

Routledge Studies in the History of the Americas

THE MIDDLE CLASSES IN LATIN AMERICA

SUBJECTIVITIES, PRACTICES, AND GENEALOGIES

Edited by

Mario Barbosa Cruz, A. Ricardo López-Pedreros, and Claudia Stern



The Middle Classes in Latin America

As a collective effort, this volume locates the formation of the middle classes at the core of the histories of Latin America in the last two centuries. Featuring scholars from different places across the Americas, it is an interdisciplinary contribution to the world histories of the middle classes, histories of Latin America, and intersectional studies. It also engages a larger audience about the importance of the middle classes to understand modernity, democracy, neoliberalism, and decoloniality. By including research produced from a variety of Latin American, North American, and other audiences, the volume incorporates trends in social history, cultural studies, and discursive theory. It situates analytical categories of race and gender at the core of class formation. This volume seeks to initiate a critical and global conversation concerning the ways in which the analysis of the middle classes provides crucial re-readings of how Latin America, as a region, has historically been understood.

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Roles and Discourses of the Radical Middle Class in Ecuador between 1895 and 1938

Valeria Coronel

This chapter analyzes the discourses and political interventions of the Radical Party's middle-class activists who were instrumental in the revolutionary war of 1895 and in the subsequent institutionalization of the national state up until the mid-1920s. By researching the formation of the National Army and the Ministry of Public Education—two pillars of social integration and citizenship—we can observe how this sector of the middle-class responded to calls for integration from the popular classes.

We contend that the shift in Ecuadorian politics in 1925 ushered in by the Juliana Revolution confirmed and expanded the sphere of influence of middle-class activists who helped build the nation-state; it also broadened the organization of the lower-income sectors that called for the upholding rights connected to the nation-state's democratic construction. This sector of the middle class became most visible during this time of change due to its sustained interest in public education and in the social programs of the newly formed state agencies. These state organs provided a locus for a dialogue between the middle classes and the popular classes demanding rights; they were also at the center of (often-conflictive) encounters with a ruling elite that had a firm grip on property ownership and class privileges, and that fiercely opposed regulations that both the secular and reformist state sought to impose on it during a period of global upheaval. While the revolutionary forces and political antagonisms saw the middle-class leaders and lower-class militia joining forces during the republican wars, the state organs provided a place where the lower classes, public officials, and where those pushing for the country's democratization throughout the first half of the twentieth century could enter into dialogue. Members of the ruling elite bristled when these middle-class actors spoke as figures of public authority; the former considered the latter's close relationship to the lower classes to be politically motivated, both in terms of collective political action and in the use of law and litigation. The middle class was in fact pivotal as a political connection with the expanding, organized popular processes to help promote the creation of an inclusive state that also embraced the popular

classes, and to foster a public environment that was supportive of this process—a factor still largely overlooked by current historiography.

We must analyze the militant discourse of the middle classes connected to the public administration and the creation of the nation-state in light of the experiences of its dialogue, antagonisms, and political connections with actors of other social classes. It gained its own identity and voice in a "relational" space—in other words, within the context of conflicts and power relations in which these middle-class members often acted with various degrees of decisiveness as agents representing a nation under construction.

To interpret this process requires us to consider a number of elements: war, political rivalries, public debate in the Parliament, the national teaching profession, land disputes, ministerial reports, and in the public sphere (including newspaper articles and literary works). There we can find records left by the actors closely involved in social events and learn about their discourses from the perspective of public officialdom. Moreover, literature from this period offers us a key to understanding some actors who faced certain risks and who showed sensitivity in situations of social conflict. They emerge as agents who activate and strengthen the meanings of republican democratic language, and their self-reflection, among other things, leads to a shift in aesthetic and political language. In this sense, rather than considering them as technical tools of the state, these people were reflexive subjects within certain fields who opened up a democratic path through the political struggles of two historical cycles, and formed their own identity during this process.

Although there are clearly many different ways of defining the middle class, here we focus on public officials who supported the aims of the democratic transition as proposed by the national-popular discourse of the democratic revolution. We have chosen not to examine those aspects of the middle class relating to the social mobility coordinated by ethnic communities, mainly connected to strategies of creating social rifts within the popular sectors and among campesinos who managed to raise some of their members into higher-status positions through market-oriented, identity-based, and cultural strategies.¹ Nor do we intend to reveal the different processes of social differentiation and middle-class formation based on employment or income in Ecuador during the decades in question, a specific subject area in Ecuadorian historical studies.²

In the following section we refer to various historiographical studies on the role of these middle-class actors with links to the state. We refer to a paradoxical coincidence, a negative image of the radicalized middle class contained in conservative early-twentieth-century historiographical, revisionist, Latin American neo-Marxist, and post-modern accounts. Countering these academic approaches, our aim is to reconstruct the significant contribution made by this sector of the radical, socialist middle class toward supporting the integration and rights of the popular class as part of two democratic programs: the state reforms following the 1895 democratic revolution and during the decades of global crisis until the late 1930s. We reappraise this sector's role in building democratic institutions, supporting the suffrage of the popular classes, developing social rights, and fighting to include the popular sectors in Ecuador's national culture. We analyze the discourse that seeks to delegitimize the middle class, while also reconstructing the perspectives of radical public officials and leaders about their role in giving visibility to the lower classes as full members of Ecuadorian society and participants in the construction of its democracy.

Reassessing the Signs of Inter-Class Political Connections

Ecuadorian historiography frequently returns to the image of subjects belonging neither to the ruling elite nor to the popular classes, but who nevertheless played a leading political role in establishing state institutions between the late nineteenth century and the end of World War II. Liberal historical accounts often use the trope of a leadership based on military fraternity rather than status. This image suggests that republican clashes gave birth to the modern political nation and the democratic process.³ In contrast, conservative historiographical studies have insisted on defining the revolutionary military leaders' rise to power as part of dictatorial processes due to these figures' middle-class backgrounds and the context of popular classes clamoring for their rights; these studies have defended a vision of social order being linked to the concept of authority, and viewed the distinguished members of the educated elites as the sole legitimate leaders of the Catholic Nation. At the same time, conservative Hispanism delegitimized the heroism of the radicalized middle class and of the Indigenous communities who aspired to be part of an Indo-American political nation. For Hispanist historiography, the communities mentioned so frequently by the radicalized middle class were not heirs to any remarkable ancient civilization and their struggle was merely a result of their leaders' manipulation; only colonial Catholic institutions and Hispanism could be identified with the origin of Ecuador as a nation.⁴ An academic and party-political debate over the nation's cultural origins and classes between the liberal, radical, and conservative forces was overshadowed by the pessimism of the new Marxist's view on Latin American republicanism.

Alongside the narrative of the predestined failure of the democratic dispute in Latin America came a pessimistic reading—rooted in dependency theory—about middle-class aspirations for agency in the democracy, with an ability to mitigate the violence between the elites and the general public in a racist society. From this perspective, the middle-class militants who had challenged Hispanism, *gamonalism*,⁵ and imperialism during the first half of the twentieth century had been a naïve group that had diverted the popular revolution into the treacherous terrain of bourgeois democracy.

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Cultural studies connected to Latin America's school of sociological and scientific thought of the 1970s tended to take a pessimistic view, sometimes ridiculing middle-class intellectuals and figures in their attempt to supplant the culture of power handed down through the generations of the ruling elites by calling upon the national-popular discourse, introducing concepts such as ventriloquy and manipulation.⁶ Others referred to a hidden agenda behind this middle-class democratic discourse, namely the aim to build a mestizo nation. This prompted literary critic Abdón Ubidia to refer to the impossibility for the liberal mestizo to play a role in Ecuador's history: "[...] the full-length mirror that he needs to recognize his own identity does not actually exist: his mestizo existence is merely a series of fragments that are impossible to connect..."⁷

The postmodern discourse has keenly adopted this gloomy perspective in global cultural studies as the basis for disparaging regional political processes and key moments in Latin American plebiscitary democracies, writing them off as authoritarian, populist movements, while simultaneously searching for a cultural otherness as the continent's offer in the midst of the crisis in late-stage capitalism.⁸

Taking a different tack, this chapter examines some lessons learned from new Latin American political history, showing how lower-class republicanisms and popular national processes in Latin America constituted experiences in political connectedness; in these instances, heterogeneous political subjects applied creativity and complexity in using political languages in disputes for power, proving effective to counteract the de facto power of oligarchic pacts. As such, they provided a field of comparative analysis on the formation of the modern world and the nation-state.

This chapter argues that in the dynamics of power negotiations that underlie the more abstract political rhetoric, the Ecuadorian state contains-among its legacies and sediments-aspects that translate into formative processes of democratic political mediations, including social agency and negotiations between inter-class movements that incorporated a section of the middle classes, particularly in the first decade of the liberal state and during the 1930s. Ecuador is the case of a country in which radicalism shaped the state's development during the first two decades of the twentieth century and where the global crisis was the backdrop for a state reform driven forward by a cross-party block that combined democratic and socialist elements.9 In relational theories applied to the state, research reveals the creation of a relatively autonomous public power that inspired initiatives that tended toward establishing control over the forms of imperialist and oligarchical domination and accumulation, constituting processes based on plebiscitary legitimacy.¹⁰ This type of question arises specifically in early-twenty-first-century Latin America when disputes over alternatives to neoliberal governments consider the formation of states with contrasting outlooks.

This chapter seeks to indicate areas in which the middle class operated after they made the transition from revolutionary activities to building up public power and the national imaginary as a platform for a cultural discourse. Its own identity is questioned by the different class extremes; its knowledge encompasses scientific rules and technical procedures, but it only takes effect to challenge the power of the ruling elites.

The Divisive Social Status of Radical Leaders and of "Cholo-Jacobins" in the Democratic Process

In 1894, Ecuador had four officially recognized political parties. A portrait of their respective leaders was taken for a photographic composition in a catalog sent by Ecuador to the Universal Expo of Chicago in that same year.¹¹ Those appearing were Camilo Ponce (Conservative Party); Pedro Carbo (a patrician member of the Liberal Party); José María Plácido Caamaño (an aristocrat and leader of the ruling Progresista Party); and Eloy Alfaro (the son of storeowners from the Manabí province and a military commander with strong support among the popular classes, included as the leader of the Radical Party).

Eloy Alfaro's inclusion reflects President Luis Cordero's aim to ensure peace during a time of global economic expansion, lifting the censorship of the Radical Party and inviting its leader to sit at the same table as the parties of the ruling elite. In contrast to other countries, attempts to stamp out radicalism in Ecuador had failed. If the idea of including radical leaders alongside the predominant oligarchical parties had been successful, it would have changed the course of history. In this chapter, we propose that two factors prevented the forces of ultramontanism from modeling the nation-state in the late-nineteenth-century transition: (a) radicalism was formed as a political tendency that articulated sectors of the regional elite and the smaller, more local elites on the peripheries, as well as a heterogeneous mix of popular collectives and classes in Ecuador's different regions; (b) the ruling class was not a homogenous entity, partly due to the influence of the transnational clergy, which limited its capacity to drive forward a process of efficient political integration and imposed the superiority of the Church's interests and its state agents.

Even at the dawn of the twentieth century, this situation continued to prevent the success of conservative republicanism. Conservatives and progressives adhered to the ultramontane creed. In 1894, the clergy objected to the participation of senator Felicísimo López, elected by popular vote to represent Esmeraldas in the Senate, because of his past as a liberal, excommunicated for criticizing the clergy's financial accounts. The clergy weakened the state, threatened its finances, stirred up conflicts among regional elites, and usurped their control over the most important areas of social interventions, preventing institutionalization itself.

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Bishop Schumacher, the head of the clergy, warned against the political use of patriotic symbols, accusing the "Reds" of entering into an "impious competition" for patriotic and sacred symbols; he criticized the erection of the statue of Sucre on Plaza de Santo Domingo in Quito (on April 24, 1894); he lodged complaints against the *Diario de Avisos* (Guayaquil) and *Democracia* (Portoviejo) newspapers for entering into the debate over the hierarchy of laws. Along with Massiá—the Carlist bishop of Loja—Schumacher attempted to prevent the veneration of patriotic symbols among the lower classes for being the proselytizing work of "committees" and the "Red" and liberal literary circles. In 1895, Schumacher sent urgent letters to protest against the small regional elites and radical leaders' "rabble-rousing" among the popular classes to lower the level of politics "with false democratic rhetoric." He said that they had been impious in raising up the lowest strata of society—"the radical hordes in the Chone jungles."

The radical leaders had indeed stirred up conflict through the radical press, and using a tried-and-tested republican language they succeeded in alerting public opinion by protesting against "the sale of the flag"—namely, President Cordero's lending of Ecuador's national flag to Chile, enabling the latter to sell a ship to Japan, triggering a public outcry across the country. The lowerclass elements among the democratic republican supporters took over the lead from the elite parties in the political sphere. Alfaro did not represent a regional oligarchical faction, but led a party that had sealed a pact between the bourgeoisie and the campesino population around the country, inviting them to join in a national ideal, which, according to the Gramscian definition, constituted a Jacobin route. This was a historic movement that had survived throughout the nineteenth century and had built up significant power on successive occasions, as well as experience in government.

By launching a campaign to protect patriotic symbols from the power of the transnational clergy and the oligarchy's secret deals, they managed to organize various sectors of society into something that Alfaro called a new revolutionary cycle. In this process, they articulated the most deeply rooted class disputes, involving Indigenous campesinos who had long opposed the expansion of the hacienda system and the payment of the *diezmo* or tithe to the Church, while also fanning the flames of the struggle for democracy—a cause supported by the middle classes and peripheral elites in various parts of the country. The connection made by leaders and radicalized middle classes with patriotic symbols was not merely part of a doctrinaire rhetoric; it lay at the heart of a strategy of making political linkages between different social groups for collective action.

This situation explains how, at the cusp of the twentieth century, this body that had accumulated power over the years, holding up the flag of the national discourse, triumphed over the conservative armies, and pronounced itself in charge as the national revolutionary government in 1895. After Alfaro had secured his definitive rule with transitional governments led by political-military leaders, the revolutionary government decided to give institutional democratic shape to the military triumph and announced a constitutional assembly in 1896. Deputies from existing parties attended this assembly and, although the presence was required of members of the ultramontane progressive and conservative opposition, the liberal and radical parties formed the largest contingent. The political elites viewed the rise of radical leaders to the position of deputies, and the presence of the popular classes around Parliament, as illegitimate—an affront to the nation they considered the property of the patriotic aristocracy of the *cabildos* or councils, in other words, of the educated elites rather than the masses.¹²

The elites feared encounters with assemblymen of lower-class origin, as opposed to the patrician members of the cabildo of Guayaquil, whom they recognized as the Liberal Party elites. After the war they found themselves sitting next to radicals who had acquired their status as leaders during the military campaign and who demanded a nation that included the lowerclass militia, Blacks, and Indigenous people. They consistently sought to delegitimize their representation in Congress, despite controlling the executive branch. This rejection was always connected to their mocking of "tropical men" not of the educated elite but instead surrounded by "manipulated" campesinos who tried to act as though they had equal political rights or who were supported by international Freemasonry. From exile, the transnational clergy incited anger about the "debasement" of politics that invigorated these radicalized, middle-income sectors:

[...] that mass of arrogant, impious, and ill-mannered men taken by the Freemasons into the galleries of the National Congress, that group of Cholo-Jacobins were brought and paid to drown the voices of all the Catholic speakers and intimidate them with their howls and threats, whereas upon a signal they applauded any impious proposition made by the Masonic lodge.¹³

Nevertheless, records show that there were as many educated men as military leaders among the Radical Party's representatives, and even among the radical deputies of the congresses from 1896 to 1898.¹⁴

The liberal elites found common cause with their conservative counterparts on this issue. Luis Felipe Borja, for example, agreed with the conservatives in describing the phobia displayed toward the military leaders acting as senators and the ranks of soldiers supporting their arguments. He called them "uncouth soldiery" who disguised themselves as civilians to attend Congress and to intimidate the genuine public following the orders of their leaders, the upper level among the plebeians who manipulated them. This connected the anti-plebeian and anti-military discourses: the revolutionaries—due to their humble origins and despite their efforts to pacify political forces and settle differences by democratic means—became associated with dictators who protected themselves by manipulating the lower classes.

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Manuel María Arízaga and Juan de Dios Corral, representing ultramontane forces, along with the liberal aristocrats Luis Felipe Borja and Juan Benigno Vela, launched a defamation campaign against the revolutionary leader, Manuel Antonio Franco, whom they considered one of the most influential members of this imagined lower-class "tyranny." Franco had forged his leadership as a commander of guerrilla forces in the Esmeraldas province among young patriots and militia of African descent. He had been appointed the political and military leader in the Pichincha province, setting up a revolutionary government in Quito known for redistributing lands and empowering the organized Indigenous workers on the haciendas of Conservative leaders. Strongly supported by the militia, Franco was elected representative for the Assembly, and touted as Alfaro's potential successor to be presidential candidate imagined by the radical majorities.

The Conservative newspaper *Fray Gerundio* referred to him as "humble" on account of his origins, insulting him as "riff-raff" and a "tiger" for his military career and campaigns in the countryside, an "innkeeper" for his style of communicating with different classes, and a "tyrant" for imposing power of the people. The ultramontane figures called for the "tigers" to be removed from Parliament and prevented from submitting their candidacy for the executive branch:

Outlaws, showing off some talent or other, somehow recruit fellow soldiers for their criminal enterprises, like Abelardo Moncayo, for example [...] seducing gangs of hardened upstarts. But what kind of riff-raff, unbearable men, a cross between gorilla and tiger, lacking any higher quality, can find support among the sons of a nation that so often has proclaimed itself KING, hardworking and educated, kind and just; this is the most abject disaster. What answer will we receive from these humble men, to describe them politely, who conjured up what has now become a dreadful reality, supposing that traces of patriotism still exist in the leader of the hordes of 1895? Let us all perish before consenting to a former innkeeper from the coast of Ecuador laying his blood-stained hands on the presidential staff.¹⁵

The radicals responded by saying that the Revolution had regenerated the nation and restored its sovereignty, and that they could legitimately form its government. They also argued that the way forward was to show their majority support, both in the National Assembly and in the ballots, referring to a majority that included even the most reluctant liberals, who remained prepared to ratify their power in the ruling party. Meanwhile, the ultramontane conservatives oscillated between war and attempting to regain their positions of power within the state. Therefore, the constitutional agenda of the radical liberal block imposed the idea of separating Church and State and broadening suffrage to go beyond the strictures of religion. It achieved this objective through a number of means: by launching a campaign to redefine electoral registers, removing the clerical and gamonal control on voting, and including sectors of the population mobilized during the years of conflict. These sectors established a presence in strategic towns, and included all those who had learned how to sign, such as the troops and those who had become literate thanks to the priority given to the state's public, secular, and compulsory education system. This agenda led to the "threat" of an expanding democracy, in a move whereby the top echelons of radicalism used electoral means to attract the support of the armed forces and a hitherto-invisible general public.

The reactionary discourse, meanwhile, focused on leveling accusations of widespread electoral fraud, connected to the idea of plebeian leaders as manipulators of "garroteros"—a term used in Ecuador by conservative forces to disparage the lowest strata of the militia, national guards, and volunteers, described as paupers, wretched mercenaries of the tyrannical designs of the plebeian "innkeeper" leaders and "tigers" who had risen to power. Even after the assassination of the radical leadership in 1912, the defamation campaign continued to discredit the electoral processes that gave predominance to the Liberal Party until 1923.

As I discussed in another article on the elections in the first decade after the revolution,¹⁶ the rapid conversion of voluntary militia forces into public officials—in addition to the literacy campaign—constituted a genuine political force capable of reflecting the democratically elected power achieved through mobilization. In 1896, there were 1,646 public officials with military backgrounds, including second lieutenants, captains, sergeants, colonels, as well as eight generals who were war veterans. Between 1896 and 1902, the year of the first presidential elections, organized under electoral laws that benefitted the secular voting rights for the public, these numbers swelled with the army's formal establishment, with 6,000 troops and the recognition of 50,000 volunteers enlisted as national guards, causing a veritable political tsunami.¹⁷

Soldiers from the lower classes entertaining electoral ambitions, and the mushrooming of the National Guard, struck fear into the heart of the political elite. Thanks to their presence on the 1902 electoral register, the military and others now included in a broader electoral register could submit their candidate: Manuel Antonio Franco. This threatened to mark a radical path that could play into the hands of the lower classes in the future. In his 1896 report as Minister of War, Juan Francisco Morales emphasized how the revolutionary militia formed a completely new core of the national army, and how the army's identity and social base was instrumental in defining the nation:

Almost the entire Army is new; and even though its ranks include some older veteran soldiers who understand strategies, ordinances, and more military laws, we should remember how it formed. The vast

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majority of Ecuadorians rushed to improvise battalions on the battlefields to wash away the stain that the party of terror stamped on the glorious flag left to us by our forefathers, clean and pure, by giving us our Nation, Independence, and Liberty.¹⁸

Responding to the elite's discourse, the minister argued that that section of the population had virtues,

[...] that making up for the (continued) lack of education and discipline that distinguishes the true soldier with studies and a professional career, their love of country inspired them to enter the fray. Their intelligence and bravery have counted for more than previous education, and served them best in battle...

he also proposed reforming the laws of 1876, 1885, and 1886, which contained a series of exceptions through privilege so that the national guards could be formed through a universal, compulsory draft, to include men from all social classes and political stripes:¹⁹

We must do our best to minimize the many exceptions in the law [...] note the homogeneity in the troops of the National Guard, of its individual members, in order to remove any excuse for avoiding enlistment, which must be compulsory for everyone [...] to militarize the population.²⁰

The radical leaders were not delicate, novice members of the middle class who had reached political power simply to simulate fake alternatives to gamonal and oligarchical power, as suggested in revisionist historiography. On the contrary, they owed their leadership and most probably governance of the nation-state to dialog, representation, and political management; the radicalized middle class achieved this among a much broader and more mobilized section of the population under the slogan of the people and therefore followed the path of forming that nationstate and an electoral democracy. The elites' reluctance to follow an alternative path of integration, complete with a discourse with a wider appeal, paved the way for an alternative, bottom-up democracy in which the radicalized middle class in public positions played a critical role in connecting different classes and, at the same time, creating a nation-state's political intelligence.

Building the Nation-State and Establishing a Militant Bureaucracy

The party's internal negotiations prevented Franco from becoming the first president elected by popular vote in 1902. Alfaro's preference for pacification—instead of allowing the popular forces to define the path of the revolutionary and democratic process through electoral means—led to a peace agreement with the rebel faction of the ultra-conservative forces. They laid down their arms in exchange for a middle-class candidate less radical than Franco: Leonidas Plaza. The party was the predominant political force at the ballot box for two decades, during which the reactionary forces made constant accusations of fraud as they failed to acknowledge the Revolution and the people at the heart of the democracy.

Between 1900 and 1925, the institutionalization of the National Army and the Ministry of Public Education created employment for a middle class instilled in republican values and knowledge and who by then were on a mission to make an impact on society from a position of power.

The bureaucratic apparatus linked to the National Army went through phases of professionalization. Of particular note were those who entered the bureaucratic apparatus through collective action during the revolution and those who followed the route offered by the Colegio Militar, the Escuela de Oficiales, and the Escuela de Clases entering as students. These institutions connected military strategy, civilian authority, and other areas of knowledge to the state's program of territorial integration through the fields of engineering and national infrastructure. Even before this, the army was an institution that assembled revolutionary militia, troops, and leaders from the country's peripheral areas into a force that defended the democratic constitutions. It is no coincidence that one of the fundamental debates about the growth of democracy and people's suffrage focused on the issue of the votes of soldiers from campesino backgrounds, and their radical leaders who undertook training and consolidated their power of constitutional supervision in the institution of the nation-state.

The field of public education was also instrumental for the plans of the popular classes' national integration and an area of work of the republican middle class. They accepted the constitutional mandate for children's compulsory education across urban and rural parts of a country that had reached a higher level than religious education had ever aspired, or been able, to achieve. Education initiatives were handled by planning departments and with local follow-up; participants included interdisciplinary educators, inspectors, infrastructure works, curricula, assessments, and the state also produced unprecedentedly accurate statistics. These show the evolution in the number of schools, enrollments, and the teaching profession's structure. The size, composition, and other characteristics of the profession reveal how the constant efforts to support an expanding middle class linked public commitments to the general public. Compulsory secular education laid the foundations for technical and professional education, and promoted a critical perspective on national reality that formed a part of the civic education for the majorities and permeated the approach of teachers, journalists, and intellectuals. Our contention is that this formed part of the democratic strategy and that it made a lasting impact on the creation of a citizenry that demanded its rights between

1925 and 1945. The civilian and military junta that took over control of the state in 1925, in opposition to the banking elite, and in the midst of the crisis, grouped together representatives of the middle class with professional military experience and imbued with civic values thanks to the liberal radical school, socialism, and the Italian school. This junta supported education as the basis for social integration and the "consolidation of nationality." The horizon of Alfaro's revolution was broadened by socialist public officials of the reformed state.²¹

In this sense, the socialist educationalist Emilio Uzcátegui, a participant in the liberal government and then in reformist politics in the field of public education, formulated a key argument in understanding how education had been fundamental for the progress of the militant middle class and society in its broadest sense, defined as the "pueblo" during four decades. He argued that the state reforms between the 1920s and 1940s had deepened the cardinal principles established by Alfaro's revolution of 1895. He emphasized the importance of integrating populations to the nation "freeing them from gamonalism," by providing an education in law, moral virtues, and national identity. That had been the work of the radicals, continued by the liberal regime, and later resumed in the 1930s during the left's most intense effort to produce politicized citizens: lawyers, teachers, and socialist technocrats who not only thought about matters of state but also contributed to them. To deepen and consolidate the progress of the reformed state, educators called for functional representation at the highest level of government—in parliament and other areas demanding the commitment of an increasing state budget, converting this duty of political representation into a new chapter in the state's role as an upholder of legal protection. After referring to the ministry's core principles of free primary and secular public education, Uzcátegui argues that the reformist constitutions between the 1920s and 1940s, under the banner of democratic socialism, bolstered these values already established in the strengthening of liberal radical governance since 1905. Uzcátegui also emphasized the progress of the 1929 Constitution which, alongside radical issues such as the social role of property, created the functional representation of teachers in the National Congress and ordered the annual increase in the national budget, demanding 20% of the total national income. The 1944-1945 Constitution confirmed education's position at the core of the state's organic function-the foundations of Ecuador's education-starting by declaring it to lie within the state's remit. The broadening horizons are shown by the articulation between the central state and municipal districts campaigning against illiteracy, expanding technical education, and guarantees of teachers' and students' freedom to organize in national unions, and the stability of those working at every level of the teaching profession.²²

An analysis of public education statistics reveals the trend for budgetary increases in education between 1938 and 1942, rising from 13.69% of the total budget for 1938 to 18.5% in 1941.²³ This increase led to more schools and teachers: the number of teachers rose from 5,253 in 1938 to 6,404 in 1942. The majority of these educators belonged directly to the fiscal regime, including the trainee teachers or *normalistas* whose number increased from 852 to 1,279. The information about primary school teachers broken down by length of service for the years 1942–1943²⁴ reveals that 795 teachers—equivalent to 12.37% of all teachers—had joined the primary school system in the later stages of the liberal period (1918–1923), whereas 1,655 (25.74%) had done so during the "Juliano" period (1924–1933) and 3,979, corresponding to 61.89% of all teachers, had signed up between 1934 and 1943.²⁵

In 1929, after the enactment of a constitution that promised to uphold citizens social and legal rights, the education sector's growth was consolidated with a complementary focus on organizations focusing on social problems. The state facilitated means of integral planning, oriented toward creating holders of rights.²⁶ The Ministry of Work and Social Welfare (Ministerio de Previsión Social y Trabajo, MPST) became the center of legal and political knowledge, with its technocrats studying and guiding state justice to address issues about rural landownership, and intervening to regulate the relationship between labor and capital. Public officials, who were members of the politically informed middle class, referred to "repairing" sections of the population through exercises in distributive justice to guarantee the economic autonomy of the lower classes, as a means of expanding their political rights.

The 1928 Constitution promoted by Julianos and socialists gave priority to the role of property in society, requiring social organization as a right, as well as its democratic representation as social citizenry within the framework of the legislative branch and state control. The joint labors of the education and social welfare ministries formed part of a political program that sought relative autonomy of public power, based on an expansion and appraisal of the lower class as an active political subject in processes of plebiscitary legitimation. The push for public officials' functional representation in the legislative branch accompanied the equivalent representation of workers and Indigenous people, among other subjects of social citizenship.

The militant middle class working in the public sector not only engaged in rhetoric, and its organization was not simply about union demands; it also developed a program of democratic expansion and the construction of social rights. In shaping the national union, one of the main objectives was to defend the state's expansion of the citizenry. The "social citizenry" was a new category of legal and political citizenry with recourse to justice and state institutions. Therefore the teaching union—recognized as the result of the agreement between the leaders of liberal socialism, Alberto Enríquez Gallo, and the assemblies of teachers from every province in April 1938—established objectives that were not solely related to union activities. For example, it sought to set up assemblies to consider and form elected representatives, ranging from the level of communities up to a national scale, and including every category of teaching professional being treated as equal.

Egalitarianism was not limited to the different hierarchical levels; women could participate as citizens who could vote and stand for elections for government positions, and, notably, middle-class women could also run for Senate positions, and Indigenous communities, workers, along with other collective actors, were able to enjoy upward social mobility between 1929 and 1946.²⁷

Whereas the judiciary traditionally curbed the transformative zeal of constitutions and legislations to uphold citizens' rights inspired by radical and socialist ideas,²⁸ the MPST tribunal—a key locus for legal and sociological issues relating to the middle class—was able to resolve social conflicts to mitigate inequalities with a view to boosting national economic integration and increasing guarantees of political rights. Public officials and technocrats were connected to the Socialist Party, while left-wing militants were the union lawyers for the communities involved in conflicts. The middle-class elements of the popular fronts and in public-sector employment found an important space in the MPST. Together with the Education Ministry, it formed a part of the functional representation before the Parliament.

Legal experts and intellectuals working closely with communist Indigenous movements added dynamism to this state department, supporting claims and constructing a public sphere supportive of ministry officials' controversial decisions on property and the business sector's compliance with the progressive social rights promoted by these two political forces in the legislative branch. The landowning elites initially reacted with incredulity to this institution represented by the middle class—which examined land issues and encouraged isolated sectors of society to join in national affairs. Then they turned violent and embarked on a political reorganization of the political right.

In *El maestro Mariano Guamán, según la versión de su colega Aurelio Benítez*, the socialist narrator Ángel Felicísimo Rojas evokes a middleclass subject who puts himself at risk while working as a public official for the Ministry of Education, representing the government in rural Ecuador. The story describes Guamán from the public perspective, and as a mediator in the field of social conflict.²⁹ This public official moves between apparently disconnected settings and his subjective voice emerges from how he is affected by the destabilization of his role within the framework of the varied fields or territories of social relations and discursive authority. This instability is his strength, as it produces a critical gaze, a modern sentimental education—a modernity that enables him to think about the national republican and democratic project in a colonial society.

Various reports from the MPST technocrats in the territories of conflict between landowners and communities translate the tension they experienced as militants in the construction of citizenry and holders of rights; they bear witness to the fragility of its middle-class condition, the result of social mobility rejected on two levels by the elite: for its inferior status, and for aspiring to represent power at a national level. As such, they relate the impact of losing the status gained through education, appearance, and employment due to the humiliation that placed them on the side of the nation marked by racial prejudices and by the complex mission of representing the country from a position of public power.

Rojas's account describes a character attached to the Education Department whose emotional distress prevents him from rising up the ranks of the liberal profession. Forced into becoming a rural school inspector, he has to apply the positivist techniques to evaluate rural schools. In a critique about the shortcomings of a functionalist perspective on society, Benítez distances himself from the director of studies, "an enthusiastic supporter of endocrinology" and its influence on emotions, and his journey takes him to the "famous school of the *cacique* Curimillma" and to the bright professor Mariano Guamán, in whose hands the community had deposited "with some solemnity, old documents" that triggered numerous lawsuits filed by citizens from rural parts of the country, who travelled to the capital to lodge their complaints with the MPST and the National Congress.

When describing the indigenous teacher, the writing transcends the ministerial style and Benítez's identity; Guamán's identity refuses to be "essentialized" in indigenous stereotypes. Guamán knew how to read the opportunities to accumulate wealth, and was adept at moving between the campesino and business worlds, connecting the official documents and languages of the country's central government to its heterogeneous territories and communities. Guamán moved between the interior rural world, the business world, and the leadership that activated the memory of long-running conflicts. Benítez read in Guamán's reflection his own condition as a subject transiting between various settings and having to construct his feeling about this experience. The technical layout of the form sought to tie the bureaucratic report to technocratic and positivist questions. However, Benítez-a middle-class radical and reflective publicsector employee—adds a twist to the narrative by voicing deep, political thoughts and connections to the indigenous teacher Guamán. This subjective connection is expressed in the narrative, highlighting to the reader that the formation of that nation-state is produced in the relationships between subjects in the territory, political relations, narratives, and encounters of historical records in the formation of modern Ecuador.

Several studies have described the social hygiene movement in the strategy of the liberal and reformed states' governance,³⁰ a discourse developed around the thesis of the Ecuadorian state's authoritarian path. In contrast, this chapter proposes that governability was based on complex political calculations and on the development of democratic

instruments, including the offers of integration and gradual democratization that ran through the formation of the state's different branches; in this regard, the creation of a middle class closely connected to labor and the production of the public discourse was essential. An integral assessment of this problem of democratic mechanisms in play calls for an indepth study. Those enrolled and the civil servants, as well as the population involved in the society–state arrangements that provide a public service, are relevant, similarly to the middle-class categorization linked to the civil service and the type of the political language that it produces.

In the civil service we can observe languages used in political disputes. These do not correspond to the image of a depoliticized society or to a sector of society seeking to climb the social ladder under the guise of representing the popular classes: the middle class participates strategically in public discourses, builds up expert knowledge and critical perspectives, and creates literary accounts. Together this suggests the creation of a voice that emerges in the interpretation of the social conflict, the existence of subjects who collaborate in the political and cultural debate to ensure the reproduction of the state and nation against other alternative power configurations tied to the construction of the people. Both cycles of disputes over the consolidation of public power in Ecuador between 1895 and 1945 created conditions that, despite boosting economic growth and leading to new forms of inequality, can also be considered cycles of democratic experimentation going against the tide of oligarchical power. The discourse around this issue, and the public gaze constructed by the militant middle class, takes shape through social conflict, threatened by those opposing the involvement of the lower classes in politics, thus restoring the status and power of the "Republic" and the "People."

Notes

- 1 See Christiana Borchart de Moreno's "Las tierras de comunidad de Licto, Punín y Macaxi: Factores para su disminución e intentos de restauración," *Revista Andina*, no. 2 (December 1988) and Karen Powers, "Señores dinámicos e indios vagabundos: Riqueza migración y transformación reproductiva de los cacicazgos de Quito, 1600–1700," *Memoria*, II (November 1992).
- 2 Cecilia Durán, Irrupción del sector burócrata en el estado ecuatoriano, 1925– 1944: Perspectiva a partir del análisis de la vida cotidiana de Quito (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2000) and Eduardo Kingman, La ciudad y los otros: Quito 1860– 1940; Higienismo, ornato y policía (Quito: Flacso; Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 2006).
- 3 Modern radical historiography reveals the influence of Roman authors, such as Tacitus, in books on the Revolution. For the Ecuadorian case, see Pedro Moncayo, *El Ecuador de 1825 a 1875, sus hombres, sus instituciones y sus leyes* (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1906 [1886]), or for the Colombian case, included in Sergio Mejía, *La Revolución en Letras: La Historia de la Revolución de Colombia de José Manuel Restrepo (1781–1863)* (Bogotá: Ceso; Ediciones Uniandes; Universidad EAFIT, 2007). This narrative is also present in autobiographical accounts, for example in Eloy Alfaro's Narraciones

históricas (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional, 1983 [1884]), in Jorge Isaacs' Liberal novel, *María* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1974 [1867]) or Luis A. Martínez's *A la costa* (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana; Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1992 [1906]).

- 4 Guillermo Bustos, *El culto a la nación: Escritura de la historia y rituales de la memoria en Ecuador, 1870–1950* (Quito: FCE; UASB, 2017).
- 5 Gamonalism is the term given by Andean socialist thinkers to a power structure related to land ownership blending religious, political, and private-sector interests, benefitting local elites.
- 6 Andrés Guerrero, *Administración de poblaciones, ventriloquía y transescritura* (Quito: Flacso, 2010).
- 7 Abdón Ubidia, prologue to *El Cojo Navarrete* by Enrique Terán (Quito: Campaña de Lectura Eugenio Espejo, 2009), 9–11.
- 8 Guerrero argues that the indigenous only expressed themselves directly in 1991, without the mediation of democratic language.
- 9 Valeria Coronel, A Revolution in Stages: Subaltern Politics, Nation-State Formation, and the Origins of Social Rights in Ecuador, 1834–1943 (New York: ProQuest, 2011).
- 10 This idea also forms a part of historical sociology's relational theories of the state. See Viviane Brachet-Márquez and Mónica Uribe Gómez, coords., *Estado y sociedad en América Latina: Acercamientos relacionales* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2016).
- 11 Gobierno Nacional, *El Ecuador en Chicago* (New York: A. E. Chasmar & Cía, 1894), 30.
- 12 Federica Morelli, "Entre el Antiguo y el Nuevo Régimen: El triunfo de los cuerpos intermedios; El caso de la Audiencia de Quito, 1765–1830," Procesos, *Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia 21* (II semester 2004): 89–113.
- 13 Pedro Schumacher, ¿Teocracia ó Demonocracia? ¿Cristo ó Lucifer? ¿Quién ha de vencer? ¿Quién como Dios! (Lima: Imprenta y Librería de San Pedro, 1897), 16.
- 14 On the origins of radicalism's military leaders, see Tatiana Hidrovo Quiñónez, *Estado, sociedad e insurgencia en Manabí 1860–1895* (Quito: UASB; Corporación Editora Nacional, 2018).
- 15 Fray Gerundio (Lima), Nov. 4, 1900.
- 16 Valeria Coronel, Revolución, republicanismo democrático e intransigencia: Contienda en torno al sufragio popular en el Ecuador de 1895 a 1902 (forthcoming).
- 17 Juan Francisco Morales, Informe del Ministro de Guerra y Marina a la Convención Nacional de 1896 (Guayaquil: Imprenta del Comercio de J. B. Amat y Luna, 1896).
- 18 Morales, Informe del Ministro.
- 19 Morales, Informe del Ministro.
- 20 Morales, Informe del Ministro.
- 21 Durán, Irrupción del sector burócrata.
- 22 Emilio Uzcátegui, "Visión panorámica de la Educación en el Ecuador," *Revista Ecuatoriana de Educación*, year VII (September–October 1954).
- 23 In collaboration with Fernando Muñoz-Miño in Sociología Histórica y Política del Estado ecuatoriano (Quito: Flacso; Fondo de Desarrollo Académico 2019–2020).
- 24 Dirección Nacional de Estadística, *Ecuador en Cifras 1938–1942* (Quito: Imprenta del Ministerio de Hacienda, 1943), 101.
- 25 According to Fernando Muñoz-Miño, an analysis of statistical sources about the budget's development reveals that primary education was the main budgetary item during the liberal period, showing a marked rise during the

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welfare state, although this was in addition to secondary and higher education. See Dirección Nacional de Estadística, *Ecuador en Cifras* 1938–1942 and Ana María Goestchel, *Educación de las mujeres, maestras y esferas públicas: Quito en la primera mitad del siglo XX* (Quito: Flacso; Abya-Yala, 2007).

- 26 For information about the states of integral planning and populism, see Hugo Dalbosco and Graciela Falvine, *El Estado peronista: Los planes quinquenales del peronismo; La primera experiencia argentina de planificación integral* (José C. Paz: Edunpaz, 2018) and María Teresa Gómez, *Manuel Gómez Morin, 1915–1939* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008).
- 27 Rafael María Avilés, "Sindicalización magisterial," in *Educación*, Órgano oficial del Ministerio de Educación, no. 2 (1938): 76–79.
- 28 See Roberto Gargarella, *La sala de máquinas de la Constitución* (Buenos Aires: Katz Editores, 2014).
- 29 Ángel Felicísimo Rojas, "El maestro Mariano Guamán, según la versión de su colega Aurelio Benítez," in Un idilio bobo: Libro de relatos (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946).
- 30 Eduardo Kingman, La ciudad y los otros, and Sonia Fernández Rueda, La construcción moderna de los maestros y de la infancia en el Ecuador (1925–1948) (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, 2013).