is also important to underline that "internal colonisation" typically meant the settlement of frontier regions by mestizo populations from overpopulated highland and coastal regions, rather than the titling of lands in these regions to the black and indigenous populations that already inhabited them. The negative consequences for certain nomadic indigenous groups were so noticeable that the government took measures to protect the Indians. The government was particularly troubled by the case of the Colorado Indians of Esmeraldas. It was noted that these Indians were continually displaced by colonos, who frequently plundered their lands and exploited them, charging them large sums of money for crossing their lands, or forcing them into labour. Significantly, it was also underlined that Afro-Ecuadorian groups were among these exploiters. This may have spurred government effort to protect Colorado land, given the distaste of the authorities for black interactions of any kind with Esmeraldan indigenous groups. The Minister of Social Provision stated that: "the importance of these indigenous groups is undeniable, not only as the surviving remnants of the strong and intelligent race of the Colorados, but also as elements of labour, indispensable for agriculture, since it is already known that in the whole Republic it is the Indian who is the true agricultural force, who cultivates the land and makes it fruitful." It was noted that land legislation had failed to protect them, and that their "possession over long years" had not impeded alternative claims and denuncias on these lands. Thus to "secure their situation" they conceded to them the legal right of ownership over "the land that they make fertile and possess." It was also recognised that any effort to grant public lands to indigenous groups must take into account their cultural traditions. In the case of the Colorados it was known that when a member of the family died the group immediately changed their residence to escape the "dangerous influence" of the deceased. With this in mind, the adjudication made in 1941 to the group of Colorados led by Jefe Alejandro Calazacon granted

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38 Although no exact details are available in government records as to the nature of this exploitation, anthropological and literary accounts of the Cayapa Indians describe incursions by blacks as leading to the association of blackness with the devil. The novel Juyungo by Adalberto Ortiz also alludes to black encroachment on Cayapa land. See Barrett, *The Cayapa Indians of Ecuador*; Ortiz, *Juyungo*. The relations between Afro-Ecuadorians and Colorado Indians are less well documented.

39 Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo presenta a la nación, 1941, *Mensajes e Informes*, 1941. ABFL.
them 700 hectares, on which it was hoped that the group would be able to move about freely, "instead of adopting the norms of civilised life." This choice of language is significant, highlighting how even when a compromise was made in policy in order to protect nomadic indigenous traditions, this was still clearly presented as the "wrong" lifestyle choice. The contract of adjudication was signed on January 20, 1941, and it was reported that efforts were being undertaken to grant an analogous adjudication for a group of Aguavil Indians in the same province. This is important in that it represented an attempt by the government to find a solution to the problems of indigenous peoples, but it is not clear whether those groups living nomadic lifestyles understood the concept of land the government was seeking to impose on them. Moreover, it is unlikely that the rights granted to the Indians were respected by non-Indian settlers, especially since they were granted land that they were not expected to settle at any one time. Land that they were not physically present on was likely to be especially vulnerable.

However, the very fact that the needs of Indian groups were considered in the formulation of public lands policy is significant. These considerations were also reflected in the use of legislation regarding internal colonisation for the expropriation of uncultivated hacienda land to be distributed to resident peasants. An Expropriations Commission was established in 1928 to draw up plans and adjudicate parcels of land to peasants, with the aim of encouraging the development of a class of peasant smallholders; a policy noted by President Moncayo to have been formulated in response to "the clamour of peoples who have requested the expropriation of lands for the development and widening of their parishes." A Decree of March 1937 ordered the expropriation of the haciendas ‘La Calera’, ‘La Granja’, ‘El Vergel’, ‘Santa Ana’, and ‘El Ceibo’ situated in the parish of Valladolid in the canton of Loja, for the benefit of the inhabitants of this jurisdiction and those of the enclosure of Taxiche. Lands were also expropriated from the hacienda ‘Chorlan’ for the benefit of the parishes of San Antonio de Ibarra and those of the Comuna de Tanguarin. These expropriations directly benefited neighbouring Indian communities, while those

40 Ibid.
41 Mensaje que el Señor Encargado del Poder Ejecutivo Doctor Don Abelardo Moncayo, presenta al H. Congreso Nacional de 1934, Mensajes e Informes 1934, ABFL.
42 Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. Mensajes e Informes, 1940. ABFL.
whose lands were expropriated received fifty percent of its value from the Banco Hipotecario. However, Moncayo noted that the Department of Social Provision could not proceed on the scale that would be desirable, owing to the lack of adequate technical personnel who could dedicate themselves exclusively to expropriation and parcelation of lands required by indigenous communities in various parts of the Republic. Moreover, in 1938 the Assembly modified the decree to give landowners 75% of the value of expropriated lands, a concession to landed elites which raised the cost of carrying out such expropriations and served to discourage the government from carrying them out.

Thus, despite some government initiatives, the primary results of the distribution of public lands were land speculation, the legalised monopolisation of land, and the expansion of the haciendas. There is no definitive answer in sources regarding the resolution of individual land conflicts. In some cases peasants managed to stay on the land, the legal status of which remained undefined. In other instances, landlords bought up peasants' improvements. A few peasants probably made a business out of opening frontier lands, selling the clearings to either entrepreneurs or other settlers and moving on. In the majority of cases, however, the evidence suggests that the small peasant settlers lost out. The formation of large properties through the dispossession of peasant communities was the dominant tendency in the period 1890-1940.

Peasants, Haciendas and Rising Social Tension: Events and Responses

The effort to create small farmers from indigenous comuneros was undermined, then, by the parallel expansion of the hacienda. The government was torn between encouraging this in the name of modernisation and economic development, and following through on the mission to protect the Indian, and to challenge the power of the haciendas by promoting an alternative smallholder-led model of development. These conflicting processes generated much tension in the countryside, largely generated by the usurpation of peasant lands. As haciendas expanded they began to enclose peasant's fields. A clear economic rationale lay behind such behaviour. The

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43 Mensaje que el Señor Encargado del Poder Ejecutivo Doctor Don Abelardo Moncayo, presenta al H.
land peasants settled was generally fertile, with some access to markets. More importantly, peasant land was already cleared and ready for production. To appropriate the peasants' fields, then, meant significant savings of time and money. It has typically been argued that haciendas expanded their claims to lands, even when they did not use them, in order to create a scarcity of land for Indians and hence induce them to work on the great estates – the Marxist theory of primitive accumulation. However, such an interpretation must be handled with care in order to avoid the confusion of cause and effect. It is undeniable that the effect of hacienda claims was to make community land scarce, but the hacienda may nonetheless have expanded for a variety of reasons to give this consequence, intended or unintended. Gavin Smith has argued with reference to Peru that by claiming community land without stocking it, haciendas were not creating a land scarcity per se, so much as undercutting a vital resource on which the politics of the Indian community depended, in favour of the patron of the hacienda. Regardless of the motive of hacendados, the effect of hacienda expansion at the beginning of the century was to challenge important communal institutions.

Beyond the modification of boundaries in wills and bills of sale, hacendados used two kinds of legal action – partition suits (juicios de partición) and boundary actions (juicios de deslinde) for similar ends. Partition suits were initiated by a number of joint tenants, (comuneros) who owned a tract of land in common as the consequence of a land grant, inheritance, or the purchase of shares. The object of the suit was to divide the property legally and to mark the individual portions of each part-owner. Boundary actions, in contrast, aimed to determine the borders between two or more privately owned properties or between one individual's property and adjoining public lands. They were generally filed by an interested landowner. Many proprietors purposely used such court cases to fix new boundaries which, on occasion, took in thousands of hectares of public or indigenous land. Because property titles were unclear, surveyors often inept and sometimes partial, and judges rarely took time to study old deeds seriously, landowners usually succeeded in manipulating the

evidence to their advantage. The result was a surge in legal cases involving indigenous communities; brought both by hacendados petitioning for the expansion of their boundaries, and by indigenous groups protesting the usurpation of their land. Faith in the new Liberal legislation was such that claims were made for cases dating back to the mid-nineteenth century – the high water mark of Indian dispossession by the hacienda.

Indians did organise themselves to oppose the encroachments of the hacienda. The struggles that Indian groups put up against expropriation and encroachment provide evidence that Indians possessed a strong sense of their own interests, separate from those of large landowners and political bosses and that they endeavoured to defend those interests as best as they could. Legislation passed gave Indians the sense that national government was on their side; it imbued their interests with legitimacy, and provided a focal point around which to began to organise in their defence. Indian resistance to the incursions of land entrepreneurs grew out of profound sense of legal wrong, out of a conviction that the propertied had obtained their wealth by illegitimate means. The result was that hacendados tried to implement their goals and the peasants to resist them through the use of judicial and administrative channels, through appeals to bureaucrats, congressmen and the executive in Quito, and last but not least, through selective use of violence.

Sometimes Indians were successful in gaining state sympathy for their plight, and subsequently, support of their demands. The struggle of the Indian peons from the haciendas ‘Quiacorral’ and ‘Espino’ in province of Bolívar which were under the administration of the Central Junta of Public Assistance represents a prime example of this. More than 2000 Indians were resident on these two haciendas in a capacity described by ministers as that of colonos, occupying small parcels of land, and paying an annual pension that was fixed by the caprice of the renter. The Indians claimed that the cost of this pension had risen to more than ten times its original value since renters had taken over from the Concepción monks. The Minister of Social Provision recognised that Indian submission to these increasing demands demonstrated the power of their “urge to live and die on the lands of their ancestors”. In recognition of
the threat to the “peace and tranquillity of the public” posed by this situation, the Department of Social Provision asked Congress for the expedition of a decree that would authorise the parcelation and distribution of the two haciendas. “The Indians cry out for this redemptive measure, and in reality it seems to us the most appropriate and beneficial solution for the state.”

Indian communities also took advantage of the transfer of lands between members of the elite to assert their own rights to ownership. Government reports for 1917 detailed the problems which had arisen when the holder of the lease on the state-owned hacienda ‘Zumbahua’ and its annexes ‘La Cocha’ and ‘Churquirahuas’ died unexpectedly, causing his heirs to cancel his rental contract. The lands were immediately re-rented to a different individual in compliance with the Regulatory Decree of the Ley de Beneficencia. However, this transfer was disrupted by the Indian huasipungeros who worked on the estate. The Indians rose up against the new provisional landlord, insisting that the plots of lands on which they lived and worked were their exclusive possession and that they did not therefore have any obligation to extend their services to anyone. They refused to carry out any work, and abandoned their holdings, moving to the neighbouring Indian community of ‘Apagua’ which also asserted ownership over a large part of hacienda ‘Zumbahua’. Government ministers perceived the uprising as instigated by third parties — “those who benefit from their ignorance to exploit them without compassion.” However, the case shows how the dissolution of the traditional order of the hacienda system through state expropriations and reformist legislation created a space for Indians to resist and assert their own claims, and how in doing so it resuscitated the links between Indians dependent on the hacienda and independent Indian communities, enabling cross-sector, intra-ethnic solidarity.

The ‘Zumbahua’ conflict was exacerbated by landowners from neighbouring haciendas, who, knowing that the Junta had not been able to obtain the property titles that could bring an end to what it described as “unleashed pretensions” on the part of

45 Informe de la Gobernacion de la Provincia de Bolivar, Guaranda, 20 Mayo 1913, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Mensajes e Informes 1913, ABFL.
46 Informe que el Presidente de la Junta Nacional de Beneficencia de Quito presenta al Ministro de lo Interior, Cultos, y Beneficencia, 1919, Mensajes e Informes, 1919. ABFL.
the haciendas, promoted trials of *apeo y deslinde* with the aim of taking hold of the portions of land which were settled by Indians. The concerns of the state centred around the issue of ensuring their access to Indian labour, expressing the fear that if these abuses continued they would have "the unavoidable result that such holdings will be converted into immense uncultivated lands, without any importance or value, through the abandonment of the Indians that cultivate them." Thus it is clear that land tensions often centred around access to Indian labour, as well as the desire of Indians to be free of burdensome obligations on their labour.

Certainly, this was not an isolated case; indeed a later report from the same ministry described how there were almost daily cases brought by landowners that possessed estates contiguous to those administered by the Junta de Beneficincia. The core problem was the declaration by the Supreme Court of Justice that the Junta lacked a legal personality and so could not intervene in actions that dealt with disputed ownership. This served as a green light for legal action by landowners. As of 1919 the Junta was engaged in costly trials of *apeo y deslinde* with seven different haciendas, and had ongoing water trials with two more. Thus it is clear that the law which stated that Junta did not have a legal personality had led many hacendados to try and expand holdings at expense of state. Yet it also opened up a space for claims of all kinds, including those of Indians who were heavily represented among groups who sought to take advantage of this ruling.

The interminable conflicts over ownership, use and access to lands and waters frequently demanded the intervention of the Ministry of Interior and the police, especially when these disputes - as so often happened - became bloody and violent. The state sought to mediate and find a compromise which would leave both parties with access to the lands and waters in question. This can be seen especially with regards to the issue of access to water, which became a primary focus of government attention. The monopolisation of water supplies by large haciendas was one of the

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47 Informe que el Presidente de la Junta Nacional de Beneficencia de Quito presenta al Ministro de lo Interior, Cultos y Beneficencia, 1917. *Mensajes e Informes, 1917.* ABFL.
48 Ibid.
49 Informe que el Presidente de la Junta Nacional de Beneficencia de Quito presenta al Ministro de lo Interior, Cultos y Beneficencia, 1919. *Mensajes e Informes, 1919.* ABFL.

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most common causes of disputes between the haciendas and the peasantry, and “latifundio de aguas” became a major problem in provinces such as Tungurahua and Chimborazo where a lack of water represented a severe obstacle to the rehabilitation of large sections of useful land. A pattern emerged whereby wealthy families, without necessarily being the legal owners of a given spring, river or aqueduct, monopolised the water supply in order to sell or sub-rent it. As they sought legal backing for this possession in the courts, many peasant families and communities who possessed channels and pipes that they had held for generations found themselves being told this use of these supplies was illegal and that they would have no choice but to make payments to the landowners in exchange for access. The goal of the landowners was of course that this payment should be paid in labour. Dispossession was often carried out through advertisements in the press, since the law held that in order to gain rights to water supply had to place notices in the press and in the central market plazas of the affected towns and parishes and if there was no contestation within fifteen days they had the right to the waters. The government firmly opposed such efforts, with the Minister of Government insisting that: “Land, as an area for the construction of human dwellings or a source of agricultural production, always demands the precious co-operation of water....We cannot deny the human right to access to water for domestic needs.”50 The Constitution of 1928-29 expressly stipulated that peoples or hamlets that lacked lands or water, or had access to them only in insufficient quantities to satisfy their basic domestic and hygienic needs had right to be provided with them.51 This represented a response to the phenomenon of overpopulation of land, and the progressive growth of inhabited nucleos in rural environment. The government sought to bring the administration of waters under closer government control with the passing of the Legislative Decree of 6 October 1940 which regulated the administration of waters belonging to various condominiums in joint ownership. However, this had little impact in practice, with only two or three Directorias de Aguas organised.52

50 Informe del Ministro de Gobierno, 1935-36 – Ley de Tierras Baldías y Colonización. Mensajes e Informes, 1936. ABFL.
51 Costales and Costales, Historia Social del Ecuador, Tomo VI, Reforma Agraria.
52 Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. Mensajes e Informes, 1941. ABFL.
Efforts to establish tighter government control over the distribution of water were paralleled in the establishment of a commission to deal with disputes that arose over land ownership in 1927. At first government mediation extended only to disputed tierras baldias, but in December 1937, responsibility for overseeing land litigation was moved from the law courts to the Ministry of Social Provision, in an attempt to speed up and simplify the arbitration of justice. However, this duty was not taken seriously by the ministry, and few effective records have been kept, making it difficult to explore the extent to which this administrative shift affected the course of land claims.

Legal Rights and Community Status

At least in part, moves towards the establishment of greater governmental control over the mediation of land disputes reflected the recognition that peasants and small landowners were often disadvantaged within the court system. Liberal efforts to extend legal rights to previously disenfranchised populations had been strongly contested by landowning elites, and even where the law operated in favour of black and indigenous groups, they often experienced difficulty in exercising these rights. Cases which appeared in the Supreme Court in Quito are interesting in that they demonstrate the power which the landowners had to expand their properties even when the law was clearly against them. One case that ended up in the Supreme Court in Quito, having originated in Riobamba, was that between the indigenous community of Calzhi and Don Ezequiel Merino for possession of land bordering Merino’s hacienda in Chimborazo. Merino admitted in his own statement that the lands in question had been possessed by Indians for more than thirty years, meaning that under the law they belonged to the Indians. In his summation the judge expressed shock that Merino had even brought the case, yet despite its apparently clear cut nature it had taken twelve years to pass through the local courts and finally reach the Supreme Court in Quito on an appeal. The proceedings of the case also made clear how Merino had harassed the Indians of Calzhi, using armed force against them, supported by the Riobamba police, and bribing and intimidating his employees to testify against the indigenous claims. This case was far from an isolated one. In 1911, the Indians

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53 ANH, Sección Tierras, Caja 210, 17-1V-1907.
of Poala in the province of Latacunga, accused a neighbouring hacienda owner, Alejandro Gallo of violent plunder of their land. Again, the Indians had proper land titles, and the experts called in to examine the boundaries at the outset of the dispute found in favour of the Indians. But this recommendation was ignored by the hacendado, who began to persecute the Indians, using violence against them, and stealing their animals. Finally, after more than ten years of legal proceedings, the Supreme Court in Quito ruled in favour of the Indians, not only recognising their right to the disputed land, but also to use hacienda resources, such as forests, paths and water supplies, and enforcing a renegotiation of their labour contract with the hacienda that reduced their weekly labour required to obtain use of these resources from three days to two. Strikingly, the hacienda owner also agreed to “renovate his friendship and consideration and protection to the Indians” on the condition that they agree to desist from “rabble-rousing”. This highlights the enduring power of patron-client relations. Indians could also be dispossessed on the smallest of legal irregularities. For example, the Supreme Court found in favour of the Rudeno hacienda against the Indians of Cucun y Cango in Loja because the only one of the Indians who was literate and therefore able to sign the petition himself forgot to do so, thus in the eyes of the court, invalidating their claim.

Tensions regarding ownership of lands did not just concern the relationship between indigenous groups and the hacienda, but between Indians and the state. A case which appeared in the Supreme Court from Loja in 1908 is representative of this. An indigenous community from Loja had presented to the court land titles issued in 1736 to their ancestors, proving that they were the just possessors of the land. Yet despite this the municipality of Loja had insisted on charging them “rent” for the use of land which they claimed belonged to the state for the past fifteen years. The Indians demanded not only the recognition of their right to the land, but also a return of the 4000 sucres per year they had paid in taxes to the municipality. Although the Indians possessed title to the land, the court in Loja had found in favour of the municipality. The Indians described the obstacles that had put in the way of them even bringing their case, accusing the municipality of requesting constant deferments and referrals, with the aim of maintaining an “interminable trial”, while state minions “harass us,

54 ANH, Tierras, Caja 178, 20-IX-1911.
tire us, humiliate is, and whatever else they can... until they wear us out and we submit and become slaves, in effect.” They also spoke in their proclamation of the “coercive jurisdiction” they had been subject to as a result of the municipalities determination to charge them “false rent”. They alleged that they had been imprisoned, their farming and domestic animals shot at, their furniture and possessions taken and sold, and that they had been persecuted in their own homes. They claimed that the worst insult they had suffered was the arrest and detention of their wives, reflecting how this alleged challenge to their masculinity was used by Indian men to indicate the unreasonableness of state behaviour towards them. Their claims of the abuses they suffered are more typical of those experienced by Indians pursuing land cases against major landowners, and shows the extent to which local authorities were in the lieu of these groups, as well as out of sync with the project of the national government. 56

Catherine LeGrand in her study of frontier settlement in Colombia emphasises the important role of what she calls “middle sectors” in providing peasants with leadership, and aiding them in the legal sphere. She argued that these individuals played an important role in many disputes by informing illiterate settlers of their rights, drafting petitions on their behalf and occasionally furnishing monetary support. People who performed these functions were most often country lawyers, large cultivators and local officials.57 These groups were equally important in Ecuador, where tinterillos were reputed to engender the disputes from which they made a living. It seems that some tinterillos hoped to generate an income for themselves by informing peasants of their rights and writing their petitions for them. Although acting from self-interest, they nevertheless played an important role in disseminating knowledge of land laws in isolated regions, and in calling usurpations and title irregularities to the attention of national authorities.

However, the influence of tinterillos and lawyers should not be over-stated. Indian communities frequently went to court to challenge tinterillos who had been employed to help them on a land case but who had been derelict in their duties or committed

55 ANH, Tierras, Caja 216, 21-III-1917.
56 ANH, Sección Tierras, Caja 211, 14-111-1908.
57 LeGrand, Frontier expansion and Peasant Protest.
abuses against them. A case brought by a group of Otavalo Indians against a tinterillo named Camilo Paste in 1914 is representative. The Indians accused him of seeking to deny the Indians authority over their own land title, and of selling pieces of communal land to foreigners. This had led to individual Indians being set against one another, sowing chaos and confusion within the community. In their statement the Indians stated that “for years” the misappropriation of their land by tinterillos had been the “dirty secret” of the community, suggesting that exploitation by such low-ranking officials was considered a source of shame within the indigenous community. In other cases, Indians requested damages for legal costs incurred in prolonged cases dragged out by the neglect and incompetence of their tinterillo representatives. Such cases were upheld with relish by the court, which happily cast the Indians as the “eternal victims” of exploitation by “lawyers without conscience.” Significantly, a few cases of this ilk exist in which the tinterillo at the centre of indigenous reclamations was in fact a member of the same Indian community. These normally involved accusations that tinterillos had sought to proceed with the division or sale of Indian community lands without their consent, suggesting that Indians used the discourse of tinterillos as a parasitic weight on indigenous communities in order to regulate disputes between themselves, aware of its power with government authorities. It also highlights the inter-community tensions that emerged as a result of new land pressures.

Legal records can shed an interesting light on indigenous understandings, aims and ambitions. Studies of indigenous responses to legal reforms elsewhere in Latin America have shown that indigenous people have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to seize upon the written word and to interpret the complexities of legal tenets in ways that conformed both to existing principles of justice and to the peasant’s immediate objectives. Reformist legislation opened the way for collectivities to reassert their identities, to claim legal rights as peasant communities and to assert or regain rights that they considered their own. The responses of peasants highlight how the Liberal

58 ANH, Tierras, Caja 214, 18-VIII-1914.
59 See for example the case pursued by the Indians of Sisig in the province of Cañar against Liberato Tenesaca in 1930. ANH, Tierras, Caja 225, 20-IX-1930.
Revolution had succeeded in dismantling the formal power of the landed elite, but did not eliminate inequalities or relations of subordination. The indigenous peasantry sought to establish its own criteria of ethnic identity, based on both full citizenship and the recognition of ethnic differences, many of which were found in control over land.

Afro-Ecuadorians do not seem to have shared this relationship with Liberal legislation, although at present such a conclusion can only be provisional, pending further research in local archives. In the national archive, however, there is not a single case related to boundary or other disputes involving peasants from either Esmeraldas or the Chota Valley, despite the growing encroachment of the hacienda in Esmeraldas in this period, and the perennial power of the institution in Chota.

This difference is undoubtedly related to the issue of legal classification. Significantly, many land-based legal trials involving Indians centred around the issue of whether the indigenous group in question could be truly considered comuneros. This status continued to afford indigenous groups certain protections in this period: the Ley de Indígenas of 1867 had not been revoked, and contained the specification that even where indigenous parcels were individually allocated, legally constituted communities had the right to hold additional land in common for grazing and other non-agricultural activities. President Moncayo made a highly telling observation about the legal status of the Indians noting that the constitutional clause which ordered the protection of the indigenous race has had great effectiveness in assuring that complaints and claims by Indians were preferentially attended to. Thus, a frequent tactic of defence lawyers engaged in boundary and possession cases against indigenous communities was to deny the legal right of the Indian group to be considered comuneros, often accusing Indians of creating false comunas in order to gain access to land. The government was also concerned by the frequent claims made by peasant groups which they did not recognise as having Indian status claiming

62 Mensaje que el Señor Encargado del Poder Ejecutivo Doctor Don Abelardo Moncayo, presenta al H. Congreso Nacional de 1934. Mensajes e Informes 1934. ABFL.
63 See for example, ANH, Tierras, Caja 212, 27-VII-1909; ANH, Tierras, Caja 216, 21-III-1917; ANH, Sección Tierras, Caja 218, 12-VII-1920.
to be indigenous comunas. For example in the province of Tungurahua a group of peasants organised themselves into community in order to make claim to the ownership of some of the lands of the hacienda ‘Mochapata’. The Ministry refused to accept the existence of the community and took every measure to protect the interests of the hacienda.  

Similar cases occurred on the haciendas ‘Chuquipogyo’, ‘Paznag’, and Zula’ in the province of Chimborazo among others. The government asserted that this was the result of self-interested tinterillos seeking to convince as many peasant groups as possible that they had a legal claim to tracts of land. The confusion highlights the ambiguity and flexibility of the category ‘Indian’. However, even if elite accusations were true, and these communities would not typically be considered indigenous, the invocation of this status highlights the usefulness and desirability of the classification “Indian” in the eyes of other peasants groups.

Rulings on the rights associated with comunero status shifted frequently. In 1915, Indians from the parish of St Paul in Otavalo tried to argue that their land was communally owned and could not be divided. The Supreme Court ruled that this was against the laws of the nation, and that to argue otherwise effectively prioritised colonial law over that of the Republic. However, this changed when Indians began to use the invocation of the Liberal principle of individual rights to frustrate legal proceedings in the defence of their lands. During the 1910’s and 20’s, many indigenous groups sought to defend their land rights against land speculators, mining, road and rail interests and the expansion of the great estates by repeatedly pursuing the same legal suite against the encroaching interests, bringing the same case again and again in the name of different community members. By bringing the same case again and again they were at least able to slow down the course of their expropriation, while also tying up state resources. The strategy proved so disruptive that in 1924 a law was passed explicitly preventing Indian communities from defending themselves in land cases as individuals, at clear odds with Liberal rhetoric.

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64 Informe del R. Balarezo, Ministro de Gobierno y Previsión Social a la Nación, 1932-33, Mensajes e Informes, 1933. ABFL.
65 Ibid.
66 ANH, Tierras, Caja 215, 5-111-1915.
67 ANH, Sección Tierras, various cases 1900-1924.
68 ANH, Sección Indígena, Caja 178, Corte Superior, 29-XI-1924.
Such legal variables played a central part in efforts to bring the administration of land disputes under tighter government control. From the early 1930’s, a huge volume of cases began to appear before different branches of the government as the decision was made to resolve disputes between the peasantry and the hacienda through government intervention rather than through judicial hearings. Cases came variously before the President, the Minister for the Interior, the Central Junta of Public Assistance, and Ministry of Social Provision, with responsibility for land-based affairs constantly moving between departments.

This coincided with a shift in government thinking regarding land in the 1930’s. The deep-rooted nature and violence of the disputes over land led the government to recognise the need for a serious reform of land policy. In 1928 the Minister of the Interior insisted that the problematic state of affairs would be prolonged indefinitely unless an immediate effort was made to find a solution to the agrarian problem, in a form that would “satisfy the necessities of the collectivity and its desire for justice and social improvement.” He argued that this would necessarily centre around the "socialisation and democratisation of lands", and these ideas became a key focus of government discourse during the 1930’s as the social disturbances caused by land tensions increased. 69 President Páez in his address to the nation of 1936 expressed his disgust at the landholding structures of the country, deploring recent estimates which had suggested that in a population of three million people, there were less than 50,000 rural landowners with a net worth of more than 5000 sucres. 70 The government was clearly searching for a compromise solution, which would allow a degree of land redistribution and so bring the social disturbances in the countryside under control, while not forcing this on landowners and potentially bringing about a political disturbance of a different kind. This was found in the Ley de Comunidades, Indígenas y Montubias of 1937. 71

69 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1926-28, Mensaje e Informes 1928, ABFL.
70 Mensaje que el Snr Ing. Dn Federico Paez, encargado del mando supremo de la Republica presenta a la H. Asamblea Constituyente, 1936. Mensajes e Informes, 1936. ABFL.
The Ley de Comunidades Indígenas y Montubias

The law regulating the organisation of peasant communities that was passed in January of 1937 possesses a singular importance in terms of its significance in breaking with Liberal discourse on equality and citizenship, and restructuring indigenous relations with the State. It has been seen variously as signalling the "return of the Indian" to Ecuadorian politics, and as a neo-authoritarian measure designed to bring traditional indigenous organisational structures under state control.

For leftist historians such as Marc Becker and Diego Iturralde, the fact that elections and the operation of community councils were supervised by tenientes políticos and the Minister of Social Provision, meant that the law could only be interpreted as another attempt on the part of white-mestizo elites to impose their control over indigenous communities, now with the help of patron-client relations. For anthropologists working on contemporary indigenous movements, the law of 1937 contributed to the revalorisation of ethnic identity, and represented the resurgence of the Indian community. The reality was more complex than either of these polarised positions allow.

This law was passed in January of 1937. According to the Minister of Social Provision, the aim of the law was "to organise...[judicially] the caserios, annexes, barrios, communities and peasant partialities disseminated throughout the national territory...that are not understood, as specific entities, within the Ley de Division Territorial de la Republica." The law was promulgated during a time of political turmoil and social unrest as elites fought for control of state power. It was passed by Federico Paez who was not nominally affiliated with any political party, but who did betray some leftist sympathies. Initially he had some support from socialists and included two socialist ministers in his government. His government passed a variety of legislation which dealt with social issues, including a labour law, social security

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72 Diego Iturralde, Guamote: Campesinos y Comunas (Otavalo: Instituto Otavaleno de Antropologia, 1980); Becker, "Comunas and Indigenous Protest".
74 Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. Mensajes e Informes, 1940, ABFL.
and a national welfare institute. Under the motto “social evolution yes, social revolution, no” he also proposed minor reforms of land tenure system. The Ley de Comunas was conceived within this framework as a means of bringing peasant agitation and land disputes under control.

The eternal history of litigation, sometimes between members of the same community, other times, and more commonly, with neighbouring partialities, or expansionist landowners, have determined repeated conflicts, some of them of such severe repercussion that they have spilt indigenous blood on the fields of our cordillera, sealing in this form the love of the Indian for the land, for that which is really his, and for that which, in the obscurity of his ignorance, and at the instigation of rapacious individuals, he has believed to be his, even without judicially valid titles.75

However, as his comments make clear, even when efforts were made to construct land policy from a pro-Indian perspective, the conviction of indigenous groups that the land they settled was theirs by rights was dismissed as ignorance and trouble-making. There was no real understanding of the deep-rooted nature of the Indian relationship with the land they settled.

The law was presented as an alternative to the complete dissolution of the Indian community. The Minister of Social Provision dismissed those who continued to call for the privatisation of indigenous land. “This remedy, for its simplistic radicalism, appears to be the quickest solution, but in reality it is not a solution: in the first place because it would be little less than impractical and would cause a commotion of conflicts and discussions, and then because it does not signify a property to anybody, not to the national collectivity, nor to the Indians, who, after losing the cohesive force produced by the community, would remain at the mercy of the monopolisers of land, and would find their property expropriated gradually and easily.”76 This rejection was extremely significant, since it recognised not only that the institution of the community allowed indigenous society to maintain a greater cohesion, but also that if land was distributed to Indians individually it would not necessarily serve to create a socio-economic base of small farmers, but would lead rather to the expansion of the large hacienda.

75 Informe del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1937. Mensajes e Informes, 1937. ABFL.
The *Ley de Comunas* was presented as an alternative which would put communal lands under the jurisdiction of the department of labour for their representation and defence. The law recognised as indigenous communities “the groupings of aborigines established within the national territory, that by titles, or simply by occupation for a period of more than thirty years, have possessed and possess sections of territory, with the exclusion of other individuals or entities and exercised acts of dominion in conjunction.” This was extremely significant, for it circumvented the reliance on title to determine rights to land which had been such a disadvantage to indigenous groups, and recognised instead the rights associated with prolonged settlement. The paternalistic nature and intent of this law are clear, as it specifically gave the government the obligation to protect and tutor the rural communities. The Ministry of Social Provision would mediate conflict between comuneros, between members and the *comuna* leadership, and between comunas and neighbouring private property. The ministry would carefully monitor their activities, and had the right to maintain “scientific statistical control”, mediate any conflicts, and protect them from those who would prey on their ignorance.

Although Paez was not from the Liberal party, the law was definitely conceived within a Liberal framework, and articulated within a Liberal assimilationist discourse. It is important to note that the classification of *comuna* was intended to incorporate all the small population centres (*caserios, anejos, barrios, partidos, comunidades* and *parcialidades*) not recognised by the existing Law of Territorial Division into the nation-state. Thus, comunas were not grassroots organisations, but part of the political-administrative structure of the state apparatus, and were intimately tied into a discourse of progress, civilisation and incorporation. Paez believed that the government should legally recognise these population centres in order to assist their social development, as it was argued by the government that this administrative structure was necessary to attend to the moral, intellectual and material development of these communities. This was consistent with Liberal discourse about indigenous upliftment more generally. The measure presented the possibility of a new degree of

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76 Ibid.
77 Ibid
political and economic autonomy for “free” indigenous communities, albeit within an emerging corporatist state structure. The law allowed for *comuneros* to elect their own government and to hold property collectively. *Comunas* were linked institutionally to local and state structure: they were linked to the local administration of the parish and *teniente político*, but could also appeal directly to the Minister of Social Welfare for arbitration of conflicts.

From a Liberal point of view, the law was an effective compromise. Paez hoped this legislation would help bridge racial divisions and create a harmonious, ethnic-blind society. It would mediate conflicts between individual and collective interests while providing a path to assimilate isolated Indians into the dominant mestizo culture. Furthermore, the law would not compromise elite privilege and would in fact ensure its survival. In order to take advantage of this law, a community would have to have held its land for at least thirty years. Indians trapped in the *huasipungo* system on haciendas could not take advantage of this law to reclaim their lost lands: access to its benefits was restricted to independent Indian communities only. It is the scale of this compromise that explains the apparent paradox of a Liberal government promoting the continued recognition of communal status- ostensibly anathema to liberal individualism. This reflected the dramatic nature of the 1930’s rural crisis, and the growing threat from the left.

The law also represented the rejection of the previous Liberal focus on the equality of Indians before the law. No less a figure than Abelardo Moncayo, one of the key members of the early Alfarista governments, recognised the failure of Liberal policy in this regard.

The equalising urge of the law was for the Indian his disgrace, because without capacity to exercise his legal rights, in every contest he was the victim. During the colonial period the Indian had *el Protector de Naturales*, a kind of tutor or attorney, on whom he could count in every litigation; after the abolition of this the Indian was left in the hands of the Judge and… lawyers of bad law… the *tinterillo*…[who with]… the curate tempted by greed and… the *teniente político*… formed the most iniquitous and intolerable consortium of exploitation that we could have imagined. I believe that the defence of the Indian, as the base of the organisation of the
new Ecuadorian democracy, urgently requires the passing of special laws in accordance with the indigenous reality.\textsuperscript{79}

Although the law implicitly targeted Indians, and emerged out of debates surrounding the resolution of the “Indian problem”, the law did not include ethnic language, or indicate that only Indians were to form comunas. The law was originally to be called the \textit{Ley de Comunidades Indigenas y Montubias}; the very name indicating that the law was initially aimed at peasants regardless of ethnicity, and that it specifically included blacks and mulattos. In reality, over time, many different types of communities formed comunas. Not all Indians formed comunas, and poor whites and mestizos living in marginalised urban barrios also availed themselves of the provisions of the legislation.

In his Presidential message of 1938, Alberto Enriquez proudly declared that during the first six months of the law’s existence more than 1000 comunas had been organised in the Republic.\textsuperscript{80} Official figures present a more measured story, with 467 communities recognised in 1938, a figure which levelled off to 67 the following year. This number remained steady thereafter, with the government recognising between twenty and thirty comunas per year throughout the 1940’s.\textsuperscript{81} There were significant regional variations in the uptake of comunas. Figure five shows the breakdown of figures by province for the period 1937-1950. It can be seen that comunas were formed in Esmeraldas, signalling that the institution was not necessarily unknown among black populations, but it was certainly not a common form of peasant organisation in the province, with Esmeraldan comunas representing only 1.1% of the national total as of 1950. In the Oriente, comunas only existed in any significant number in the province of Napo, where rates of mestizo settlement were highest. Comunas were not formed among Amazonian Indians; the provinces of Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Zamora Chinchipe showing a zero or near zero uptake. This is in line with expectations, reflecting the fact that settled agricultural communities mediated by a cabildo were alien to nomadic Amazonian lifestyles. Yet with regards

\textsuperscript{79} Mensaje que el Señor Encargado del Poder Ejecutivo Doctor Don Abelardo Moncayo, presenta al H. Congreso Nacional de 1934. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1934}. ABFL.

\textsuperscript{80} Memoria que el Señor General G. Alberto Enriquez G., Jefe Supremo de la Republica presenta a la Honorable Asamblea Nacional Constituyente sobre las labores desarrolladas en su administracion, 1938, \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1938}, ABFL.

\textsuperscript{81} Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio, \textit{Politicas estatales y organización popular}, p.265.
to the highlands, there was a strong and obvious correlation between community organisations and the presence of indigenous populations, with the highest uptake in Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, areas of densest indigenous settlement. The exception to this rule was the canton of Cayambe in the province of Pichincha, where Marc Becker has demonstrated that indigenous activists shunned the *comuna* law and refused to take advantage of its provisions in order to advance their political goals.\(^{82}\) This seems to have been related to the influence of the Left in this canton.

**Figure Five:** Table showing number of *comunas* by province 1937-1960


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of <em>comunas</em></th>
<th>Percentage of national total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esmeraldas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manabi</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guayas</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>Los Rios</td>
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<td>Carchi</td>
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<td>Pichincha</td>
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<td>Cotopaxi</td>
<td>226</td>
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<td>Tungurahua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>22.02</td>
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<td>Bolívar</td>
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<td>Cañar</td>
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<td>Azuay</td>
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<td>Napo</td>
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<td>Pastaza</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morona Santiago</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.17</td>
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\(^{82}\) Marc Becker, "Comunas and Indigenous Protest", p.533.
Official reports describe the comuna legislation as leading to an awakening of civic life in rural communities, with the new comunas demanding schools, water supplies, fields to cultivate, and more generally, greater attention from the public powers. The Minister of Social Provision described “great streams of peasants arriving at the offices of the Ministry of Social Provision with their demands and complaints... and their requests of support versus the possible or real infringements on their interests.”

Although the government assumption that it was the Ley de Comunas which had formed the “collective consciousness” of Indian groups dismissed the deep-rooted community ties and organisations among indigenous groups, it did highlight the extent to which many indigenous groups were prepared to engage with state-imposed structures in order to impose their rights.

The immediate reason for the interest of communities in obtaining official legal status was to protect their lands against the encroachment of whites and mestizos. The legal status also allowed communities to start rebuilding their political institutions. The law required each comuna to select a community council (cabildo) comprised of a president, vice-president, treasurer, trustee (sindico) and secretary, which was to have judicial and social representation over the community. The officers, who were to be “honourable and morally upright”, met once a month to administer the community’s affairs and to look after the moral, intellectual, and material well-being of the community members. Few other restrictions were placed on who could fulfil these posts; a comunas by-laws would occasionally mention that president needed to be 25 years old and the secretary needed to be literate in order to carry out functions of that office. The law allowed for indefinite re-election to these positions. The teniente politico was to control and administer the local cabildo. The teniente politico and the jefe politico were to preside over the annual comuna meetings, monitor elections of

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83 Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. Mensajes e Informes, 1940, ABFL.
the *cabildo* and communicate these results to the central government. Thus it was easy for local authorities to manipulate the voting process for the *cabildo* in order to assure that malleable persons responsive to government demands would be in charge of the comuna. Moreover, the law explicitly expressed an intent to control and negate local decisions of they were not favourable or convenient to the government. Article 14 reserved for the ministry of social provision the right to “elect a different *cabildo* which successfully represents the interests of the *comuna*.” ⁸⁵ This was clearly intended as a means by which local authorities could exercise a more direct control over their communities. Links were further institutionalised with the Ministry of Social Provision, through the requirement that it was to lend its support to the communities in everything related to their “material and intellectual improvement” of the *comunas*. ⁸⁶ Particularly significant was the clause authorising the Ministry of Social Provision to designate a new *cabildo* “when that chosen by the *comuna* does not comply effectively with its obligations, or when there are disturbances and tensions between the members.” ⁸⁷ This effectively opened the way for the Ministry to dismiss any communal government that sought to assert the *comuna*’s own interests in a manner unacceptable to the state. The *comunas* were also legally obliged to hold yearly elections, which served to create further space for government intervention. The Ministry of Social Provision explicitly emphasised the need for the Ministry to maintain the right of veto and the right to deny the rulings of the *cabildo*. ⁸⁸

The President and secretary of the *cabildo* were to maintain a registry of everyone who lived in the *comuna* as well as an inventory of the communal property. They were to submit copies of these registries and inventories to the Minister of Social Provision in Quito. This was clearly envisaged as a way of monitoring and collecting statistics and data on indigenous communities. Indeed, the Minister of Social Provision expressly stated that this measure was intended to enable to government to “know the truth about the peasantry” and to organise this knowledge in an ordered

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⁸⁴ Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. *Mensajes e Informes, 1941.* ABFL.


⁸⁶ Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. *Mensajes e Informes, 1940.* ABFL.

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid.
and scientific form.\textsuperscript{89} The priority granted to this can be seen from a 1941 proposal to develop an Office of Social-Biological Statistics that would allow the government a better understanding of the real situation of the diverse zones and their inhabitants, as a prelude to developing a national census.\textsuperscript{90}

The \textit{comuna} legislation indicated that the central government was no longer willing to allow its power and control to stop at the parish level. However, the power the maintenance of registries of \textit{comuna} members and property granted to the government should not be overstated. Indians did not just accept the authority the \textit{cabildo} imposed upon them. Oswaldo Hurtado has shown that, although the \textit{cabildo} was the official, legal representative of the \textit{comuna}, power was disputed by informal authorities, which in some cases assumed control of the organisation. This phenomenon was seen especially in \textit{comunas} which proclaimed their pre-Hispanic ancestry, and which conserved a strong, historically rooted leadership, such as the \textit{cacique} and the \textit{curaga}.\textsuperscript{91} Although this could in some cases lead to parallel authority structures, with the traditional authorities coming into conflict with the one imposed by the government, in other cases they gave a new role to indigenous \textit{curagas}, allowing members of \textit{curuca} families often became community presidents.\textsuperscript{92} This can be seen in the 1941 assertion of the Minister of Social Provision that the legal organisation of \textit{comunas} had led to the “coronation of caciquismo” among the Indians.\textsuperscript{93} Thus the \textit{comuna} system ensured that despite the growth of agrarian capitalism, indigenous Andean communities maintained their vitality, spinning off a network of formal political institutions.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Carlos Andrade Marín. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1941}. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{91} Hurtado, \textit{La organización popular en el Ecuador}, pp.15-16.
\textsuperscript{92} Korovkin has argued that \textit{curacas} acquired power through the \textit{comuna} system in Otavalo. “Reinventing the Communal Tradition”, pp45-46. It is likely that the case Becker describes for Cayambe, in which \textit{comunas} generated serious internal tensions within the community, reflects the fact that the indigenous leadership in this canton were strongly influenced by the left (see chapter five) making it inevitable that the government would intentionally use the \textit{comuna} legislation to undermine and replace these traditional authority figures, and equally that the indigenous leadership would therefore reject them and refuse to cooperate with their rulings. It is unlikely that tensions were so pronounced in others areas without these aggravating factors.
\textsuperscript{93} Carlos Andrade Marín. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1941}. ABFL.
Comunas also created an official state-recognised role for women. The law explicitly stated that both men and women from the community were to gather every December to elect the comuna’s leadership. Indeed, both men and women participated in these annual meetings and were listed on membership roles, although men usually held leadership positions in the comuna. Marc Becker has interpreted this as “covert recognition of the unique nature of Indigenous societies in which gender roles were different from white society.” This interpretation is incorrect and reflects a romanticised understanding of indigenous society. Gender roles in Ecuadorian indigenous societies were generally far less egalitarian than idealised conceptions based on the idea of Andean gender complementarity would allow. With regards to political participation in particular, women were often marginalised. It is more likely that this legislation reflected efforts within the dominant society to bring women into the political process, and the belief among political elites that indigenous women would be easier to co-opt.

Despite its name, the law did not aim to preserve communal landholding patterns. Indeed, the Ministry of Social Provision had the right to privatise communal landholdings belonging to comunas in cases where it was determined that the current system of landholding was not “convenient” to the comunas interests. Interestingly, however, the government did in general seek to uphold communal land ownership, with the Minister of social Provision noting that although it was not necessary for a comuna to possess collective property in order for it to exist, “it is certain that only the comunas that at the same time are communities, or those that have a determined interest that concerns each and every one of their members, such as the preservation of landholding, or the attainment of a certain quantity of water, are those that have a true life.” However, it was also noted that there were circumstances in which the partition of communal lands was necessary, in order to avoid “profound disagreements” between community members, to defend against “external pretenders”, or where division was in the best economic interests of the comuneros, such as those who had found themselves within the “urban perimeter” as a result of

95 O’ Connor, Dueling Patriarchies; O’ Connor, “Indians and National Salvation”.

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the growth of cities, with the result that the lands had taken on an enormous value, and could no longer be considered agricultural. 96

Despite the apparent vulnerability of comuna lands under these provisions, Indians were actually extremely successful in using their new status to agitate for land rights, to the extent that the Minister of Social Provision, apparently exhausted by the burden that had fallen on him as a result of his duty to personally oversee all comuna-based land cases, denounced the indigenous “tendency to perennial litigation”, describing their tendency to resort to the law as “shading the indubitable benefit of communal organisation,”97 Although there is no record in the supreme court prior to the end date of my investigation of Indian communities invoking comuna status to defend their land, this probably reflects the slow appeals process rather than a failure to engage with the legislation. In particular, it appears from government reports that Indians were able to benefit from law number 181 of 29 July 1938 which enabled comunas and other groups of inhabitants to bring trials of expropriation. By 1941 the Ministry had heard ten trials of expropriation, in which it checked whether the petitionaries needed the land for the expansion of settlements or for agricultural development: the conditions of ensuring an expropriation and division. The state-owned hacienda ‘San Agustin de Cajas’ in the canton of Otavalo was one expropriated under this law, to the benefit of the Gonzalez Suarez comuna.98

However, the role of the Ley de Comunas in the assertion of ethnic rights should not be overstated. Much of the legislation surrounding the Ley de Comunas was never enforced. Moreover, although it offered minimal protection for community land against hacienda owners, the legislation did nothing to change relations between indigenous communities and urban administrative centres. It also left the system of “ethnic administration” in tact, by excluding haciendas and their sizeable indigenous labour force from the reach of the law.99 This must be understood in terms of the

96 Memoria del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1939-1940, Enrique Malo. Mensajes e Informes, 1940, ABFL.
97 Ibid. It is a significant reflection of the extent of Indian land litigation in this period that litigiousness came to be seen as a defining indigenous cultural characteristic.
98 Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nacion, 1941. Mensajes e Informes, 1941. ABFL.
99 The only access of hacienda-based huasipungeros to the rights entailed in the law would be through relations with free comuneros. It is not clear to what extent this occurred.
framework within which the law was conceived by the state: as a compromise between the concessions that were still given to large landowners, and the project of the indigenistas who, worried about the experience of the Mexican Revolution, saw in the agrarian conditions the foundations of social conflict.

Andres Guerrero has argued that the aim of the national project of the Liberal Ecuadorian state was to create “the right kind of Indian”, and it seems that comuneros were considered to represent an archetype of what this Indian should be. This can be seen especially in indigenista literature. In his famous work of 1925 Pio Jaramillo Alvarado wrote about the virtues of the “free communities” who were the target of the Ley de Comunas: “The free comunero is a good worker, well-fed, dresses neatly, knows how to defend his rights before the usurpation of neighbouring haciendas, recovers abandoned zones of cultivation, utilises irrigation, constitutes the nucleus of the demand for the agrarian rights of the Indians, and organises strikes…. And for all these characteristics the hacendado does not look well upon the comunero and propagates the need to divide the territories that these Indians occupy.” Thus these free spaces had to be protected and ultimately expanded, as a safeguard against the stagnation engendered by the power of semi-feudal forces. In Jaramillo’s passage, the “community”, free from hacendado domination, is the space in which Indians could be well-fed, clean, productive, rights-bearing, in short, “modern political subjects”. Thus the Ley de Comunas reflected a certain elite image of the Indian. This reflects Derek Williams’s argument that under the nineteenth century Liberal administration of Urvina (1851-1856), “the free Indian –more so than the hacienda peon – was considered better able to exercise his “natural faculties”, and stood on the verge of equality with his fellow white-mestizo citizens.” This was such a fundamental of Liberal discourse that land policy was centred around preserving and extending the rights of this group vis-à-vis the hacienda.

The elaboration of the Ley de Comunas also highlights an important aspect of the rhythm of domination and resistance in Latin America. The legislation reflects the

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102 Williams, “Popular Liberalism and Indian Servitude”, p.706.
familiar pattern by which the incorporation of popular sectors through corporatist measures followed periods of social unrest; what Lucero described as a "safety-valve" system of representation.\textsuperscript{103} It was particularly intended as an attack on independent leftist political organising efforts that were having such an impact on indigenous communities, especially in the Northern Sierra.\textsuperscript{104} Increasing the power of the \textit{teniente politico} and other local authorities, and the requirement that the comuna send an inventory of the names of its members, meant that the government would more easily be able to monitor and dissemble leftist organising efforts in the communities.\textsuperscript{105}

The law also reflected an extremely paternalistic construction of citizenship, with the discourse surrounding its implementation depicting Indians as childlike and in need of state protection. In this sense, the law reflected the ascendancy of protectionism within the perennial dualism that existed within Liberal thought as regards the indigenous population; embodied in the tension between efforts make the Indian "equal", and the conception of indigenous people as dependants in need of protection, and reflecting conflicting ideas about the role of the state. The corollary of this protectionism was clientilism, and through the \textit{Ley de Comunas} the state effectively offered indigenous groups its support and intervention in the acquisition of goods and services in exchange for their loyalty and submission. The Minister of Social Provision described how it pleased him to see “how everywhere small populations were organised in \textit{comunas}, with the security that in this form they will obtain state support to achieve the flow of water that they need for the irrigation of their fields, and many times for the satisfaction of their most urgent vital necessities; to open the road that will allow them to communicate with the great carriage routes; to acquire, through means of the legally required expropriation and payment, the lands that they have been cultivating under their own force.”\textsuperscript{106} Clientilism was a typical mechanism by which states in Latin America managed to subvert the need to extend a truly representative citizenship.

\textsuperscript{103} Lucero, “Locating the Indian Problem”, pp.30-31.
\textsuperscript{105} Becker, “Comunas and Indigenous Protest”.

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This allows us to focus on the question of how citizenship rights are conferred in practice, and highlights how the network of institutional mechanisms and quotidian administration through which the beginnings of agrarian reform were implemented can shed light on the creation of state subjects as citizens. If states make their power visible through the gradual extension of "officialising" procedures, then one of the most important and widespread state rituals is the effort of state agents to count and classify the population living within a state’s territorial boundary: what James Scott has termed “making society legible” is a hallmark of modern statehood.\footnote{James Scott, \textit{Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed} (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).}

Apparently neutral administrative procedures could affect important shifts in the content and nature of citizenship, conferring rights to some individuals, while excluding many others. While \textit{comuneros} are still best categorised as subjects rather than citizens in this period, in that their property rights were revocable, and their community voting rights subject to state control, the rights that they had acquired significantly renegotiated their relationship with the state. The law is also an important example, in that the gradual conferral of limited rights upon indigenous populations did not in this instance exclude women, in contrast to earlier policies based on individual parcelation of land, and later agrarian reform, and at odds with the negation of women’s rights within agrarian reformism elsewhere in Latin America.\footnote{See Baitenmann, “Gender and Citizenship”; Deere and Leon, \textit{Empowering Women}.}

The \textit{Ley de Comunas} represented the incorporation of indigenous groups “from above”, on the corporatist terms set by the state. While the rights acquired by Indians as a result were limited, and acquired in a trade-off with increased state intervention in community affairs, we should be wary of underestimating what a significant step it was for Indians to have a legal basis on which to secure their land rights against the hacienda. The very fact of communities acquiring a judicial personality and legal recognition as the subject of rights and obligations was a breech of enormous significance, and presented communities with an instrument for the defence of their interests and the consolidation of institutional links to wider society. The legislation left clear political and cultural legacies through the rise and institutionalisation of particular kinds of hegemonic indigenous collectivities, and specifically infused new

\footnote{Carlos Andrade Marin. Informe que el Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo a la Nación, 1941. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1941. ABFL.}

\footnote{ABFL.}

\footnote{107 James Scott, \textit{Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed} (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).}

\footnote{108 See Baitenmann, “Gender and Citizenship”; Deere and Leon, \textit{Empowering Women}.}
power into the idea of “community”. It made the reconsolidation of indigenous communities possible, laying the groundwork for the convergence of localised, regionalised indigenous populations into unified, visible, and representable political actors through shared institutions. Thus the norms expedited by the 1937 legislation created a social and political space for Indian demands to be heard.

Conclusion: Land, Community and the Power – and Limits - of Liberalism

The contradictions of Latin American liberalism are well-known, and much work has been undertaken on the way in which the realities of hierarchical, racially divided societies restricted the implementation of Liberal ideologies. The retreat of the Ecuadorian state on the issue of individualism as related to indigenous land rights in the face of rising tension in the countryside reinforces this idea of the Liberal state as favouring pragmatism over idealism in its efforts to retain social control, and integrate dissident social groups, while the implementation of a corporatist compromise highlights the deep-rooted continuities of political responses in this era. Yet what the apparent inconsistencies of Ecuadorian land policy also reveal is the space that liberalism created for racially subaltern groups to assert their rights. Through repeatedly asserting their individual rights in court cases, to the detriment of landed and elite interests, Indians effectively forced the consolidation of their communal rights, and thus strengthened their political position, and gained a space for organisation and action. Although the significance of the 1937 Ley de Comunas has perhaps been over-stated, in that it placed clear limits on indigenous autonomy, the fact that it was conceived primarily as a means of extending state control over rural indigenous groups should not undermine its power as a symbolic - and practical - recognition of the rights of indigenous communities to exist. Thus the law did allow highland Indians to stem the trend towards the individualisation and disintegration of their communities. Indians also engaged with key elements of Liberal discourse – such as anti-tinterillo rhetoric – in order to gain sympathy in court cases and to advance their rights. The power of the imagery of the “embattled Indian” can be seen from the fact that it was invoked by groups ranging from North American land speculators to mestizo peasants who sought to label themselves ‘comunas’ even before the passing of the 1937 law, in order to cement the legitimacy of their claims.
The fact that the ability of racially subaltern groups to engage with Liberal policy in order to gain rights centred around legal classification must be underlined. Afro-Ecuadorian groups, who lacked a formal legal status that could offer them special consideration and protection, were not so successful in engaging with Liberal policy in order to advance their rights. Although blacks were not officially excluded from the *Ley de Comunas*, the uptake in Esmeraldas was low, and it seems that few black groups sought this official status. Nomadic indigenous groups were also isolated from this state-subaltern pact, and in Esmeraldas these groups suffered from black as well as white-mestizo incursions on their land. Both black and indigenous groups suffered from state efforts to redistribute *tierras baldias* for “internal colonisation”; a term which in itself negated their rights to the land they had conventionally held or settled. Yet even here the imagery of the Indian as in need of state defence and protection had power, and the rights of nomadic Indians to land was occasionally recognised, as in the case of the land grant to the Colorado Indians which specifically recognised their “cultural traditions” and their right to “move about freely”. No such recognition was granted to blacks, and they only became visible in government discourse when they were engaged in struggle with foreign companies considered to represent a threat to national sovereignty, as in the case of the Ecuador Land Co. The claim of the Ecuadorian government to control the town of San Lorenzo on the basis of the national citizenship of its black residents was particularly ironic in view of the general neglect of black land rights in Esmeraldas and elsewhere. In this prioritisation of the rights and demands of settled highland Indian communities over nomadic indigenous groups and blacks, land policy reflected many of the other dimensions of Liberal discourse, and highlighted the favoured status of highland Indian communities as ‘future citizens’. For those earmarked for inclusion, liberalism could present the basis for the assertion of their rights; for those not so favourably conceived it was significantly less powerful.
Chapter Four: Race and Social Policy

This final case study of state policy explores social policy as one of the primary organs through which the Liberal state's project of national development was articulated and implemented. Social policy is widely appreciated as a key dimension of nation building, yet its study has been neglected in Ecuador and its relationship with economic development and political ideology has been little explored.\(^1\) Social policy was a key feature of the Liberal State's project of national development and integration. Education, healthcare and sanitation, worker protection and the provision of social security were all areas in which the State sought to expand its presence at the expense of the Church, to reform the habits and culture of the population in accordance with ideas of 'modernity' and progress' and to develop a vibrant, clean and homogenous nation. Innovations were implemented in response to economic stimuli, notably fluctuations in the world economy, the collapse of the cocoa industry and the world depression which created crises of urbanisation and poverty. However, they were always informed by political ideologies, and in Ecuador these were strongly racialised. Social policy was seen as a way of compensating for the racial and ethnic "weaknesses" discussed in chapter one that were perceived to hold back the nation's development. Recent studies of eugenics in Latin America have underlined the way in which ideas of race as linked to the national destiny influenced particular aspects of social policy.\(^2\) This chapter will seek to explore these themes through a focus on education and healthcare and sanitation, which were the two primary dimensions of social policy in the Liberal period,\(^3\) assessing the ways in which each were refracted through racial and gender ideologies and intimately bound up with ideas about morality and civilisation.

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\(^1\) The literature regarding the development of social policy in Latin America as whole remains in its infancy. Most of the work related to social policy in Ecuador deals with contemporary issues, although issues of health and labour provisions have been touched on by studies of urbanisation and labour movements. See most notably, Pineo, *Social and Economic Reform*.

\(^2\) See for example Borges, "Puffy, Slothful and Inert"; Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*.
Public education in Ecuador at the end of the nineteenth century was almost non-existent, and what passed for an education system was elitist, religious and dogmatic, controlled by the Church and extended only to the sons of the elite. Education had been neglected throughout the colonial period: the first school for boys was not established in Quito until the mid-seventeenth century, and Guayaquil remained without a single school until as late as 1794. Flores and Rocafuerte were both concerned with the development of education, and gave a minor boost to the establishment of schools in Guayaquil and the expansion of primary education. However, due to continued political disorder, the emptiness of the national treasury, the scarcity of trained teachers and the absence of a consensus on the need to maintain and establish schools, it was impossible for enlightened governments to make much progress. It was not until the Garcia Moreno administration that any real and concerted attention was given to the extension of education.⁴ These new developments were, however, wholly controlled by the Catholic Church. The religious fervour of the administration led to the amalgamation of ‘instruction’ and ‘Catholicism’, and religion came to be seen as the political and philosophical base of education.⁵ A decree passed in 1859 permitted the right to establish schools only to Catholics, while the 1865 Concordat with the Vatican completely subsumed education to the Papacy, stating that all tenets of education had to conform to the doctrine of the Catholic religion. Bishops possessed the right to prohibit texts considered to be against religion and morality, and dioceses became the supreme authority for examinations and the exercise of teacher-training. The result was that

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³ Social security developed only towards the end of the period, and then only very weakly, while housing and population policy did not become a focus of government concern until the 1960's.
⁵ Emilio Uzcategui, “La educación en el Ecuador”, p.138.
schooling was denied to many non-Catholics. Education remained the province of the Catholic elites, and the majority of pupils continued to be the sons of traditional families. Throughout the nineteenth century secondary schools existed only in the major cities of Quito, Loja, Ibarra and Cuenca; elsewhere the municipalities did not take their legal obligation to provide schools seriously.

If the popular classes in general were marginalised from the nascent education system, black and indigenous people were subject to a particular exclusion. This exclusion dated back to the colonial era, when the discourse surrounding the instruction of the black and indigenous population was one of evangelising and civilising, with a focus only on teaching them religious doctrine, rather than providing a more academic or practical education. The few schools that existed during the colonial era maintained strict criteria of ‘limpieza de sangre’, and while separate schools were established for Indians, blacks and mestizos, the education they received was the “education of domination”, which gave them only a knowledge of manual skills that enabled some of them to become extraordinary painters, sculptors, shoemakers, tailors, and blacksmiths but continued to exclude them from Jesuit and Dominican colleges. Academic culture remained the province of whites. The Garcia Moreno administration made the first definite effort towards incorporating Indians into the education system, with the creation of rural schools and boarding schools, to be paid for with the free labour of the children’s fathers. Sanctions were placed on hacienda owners who continued to oblige children to work to try and ensure the attendance of as many Indian children as possible. The policy aimed to

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6 For literature related to the education of the indigenous population in Ecuador see, Paul Cliché and Fernando García (eds.) Escuela e indigualidad en las urbes ecuatorianas (Quito: EB/PRODEC, 1995); Jed Arthur Cooper, The school in Otavalo Indian Society (Tucson, Arizona: Panguitch Publications, 1965); Rodrigo C. Martinez, La educación como identificación cultural y la experiencia de educación indígena en Cotopaxi (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1994); Rafael Mastinkiaish, La educación entre los Shuar (Quito: Mundo Shuar, 1984); Consuelo Yaniz Cossio, La educación indígena en el Ecuador (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1997); Victor Hugo Torres (ed.), La Escuela Indígena: Integración o Afirmación Étnica?: La Educación Indígena, Vista por sus Propios Actores (Quito: COMUNIDEC, 1992), and more generally on Latin America, Emanuele Amodio (ed.) Educación, Escuelas y Culturas Indígenas de América Latina (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1986) and Consuelo Yanez Cossio, La educación indígena en el área andina (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1989). There is an almost complete absence of literature regarding the education of the black population; even the limited number of works that deal with the experiences of Afro-Ecuadorians, and the regional history of Esmeraldas and the Chota Valley, barely touch upon the issue of education.

7 Consuelo Yanez Cossio, La educación indígena en el Ecuador p.11.

8 Ibid, p.15.
eradicate illiteracy, but the obligation to attend schools, and the forced labour it entailed provoked strong resistance from the indigenous population, who rebelled to prevent their children being interred in boarding schools in Quito. Moreover, Congress and the Conservative elite continued to strongly oppose education for Indians, arguing that it would place agriculture and the economy in danger, since educated Indians would abandon the fields and the ‘humble’ services and there would be no-one to replace them. This coincided with a sharpening of the critique of the 'defects' of the indigenous race, fuelled by the rise of scientific racism, and it was argued in newspapers, magazines and congress that Indians were vicious, thieving, dirty and superstitious, and that it was impossible to educate them. While some individual Indians did manage to attain an education this did not lead to the expansion of indigenous education more broadly; indeed most educated Indians sought to distance themselves from their cultural roots. Meanwhile, the education of blacks was not even considered by elites and intellectuals, and the province of Esmeraldas and the Chota Valley remained entirely without schools.

The Liberal Revolution of 1895 represented a complete transformation of the philosophy behind Ecuadorian education policy, epitomised by the clause in the 1906 Constitution: which stated that that education was to be free, obligatory and lay. Education was viewed by Liberal elites as a sacred duty, and as key to the perfection of the Republican form. The Minister of Education insisted in 1906 that: “It is a well-known truth that public education is the base of society and of a truly democratic Republic.....The most primordial and sacred duty of the government must be to cultivate, civilise and bring progress to its population; this must be done through the expansion of education.” The ideals of Sarmiento, and the examples of the United States, Japan, and Bismarckian Germany were all invoked in arguments that education would be the pre-eminent means of promoting national consciousness and the development of the national economy, bringing with it economic prosperity, political unity, and cultural maturity. Education was seen as an agent through which the skills that would enhance the efficiency of agriculture and the industrial workforce could be disseminated, training patriotic workers, loyal to

9 Ibid, p.22.  
10 Memoria del Secretario de Instrucción Publica, Correos y Telégrafos etc. a la Convención Nacional de 1906, Mensajes e Informes 1906, ABFL.
the nation. Education was viewed as a guarantee of public order, a tool to bring to an end the tumultuous revolutions which had so destabilised the country economically and politically. Indeed, it was argued that without education there could be no true nation, since only through education could citizens come to understand their duties to the patria, to society, and to the family.\textsuperscript{11}

Education was, therefore, conceived as one of the core duties of liberalism, and as indispensable to the exercise of a successful Liberal project. Education was also considered more pragmatically as a way to ensure the triumph of liberalism over conservatism; a way of ensuring that Liberalism would become irrevocably enshrined in the hearts and minds of the populace. As Leonidas Plaza proclaimed: “When we have established official public education as the most powerful bastion of national culture...we can rest peacefully in the days to come, because when Liberal culture becomes a matter of pure feeling, there will be no reactionary force which can counter the influence of the education of the popular masses.”\textsuperscript{12}

Education was viewed as a moralising endeavour; as a means of transforming the behaviour of the lower classes. Liberal elites keenly followed the example of the United States and Europe, where education was gradually being extended to the industrial workers, and there was a real interest in what José Peralta as Minister of Education termed “the regeneration of the working class through the medium of instruction.”\textsuperscript{13}

This regeneration was generally seen in moral terms, with Liberal elites arguing that without education the poor would not be able to teach their children right from wrong, or respect for social authorities and their elders; rather, by "the great educational method of example", they would unwittingly induct them into crime, promiscuity and apathy.\textsuperscript{14}

This built on earlier conceptualisations within the ministry of education, of schools as “cathedrals to morality”. It was argued that in the homes of the lower classes “morality is

\textsuperscript{11} Informe que el Ministro de Instrucción Publica etc. Presenta a la Nación en 1911, \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1911. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{12} Mensaje del Presidente a la Nación, 1914. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1914. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{13} Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica al Congreso Ordinario de 1900, \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1900. ABFL.
that which is least seen", and that the examples set by working-class parents were
“noxious for these little ones, whose hearts will be infiltrated by…. sad doctrines if the
school does not combat this tendency and teach them right from wrong.”\textsuperscript{15}

The immorality and negative characteristics attributed to the poor were often attributed to
the racial degeneration held by the exponents of scientific racism to have undermined the
capacities of even the mestizo majority. Taking his cue from the Argentine intellectual
Carlos Bunge’s infamous description of the psychology of the South American people as
plagued by the laziness, indolence, apathy, pride and lack of originality, Guayaquileño
sociologist Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo argued in 1916 that it was the mixture of Indian,
black and Hispanic blood that accounted for many of the social problems encountered in
Ecuador. However, he suggested that education could be used as a means to overcome
the racial shortcomings that social Darwinist theory ascribed to the Ecuadorian nation:

\begin{quote}
Education must correct these vices of indolence, pride etc, cultivating instead
the opposite qualities of constancy, energy, personal initiative, a sense of duty
and obedience, contrary to the rebelliousness of our race and its resistance to
complying with prohibitive or coercive laws, and serve as the essential base
that will develop a spirit of solidarity and create the civic values and virtue of
citizenship so forgotten among us and the love of the Patria and its good and
felicity as the supreme aspiration of those associated with it … These must be
the principal educational goals and the immediate object will be to
achieve…… useful and hard-working citizens, loving of their country and
respectful of its laws and institutions, who will fill at the same time the role of
good heads of families, and of moral men, devoted to civilisation and
progress.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Indeed, some government figures turned traditional social Darwinist analysis on its head
completely, and argued that the unwelcome characteristics of the Latin American race
could be directly attributed to a lack of education. The Minister of Education asserted in
1907 that “nationalist education” would have prevented the development of negative

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc., 1907, \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1907. ABFL.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, \textit{El Problema de la enseñanza en el Ecuador} (Quito, Imprenta y
\end{itemize}
psychological traits and the “so-called vices of the Latin race” that had caused the decay of the race and impeded its “normal” development. “These would have been different were it not for the inefficiency of our education system: if education had followed the path of scientific reform and experimentation that signifies light and truth, it would have been enough to give a civilising path to our noble race, so badly encumbered with the sterile settlement of its powerful faculties.” He argued that it was poor education that was producing men without the spirit of action, lacking in character, easily won over by any idea. Thus the root cause of Ecuador’s political, economic, and social problems was the lack of a proper education system based on a modern plan of studies.17 These ideas were taken up by Luis N. Dillon who, as Minister of Education in 1913, asserted that “ethnic heterogeneity – the fateful result of our colonial origins – is not in my opinion, as damaging as the unequal culture of our social masses.”18 Further refuting the idea that racial mixture alone represented the core of Ecuador’s social and economic problems, he argued that it was lack of education and ignorance which left the country divided and mutually isolated. “We lack political education, we lack civismo, moral and intellectual culture, and physical hygiene that would temper the irritability of our tropical character and tone down our weak nature, which easily captures all violences and rage.”19 As he insisted: “Other Latin American countries with similar ethnic bases to Ecuador, and with the same defects, have succeeded in renovating themselves through schooling and through centres of culture, and have converted themselves into strong, respectable and respected countries ...... Education, and education for all; this in my opinion is the solution to all our political and social problems.”20 This represented a direct challenge to racist social Darwinist ideas about the educability of non-European peoples.21

17 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc., 1907. Mensajes e Informes, 1907. ABFL.
18 Informe Anual que Luis N. Dillon, Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc. presenta a la Nación en 1913, Mensajes e Informes, 1913, ABFL.
19 Ibid.
20 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc, 1915. Mensajes e Informes, 1915. ABFL
21 Mary Kay Vaughn has argued that this also occurred in Revolutionary Mexico; however, she emphasises that this was achieved through the homogenisation of categories of class and ethnicity. See Mary Kay Vaughn, Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940 (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1996) As will be argued below, this was not the case in Ecuador, where educators and elites maintained a conceptual and policy distinction between mestizo peasantries and indigenous peoples.
If education was conceived as both an alternative to the racial degeneration presented within North American and European thinking as a root cause of Ecuador’s economic and political backwardness, and also as a means of compensating for this same problem, it was with regards to indigenous populations and the “Indian problem” in particular that education was held up as a general panacea. As with so many dimensions of Liberal Indian policy, indigenous education was repeatedly asserted to be one of the core obligations of true liberalism:

The heroic and virile race which gave us such princes of talent and valour as Cacha and Atahualpa, historians like Garciloso and Callahuazo, sculptors like Caspura, and other geniuses who stand out for their deeds and their work and for their special knowledge of science and the high arts, this race which doggedly resisted the incursions of their usurpers, [and] who felt the yoke of the Conquest upon their shoulders, has been prostrated and degraded, belittled and surrendered to vice and abjection, regressing immensely until the disappearance into the mud of his civilised self. Now that the Liberal party is newly in power and Republican equality reigns, it is a priority for the public powers to attend to education for the Indian, founding special schools for him. Indians do not lack in intellectual capacity, they only require a friend’s hand to help them on their way, and to instruct them with kindness and insight.22

Education was conceived as a crucial means of integrating the indigenous population into national life. Instruction was designed to “remake” the traditional indigenous peasantry, supposedly rendered squalid, superstitious and myopic by virtue of their isolation and their domination by priests, landowners and merchants. Indians were to expand their loyalty beyond the local community to the Ecuadorian nation, their knowledge into the realm of science, and their produce into the marketplace. This integration would transform and renovate the nation. “To educate the Indians would regenerate society, increasing the number of useful citizens by more than 800,000 multiplying prodigiously the elements of progress….And the Indians, let us not forget, compose the major part of the population of the Republic; to maintain them in ignorance and backwardness, is to expressly renounce the prosperity of the Fatherland.”23

22 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos, Telégrafos etc., 1907. Mensajes e Informes, 1907. ABFL
23 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1900. Mensajes e Informes, 1900, ABFL
Education was also seen as a redemptive force for the Indians themselves. Philosopher and intellectual José Peralta, who held many positions within the early Liberal governments, including Minister for Education (1899-1902) and Minister for Foreign Relations (1906-1908), presented in his writings an idealised vision of the Incas and repeatedly insisted on the need for the Liberal regime to return the Indian to his original status.

The Indian, overwhelmed by various centuries of slavery, needs to regenerate himself through an enlarged and gradual education, to return to occupy his old position in the human family. The Indian needs to begin to adapt himself to the customs of men, to abandon his brutish life; and to enter the roads to a rudimentary civilisation, as if they were even in the first dawn of progress of our race....We need to accustom the Indian to seek even the relative comfort of the worker, to subject himself to the healthy yoke of hygiene and cleanliness; to flee drunkenness and vice; to hate the servitude that engenders all the disgraces of this race. We must emancipate him from superstition, the religious faith that has infused him only to exploit him. In a word we must resuscitate in him human dignity; his character, his very soul, is enervated, dead, we could say, from hundreds of years of suffering and abjection." 24

It was argued that any policies designed to ameliorate the situation of the Indian would be worthless without the extension of education, since the indigenous population needed to be taught that they had the right to live comfortably, “like other men”. Without education, the Indian “could earn twice what he makes today and still live in the same disgraceful state.”25

It is clear, then, that education as it related to the indigenous population represented an inherently civilising discourse, mediated through concepts of (Indian) backwardness and (white/mestizo) progress. As late as 1924 the Minister of Education insisted that: “The savage, swallowed by the profundity of his ignorance, does not imagine that the benefits of civilisation have any validity whatsoever. Progress in its multiple manifestations does not have for him any significance at all, his life is primitive, without rights nor reciprocal duties, nor any notion of personality, nor the remotest idea of social cohabitation, without

25 La Sanción, 20 de Diciembre, 1899.
the least sentiment of the solidarity established by family relations, without the weakest understanding of what the Patria represents as a symbol of nationality. As argued above, Liberal intellectuals viewed indigenous culture as in need of complete transformation before they could be granted the rights of citizenship and nationality. It is important to acknowledge that the very idea of making Indians literate effectively meant hispanicising them, as it was implicitly understood that they would become literate in Spanish rather than Quechua. Unlike in Mexico in the same period, there was no discussion of the possibility of bilingual education. Education thus served as a means of erasing one of the key concerns regarding the existence of semi-autonomous indigenous communities within the nation: the existence of more than one language. In its emphasis on education as a form of civilisation, Liberal discourse did not break with the longstanding trajectory of Ecuadorian thought on indigenous education which dated back to the colonial period. In treating the Indian as the object of education policy, and in presenting their culture as in need of direction and control to enable them to 'catch-up' with the more advanced state of the white-mestizo population, the discourse surrounding indigenous education both stemmed from and served to perpetuate ideas about Indians as child-like and dependent. Yet at least the special status of the indigenous population and the clear visibility of the "Indian problem" meant that attention was given to the issue of Indian education. This was not the case with regards to blacks, and the continued failure of elites and intellectuals to acknowledge the existence of a significant black population with special problems caused by a particularised system of racial neglect meant that the education of Afro-Ecuadorians continued to be ignored.

Boarding Schools, Barracks and Escuelas Prediales: Practical Solutions to Black and Indigenous Education

The most basic efforts to establish schooling for black and indigenous populations were part of a more general movement towards the development of rural education. Reports from the Ministry of Education consistently emphasised the role of rural schools in instilling in children a love of the land and awakening vocational tendencies towards

26 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1924. Mensajes e Informes, 1924, ABFL
agricultural work and related industries. It was also hoped that rural schools as the centre of the rural community would contribute to the wider upliftment of the peasantry, and encourage peasant families to "employ their free time in improving their moral, physical and social conditions." Regular articles in the press calling for greater sums of money to be directed towards the improvement of schools in rural parishes demonstrated the extent to which rural education was considered to be a national priority.

Yet from the earliest stages of the Liberal period, intellectuals and educationalists began to assert that not enough was being done within the realm of rural education to attend to the pressing needs of the indigenous population and to articulate the need for a specifically indigenous education. The most vociferous proponent of this theory was Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo who called for a gradual and well thought-out form of indigenous education especially adapted to their "particular psychology and mentality." As he argued:

The problems of the Indian is one of the biggest and most difficult that the Republic of Ecuador has to solve. This race has its own psychology, distanced from civilisation by two or three generations of backwardness and ignorance. It would be necessary to begin by raising their moral and intellectual state and [we] would need to begin to educate them with special methods and systems, inculcating through schooling notions that it would not be necessary to teach to other inhabitants of the country who are much more advanced in terms of civilisation.

The need for a specifically indigenous education was based not just on ideas about the purportedly lower level of civilisation of the indigenous populations, but also on ideas about the differing intellectual capacities of Indians and white-mestizos that persisted throughout the Liberal period. In 1943 Leopoldo N. Chavez, the founder of the first rural teacher-training college for Indians, the Escuela Normal de Uymbicho, published his findings on the physical, mental and intellectual abilities of Indians and mestizos based on seven years of observation in the course of his work. He argued that mestizos

29 Espinosa Tamayo, El Problema de la Enseñanza, p.98.
possessed a greater range in their capacity to understand the problems of science, more
power to assimilate ideas, a greater facility of abstraction, and more fluidity in spoken,
written and graphic expression than people of the indigenous race. Indians, in his opinion,
demonstrated a slower assimilation of ideas, but were more sure of the little they captured
and possessed a greater sense of reality than mestizos. He characterised Indians as more
specific, objective and fundamental in their thinking. While mestizos possessed a fragile
and superficial memory and were constantly forgetting things, Indians enjoyed an
admirable power of attention and observation, “grasping with the mind, as they grasp
things with their hands, all the knowledge they must understand, never to forget it.”
Where mestizos were passionate and emotive and expressed their pleasures and pains
with great liveliness and originality, the Indian had simple, measured feelings and reacted
slowly to emotional stimuli, lacking creativity and self-expression. Rather than attributing
these differences to the divergent life experiences of the Indians and mestizos educated
within the school, and to the Indians inferior previous schooling and weaker grasp of the
Spanish language, he concluded that Indians required an education of “indigenous spirit”
to match their particular strengths and weaknesses. Thus he called for the creation of an
indigenous pedagogy, in the same way that particular English, French, Spanish and
Russian pedagogies existed. “Now is the moment to delineate a type of school that suits
the Indian and that will transform him into a man first and a citizen second.”

This call was rarely heeded by the majority of Ecuadorian pedagogic thinkers, whose
major works included no mention of the particular problems of the indigenous
population, although the idea was taken up by government authorities who consistently
called for the adaptation of the new systems and institutions to the customs of the
indigenous race. However, in practice, “indigenous education” was considered to
simply consist of two to four years of instruction in history, geography and natural

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31 See for example, Alejandro Andrade Coello, Algunas ideas acerca de la educación (Quito: Imprenta Municipal, 1915); Politoero Avellano Montalva, La escuela para la vida por la vida (Quito, s.n, 1937); Cesar Sylva and Ernesto Guevara W., La Escuela Nueva: Ensayos de los ‘Centros de Interés’ en el primer grado de la escuela primaria (Quito: Escuela Tipográfico Salesiana, 1931); Julio Tobar Donoso, Problemas escolares (Quito: Prensa Católica, 1930).
sciences as they referred to Ecuador, as well as practical agricultural education, with the aim of awakening within them an awareness of common national interests, and “equal economic ambitions.” It also placed a strong focus on teaching them to believe in a glorious and prosperous future in order to override the supposed Indian tendency to view the future in fatalistic terms of misery and pain. “Indigenous education”, then, was adapted to the State’s needs in terms of its project of civilising the Indians, and focused on those aspects that would integrate them into the national community; it did not treat the specific problems that indigenous people faced in receiving education such as the language barrier, and the economic imperative for Indian children to work, nor indeed take any account of the customs, beliefs and traditions of the indigenous people.33

Following the example of Bolivia and Peru, prominent indigenista thinker and sociologist Pio Jaramillo Alvarado proposed the formation of barrack schools for Indians which would teach military, civic and scholarly instruction to adults as an integrated part of national service. He suggested that these schools teach basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, with “the science of war as a question of the second level” and “the modelling of their personality” the primary goal.34 The core advantage of such a method of instruction as he presented it was that the Indian men, on their return to their villages after their period of service, would be appalled by the customs and traditions in their ‘ancestral homes’, and would seek to instil in their kin the knowledge and skills they had learned while away. He quoted Mexican sociologist Manuel Encinas who argued that the Indians’ “spirit of race is insignificant and weak. The smallest influence suffices for him to lose it. When an Indian increases his social level, it is the worst cruelty for his kin. The sentiments of family decay and lose measurement when the Indian is removed from his environment, as can be seen in those graduating from the army or those who have leant their services in the city. The customs acquired, the new language, the new

32 This was particularly true of provincial authorities who had more contact with the specific problems of instituting Indian education.
33 In this focus on civilisation by replacing traditional beliefs and customs with those preferred by the dominant culture, Ecuador followed closely the example set by other countries with significant indigenous populations. The primary influence was of course the system of rural schooling instituted in revolutionary Mexico, but also important were the examples of the United States, Chile and Bolivia.
34 Pio Jaramillo Alvarado, El Indio Ecuatoriano: Contribución al Estudio de la Sociología Indo-americana (Quito : Imprenta y Encuadernación Nacionales, 1925) p.156.
dress, the transformation is in such a manner that the language of his birth, his plot, his
kin, are completely foreign and odious.”35 While Jaramillo did not agree that this
revulsion against his kin and his old way of life was a good thing, he suggested that it
could be overcome if the Indian could have as a small plot of land as a base on his return
from school or the army, which would give him a sense of renewed opportunity and
encourage him to continue in the family the propagation of his new knowledge and his
new habits, and thus advance the continuing transformation of the indigenous race as a
whole.

Neither of these proposals was put into practice, due to the opposition to the deployment
of indigenous people in the military discussed above, and resistance to any kind of land
reform or redistribution. However, the belief in the likelihood of Indian rejection of their
traditional culture and customs if educated in other modes of living, and their willingness
to disseminate their new knowledge among their kin and community formed the basis for
another important and influential Liberal education policy: that of Indian boarding
schools. Indian boarding schools dated back to the very beginning of the Republican era:
the first had been established by General Flores, while the policy had also been a key
strategy of Dominican and Jesuit activity in the Oriente during the colonial era. Schools
were established by Eloy Alfaro in Quito and Riobamba for young Indian boys, with the
aim of educating Indian boys from provincial villages so that they could return to help
bring modern education to their home communities. Boarding schools were also opened
for the children of the Cayapa tribe in Esmeraldas and for the Shuar, Huaroni and
Amazonian Quichua in the Oriente, with mixed results. Many Amazonian Quichua
children, considered to be more passive and submissive than other Amazonian groups,
were also taken to boarding schools in Quito.

These schools were founded very strongly on the premise of civilisation. The Sagrado
Corazón de Jesus, a boarding school for Amazonian Quichua run by Dominican monks
in Quito, for example, taught its students how to read and write, and educated them in
religious doctrine, and “skills pertaining to domestic service”; in other words, it served to

train Indians for the kind of work thought suitable for them - that at the bottom of the social scale, in service to white elites. In the discussion of the establishment of Indian schools in the Oriente the familiar discourse of indigenous isolation from progress, civilisation and advanced human knowledge was drawn on once again. The Governor of the Province of Oriente in 1909 argued that the Indian knew nothing of great human destinies, because he had “not been called by the name of civilisation”, and because nothing had been done to prepare him for the possibility of admission to the communities that surround him; and that therefore the government had an obligation to open and maintain, whatever the cost, schools where Indians could come as well as the children of merchants and police authorities in the region. This obligation was often carried out by force. The Jefe Político of the canton of Napo described how in order to extend education to the Indians of the province it would be necessary to use the old system of the Jesuits, which was “to construct with the Indians themselves large houses to be used as schools, then take the Indian children and inter them there by force.” He insisted that “any other method is impossible because the Indian is opposed to social life and instruction” and that in a state of liberty the Indian surrendered to crimes and vices such as drunkenness, which they passed onto their children. “Because of this the government believes that if we want to transform this race we must take their little ones by force and educate them first, and afterwards give them the office of authority....It is necessary to use violence... because it is not possible to govern semi-savage people with the same laws that apply to civilised people.”

The result of such outright use of force was that indigenous groups violently resisted the internment of their children in boarding schools, setting fire to buildings, attacking teachers and relocating when necessary. The irony of a policy aimed at “civilising” the

36 Informe del Monasterio Provincial del Buen Pastor al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Quito, 23 de Mayo, 1898. Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Publica al Congreso Ordinario de 1898. Mensajes e Informes, 1898, ABFL.
37 Informe del Carlos A. Rivadeneira, Gobernador de la Provincia de Oriente al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Oriente etc., 1909, Anexos al Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Publica, Oriente, etc, 1909. Mensajes e Informes, 1909. ABFL
38 Informe del Jefe Político del Cantón Napo correspondiente al 30 de Julio 1907. Sección de Oriente, Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Publica a la Nación, 1907, Mensajes e Informes, 1907. ABFL. The theme of force and violence continued with the appointment of army officers as teachers in schools in Archidona and La Coca.

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indigenous people through settlement in the few towns of the Oriente was that it contributed to Indian depopulation in the region. Similarly, the majority of the Cayapa in Esmeraldas refused to let their children attend the school constructed for them, and instead moved further up the River Cayapa, away from missionary activity. In the highland cities of Quito and Riobamba the results of the experiment were more impressive but similarly contradictory. Most of the serrano Indian graduates of boarding schools chose to seek work in the major cities rather than return to their villages. This reflects one of the key problems of rural education across Latin America: the better students often left home for what they perceived as greater opportunities and the excitement of the city. The result was that rural villages lost some of their more capable young people and remained on the fringes of national life. Of those who did return home, the majority returned to their old patterns of life and quickly forgot what they had been taught in the boarding schools. As indigenista thinker Luis Monsalve Pozo insisted, they were obliged to adopt traditional Indian methods of life if they wished to be accepted by their families and be permitted to take part in communal life. “Many people have attributed this to a perversion in the nature of Indians, without realising that the reactions of many Indians and their parents are no different from that which white children would have in a similar situation.”

Perhaps the most important and far-reaching initiative in the field of indigenous education was the 1906 decree passed by Eloy Alfaro, which legislated for the establishment of escuelas prediales; estate schools on the large haciendas. Article 47 of the Law of Public Instruction of 1906 stated that the owner of a rural estate with more than twenty children of school age dependent on his workers must establish a mixed school of the third class on his property for children of both sexes. It was envisaged that the schools would be established at the hacienda owner’s cost, thus lowering the

40 Yanez Cossio, *La educación indígena en el Ecuador*, p.17.
41 Luis Monsalve Pozo, *El Indio, Cuestiones de su vida y su pasión*. (Cuenca: Editorial Austral, 1943), p.136. This was a common pattern in the use of boarding schools for the instruction of indigenous peoples across the Americas, and a source of constant disappointment to proponents of indigenous assimilation.
42 Third level schools were those that offered a simple elementary education, consisting of the first three grades of primary instruction as legislated for by the central government. There was a total of six grades
burden on the Treasury and strengthening state control over the conservative landowners. In practice, however, the law proved extremely difficult to implement. The Director of Studies of the Province of Tungurahua complained in 1912 that in his province only a single landowner, Dr Filoteo Samaniego, owner of the ‘San Javier’ hacienda, had actually established and maintained the school required by law.43 The following year the Governor of Pichincha deplored the fact that almost nothing had been achieved with regards to the implementation of Article 47 in the Province, “because of the resistance of the landowners who insist that they do not have the requisite number of children on their estates, or that there are no teachers available who could possibly work in such institutions.”44 Landowners were desperate to continue to benefit from the labour of Indian children, and complained that they found the law “extraordinarily unjust, annoying, humiliating and impractical”45; insisting that education would be the ruin of agriculture, and that Indians did not need education but “nutrition, money and the lash…”46 To challenge the false claims of landowners regarding the number of children on their estates and the shortage of teaching staff, school inspectors were appointed who were charged with carefully compiling the statistical data regarding children in the schools. However, this had little effect, since the inspectors were generally appointed by the same local political authorities who were in hoc to the influence of the landowners.

As a result officials at all levels did practically nothing to enforce the law. As Luis N. Dillon argued as Minister of Education in 1913: “One of the multiple absurdities of the law is that it leaves in the hands of the patrons the foundation and maintenance of the rural schools, meaning that those who have most interest in ensuring that the said schools do not function are those charged with setting them up.”47 He argued that it would be necessary to rethink the methodology completely if the government wanted to achieve any kind of result. He suggested dispensing with the role of the landowners and

provided for by national plans of studies, but in practice very few schools moved beyond the second level, that of offering four grades of primary education.

43 Dirección de Estudios de Tungurahua al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Ambato, 6 de Junio, 1912. Anexos al Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Publica, 1912. Mensajes e Informes, 1912. ABFL.
44 Informe del Gobierno de Pichincha al Ministerio de Instrucción Publica, 1913. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1913. Mensajes e Informes, 1913. ABFL.
47 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1913. Mensajes e Informes, 1913. ABFL.
organising mobile schools either from the funds allocated to public instruction, or from a special tax that could be taken on rural properties for this precise purpose, arguing somewhat ambitiously that mobile schools following the system of Maria Montessori, would allow Indian children to learn to read and write in three months, and would be the most efficient manner of combating illiteracy in the countryside.

In practice the law lay dormant for the majority of its first twenty years of existence, and for the most part estate schools existed only on paper. It was Luis N. Dillon, who, on coming to power as a member of the Ruling Junta in the July Revolution of 1926, sought to reinvigorate the law regarding the establishment of estate schools, and began an effective campaign to establish schools for Indians. A first push spawned forty-five estate schools in the single province of Pichincha, providing instruction to a total of 800 boys and 200 girls. A 100 sucre fine was instituted for any landlord who refused to comply with the law. Inspectors were appointed independently by the Minister of Education, and teachers on estate schools were granted higher wages. The schools taught Spanish, mental arithmetic, the geography, history and economy of Ecuador, and “the daily practice of sociability and certain hygienic precepts.”

There was still a shortage of teaching staff and general funding, and schools had to make use of corridors, old houses, sheds, garages, and storehouses as locations, and lessons were carried out with children sitting on the floor or on sheets of rope, but, as Leopoldo Chávez so aptly put it, “everything was contrary to ideals, but the lights had come on in the rural schools.”

The result was that the ten years between 1926 and 1936 represented a “golden era” for indigenous education, with more than 1000 estate schools established, and instruction given to more than 3000 Indian children.

‘Good Intentions and Truncated Works’: The Problems of Instituting Black and Indigenous Education’

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49 Ibid.
50 Luis Monsalve Pozo, El Indio, Cuestiones de su vida y su pasión. (Cuenca: Editorial Austral, 1943), p.135.
51 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1941. Mensajes e Informes, 1941. ABFL.
Despite some successes, none of these initiatives was able to resolve the fundamental problems and shortcomings at the heart of educational provision for black and indigenous people. The reality was that rural schools were under-funded, ineffective and extremely limited in their operation. Schools first opened in small towns, then in villages and only finally in isolated parish hamlets surrounding the village centre. More specifically, the education provided in the outlying districts of rural parishes was qualitatively inferior to that provided in the villages. There was an abject lack of funding, and teacher absenteeism and lack of commitment were widespread. The British Consul calculated in 1911 that the budget for primary education worked out at 1 sucre 50 centavos per pupil per year, roughly equivalent to the daily jornal for a hacienda worker. Furthermore, at least three quarters of the education budget was centred on schools in the major cities, meaning that only a tiny portion of even this paltry amount actually went towards the instruction of peasant children. In addition, rural schools were the first to be affected in the face of budget cuts. As early as 1898 the Minister of Education suggested that rather than continue with the “fanatical” preoccupation with establishing a school in “every canton, every parish, and every individual house”, the government should seek to concentrate its resources on those that served the largest number of pupils, implicitly, those in the major towns and cities. This was due in part to practical exigencies. As Espinosa Tamayo, himself a fervent proponent of rural schools, acknowledged: “In some ways it is better to leave the peasant uneducated than the working class, because if the peasant is left without education he will still do what he must do, and he has already a great teacher in nature, but if one leaves the man of the city without education in the environment of the streets he will have vice as a teacher and he will become a criminal.”

A core problem was the recruitment of teachers for indigenous and other rural schools. Although prestigious teacher-training institutions such as the Instituto Normal “Mejía” and Instituto Normal “Juan Montalvo” created a large number of graduates, those who

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54 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Pública al Congreso Ordinario, 1898, *Mensajes e Informes, 1898*, ABFL.
graduated from such schools tended to be the daughters of the elite and the sons of the middle-classes, who considered themselves too "cultured" to teach Indian children. Rural schools, moreover, lacked prestige, and the rural teacher had little status and was erratically paid. It was not unknown for teachers to go three to four months without pay, struggling with hunger and creditors. Even when paid, salaries were generally too low to cover all expenses. The result was that the majority of teachers were, as the Minister of Education raged in 1906, "not suitable to give instruction to the country's children. There are those who far from regenerating our schools need help with their own studies." To supplement formal teacher-training, the government began to authorise school councils to award diplomas to individuals who passed an examination comprised of the basic materials taught in primary education, which allowed them to obtain the title of third class teacher. This could be upgraded to second class teacher after five years in the post, subject to a second exam. Very few men obtained this title, while the number of female teachers far outstripped the number of schools which had places for female teachers. Yet despite the acute shortage of teachers, many schools preferred to use men who had no teaching qualifications whatsoever rather than turn to women teachers in one-class schools. This was despite the fact that many Indian communities responded better to women teachers than to men, apparently possessing more confidence in white women, from whom they did not have direct experience of exploitation and brutality. The shortage of teachers was so acute that many rural provinces had to close large numbers of schools during the 1910's and 1920's because so many of their teachers had abandoned their posts. The Director of Studies of the Province of Tungurahua lamented in 1907 that the province had previously had the greatest number of schools in the country after Pichincha and Guayas, but that many had been forced to close after teachers abandoned their posts because lack of funds left their salaries unpaid.

56 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos y Telégrafos 1906. Mensajes e Informes, 1906, ABFL.
57 Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, El problema de la enseñanza pp.18-19.
59 Dirección de Estudios de la Provincia del Tungurahua, Ambato, 23 Julio 1907, Informes de los Directores de Estudios, Anexos al Informe de Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1907. Mensajes e Informes, 1907, ABFL.
This problem was particularly acute in Esmeraldas. In his annual report to the Minister of Education 1907 the Director of Studies decried the fact that of the 42 schools that existed in name in the province, only 28 were actually functioning; the rest were without teachers due to the absolute scarcity that exists throughout the province, "not just of qualified teachers, but of any vaguely suitable person whatsoever." The lack of training and education within the province proved self-perpetuating, restricting the supply of qualified teachers, while the appointment of teachers from outside the province proved virtually impossible due to the extremely negative opinions held by the educated classes about living and working conditions in Esmeraldas. The Director of Studies told in his annual report of 1917 how he had contacted teachers in Quito with the offer of work, and all had offered the same three reasons for turning him down: that the cost of living was excessively high, that the climate was deadly, and the inhabitants were "bloodthirsty and depraved." Appalled, he insisted: "Of these three reasons, only the first is true, the rest are founded in prejudice." He believed that the perception of the inhabitants as bloodthirsty and barbarous could be attributed to the recent Concha Revolution; yet the fact that their concerns were attributed directly to the "depravity" of the inhabitants, rather than to the more abstract fear of political disturbance, suggests that anti-black prejudice played a strong role in these fears and in the subsequent failure of Esmeraldas to develop an effective education system. This also suggests that unlike indigenous groups, black people were not seen as redeemable. The result was that the people working as teachers in the province were all natives without qualifications, who were often forced to undertake secondary employment in order to survive, and school closures and illiteracy rates continued to grow year by year.

Material conditions in rural schools were equally unsatisfactory, with schools housed in inadequate buildings, lacking such basic necessities as furniture, lighting and ventilation, as well as the fields and tools necessary for the teaching of agriculture. The children were

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60 Dirección de Estudios de la Provincia de Esmeraldas al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Esmeraldas, Junio 27 de 1907. Mensajes e Informes, 1907. ABFL.
often completely exposed to the elements, shivering with the biting cold in the highlands and drowsy from the tropical heat on the coast. A lead article in *El Imparcial* argued that one of the biggest problems preventing the development of rural schools was the appalling locations in which school building were situated. “Schools installed in obscure and sad locations with useless equipment, are not very sympathetic to the student, who needs space and light as the plant needs air. Schools operating in such conditions sacrifice the idea of teaching, despoiling it of all that is attractive….All the money the government can spend on schooling and all the efforts teachers make will be useless if there is not a serious effort to equip or provide premises which at least adhere to the most basic prescriptions of physical and moral hygiene for children.”

In most places schools were installed in houses without any comfort or adequate specifications for their objects. Sanitary conditions were further undermined by the custom of granting school masters accommodation in the school where they taught. Many kept most of the building for their family, and squeezed the classroom into the smallest and most unattractive room in the house, affecting morale and discipline within the school. In an excursion to schools in the Guayaquil countryside in the mid-1910’s, Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo found rural schools to be operating in small huts, “no cleaner or less miserable than those around them”, with children sitting on the floor, balancing their books on their knees. This was a common practice: the Director of Studies of the Province of Azuay noted that there were schools in the province that did not possess even a single piece of furniture. In Esmeraldas this problem was exacerbated by civil war and political instability, with the Director of Studies complaining in 1917 that nearly all school furniture had disappeared during the Concha Revolution. Textbooks, school supplies, canteens and hygienic services were also scarce. In some cases the situation was so bad that schools were reported to be sharing textbooks one to a province. Meanwhile, students were forced to compromise. Students in the province of Manabí made their own books with card and

62 Ibid. Moreover, figure six suggests that even where schools were established in the province, instruction was not generally extended to blacks.
63 *El Imparcial*, 28 de Julio 1908.
64 Espinosa Tamayo, *El problema de la enseñanza* p.25.
65 Ibid, p.47.
sheets of paper, while those in Chimborazo lacked books altogether and wrote on mini-blackboards with pieces of chalk. Some schools lacked even blackboards and used instead agave or maguey leaves, or sand-sprinkled boards, with pupils forced to use sticks or their index fingers for the formation of letters and numbers.

Rural schools focused overwhelmingly on the education of boys, and black and indigenous girls were often left without even the most rudimentary form of instruction. This reflected both the gendered division of labour within peasant communities, and wider ideas within Ecuadorian society about the low importance of women’s education. Girls were likely to be pushed into domestic service from a very young age; a pattern institutionalised in both black and indigenous societies as part of the relations of conciertaje. Parents who already questioned the validity of education for their sons were sure to be particularly sceptical about the relevance reading and writing might have possessed for their daughter’s future domestic lives. One Quichua woman who grew up in the 1920s described in an oral history interview how her father only sent her brothers to school, insisting that education would be useless for girls, and would bring them into undesirable contact with young men. This suggests that part of the opposition to young Indian girls attending school was the possibility of close, unsupervised access to boys, and suggests that single-sex schools been available to rural students, take-up may have been better among indigenous girls.

Women’s education had been generally slow to develop in Ecuador, and those schools that did exist tended to focus almost exclusively on the cultivation of women’s domestic roles, giving them knowledge of politics and economics only in as much as they would

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67 Dirección de Estudios de la Provincia de Esmeraldas al Ministro de Instrucción Pública, Esmeraldas, Mayo 25 1917, Mensajes e Informes, 1917. ABFL.
69 Lema, Los Otávalos, p.20.
70 Ebaugh, Education in Ecuador, p.4.
71 Indigenous activist Tránsito Amaguafio, for example, recalled that from the age of seven all she knew was "service, service, service". Oral testimony printed in Martha Bulnes, Hatarishipa Nirimi/ Me levanto y digo. Testimonio de tres mujeres Quichuas (Quito: Editorial 'El Conejo', 1990) n.p. Peasant women also began their reproductive labour at a very early stage, often giving birth as young as 12.
72 Interview with Josefina Amaguafia, in Bulnes, Hatarishipi Nirimi, n.p. Indeed, in a footnote to this interview, Bulnes described unequal access to education as one of the key forms of gender discrimination present within indigenous families.
need to know in the role of mother, raising the next generation of patriotic citizens. Ecuador was in some senses more progressive than many other Latin American countries on the subject of women's education, since even within the most conservative reaches of the Church hierarchy, it was accepted that women had a right to education, and that indeed the state had a duty to provide this. However, this discourse was located even more fervently in the concept of motherhood and a woman's need to be prepared for her future role for the good of the nation and to ensure the raising of the optimal citizens. This can be seen in the transformation of many elite women's educational programmes into 'Escuelas de Amas de Casa' or housewife schools, with training only in the domestic arts and some reading and writing. Given the secondary importance in which women's education more generally was held, it was not to be expected that government authorities and educational sociologists would concern themselves overly with the shortage of education for black and indigenous girls. While a minority of educationalists did express alarm about the absence of instruction for Indian girls, this was a concern because it was believed that Indian degeneracy and ignorance would continue to be passed on through the female line if they were not also corrected in the error of their cultural ways. Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, for example, lamented that indigenous girls were dedicated to domestic duties at the sides of their mothers, receiving "no moral or technical instruction, nothing that will prepare them for the life that will arrive for them, and in a truly primitive ignorance, they grow and develop, ignorant of all; more, conserving the tendencies, not combating those of inheritance, environment and race."73

Another problem was that population increase outstripped the creation of schools. By 1941 rural schools were in such short supply that out of every ten school-age children, it was estimated that six did not have a school to attend.74 In his highly influential study of the situation of the Ecuadorian Indians published in 1933, Mexican anthropologist and indigenista Moisés Sáenz argued that Ecuadorian schools had not yet reached the indigenous populations. He asserted that eighty percent of Ecuadorian Indians were illiterate, and while the other twenty percent had attended rural schools, they scarcely

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74 Guillermo Bustamante, *Ministro de Educación Publica, Informe a la Nación* 1941, *Mensajes e Informes, 1941*. ABFL.
knew how to read and write, even badly. Schooling in many provinces remained so deficient that the most instruction many Indians received was the weekly sermon in religious doctrine offered to Indian children by priests on the patios of monasteries and convents. Another ad-hoc method, propagated by the Governor of the Oriente in the late-1910's, opened up the offices of the parish *tenientes políticos* for a Sunday school for adults and children, in which they were taught "the rudiments of the Spanish language, and elemental precepts of morality, hygiene, arithmetic and writing; then if possible, some manual trades and the cultivation of certain vegetables." All of the *teniente político* 's employees who possessed some form of education were obliged to teach whatever knowledge they had "in the form indicated by their sectional authority", with no apologies made for the fact that this was an unashamedly amateur system of education.

The reality of a severe shortfall in indigenous education provision meant that the state was forced to turn to both Catholic and Protestant missions in order to fill the gap. Lay education was a key foundation of Liberal education policy; it was enshrined in the constitution and was constantly reiterated as essential to the advancement of the nation. Intellectuals and ministers alike took every chance to underline how clerical education was responsible for the ignorance of the masses and for the "shameful slavery" to the priesthood in which the nation as a whole was held. Under clerical dominion, school was "the place where a child runs incautious with his intelligence and atrophies it, where he kills his civic sense and loses all notions of altruism and dignity." Despite these convictions, indigenous education, particularly in the Oriente continued to be entrusted to Church officials and missionaries. Following the re-expulsion of the Jesuits in 1896, Josephine monks were invited to take over the schools they had established for

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75 Moisés Sáenz. *Sobre el indio ecuatoriano y su incorporación al medio nacional. Publicaciones de la Secretaría de educación publica.* (Mexico, s.n, 1933).


77 Memoria del Secretario del Instrucción Publica, Correos y Telégrafos, 1906. *Mensajes e Informes de 1906*, ABFL. Significantly, it was argued that lay education was particularly important for women, since it was they who were most vulnerable to the "influence" of the Church.
Amazonian Quichua in Aguarico, Curaray, Tena and Loreto. This allowed the Amazonian missions to consolidate their position in the Oriente, even as the development of commerce and the extraction economy and the advance of white immigration threatened to destabilise their pre-eminence in the region. In an attempt to resolve the paradox of an anti-clerical state reinforcing Church power, the Liberal government sought to attract North American Protestant missionaries, who were favoured for their development projects and the packaging of North America values, beliefs and culture in which they wrapped the word of God. The first Protestant mission from the Gospel Missionary Union arrived in Quito in 1897 and began work in Colta Chimborazo; it was quickly followed by others from the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New York City. However, the Protestant missions preferred to work in the coastal cities and with the highland Indians; they were slow to penetrate the Oriente where state educational provision was most lacking. The result was that Catholic missions remained the dominant force in the education of the Amazonian Indians, and were allowed to retain a more general role in indigenous education. (See figure seven.)

In his classic analysis of Church-State relations in Latin America, J. Lloyd Mecham described the vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in Ecuador as clearly demonstrating "the aversion of Latin American politicians to compromise, or to the adoption of half-way measures in meeting problems." Yet the study of education policy highlights the contradictions in Liberal relations with the Church, and shows that despite the anti-clerical agenda pursued by the Liberal government, Ecuadorian Liberals were forced to compromise on the issue of education. Clearly, the power of the Church in areas that

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78 Padre Lorenzo García, Historia de las misiones en la Amazonia Ecuatoriana (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1985).
80 This was not, of course, the only inconsistency in the state focus on lay education; it was estimated in the 1940's that one third of all schools continued to be run by the Church on a fee-paying basis, and Ecuadorian elites in particular continued to demonstrate a strong preference for confessional schools over lay. The use of the Church in the education of Indians was facilitated by the fact that the civilising discourse directed at the Indian by Liberal elites bore direct parallels to that which had been propagated by the Church since the colonial period, and both shared the same priorities in teaching the Indian Spanish and improving their social conditions.
were politically peripheral was seen as less of a threat than leaving the indigenous population in a state of ‘uncivilised backwardness’, and their education by whatever means won out as the clear priority.

‘Separate But Equal’: The Modernisation of Ecuadorean Education

It is generally asserted that the modernisation of education in Ecuador began in 1930 with the First National Congress of Primary and Secondary Education\(^8\) which led to an effort to plan the development of education more systematically and to professionalise its administration.\(^8\) During the 1930’s the suggestions and recommendations of French, German and United States educational missions were finally acted upon, and efforts were made to distinguish between and plan specifically for different fields of education.\(^8\) In places these modernisation efforts were marked by the influence of indigenista thinking. This manifested itself in particular in a recognition that the type of education that had been offered to Indians was ill-adapted to the indigenous lifestyle, and in a call for an education shaped to their needs rather than simply those of the government. Pio Jaramillo argued that even in the event of hacienda schools operating effectively and enabling Indian children to benefit from some teaching, “if a rudimentary knowledge of reading, writing and counting … is all that is offered as the liberation of the Indian, the irony could not be more cruel, because these notions are going to be forgotten very soon, if their life has not provided them with more occasions to take a book into their hands.”\(^8\)

This point was reiterated by Luis Monsalve Pozo who insisted on the need to create

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\(^8\) Prior to this point the provincial Direcciones de Estudios were composed of “interested citizens” who volunteered for the post, most of them with no knowledge or experience of the field of education.

\(^8\) A German educational mission arrived in Quito in 1913 and stayed until the mid-1930’s; it was followed by a French mission in 1921 which stayed for five years. Unlike the North American Protestant missions discussed above which became involved in more practical teaching, these missions, the German in particular, undertook extensive studies of the situation of primary and secondary schooling in the country and based on these observations formulated a series of plans of studies, taking into account the conditions of the diverse provinces. The German mission also operated a model school in Quito, and had an enormous influence on the development of pedagogic thought in Ecuador. For literature on the German missions see Jorge Gómez, *Los misiones pedagógicas alemanas y la educación en el Ecuador* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1993) and Ivan Cruz Cevallos and Matthias Abram, (eds). *Viajeros, científicas, maestros: misiones alemanas en el Ecuador* (Quito: Galerías Artes, 1989).

\(^8\) Jaramillo Alvarado, *El Indio Ecuatoriano*, p.126.
specifically Indian schools, tailored to their needs and with a focus on the teaching of agricultural and industrial life-skills. "The school of first letters, the simple school of whites, isolated and alone, will not produce any kind of effect.... It is not sufficient just to know how to read and write to solve the Indian problem."\(^{86}\) He argued that Indian schools must shift their focus from the child to the community as a whole and become the centre where the efforts and desires of whole communities could converge, creating a natural, stable and human environment for all rather than attempting to artificially change the environment of the child by force. "When the school is not of the community, nor the community of the school, the Indian child, as soon as he leaves and is free in the hands of god, will soon convert himself into the worst scourge of his own blood brothers."\(^{87}\)

The model most frequently cited by such thinkers was that of the Warista schools established by Elizardo Pérez in Bolivia, and it was in an effort to emulate this success that the first attempts were made to establish schools to train indigenous teachers. This was a logical extension of the recognition of the problems caused by the lack of familiarity of most white-mestizo teaching staff with the Quichua language and with questions of agriculture and small industry, and it was hoped that Indian communities would have less distrust for teachers recognisably from their own ethnic group and cultural background. The first rural teacher-training college was established in 1925, at Uyumbicho, a hacienda twenty-five kilometres from Quito, dedicated to the raising of pure-bred animals. The school was not exclusively indigenous; as its Director Leopoldo Chávez proudly proclaimed: "Indians and mestizos come together under the same roof, are regulated by the same regime of liberty and affection, and are assisted in the same rights."\(^{88}\) The first Indian pupils at Uyumbicho were recruited in their own populations; gradually they began attending the school of their own accord. By 1940 the school had 120 students: 100 boys and 20 girls, all aged fourteen or above. In the school they received food, a parcel of land to tend, an annual clothing allowance and their instruction, all for free. The results were considered to be extremely pleasing. Dr Federico Páez in his presidential address of 1936 enthused: "The Indian child in the environment of

\(^{86}\) Luis Monsalve Pozo, *El Indio, Cuestiones de su vida y su pasión*, p.136.

\(^{87}\) Ibid.

Uyumbicho undergoes a radical transformation. He gains a perfect realisation of the value of education and the importance of a civilised life. Tomorrow the teacher of his brothers, he will know how to remedy the abjection in which they live." The dream of transforming the Indian through training a vanguard of his peers in the ways of civilisation, which had permeated Indian education policy since the colonial era, had apparently become a reality. Ten more rural teacher-training colleges were established during the 1930's in the major cantonal capitals, and a goal was set of forming at least 10,000 indigenous teachers. There may have been hopes to extend this reform to Afro-Ecuadorians as well, since one of these schools was located in Esmeraldas, although to date it has not proved possible to locate documents relating to the operation of this school.

However, this assertion that traditional forms of education were unsuited to the needs of the Indian population was also used to marginalise indigenous education, not only by conservative landed interests, but by those within the government who argued that it was "neither beneficial nor practical to oblige the children of peasants to acquire knowledge that, given the necessities of their work and the conditions for which they are destined, will not serve them for anything during the course of their life, and on the contrary, will make difficult the rudimentary instruction of which they are capable and which they need, [as they will] come to hold in horror schools, teachers and civilisation." It was also argued that peasants resisted sending their children to school because they instinctively knew that formal schooling would not help them with the work that they were obliged to do. The Director of Studies of the Province of Bolivar in 1930 suggested the establishment of "auxiliary schools" in which teachers on a reduced salary of ten sucres per month could teach a limited curriculum of moral and civic instruction and good reading and writing. Schools which already existed but which performed badly

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89 Mensaje que el Ing. Dr. Federico Páez, encargado del mando supremo de la Republica presenta a la Honorable Asamblea Constituyente, 1936. Mensajes e Informes, 1936. ABFL.
90 Ibid. This goal was never achieved, instead the economic problems of the 1930's led to cutbacks, and the number of indigenous schools began to fall.
91 Uzcategui, La educación ecuatoriana en el siglo del liberalismo, p.248.
92 Informe de la Dirección de Estudios de la Provincia de Bolivar, Guaranda, Junio 23 de 1930 (Gabriel. I. Veintimilla I.) Memoria del Secretario de Instrucción Publica al Congreso Ordinario de 1930, Mensajes e Informes, 1930, ABFL.
could be transformed into auxiliaries; others could be closed down and new auxiliary schools created.93 This was echoed in changes in the curriculum, which gave preference to general notions of agriculture and the cultivation of plants and animals over the study of Spanish, mathematics and history. Such proposals effectively jettisoned any idea of educating black and indigenous peasants for their own progress and social advancement, and instead sought to simply instil in them an understanding of their duties to the nation, and their own position within it, enabling the government to bring them under a more effective political control without granting them any vision of an alternative future status.

This idea of schools for peasants as "separate but equal" was epitomised in the growing trend in educational thinking from the 1930's which insisted on the need to distinguish between rural and urban education. This idea had existed throughout the Liberal period. In 1911 the Governor of Pichincha insisted that: "It is impossible to think that rural schools can follow the same plan of studies as urban schools. It is a universal truth that school must prepare the individual for life, and if life in the rural environment is distinct from that in urban areas, nothing is more natural than that the preparation given in rural schools be distinct from that in urban schools." 94 However, no real action was taken on the matter until after the July Revolution, when proposals were put forward for separate plans of studies for rural and urban schools. Urban schools were to have six grades and cover a broad curriculum. Rural schools were to consist of four grades, and teach reading, writing, Spanish, and counting, as well as providing "a minimum of general culture that will give students the capacity to exercise their activities in agriculture." 95 Educationalist Humberto Mata emphasised the need to create two different kinds of education for the country's different populations. He argued that education must take into account the essential characters of both rural and urban environments in order to adapt its labour to their necessities. He underlined that the city represented industrial life, and the country agricultural life. As a result the state must educate the city-dweller for industry and the peasant for agriculture, but with each to be held in equal respect: this was for him the

93 Ibid.
94 Informe del Gobernador de Pichincha al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, 1911-1912. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica 1912, Mensajes e Informes 1912, ABFL.
95 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica 1926-28, Mensajes e Informes 1928, ABFL.
highest mission of education. Yet despite this ostensible emphasis on equality within the system of dual programmes, it is clear that the idea of separate forms of education was born of a conviction that blacks and, especially, Indians, did not require anything other than a basic education for the social roles they were destined to fulfil. As the Minister of Education insisted in 1931: “Urban and rural schools have been subsisting in equal conditions and with identical plans and programmes. This organisation which implies an absolute lack of knowledge of the reality of things, was absolutely inconvenient, not to say absurd, above all if one takes into account the heterogeneity of our ethnic elements, and the problem of the Indian.”

A decree of September 1930 led to the creation of a new type of rural school, which the government claimed was based on “knowledge of the conditions and needs of our peasants in order to satisfy these needs in a beneficial form for both them and the country.” The Decree established a new plan of studies, stating that its intentions were: to awaken and establish a love of the land in rural populations; to elevate the social and economic level of the peasantry giving them the capacity for the rational exploitation of natural resources through instruction in new practices and agricultural techniques and instruction in small rural industries; to foment a spirit of intelligent co-operation in the community and to give them an elementary form of social organisation; to create new habits of work, hygiene, morality and civic duty; and, finally, to tend to the transformation of the home to create well-being in everything regarding food, dress, housing and recreations, modifying “vicious customs” and creating the necessities for a civilised life. This suggestion was patronising, derogatory and based on a fundamental misassumption of the nature of Indian culture: the love of land, respect for natural resources and mutual co-operation that the “new schools” aimed to teach the peasantry in fact represented the core foundations of indigenous society. It also reinforced the connection between education and ‘civilisation’, and, with the lower number of years

96 Humberto Mata, El Problema Educatacional y sus proyecciones sociales en el Ecuador (Quito: Imprenta de la Universidad Central, 1929) p.253.
97 Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica 1931, Mensajes e Informes 1931, ABFL.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
schooling decreed for rural children served to institutionalise the division in quality between rural and urban education.

**Indian and Black Responses to Educational Initiatives: Resistance or Accommodation?**

The general perception held by elites was that Indians were resistant to schooling. Indeed, this was often cited as further proof of Indian backwardness and resistance to 'civilisation'. As the Director of Studies of the Province of Chimborazo fumed in 1904: “Approximately two thirds of the population of the province belong to the indigenous race, whose children do not receive any elemental instruction, as much for the dressed-up indolence of their parents as for the harm that comes to them from the long oppression in which they have lived, and the lack of attention which the school inspectors have paid them.”

The same Directorate in 1913 suggested that “a permanent rebellion against everything which constitutes civilisation” was a defining characteristic of the indigenous race. A similar argument was made in frequent comments attributing resistance to schooling to “the static force of ruralism” which was argued to paralyse all social phenomenon, affecting both landowners and peasants alike. Certainly, there was an acute sense of distrust between indigenous groups and government elites which led Indians to view government initiatives with suspicion. When schools were created in Indian annexes, parents frequently refused to send their children, believing that the government was using the creation of schools as simply another way of recruiting them for the armed forces or for forced labour. The Governor of the Province of Tungurahua in 1913 described the “savage resistance” with which the indigenous race opposed the benefits of education as in part the result of government mismanagement. “Resistance is almost inevitable, and comes not only because the Indians suppose that it is useless to

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100 Informe del Director de Estudios de la Provincia de Chimborazo, Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Pública al Congreso Ordinario de 1904, *Mensajes e Informes, 1904*, ABFL.

101 Informe del Director de Estudios de la Provincia de Chimborazo al Ministro de Instrucción Pública, Riobamba, Junio 6 de 1913. Informe del Ministerio de Instrucción Pública al Congreso Ordinario de 1913, *Mensajes e Informes, 1913*, ABFL.

102 See for example Guillermo Bustamante, Ministro de Educación Pública, Informe a la Nación 1941, in which he argued that these forces tried to first isolate local schools and then annihilate them, *Mensajes e Informes, 1941*. ABFL.
know how to read and write, but because they are convinced that they live outside the law, without any right to protect them, nor aspirations, nor remote hope of improving their situation and leaving the slavery and barbarism in which they find themselves, but also of the corruption and incompetence of the tenientes políticos, coarse and rough people, chosen almost always from among the estate foremen, accustomed to tyrannising these poor unfortunates, reason for which, and to fulfil their bosses orders, they deny the instructors the help they need, without which they never put into practice the methods that healthy reason would advise to convince the Indians of the importance and usefulness of schooling." 103

Attitudes towards education were also coloured by the impact that education had on peasant lives. Many indigenous and black children were forced to stop attending school, even in areas where one existed, because they could not afford books, supplies and uniforms. Access to schooling was also complicated by the fact that in order to survive, a peasant family needed the labour of all of its members, thus sending a child to school put into danger the well-being of the entire family. This was a point made by contemporaries particularly with regards to the indigenous population; however, the problem applied equally to black peasants. Rural schools showed no relationship between the school organisation and the geographic and socio-cultural reality in which they operated. The participation of children in the family economy, migrations and various other cultural traditions, were seen by the schools as obstacles to be eradicated. 104 Even the division of time and space reflected the social and economic organisation of the Western city; school timetables made no concession to the realities of the rural economy. 105 Both Indian and black children struggled with long distances between their school and homes, and were afflicted by hunger during their lessons. Such problems were exacerbated by a strict system of discipline which often possessed racialised overtones. One indigenous female

103 Informe del Gobernador de Tungurahua al Ministro de Instruccibn Publica, 1913. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Instruccibn Publica, Seccibn Primera- Enseñanza Primaria, 1913. Mensajes e Informes 1913, ABFL
105 Ibid, p.10.

220
activist who grew up in the 1930’s recalled being physically punished and verbally abused, called names such as 'guambra yumba' by her teacher.\textsuperscript{106}

Indigenous children faced a further discouragement in terms of the culture shock that was generated by their education in Spanish and their introduction to alien cultural concepts. Education led to Indians becoming inundated with images outside their lived experience, and imposed a vision of the Indians held by the dominators, encouraging indigenous children to disregard their cultural traditions, from their religious practices to their medical knowledge and artistic expressions.\textsuperscript{107} The very concept of formal instruction was at odds with the informal education favoured in indigenous societies through such mechanisms as the teaching of shamans, age rites and so on, and served to challenge the validity of indigenous knowledge and ways of transmitting that knowledge, introducing the dualism of written versus oral knowledge.\textsuperscript{108} The conflict between indigenous and Western knowledge penetrated every level of schooling: even in the field of mathematics the numerical bases of Quichua and Castilian thinking were completely different, with Quichua mathematics based around the number five, rather than ten.\textsuperscript{109} It has been argued with regards to Indian education in Latin America more generally that institutionalised education teaches the establishment of values fundamentally inimical to Indian culture. Traditional Indian life emphasises co-operation and mutual assistance in social relations, and favours the egalitarian distribution of economic products. By contrast the school is oriented towards competitive rivalry, favours inequalities in the distribution of goods, and tolerates an economic surplus for some and deprivation for others. These fundamentally different orientations inevitably bring the two cultures into mutual discord.\textsuperscript{110} The result was profoundly destabilising and often generated social dislocation. Slightly outside of the timeframe of this thesis Colombian sociologist Oswaldo Díaz interviewed Indians returning from school in Riobamba to their villages in the province of Chimborazo, and describing them feeling - exactly as Pio Jaramillo had predicted forty years earlier-

\textsuperscript{106} Interview with Transito Amagaufia, Bulnes, \textit{Hatarishipa Nirimi}, n.p.
\textsuperscript{107} Yanez Cossio, \textit{Educación indígena en el área andina} p.10.
\textsuperscript{108} Amodio, \textit{Educación, Escuelas y Culturas Indígenas} pp.11-12.
\textsuperscript{109} Yanez Cossio, \textit{La educación indígena en el área andina}, p.12.
\textsuperscript{110} Erwin E. Epstein, “National Consciousness and Education in Mexico”, Colin Brock and Hugh Lawler (eds.) \textit{Education in Latin America} (London: Croom Helm, 1985) pp.69-70.
depressed by the situation of their kinsmen and alienated from their traditions and culture.\textsuperscript{111} It is not surprising then, that during the first few years of schooling, the majority of children could not help succumbing to culture shock, and abandoned their education, quickly forgetting what they had learnt. The result was that even where schooling was available the average Indian child completed only a single year of education.\textsuperscript{112}

However, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that all indigenous groups resented the imposition of education. The Director of Studies of the Province of Carchi in 1910, explained how indigenous children attended central schools in Tulcan as well as rural ones in the provinces, and he described as “worthy of much praise” the enthusiasm with which indigenous parents had welcomed the education of their children, arguing that they recognised education to be the only means by which their children “could find better luck.”\textsuperscript{113} Monsalve Pozo wrote in 1943 that the Indians of Azuay had understood that: “to know how to read does not make them stupid; that the Indian who knows how to write does not have to sign documents of concertaje, nor pay for money that he never received, nor sign documents that steal his land. For this reason the Indians want schools, and ask for them, and when not listened to he himself creates and sustains them.”\textsuperscript{114} Oral

\textsuperscript{111} One of Diaz’s interviewees described his horror at returning to his village and realising how the people there lived like “animalitos”, without even knowing what day it was. All described their frustration and alienation at being surrounded by people who had no understanding of life outside their village, and who could no realise to their personal and academic achievements. Oswaldo Diaz, \textit{El negro y el indio en la sociedad ecuatoriana} (Bogota : Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1978), especially pp. 50-64.

\textsuperscript{112} Lema, \textit{Los Otavalos}, p.20.

\textsuperscript{113} Dirección de Estudios de la Provincia del Carchi al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Tulcán, junio 1 de 1910. Informes de los Gobernadores al Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de Instrucción Publica, Correos y Telégrafos en 1910. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1910. ABFL.

\textsuperscript{114} Monsalve Pozo, \textit{El Indio, Cuestiones de su vida y su pasión} p.135. As with black and Indian involvement in the construction of roads and railways, there is some confusion over the extent to which black and indigenous peasantry became actively involved in the creation of schools. From the very beginning of the period artisan groups were pushing for the creation of schools for their workers and their workers. However, newspaper and handbill evidence suggests these took place mainly in the cities of Quito and Guayaquil and in majority mestizo provinces such as Loja, and it is not clear to what extent black or indigenous groups were incorporated into such efforts. Artisan were extremely enthusiastic about the development of “workers education” and established their own night-schools in places where government funds were not forthcoming. It is likely that some black and indigenous workers were incorporated into these groups, but it is not clear in what proportion. By the late 1930’s the majority of Ecuadorian primary schools had “parent committees”, including those in rural areas. These became involved in such activities as sending circulars and handbills demanding the co-operation of the entire community in the construction of rural school buildings. ‘\textit{Mingas escolares}’ were established in several provinces for the construction and
testimonies also present Indians as actively seeking education for themselves and their children, often against opposition from landowning elites and local officials. Dolores Cacuango, for example, who became an important indigenous leader during the indigenous struggles of the 1940's in Cayambe, told her biographer how she had always believed immensely in the power of education, to the extent of paying the local schoolteacher extra money to ensure that her own children learnt how to read and write. It seems that what Indians resented was the civilising dynamic of Liberal education. One of the primary goals of the Federation of Ecuadorian Indians which was established following the May revolution in 1944 was the establishment of bilingual schools, and Cacuango made the establishment of such schools one of her central ambitions during the 1950's. Although these developments occurred slightly outside the period under study, the ideas behind them would have been important forces in shaping Indian responses to Liberal education policy, and suggest that Indians were in favour of education, but opposed to the ideologies that lay behind its articulation by the Liberal state, as well as discouraged by the practical obstacles that the state did little to countervene.

The Perpetuation of a Civilising Paradigm: Representations of Blacks and Indians Within Educational Material

If the knowledge taught in rural schools bore practically no relation to the everyday life of black and indigenous people, neither did it make any attempt to incorporate the study of any aspect of black or indigenous culture. History as it was taught in schools began with the study of the Wars of Independence, with no effort to cover the pre-Colombian era, and on the topic of ancient history, pupils were taught about Greece and Rome. This was reflective of the general effort to shape the curriculum to the development of a national culture in line with European ideals. Text-books continued to present an anti-

repair of school locations, for the formation of farms, patios, and sports-fields. They also solicited donations of furniture, material and school supplies. However, their complex and hierarchical organisation suggests they were run by elites and it is unclear what role black and indigenous people had within them.  


Ibid.  

Indian ideology, marked by a concept of progress and the devalorisation of their societies as primitive. These issues can be explored through an analysis of Por Tierras Ecuatorianas, a history and geography book in common use during the 1940’s in state primary schools and in the night-schools established for workers and artisans.

The book depicted blacks and Indians in an extremely reactionary, often derogatory manner. It presented the Amazonian Indians in direct contrast to the ideals of civilisation, describing the oil-town of Puyo thus: “Puyo has already been conquered by civilisation. Comfortable hotels open their doors to the tourist and well-stocked grocery stores are filled with all their necessities. However, the Amazonian Indian is the predominant element in these regions; he can be seen passing by with his big necklaces, his gaudy earrings, his bright ponchos and his inexpressive face covered in grotesque daubings.” The degradation of the Indian conciertos of the highlands was presented as one of picturesque images of country life, while the hacienda was defended as the centre of national production: “It is like a beehive where all must play their part in the work to have their right to their ration of food; the drones are expelled, they regenerate themselves or disappear.” Of the Indian workers it stated: “The Indian is a tireless peon of the hacienda, he is our principal element of production.” It followed this by describing as the Indian’s “inseparable compañeros”: “the guard dog that watches the hacienda, the ploughing oxen that accompany him in his work throughout the whole year, the humble donkeys that lend their patient hooves to bring his produce to the fair; the arrogant and spirited horse that takes his master on his journeys; the little cow who gives her milk to drink and for the fabrication of cheeses and butter; the flock of sheep to whom belongs the abundant and warm wool for the fabrication of cloth and covers, and other domestic animals such as the pig, chicken, and rabbit,” directly comparing the Indian to all the other farmyard animals and reinforcing the traditional conception of Indians as little more than beasts of burden. The book also naturalised the economic condition of the Indians, and sought to blame the Indians themselves for the fact that they were not educated: “The Indian knows that he was born for work, and to work he dedicates himself from a tender age; so early does our Indian begin work that it is difficult; and was more difficult in past epochs to convince him of the necessity of attending school.” The book argued that vices
such as ignorance and alcoholism were inherent in the Indian people, and that as a result
the nation as a whole had a duty to protect them; thus perpetuating the idea of Indians
both as childlike and as alien to mainstream culture.

The blacks of Esmeraldas were described in terms of ethnic stereotypes as “cheerful,
happy, talkative, frank and attractive to a certain level….sunny and optimistic”. It was
suggested that the subsistence based poverty in which the black people of the region lived
was a result of their environment, with the land being so fertile and rich in plantains,
bananas and mangoes that they never had the need to sow. This served once again to
naturalise their economic conditions, and the idea of black laziness was a barely stated
undercurrent. The music of the marimba was described in patronising terms as “sweet
and melodious music” played on “primitive instruments” made by the same “nice little
blacks that have gifted us with their traditional songs and their native dances in which,
enthusiastic and happy, they invite us to participate.” Despite recognition of this black
cultural contribution to the nation, the book was reluctant to recognise Esmeraldas as a
black region, instead giving two pages over to an account of three “white” families who
had moved to Esmeraldas from the Sierra and were happy there, the implication being
that the region was ripe and safe for settlement by “true” Ecuadorians. Children were
also given an image of black women as sexual and available that would serve to
perpetuate the racialised sexism that was such a blight on the lives of black women across
Latin America, with the book informing them that they must go and see the mulatas of
Manabi in order “to know what a truly beautiful woman is.”

Even those books that sought to take a more progressive stance and that sympathised with
the struggles of workers and the poor continued to present an image of the indigenous
population as backwards and in need of transformation. A book written in 1943 for use
in the night schools attended by artisans and workers entitled Así han vivido nuestros
indios gave only three pages over to any kind of description of the pre-Colombian way of
life, and this mostly consisted of the names, languages, and geographical locations of the

118 Hugo Albomoz, Por Tierras Ecuatorianas (2nd edition, Quito: Ministerio de Educación Publica, 1948)
pp.21, 24, 24-25, 27, 30, 29, 52.
different tribes. The rest of the book was given over to the Spanish Conquest and the suffering of the Indian under Spanish rule. Indians were acknowledged as the centre of mestizo nationhood: “From the abused womb of the Indian woman was born us, the mestizos; from the milk of her breast the mestizo was nourished; her loving care made possible the growth of mestizaje.” Yet it was also made very clear that Indian greatness belonged to the ancient past, that the indigenous race had been so degraded and abused by the consequences of Spanish rule that the Indian should now be viewed as an object of pity who needed the help of mestizos to survive. The introduction to the book outlined six reasons why “all good Ecuadorians” must concern themselves with the vigorous future of the Indian which focused on the abuses and plunder they had suffered at the hands of the Spanish, while the final section - “suggestions in favour of the Indians” - insisted that the indigenous population must be educated on order to become rational beings and to take up their role as full participants in national life. This represents clear evidence that the educational project of the Liberal Revolution had reached its final stage: educating students in its goals in order to ensure its perpetuation.

Healthcare, Hygiene and Sanitation: Eugenics, Inheritance and Social Cleansing

I turn now to look at another core dimension of social policy that demonstrated a particular concern with indigenous and black populations and that was seen as a way of rescuing the country from racial and climatic degeneracy: health care and sanitation provision. It must be noted that there was a strong connection between racial thought and the emergence of the social reform movement across Latin America in the early twentieth century. The idea of race provided a common language and a scientific foundation for a wide range of discourses connected to the social question, including such problems as public health, criminology, immigration control, labour militancy and prostitution. In this context, race transcended all ideological boundaries and was adopted as key term by intellectuals and politicians of all persuasions. Ideas that later became symbols of

120 Ibid, pp.6-7.
reactionary politics, such as the intrinsic superiority of certain racial groups over others, or the need for scientific regulation of racial purity, were considered at the time to be progressive notions, accepted by Liberal reformers both in Latin America, and in the countries where many of these doctrines originated. However, the inter-connection between ideas of race and health and hygiene policies was particularly apposite because of the medicalisation of social thought in Latin America, which dated back to the early 19th Century when physicians began calling for hygienic reforms within upper-class families to protect children from hereditary and environmental contaminations, and was itself a result of the dominance of French medical thought and the general prestige of tropical medicine. Social thinkers, influenced both by the social Darwinist thought epitomised by Arthur de Gobineau’s ‘On the Inequality of Races’ which defined degeneration as an inevitable outcome of racial mixture and conquest and by Benedict Augustin Moreau’s *Treatise on Physical, Intellectual and Moral Degeneration* which identified degeneration as a specific syndrome of a cumulative hereditary decline that ran in families, producing successively weaker generations, came see the main threat to national interests in the deterioration of physical health and the racial purity of the population. The neo-Lamarckian theory of heredity that emphasised the inheritance of acquired characteristics facilitated the fusion of ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’ in the discussion of social policies. This fusion implied a combination of programmes aimed at heredity and the social environment as targets for racial improvement. In this context, just as criminologists could advocate the exclusion of undesired immigrants, hygienists could justify many of their proposals for social legislation as being in the national interest as public health ministries linked genetic purity to sanitation, social hygiene, mental hygiene, and the hygiene of reproductive cells.

In recent years the history of Latin American medicine has been revived by an increased number of works focusing on the interweaving of disease, politics and society, which have provided an understanding of modern demographic patterns, little-known aspects of local culture, and the interaction of well-organised international public health campaigns.
with incipient national public health systems, and highlighted the way in which even the most basic health care initiatives were informed by racial and social ideologies as well as political and economic exigencies.\textsuperscript{124} This section will build on these developments, exploring the way in which the development of health and sanitation programmes in Ecuador aimed to expand the authority of the state and aid the modernisation of the economy, while also bringing black and indigenous communities under closer control and regulation, transforming those habits held to be unhygienic and unsanitary.\textsuperscript{125}

**Indians, Blacks and the Development of a Modern Public Health System in Ecuador**

Prior to the Liberal Revolution, healthcare provision in Ecuador was extremely inadequate. Modern methods of medicine were slow to come into use, and their practice spread unevenly. Medical education was centred in Quito and not all practising physicians had formal training or licences. There were many fakes who dispensed

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\footnotetext{125} The literature regarding the development of healthcare and medicine in Ecuador in still very much in its infancy, and consists mainly of unadorned, narrative texts from the 1960's and 70's that focus principally on individuals and institutions and rarely take into account the issues raised here. Examples include, Gualberto Arcos, *Evolución de la medicina en el Ecuador* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura, 1979); Cesar Hermida Piedra, *Resumen de la historia de la medicina en el Ecuador* (Cuenca, Ecuador : Departamento de Difusión Cultural, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cuenca, 1977) and Virgilio Paredes Borja, *Historia de la medicina en el Ecuador* (Quito, Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1963). There are many anthropological accounts available which detail traditional indigenous health practices and medical beliefs; however few of these reflect on how these were affected by the imposition of modern medicine. Where these issues are addressed it is in regards to the colonial period, see Suzanne Alchon, *Native society and disease in colonial Ecuador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Linda Newson, *Life and Death in Early Colonial Ecuador* (Norman : University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).
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dubious “cure-alls” and pharmacists who sold tainted or impure drugs. Even medical school graduates were not always well-prepared, as the constant political upheaval led to the frequent closure of the universities and the declaration of “free study”, while the shortage of medical texts was a constant problem. From 1895 the administration of Eloy Alfaro began to provide scholarships for medical training overseas, and the university system was reorganised, with the establishment of medical facilities in Guayaquil and Cuenca. The modernisation of medical provision and the expansion of hospitals was facilitated by the Ley de Manos Muertos of 1908 which turned the proceeds of lands confiscated from the Church over to public administration and allowed the establishment of Juntas de Beneficencia in the major cities dedicated to the propagation of health and hygiene services. The result was the spread of a network of hospitals, clinics, asylums and hospices which came to form the basis of a system of social provision. The diffusion of European and US models in public health and medical education and practice through the training of Ecuadorian physicians overseas, the activity of foreign missions such as the Red Cross and the Rockefeller Foundation, and the gradual professionalisation of medicine generated a great deal of optimism regarding issues of healthcare, hygiene and sanitation. The reorganisation of military hospitals was another major impetus to the development of healthcare, as hospitals which were established to attend to the military class and the police opened their doors to the sick poor. Christopher Abel has argued that one of the main impetuses to the development of a modern health care system in Latin America was civil war. This was certainly true of Ecuador, where concern over the loss of government soldiers to pían, malaria and typhoid while fighting in the provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabi during the Concha Revolution led to a focus on the need to bring proper sanitation and hygiene to the region to prevent the spread of these illnesses to neighbouring provinces. However, as elsewhere in Latin America, the biggest push to the expansion of public health came from repeated outbreaks of epidemic disease.

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126 Pineo, “Misery and Death”, p.622.
127 Abel, Health, Hygiene and Sanitation, p.7.
128 Informe de la Dirección del Servicio de Sanidad Publica del Ecuador. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Municipalidades, Policía, Obras Publicas etc. 1914, Mensajes e Informes 1914, ABFL.
The coast of Ecuador had a long history of epidemic and endemic disease, with Guayaquil known as the "pest-hole of the Pacific" as late as the 1890's as a result of the prevalence of yellow fever, smallpox, malaria and typhoid. However, the inauguration of the railway in 1908 meant that for the first time tropical diseases were carried over the Andes into the highland towns, putting Quito increasingly at risk. During the 1910's, 20's and 30's there were major epidemics of typhoid, tuberculosis and dysentery, as well as repeated outbreaks of bubonic plague between 1908 and 1926. Many of these outbreaks had a particular impact on black and indigenous communities, whose health was poor to begin with due to inadequate nutrition and housing. The flu epidemic of 1900, for example, had devastating consequences for the Cayapa Indians of Esmeraldas, while the tribes of the Oriente were similarly afflicted by fevers and respiratory illnesses. Henri Michaux described during his travels in the late 1920's a fever called 'vomito-negro' which killed fourteen Indians in a single day in the village of Amienia by the River Napo, while E. Erskine Loch was told in 1935 that hundreds of Indians had died from outbreaks of fever in the Upper Napo Valley. During the 1932-33 dysentery and flu outbreaks in the province of Carchi, 95% of the fatalities were black workers from the zones of Chota and Ambi, while the outbreak of 'pián' in Esmeraldas in the 1930's affected more than 40% of the regions inhabitants, mostly poor blacks.

The strategies developed to tackle these diseases focused on prevention as well as cure, leading to a recognition of the importance of sanitation. Typhoid, for example, was recognised to be closely related to the absence of adequate sewerage facilities, a good water supply and the proper handling of refuse; while it was learnt that yellow fever could be eliminated by destroying the breeding sites of the infection-carrying Aedes aegypti mosquito. Sanitation came to be viewed as a patriotic endeavour that would

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129 Pineo, "Misery and Death", p.621.
131 El Grito del Pueblo, 13 de Febrero 1900; El Grito del Pueblo, 22 de Marzo 1900
133 Loch, Fever, Famine and Gold, p.95.
134 Informe del Ministro del Gobierno y Previsión Social, 1932-33. Mensajes e Informes, 1933. ABFL.
135 Informe del Ministro de Previsión Social 1937. Mensajes e Informes, 1937. ABFL.
enable the government to “offer the maximum of welfare, health and active life to its citizens by creating and maintaining favourable surroundings and eliminating the conditions which prejudice the health and physical and normal strength of the people and destroy life.” It was also explicitly linked to the “improvement of the race”. The Minister of the Interior argued in 1902 that: “If nations recognise the need to cultivate the intelligence of their inhabitants, they must also devote attention to their physical development. Governments must safeguard public health by whatever means at their disposal. Malnourished people, consuming toxic foodstuffs, living in cramped housing, cannot ever march to the head of civilisation. With good nutrition and pure air, with shackles on the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, and the prevention of the industrial by products that are introduced every day into articles of prime necessity, could give our people rich and well-oxygenated blood that, on arriving in the head, would disperse ideas and communicate with vigorous muscle. Then Ecuador could figure in the first line of nations of the Continent.” This argument was reiterated by the same Ministry in 1915: “Public hygiene has been proven as the key contribution to the development of advanced countries; it has countered the destructive power of the evils that afflict humanity, which not only deprive society of the energy of individuals, but also make less useful their victories …… and cause the degeneration of the race.” A report made to the Kemmerer Mission on the organisation of public sanitation in Ecuador concluded that: “The Sanitary Department is of the opinion that certain modifications should be made in the Municipal budgets to meet the work of bettering the race and improving general social conditions.”

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136 Pablo Arturo Suárez, Director General de Sanidad, “Sanitary Organisation of Ecuador”, 1926. Archivo Historico del Banco Central, Fondo Kemmerer, Kemm.132.9.6. However, sanitation was seen as a necessarily urban endeavour. The same report insisted that: “The municipalities are charged with the constructive work of improving the surroundings; when it is not the individual himself who makes his environment as is the case in the country districts.”

137 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, Policía, Obras Públicas etc., al Congreso Ordinario de 1902. In Informe de los Ministerios de lo Interior, Hacienda, Guerra y Marina de 1902. Mensajes e Informes, 1902. ABFL.

138 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1915. Mensajes e Informes, 1915. ABFL

139 Pablo Arturo Suárez, Director General de Sanidad, “Sanitary Organisation of Ecuador”, 1926. AHBC, Fondo Kemmerer, Kemm.132.9.6,
The result was a focus on changing hygienic conditions at the grassroots in the name of racial survival. Health officials insisted that efforts must be made to extirpate “pernicious customs”, and to “replace bad customs with good ones … gradually and prudently, so that the population do not become resentful and, exasperated, revert to their old habits of hygiene.” Within such a discourse it was inevitable that black and indigenous customs would come into focus as a cause for concern. It was generally considered that indigenous practices of food preparation were unhygienic and encouraged the spread of disease. American writer Ludwig Bemelmans described being put off his breakfast in a local restaurant by the sight of the butcher stand from which the meat had come. “There under a big tree stood a wobbly box. It was covered in tin, and an old oil can cut into pieces was nailed over it. An Indian woman with a baby on her back stood next to it with a leg of mutton in her dirty fingers. Overhead was a cloud of flies, so thick you could reach in, squeeze a fistful together and throw them away. The woman had a machete and with this she carved the meat, the way you sharpen the end of the fence post. I sent Aurelio [the guide/servant] to buy bananas for my breakfast.” North American Protestant missionary Webster Browning likened the indigenous delicacy of cuy (guinea-pig) to eating rats, and alleged that the hot sandwiches sold by Indians along the railway line contained dog meat. Some of these accusations of poor hygiene had a basis in fact: the Jivaro method of preparing chicha by chewing the root of a cassava plant and spitting it into a pot or banana leaf, and the fact that many families came together in its preparation, made them especially vulnerable to infection and meant that epidemics such as tuberculosis could easily sweep whole communities. However, most had their roots in racial stereotypes about Indians. Rudi Colloredo-Mansfield has argued that dirt is a key signifier of racial identity in Ecuador, with white-mestizo groups using images of disease

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140 Informe de la Subdirección de Sanidad Publica de la Provincia del Chimborazo al Ministro de lo Interior, Riobamba, Junio 1913. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior. Mensajes e Informes ABFL.
143 This link between indigenous customs and the spread of disease is still considered to be a problem today. For example, Eduardo Kohn in his study of the medical culture of the lowland Quichua argued that Indian practices such as not washing their hand before eating and cooking, not washing their plates with soap, and serving leftover food without re-heating it encourage the spread of disease. Eduardo Kohn, Cultura Medica e los Runas de la Región Amazonica Ecuatoriana (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1992) p.7.
and dirtiness to characterise the indigenous and to justify their poverty, with cleanliness being used as a measure of social fitness, reflecting the national preoccupation with racial and national hygiene.\textsuperscript{144} Certainly, the stereotype of Indians was overwhelmingly one of dirtiness. Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen was told by an Imbabura hacienda owner that: “The Indian who has overcome his origins is an Indian who bathes,”\textsuperscript{145} while Ludwig Bemelmans described watching a group of Indians sitting in Church in Quito, “the fleas hopping from one to another.”\textsuperscript{146} The exception to this rule were the Otavalo Indians, whose much-emphasised exemption from this paradigm served only to reinforce the connection between Indianness in general and dirt. Travellers accounts repeatedly described how clean the Otavaleños were in comparison to the other indigenous groups. All were impressed by the Otavaleños’ immaculate white clothing, giving elaborate descriptions of “the men dressed in white trousers and blouses with ponchos over their shoulders, and the women wearing embroidered sashes. Even the children are spotlessly clean, little boys in little white trousers and little girls trailing black skirts with fancifully embroidered sashes, usually decorated with the designs of monkeys, deer, donkeys and other animals.”\textsuperscript{147} The general consensus among travellers was that Otavaleños were the “cleanest and most attractive” Indians, not only in Ecuador, but in the whole of South America. Indeed, some visitors could not reconcile the cleanliness of the Otavalo Indians with their preconceptions and stereotypes of indigenous people. Albert B. Franklin, for example, asserted that: “The sight of his clean poncho, the immaculate spread of his white or russet hat, and his well-fleshed, sturdy legs, remind the patrona and me of Walt Disney, of clean little, sturdy, American-made wooden toys, all wrapped in cellophane.”\textsuperscript{148} Significantly, Afro-Ecuadorians do not seem to have been stereotyped in the same way. The equivalent to the knee-jerk stereotype of Indian dirtiness were ideas of black laziness and blood-thirstiness, which as we have seen, affected Afro-Ecuadorian

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\item \textsuperscript{145}V. W. Von Hagen, \textit{Off with Their Heads} (New York: Macmillan, 1937) p.85.
\item \textsuperscript{146}Bemelmans, \textit{The Donkey Inside} p.44.
\item \textsuperscript{147}Isador Lhevinne, \textit{The Enchanted Jungle}, (New York, Coward-McCann, 1933) p.196.
\item \textsuperscript{148}Albert B. Franklin, \textit{Ecuador: Portrait of a People} (New York: Garden City, 1943) p.261.
\end{thebibliography}
experiences in many ways, but did not lead to blackness being specifically discussed within the discourse of health and hygiene.

Certainly, the “uncivilised behaviour” of the indigenous populations was seen as a primary cause of epidemics. Indian groups were directly blamed for the TB and flu epidemics that raged through Alausi, Chimborazo, in the first few months of 1916: “One could almost say that hygiene is not known by this population, and is even worse in the parishes, where we have been informed that there are breeding places for pigs in the homes themselves of the inhabitants.”\(^ {149} \) A measles outbreak in Pichincha in 1915 was blamed on the poor childcare techniques of the popular classes, who, it was argued, did not make use of the available prophylactic measures to protect their children against this disease, and did not show enough care to their children during the development of the illness to prevent complications and fatal consequences.\(^ {150} \) The US Consul in Quito reported that the typhoid epidemic of 1926 was almost certainly caused by the contamination of the cities water supply, yet local officials had attributed it to “the selling of sweets by three infected individuals,”\(^ {151} \) highlighting the way in which the concept of “dirty Indians” was used to scapegoat vendors for the spread of the epidemic, to avoid acknowledging the problems with the city’s infrastructure.

It was with regards to the spread of bubonic plague throughout the highland provinces served by the railway that this connection between indigenous behaviour and the spread of disease can most clearly be seen. Plague took a particularly strong hold in Chimborazo, affecting especially the railway town of Alausi. The Governor of Chimborazo described how the Department of Sanitation had done everything in their power to halt the spread of the disease and he attributed the fact that it had still had a devastating impact, despite these efforts, to the “complete absence of hygiene in these populations”, insisting that its spread had been hastened by “backward routines and


\(^ {150} \) Informe de la Subdirección de Sanidad de Pichincha, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1915. Mensajess e Informes, 1915. ABFL.

\(^ {151} \) Bading to Secretary of State, June 30\(^ {26} \) 1926, Doc # 217015, Microfilm 22,623, Reel 4.
savage traditional customs". An editorial in *El Ecuatoriano* concurred, blaming the epidemic on the "stupid and ignorant people", who resisted "every order of cleanliness and hygiene." Moreover, regulations issued to tackle the spread of plague decreed special measures which directly affected indigenous living patterns. The Director of Public Health issued a statement dealing with indigenous housing which prohibited Indians sleeping on the floor: instead they were to sleep on a platform at least fifty centimetres from the ground to decrease their proximity to the fleas that multiply on the ground and the rats that enter the huts at night. The cohabitation of people and animals was also prohibited, affecting Indian traditions of keeping guinea-pig corrals in their kitchens and sleeping quarters. These actions demonstrated the belief that it was possible to legislate the private conditions of Indians lives, in a further reflection of their conceptualisation as childlike and in need of guidance and transformation. Such legislation also made clear that the blame for plague was seen to lie not in the state's lack of services in the region and in these communities in particular, but in the "uncivilised" behaviour of Indians, focusing on their cohabitation with guinea pigs, a highly symbolic practice in Andean life.

The wider campaign versus bubonic plague also had a very specific impact on the indigenous population of the region, and it therefore serves as a good case study of the way in which health and sanitation programmes affected black and indigenous populations. The campaign versus bubonic plague in Alausi was fought on two fronts: the elimination of sources of infection and the vaccination of healthy people. Many of the measures taken involved the policing of private as well as public hygiene, such as state official entering private homes to regulate waste disposal and to ensure that animals did not inhabit domestic areas. Because of the role of rats and other flea-ridden animals in spreading plague, the extermination of rodents was the cornerstone of the campaign. House-by-house visits were made to inspect hygiene conditions, and double-wall

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152 Informe del Gobernación del Chimborazo al Ministro de lo Interior, 1914. *Mensajes e Informes, 1914.* ABFL.
153 *El Ecuatoriano*, Guayaquil, 21 de abril, 1913.
154 Dirección de Sanidad Publica de la Provincia del Chimborazo al Director General de Sanidad Publica, 1927. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1927, *Mensajes e Informes, 1927,* ABFL.
constructions were destroyed. In an indigenous settlement outside Alausí, the straw roofs of the houses were burned because they were considered to be unhygienic. “As the largest number of sick appeared in a hacienda close to town in huts inhabited by the Indians, we had to resort to the painful but necessary measure of incinerating the straw roofs, given that no other means could be effective in these miserable dwellings whose hygienic conditions are disastrous and where any work of sanitation is impossible. No recourse but fire is available to save the lives of the inhabitants.”156 This pattern was repeated in indigenous towns throughout the country. Ronn Pineo describes how the town of Huigra, near Babahoya was completely levelled during the 1909 plague epidemic.157 The Director of Health of the Province of Pichincha described how “active work” was taken against infected houses, incinerating those where “any work of sanitation was impossible,”158 or, those whose inhabitants were too poor to hold any influence to prevent such action being taken. Home visits were carried out with the aim of discovering cases of plague where families had tried to conceal it in order that the victim could be taken to hospital for treatment and isolation, in accordance with government rules.159 This was strongly resisted by Indians who sought to keep control of the diseased in their own hands. The inspection of animals also became an opportunity for officials to appropriate healthy livestock for their own use.160 There is no evidence that compensation was offered to workers, either for the animals killed or for the houses burned.

A compulsory vaccination programme was also undertaken, and was carried out by a team of health inspectors with the assistance of municipal police. In the cantonal seat,
people were required to appear at the police headquarters to be vaccinated. In the
outlying areas, either the police went to the houses or the people were ordered to go to the
offices of the political lieutenants.\textsuperscript{161} It was an accepted fact that sometimes coercion had
to be used in obligatory vaccination programmes.\textsuperscript{162} Calls for armed troops to be
stationed wherever an epidemic broke out demonstrates that force was integral to overall
sanitation efforts. Yet despite this resistance, the government sought to present the
vaccination programme as being accepted and understood by all social groups. The
Sanitation Board of Pichincha insisted that: “all social groups, even the less educated,
understand the benefits of vaccination, and they hurry exponentially to present their
children to the office to be immunised, and hundreds of vaccinations are given every
month.”\textsuperscript{163} This was at odds with the accounts of other provincial governors who told
how local inhabitants had been obliged “by every means possible”\textsuperscript{164} to have their
vaccination against plague, strongly implying the use of force.

Indians also resisted vaccinations because of their role in sanitation campaigns. These
campaigns represented a key part of the public works programmes for which they
provided their labour. Procedures such as fumigation, disinfection, rat-catching and the
removal of rubbish were carried out by Indians, and recruitment often occurred
simultaneously with vaccination. Indians thus had to balance out any protection they
might receive from the vaccination with the possibility that they would be recruited to
work in precisely the most infected areas.\textsuperscript{165} Despite their crucial role in sanitation
campaigns, when indigenous areas were hit by plague no money was provided by the

\textsuperscript{160} A. Kim Clark describes how “Señor Rat Inspector” became notorious for collecting guinea-pigs and
rabbits that were taken on the pretext of examining them and that ended up being eaten by the inspector.
Clark, \textit{The Redemptive Work}, p.150.

\textsuperscript{161} Christopher Abel has drawn attention to the way in which the development of health and sanitation were
often developed simultaneously with modern policing and detection methods, with public health provision
being viewed as a form of policing that involved inspection and enforcement. Abel, \textit{Health, Hygiene and
Sanitation}, p.3.

\textsuperscript{162} This was typical of health care developments throughout Latin America, they tended to be of a ‘top-
down’, authoritarian nature. See Marcos Cueto, ‘Sanitation from Above: Yellow Fever and Foreign
Intervention in Peru, 1919-1922, \textit{Hispanic American Historical Review} Vol. 72, 1992, pp.1-22; Needell,
“The Revolta contra vacina of 1904”.

\textsuperscript{163} Informe de la Subdirección de Sanidad de Pichincha 1915. Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo
Interior, 1915. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1915}. ABFL.

\textsuperscript{164} Jefatura Política del Cantón de Guano, al Gobernador de la Provincia del Chimborazo, Guano, Mayo 9
de 1913. Anexos al Informe del Ministerio de lo Interior, 1913. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1913}. ABFL.
provincial authorities for supplies or medicine to fight the plague. When indigenous day labourers were forcibly recruited for sanitation campaigns, they usually had to travel into an infected zone to carry out their work; yet when their own communities were affected, the white and mestizo townspeople did not return the favour by travelling out to assist them. As A. Kim Clark surmised: "It is not clear which was worse for the indigenous peasants: to live far from the line and receive no assistance when plague struck, or to live close to the line and have their huts burned down and their guinea-pigs taken."\(^{166}\)

This focus on black and indigenous peoples as the "cause" of epidemics and as the subsequent focus of hygiene initiatives was repeated during virtually all the epidemics that occurred during this period. Intensive sanitary campaigns in Esmeraldas and Manabi in 1926 and 1927 to free the provinces of dysentery focused on "cleansing" the houses of the majority black population.\(^{167}\) The anti-typhoid campaign in Carchi in the early 1930's extended especially to the majority black parishes of Bolivar, El Angel, Julio Andrade and La Libertad, including the rural estates of Guambuta, Puntalès, Yascon and Michuquer which were said to have necessitated "abundant material of disinfection"\(^{168}\)

Yet paradoxically, blacks and Indians also suffered from neglect in terms of health care and sanitation provision. The impact of public health policy was extremely uneven in Ecuador and focused on the major cities, leaving the countryside and the less "visible" provinces isolated from new developments. Nowhere can this contrast be more clearly seen than in the contrast between the port cities of Guayaquil and Esmeraldas. Guayaquil underwent a radical transformation in this period from the "pesthole of the Pacific" to a

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\(^{165}\) Clark, *The Redemptive Work*, pp.151-152.

\(^{166}\) Ibid, p.154.

\(^{167}\) Informe del Ministro de Previsión Social y Trabajo, 1926-28. *Mensajes e Informes*, 1928. ABFL.

\(^{168}\) Informe del Ministro de Gobierno y Previsión Social, 1932-33. *Mensajes e Informes*, 1933. ABFL.

There was also a campaign against plague in Esmeraldas in 1916 which was said by the Director of Public Health of the Province of Pichincha to be identical to that carried out in Alausí; however, it has not been possible to find any further information on this campaign. There is far less documentation detailing these local campaigns than is available for that against plague in Alausí because they were rarely reported on in any depth in national reports. The campaign in Alausí served as a "showcase" for sanitation policy since because of its proximity to Quito, its connection to the railway, and fears about infection of the capital it attracted the full attention of all the national sanitation authorities. As a result it was reported on every year by the Director of Public Health in his annual report. To find out about these other campaigns it would be necessary to undertake extensive research in local archives, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.
Grade A classified port as a result of concerted effort and investment on the part of the government, the Kemmerer Commission, and the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as private initiatives and local charity. In contrast, Esmeraldas remained completely neglected, and well into the 1920's nothing had been done in the field of either sanitation or welfare. As the Provincial Governor admitted in 1913: "Hospitals, hospices, leper colonies, asylums and halfway houses do not exist because the municipal income does not stretch to such things." The only service provided by the municipality in this field was the burial of the indigent poor, and a hospital was not established until 1932. In the meantime sick peasants who made the journey to the city of Esmeraldas expecting to find better treatment than was available in their villages, were simply left to die in the streets. This was a pattern repeated throughout the indigenous dominated highlands: hospitals were established in Tulcan before Chota, Ibarra before Cayambe, and Loja before Latacunga. Some efforts were made to provide free medical care to the sick poor from the 1910's, for example, the municipality of Loja distributed medicine for those sick with dysentery, and there were similar initiatives in other provinces. However, it is likely that many blacks and Indians were put off by provisions which required that to receive this benefit they must first obtain a prescription signed by the municipal doctor.

Even where efforts were made to extend health care provision to black and indigenous populations they were normally met with resistance and rejection. This served to reinforce the connection between black and indigenous culture and the spread of disease. The Director of the Public Health delegation of the parish of Sangolquí in Pichincha, explained how the Indians in the parish had been stubborn and resistant to the help of doctors and formal medicine and continued to cure themselves with ‘caseros’ - homemade medicines, or traditional remedies. This had fatal consequences in the face of diseases such as typhoid, measles and whooping cough which indigenous medicine was

169 Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia de Esmeraldas sobre Beneficencia y Sanidad, Esmeraldas, Junio 20 de 1913. Anexos al Informe del Ministro del Interior, 1913. Mensajes e Informes 1913, ABFL
170 Informe que el Subdirector de Sanidad de Pichincha eleva al Señor Ministro y al Director del Ramo, 1917-1918. Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1918. Mensajes e Informes, 1918. ABFL.
172 Informe del Delegación de Sanidad de Sangolquí al Subdirector de Sanidad de la Provincia de Pichincha, Junio 30 1918. Anexos al Informe del Subdirector de Sanidad de Pichincha, 1917-18. Mensajes e Informes, 1918. ABFL.
rarely able to treat successfully. The report of the Minister of Social Provision in 1937 told how black peasants from the countryside who were taken to the makeshift hospitals set up to deal with the outbreak of pian abandoned their treatment as soon as they got a bit better and “took refuge in their enclosures”\(^{173}\). This served to exacerbate and further spread the illness, and to achieve the eradication of the illness, the Minister suggested that it would be necessary to create a hospital wing devoted entirely to the treatment of pian, where the sick could be held “by force if necessary” until they were better\(^{174}\). Black and indigenous people disliked the formalism involved in hospital and clinic visits and were opposed to treatment by medical professionals belonging to a different and distrusted social group. According to one anthropologist, the Otavalo Indians believed that official medicine represented “pure propaganda to suck money from innocent people.”\(^{175}\) It was believed that the authorities invented new diseases such as typhoid and flu, and then gave them injections that ensured they would get sick every year. Western medicine was identified with conquest and invasion, with the bringing of illness that wreaked such havoc on their population, and it was hated for the aggressiveness with which it was deployed. This was especially true of more isolated indigenous communities, such as those in the Oriente and in Esmeraldas, which had not had such extensive contact with white-mestizo society. Rejection of "official" medicine also stemmed from the racist attitudes of many of its elite practitioners. Black recognition of the racist disdain in which they were held by many physicians is represented in the novel \textit{Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian}, written by Afro-Ecuadorian writer Nelson Estupiñán Bass and set in Esmeraldas of the 1910's. The main character described how he refused to visit the doctor following the condescending and careless manner in which his son had been attended to when he sought treatment for a digestive disorder. "You should see how they treat the poor person! It turns their stomach to treat the poor person! And if he's black, it's

\(^{173}\) This distrust of hospitals continues into the present day. Eduardo Estrella found in the mid-1970's that 86% of rural doctors had reported profound conflicts with their patients over methods of treatment, Eduardo Estrella, \textit{Medicina aborigen} (Quito: Editorial Epoca, 1977). An article published in the indigenous newspaper \textit{Kipu} in 1985 told of how the indigenous people of Imbabura preferred to stay dying in their homes than face racism and humiliation in Western hospitals. Silvana Andrade, 'Jambituasi – Volviendo a los raices', \textit{Kipu}, Vol. 1-2, 1985.

\(^{174}\) Informe del Ministro de Previsión Social, 1937. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1937. ABFL.


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worse!" Indeed, the character believed that the doctor's lax attitude was responsible for his son's death. The result of such convictions was that the majority of the population was excluded from the development of the modern healthcare system. Formal and informal healthcare systems thus developed in Ecuador in parallel, and a cottage industry of traditional medicine continued to subsist, its secrets kept by shamans, healers, and midwives.

A Moralising Discourse: Social Policy and Ideas of Race

Social policy as it related to blacks and Indians during the Liberal period was a moralising discourse, based on the paradigms of control, civilisation and transformation. Education remained definitively linked to "civilisation", epitomised by the maintenance of indigenous education in the hands of the Church; an implicit recognition of the moral authority the Church continued to possess. The idea of 'indigenous education' did not reflect a concern with the needs of indigenous groups themselves, but rather the continued conceptualisation of Indians as a 'problem' that needed to be solved. Thus indigenous education had definite homogenising overtones, aimed at instilling in Indians the knowledge and sentiments that they 'should' already have. Indigenous education was intimately linked to the wider ideal of 'uplifting' racially subordinate groups in order to 'fit' them for citizenship - indeed, it could be argued that education was the primary foundation on which this policy as whole rested. Thus the exclusion of blacks from the new pedagogic focus was particularly significant. The failure of intellectuals and policy makers to engage at all with the issue of black education reflects the extent to which blacks were not seen as part of the newly expanded vision of the nation, and underlines that this was based on a conception of them as non-transformable. Ideas of black

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177 It is important to acknowledge that there were also cost considerations at play and that indigenous and Afro-Latin American medical practices remained the only available and affordable option for large sections of the population. See Abel, Health, Hygiene and Sanitation, p.35.
178 It should be noted that in contrast to countries such as Cuba and Colombia where ideas about black powers of healing became a part of cultural stereotypes about blacks, such formulations do not seem to have entered dominant ideas about Afro-Ecuadorians; the exception being among the Cayapa Indians of Esmeraldas, where blacks often played a mystic role as healers and sorcerers. However, there are indications in novels and travelers accounts that local elites did use black healers as a source of treatment when other options failed.
barbarity affected the willingness of state functionaries to establish facilities for education or in Esmeraldas, a racist distaste disguised by the rhetoric of civil instability. With regards to healthcare and sanitation the dynamics were slightly different, yet the over-arching framework of civilisation and transformation continued to be the primary underpinning of policy formation. Negative cultural stereotypes about indigenous people as dirty and unhygienic placed them at the centre of health and sanitation policy. In contrast to the discourse surrounding education which presented policy as representing an aid to the integration of indigenous people as part of the nation, ideas about health and hygiene were posited on the need to prevent them from exercising dirty habits in order to protect the other (true) inhabitants of the nation from contagion. This disparity underscores the precarious positioning of indigenous people within nationalist thinking at this time. Where Indians found their customs, traditions — indeed, their very homes — at threat from government hygiene policies, in general blacks suffered a more simple neglect. Esmeraldas did not receive hospitals until several decades after they were established in other major cities. This did not even seem to be a matter of government concern; certainly, it was rarely discussed within reports by the various Juntas of Sanitation.

With regards to all aspects of social policy as discussed here, what is most striking is the gap between rhetoric and reality. Government authorities made extravagant gestures in speeches and proclamations, but the ability of the state to implement its goals was notably weaker. The state found it difficult to assert its authority over local elites, seen especially in the foot-dragging of highland hacendados regarding the establishment of schools on their estates. State goals also suffered from financial weakness. As with policies related to national integration, the responses of black and indigenous peoples to the implementation of policy was far from uniform. In general both black and indigenous groups sought to isolate themselves from developments in healthcare and hygiene, seeing these mainly as a threat to their cultural autonomy. Yet there is evidence of peasants seeking out ‘official’ healthcare, often after ‘traditional’ medicines had failed; highlighted in the bleak imagery of black peasants dying in the streets of Esmeraldas city, making the trek in the belief that there were medical professionals there who could heal
them. Likewise, with regards to education it seems that many indigenous groups – far from the contemporary stereotype attributed to them of their dislike for education – sought access to instruction for themselves and their children. Indeed, many of the shortcomings in education policy as related to Indians can be seen as the result of the opposition from vested landholding interests, and lack of financial investment. This brings us back to the state, and the gap between articulated ideological concern and its ability to implement its goals. A focus on social policy reveals the centrality of racial ideas to state aims and practices, and shows that although policy was generally formulated out of line with the desires of black and indigenous groups, this was not universally the case, suggesting that policy was not predestined to fail because of the opposition of racially subordinate groups. Rather, the problems incurred in the exercise of these policies in large part reflected the limits of state power.
Chapter Five – Liberalism from Below: Rural Resistance and The Struggle for Citizenship Rights

The final chapter of this thesis will locate itself outside of the Liberal state, and explore the issue of national identity and citizenship from below, focusing on the rural resistance movements that developed in the first half of Liberal rule. The issue of rural rebellion is in urgent need of revision. In contrast to the sustained efforts that have been directed towards uncovering the popular basis of urban disturbances in the 1920's and 30's, interpretations of rural resistance in the liberal period have been partial, isolationist and at times reactionary. Virtually no attempt has been made to explore possible links between the various hacienda based uprisings which spread across the Andean countryside during the same period. Dismissed under the label of 'Indian rebellion', they have been considered only in their specificity, with no long-term, cohesive view emerging of the nature of peon grievances and demands. Rural rebellion in the coastal provinces, notably the Concha revolution and the civil war that simmered in Guayas and Esmeraldas between 1895-1916, has at least been recognised as being political in nature. Such movements have, however, been analysed principally as montonero or guerrilla uprisings, with no attempt being made to read the potential racial transcript, despite the clear pre-eminence of Afro-Ecuadorian insurgents. This chapter seeks to chart the meaning of these rural disturbances, assessing popular motivations, consciousness and modes of mobilisation. It interprets these movements through the theoretical lens of popular liberalism, exploring black and indigenous efforts not to depose of the Liberal state, or to replace it with something else, but to reshape it, to apply or enforce the kind of liberalism – and the kind of relations between the peasantry and the state –they felt the Liberal Revolution to have promised them.

Reinterpreting The Concha Revolution

The Concha Revolution of 1913-1916 is perhaps the best-known instance of black political resistance during the Liberal period; yet paradoxically it is rarely viewed in such terms, despite the fact that a large part of the movement’s notoriety within Ecuadorian history has centred around the prominent participation of blacks. It is usually skimmed
over in a paragraph or two in histories of the Liberal period, and the few monographs that
do exist on the topic are deeply partisan and hagiographic; written by soldiers who served
in the campaign, or by relatives of Concha himself.1 Olympic Efren Reyes' summary of the
revolution is typical of the way in which the movement has been perceived by orthodox
histories: as a movement of criminals and mercenaries motivated by personal gain.

As in every bloody revolt, true criminals were able to cover up their
lawless tendencies under the pretext of political belief, and mere
criminal types became, in that way, "revolutionary" captains and
majors.... Agriculture in the battle zone was wiped out altogether
because farm hands had been recruited into bands entrusted with the
task of cutting off the heads of *serranos* with machetes.....This is one
of the darkest and most detestable episodes in the history of our
turbulent "politics of claims."2

Attempts to revise this interpretation have centred around efforts to restore the reputation
of Concha himself.3 There has been almost no effort to re-examine the motives of the
black popular groups involved in the movement.4

The Concha Revolution emerged as a response to the deposition and murder of Eloy
Alfaro and his key supporters, which represented the culmination of a serious schism
within the Liberal party between the *Alfarista* and *Plazista* factions. Eloy Alfaro was

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1 See for example, Segundo Luis Moreno, *La campana de Esmeraldas de 1913-1916, encabezada por el
Coronel Graduado Don Carlos Concha Torres* (Cuenca: Tipogrdfico Universidad, 1939); Elias Muñoz
Vicuña, *Primero Entre Iguales: General Carlos Concha Torres* (Guayaquil: Universidad de Guayaquil:
1984); Jorge Pérez Concha, *Carlos Concha Torres: Biografia de un luchador incorruptible* (Quito:
Editorial "El Conejo", 1987). Moreno fought on the government side against the Concha Revolution, Perez
is a descendent of Concha Torres, while Muñoz Vicuña is hugely enamoured of Concha and his
achievements, and states explicitly in his introduction that his aim is to return the good name of a legendary
revolutionary hero. Moreno’s account is probably the most balanced. Although he fought with government
troops, he was deeply angry at the way the government handled their response to the revolution, and is
critical of their actions, while he is admiring of many elements of rebel conduct. The other major source on
the movement is literary: Afro-Ecuadorian writer Nelson Estupiñán Bass’s novel, *Cuando los Guayacanes
Florecían*, (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura, 1954), a fictional account based on popular memory and
oral tradition of the revolution. See also Henry J. Richards, "Nelson Estupiñán Bass and the Historico-

2 Oscar Efren Reyes, *Breve historia general del Ecuador*. 5th ed. (Quito: Editorial Fray Jodoco Ricke,

3 See Muñoz Vicuña; Pérez Concha.

4 One exception is Alfonso Castro Chiriboga, who has called for an analysis of the insurrection as an
"ethnic local phenomenon" – see Castro Chiriboga, "Revolución de Concha", *El Negro en la Historia del
Ecuador y del Sur de Colombia* (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1988)p. 86. His article, however, provides
only a very general outline of the movement and does not advance the analysis he himself has demanded.
deposed by the *Plazistas* in August of 1911, but was allowed to go into exile on the condition that he did not interfere in national politics for one year from the date of his expulsion. However, the movement to replace him did not take place as smoothly as the *Plazistas* had anticipated, with Alfaro’s nephew, Flavio, standing against the official Liberal party candidate, Emilio Estrada, and attracting much support. Flavio Alfaro’s defeat was widely believed to be due to electoral fraud. Anger at this turn of events was reinforced by the assassination of the other major Alfarista figure, Julio Andrade, which left Plaza without any major opposition within the Liberal party. The result was an *Alfarista* uprising, led by General Montero, but with the aid and, importantly, the presence of Eloy Alfaro, his brothers and nephews. Montero declared himself President at Guayaquil on December 29th 1911 and appointed a cabinet. However, he was deposed when the people of Guayaquil rose up against him, and he was captured and imprisoned, along with the Alfaros. Although all were sentenced to imprisonment, “popular justice” swiftly took over, and on their arrival in Quito the prison where the Alfaros were held was stormed by angry crowds, and the men were murdered in their cells. Their bodies were stripped and mutilated, and dragged down the street in a public parade, before being burnt in proceedings widely believed to have enjoyed the tactic support of the *Plazista* government. This idea of government involvement in the massacre was key to popular agitation and the retaliation that followed. Although the Plaza government took great lengths to prove that they were not to blame for the events of January 1912, as the British Consul argued, “the more they try to clear themselves, the more it becomes clear that the precautions they took for their protection were clearly inadequate, and indeed, it is said and believed, that they even instigated the crime.”5 The murder of their leader was too much for Alfarista elites to bear, and they sought immediate revenge.

Leadership of this movement fell to Colonel Carlos Concha Torres, an important member of the Esmeraldan landowning elite, whose family had played a key role in the Liberal struggles of the period. Concha himself had led the Liberal victory in Esmeraldas in 1895, and had served as Governor of the Province between 1897 and 1900 and as ambassador to Paris between 1906-1911, his fortunes following those of Alfaro. After

5 Griffith to FO, March 4th 1912, FO371/1458/15924.
the fall of Alfaro, Concha was recognised by exiled Alfaristas such as José Peralta and Abelardo Moncayo as the leader of this section of the Liberal party. Concha participated in the Montero Revolution of 1912, commanding the Esmeraldas Battalion. However, through the intervention of his influential allies, he managed to avoid its worst repercussions, spending just a few months imprisoned on the Isla de San Ignacio in the Gulf of Guayaquil before he was pardoned and released. As soon as he was released he returned to Esmeraldas and began stockpiling arms and ammunition, and organising men. The rebellion was launched with an attack on the barracks of Esmeraldas on the 24th of September 1913.

At first it was anticipated by the government that victory would be easy and rapid, and the revolution was not taken seriously. In an interview with the newspaper El Guante, Colonel Arellano, head of the prestigious Constitución battalion, stated that the Conchistas numbered only thirty men, poorly armed, with ten bad rifles, a few machetes and a couple of revolvers. He stated that when the “concierto peons and criminals” who accompanied them were factored in their numbers were increased to seventy, implying that a movement so dependent on black peons was not a force to be reckoned with. This sentiment was echoed by the British Consul, who suggested that the movement was the result of “agents provocateurs”, and that accounts of their efforts seemed “a little too thin for it to be a genuine subversive movement.” Initially, however, the Conchistas had the upper hand, as the government army was ill-equipped to deal with the guerrilla tactics of surprise ambushes and assaults, while the Conchistas had on their side the knowledge of the difficult forest terrain, and acclimatisation to the tropical climate. The Minister of War, General Francisco Navarro, who was in charge of the Guayas battalion sent to face the revolutionaries wired false reports to the government, claiming that he had defeated the rebels when he had not even encountered them. This served to further delay the government response to the movement. Government forces suffered serious defeats at the battle of Guyabo in 1913 and at Camarones in 1914. The tide began to turn

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6 Pérez, Carlos Concha Torres, p.173.
7 For details of this trial, see ANH, Sección Militares, Caja 27, 15-1-1913.
8 El Guante, 13 de Noviembre, 1913.
9 Jerome to FO, September 25th, 1913, FO371/1737/53350.
against the rebels when the government troops began to employ different tactics. Rather than pursuing the rebels through the jungle, they focused their efforts on re-taking the city of Esmeraldas, after which they simply waited for the rebels to attack, where they had the advantage of better weaponry. However, the civil war continued until the end of 1916, carrying on for more than a year after the capture of Concha himself, and with devastating consequences for the national economy and for local agriculture. Eventually the war ended when national elites came together regardless of political affiliation to extinguish it, so concerned were they about the threat to public order represented by the momentum that the revolution had acquired among the popular classes.

The leaders of the Revolution rarely made any explicit appeals to issues of social justice. Handbills and petitions issued by the Conchistas focused on the shortcomings of the Plaza government, accusing him and his ministers of possessing “insatiable ambitions” and of having committed “horrendous crimes” against the Ecuadorian people. They argued that the murder of Alfaro would prove a mere prologue to even greater wrongdoings, accusing Plaza of plotting to sell the Galapagos Islands to the United States, thus threatening the territorial integrity of the nation; in this era a hugely charged issue guaranteed to arouse popular emotion. The Conchistas insisted that theirs was a patriotic movement, aimed at restoring honour and dignity to the Patria. 11 Despite repeated assertions that a “new era” would dawn with the victory of the revolution, no kind of social programme or plans for reform was ever articulated. It was simply implied that the victory of the revolution would represent the continuation of the Alfarista mandate. Even the manifesto issued by Concha from the Tachina rebel camp on the 27th September 1913 contained no direct appeal to the popular classes, focusing solely on the political situation, and the ambitions and corruptions of Plaza and his supporters. There was no mention at all of the problems of popular groups. 12 Likewise, appeals to the masses to fight for the Conchistas were made in the name of overturning Plaza, and punishing him for his role in the death of Alfaro. Thus the poor black Ecuadorians who

10 Moreno, La campana de Esmeraldas, p.7
11 See for example, 'La Revolución', Quito, Noviembre 27 de 1913; 'Concededlos', Lima, Enero 1 de 1914; '¡Ecuatorianos!! Basta de Farsas', Guayaquil, 1914. All in BAEP, Hojas Volantes, 1901-1920.
joined up to the Revolution have been seen as coerced or duped into action by political
elites bent on power and revenge. Yet such interpretations risk undermining the political
convictions and Alfarista affiliations of many Esmeraldan blacks, as well as obscuring
the movements deeper ideological foundations. An over-focus on the hostility between
Concha and Plaza has undermined the dynamic of social struggle and the principles of
subversion.

Esmeraldas, Alfarismo and the Search for Freedom

The province of Esmeraldas possessed a long relationship with Liberalism, and was the
site of many conspiracies and attempted revolutions during the 1870’s and 1880’s.
During the dictatorship of General Ignacio de Ventimilla, the city of Esmeraldas was the
first to resist the established order. Liberal troops disembarked in the province in 1895,
and the victory of the Liberal Revolution was declared first in the central plaza of
Esmeraldas. Esmeraldan troops featured prominently in all the Alfarista struggles, both
before and after the Liberal Revolution, including the Montero Revolution of 1912.
Blacks played an important role in all of these movements.

During the anti-Conservative struggles of the 1880’s, ordinary black peasants repeatedly
fought in the streets with sticks and stones, protesting against political abuses and
electoral fraud. Elias Muñoz Vicuña, for example, provides an anecdote from the 1880’s
in which Roegelio Escobar, a “big, strapping black man” charged with a machete at a
sergeant in charge of the government troops who were regulating (and believed to be
defrauding) the elections and cut off his head. 13  Afro-Ecuadorians formed the core of
Alfar’s army, and played a key role in the all of the military victories that brought the
Liberal Revolution to power. An account of the victory in Esmeraldas of 1895 by one of
the main protagonists, Comandante Enrique Torres, tells of the important role played by
young blacks from the town.

12 Carlos Concha Torres, ‘Proclama a la Nación’, Esmeraldas, setiembre 27 de 1913. BAEP, Hojas
Volantes, 1901-1920.
13 Muñoz Vicuña, Primero entre iguales, p.56.
The first to jump, like tigers, on the guards of the army barracks and to dominate them in no time at all, were a group of 23 conspirators, armed with shining and sharpened machetes. The rest burst immediately after like an avalanche, which left the soldiers paralysed, scarcely able to recover from the shock and surprise...the majority of these conspirators were young black Esmeraldans, who had proven themselves among the Alfarista monteneros....The cries of ¡Viva Alfaro! awakened the recognition: Alfarismo was triumphant.14

It is argued in chapter one that black and mixed race peasants in the coastal provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabi had been radicalised by more than a decade of Liberal guerrilla activities in their regions, and that their participation in the revolutionary wars reflected their belief in the possibilities that liberalism offered for a radical democratic transformation.15 This loyalty and conviction did not wane throughout the first two decades of Liberal rule. This political consciousness and belief in ideologies of liberty, equality, peace and progress reflects recent findings regarding black participation in political movements in other Latin American countries.16

Alfaro was remembered with real affection among Esmeraldan blacks. Prior to his death, solicitudes and petitions to local and national governments were addressed directly to him, with the black peons protesting abuses against them convinced that Alfaro must be unaware of their situation, and that if only he could be made aware of their problems he would be able to make things better. This highlights the tremendous prestige which the name of Alfaro continued to possess among blacks, a legacy of his immense personal charisma, and his ability to convince subaltern groups of the power of his project. Thus his name was an effective tool for recruiters, and appeals made in the name of Alfaro were extremely effective in convincing black recruits that enlisting in the Conchista army would serve their own political ends.17 Blacks could easily be convinced that it was a

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14 Enrique Torres, cited in Pérez, Carlos Concha Torres, p.34.
15 See also Enrique Ayala Mora, “De la Revolución Alfarista al Régimen Oligárquico Liberal” in Nueva Historia del Ecuador, volumen 9, Época Republicana III, p.119 p.122.
17 This is highlighted by the recruitment scene in Nelson Estupiñán Bass’s novel, Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian, (1954), pp.3-7, where the Captain in charge of recruiting implores the debt peons in his audience: “You...all...have to help us avenge the death of General Alfaro, the idol of the nation, the man who gave us this freedom that all of us, regardless of race, now enjoy.”
particular faction which had corrupted the ideal of Alfaro and was to blame for the failure of the Liberal government to fulfil its promises to them.\(^\text{18}\)

Carlos Concha had been a faithful supporter of Alfaro, and had sought to uphold and implement his programme. In his role as Governor of the Province of Esmeraldas which he occupied from 1898-1902, he actively campaigned against debt peonage and sought to establish schools and public works in the region, albeit with very little success.\(^\text{19}\) Concha also had his own black support base. Many had served under him during the revolutionary campaigns of 1895, 1906, and 1912, while his populist efforts as governor had gained him much support. Many Afro-Ecuadorians saw him as their only defender within an unjust system, believing in his true desire to end concertaje, based on his rejection of the institution on his own landholdings.

There were also direct abuses against Afro-Ecuadorians by the Plaza government which encouraged them to ally with the Conchistas. Segundo Luis Moreno, who fought on the side of the government forces during the campaign, tells how Plaza, expecting unrest, named a native Esmeraldan, Luis Tello, as Governor of the Province, hoping thus to diffuse regional tension. However, Tello was a personal enemy of the Alfarista leaders, and sought to take action against them. Since the majority of Alfaristas were 'gente de color' he did this by clamping down on the activities of blacks. He was supported in this by his racist police chief Intendente Ayora, who made use of his powers to prevent blacks dancing marimba, and gathering for religious meetings. Moreno, apparently an enemy of Tello and Ayora, saw this as sheer vengefulness and cruelty, likening preventing the black race from dancing the marimba to preventing a child playing with his favourite toy.\(^\text{20}\) However, it is likely that regional authorities feared black involvement in a

\(^{18}\) There is evidence that the assassination of Alfaro had a similarly emotional impact on indigenous people. An oral testimony from Cayambe recalls that the Indians of Pesillo on hearing the news of the assassination stated their refusal to work for those who had killed “el indio Alfaro”. Yanez del Pozo, Yo declare con franqueza, p.68. Likewise, Whitten and Corr describe how in the festival of Caporal held by the Salasca Quechua, the “good president” Eloy Alfaro is represented as besieged by “devils” in the person of high-ranking bureaucrats and wealthy politicians who wanted to ensnare and dislodge him. Whitten and Corr, “Imagery of ‘Blackness’ in Indigenous Myth, Discourse and Ritual”, pp.221-223.

\(^{19}\) See Informes de los Gobernadores, Anexos al Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, for the years 1897-1900. ABFL, Mensajes e Informes.

\(^{20}\) Moreno, La Campaña de Esmeraldas, p.16.
potential revolution, and sought to prevent blacks from gathering where they could not be supervised. Fear of black traditions is a common pattern throughout the Americas, and emerges whenever the likelihood of a rebellion is suspected.

The result was a severe challenge to black freedoms and liberty. Moreno told how if a black Alfarista was found drinking liquor in the street, or was simply walking but did not greet police officers with due respect, then he would be taken to prison and subjected to torture on the rack. Many times blacks were submitted to these “infamous punishments” without any pretext; political fears apparently being used as the basis for racist persecution.21 A handbill issued in Esmeraldas in early 1913 complained of the “excessive brutality” with which police powers were being used against the people of the city, and called on the governor to investigate the actions of his police troops.22 So extreme was the humiliation, harassment, and oppression suffered by blacks and Alfaristas under regime of Intendente Ayora that Moreno has argued that Ayora was the principal cause, “the origin itself” of the Concha Rebellion.23 This is unlikely, especially in view of the fact that Concha himself began plotting and stockading arms immediately on his release from prison without even knowing about the situation. It is useful, however, in explaining popular resentment, and in suggesting explicitly racialised motives for insurrection at the grass roots.

This feeling of resentment was reinforced by the absence of material progress in the region. As of 1912, there were still no roads or hospitals in the province and only a single school, located in the capital itself. Black peasants and city-dwellers alike continued to live in conditions of desperate poverty, and suffered from terrible ill-health. Many blacks believed that the poor state of the province was a result of racism on the part of central authorities, and were keen to express their anger at the government that had neglected them. The Afro-Ecuadorian peasantry also possessed a strong emotional connection to the Conchistas, the result of regional and kinship ties. These twin

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21 Ibid, p.17.
23 Moreno, La campana de Esmeraldas, p.17.
sentiments of resentment and solidarity are captured by Nelson Estupiñán Bass in his novel about the Concha Revolution, *Cuando los Guayacanes Florecían*.

*Conchistas* belonged to their class, they were from their province, or other coastal provinces, or were Colombians. As children they had played with the *Conchistas* in the river... They were their people. They were the courageous, indomitable people, with Carlos Concha as their leader, fighting sincerely to avenge an infamous act and to secure the endangered freedom. They were the people of the rivers, of the immense and depopulated plains at the foot of the mountains, completely separated from the rest of the *Patria*, fighting face to face with the government. And what great pride for a man of the woods, whatever his class may be, to fight against the government! Because, throughout history, the governments only remembered the “wild niggers” (*negros salvajes*) when it came to the collection of taxes and the recruitment of “rebellious and courageous men” – now no longer “wild niggers” – when the Boundaries of the Fatherland were threatened by the Peruvian invader. It was Eloy Alfaro, it was Carlos Concha, it was Esmeraldas, it was freedom.²⁴

This highlights how the idea of rebellion and the ‘search for freedom’ was central to the self-identification of Esmeraldan blacks. The power of this discourse can be seen in the oral history and popular literature of the region, which centres around the foundational shipwreck and the story of how blacks liberated themselves, and forged inland from the coast, forming the ‘Zambo Republic’ through their encounters with indigenous peoples, and vigorously protecting their freedom, allying with the Spanish crown on their own terms only after years of armed struggle.²⁵

There were also economic motivations behind black participation in the Concha Revolution. Most of the insurgents were impoverished peasants, who, in both Esmeraldas and Manabi were suffering from the expansion of agro-export industries and the expansion of haciendas, which was forcing them to become *conciertos* in increasing

²⁴ Estupiñán Bass, *Cuando los Guayacanes Florecían* pp.21-22.
²⁵ See Miguel Cabello de Balboa, *Descripción de la Provincia de Esmeraldas*. Edición, introducción y notas de José Alcina Franch. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Historia, Departamento de Historia de América, 2001); Julio Estupiñán Tello, *Esmeraldas de ayer: crónicas y anecdotario del pasado esmeraldeño* (Esmeraldas: REDIGRAF, 1996); García-Barrio, “Blacks in Ecuadorian Literature”; Rueda Novoa, *Zambage y Autonomía*. This can be seen too in the themes emphasized by the black writers of the 1940’s. The main character in Adalberto Ortiz’s *Juyungo*, for example, is a black man who constantly speaks in the language of freedom, and of whom all observers note that he would never have submitted to slavery.
numbers. Oswaldo Albornonz Peralta has argued that the "horrific and violent treatment of [Esmeraldan] conciertos exceeded even that of highland Indians." Many peasants had turned to tagua collection as an alternative to enserfment on the haciendas, but by the 1910's this industry was in crisis. Thus the economic conditions were ripe for a black peasant rebellion.

Blacks also saw the Concha Revolution as a means of self-ascension and social mobility, inspired by the black Sergeants and Lieutenants among the Conchista ranks. The armed forces had long been used as a means of social mobility by blacks, and the Concha Revolution was able to tap into this tradition. Many blacks were freed from debt-peonage by their recruiters. Others were inspired by their ill-treatment at the hands of government troops; the rape and ill-treatment of their wives, the theft of their livestock.

This is not to deny that many black soldiers were press-ganged unwillingly, or that others joined without understanding the reasoning behind the Revolution and with only the vaguest ideas about the Liberal ideals they were supposed to be defending. Nelson Estupiñán Bass is particularly eloquent on the topic, elegantly surmising the irony of concierto peons whom the Liberal government had left languishing on the hacienda being asked to fight for universal equality and freedom. The confusion he depicts in the three black concierto peons who are his main characters when they hear the Liberal Captain extolling the virtues of the Revolution that had brought freedom to the entire province "regardless of race", was doubtless felt by many of the peasants and workers who attended the recruitment meetings, hoping merely for a free glass of alcohol and a

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27 It is notable, however, that in the Concha Revolution, rank did not necessarily equate to material advantage. Cuando Los Guayacanes Florecian describes vividly how the rebel soldiers were forced to pick over the bodies of their dead opponents to acquire any kind of uniform, leading to the macabre image of black macheteros roaming the countryside wearing thick heavy overcoats more suited to the cold highland weather, and swapping government army-issue boots amongst themselves, hoping to find a pair that fitted. Similarly in the recruitment scene which opens the book the Sergeant assisting the recruiting Captain was a "huge black man", but despite his rank, he was barefoot like the peons they were addressing. Estupiñán Bass, Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian, pp.16-17; p.3.
28 Indeed, photos of Conchista camps show many children and adolescents enlisted as soldiers. (See figure eight.)
snack. Yet to suggest that this was universally true would be to undermine the very real political and personal motivations that factored into black support for the Concha Revolution, and to ignore the desire for racial equality and freedom from oppression that they manifested within it.

*Macheteros and Mieditis: Black Soldiers and the Concha Revolution*

Whatever their motivation, there is no denying that blacks played a crucial role in the Concha Revolution. The movement was dependent on and famous for its black militia, and as such blacks appear in key roles in the narratives of the Concha Revolution. In the first act of the revolution, the capture of the police barracks of Esmeraldas at 3am on the 24th September 1913, it was thirty blacks from Tianoe who, armed with pistols and machetes, carried out this raid and took possession of the barracks. These thirty men were the sole revolutionaries at this point. After they had successfully taken the barracks, a further thirty men arrived from Tachina, whose ethnicity was not specified in the accounts of this event. Even if all of these men were white or mestizo, at least half the revolutionaries at this stage would have been black. This group of sixty men then proceeded to attack the military barracks that garrisoned the 4th Company of Manabí. Significantly, these soldiers had been relieved for the evening by Afro-Esmeraldans to allow the regular soldiers to celebrate the day of the Virgin of Mercedes, the patron saint of the Ecuadorian army, and it seems that an agreement had already been made between these black stand-ins and the revolutionaries. Moreno describes how as the first shots were fired, the Esmeraldan soldiers, having thrown their arms into the streets, jumped from the garrison to receive the revolutionaries, and, “conforming to what had previously been agreed”, fled to the back parts of the building. Photographs of the *Conchistas* show that most were black peasants in their everyday clothes, all armed with machetes. (See figures nine and ten.) While the photos replicated here do not include women, photos not available to this author, but printed in Muñoz Vicuña’s book do grant clear visibility to women, showing that black women were also participants in the war,

29 Estupiñán Bass, *Cuando los Guayacanes Florecían*, pp.3-5.
30 Moreno, *La campana de Esmeraldas*, p.2.
occupying roles as nurses, cooks and guerrillas. Blacks remained important right to the end of the war. When Concha was captured in 1915, one of his black attendants, Patricio, who had been assisting in nursing him, was taken prisoner alongside him. Patricio managed to break open his bindings on the march from Concha’s hacienda and escape into the forest, where he ran to give the information on the capture to the rebel command. This underscores the loyalty and commitment of black troops and auxiliaries to the Concha cause and to Concha himself. On the 7th November, 1916, the last 400 guerrillas handed over their arms. Photos taken in Rioverde on this occasion show that blacks participated right to the end.

Many blacks rose through the Concha ranks to become sergeants and lieutenants. Sergeant Lastre in particular became a legendary figure, revered for his exploits on the battlefield. Even government forces recognised the leadership skills of Lastre. Moreno, who fought against him, showed a remarkable level of respect and admiration for his military skills and valour, describing him as an exemplary leader, who managed to maintain order and discipline among the troops “in a form worthy of imitation and just applause.” Lastre became a true hero to blacks in the region, who recognised in his ascension the validation of their culture, and who had the pride of serving under a famous leader of the same race as themselves. When the revolutionary forces entered the city of Esmeraldas on the 15th December 1913, Lastre was named Jefe Superior of the Central Plaza, and rode the entrance to the city mounted on a white horse. This would have had a tremendously powerful racial symbolism for local blacks, representing their entry into the political domain. According to Esmeraldan popular tradition, Lastre was said to have declared as he entered the city: “I be ridin’ top o’ the whole white race.”

31 Ibid.
32 Pérez, Carlos Concha Torres, p180. See also Adalberto Ortiz, “Captura de un caudillo” in Adalberto Ortiz, Cuentos (Guayaquil: Ediciones Populares, 1966).
33 Photo reprinted in Muñoz Vicuña, Primero entre iguales, p.180. The photograph included as figure eleven of Concha’s funeral shows black soldiers acting as pallbearers, as well as a groups of black men hanging from a tree overlooking the event, trying to get a closer look; an image which alludes to the endurance of black peasant ties to Concha.
34 Moreno, La Campana de Esmeraldas, p.28.
35 In many respects the imagery of Sergeant Lastre parallels that of Antonio Maceo during the Cuban War of Independence.
36 Moreno, La Campana de Esmeraldas, p.28.
37 Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo p.38.
difficult conditions and shortages arising from the government blockade of the port, Lastre was able to maintain order and discipline in the city, and Moreno argued that "there remained a true fraternity between the soldiers of the revolution and the civil element in a way which has almost never been seen in the Ecuadorean army, especially not in times of war."\(^3^8\) Certainly, Lastre exercised an iron discipline over his soldiers, with anecdotes recounting his refusal to accept civil disobedience among his troops, with offenders who failed to pay for the services of a brothel or cantina or who raped a local woman punished and humiliated.\(^3^9\)

The pathologisation of the Concha Revolution centred around the issue of black involvement. Newspapers in particular picked up on the fact that the majority of the fighters were blacks, and used this as shorthand to symbolise their brutality and barbarism. In descriptions of particularly violent acts of war, the guerrillas were described simply as blacks, as opposed to soldiers or rebels. This went in tandem with accusations that the principal characteristic that distinguished the guerrillas was violence, and that they lacked political goals, ideals or principals. *El Guante* described the Conchistas as "something less than a faction, a little bit more than a gang of rebels," with "neither flag, nor programme; neither ideas, nor resources; neither illusions, nor hopes; neither honourable proposals, nor honourable people."\(^4^0\) The Minister of the Interior went a step further, insisting that the rebels were: "simply gangs of outlaws, headed by criminals, who enter into the sacking of innocent populations, and commit outrages against private property and the honour of families, and kill those who resist."\(^4^1\) The rebels were regularly accused of banditry and crimes against property, and it is possible that such activities reflected the anger of black rebels at white elites and landlords. However, these actions were interpreted by many elites as representing a lack of ideology, and a desire on the part of the black masses simply to rabble-rouse. The blackness of the soldiers was central to such accusations. *El Guante* described the

\(^3^8\) Ibid, p.29. The occasionally rose-tinted nature of Moreno's account of Lastre's administration of the city of Esmeraldas, at odds with his position on the opposing forces, reflects his anger and disillusionment with how the government ran their campaign against the Conchistas.

\(^3^9\) Ibid, p.29.

\(^4^0\) *El Guante*, Guayaquil, 1 de Noviembre, 1913.

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Conchistas as “black hordes that prowl in the thicket like jackals congregated in a general ambush,” using race as a shorthand to challenge the social standing and morality of the rebels: “The lost, the broken, the drunk, the indigent, the men of the gambling houses and brothels, the criminal underworlds of some pueblos of the coast, the outcasts of the city. Is this a guerilla? No, it is a horde.” The spectre of cannibalism was also raised, with Concha rebels said to have revived the “African tradition” of consuming the flesh of those killed in battle.

This highlights how existing stereotypes of blacks as brutal, bloodthirsty and barbaric were attached to the Conchistas. President Plaza accused the rebels of failing to recognise any of the normal rules of combat, assassinating without mercy prisoners and the injured, mutilating bodies and victimising civilian landowners. The notoriety of the black soldiers became a source of terror for government troops, already afraid of the hostile environment. Moreno describes the “epidemic of fear” which spread among government forces intimidated by what they had heard about the “macheteros” – “the title acquired by blacks fond of death and desolation.” He describes his friend, an army captain, losing his mind with fear, unable to walk even a step without “looking crazily left to right, sure that he would be assaulted by a machetero”. He ended up a victim of “mieditis” : that is he died of fear, apparently not an uncommon fate. Some government soldiers had scarcely disembarked when they were sent to hospital, using all kinds of illicit measures to get themselves medically discharged and sent back to the sierra. “They would leave the hospital by night, and return to the boat triumphant, free of the ‘negritos’ who wanted to make them into soup.” This fear could be used to the strategic advantage of the Conchistas. The Concha victory at the battle at Camarones in

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41 Informe que Modesto A. Peñaherrera, Ministro de lo Interior, Municipalidades, Policía, Obras Publicas etc Presenta a la Nacion en 1915, Mensajes e Informes 1915. ABFL.
42 El Guante, 31 de Octubre, 1913.
44 Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1915, Mensajes e Informes, 1915. ABFL.
45 Moreno, La Campana de Esmeraldas, pp36-37. It has been estimated that six to eight government soldiers were killed for every day of the combat. See Muñoz Vicuña, Primero entre iguales, p.151.
46 Moreno, La Campana de Esmeraldas, p.44.

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April 1914 in which government troops were attacked simultaneously on several fronts by Lastre’s forces was facilitated by the panic of government troops at the cry “los macheteros”. When they heard this they began to flee towards the beach, where they were met by other rebel forces, and ended up trapped between the forest and the sea. El Telegrafo expressed sympathy with their fear. “The very figure of such naked blacks, with red turban and brandishing a machete is enough to set on edge the nerves of even the toughest soldier.”

Ideas of black savagery were used to blame Afro-Ecuadorian soldiers for the Red Cross massacre of 1914. The killing a boatful of Red Cross medical personnel and their sick and injured charges occurred when a group of Conchista soldiers mistook the Red Cross flag for the colours of the Conservative Party and attacked, in what is recognised as the greatest tragedy of the Concha Revolution. The massacre was used discursively as proof of the barbarity of black rebels. As the Minister of the Interior put it: “if there had been any doubt about the sinister intention of this group of mercenaries and bad sons of Esmeraldas, the assassination convinced the whole world that the revolt was not only unjustified, but also barbarous.” President Plaza refused to accept the protestations of the Conchistas that the black soldiers had not recognised the sign of the Red Cross, insisting that: “They saw the fact that they were weighed down by the moribund injured, they saw their prayers and heard their pleas for mercy, but they did not stop killing them, one by one, throwing their bodies overboard into the turbulent waters of the river.” He even used the act to suggest that they were not Christian; expressing the hope that the God of “whatever religion they practice” would love and forgive them. Care was taken to underline that it was not just the rebels that were to blame, but, more specifically, black rebels. Moreno, for example, argued that five men did all the killing and that they

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48 El Telegrafo, 26 de Abril, 1914. This obsession with black barbarity was paralleled in Cuba, where blacks in the Liberation Army were stereotyped as headcutters. See Helg, Our Rightful Share, p.58.
49 The Red Cross had arrived in the country only months prior to the massacre, and did not return again for almost a decade.
50 Informe que Modesto A. Peñaherrera, Ministro de lo Interior, Municipalidades, Policia, Obras Publicas etc., Presenta a la Nación en 1914.
51 Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1914, Mensajes e Informes, 1914. Note that the Red Cross had not been in the country very long before the massacre, and after the tragic incident did not return again until 1922.
were all blacks: three Colombians and two Esmeraldans. Yet despite this confident assertion of their guilt and nationality, he was unable to provide names for them.

Sergeant Lastre was often singled out in these effort to construct a negative imagery of the black Conchista soldiers. Following the Red Cross massacre, rumours spread around the country that Lastre had ordered the assassinations. This could not have been true: he was injured and was being treated in the San Mateo camp at this time. However, the accusation shows the extent to which Lastre was hated, feared and demonised. He was regularly described in press accounts as a scoundrel and a womaniser, who would “give his life for a white woman”, and who would resort to any means to possess a woman in whom he had an interest. In Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian the rumour circulates around Esmeraldas that Sergeant Lastre had announced that as soon as the Conchistas were victorious they would take hold of all the white women and distribute them among black men. This reflects of course the other major stereotype of black men: that of insatiable sexual desire and prowess, and echoes the imagery of the black rapist so common in slave societies throughout the Americas.

In his Presidential Message of 1914, General Leonidas Plaza drew on these fears, interpreting the Concha Revolution as a race war, with Esmeraldan whites on the side of the government, against blacks full of “murderous hatred”. He stated that the Revolution in Esmeraldas formed its army from the black inhabitants of the surrounding area, who had in their favour the “sinister complicity “of the land. While the constitutional troops had enjoyed “the support and adhesion of the totality of the scarce white people of this territorial zone”, they had been forced to struggle “distressingly against the climate, the impenetrable forest, sickness, and the murderous hatred of the black race, which inhabits and dominates the Esmeraldan forests.” Likewise, in concluding his Presidential message of 1915, Plaza repeatedly drew a distinction between the rebels and the

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52 Moreno, La campana de Esmeraldas, p.23. Even here we see this pattern of ‘trouble-making’ blacks being described as Colombians.
54 Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1914, Mensajes e Informes, 1914. ABFL.
"Ecuadorian race". At one level this can be read as a simple attempt to discredit the patriotism of the rebels, but it can also be read as the exclusion of black rebels in particular from the national imaginary, since they epitomised everything considered to be dangerous about the inclusion of Afro-Ecuadorians in the nation. Whereas in other movements involving blacks elsewhere in Latin America, authorities were quick to express the fear of race war, this did not happen in Ecuador, despite these hints to this as an underlying issue; probably because blacks were too numerically insignificant within the Ecuadorian population for it to be a realistic fear that blacks could take over on a national scale. Certainly, the kinds of fears which emerged among Colombian and Venezuelan elites during the Wars of Independence, or in Cuba in response to the formation of the Partido Independiente de Color, that the black masses would turn on their leaders and exterminate the privileged classes, were never voiced in Ecuador. However, it seems clear that at a regional level this was occasionally how the movement was interpreted.

What was made explicit in national discourse was the class dimension to the revolution. It was repeatedly emphasised that the upper and middle classes were appalled by the movement. As Leonidas Plaza put it: "It has been the good fortune of the government that public opinion has been on their side. The revolution does not have supporters among honourable and hardworking people. Cultured society regards it with horror. Even the leading men of the political parties disaffected with the government have remained indifferent to opportunity, and have not hesitated to condemn the motives and proceedings of the revolt." The governor of the province of Manabi likewise insisted that it was the "low social groups, the dregs of the population", who were affiliated to the revolt; and argued that rather than being motivated by political goals, the Conchistas were those taking refuge from justice, those "indignant that the organised social community conforms to the principals of law", those who "hated work", and who were "the enemies of ownership, private wealth, and the enlargement of the people." He

35 Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1915. Mensajes e Informes, 1915. ABFL.
36 Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica al Congreso Ordinario de 1914, Mensajes e Informes, 1914. ABFL.
argued that "honourable men, the workers, those that run in the vast field of industry, and those that search for means of subsistence, struggling within the lawful field of activity" had, "with few exceptions", rallied the government and helped resist the revolution.\(^5\)

The fear of the popular mobilisation engendered by the revolution is epitomised by the surprising absence of Conservative support for the Conchistas. Both groups possessed a strong interest in the deposition of Plaza. Certainly, Plazista Liberal groups feared at the outset of the revolution that collusion was inevitable. El Ecuatoriano in particular editorialised in appalled tones about the ‘Conservative-Alfarista’ alliance that it feared emerging, and described the Concha Revolution at one stage as a “Trojan horse” for Colombian conservatism.\(^5\) Likewise, the British Consul suggested that should the Concha movement succeed in forcing Plaza to leave the country, the two Liberal groups would have so exhausted their strength that “there will be a very possible prospect of a Conservative government coming to power.”\(^5\) Although some Colombian Conservatives were among those who joined the Northern rebels in seeking to spread the movement to Ibarra in 1915, this alliance never materialised on the scale expected; indeed, Conservative elites later joined forces with the Plazistas to crush the Concha uprising.

The only explanation for the failure of the Conservatives to capitalise on a movement which offered them such obvious political gains is fear at the consequences of the continued mobilisation of the black masses, and an unwillingness to be associated with a movement so bound up in imageries of blackness and barbarity.

A Detestable Episode? : The Consequences of the Concha Revolution for Afro-Esmeraldan Populations

The power of the revolutionary movement in Esmeraldas meant that few parts of the province were left untouched by the partisan fighting. Peasant families in particular found it very difficult to avoid being caught up in the war, with troops on both sides demanding food and contributions from them, while it is known that many non-combatants were routinely killed in the fighting. This idea of the Concha Revolution as

\(^{57}\) Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia de Manabi al Ministro de lo Interior, Portoviejo, 21 de Mayo, 1915. Anexos al Informe del Gobernador de la Provincia de Manabi, 1915. Mensajes e Informes, 1915. ABFL.

\(^{58}\) El Ecuatoriano, 13 de Mayo, 1913.

\(^{59}\) Jerome to FO, December 1st, 1913, FO371/1737/57702.
something with negative consequences for popular groups was certainly one propagated by the press, which would print graphic accounts of peasants killed and injured in the war. A particularly striking example of this can be found in an edition of *El Ecuatoriano*, which described in detail the case of a "Herculean negro" who received a bullet in "the most secret part of his organism", and had to walk on foot for two miles in search of a doctor, before "ending his brief journey dying amid horrific contortions". Witnesses stated that his cadaver was the most horrible thing they had ever seen. The use of a black man injured in his "intimate parts" as an example of the brutality and violence of the war is telling, focusing on that which was most mythologized about the Afro-Ecuadorian physique – male sexual prowess and power – in order to imply that fighting the war would strip this virility away; a metaphor perhaps, for its impact on the nation.

Civilian suffering caused by the Concha revolution was strongly feminised. By the end of the campaign, Esmeraldas was virtually a military garrison. The only inhabitants who had not abandoned the city were poor women with children and the indigent elderly, since for these groups the roads out of the province were impassable, and ship-boarding sites unsuitable. Women suffered from a lack of food and medical supplies as a result of the blockade. Black women - old and young alike - were also the victims of sexual depredations on the part of government troops. Nelson Estupiñán Bass describes how "Soldiers and sailors pursued the women at night and when they caught them, they beat them and left them lying on the ground." This fits with the analyses of many feminist theorists of war, who have argued that the discursive separation of women from battle allows them to become symbols of men’s revenge. In cases of civil war in particular, rape operates as part of the booty for ascendant forces, as well as punishment for the insubordination of the male rebels, who are forced to suffer the blow to their pride and honour of the systematic rape of their women.

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60 *El Ecuatoriano*, 30 de enero, 1914.
It is important to underline that it was not just blacks who took part in, and suffered from, the Concha Revolution. Soldiers passing through the Northern highlands on their way to Esmeraldas also wrecked havoc on Indian communities. A US army officer sent to assess the rising described riding in a train with government soldiers on their way to Esmeraldas, who drunkenly fired their rifles out of the windows, hitting several indigenous labourers working in the fields. Indigenous oral testimonies recall the Conchista movement with horror, remembering how government soldiers passing through sacked their houses and animals. Others described Indians from their villages who had left to fight the Conchistas and never returned. Many of the government forces were indigenous peons, despite the ban on using Indians within the national army. This reflected the enormous difficulty in recruiting soldiers in view of the hysteria surrounding the alleged savagery of the black soldiers, compounded by fear of the Esmeraldan climate. The only loyalist soldier to be fleshed out as a character in Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian was Gabriel Simbana, an Indian who had enlisted as a soldier in order to escape the miserable life of debt peonage, highlighting the fact that troops on both sides were using the war to escape slavery and submission. In the novel, Simbana cries before going into battle, aware that he faced certain death on the battlefield.

The patron’s pitiless whip was preferable he thought to certain death at the hands of an Esmeraldan black, emerging from a dense thicket, with his eyes bulging, bursting with an insatiable thirst for blood... He wouldn’t be able to return to his land he thought. Now, between his village, distant and unreachable, and him, there stood, blocking his way, a thick wall of blacks, thirsty for blood, with sharpened machetes, ready to cut off his head at the first movement and to pursue him if he tried to escape across the plains.

Simbana was indeed killed by one of the three black peons who are the main characters in the book, and the group of friends were shocked when they discovered from letters found in his pocket that the loyalist solider they had killed was also a debt peon, fleeing the life into which he was born. While of course this is merely a fictional account, it is likely that

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63 Gardien, Captain, 26th Infantry Military Attaché, on board USS Maryland, Ecuador, to Young, February 11th 1912.
64 Yanez del Pozo, Yo declaro con franqueza, p.71; p.73.
the gradual realisation that the men they were fighting against were not the “rich Serrano oppressors” of Conchista discourse, but rather poor peasants and debt peons like themselves, would have had a disillusioning effect on the black rebel forces.

Such sentiments were compounded by growing evidence of corruption on the part of Conchista elites, who were using the revolution to conduct land seizures and the theft of livestock, as well as that of blacks, dizzied by their rank. Oswaldo Albornoz has argued that the war came to an end because the peasantry lost faith and began to see it as just another bourgeois war for personal enrichment, an interpretation consistent with that given by Nelson Estupiñán Bass in his novel. Troop morale was also affected by the desperate conditions in the rebel camps, and in the province as a whole. Food and medical supplies were scarce. Many men, as a result of spending long periods in the trenches were now victims of beri-beri, while children were emaciated through severe malnutrition. In the countryside, fields were completely ruined, and many abandoned houses had been completely covered by brush. In short, the rebels were tired, having endured hard fighting for several years, during which they had struggled with an enemy superior in numbers, arms and ability. Moreover, after the capture of Concha there was no leader who could emulate his universal prestige. Lastre was not accepted by white Alfarista elites, while other leaders more acceptable to these groups did not find favour with the black masses. Thus the movement gradually petered out, before coming to a negotiated ceasefire in November 1916.

After the revolution was over, elite members of the movement were let off with a pardon in the name of promoting “a spirit of harmony and tolerance.” Many of them had made significant financial gains as a result of their cattle-raiding activities during the revolution, while the official pardon meant that there was minimal effect on their political standing. In contrast, the majority of the peasants who had fought in the revolution found their conditions of life worsened. Many haciendas took advantage of the confusion generated by the war to expand their boundaries, and many peasants found themselves

66 Albornoz Peralta, Ecuador: Luces y Sombras, p.146.
67 Informe que el Ministro de lo Interior, Policía, Obras Publicas, Municipalidades, etc. Presenta a la Nación, 1920. Mensajes e Informes, 1920. ABFL.
dispossessed and pushed off the land. In Estupiñán Bass' novel, the peasants efforts to gain their freedom end in disaster, with one peon imprisoned, the other returned to *concertaje* on the same hacienda he had left at the start of the novel, and the other killed attempting to escape this fate. 68

This painful dualism hints at why the revolution failed: it was defeated because of its limited social reach. In order to triumph, it needed to find solutions to the needs most strongly felt by the peasants who were a fundamental component of the guerrillas. It was necessary in other words to profoundise the revolution, to turn it into an agrarian transformation, which would have had the support of all Ecuadorian peasants including the indigenous masses. Yet this was never part of the movement's agenda. In many respects, the traditional negative interpretations of the Concha Revolution are correct. It represented the bankruptcy of Liberal political philosophy, especially vis-à-vis the masses, for whom the revolution offered no direct appeal, other than an ironic call to defend a freedom they had not yet received. For the Alfarista elites, "revolution" perhaps simply did mean gaining armed revenge against those responsible for Alfaro's death. Yet many of the black peasants who became involved in it read different meanings within it, and their support for it manifested their desire for a better future and a rejection of their present circumstances. The enduring legacy of the movement can be seen in the permanent place that the Concha Revolution has achieved within Esmeraldan folklore. Work songs dedicated to Carlos Concha continued to be sung in the fields of Esmeraldas into the 1980's; one including the lines "Carlos Concha es mi papa/ bajando del infinito/ si Carlos Concha se muere/ el negro quedo solito/ Del pobre Constitucio/ que terminó en el Guayabo/ no quedó ni un solo cabo/ pa que cante esta canción."69

**Rethinking Indian Movements**

Although in contrast to Afro-Ecuadorian acts of political agitation so-called Indian 'rebellions' have been recognised as specifically ethnic movements, very little is

68 Estupiñán Bass, *Cuando los Guayacanes Florecian*.
understood about the role of class, race and ethnic identities and demands within them. Indigenous uprisings have been perennial occurrences in Ecuador since the colonial period, with major rebellions occurring in 1777, 1803 and 1871. However, during the 1920’s and 30’s, there was a rapid spate of indigenous insurgency that occurred on a wider scale and with more politically destabilising effects than any seen until the recent ethnic mobilisations of the past two decades. Yet although there has been far more scholarly interest in these movements than in those involving Afro-Ecuadorians, there has been little effective analysis.70 Writings on indigenous movements in Ecuador – as in so much of Latin American historiography – are polarised between studies of the colonial period and those of the post-1970’s contemporary indigenous movements, conceptualised within the “new social movements” analytical framework. There is still a gap for the nineteenth and early twentieth century that is only partially filled by accounts of those major uprisings which caused such a serious commotion that they have proven impossible to ignore.71 Nothing was written on the indigenous rebellions of the late 19th and early twentieth century until the 1960’s, and then by non-professional historians, who used insufficient sources, and used events to construct romanticised arguments, glorifying the heroism of the Indians.72 During the 1970’s, the historiography of the left returned to focus on these movements, analysing them as precursors to the class-based peasant

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70 Certainly there has been no work for these early twentieth century movements to compare with that by Segundo Moreno Yanez for the colonial period. Moreno’s Sublevaciones indígenas en la Audiencia de Quito is recognised as a classic in Ecuadorian ethnohistory, and contains a detailed analysis of ten major and minor uprisings spanning from 1730 to 1803, exploring the politicised nature of indigenous anti-colonial protest, and underlining the heterogeneity and varying interest groups within indigenous society. Segundo E. Moreno Yanez, Sublevaciones Indígenas en la Audiencia de Quito, desde comienzos del siglo XVII hasta finales de la colonia. (Quito: Centro de Publicaciones, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, 1978).

71 The key example, of course, is the so-called Daquilema uprising of Chimborazo in 1871, named after its leader, which has attracted a great deal of attention. See Alfredo Costales Samaniego, Fernando Daquilema: Ultimo Guaminga (Quito: Instituto Ecuatoriano de Antropología y Geografía, 1963); Enrique Garcés, Daquilema Rex: Biografía de un dolor indio (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1961); Hernán Ibarra, Nos encontramos amenazados por todita la indiana: el levantamiento de Daquilema, Chimborazo, 1871 (Quito: CEDIS, 1993).

72 Costales Samaniego, Fernando Daquilema; Garcés, Daquilema Rex. Both these authors sought to use the bravery and combative capacity of the Indians faced with injustice and exploitation as a precursor to the later leftist struggles of mestizos.
struggles of that period. These accounts focused specifically on relations between the
indigenous peasantry and the working class, and argued that these uprisings failed
because they lacked direction and support from urban groups, thus undermining the
capacity of Indians to exercise their own initiative in asserting their rights. This leftist
focus has been maintained by many more contemporary works which in dealing with
Indian resistance have focused almost exclusively on the relationship between indigenous
communities and the left, and have focused their studies on the canton of Cayambe where
socialist agitation was an important force during the 1920's and 30's.

Steve Stern has argued convincingly that we must be wary of reducing peasant political
action to its most abnormal moments: moments of rupture, defensive mobilisation against
harmful change, and collective violence against authority. Although such an approach
has value in that it recognises that peasants have placed their own stamp on the political
histories of their regions and countries, it shrinks such an impact to moments of crisis
leading to rebellion, and means that during more normal times, peasants recede from the
political picture and become an inert, dormant force. This tendency towards
reductionism reflects the enduring power of the imagery of peasant rebels as parochial
“reactors” to external forces. Stern argues that the problem with this approach is that it
not only fails to understand peasant politics during ‘normal’ or quiescent times, but that it
also leads to superficial explanations of the causes of rebellion. He therefore insists on
the need to look at pre-existing patterns of ‘resistant adaptation’ that entailed the
innovative political engagement of the state by peasants, an approach adopted by many
scholars of indigenous resistance in Latin America. This allows a shift in focus away
from the question of why a peasantry suddenly “becomes” insurrectionary, and a move

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73 See especially Oswaldo Albomoz Peralta, Las luchas indigenas en el Ecuador (Guayaquil, Editorial
Claridad, 1971).

74 See Marc Becker, “Una Revolución Comunista Indígena: Rural Protest Movements in Cayambe,
Ecuador” in Rethinking Marxism Vol. 10, no. 4, 1998, pp.34-51; Muriel Crespi, “Changing Power
Relations: The Rise of Peasant Unions on Traditional Ecuadorian Haciendas” in Anthropological
campesina, 1926-1948” in Miguel Murmis (ed.) Ecuador: Cambios en el agro serrano (Quito: FLASCO,

75 Steve Stern, Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th-20th centuries
towards an understanding of why, at specific moments, ongoing peasant resistance and self-defence increasingly took the form of collective violence against the established authority. However, such an understanding requires not just an analysis of the deep-rooted historical nature of indigenous resistance, but also an examination of the links between the acts of resistance of different peasant communities within a national framework. Such a comparison has not been attempted in Ecuador, where the few accounts of indigenous resistance in this period have been local-level case-studies. The one major study to explore a variety of movements – Oswaldo Albornoz’s Las Luchas Indígenas en el Ecuador – looks at each uprising in isolation, without adopting a comparative framework or exploring the links between them. This section will seek to break with this tradition, and adopt a more direct comparative perspective.

Day-to-day resistance has been proven to be a key feature of peasant political consciousness, and its analysis has been an important feature of Latin American studies of peasant groups. It is undoubtedly the case that peasant political consciousness emerges from and is concerned with everyday issues, and cannot be understood outside of this context. It is when we study the bases of apparent and real accommodation to authority, and consider the patterns of resistant assertion and self-protection incorporated into such accommodations, the ways that such “resistant adaptation” made accommodation partial and contingent, and the values and ongoing political evaluations that lay behind these partial accommodations that we can discern more clearly why peasants sometimes become rebels or insurrectionists. Means such as malingering, going slow, and sabotage were definitely used by peasants in Ecuador in order to subvert these ties. The most striking instances appear from judicial sources to have been much more prevalent (or at least more prevalently reported) in the coastal provinces where workers were less likely to be indigenous, and more likely to be semi-unionised mestizos. In particular, the cacao estates of the provinces of Guayas and Los Ríos were subject to

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serious worker sabotage in the theft of cacao for sale on the black market, as well as the burning of crops.\textsuperscript{78} At times this spread into open resistance. \textit{El Ecuatoriano} reported a case in 1913 in which police authorities sent to investigate allegations of horse and cattle rustling on the hacienda El Quinche in the province of Bolivar were attacked by "a mob" of more than 80 Indians who refused to allow the police access to their land.\textsuperscript{79} However, such occurrences were rare, and an analysis of such everyday forms of resistance is better-suited to detailed hacienda-based case studies; something beyond the scope of this project.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, the focus must necessarily be on the unusual, on the moments of rupture, but exploring how these moments relate to and emerge from the everyday. Such an approach will centre around indigenous culture and ethnic identity, exploring how indigenous peoples were able to transform identity into a powerful tool of self-determination. This will draw on anthropological ideas of indigenous identity as a form of resistance.\textsuperscript{81} While indigenous peoples have accepted the burdens of the state, rarely directly challenging its legitimacy and impositions, they have not accepted its "symbolic universe".\textsuperscript{82} Thus, following E.P Thompson, culture will be seen as a "field of contention"; a "contested domain" in which negotiations between individuals and social sectors of the same ethnic group and between the latter and the external dominant society constantly occurring, as indigenous peoples engaged in a constant struggle to maintain socio-political and ethnic autonomy.\textsuperscript{83} These negotiations will be seen as centred around an idea of mutuality and reciprocity between the state, the landowners, and the indigenous community, and it will be argued that this mutuality, which ensured that core

\textsuperscript{78} For interesting examples see "Criminal contra el autor o autores del robo de varios sacos de cacao de la balso de Seminario Hermanos", Guayaquil, mayo 30 de 1908. AHG, EP/J – 14994; 'Criminal contra Rodolfo Medina, Pedro Ramirez, and Manuel Romero, por robo de cacao', Guayaquil, Julio 19 de 1909, AHG – EP/J-15001; 'criminal contra Leopoldo Alarcón, Juan, Pablo y Soltero González por robo de cacao,' Babahoyo, Julio 25 de 1912', AHG –EP/J -15003; 'Crimina; contra el autor o autores al incendio de unas plantaciones de cacao y una casa de la hacienda de la Sra. Aguirre de Arturo', Babahoyo, Setiembre 5 de 1910. See also Soderstrom to FO, Quito, January 30th, 1899, FO25/105/26.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{El Ecuatoriano}, 2 de Abril, 1913.

\textsuperscript{80} A very effective analysis of these day-to-day forms of resistance and accommodation can be found in Guerrero, \textit{La semántica de la dominación}.


\textsuperscript{82} Phrase borrowed from Rasnake, \textit{Domination and Cultural Resistance}, p.7.
indigenous cultural traditions and institutions (land, authorities, religion) were respected is at the heart of indigenous understandings of citizenship, as well as sentiments of injustice and oppression. These ideas will be seen to be at the heart of indigenous conceptions and understandings of citizenship.

Indian Unification and the Phantom of Race War

Indian rebellions occurred sporadically throughout the early years of Liberal rule, most commonly in opposition to perceived incursions of the state, such as efforts to undertake agrarian censuses and the imposition of new taxes or labour programmes. However, these movements were typically restricted to single communities, and were quickly extinguished by the use of state force. From the mid-1910's, the isolation of Indian movements began to give way to a degree of inter-community cooperation in the organisation of resistance and the articulation of demands. Three major rebellions occurred in the period 1919-1925 which saw indigenous mobilisation spread beyond a single community or parish and embrace more wide-reaching groups. These took place in Azuay and Cañar in 1919-1921, Chimborazo in 1921, and Azuay in 1925. These were all taken extremely seriously by government officials. The Minister of the Interior in his annual report of 1920 asserted that the key challenge to public order during the previous year had been the uprising of Indians in the provinces of Leon, Azuay, Cañar and Chimborazo. 84

The first of these took place in Azuay in 1920 in opposition to the rural census, to labour requirements on a new road to be built in the province, and to new taxes fixed by the Junta of Agricultural Development, which placed a charge of 'dos per mil' on meagre indigenous landholdings as a contribution to "agricultural development". The Minister of the Interior acknowledged that the census-taking had been poorly handled, describing it as a "delicate operation that was realised in the field for the first time... by means of indiscreet and inadequate people." However, he also insisted that the situation was

83 Varese, "The Ethnopolitics of Indian Resistance", pp.63-64.
manipulated by “ill-intentioned people” who propagated the rumour that the operations of
the Junta were intended to establish a family tithe, and set the bases for the establishment
of new and execrable contributions. The British Consul suggested that the ill-treatment
Indians received at the hands of the local authorities and large landowners may also have
been a factor in the rebellion.

The uprising began when the Indians of the parishes of Checa, Santa Rosa and Sidcay, in
the north of the province of Azuay, broke into and razed the public dispatches and the
office of the rural authorities. Faced with between three and four thousand indigenous
insurgents headed towards Cuenca, at first the governor of Azuay and the local military
authorities sought conciliation, publishing edicts and proclamations, and printing decrees
in the press that agreed to certain indigenous demands and sought to persuade them that
their fears regarding the land commissions had been based on a misunderstanding.

“Peace commissioners”, presumably members of the local clergy, were also sent to
negotiate. Despite these measures, rebel Indians continued to advance in the direction of
the city, coming down from the surrounding hills in all directions. The Governor of
Azuay described the situation thus: “The danger could not have been worse: a horde of 3
or 4000 rebels touching the doors of the threatened city, and a good possibility that they
would overcome the military garrison, since they were favoured by numbers and by the
night which was falling.” Feeling severely threatened, the authorities reverted to the
tactic of “terrifying the Indians by means of wings of fire which embraced them at the
front and back.” This did not lead the Indians to back down completely, but did force
them back up the mountain a “convenient distance” from the city, and calm was re-
established in Cuenca. However, not all Indians returned to their homes, and large groups
of indigenous men and women continued to roam the alturas.

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84 Informe que el Ministro de lo Interior, Policía, Obras Publicas, Municipalidades etc., Presenta a la
Nación en 1920. Mensajes e Informes, 1920. ABFL.
85 Ibid.
86 Wilson to FO, 5th May, 1920, FO371/4467/A3799.
87 Informe de la Gobernación de la Provincia del Azuay al Ministro de lo Interior, 1919. Anexos al Informe
del Ministro de lo Interior, 1919. Mensajes e Informes, 1919. ABFL.
A few days later the rebellion spread to Turi, Baños and other parishes to the south of the province. 3000 Indians participated in the uprising, among them those that had been notable leaders during the uprising in the north of the province, highlighting that this was not a specific localised community-based movement, but one which saw co-operation and solidarity between indigenous groups over a fairly wide geographical area. Again, the insurgents sought to converge on the city of Cuenca, and were staved off by police, army troops and local volunteers. A group of 100 Indians did manage to enter the city, although they were immediately dislodged.

The uprising quickly spread to Cañar, and the provincial governor asserted that the uprising of Indians in this province did not result from the type of specific issues and grievances which had spurred the rebellion in Azuay, but rather owed to a spirit of "compañismo and solidarity" with this other indigenous group. Certainly, government correspondence suggests that the uprising began among the Indians of Deleg on the 5th April 1919, motivated by the instigations of the Indians of Santa Rosa parish, who had been prominent in the Azuay uprising. Local authorities in Deleg managed to suffocate the rising, but it was followed immediately by an uprising of the Indians of Bibilian, aided by the Indians of Deleg. Knowing that all of the locally garrisoned military had marched on Cuenca with the aim of re-establishing order there, leaving Azogues undefended, the two groups of Indians launched a carefully planned attack on the city. The clearly premeditated nature of the attack meant that the uprising was far more than just an "expression of solidarity", but rather a well-organised rebellion headed by indigenous leaders who had acquired pan-parish authority. The cooperation of the residents of Azogues with police security forces succeeded in dispersing the rebels, although with many deaths among the indigenous insurgents.

Although at first armed intervention seemed to restore calm, in April the movement resurged on a dramatic scale. Insurgent violence was directed above all against state representatives, fiscal collectors and tenientes políticos, but insurgents also attacked aguardiente deposits and the offices of judges. Rebels also sought to break down

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88 Ibid.
communications between distinct parts of the region, assaulting post boys, and destroying telegraphic lines. It appears that the timing of events was coordinated and that there existed communication between rebels, and shared forms of organisation. Certainly, the uprising’s events took place in different places at the same time. The tactic of drawing troops to one part of the province and then attacking in another continued. The town of Quinges was attacked by an offshoot rebel group while most of the insurgents – and the armed forces defending the cities against them - were at Cuenca and Sidcay, while Azogues was assaulted again. The simultaneity of attacks indicates a considerable coherence and coordination within the rebel ranks. The authorities began to recognise that the strike was not a transitory occurrence, and that the indignation of the indigenous masses could not be extinguished with a few conciliatory words. Besides, the inhabitants of the countryside knew their own lands, and many times were able to push off government forces who had to fight on neighbouring lands. The rebels used a guerrilla strategy that made them less vulnerable to police troops.

With the passing of time the demands of the rebel groups had extended considerably. The strike became converted into a general protest against the government which had closed its eyes to the problems of hunger and poverty among the rural populations, and against a society which considered them to be inferior citizens. The movement began to tail off towards the end of 1920 as peasants returned to their communities to attend to their harvests, while the economic and social crisis in the region caused by the extreme drought during the second half of 1920 and the continued collapse of the hat market decreased the spirit of combativeness in the region. Yet the peace was superficial. Outside the urban centres state control was very fragile and almost non-existent. Many parishes maintained autonomy. Communications were difficult and dangerous and transportations were frequently assaulted by armed groups. The line between striking and banditry began to blur.

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89 Baud, “Campesinos indígenas contra el estado”, p.51.
90 Ibid, p.53.
91 Ibid, p.6.2
Discontent surged again in March and April of 1921, aggravated by the new law of military inscription, which threatened peasants with fines or prison if they failed to report for inscription. In view of the desperation that these types of demands provoked within the peasantry, the military inscription should have been recognized as a delicate issue by the government. The attitude of the authorities demonstrated again the extreme insensitivity to the explosive situation in the countryside. The direct cause of the uprising was the assassination of two indigenous leaders Anselmo Guaman and Miguel Sinchi in Sidcay in March of 1921. The Indians believed that the assassinations were premeditated and had been carried out with the support of provincial authorities in Cuenca. This time the government decided to act in a drastic manner and repress all acts of rebellion once and for all. Two military battalions were sent to the respective parishes and it was estimated that at least 100 Indians were killed.92

The rebellion in Azuay is most notable for the solidarity manifested between different indigenous groups over a wide geographic area, and for the organisation and communication that existed between them. It is also significant in that it was relatively successful in attracting elite sympathy and solidarity, and in acquiring the resolution of its demands. The left in particular was very supportive of what became known as 'la huelga indigena', and the movement inspired several well-known poems. Alfonso Andrade Chiriboga's Espigueo related the final phase of the conflict, focusing on the injustice and barbarity of the massacre of the Indians, and of the ill-treatment which forced them to resist.93

However, even mainstream elites at times supported the veracity of the indigenous cause. El Comercio, for example, repeatedly expressed the hope that the government would take the indigenous demands seriously in order to bring a more long-lasting peace, and repeal the taxes in electric light and agricultural development which appeared to have been the principal causes of the uprising. The paper agreed that the taxes were extremely unfair, noting that they sought to tax Indians for a utility they could not access, since electric

92 El Comercio, 17 de abril, 1921.
light was available only in the major cities, while taxes for the development of agriculture were levied on plots which barely provided even the minimum necessary for their subsistence. The paper insisted that the uprisings must serve as a reminder that reforms in favour of the Indian population were “more urgent than legislators think”, underlining that the current laws “remain in conformity with the indolence of the vanquished and unfortunate race”, and that until they were changed, it was inevitable that indigenous agitation would continue. However, it was notable that the concern manifested ultimately had as its focus the white-mestizo residents of Azuay, not the Indians themselves: “We will quickly pass the thirty victims of this last uprising if administrative measures are not entirely prudent, and, even more, rapid….it is very possible that for all this, the uprising will spread, putting in equal danger in a few months, the Azuayan populations, victims of this true socio-epidemic illness.”94

Michiel Baud’s analysis which located the Azuayan uprisings of 1920 and 1921 in the context of preparations for the centenary of Ecuadorian independence is very useful in explaining why indigenous mobilisation emerged on such a large scale in these particular years. Exploitation and oppression were constant features of Indian life; full-scale uprising was not. Baud argues that due to the marginalised position of Azuayan elites within the nation, they sought to prove their patriotism and national importance by throwing the biggest celebratory fiesta in the country. The indigenous peasants not only had to provide the labour for this, contributing their labour through mingas organised by teneinete politicos, but they also had to pay the costs: the centenary was the cause of the surge of new taxes. Local authorities were so enthused by these plans that they completely forgot about the other problems of the province, which included severe famine in the countryside, the result of two major crop failures.95 It is notable that in Peru, the festivities for the centennial of 1921 were received with indigenous revolts.96 It is possible that the centenary operated as a basis for Indian rebellion, in a manner parallel to the 1992 quincentenary, with the anniversary highlighting indigenous

marginalisation from mainstream society, and underlining the fact that for all the Liberal rhetoric about equality and social justice, there had been no change in the social position of the indigenous population.

The nature of the taxes is also significant. As Baud has argued, the taxes in and of themselves were not the problem: as long as the state managed to maintain a semblance of reciprocity and the population could see compensation for their tributes taxes were grudgingly accepted and rebellion was unlikely. However, when the state sought to change the weight of the taxes a strong potential for conflict existed, especially when they were directed towards a cause the peasant population did not support.97 Thus the risings can be attributed to shifts in the balance of the relationship between the state and the indigenous community, in which the indigenous population felt that they were subject to the ever more onerous intervention of the state, receiving only a reduction in their traditional protections and benefits in return. Although tributes and forced labour had always been imposed on the Indian/peasant population by the state, from the end of the 19th century state demands had been increasing to the point where the rural population became exasperated. A comparison can be made with Tristan Platt’s argument that the “pact of reciprocity” between the Bolivian state and the indigenous communities was broken during the second half of the 19th century.98 Changes in the relationship between the state and the rural population was a deep-rooted cause of great importance in explaining the discontent among the Azuayan population, and explains why, in contrast to many other Andean indigenous movements, conflicts with the hacienda did not play an important role. Despite police repression the “spirit of rebellion” remained alive within the Azuayan population throughout the 1920’s, and uprisings occurred against the state in 1923 and 1925, although the scale of the 1920-21 uprising was never recreated.

In 1921 another major rebellion developed, this time in the province of Chimborazo. The movement began in the canton of Otavalo, but quickly spread throughout the province as

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97 Baud, “Campesinos indígenas contra el estado”, p.68.
the insurrection became generalised. At the earliest moment of the uprising newspaper reports placed the number of rebels at more than 5000, and this number only continued to grow as the movement progressed.99

As with Azuay, the movement is notable for its co-operation between different indigenous groups, as well as its carefully planned and coordinated implementation. *El Comercio* painted a picture of how the rebellion spread, describing Indians responding to the call of the bugles, this sound guiding them through the mountains to new meeting places ahead of the arrival of government forces. The Indians attacked the town of Guano while the majority of its inhabitants were attending the local market.100 Three weeks into the uprising it was reported that Indians throughout the province had stopped work and were planning a full-scale uprising for Corpus.101 Hacienda overseers throughout the province reported that the Indians were disobeying orders and threatening a general uprising, while those from free communities had abandoned their houses and were roaming the hills.102 On the 26th May, the day scheduled for the general uprising, it was reported that the uprising was acquiring serious proportions and that the Indians had risen up at Luisa, Achupallas, Guasuntos, and Guasalan. The whole province was said to be in fear of the “drunken Indians [who] are threatening to take the whole province.” The employees of the Railway Company had asked for help, fearing the disruption of traffic with Riobamaba.103 However, it is impossible to know what actually happened on the day of Corpus, as the rising was immediately pushed off the pages of the newspapers by the arrival of US President Warren G. Harding and his Secretary of State. Half of the paper was turned over to a newly created “English section” – general descriptions of the city, and welcomes and salutations from various organisations, while the rebellious Indians who would present such a backward, unprogressive and embarrassing face to the visiting President were pushed off the pages. Government officials simply sought to pretend the event had never happened, denying the scale of the rising in their official reports, and accusing the press of exaggerating the movement in order to destabilise the government.

99 *El Comercio*, 3 de Mayo, 1921.
100 *El Comercio*, 23 de Mayo, 1921.
101 *El Comercio*, 25 de mayo, 1921.
102 *El Comercio*, 23 de mayo, 1921.
For these same reasons, it is very difficult to ascertain the causes of the Chimborazo uprising. According to the Minister of the Interior, the uprising occurred in response to the Legislative Decree of the 8th September 1920 regarding obligatory military service, which held that all Ecuadorians, without any distinction of race, and specifically including Indians, must be included on the military registries of their respective parishes from which the military authorities would select those considered to be capable of lending their military services. This was the first time that Indians had been included in such a law. It was argued that in Chimborazo the indigenous population were convinced that the object of the new law was to take them directly to the military barracks and enrol them in the army, to fight in a war they imagined Ecuador to be waging.104 The US Consul stated that the cause of the indigenous rising was the tax registration ordered by the government, arguing that they believed registration was the first step in depriving them of all their property.105 El Comercio, however, argued that “the difference between this and the risings that from time to time occur in the other provinces, is that this one in Chimborazo has been produced without any apparent cause,” insisting that no new taxes had been imposed on them, and that suggestions of opposition to the new military law were illogical.106 It is clear, however, that there was already deep resentment harboured by indigenous groups towards the parish authorities. The Minister of the Interior admitted that abuses had taken place in the valuation of indigenous holdings by the rural census takers and the representatives of the Junta de Fomento Agricola, with their holdings being over-valued by as much as four or five times, as well as rights of civil registry being illegally charged.107 Moreover, as discussed above, this province was at the centre of tensions between indigenous communities and haciendas regarding the boundaries of indigenous land.

Accounts of the movement as it spread make clear that the uprising may have had deeper ideological roots, and been embroiled in more complex ideological issues, than

103 El Comercio, 26 de mayo, 1921.
104 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. Mensajes e Informes 1921, ABFL.
105 Harman to State Department, June 3rd, 1921, no. 544.
106 El Comercio, 22 de Mayo, 1921.
government reports would suggest. It seems that the indigenous rebels sought to establish an Indian army and to name an Indian President, in an apparent parallel with the Inca revivalist movements that were occurring in Bolivia and Peru at this time. Manuel Moncayo, a telegraph operator who was injured in the Indian attack on Guano, reported how the insurgents carried out their strike shouting “Viva el General Morocho, muere el Gobierno.”  

It appears from newspaper reports that Morocho was a colonel in the Conservative party who was suspected by Liberal elites of plotting rebellions against the government. Apparently he had persuaded the Indians that he was a General and had made several indigenous leaders colonels of “his” army. But it appears that rather than acting in support of a conservative military movement, the Indians sought to use his rank to establish their own army. Reports were made of a “Generalísimo” Esteban Paguay, an Indian from Riobamba who had apparently organised the uprising. There were also frequent references to an indigenous “President”, Andres Llamuca; indeed, his recognition was one of the key demands issued by indigenous leaders in the build-up to the Corpus general uprising. Indigenous prisoners gave testimony that Llamuca had told them to go to Quito and return with the “golden baton” which would allow the Indian army to gain its victory.

This idea of a magical “golden baton” looks like it might have been based on some kind of indigenous mythology, paralleling in many ways Silvia Rivera’s description of indigenous rebels searches for Tupac Katari’s arm during the uprisings of the 1920’s. This should not be surprising since it is understood from studies of Indian uprisings throughout the Andes that indigenous struggles are informed by elements of the distant past found in popular myths and stories which allowed insurgents to transcend the local character of their conflict, and make them intelligible to a wider group. However, so little is known about the dynamics of memory of pre-Colombian society among...

107 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. Mensajes e Informes 1921, ABFL
108 El Comercio, 18 de mayo, 1921.
109 Ibid.
110 El Comercio, 19 de mayo, 1921.
111 El Comercio, 24 de mayo, 1921.
112 El Comercio, 20 de mayo, 1921.
Ecuadorian indigenous communities that it is impossible to imagine the exact form or content of these mythological beliefs, legends and memories. It is to be assumed that the Incaism which resurged in Peru and Bolivia during this period was not a factor in an Ecuadorian indigenous society which had very little experience of direct Inca rule. However, it is not clear what kinds of memories informed popular struggle in its place, and with oral histories already a scarcely viable source for this period, it is possible that the specific details will prove impossible to uncover. However, the very fact of a specifically indigenous mythology and cosmology as an informative factor in Indian resistance is in itself extremely significant, allowing a more direct comparison with events in Peru and Bolivia during this period.

Tristan Platt has interpreted Incaism in Bolivia not as a “messianic dream”, but as a natural mirror to creole hegemony within a common Republican model, in which the subaltern Indian groups sought to reverse their positions and dominate the whites. The appearance of the Inca represented a specifically nineteenth century transformation of an old symbol of Andean statecraft when no other source of visible redress appeared viable. Thus Platt sees both Indian and Liberal projects in the late nineteenth century as ethnocidal, arguing that the Inca version of racism simply held a mirror up to the Liberal version. 114 In his analysis of Peruvian resistance in this period, Alberto Flores Galindo has argued that although there is no evidence that indigenous peasants in Peru truly believed that the restoration of the Inca was possible in the 1920's, landowners were definitely convinced that they were dealing with a real “race war” or caste struggle.115 Both of these positions have relevance for Ecuador. In the uprising at Chimborazo there is evidence that Indians sought to overturn the existing racial order, while elites panicked amid fears that a “race war” was imminent. Despite his dismissal of the uprisings as exaggerated by the newspapers, later in his report the Minister of the Interior effectively argued for the rebellions as a form of race war, emerging from the hatred found in the

115 Alberto Flores Galindo, Buscando un Inca: identidad y utopia en los Andes Lima (Peru: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1987) p.266.
Indian's souls: "At the bottom of the spirit of this unfortunate race, there exists, latent and perennial, sentiments of ill-will, antagonism and vengeance, which can quickly be converted into acts of blood and extermination when scarcely presented with a pretext or opportunity to exercise them in this form." Elsewhere in the report he argued for the uprisings as being "nourished by ... the cruel instinct of the indigenous race".\textsuperscript{116}

This was an interpretation shared by the mainstream press. The lead article in the Sunday edition of \textit{El Comercio} in May 1921 was headlined "\textit{Lucha de razas}". The newspaper stated that the "cheap literature" that held forth on the Indian problem now extended to volumes, but that all were insubstantial, because "at the end of the day, the Indian problem is at present, with extremely light variations, the same as it was during the colonial period, and has left a sentiment of insurmountable hatred, of cruel vengeance, in the soul of the pariah-Indian, once the owner and señor of America."\textsuperscript{117} It was explicitly stated that the indigenous uprising was aimed at restoring indigenous dominion of the country, and establishing their power over the white-mestizo population. "The evident fact is that the Indians today do not demonstrate any sign of being open to conciliation – we have seen that efforts at this have failed- but have no other intention than to continue their struggle, in the illusion that they are going to emerge the victors, in this foolish campaign of reconquest, that, in the primitiveness of their brain, they believe to be holy, noble, and above all, viable." The paper argued that the Indians saw violence, and in particular, overturning white rule, as the only way to win their demands. They had tried peaceful methods, they had come to Quito with petitions, only to be met with empty promises.

\begin{quote}
The Indian knows how to guard, in the deepest part of his heart, the good actions which have been made to him, along with the evils that produce in him resentment. They did not return satisfied in their petitions, they understood that the authorities thought them stupid, fools, whatever, and waited patiently for the opportunity to demonstrate that they preferred death to perpetual slavery.... In our understanding, this and no other is the cause of the uprising that is taking on ever greater proportions in the province of Chimborazo, and that presents a terrible threatening shade over society that could be the victim of the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{116}Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. \textit{Mensajes e Informes 1921}, ABFL.

\textsuperscript{117}\textit{El Comercio}, 22 de Mayo, 1921.
cruelty manifested by these primitive beings, whose reprisals are always terrorising, bloody and unspeakable.\textsuperscript{118}

The Minister of the Interior shared this view of the indigenous struggle as one seeking racial emancipation, classifying the Indian uprisings as: “general struggles to emancipate themselves or to defend themselves against those who exploit them in distinct forms for their own benefit. The Indian is sacrificed to avarice, plundered, excluded from the benefits of civilisation, thus acquiring a consciousness as part of an economically disregarded and exploited class, a feeling which induces him to these rebellions.”\textsuperscript{119}

This conviction on the part of elites that the mobilisation of ethnic subalterns necessarily equated to “race war” was a common pattern throughout Latin America, dating back to the mobilisations of the black \textit{llaneros} of Venezuela in the 1840’s, through the Afro-Cuban Independent party of colour in 1912, to the Zapatista peasants of Morelos in 1910 and in 1990. As soon as it became clear that marginalised ethnic groups were seeking to follow and impose their own agenda elites would cry race war.\textsuperscript{120} This reflects the extent to which these societies were divided along racial lines, and the fear of revolution that haunted the white-mestizo elites. An interchange described by an American traveller sheds an illuminating light on the deep-rooted fear among the white population of indigenous rebellion even in the 1940’s. He describes how an Indian servant who was guiding him to the hacienda where he was staying “began to show his teeth again in the moonlight in a broad Indian smile, that smile that has somehow always seemed so threatening to landholders, that smile they call the \textit{mueca de indio}; the Indian grimace....It is not a grimace. It is a smile. Only latent fear gives it a quality a little frightening to a man holding a whip – as if there were someone behind him.”\textsuperscript{121}

Moreover, a focus on the innate hatred in the hearts of the indigenous population enabled white elites to avoid some of the blame for the uprisings.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1921. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{120} This accusation is still made today. Fears that the indigenous rights movements of the 1990’s would lead to the “Balkanization” of Latin America republics can be read as thinly veiled assertions of race war.
\textsuperscript{121} Franklin, \textit{Ecuador}, p.193.
However, rather than a race war with its connotations of being aimed at whites in general, indigenous anger was expressed most fervently against those they felt to be most responsible for their abuses. Thus the wives and children of hacienda owners and employees were kidnapped and assaulted, highlighting how theories of the gendered nature of the spoils of warfare discussed above can also be applied to Indian rebellions. Moreover, during the course of the uprising Indians inflicted on whites the punishments that had previously been used against them. In the attack on Guano, for example, the Indians cut off the ears of one of the watchmen, before “clubbing him cruelly.”

Significantly, the Minister of the Interior recognised the role of elite behaviour and attitudes as contributing factors to the uprisings. He insisted that the landowners who were calling for the deployment of military forces were effectively calling for the extermination of the Indians. This could not be a solution. Rather, what was required was the improvement of indigenous conditions. He argued that the evil dated back to colonial times, and has been nourished by the greed of those who had found in the unfortunate situation of the Indians a source of exploitation that has contributed on a large scale to satiate the enormous appetites of wealth and dominion. The problem stemmed from the fact that the white population had not treated the Indian as his equal but rather as his inferior, never showing him respect or striving to advance him equal opportunities. He insisted that it was time that law and state intervened with sufficient energy to prevent Indians from continuing to be the victims of “patrons who exploit their person and property, of bailiffs and officials that rob their money in the form of fabricated judicial rights, of such authorities who oblige them to lend their services for free in works of private interest, or to decree taxes that are too onerous for the scarce resources of their contributors, of tinterillos and practitioners of bad law that live on the expenses of Indians, and finally parish priests who persist in benefiting from the religious credulity of Indians to oblige them to undertake unnecessary religious fiestas.”

122 El Comercio, 18 de Mayo, 1921.
123 Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. Mensajes e Informes, 1921. ABFL.
Some concessions to indigenous demands were also offered. The Minister insisted that the question of whether Indians should pay taxes on their land should be put before the Legislative Power, suggesting that a compromise like that imposed by the Governor of Azuay in response to the disturbances in that province in which holdings valued under 2000 sucres were exempted from taxation should be installed nationwide. He also demanded that municipal authorities and provincial governors take greater care in the naming of civil judges, bailiffs and tenientes politicos, insisting that those named to such posts be respectable, honourable people, that, “besides not directly abusing and taking advantage of the ignorance of the Indians support them energetically against the abuses of their enemies.” This represented a request for a total shift in the role of public officials, and shows the extent to which the Indian agenda was being taken seriously by authorities in the face of the desire to subdue them and the fear of further uprisings. However, The Minister of the Interior noted that although many teniente politicos had already been discharged following earlier complaints from the Indians their replacements, “far from exercising their duties did not delay in imitating the bad arts of their antecedents, and in returning to oppress the same victims as always.” The failure of the Ministry to impose this agenda reflects the ideological distance between local and national authorities.

Contested Citizenship and the Meaning of Indigenous Mobilisation

The two major rebellions discussed above have much in common. First is the fact that despite elite recognition of the scale of these movements, and acknowledgement of their deep-rooted causes, efforts were made to undermine both their importance and the autonomy of Indians within them. The Minister of the Interior repeatedly insisted that indigenous insurgency was provoked by “unscrupulous lawyers and tinterillos who swarm through the city and countryside sowing discord and bringing misery and intranquility to homes.” The British Consul explained with reference to the Azuay uprisings, that the Conservative party accused the government of having created the

124 Ibid.
125 Informe que presenta a la Nación el Dr. Francisco Ochoa Ortiz, Ministro de lo Interior, Policía, Municipalidades, Obras Publicas, Correos, Telégrafos, Teléfonos etc., 1924. Mensajes e Informes, 1924. ABFL.
trouble in order that constitutional guarantees might be suspended and the President
granted extraordinary powers, which would allow them to control the situation at the up­
coming congressional elections; while the Liberals accused the Conservatives of having
stirred up the Indians to try the temper of the government and their ability to deal with
such a movement, in order to see what probabilities of success they might themselves
have in a revolutionary movement.\textsuperscript{126} The depth and consistency of the Indian position
make it unlikely that these mobilisations can be wholly attributed to “manipulations”
from above. Rather, the accusations and counter-accusations highlights the extent to
which Indians were always seen as the pawns of other people and political interests, and
that their own aims and desires and their ability to organise movements to pursue these
were rarely taken seriously.

The rebellions also highlight the distance between town and country. These uprisings all
feature the powerful symbolism of Indians trying to enter the major cities in order to
press their demands. Accounts by government ministers of these efforts make clear the
extent to which Indians were feared and seen as alien by urban residents. A letter from
the Governor of Azuay to the Minister of the Interior described the chaotic situation in
the province, and demonstrated the perceptions and prejudices of Cuencan elites. The
letter stated that the peaceful inhabitants of Cuenca live in a state of constant alarm, like
“residents of incipient colonies faced with semi-savage tribes”, fearing from one minute
to the next, a savage attack on person and property.\textsuperscript{127} The classic dualism of
Sarmiento’s “civilisation versus barbarism” is clearly in play here in this imagery of a
civilised urban centre being threatened by barbarian peasant hordes.\textsuperscript{128} The very
dynamics of town resistance to Indian rebellion serve to underline this, defined as it was
by ethnic polarisation, with Indian uprisings effectively pitting Indian peasants against
the white-mestizo townspeople who joined forces with the police and army in order to
fend them off. It is likely that in arriving at the city gates Indians sought not to raze and
vanquish the city, but simply to make their demands heard through the force of their

\textsuperscript{126} Wilson to FO, 5\textsuperscript{th} May, 1920, FO371/4467/A3799.
\textsuperscript{127} Carta del Gobernador del Azuay al Ministro de lo Interior, 23-8-1920, Anexos al Informe del Ministro
de lo Interior, 1920. \textit{Mensajes e Informes, 1920. ABFL.}
presence. It is notable that in all of the rebellions discussed here, Indians had sought to make their voices heard through judicial cases and legal petitioning prior to the uprising. This is significant in that this armed resistance to Indian penetration into the public spheres of urban centres occurred simultaneously with efforts to create modern, progressive towns by physically clearing away the indigenous presence through attacks on Indian hygiene practices and efforts to remove indigenous markets from central spaces, thus denying Indians the possibility of participating as citizens in urban political life.

Indian conviction that they had the right to express these demands – that, in short, they had the right to citizenship – can be seen in the fact that popular anger was directed at the closest representatives of state justice; those who represented the state at the level of the countryside. *Tenientes políticos* in particular became a primary target. Andres Guerrero has argued that the *teniente político* in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century operated as an “battering ram” that expanded the sovereignty of the national state over the indigenous population.129 Certainly, for the rural population these groups were converted into symbols of state oppression. It is not surprising that in many places the uprising operated as an opportunity for rural populations to settle their accounts with *tenientes políticos*.

However, it should be noted that *tenientes políticos* were not unambiguous figures. While they did operate as the arm of the state in the countryside, they were also victims of state powers. Archival documents and newspaper reports abound of *tenientes políticos* being fired for not producing enough workers for public works, while sometimes they rebelled against state orders and became community leaders. The role of *tenientes políticos* becomes more complex when the question of who they actually were is posed. It is not clear whether they always came from the white-mestizo classes, or whether they also came from indigenous groups. While it is not possible to answer these questions decisively at the present time, it is evident that although indigenous authority had been

rapidly eroded during the 19th century, the 'cabildo pequeno' and the governor of indígenas continued to exist, and that state functionaries understood the need to adapt ideas of justice to systems of indigenous organisation, that which Andres Guerrero has called 'la ley de costumbre'. It is possible to assert that rural authorities belonged to a liminal population, constituted, for example, by white Quichua speakers, or by Indians, under the dominion of the legal norms and politics of the state.

The targeting of tendientes políticos also suggests that the bureaucratic role of the state representatives in rural society was accelerated by Liberal politics after 1895. This suggests that during this process representatives of the state in rural society lost their position as intermediaries between two ethnic and political systems, and became simple representatives of the state that demanded every day ever more onerous financial and personal contributions. Moreover, as state power expanded, the pressure exercised by the state over the indigenous hierarchy increased. If Indian caciques did not comply with the tasks expected of them they were removed from their position. With the strengthening of control over their representatives, the autonomy and freedom of action of the indigenous hierarchy declined. It would be very interesting to see if some of the ringleaders of this uprising came from this class of traditional leaders. This would fit with Stefano Varese’s insistence on the need to understand the relationship between the indigenous masses and Indian intellectuals in order to understand the nature and tenacity of native American political resistance.

It is paradoxical that while indigenous complaints centred around increased state incursions, the insurgencies themselves served to undermine the authority of the state. Police and other authorities were at first expelled by rebels, even if they later managed to subdue them, while the threat against local state functionaries meant that many fled, resigned or disappeared from their post. This made it almost impossible for the state to exercise its authority. The strikes broke urban control over the countryside, while in turn, the power vacuum created made it much easier for rebellions to spread, forcing the

130 Ibid.
131 Varese, "The Ethnopolitics of Indian resistance", p.60.
authorities to engage with them in order to achieve the social tranquillity. It is clear that Liberal rhetoric in favour of the Indians had changed the manner of thinking within the indigenous population about their own social position. Ideas about equality and social justice helped them to formulate their protests and made them more combative vis-à-vis the political elite. The rebellions of the 1910’s and 20’s were the violent culmination of the indigenous communities long process of resistance and organisation in defence of their land, their own forms of organisation, and ways of life, which latifundismo threatened to eradicate.

This can be seen most clearly in the fact that during this period Indian uprisings were strongest and most prevalent on the haciendas owned by the Juntas of Public Assistance. In January 1925 El Comercio published an article musing on the root causes of the recent spate of indigenous rebellions. It noted that the vast majority had emerged on state-run haciendas, and suggested that this was a result of defects in the way in which these were run. It argued that the key issue was the greed of the renters, who, not content with having access to hacienda resources were seeking to take possession of the land of neighbouring indigenous communities, and to force them into dependence on the hacienda.132 It was certainly the case that although in reality renters typically held land for between 24 and 32 years, the illusion of renting as a short-term economic strategy meant that renters were concerned with maximising their profits as quickly as possible. They did not take a long term view of the management of land, livestock, construction of buildings and relations with workers. In many cases, this led to worse exploitation for workers. Renters decapitalised holdings, and wages were cut. Customs of work were violated, and a vacuum was left at the social and ideological level, since the paternalism characteristic of the patron-peasant relationship was eroded by this new system.133 In oral testimonies gathered from Indians on the Pesillo hacienda in Cayambe, informants described the renter who took over from the Conception monks as having “a bad attitude”, and of treating the Indians rudely, refusing to give them personalised aid. “He told us ‘You are huasipungeros, you have your huaspingos, your labours, your food, and

132 El Comercio, 25 de enero, 1925.
for this you must work, and for this I pay you.” He did not see their relationship as extending any further to the consternation and disgust of the indigenous workers. This disintegration of the patron-client system decreased the forms of domination exercised by the patron and his functionaries, reducing his authority and creating a space for peasant action.

Most importantly, the confiscation of Church land without any kind of redistribution towards the indigenous population led to Indian bitterness and resentment at the way in which the transfer of land had been handled. The renters were members of the traditional landholding class, and the logic of land management remained the same. Indeed, indigenous testimonies from Pesillo suggest that the renters treated the Indians far worse than the padres had ever done. “In the time of the renters, the overseers were bandits, the patrons the same.” Thus for the Indians, despite all the Liberal rhetoric, there was no improvement in the system of oppression that governed their lives. At Pesillo, Indians refused to accept the transfer, convinced that the hacienda must have either belonged to the padres or been passed to them: they could conceive of no middle ground. When the first renter came, a Colombian named Pancho Portilla, the Indians refused to work, shouting “We don’t need to! Go back to your home! This is our land that has been left to us!” When Portilla attempted to insist that they return to work, he was killed with a stone to his head. Troops were inevitably brought in to quell the disturbance, with the result that 50 people died and many more were injured.

Elite responses to rebellions in this period reveal the bankruptcy of Liberal discourse vis-à-vis the indigenous population. Government ministers responded to the major uprisings with the same rhetoric of “upliftment” and “improvement” in the name of the common good that they had been repeating for the last 20 years.

For the regeneration of the Indian we need to awaken the dormant consciousness of the dictates of honour and justice, we need to teach them the route to improvements of their economic situation, we need to show them more humanity, more sincerity, more disinterest in personal

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134 Testimony of José Juan Balladares in Yanez del Pozo, Yo declaro con franqueza p.77.
135 Testimony of Alfredo Catacumba in Ibid, p.128.
relations between them and us. According to this, the regeneration of
the Indians will be the fruit of a practical, individual labour, long and
difficult, which must urgently be intensified to bring the contingent of
our numerous indigenous class to the common work of social
progress....If, in addition to the suggestions above, we also improve the
diffusion of schools and the spread of justice and goodwill towards the
Indian, we will be able to lift up his moral level, improve his material
conditions of existence, and convert him into a more conscious and
immensely more useful member of the social body, for the realisation
of the goals of the collectivity.\textsuperscript{137}

Yet, the rapid reversion to military force shows the extent to which the Liberal
government felt threatened by indigenous mobilisations. Indeed, there are several
examples of localised land-based Indian rebellions that ended in large-scale massacres
during the 1920's because the government was so skittish as a result of what had
preceded.\textsuperscript{138} The use of massacre as a government means of annihilating social protest
punctuates the social history of the Americas, and was used by governments whenever
subaltem racial groups seriously challenged the white-dominated social structure. The
mass killing of blacks or Indians by government forces was aimed not only at suppressing
an immediate rebellion's leaders and followers, but at effectively terrifying the entire
black population into conformity.

It would seem that along with Peru and Bolivia, Ecuador also experienced what Silvia
Rivera and Alberto Flores Galindo have described as a “rebelt cycle” during the 1920's
and 30's.\textsuperscript{139} In Ecuador, as in Peru and Bolivia, indigenous uprising in this period
represented a protest against a parasitic state, and the gap between the favourable
legislation passed on behalf of the Indians, and the absence of any real reform.\textsuperscript{140}

The demands of indigenous insurgents touched on the fundamentals of social
organisation in the countryside. Essentially, they insisted that the state comply with all

\textsuperscript{137}Informe del Ministro de lo Interior, 1921. \textit{Mensajes e Informes}, 1921. ABFL.
\textsuperscript{138}The Leito hacienda massacre in 1923 in which more than 300 Indians were killed is only the most
famous example.
\textsuperscript{139}Flores Galindo, \textit{Buscando un Inca}, p.308-343; Rivera, \textit{Oppressed but not Defeated}, pp.36-7.
\textsuperscript{140}Similarly in Peru, Gavin Smith has argued that the uprisings of the 1920's in Peru were caused by the
gap between the favourable legislation passed on behalf of the Indians, and the absence of any real reform.
Smith, \textit{Livelihood and Resistance}, p.171.
the promises made in the Liberal laws proclaimed by distinct governments since 1895. The movements were converted into a direct critique of state authority that challenged the burden of taxation and public works and demanded better access to schooling and education. The movements conclusively demonstrate that in Ecuador – as in other Andean countries during this period – the Liberal project of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century state provoked considerable changes in rural society which in the ultimate instance led to collective protests among indigenous populations and peasant groups.

**Conclusion: Liberalism, Nationalism and Hegemony**

A focus on rural resistance highlights both the salience of the issue of citizenship for black and indigenous groups, and the limitations on how far the Liberal state was able to implement it in practice. In response to frustration at the failure of the Liberal state to extend to them the rights they had been promised, racially subaltern groups mobilised in order to demand their citizenship rights. In this they manifested an understanding of themselves as part of the nation, as well as a desire to play a fuller role within it. The conflicting responses of the state reveal that there was a complex dialectic at work that challenges any simplistic claims about liberal hegemony.

Black participation in the Concha movement is perhaps the only one of the movements discussed here that could be classified as representing “popular liberalism” in the sense advanced by Mallon, Sanders and Thompson. Afro-Esmeraldans joined the movement out of a determination to defend and enforce the Alfarista ideals which they viewed as offering them freedom from debt peonage and hacienda oppression, and as presenting a foundation on which the rights of black people could be advanced. But indigenous rebellions also reflected an engagement with the ideals projected by liberalism, particularly as these were articulated (and embodied) by Eloy Alfaro. Indeed, their rebellions emerged in response to the failure of the Liberal state to give them the rights and protections they had fought for alongside Eloy Alfaro. This can be seen
especially in the role occupied by state-owned haciendas as a site for indigenous militancy.

Indian discontent also reflected shifting relations with the state, in particular resentment at state efforts to assert a closer control over Indian communities through agrarian censuses and public works programmes, and to shift the burden of economic development still further onto Indian groups through the imposition of new taxes and ever more onerous labour demands. These tensions were exacerbated by the reshaping of patron-client relations which restricted the utility of the conventional indigenous response to growing state incursions, and by the clear discrepancy between the realities of their situation and the nature of Liberal discourse and legislation.

Peasant perceptions of justice and injustice are of central importance in explaining the timing and emergence of each of the movements discussed above. James Scott in his famous study of South East Asian peasants showed that although exploitation may be measured partly by such “objective” means as surplus value, it is also a subjective concept, because it consists of complex relations between individuals and groups – relationships comprising materialistic and moral dimensions.\(^{142}\) Thus the concepts of mutuality and reciprocity were at the core of peasant understandings of exploitation, and determined their resistance to this. Such ideas are important in particular for understanding why indigenous rebellions became so prevalent during the 1920’s.

The rebellions also shed light on the nature of peasant political allegiances, highlighting that indigenous communities could feel affiliations to their group, to a wider regional Indian population, and to the national society. While Ecuadorian inter-indigenous alliances did not perhaps match those developed in Peru and Bolivia, where the Inca mythology created the basis for a dream of a pan-Andean indigenous polity, there is definitely evidence of cooperation between indigenous groups on the basis of shared

\(^{141}\) Mallon, \textit{Peasant and Nation}; Sanders, "’Citizens of a Free People’"; Thompson, \textit{Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism}.

ethnic/racial identity. The deep-rooted, historical motives for black participation in the Concha Revolution and the indigenous rebellions in Azauy and Chimborazo, and the relationship of these movements to local and ethnic identities, strongly support Scott’s idea of “subcultures of resistance” preserved in selected popular historical memory.\textsuperscript{143}

These movements also highlight the distinction between elite and peasant nationalism. Alan Knight has argued that in Mexico peasant patriotism was centred on the idea of the local community embedded within the nation; as such it was hostile to the pretensions of the centralising state, which elite nationalism sought to strengthen, centralise and augment.\textsuperscript{144} Such a formulation can be applied to Ecuador, where indigenous nationalism in particular centred around rights for Indian peoples within autonomous community groups whose rights were respected by the state, and thus often operated against the central state.

All of the movements discussed above dismiss completely ideas of peasants as reactionary or backward-looking. Black and indigenous people in Ecuador did not struggle to defend past arrangements or to restore a traditional social order. They sought not to reinstate old prerogatives, but to gain those they had never experienced and had been promised: citizenship rights and a place in the nation. They also shed an important light on the nature of Liberal hegemony. In one sense liberalism was hegemonic in that black and indigenous people adopted its language and sought to attain its rights, in another sense, liberalism was not hegemonic because of its failure to grant them the rights it claimed to represent. The movements discussed here reveal the tensions generated by unleashing a rhetoric of rights without a readiness to deliver - itself a reflection of the weakness of the state. While the movements discussed here sought to work within liberalism, their failure provoked resentment and a search for alternatives, and contributed to the demise of liberalism as a dominant ideology.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{144} Alan Knight, “Peasants into Patriots: Thoughts on the Making of the Mexican Nation”, \textit{Mexican Studies}, Vol. 10, 1994, p.148. Knight sees the idea of peasant status as being incompatible with nationalism as resulting from the conflation of political patriotism with the process of nation-building.
Conclusion: The Racialisation of the Liberal Nation-Building Project and the Question of State Hegemony

The themes and case studies discussed above have been framed within the argument that the nation-building project undertaken by the Ecuadorian Liberal state in the period 1895-1944 represented not only an attempt to integrate national territory and resources, but also a redefinition of who could be included in the nation. At the level of rhetoric and representation this was, then, an inclusionary project, centred around the extension of citizenship to previously marginalised groups. The practices of Liberal nation-building were, however, profoundly constricted by racial ideas and racialised structures, as evidence from other Latin American countries has indicated. Above all, though, what the research presented by this thesis vividly illustrates is the extent to which racially subordinate groups were able to present challenges to the power of the state, and to assert their own conceptions of race and nation. The tensions generated by the gap between rhetoric and reality highlight both the limits of state hegemony and the extent to which the state became the touchstone for imagining the nation. The dynamics of this process have implications for understanding the relationship between race and nationalism, which will be outlined in this concluding chapter.

The Multifaceted Relationship between Race and Nation in Liberal Ecuador

This thesis demonstrates the pervasiveness, resilience, and malleability of race as an idea. The term race as it was used within Liberal discourse referred both to the nation as a whole, and to human and spatial components within it. Race operated under many guises. It was used to classify sectors of the population into hierarchical rankings, and to associate biological differences with social and economic qualities. In this kind of formulation the influence of social Darwinism was strongly felt, with Indians and blacks being constructed as hindrances to national development, as obstacles to be overcome on the path to modernisation and progress. These classic ideas of scientific racism were carried over into the discourse of “degeneration” which emerged in the 1920’s and 30’s (a time when most Latin American countries were leaving such ideas behind), and its focus on the social ills caused by the “unhygienic” and “dirty” practices of blacks and Indians. In this sense, race was a way in which membership in the national community was restricted and negotiated. The tension between the ideal
of the “Ecuadorian race” as a homogenous entity at the heart of the nation, and the reality of such heterogeneous and “undesirable” groups forming a significant part of the national population meant that nation-building centred around the idea of “civilising” indigenous and black people in order to fit them for integration; whether physically in the case of roads and railway building, or culturally in the case of education.

Race could also serve as a facilitating mechanism for the enactment of wider political goals, as was the case with Liberal efforts to protect the Indians which enabled the party to grasp the moral high ground and deflect criticism, while also pushing through their own agenda of dismantling the power of the Church and the highland haciendas. Such formulations also demonstrate the complexity of racial ideas and the variety of ways in which racial stereotypes could be manipulated. Indians could thus be represented as innocent and helpless victims of exploitation, future citizens being kept from reaching their potential by retrograde social forces, or, alternatively, as symbols of savagery and backwardness who epitomised all that was wrong with the nation. Significantly, these ascriptions were often regionalised, with highland indigenous groups the “good” Indians who needed state protection, and Amazonian Indians a source of shame, and a cause of national weakness, a conceptualisation that gained power following the loss of national territory to Peru in 1941. However, these categorisations could be reversed: the demonisation of Chimborazo and Azuayian Indians during the uprisings of 1921 and 1925, and the use of Amazonian Quichua to symbolise the ills of a rubber trade from which Ecuador had not been able to benefit, and which was considered to be counter to the national interest representing prime examples. The imagery of the Indian was used to shade and soften the redefinition of the functions of the state in Ecuadorian society. Blackness was rarely used in such a manner. Instead, it was an anti-national discourse, used to invoke savagery and barbarity; a shorthand for criminality and banditry. The label of blackness was used to decry the Conchista rebels, and more generally, to underline the problems with radical liberalism as epitomised by the Alfaristas.

These categories were intimately entwined with ideas of gender, seen especially in the feminisation of the Indian population, through their classification as in need of the patriarchal protection of the state. It is also notable that many of the policies aimed at
indigenous uplift sought to bring internal gender relations within Indian communities into line with the rest of society. Thus, many of these policies were aimed at giving indigenous men control over indigenous women, seeking to make them more effective patriarchs, and at freeing Indian women from the "unfeminine" burden of their labour obligations, and bringing them into the domestic sphere. The most notable aspect of this feminisation was the exclusion of Indian men from the military until the mid-1930's, a practice dramatically out of line with the Latin American pattern whereby indigenous males formed the majority of army conscripts. That this conventional mechanism for the inculcation of nationalist sentiment in subordinate populations was not invoked by the Ecuadorian state reflects the extent to which Indian men had been conceptually emasculated as a result of the gender dimensions of the dominant racial ideology.

Race was also used in the sense of the nation as a people, as seen in the fears over poor hygiene and sanitation problems degenerating the national populace. Yet these ideas were still infused with the idea of race as related to distinct ethnic groups, such that it was black and indigenous peoples who were generally seen as the cause of these dangers. The realities of nation-building also meant that an ideology that perpetuated the idea of blacks and Indians as useful servile labour remained. This served to complicate the implementation of ideological ideals of "civilising" and uplifting, and shows how the perpetuation of a racialised labour force compromised other goals. Nation-builders were forced to pick and prioritise goals, and in general economic concerns were elevated over those associated with race. Aims associated with the civilisation and transformation of racially subordinate groups were also dislodged by the weakness of the state, which meant that responsibility for certain key facets of nation-building were effectively taken out of state hands, seen most notably in the use of foreign capital to develop mines and Amazonian resources. These sectors often possessed their own ideas about the meaning of race, particularly as related to labour, which served to compromise Liberal wider goals. From this perspective then, nation-building should be viewed as a series of mutually conflictive and compromised strategies which at times were contradictory in nature.
Race, Regionalism, and the Mapping of National Territory

The contested effort to define and shape national populations according to restrictive elitist ideals can be seen in the relationship between race, space and nation. The integration of national territory was a key part of Liberal nationalist ideology, yet not all territory was seen as equally integrable, and the mapping of the territory defined as national strongly reflected racialised regional divisions. Regions discursively marked out as black or Indian - particularly Esmeraldas and the Oriente - were labelled backwards in relation to more modern, whiter regions. But the relationship between race, modernity and national status was not as straightforward as in other Latin American countries, where the most progressive, economically advanced regions were also the whitest, since Guayaquil was marked by the coastal association with blackness, and whilst Quito may have escaped associations with Indianness, the wider highland region was defined by precisely this. Effectively regional relationships to national status mirrored those of the racial groups they were associated with; with highland provinces seen as central to the nation yet in need of economic and political transformation, Esmeraldas definitively negated and excluded, and the Oriente occupying a more ambiguous role, characterised by anti-national traits of savagery and backwardness, yet also seen as possessing the resources necessary to generate future economic wealth. This was reflected at the level of state policy, and state action - and non-action - served to constantly redefine and reinforce the mutually constitutive relationship between race and space. This can be seen most clearly in the exclusions, such as the absence of state services in Esmeraldas, but also in which regions became the primary focus of state policy. Markedly more attention was paid to the establishment of rural estate schools in the highlands than elsewhere; while the most successful public works were those which connected the highlands and the coast. Policies aimed at the development of the Amazon were lauded on paper yet neglected in practice, while the construction of a railroad to Esmeraldas was only finished half a century after discussions had begun. The role of the state in this sphere hints at the enduring way in which the racial order was structured in its operation by the underlying forces of political economy, and signals the two-way relationship between material factors and cultural constructions. The power of racialised regionalisms also underline the dual sense of place within constructions of national territory and identity, and the intersection between geographical place and social
status. Such findings reflect and reinforce the work of Sarah Radcliffe who has shown the key role played by the Ecuadorian state in the creation of national space.¹ Race in Ecuador was not simply reflected in spatial categories, it was constituted in spatial structures, and state policy played a primary role in creating and reaffirming these.

The Meaning of Racial Categories: Differences between Black and Indigenous Experiences of Nation-Building

The centrality of race to nation-building and state-formation affected how these processes were experienced, a fact highlighted especially by the differences in how black and indigenous groups experienced the nation-building project. The similarities between black and indigenous experiences of nation-building in this period are far-reaching and significant. Both were seen by elites as problematic minorities threatening the national project of homogeneity. Both were at the bottom of a ladder which represented parallel hierarchies of education, civilisation, and race. Both were seen as the objects of a progressive, modernising process of whitening the nation. However, the differences between the two groups – the divergence in the way in which they were “othered” - were arguably even more important.

Peter Wade and Norman Whitten, with regards to Colombia and Ecuador respectively, have argued that these nations were characterised by a racial order in which black people were both included and excluded. This has been framed within the discourse of mestizaje, with it being argued that blacks were included as ordinary citizens in the sense of participating in the overarching process of mestizaje, and simultaneously excluded as inferior citizens, people who only marginally participated in “national society”, and as individuals with whom whiter people might not want to actually practice mestizaje, especially in the most intimate sense of forming links of kinship.² Much anthropological and sociological work has been undertaken centred around this idea for various Latin American countries, which has focused on the real exclusion underlying the apparent inclusion of mestizaje with regards to African-descended groups. However, what is perhaps not emphasised sufficiently within such

¹ Radcliffe, "Imagining the State as a Space".

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formulations is the fact that this exclusion was central to the framework’s very foundation. Wade has argued that the difference between black and indigenous status derives from the divergent ways in which they have been inserted into “structures of alterity” dating back to the earliest days of the colonial periods. 3 It is certainly the case that the dissimilarities in black and indigenous experiences of liberalism and nation-building in Ecuador can in large part be attributed to the different legal and ideological categorisation of the two groups. Despite the conceptual opposition of liberalism to different categories of citizen, the colonial construction “Indian” possessed an enduring power, and meant that a specific place had been carved out for indigenous peoples which made it possible for statesmen and intellectuals to think about them in particular ways. Although these structures were constantly renegotiated and revised during this period, particularly as related to citizenship rights, Indian remained a distinct category. Blacks were not imagined in this way, and this made their exclusion from state discourse much easier. However, the evidence presented here suggests that the conceptual situation of blacks was more complex than that articulated by Whitten and Wade, which holds that blacks were imagined simply as a non-distinct sector of the poor; that they were “blended” into the masses, with this being the paradigm within which their simultaneous inclusion and exclusion should be theorised. By looking at slightly earlier racial ideologies in the period immediately before mestizaje became an explicit discourse, it becomes clear that with regards to blacks exclusion was always the much more dominant of the tendencies, and indeed that national inclusion was never meant to be extended to blacks. While elites accepted Indian-ness as a key part of national identity, and Indians as part of the national population, there was no such willingness to incorporate blacks. It was not that blacks were invisible because they were linguistically and culturally less distinctive than Indians: they had been seen as blacks, recognised as blacks, and rejected as such. Their supposed invisibility was itself socially constructed and ideologically charged.

The negation of Afro-Ecuadorian nationality centred around the denial of black potential. Citizenship was dependent on transformation, on redeemability, and blacks

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were not considered to possess such potential. From the classification of blacks by early sociologists as a “bad influence” and unsuitable for incorporation into civilisation, to the refusal of trained teachers to work in Esmeraldas because of the alleged ‘degeneracy’ of the population, blacks were allocated a markedly different role to Indians in the formation of the nation-state. That blacks were considered to be more lowly than Indians was illustrated by debates surrounding \textit{concertaje} which implied that indigenous servitude was to be condemned because it placed Indians on a lower social strata than blacks, their natural inferiors who were no longer subject to slavery. Blacks were rarely even seen as belonging to the nation, with government elites taking every effort to classify them as ‘Colombian’. When blacks were seen as Ecuadorian, they were viewed irrevocably as a source of ‘racial danger’, in particular through the characterisation of blacks as bloodthirsty and rebellious. Such imagery came dramatically into focus during the Concha Revolution, but was a feature of the representation of Afro-Ecuadorians throughout the period. Paradoxically, however, it was these mythologised fighting skills that led to the major route to national inclusion for blacks through their role in the military. This highlights that there can be no easy assumptions about the operation of practices of exclusion, and that all were negotiated, contested and limited by the nature of subaltern action.

However, the separation should not be seen in overly polarised terms of blacks versus Indians. Rather, the inclusion and exclusion of racially subordinate groups operated on a sliding scale, with definite parallels between the situation of blacks and Amazonian Indians, who were also largely excluded from the Liberal rhetoric of citizenship and inclusion on the basis of their alleged savagery. In other words, there were multiple and shifting hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion. Liberal nationalist rhetoric was directed towards shaping the inclusion of a particular kind of racial subaltern, one that possessed the qualities and capacities considered to be consistent with the acquisition of national citizenship. But the subalterns themselves did not only speak; they also acted to challenge and negotiate that model. Indeed, the May Revolution that overthrew Liberalism, arose out of the failure of the Liberals to contain the claims to rights that they had unleashed.

\footnotesize{Wade, \textit{Race and Ethnicity}, p. 27.}
Tensions and Contradictions in the Establishment of National Hegemony

Looking at the relationship between race and nationalism from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective enables an exploration of the ways in which ideas about race are contested and negotiated, and underscores the fact that they are never just imposed. It is far too simplistic just to say that elites imposed ideas and subordinate groups resisted them, the relationship between the two is far more complex. This can be seen in the way in which state policies were constantly reformed and reshaped in response to contestation and resistance, and the ways in which subordinate groups were able to use the paradigm of inclusion to push for augmented rights.

A focus on Liberal nation-building is particularly interesting because of the parallels between liberalism and nationalism in the sense that both have a tension between difference and equality at their core, and that it is precisely this tension which creates such scope for resistance and contestation. In Liberal Ecuador, the discourse of equality and universality created the “field of force” within which different social groups were constrained by the actions and projects of others, and which enabled individuals who were only partially or marginally perceived as members of the community to use its inclusive language to make claims for equal treatment. But it was precisely this contradiction at the heart of both liberalism and nation-building – the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity within nationalism, and between the rhetoric of inclusion and the tendency toward exclusion within liberalism – that accounts for the weaknesses and shortcomings in their efforts to attain hegemony.

While liberalism proved effective as a nationalising discourse, and became the framework within which black and indigenous groups could assert their rights, it also generated resistance when it was unable to disseminate these rights. However, liberalism did represent a means by which racially subordinate groups could engage with the nation, so in this sense it can be considered a nationalising discourse, even if it was not always a hegemonic one. Nationalism was more hegemonic because it transcended political ideology, and was appropriated and reformed by different political factions. Indeed, the May Revolution which finally served to displace the Liberal state was explicitly conceived as a nationalist movement. Race, however, remained central to all these formulations.
The work presented here leaves little room for doubt that, far from race and nationalism occupying different conceptual space as in Anderson’s schema, ideas of race were integral to the conceptualisation and operation of the Liberal nation-building project. As such it adds to recent efforts to understand and theorise the relationship between race, gender and nation in Latin America. It demonstrates the interplay between these three categories at different levels; showing how nationalist discourses were forced to grapple with ideas of race at every level, how concepts of race and nation were gendered and how this affected the ascription of racial roles and identities, how discourses of race and nation were affected by subaltern actors, and how the influence of these categories and ideas operated in both directions, with nationalist prerogatives changing the meaning of racial classifications, and affecting the way in which ethnic categories were imagined. In this it feeds into the growing body of work discussed in the introduction, and provides detailed case studies for these arguments that will underline their general validity. The power of race within nationalist discourse, and its centrality to the nation-building process in Ecuador suggests that Latin American countries are not, as is often assumed, necessarily exceptional in terms of post-colonial nation-building.

A further general conclusion with relevance beyond Ecuador, and beyond Latin America too, is that in order to properly understand the intricacies and complexities of nation-building, it is necessary to reformulate our understandings of the state. There has been much focus within academic work of late on the complexity of society, and there is a need to extend new thinking regarding the multiple layers of meaning and representation into a reformulated understanding of the state. While much of the literature discussed in the introduction does seek a revised engagement with the state, there is still a tendency to view the state in monolithic terms; and particularly in terms of its relationship to racially subordinate groups it continues to be conceived as a single entity, a factor which has contributed to the fragility of theoretical engagements with the relationship between the state and nationalism in Latin America. There is a need, then, to ‘bring the state back in’, but within a reconceptualised framework, and with a more nuanced view of its operation.

Certainly, the Liberal state in Ecuador operated at different levels and varied according to place and time. “Official discourse” in particular, which is generally
conceived as a coherent, single whole in fact varied markedly within regions and between different periods, as well as within and between different arms of the state. These disparities can be seen most markedly in the distinction between the judiciary and the executive, where the equalising ideals advanced by the central state were much slower to be reflected in the extension of legal rights to racially subordinate groups. In the case of land policy this disparity generated so much tension that the executive sought to bring these functions under its own control, removing the right of judicial appeal through the courts in the case of disputes over land rights, and replacing this with legal mediation through government ministries. This policy was institutionalised in the Ley de Comunas, one of the clearest examples of the limitations placed on liberal ideas as a result of these divisions. The state was weak in some areas – those associated with the extension of services and the creation of infrastructure in particular, where fiscal weakness was a serious impediment to the implementation of its aims – but strong in others, notably, the ability to impose and monopolise debates. It also functioned at different levels, with the conflict between the practices followed by local and central representatives of the state most marked. This separation was the cause of much tension and resistance, as black and indigenous groups became resentful at the gap between the extended rights outlined by the central state, and the reality of increased incursions and abuses by its local representatives.

The weaknesses of the state – in particular the problems incurred by a weak treasury and political instability- meant that the state also had to engage with its competitors in a manner which at times compromised its goals, highlighting another dimension of the limits of state hegemony. This can be seen especially in the tension with the Catholic Church. Dismantling the power and position of the Church was a key goal of the Liberal state, and was reflected in some important dimensions of state policy – the Ley de Manos Muertos and the law of Civil Marriage being those of most far-reaching significance. However, the state also found it necessary to use the already established bases of the Church to implement some of its core goals. This can be seen most clearly in the realm of education in which, in direct contrast to the articulation of lay education as the foundation of government policy, priests, nuns and missionaries were used to provide instruction in those regions –notably the Oriente - in which state power was weak, thus forcing the state to miss a prime opportunity to renegotiate Church power. The same paradoxes were present in health policy, and the
establishment of 'state' hospitals over previously existing structures established by the Church, with Church personnel remaining the medium by which healthcare was extended. The same tendency to pull back at the moment of expanding state power can be seen in the decision to grant large landowners control over state-expropriated haciendas following the implementation of the Ley de Manos Muertos, thus consolidating the power base of regional landowners at a moment when state control of resources could have been consolidated. This reflects the way in which financial penury forced the prioritisation of the collection of revenue as a priority over the freezing-out of competitors, and highlighting the way in which the economic constraints on the state undermined its pursuit of political power.

Such tensions can also be seen in state relations with foreign corporations, which impeded tremendously on the implementation of state goals in terms of the extension of free, contracted, wage labour as a guiding principle of the development of a labour market, since they brought with them alternative, conflicting goals centred around the maximisation of their own profits. Ultimately, the state was in no position to countervene such activities, and many foreign companies operated as closed, enclave economies, outside the control of the nation-state, epitomised by the operations of Ecuador Land Company, the South American Development Company, and the Quito-Guayaquil Railway Company. However, the existence of these companies in many respects served, paradoxically, to increase the importance of the nation-state, as subordinate groups turned to the state to help defend themselves against exploitation and abuse by foreigners. This can be seen especially in the negotiations over who warranted protection from these foreign companies, as the state explicitly extended rights of protection only to non-blacks. That the West Indian blacks who were subject to such extremes of abuse during the construction of the Quito-Guayaquil Railroad actually were foreign is itself unimportant. More significant is the way in which the state, in its very failure to engage with or respond to this ill-treatment, symbolised the fact that the blackness of these workers made them unworthy of state intervention or even comment, and fair game for acts of brutality, which indeed, were deemed by state organs to be entirely necessary to control and subdue their barbaric tendencies. If the labour strategies employed by these sectors operated as a means of defining at the level of symbolism who the state sought to be included in the nation, they also frequently served to develop ideas of national belonging in marginalised populations.
This can be seen most dramatically in the responses of the Jivaro who took their revenge for the incursions of rubber gatherers in the massacre of a Peruvian garrison, expressing thus their recognition that such abuses were being committed by alien national powers, specifically delimited as Peruvian, an attack initially lauded by the Ecuadorian press for its anti-Peruvian content. In this sense then, the foreign corporation can be classified as the "other" against which the national imaginary was constructed.

The findings presented here, then, suggest a new path towards the conceptualisation of the relationship between state, ethnicity and nation. This study has shown that when the state is viewed as the primary motor for the process of racialisation and is taken as a central site of investigation, the relationship between race and nationalism comes into much clearer focus. Looking at the relationship between race and nation through the locus of the state provides a framework for overcoming the analytical separation that has hindered an understanding of the interactions of these three concepts, and for seeing state-development, racial ideas and national identity as interlocking relationships, mediated through one another. Thus while the process of nation-building cannot be considered outside that of state formation, neither of these can be considered effectively outside of the context of racial ideas and the construction of racial ideologies.
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