

The Governorship of Quijos, Sumaco and La Canela Frameworks of the socio-historical production process of the territory in the Ecuadorian High Amazon, sixteenth and nineteenth centuries

*La gobernación de los Quijos, Sumaco y La Canela. Marcos
del proceso de producción sociohistórica del territorio en la Alta
Amazonía ecuatoriana, siglos XVI-XIX*

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Abstract

The following article explores the socio-historical production of the territory in La Gobernación de los Quijos, Sumaco and La Canela, Ecuadorian High Amazon. From a historiographic perspective we approach the historical process and the dynamics that motivated various social actors to exercise their power from the 16th to the mid-19th centuries in the Ecuadorian High Amazon. The text suggests three periods of occupation of the territory: the first one addresses the conquest of the Eastern region (Amazon), and problematizes the domination of the Spanish empire, with the support of the church and the imposition of the “reductions” regime; the second one addresses the Spanish sunset and the beginning of religious missions in the Amazon; and the third one approaches the Republican period and the socio-political production of the East.

Keywords

History, territory, Quijos, Napo, Amazon, Ecuador.

Resumen

El presente artículo tiene por objetivo explorar la producción sociohistórica del territorio en la Gobernación de los Quijos, Sumaco y La Canela, Alta Amazonía ecuatoriana. Desde una metodología historiográfica se aborda el proceso histórico y las dinámicas que motivaron a diversos actores sociales a ejercer su poder desde el siglo XVI hasta mediados del siglo XIX en la Alta Amazonía ecuatoriana. El texto sugiere tres períodos de ocupación y producción del territorio: el primero aborda la conquista de la región Oriental (Amazónica), y problematiza la dominación del imperio español, con el apoyo de la iglesia y la imposición del régimen de las “reducciones”; el segundo, aborda el ocaso español y el inicio de las misiones religiosas en la Amazonía; y el tercero se aproxima al período Republicano y la producción sociopolítica del Oriente.

Palabras clave

Historia, territorio, Quijos, Napo, Amazonía, Ecuador.

Introduction

The socio-historical production of the territory is a promising field of study in Ecuadorian historiography. Territory, conceived as an indissociable and contradictory totality of reality, is the space where the dynamics and interactions of social agents, their processes of appropriation and transformation of nature and, therefore, the historical accumulation of human pro-

duction are developed. The territory as a concept expresses existence determinations and configures a category of space analysis. The social being is complex and mutable. The knowledge constructed by the subject about his reality demands multiple approaches, given the high degree of determinations that are characteristic of the societies that enable the categories of the social being to prevail over the natural being. As the society-nature relationship is the environment that metabolizes the production and reproduction of the material and symbolic life of the human being. In the territory, power relations are expressed, in various social, political and economic scales decisions of each sociability materialize. In this sense, the territory is particularly for this article a scenario that allows us to develop and analyze the socio-historical production of the Ecuadorian Amazon region.

This article is part of an extensive study where mixed methods were used, especially of history, geography, and anthropology. Focusing particularly on the study of the current region of the province of Napo, between 1559 and 1563, four cities were founded: Baeza, Ávila, Archidona, and San Juan de los Dos Ríos de Tena. These foundations began the process of socio-historical production of the colonial territory in what was called La Gobernación de los Quijos, Sumaco and La Canela. In the 16th century, this Governorate constituted the territory through the violent domination of indigenous populations and the restructuring of their spaces from the Spanish colonial administration subject to the search for auriferous resources and the domination of the indigenous labor force that fled or died slaughtered by colonizers and epidemics. At the end of this century, the model of plundering of natural resources determined the social production of the territory and the weakening of the regional economy.

In the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, the social production of the territory was associated with the expansion of colonization over the Amazonian territories, characterized by an economy based on the exploitation of resources and the fruitless search for absolute surplus value. This period of time presents a demographic decrease of the indigenous population and the establishment of new production relations with the arrival of the missions, which cause new conflicts with the encomenderos and indigenous peoples, mainly, due to the dispute and dispossession of their territories, the natural resources, and labor. During the Republican period, the Ecuadorian East was a marginal region due to civil wars of independence and institutional weakness. In 1860, the Ecuadorian State took some actions to incorporate the

Amazon into the national dynamic, including the return of the missions for the unification of the territory and the control of the indigenous populations.

The conquest of the Eastern Region¹: the Spanish Empire and the church

The first steps of the Spanish colonization in the Ecuadorian High Amazon took place during the mid-16th century. Captain Gonzalo Díaz de Pineda was the first Spanish explorer who, following the route of “Hatunquijo, Cosanga, La Canela, Sumaco and the Coca Valley” (Rumazo, 1982, p. 34), established contact in December 1538 with the indigenous people called “Quijos”,² who lived in this region of the Amazon. The second expedition takes place in 1541, under the captaincy of Gonzalo Pizarro, then governor of Quito, who with 220 Spaniards and about 4000 indigenous people from the mountains entered the Amazon.

The route of entry followed by Pizarro was through Hatunquijo, turning towards Sumaco, where two years before Captain Gonzalo Díaz de Pineda had been. Once in the Sumaco, Pizarro went to the Omagua province, passing through the province of Quema where he reached the confluence of the Coca River with the Napo River. In this place, Francisco de Orellana takes his own path through the Napo River, “discovering” in 1542 the Amazon River, as indicated on map 1.

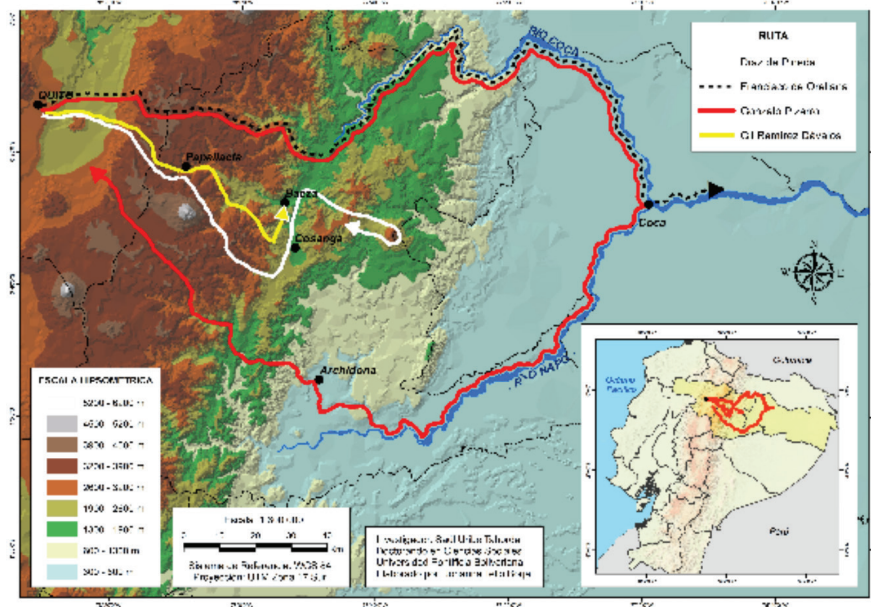
In 1556, Viceroy Márquez de Cañete appointed Gil Ramírez Dávalos as Governor of Quito, entrusting him with the pacification of the Quijos and the foundation of Spanish cities in the Amazon. The objective of Gil Ramírez Dávalos resided in the distribution of the indigenous population to the few Spaniards who settled in the Quijos region; a strategy that allowed the imposition of the tribute to the natives according to their capacities and resources. With these provisions, the parcel system and unpaid services of the indigenous population were established during the 16th century.

1 The Eastern region also called the Amazon region from the 70s of the 20th century, when the Ecuadorian State, under the military presidency of Guillermo Rodríguez Lara, incorporates it more effectively into the national territory due to oil exploitation.

2 The ethnogenesis process to which numerous Amazonian groups have been exposed constitutes a starting point to explain the current process of self-naming of the indigenous people who inhabit the Napo region. They call themselves Napo Runa. Napo, in recognition of the Napo River, and Runa, a word that means being human.

The pacification campaign of the Quijo region began on March 6, 1559. Led by Gil Ramírez Dávalos with 39 soldiers, the Franciscan religious Fray Martín de Plasencia and the chief of Latacunga Sancho Hacho de Velasco. The pacification strategy of the Quijos region was accompanied by political negotiation actions with the chiefs of Hatunquijos, Coca, Sumaco, Ceño, Pachamama, Oyacachi, and Cosanga among others. The strategy of Governor Gil Ramírez Dávalos allowed his entry into the Amazon without further resistance by the “Indian friends”, with whom he founded in 1559 the city of Baeza in the valley of the Cosanga River.

Map 1
Access routes to the Eastern Region



Source: Own elaboration, 2019

The expeditionaries were motivated, not only by the search for the land of gold, the myth of El Dorado and cinnamon, but the Spanish Crown intended to grant land to those conquistadores who were not benefited in the con-

quest of the Inca Empire. From these first conquest expeditions, “the Amazon region was virtually divided into five governorates or administrative political spaces, whose territories were largely unexplored. From north to south these governorates were: Mocoa-Sucumbíos (1557), Quijos (1551), Macas (1548), Yahuarzongo (1548) and Jaén (1548)” (Dávila, 1992, p. 54). In the current region of Napo, between 1559 and 1563, four cities were founded: “Baeza, Ávila, Archidona and San Juan de los Dos Ríos de Tena. These foundations began the process of colonial administration in what was called Governorate of the Quijos, Sumaco and La Canela” (Muratorio, 1998, p. 18).

The governorates were under the political and economic administration of the Royal Audience of Quito and its Bishopric. Thus, for each region, doctrinal priests were requested for the evangelization of the created population centers. Some of the founded provinces were, in 1558, that of the Quijos made by Captain Don Gil Ramírez Dávalos in the company of the Franciscan father, Fray Martín de Plasencia. In 1550, they also founded the New Baeza of the Holy Spirit (García, 1999). Later, in 1576 the Dominican convent of Our Lady of the Rosary would be created in this province. These foundations were given under the Spanish regulation that stipulated evangelization as one of the main aspects of the conquest. “Evangelization was precisely the main instrument of cultural change and justification of the system of exploitation and submission of native peoples” (Padilla, 2008, p. 31).

Exploration and conquest in the Amazon highlands was not easy; “The failure of Gonzalo Pizarro’s expedition put an end to the legend about the existence of great towns and riches in the east, where, although there was cinnamon, its exploitation was not profitable” (Garcés, 1992, p. 60), because the trees were very scattered in swampy terrain preventing their access. Other factors that influenced the failures of the conquest were the shortage of food, earthquakes, conflicts between the crown and the conquistadores that gave rise to the civil wars of 1540, and the priority that the Spaniards gave to the “reduction” of the indigenous peoples of the highlands and the coast, but not of the Amazon (Landázuri, 1989).

From 1542 to 1556, the Spaniards returned in their eagerness to conquer the Amazonian lowlands and the Baeza, Archidona and Ávila groups. Blanca Muratorio points out, considering the ethnographic writings of the chronicler Diego de Ortégón made in 1557, that the natives of Baeza and Ávila showed a clear connection with the groups of the Highlands, while those of Archidona had a “more defined jungle culture” which complicated their domination (Mu-

ratorio, 1998). In 1559 Gil Ramírez Dávalos, governor of Quito, was entrusted with the reconquest of the Quijos Indians in the lower Amazon. Ramírez directs “peaceful” conquest strategies through the exchange of gifts and begins the application of the *encomienda* (parcel) system that was already taking place in the highlands. The *encomienda* included a system of feudal domination and accumulation planned by the Spanish, in which, from granting military protection services, indigenous populations had to pay tribute.

In 1568, Viceroy Toledo creates, then, the indigenous “doctrines” and “reductions” throughout the Amazon region. Both models of accumulation imposed that the natives should be grouped into larger towns, while they were assigned a priest for evangelization tasks, changing the patterns of space occupation and disarticulating the social organization of the indigenous people. The reductions made the work of the priests easier and facilitated “strict population and territorial control by the civil authorities, especially for the collection of taxes that the natives were obliged to pay for the simple fact of being born in America” (Padilla, 2008, p. 32). Oberem (1980) describes that the conquest of the natives was in charge of both the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church:

[...] The objective of the Crown was to achieve the submission of the population and establish control over the territory; the objective of the Church was the Christianization of the population, and for merchants and settlers, the objective was the private interest of exploiting human and natural resources for personal gain. (Reeve, 2002, p. 334)

This second moment of colonization forced the Amazonian indigenous people to work on “the exploitation of mines and the laundering of gold, the collection of cinnamon, the cultivation of cotton, the manufacture of textiles and the transport of food and people to Quito” (Garcés, 1992, p. 70). To pay their taxes to the *encomiendas* granted to the Spanish by the Crown, the natives became slaves, and they were denied freedom by reducing them to sedentary domestic groups.

In 1580 a large part of the indigenous population of Quijos and Macas had already been organized in *encomiendas* around the newly founded villages. By 1582, only the area of Zamora already had about 26 villages with 1,500 indigenous tributaries of the Spanish Crown, who paid through the gold that was extracted from local mines. (Reeve, 2002, p. 73)

In addition, many of them were brought from distant places like the middle course of the Pastaza River. In reaction to this imposition, Taylor points out that three types of response to the colonial model emerged: 1) the isolation of inland jungle groups and their readjustment to the new environment; 2) the escape and individual transculturation, where conglomerates of people were formed without a defined identity; and 3) neocolonial tribes forged within the reductions or in the surrounding areas (Taylor, 1994, p. 32).

At the end of the 16th century, the conqueror's greed was responsible for looting the natural wealth: wild cocoa, cinnamon, sarsaparilla, copal, quinine, gold, cotton, among others; which began a weakening of the regional economic structure. "This purely plunderous approach to nature considering it as an enemy has characterized the relationship of whites and Hispanicized mestizos with the jungle environment" (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). In addition, the colonization process was not prolonged due to the disorderly system of colonizing control, the weak organization of local indigenous populations, the depletion of gold resources and the disappearance of indigenous labor fleeing or dying massacred by the colonizers and epidemics.

The Spanish twilight and the beginning of religious missions in the Amazon

The overexploitation that reign during the *encomiendas* against the indigenous population, led to an uprising in 1578, which resulted in the destruction of two Spanish cities: Archidona and Ávila, in the current province of Napo. This uprising was confederative and led by "pendes": wise men, shamans, and healers. The term "pende" referred to the category of wise-sorcerers and did not include the chiefs (Ruiz, 1992). The main pende figures of the uprising, according to the chronicle of Toribio de Ortuera (Muratorio, 1998), were those of Beto, from the *encomienda* of Diego de Montalbán in Archidona, and Guami, from the *encomienda* of Sebastián Díaz de Pineda in Ávila.

The uprising began in the indigenous communities of the areas of Ávila and Archidona, who achieved alliances with the chiefs of the nearby Andean region and with the Omagua Indians (Revee, 2002). After obtaining alliances, they retired to the Sumaco Valley in search of Jumandi, one of the most prestigious chiefs among the *pendes*, in order to increase the forces of the rebels and be better prepared for the attack on Baeza (Ruiz, 1992). Jumandi was a Christianized

chieftain, who knew the world of the Spaniards closely. The three leaders Beto, Guami and Jumandi planned the attack, but despite the entire organizational process, the assault on Baeza failed. Federico González Suárez reports:

Baeza was preserved, thanks to the warning that those of Archidona managed to send him on time: from Baeza, the news came to Quito, and from this city, a relief force left with great diligence of more than three hundred armed individuals, under the command of Rodrigo Núñez de Bonilla, son of the conquistador: they carried harquebuses, bullets, and gunpowder, the only equipment with which it was possible to deal with the barbarians, whose crowds were innumerable. (González Suárez, 1901, p. 65)

The Spanish army quickly defeated the rebels. The precursors of the uprising escaped to the jungle and hid for four months until they were captured and sent to Quito. Despite the defeat, the mythical figure of Jumandi as a hero in the Quijos community today is still remembered. In 2011, the National Assembly declared him a National Hero for his anti-colonial struggle in the Amazon.

The expansive processes of colonization were characterized by a deteriorated economy and the fruitless pursuit of absolute surplus value by the Spanish Crown. There is then the territorial advance of the Jesuit mission front as part of the Crown's mandate to mark its limits and regulate the escalation of violence between encomenderos and indigenous people. Peter Downes explains that the missions of the Jesuits in the Amazon, both in Spain and Portugal, were a response to the conflicts between the natives and European settlers, and to the instability that remained in that territory throughout the colonial era. The missionaries worked loyally for God and for the King, and their contribution to the pacification of the Iberian colonial borders in the Amazon was vital for the security and expansion of both empires (Downes, 2005).

In 1619 the city of San Francisco de Borja was officially founded at the hands of Don Pedro Vaca de la Cadena, who in 1620 would also create four indigenous reductions: "the Moronas, Pastazas, Jeveros, and Maynas. He divided the Indians among the main expedition partners and established the encomienda system in that territory that was called Governorate of the Maynas" (García, 1999, p. 117). Precisely because of the pressure exerted by the encomenderos of the region, the uprising of the indigenous Jeveros and Maynas in San Francisco de Borja took place. At that time Don Pedro Vaca de la Cadena, founder of the city, who held the position of Governor of Maynas, ordered

the establishment of Jesuit Missions as a form of “appeasement” of the rebellious Indians. The Maynas Mission was one of the most controversial due to its geographical dimension, its impacts generated in the indigenous world, the imposition of administrative models and for associating with the settlers for the exploration and exploitation of resources, applying indigenous reduction methods. It also led to the opening of new colonization fronts and founded new missions in the Ecuadorian High Amazon, in what is now Pastaza and Napo to expand their cruel evangelizing work (Moreno, 2012).

Although the breadth of the contacted territory was vast (See map 2), the missions that survived were few, mainly due to the depletion of the tools for the exchange, the multitude of languages and dialects that existed, the difficulty to achieve an effective evangelization, the sedentarization of the peoples, the continuous inter-tribal conflicts, the total isolation of the missionary and the diseases that affected them (Downes, 2005). On the other hand, Taylor states that they never had more than nominal support from the civil and ecclesiastical hierarchy of Quito. Nor could they develop stable trade routes, as foreign religious groups, mostly Germans, who exported co-coa managed to do it in the east in the lower Amazon (Taylor, 1994).

The Jesuits were expelled in 1767 from across the region and deported to Italy and Portugal as a result of the promulgation of the *Pragmatic Sanction of 1767* by *Carlos III*. This led to the Franciscans trying to replace them in 1778; nevertheless, in 1784 Spain disapproves that the place of the Jesuits was occupied by the Franciscans, and they are replaced by diocesan clergy (García, 1999).

Esvertit notes that:

[...] during the stage of Spanish domination, the Audience of Quito held sovereignty over the vast Amazonian territories of its eastern borders(...) [where] it was limited exclusively to the formal and there was no real incorporation of the region to the colonial administration. Under these conditions, the administrative and religious control exercised from the Audiencia of Quito was, in fact, extremely fragile and the Amazon remained outside the socio-economic and political dynamics of the Spanish empire. (Esvertit, 2008, p. 20)

However, while Crown control was fragile, the consequences on indigenous and regional populations were drastic. “[...] It can be said, then, that the process of conquest and first evangelization originated an “ethnocidal simplification” of the rich ethnic panorama of the Amazon that, to some extent, is not yet over” (Muratorio, 1998, p. 81).

Map 2 The Quito Jesuit Missions of the Spanish Marañón 1638-1768



Source: Juan Morales and Eloy, 1942.

The Republican Period and the socio-political production of the East

By the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century³, two-thirds of the “non-Indian” population in the Amazon region have been lost and the indigenous populations have reoccupied the riverine areas, which they had not inhabited since the 16th century (Taylor, 1994). Muratorio affirms that, due to the internal and external conflicts of the new State, even “the weak controls of the Royal bureaucracy” were lost (1998, p. 123); and merchants, soldiers, looking for fortunes, some priests and all kinds of adventurers began to chaotically occupy the land. There is a decline in colonial rule and, although in 1822 the Republic of Ecuador becomes independent, the lack of interest in this area is evident. “For the Quijos, the passing of the Spanish era to the Republican meant nothing in the course of its history” (Oberem, 1980, p. 111).

During the first stage of the Republican period, 1830-1860, Ecuador was regionalized by large landowners on the coast and the highlands. This was seen in the population distribution, which according to Deler (1994), 80% of the national population were grouped in four of the seven provinces. The Quijos area, which had long been considered “pacified” and “reduced”⁴, was within the national border as dominated territory, unlike southern Pastaza, where its exploitation was “much more intense, and above all more effective, and with the strongest missionary framework” (Taylor, 1994, p. 37).

[...] the “distributions” were made in Archidona twice a year, but generally, it is done in such a way that on Sundays, when the Governor or one of his delegates comes to Mass, he gives the Indians a package with some objects such as mirrors, knives, crosses, etc. And he tells them that within a certain time they have to deliver the counter value of those objects in the form of a certain amount of pita or gold powder. (Oberem, 1980, p. 112)

3 “The long nineteenth-century” is a term coined by the famous historian Eric Hosbawm, to refer to the historical period between 1789 and 1914. Martínez Sastre speaks of the “long Ecuadorian nineteenth-century” which is used by numerous historians (Martínez Sastre, 2015, p. 91).

4 There is a whole ethnohistorical discussion, which extends to recent works in the region, where it is studied whether the Quijos (Napo Runa), have developed or not strategies of resistance to the advance of Western culture, and mainly in the religious sphere regarding evangelization. “The absence of open and collective resistance in this period does not mean - as it is suggested in most historical sources - that the Napo Runa were already fully subjected, or that they were not aware of their exploitation (...) the flight to the jungle in search of freedom (...) and the lack of interest in being converted to Christianity were their survival strategies” (Muratorio, 1998, p. 125).

To pay their forced debts, the indigenous people went several months in search of materials, and therefore the authorities were also absent much of the year residing in Quito, and only returned to collect. “In reality, in the East, the charges were prebent and there was no differentiation of duties between authorities and merchants, which deprived the indigenous people of all legal protection” (Muratorio, 1998, p. 124). The “forced distribution” and the indigenous tribute were eliminated by the president Vicente Ramón Roca in 1846, due to the denunciations of the excesses to which the natives were subjected (Esvertit, 2008, p. 23). As Oberem points out “[...] after almost 300 years of life under the white regime, one of the greatest evils of the Quijos became legally extinct” (Oberem, 1980, p. 112).

In 1854, under the presidency of José María Urbina, the eastern Ecuadorian territory is divided again. The cantons of Quijos, Canelos and Macas are formed, with their respective parishes: Santa Rosa, Archidona and Ávila for the former; Canelos and Zarayaco for the second; and Macas and Zuñac for the third. There were many projects from the first period of the Ecuadorian Republic with regards to the amazon: in 1843, through Interior Minister Benigno Malo, the territory was sought to be populated with “private companies that promised to move in Catholic and European settlers” (Esvertit, 2008, p. 28).

In 1846, through a law passed by Congress, prisoners, lazy, and banished, are transferred to the amazon as a punishment mechanism. In 1853, the free navigation of the Amazon was decreed, so that European and American merchants have autonomy in the communication and transfer of Amazonian products. Finally, an agreement for the payment of external debt with England is signed through the allocation of land in the Amazon region.

These laws issued during the Republic show how the Ecuadorian State saw the Amazon region: an inhospitable, backward, immense and conquerable territory, where it was intended, under the “modernizing” discourse of the time, to populate the Amazonian areas of the country with foreign people. Thus, the expansion of international capital begins to accentuate in the higher Amazon, which saw in the region a source of natural resources and the possibility of rapidly expanding and reproducing capital.

External debt appears as a key factor in the internationalization of capital. According to the historian Juan Paz y Miño after the independence of Gran Colombia, Ecuador assumes a debt of 21.5% of the Colombian debt. In 1854, under the Espinel-Mocattase agreement, the debt was recognized in £ 1,824,000 and mining income and tolls were given in the form of payment

to holders of bonds and lands (Paz and Miño, 2015). Then, “in 1857, the Icazza-Pritchett Agreement specified the concessions of land on the Coast and in the Amazon so that would be used to pay the debt” (Esvertit, 2008, p. 32).

Throughout the Republican period, Peru exerted constant pressure on Amazonian territories. In 1853, Peru would form the department of Loreto in the Amazon until that moment Ecuadorian, which was perceived as a usurpation to the sovereign territory (Stanfield, 2009). In 1857, Peru protested against Ecuador because of the concessions that “comprised extensive territories in the Amazon region yet to be delimited” (Esvertit, 2008, pp. 297-298). Before the transfer of land to foreigners, the marked political regionalization and free navigation through the Amazon, the Peruvian Government declared war on Ecuador and blocked the port of Guayaquil. With the rise of Gabriel García Moreno to the presidency of Ecuador, the Peruvian army was pushed back.

The main manifestation of concern for the Amazon region of the country is recorded in the Government periods of Gabriel García Moreno (1860-1865, 1869-1875), who again gave entry to religious missions for the maintenance of national sovereignty against the advance of the Peruvian border. This period was mainly characterized by mediation in the church for the unification of the territory. Measures were taken to guarantee the maintenance of the Society of Jesus in the East, from regulations for income collection, such as the approval of the National Convention of the Institution of Propagation of the Faith, to the formal restoration of the income of the Society of Jesus in Ecuador. However, the financial contributions from the State were always in question, which is why one of the main sources of income for the Jesuit Mission was the indigenous labor force, its contributions in food, but mainly in gold dust, pita and canvas (Moreno Tejada, 2012).

In the “modernizing era of the Ecuadorian State”, after a Catholic liberalism, in 1870, García Moreno handed over powers to the Jesuits who settled in the Ecuadorian Amazon, authorizing them to “take the necessary measures in the order and good civil and ecclesiastical government of this province” (Jouanen, 1977, pp. 33-34). They were assigned “[...] the role of legitimate representatives of the State in Napo [...] which involved naming and taking out authorities, punishing crimes, opening schools and enacting laws” (Muratorio, 1998, pp. 129-130). The same year, even with a small number of missionaries going to the Amazon, the establishment of four mission centers was dedicated to the Society of Jesus: Napo, based in Archidona; Macas, centered on the homonymous population; and Gualaquiza/Zamora based in Guelaguetza” (López, 1894, pp. 9-10).

Map 3 Religious Missions in the Ecuadorian Amazon 1869-1886



Source: Juan Morales and Eloy, 1942.

The Society of Jesus in the Amazon sought to establish the order and control of the indigenous population through the “moralization of the savages” and the schooling of children. As it had been recorded in previous centuries, religion, arts, and crafts were taught in both Quichua and Spanish. This work was divided between boys and girls where they had the help of the Mothers of the Good Shepherd exclusively for working with women (Moreno Tejada, 2012). This was totally in tune with the interests of the central government of García Moreno to establish a national sentiment from the educational work in colleges and universities throughout the country. The establishment of discipline through recurring physical punishment is a distinctive aspect of the type of Jesuit education.

On the other hand, García Moreno, through the missions, also sought the sedentarization and the implantation of agriculture, to open roads and means of communication between the central mountain region and the east of the country, with a view to transporting the products to be exploited, consolidating trade routes based on them. He also sought control of the exploitation of quina, pita and gold.

The indigenous population of Napo was once again dominated by merchants through debts that had to be paid for life-long work.⁵ In this context, the existence of the system called “licenses” allowed the indigenous people to enter the jungle to collect products. The licensing system, in a way, gave “freedom” to the Napo Runa Indians, as it enabled them to depart and integrate into the jungle away from the methods of violence to which they were subjected by merchants and missionaries (Muratorio, 1998). However, this was a matter of dispute between merchants and Jesuit missionaries, as the constant “licenses” made it difficult to control and supply indigenous labor in the missions.

Given this, and the opposition of interests between the merchants who maintained the extractive model of gold, pita and quina, and the missionaries who sought to implant agriculture; the natives “ally” with the merchants against the Jesuits and achieve their expulsion for the second time in 1896, approximately twenty years after the assassination of President García Moreno.

However, Muratorio notes that:

[...] the final resolution of this conflict (...) was strongly influenced by the indigenous resistance to settle more or less permanently in villages and to become peasants or semi-proletarianized labor force. The other factor was the invasion of the entire Amazon by industrial capitalism in search of rubber. (Muratorio, 1998, pp. 131-132)

García Jordán (2002) points out that it is necessary to consider two fundamental points that would hinder the objective of the unification of the East to the national State in the Republican era: on the one hand, the lack of funding destined from the State to the missions of the Amazon; and on the other, indigenous resistance to religious missions. During this period, the Amazonian territory was again divided into a province called Oriente, with two cantons: Napo to the north and Canelos to the south.

Conclusions

The social production of the territory in the Ecuadorian Amazon is a process that historically has been carried out by different social actors with dis-

5 As we saw above, the system of “forced distribution” has already been banned since 1846, but the logic of indebtedness continued to function as an exploitation mechanism for the Amazonian indigenous peoples.

tinctive characteristics and diverse interests, but with a common objective: to control the territory and submit the indigenous population as a labor force to exploit the natural resources. Motivated by the search for el Dorado and cinnamon, an unbridled process of exploration took place, in which social actors such as the Church played a leading role in the conquest of the Region and the pacification of the Government of Quijos, Sumaco and La Canela.

Since the 16th century, a process was consolidated in which settlement patterns were imposed as strategies aimed at dismantling the processes and social organization of the indigenous population. Reducing and dominating the population was the main objective of the Royal Audience of Quito and its Bishopric, a task assigned to Don Gil Ramírez Dávalos and Fray Martín de Plasencia, who in 1550 founded the city of Baeza del Espíritu Santo. The foundation of this city, like others in the East, was carried out to strengthen the model of accumulation and exploitation of natural resources and found new mission centers to catechize and train indigenous labor for the economic purposes of the Spanish Crown.

The exploration and conquest processes of the eastern region were carried out for economic purposes; however, the strategies used for population reduction and pacification were no less important. Diego de Ortegón and Gil Ramírez Dávalos mention that the exchange of gifts allowed a less violent relationship between the Crown and the indigenous people, establishing a dependency relationship that facilitated their concentration in one place, which was markedly different from the dispersed settlement pattern that the natives had. Also, reduction systems such as *encomienda*, *mita* and force distribution led to a series of indigenous rebellions and uprisings aimed at combating the yoke of the Crown. However, the power of evangelization helped reduce the rebellions that the indigenous population undertook, facilitating the foundation of more than 16 cities in 20 years, 1534 to 1560.

It is emphasized that during the seventeenth century a relationship of tension between the Crown, the encomenderos and the Jesuits originated, triggering a conflict of interest motivated by population control. The encomenderos considered it necessary to increase the workforce and expand their exploration areas, and the missionaries sought to incorporate the natives into their agricultural enclaves. A situation that was the breaking point for the missions, especially Jesuits who were unable to control and confront the indigenous population to exercise total control over it.

During the Republican period, the main feature in the Ecuadorian East was political instability; causing a process of resettlement of the indigenous population in areas from which they had been expelled. It is remarkable the origin of a new process of colonial expansion that, through the system of peonage and indebtedness of the hacienda, established agricultural enclaves in which the indigenous population was the favorite workforce. This new phase of accumulation driven by large landowners of the coast and the highlands would establish new settlement patterns that concentrated the indigenous population and new settlers in intermediate cities in the Ecuadorian East.

In this Republican period, it was also decreed that lazy, criminals and banished should be sent to the East, political instruments were created for the expansion of the agricultural colonization border, and the arrival of Catholic and European settlers, who arrived with new religious missions was approved, all with the purpose of unifying the nascent nation-state. It was also characterized by the establishment of commercial relations that encouraged navigation on the Amazon River, and the allocation of large areas of “empty lands” to foreign capital as a form of payment of the foreign debt acquired with England. However, it should not be forgotten that during everything described above, the indigenous population stipulated forms and practices of social resistance that were almost always imperceptible and incomprehensible to actors outside the Amazon. These practices sought to resist Eurocentric logics and colonial control of the church and the State. Thus, the socio-historical production of the territory in the province of Napo, Ecuadorian High Amazon is charged with the excessive use of violence and the dispute between indigenous territories and imperialist interests and their eagerness to control the territory.

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