Enclosed Paper:

Chapter 4: The Mask of Gender, Part II: The State and Indian Men

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Draft Prepared for the Washington Area Symposium of the History of Latin America
University of Maryland, November 8-9, 2002

This paper is a draft. Please do not cite without the author’
Abstract of the Manuscript Project:

This monograph investigates some of the historical roots of the contemporary and complicated connections between Indian men, Indian women, and the state by examining multi-layered links between gender and Indian/state relations from 1850-1925. In particular, the study explains the historical foundations for Indian women’s often-peripheral status in Indian/state relations and thus the greater challenges they have faced, relative to indigenous men, in contemporary political activism by revealing ways that the early phases of state formation masculinized Indian/state relations. The period of 1850-1925 included three critical phases of nation making: first, the debate over the abolition of Indian tribute (known as the contribución personal de indígenas) culminated in the 1850s. This contest was the first national political dispute in the new republic, and its resolution was essential to forging a nation because the abolition of tribute marked a clear break with colonial practices that separated members of society according to racial status. However, because Indians faced new burdens after tribute was abolished, a period of heightened tensions between Indians and the state followed the 1857 abolition of tribute. This same time frame marked the beginning of the nation’s earliest comprehensive state building projects—the first undertaken by Conservative Gabriel García Moreno from 1861-1875, and the second under liberal rule from 1895-1925. In this period of simultaneous political transformation and interethnic struggle, state-sanctioned gender ideologies that identified men with the public sphere and women with the private sphere patterned state builders’ conceptions and descriptions of Indians. I contend that conflicting white/mestizo and indigenous gender ideas and practices were a means through which interethnic negotiations and struggles were played out in the course of Ecuadorian state formation from 1850-1925. Garcian state officials in the late nineteenth century used ideas about proper gender roles to blame Indians themselves for their plight in Ecuadorian society and politics; liberals manipulated similar gender notions to blame their competitors—Church officials and highland estate owners—for Indians’ continuing marginalization. Indians’ own ideas about gender often paralleled those held by state officials, though they tended to be more permeable and flexible, giving indigenous women both an important role in community defense against state officials and private elites, and providing them with negotiating power to use with indigenous men. The processes of state formation, however, had a differential impact on Indian women and men. As part of the evolution of interethnic politics, a shift occurred in Indian men’s and women’s capacity to interact with the emerging state: while Indian men’s roles expanded, Indian women’s roles stagnated, indicating a relative decline in these women’s influence on Indian/state relations at the time.

1 To some extent, this monograph also examines and explains indigenous women’s centrality to Indian/state relations. However, the current link between women and cultural authenticity has specific roots in the mid-twentieth century, as will be discussed in the Epilogue.
BRIEF SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PART I: MAKING ECUADOR

CHAPTER 2: MAKING ECUADORIANS? THE ABOLITION OF TRIBUTE
This chapter explores how and why Ecuador’s first national debate—over the abolition of tribute—was centered on (often contradictory) notions of manliness.

CHAPTER 3: THE MASK OF GENDER, PART I: “WOMAN” AND STATE FORMATION
This chapter addresses official government-sanctioned patriarchies under the Garcian and Liberal regimes, noting the many ways that gender helped legitimize these two distinct projects.

CHAPTER 4: THE MASK OF GENDER, PART II: THE STATE AND INDIAN MEN
This chapter examines how state-sanctioned gender ideals were applied to “the Indian question” under Garcian and Liberal rule. (See attached chapter)

PART II: GENDER AND COMMUNITY DEFENSE

CHAPTER 5: INDIGENOUS VISIONS OF PATRIARCHY
This chapter identifies how indigenous gender ideas and practices both reflected and diverged from state-sanctioned gender notions, and how Indian men and women used these distinct notions in their struggles to protect their communities.

CHAPTER 6: INDIAN WOMEN IN FOCUS
This chapter explores Indian women’s particular place/s in community life and defense, including the ways that Indian women managed to take advantage of elite gender ideas protect their own and/or their communities’ interests.

PART III: PATRIARCHAL SHIFTS

CHAPTER 7: GENDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL ON SIERRA HACIENDAS
This chapter evaluates Indian men’s and women’s differential experiences when they moved from peasant communities to permanent residence on haciendas and shows how hacienda structure was based on rigid interpretations of white/mestizo patriarchal concepts.

CHAPTER 8: PATRIARCHY AND INDIAN ADAPTATION TO POLITICAL CHANGE
This chapter summarizes the masculinization of Ecuadorian Indian/state relations from 1850-1925, especially how Indian men incorporated liberal gender notions to their own benefit.

CHAPTER 9: EPILOGUE: MOVING INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
In addition to summarizing the main themes and arguments of the manuscript, this chapter outlines how the masculine precedents of Indian/state relations established by 1925 help to explain the continuing obstacles that these women faced in the mid- to late twentieth century in their quest to defend, dignify, and democratize indigenous political culture.
Chapter 4:
The Mask of Gender, Part II: The State and Indian Men

…there is a deep-seated custom among the Indians, in which a wife requires a dozen monthly blows from her husband as a token of his affection for her…

The small property-owning indigene cares for his land with love… the family happily collaborates on agricultural work, singing with hope…

Though the Garcian and liberal gender ideologies examined in chapter 3 were focused specifically on state officials’ notion of ideal middle- or upper-class women, state-sanctioned gender ideas did affect the ways that state builders described and developed their Indian policies. Additionally, Indian/state relations from 1860-1925, particularly the liberal debates over the abolition of concertaje, show evidence of a strong legacy from the interethnic paternalism that was so central to the abolition of Indian tribute in the 1850s. As with the “woman question,” the Indian problem at first appears to differ dramatically from one state-building regime to the next—yet closer examination of documents uncovers a great many similarities as well. And, as with the “woman question,” state officials and scholars manipulated (gendered) images of Indians as a mask to hide both less-than-altruistic political agendas as well as ongoing social (especially racial) inequalities.

Of particular importance was the place of Indian men in the new nation: because of the proclaimed equality of all Ecuadorians before the law, authorities in both regimes had to identify Indian men as potential citizens and show how the state worked to achieve that goal. At the same time, statesmen had to explain why Indian men were not yet fully incorporated into the political nation. Gender ideologies, especially various—and often contradictory—connotations of

2 ANH/Q:Cr: December 19, 1874, ff. 3-4.
manliness and paternalism, proved useful in both of these tasks. Sometimes these strategies overlapped significantly: during both Garcian and liberal eras, state officials and scholars identified Indian men as helpless and child-like, and therefore in need of saving and/or civilizing. Of course, each regime’s manner and purpose with this gendered construction of “the Indian” was unique, and an even greater contrast came with interpretations of Indian men’s patriarchal roles within their own homes. Garcian officials identified Indian men as brutal patriarchs who were not fit for participation in the nation, whereas liberals (similar to statesmen arguing for the abolition of tribute in the 1850s) classified Indian men as well-meaning patriarchs who were being kept from fulfilling their paternal duties by priests and hacendados. These multi-faceted, gendered images of Indian men served both to justify Indians’ problematic place in the developing nation and to reinforce other state building agendas in each period.

**Denial of the “Indian Problem” from 1860-1890:**

Because it had made Indians legally equal to other Ecuadorian citizens, the recent abolition of tribute led to an almost deafening silence on the “Indian question” during the Garcian era of nation making. Within the space of a few years, Indians’ plight went from being a predominant consideration for the central state to an issue that was rarely mentioned, in spite of the fact that racism and ethnically based exploitation remained as strong as ever in politics, society, and the economy. Closer examination of the documents, however, shows that state officials at both the central and local government levels grappled with contradictory theory and practice that led to tense interethnic relations in the 1860s and 1870s, and that gender ideas helped to play down paradoxical Indian/state relations.
Officially, no Indian problem existed during García Moreno’s rule; the abolition of tribute had technically made all Ecuadorians, Indians included, equal before the law. This legal unification of the previously ethnically divided nation was an important precedent for García Moreno’s state building agenda: without it, his claims to be forging a single Ecuadorian “family” would have been impossible to defend. But just as Garcian nation making was greatly influenced by the aboliton of tribute, so too was the significance of abolition shaped by Garcian policies. Many of the laws and practices that made abolition a negative experience for most highland Indians were either drawn up or first enforced during Garcianismo; these included the trabajo subsidiario, vagrancy laws, losses of Indian lands as “tierras baldías,” and loosened trade restrictions. Garcian state officials were, of course, careful to assert that they were upholding the spirit of fairness and equality. For example the 1860 decree that restructured the trabajo subsidiario so that it would be more productive stated that “The contribution known as the trabajo subsidiario will be paid by all Ecuadorians, without any distinction…Indians must pay the same quota for the trabajo subsidiario that the law imposes on other citizens.” An 1865 decree regarding tierras baldías went even further, suggesting that the state protected Indian interests by issuing that “Vacant lands possessed and cultivated by indigenes and miserable persons will be freely adjudicated to the possessors, each time they offer a summary of proof before [a] judge….” The same decree also indicated that indigenous people’s communal lands would remain within communities. Likewise, when the governor of Loja inquired in 1870 whether Indians had to pay sales taxes or scribal services for sales contracts, the Minister of the Interior responded in the

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4 *El Nacional*, Número 24, April 2, 1860. For other decrees regarding the trabajo subsidiario, see Número 62, February 5, 1862; Número 68, April 1, 1862; Número 366, April 24, 1869.
5 Ibid, Número 196, October 2, 1865.
affirmative specifically indicating that Indians’ obligation stemmed from the constitutional establishment of equality before the law. If in theory Indians were equal to non-Indians and colonial abuses had come to an end, in practice state officials continued to see (and treat) Indians differently than whites and mestizos, and Indians’ rights and protections were often ignored. While the law pertaining to tierras baldías legally protected Indians’ rights to land, it also left loopholes enabling hacienda owners to usurp Indian lands. Indians were vulnerable because they had to prove their ownership of land; moreover, any land lying fallow could be identified as “uncultivated” and therefore not under the protection of the decree. Indians also failed to keep lands because hacienda owners’ influence in local politics often meant that there were vast differences between the spirit of the laws written and the manner in which they were carried out at the local level. Though infrequent, the central government officials’ own occasional and indirect admissions that Indians were not truly equal to other Ecuadorians speak to the fact that statesmen themselves were aware of the contradictory position they took regarding Indians. For example, the 1861 law of political rule stipulated that among the duties of the tenientes politicos was that they “should protect indigenes or miserable persons, being careful that they are not mistreated or offended.” In the same year, members of the National Convention responded positively to a request from Indians in Molleturo for an extension of the previous exemptions they had enjoyed under the tribute system. These admissions of the ongoing protective duty of the central state stood in stark contrast to other central government communication that emphasized that Indians no longer merited “special treatment” once tribute was abolished. Occasionally, the central government even recognized that Indians needed protection from local state representatives themselves.

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6 Ibid, Número 426, May 11, 1870.
7 Ibid, Número 44, June 11, 1861.
an 1870 letter to provincial governors, the Minister of the Interior remarked that local political and judicial officials often abused their power by “compelling Indians to labor on private construction work against their will.” He further indicated that “this scandal is so extreme that the aforementioned authorities oblige [Indians] to contracts that supply them with peons.” In response, García Moreno declared that any authority discovered doing this would be subject to removal from office and potentially face criminal charges. Although these orders were carefully worded to avoid any direct association with “special treatment” for Indians, the very need to discuss these matters was evidence of the ongoing marginalization and oppression of Indians in the Ecuadorian countryside. Contradictory ideas about Indians’ place in the nation also played themselves out in court: take a supreme court case in which Indian peasants complained of an hacienda owner who tried to take their land from them and had arbitrarily and privately imprisoned them on his estate. While the peasant/estate owner struggle was typical of the nineteenth century, the arguments made by the peasants’ lawyer played upon Indians’ contradictory position in the nation in the late 1850s. Most interesting in the case was the assertion that

An inhuman and ignorant principle is that the indigenous class is considered outside of social guarantees, and that the other classes have the right to look upon them as brutes and exercise all forms of domination [over them], this is without a doubt the same injustice plotted against us today; to guard against this we call upon your proven integrity…

As the existing court record did not include the outcome of the case, it remains unclear if the Indians were successfully defended land from hacienda expansion. Nevertheless, their lawyer’s argument rested on the assumption that, regardless of Indians’ official legal status, court officials

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8 Ibid, Número 42, May 21, 1861.
9 Francisco J. León, Minister of the Interior, El Nacional (Quito), Número 449, September 21, 1870.
might recognize that indigenous peoples were in fact not equal before the law—in short, that members of the state itself understood that law did not in this case reflect reality.

Sometimes Indians’ paradoxical position in the nation was represented through different practices on the central versus regional or local state levels. One telling pattern is that although the central state officials proclaimed ethnic labels and distinctions unnecessary, court officials in Chimborazo province still saw ethnic difference as meaningful in court disputes, as evidenced by the fact that they continued to identify litigants by race throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s. Distinct central and regional government responses to “the Indian situation” were apparent when Joaquín Pinto, public scribe for the superior court in Riobamba, wrote to the Supreme court inquiring whether or not Indians had to pay legal fees in court cases. He pointed out that a recent decree did not specify any special status for Indians when discussing poverty exemptions, while in 1854 the state had proclaimed Indians impoverished and therefore exempt from court fees. Pinto explained that “Until the present, the practice has been that Indians are not charged with this fee…[but] it seemed prudent to seek a resolution.” Supreme court judges reasoned that Indians would have to prove poverty in each individual case, as the abolition of tribute had put an end to automatic exemptions by making Indians equal to other citizens.

Though the Supreme court denied Indians’ need for special treatment, the query itself shows that at least some indigenous peasants could take advantage of persisting perceptions of their child-like vulnerability.

10 ANH/Q: Cr: April 21, 1858.
11 These patterns are evident from review of civil and criminal court cases from the superior court in Riobamba for the nineteenth century.
12 ANH/Q: I: February 15, 1873; see also ANH/R: Gb: January 14, 1874. Though Pinto claimed that Indians were regularly exempt from court fees, my review of court cases from Chimborazo province suggests that the practice was inconsistent.
In spite of the official central-state position that the category of “Indian” was no longer nationally relevant, whenever the reality of racial inequalities was apparent, politicians and judges needed ways to mask them in order to reaffirm that all Ecuadorians were equal before the law. Gender was an important tool—though certainly not the only one—which helped to smooth over the inherent contradictions of late nineteenth-century Indian/state relations. Using gender to justify racial inequality was of course not new; this was precisely the purpose of colonial and early nineteenth-century state paternalisms. However, the abolition of tribute changed both the practices and rhetoric of Indian/state relations in Ecuador, leading to new challenges and requirements in the state’s attempt to cover its role in the maintenance of indigenous marginalization. Similarly, the purposes of gender ideologies shifted, and they were now used not only to justify interethnic oppression but also to blame Indians themselves for the gap between the state’s equalizing rhetoric and oppressive reality.

Helpless Men or Undeserving Patriarchs? Indian Men during Garcianismo:

Political and scholarly generalizations of Indian qualities in late nineteenth-century Ecuador frequently emphasized that Indians were naturally submissive, particularly in their relations with whites and mestizos. Juan León Mera—author of Ecuador’s first novel and

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supporter of Gabriel García Moreno’s conservative regime in the 1860s and 1870s—wrote a
school text depicting Ecuadorian law, society, and history in which he claimed that:

Among Indians, humiliation, timidity, and guile are predominant
[traits], acquired in their long and perverse servitude, from which
also comes their notable air of sadness...but they are [also]
hardworking, active, long-suffering, and constant.\(^\text{14}\)

If León Mera did not openly criticize indigenous attributes here, neither did he view Indians as
equals to whites and mestizos in Ecuadorian society. Europeans, he asserted, were by nature
“religious, honorable, generous, and lovers of their independence and liberty.” Mestizos
supposedly fell between the indigenous and European extremes, but “as they become more
civilized they continue to mold themselves more and more towards [European traits].”\(^\text{15}\)
He used similar distinctions in his discussion of Ecuadorian customs—Indians “exceed extreme
simplicity in their rural [or course] character, and superstition holds great influence over them;
those of European descent maintain Spanish customs...[and] mestizos have less uncultured
customs than the Indians, but different than the Europeans.”\(^\text{16}\) León Mera thus constructed “a
world replete with social and hierarchical distinctions” in order to justify racially based social
inequalities.\(^\text{17}\)

León Mera used this text and its racial profiles to construct a vision of the nation that told
Ecuadorian youth of the time the relative value of different members of society. When he
asserted that mestizos were becoming more civilized by adopting European traits and discarding
indigenous customs, he reinforced nineteenth-century notions of progress. European culture

\(^{14}\) Juan León Mera, *Catecismo de geografía del Ecuador*, 2a edición, (Guayaquil: Imprenta de la
Nación, 1884 [1874]), 33.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 34.
\(^{17}\) The quote is from Uday Mehta, “Liberal Strategies of Exclusion,” *Politics and Society* 18:4
(December 1990), 437, where he analyzed the assumptions in Locke’s seemingly “universalistic”
claims.
represented civilization and progress, and Indian (and other non-European) cultures represented barbarism and backwardness. The so-called “progressive” elites hoped that by emulating European culture, and embracing export-oriented economics, they would also be able to duplicate European economic success and political stability. Ecuador’s indigenous peoples, maintaining their own languages and customs, and either farming small subsistence plots of land or toiling begrudgingly as peons on large estates, inhibited both cultural and economic progress. Indians therefore had to assimilate into European cultural standards in order for progress to occur. In the meantime, the traits León Mera catalogued under each ethnic group suggested how they could be most useful in the quest for national development. As honorable men and lovers of liberty, those of European descent would be best to lead the nation; as timid but hardworking and constant, Indians had potential to serve as the backbone of labor in the search for national economic success. Mestizos, given their mixed qualities, could be either leaders or laborers.

Indians’ submissiveness not only differed from characteristics attributed to whites and mestizos, but it was also problematic. Indians’ humility—combined with accusations of inherent dishonesty—could be used to defend cruel treatment that many Indian servants received from their employers. James Orton’s travel account elaborates:

> Always humble and submissive to your face...[the Indian] will do nothing unless he is treated as a slave. Treat him kindly, and you make him a thief; whip him, and he will rise up to thank you and be your humble servant. A certain curate could never trust his Indian to carry important letters until he had given him twenty five lashes.  

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18 For one of the more important discussions of how these notions of civilization and barbarism fit into the broader ideas of “progress” in nineteenth-century Latin America, see E. Bradford Burns, *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).  
In essence, Indians were figurative children who needed patriarchal discipline lest their dishonest tendencies get the best of them. Likewise, Indians’ child-like ignorance and dishonesty supposedly made them unreliable witnesses in court: one defense attorney, for example, claimed that no Indian could be trusted as a witness because he did not understand what he had heard or observed, and in particular had no concept of how the law functioned.\(^\text{20}\) Unmanly humility also left Indian men defenseless, as Pedro Fermín Cevallos explained when he claimed that their “...cowardice and humility are such that [Indians] allow themselves to be dominated even by the lowliest members of the other castes.”\(^\text{21}\) Even in his vulnerability, the Indian man was not described as a victim, since his own shortcomings were to blame for how he was treated. Yet the notion that Indians’ (presumably inherent) timidity left them susceptible to mistreatment did sometimes lead the central government to define Indians as a social sector in need of protection and guidance, as their proclamations over Indian rights communal lands and to protect Indians from abusive officials show.

Another dubious attribute frequently associated with Indians was their supposed idleness or laziness, with education being the most frequent means proposed to eradicate this problem. Gabriel García Moreno himself suggested this in his 1869 message to congress when he stated that: “It is not, therefore, strange that ignorance and lack of honor are so frequently transmitted like a fatal inheritance, which perpetuates the lazy idleness with which we justly find fault, and from which the indigenous race, especially in the interior provinces, continues to be wretched.

\(^{\text{20}}\text{ANH/Q:Cr: May 3, 1871. Also see ANH/Q:Cr: September 5, 1872 in which the defense attorney questioned Indians’ ability to understand the law, and asserted the fatherly role of employers. Both of these were concubinage cases.}\)

\(^{\text{21}}\text{Pedro Fermín Cevallos, Resumen de la historia del Ecuador, Tomo VI, (Guayaquil: Imprenta de la Nación, 1889), 86.}\)
depraved, and miserable.”

The solution was to found new primary schools that would, by teaching them, help Indians to raise themselves out of their abject positions. Literacy would also change Indian men’s political status since it would make them eligible to vote. The educational initiative did not proceed easily or smoothly, however. Just two years before García Moreno made the above declarations about the need for primary schools, the Minister of the Interior admitted that “public education has only advanced slowly...[in part because of] the idleness of our villages...[rural schools] deserve to be called crowds of wretched beings who grow in indolence, without having their sublime destiny in the land known to them.”

The submissive timidity which state officials attributed to Indians therefore placed indigenous peoples in the child-like position of being guided and protected in order to facilitate their advancement towards true civilization.

Since the state identified submissiveness and vulnerability with women, making statements that Indians were innately meek and in need of protection identified all Indians, men as well as women, with a trait that was considered naturally feminine. This was evident in an 1892 statue depicting Sucre, an Independence hero in Ecuador, standing protectively over an Indian woman. Identifying Indian women as passive may have fit into general ideas about intrinsic traits of men and women, but classifying Indian men as passive—in light of state officials’ association of passivity with women and children—meant that Indian men fell short of true manly qualities. This in turn helped to justify their political and social marginalization in

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22 In Manuel María Polit, Escritos, 283. García Moreno’s reference to the interior provinces here reflects an important distinction made between Ecuadorian Indians in the nineteenth century in which highland Indians were seen as “socialized” and tropical Indians as completely “savage.”
23 Exposición del Ministro de Hacienda y Relaciones Interiores...a las cámaras legislativas, 1867, (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1867), 14-16.
24 For an analysis of this statue, see Blanca Muratorio, “Nación, Identidad, y Etniciad: Imáginas de los Indios Ecuatorianos y sus Imagineros a Fines del Siglo XIX,” in Blanca Muratorio, ed.,
late nineteenth-century Ecuador, as the assumption quietly condoned employers and state officials who acted as patriarchs over child-like Indians. After all, if men were the proper authorities within the family, and Ecuador was una sola familia, it followed that the national family needed reliable patriarchs. Considering that Indian men were passive and ignorant, white and mestizo men had to take charge of the Ecuadorian household, sternly but fairly ruling over all women and Indians.

Though politicians and scholars of late nineteenth-century Ecuador considered highland Indians submissive on many, if not most, occasions, they also attributed darker, more violent characteristics to Indians as well, mainly regarding how Indian men treated their own families and peers. A Supreme Court case from 1874 offers an excellent example of how state officials identified and evaluated this ostensibly inherent Indian brutality. Asencio López, an Indian man from the central highland province of Chimborazo, was charged with beating his wife, María Aguagallo, and his mother-in-law, Rosa Aguagallo. Both the prosecution and defense used the trial as a platform on which to argue over Indian “otherness” and—ultimately—Indians’ place in the Ecuadorian nation. Because of its rich discussions of race and gender, the case merits detailed attention and analysis.

Defense attorney Alejandro Rivadeneira admitted that López committed the crimes for which he was accused. He maintained, however, that domestic violence was a natural—and therefore unchangeable—part of indigenous life; it was from his defense argument that the first quote at the beginning of the chapter was taken. As this larger excerpt shows, Rivadeneira’s reference to domestic abuse among Indians suggested not only that such behavior was

Imágenes e Imagineros: Representaciones de los Indígenas Ecuatorianos, Siglos XIX y XX, (Quito: FLACSO, 1994), 169-173; a photo of the statue itself appears on 171.
widespread, but it also proposed that Indian men were helpless to change these gender dynamics.

He stated:

Lopez’s coarseness (rural character)...which is *congenital*, with very few exceptions, to the indigenous class to which he belongs...there is a deep-seated custom between the poor Indians, in which a wife *requires* a dozen monthly blows from her husband as a token of his affection for her: a peculiar way to show love!; but...when a husband...beats [his wife], he is driven by love, rather than by hate and vengeance. (emphasis added)\(^{25}\)

Rivadeneira also called upon racial stereotypes in his plea for lenience when he insisted that his client failed to understand the severity of the crime he had committed. Since he presented domestic violence as an inborn trait of this ethnically distinct group within Ecuadorian society, he could claim that such brutal displays of “affection,” while horrifying to non-Indians, should not be severely punished. Furthermore, he argued that López could not understand the brutality of his actions due to his limited intelligence and his drunken state at the time when the beatings occurred.\(^{26}\) In short, the barbaric Indian could not be held responsible for his own actions because his very nature was contrary to civilized actions. In this analysis, the Indian man was as much—if not more—of a victim than the Indian woman, because his wife instigated the crime by “requiring” violence as a sign of love and affection.

Prosecutor Elias Laso maintained similar ideas about white civilization versus Indian barbarism, but he interpreted these differently than Rivadeneira. He stated:

> ...the judge should use all means at his disposal to contain the *savage* custom which unfortunately exists among our lower orders...of mistreating wives without taking into account the consideration that a man should have for a woman, not only because of religious or family obligations, but also *because it is characteristic of the rational mind*. In a...free republic born in the century of enlightenment and in a culture which guarantees *individual rights to all within its territory*...it is not impertinent

\(^{25}\) ANH/Q:Cr: December 19, 1874, ff. 3-4.  
\(^{26}\) Ibid.
Laso also identified Indian domestic violence as endemic within Indian societies, but he did not recognize this as an inherent trait that absolved the Indian man from responsibility for his actions. Yet even within the prosecutor’s harsher interpretation of Indian domestic violence, the Indian woman was not the true victim of the crime. Instead, he contended that the more significant threat was that this example of barbaric behavior would reflect badly on the nation as a whole, and on civilized (read white) society in particular. Laso firmly declared that the government had to forcibly obliterate Indian domestic violence by severely punishing Indian men who were charged with the crime.

The conflicts and continuities in the attorneys’ arguments related not only to their roles in the case itself, but they also reflected broader ideas about European civilization and Indian barbarism. Here, however, barbarism had a tangible consequence with the disruption of the core unit of society—the family. This helps to explain why both the prosecutor and the defense attorney in Asencio López’s case were relatively unconcerned with the plight of Indian women who were beaten by their husbands. While they did not consider the women’s suffering trivial, it was less significant than the fact that they saw Indian domestic violence as an obstacle to their aims at Europeanized progress and modernization. Yet their proclaimed concern did mean that, at least in theory, court officials had to commit themselves to eradicating domestic violence.

The lawyers’ impassioned arguments in this case were simultaneously deceptive and enlightening. Their deceptiveness stemmed from the unusual circumstances and outcome of the case itself. Though López was found guilty and given the two-year maximum prison term for his crime, most cases against indigenous men for domestic violence or sexual harassment went

27 Ibid.
unpunished, and Indian men were freed either for insufficient evidence or on the grounds that women’s injuries were not serious. The López case was also exceptional because Indian women rarely brought domestic violence cases to court. Indigenous women’s reluctance to do so may have been influenced by court officials’ leniency in these disputes, but the paucity of domestic violence cases was also due to the fact that Indian peasant women had other means through which they could address domestic problems. Documentary evidence suggests that abused Indian women were more likely to temporarily abandon their homes, seek the protection of other men in their communities, or even leave their husbands to live with other men than to bring these cases to court. Although Asencio López’s trial cannot be taken as a typical

28 Examples of leniency in cases of indigenous domestic violence appear in Criminal cases from the Archivo Nacional de la Historia, Riobamba (cited as ANH/R:Cr; civil cases from this archive are cited as ANH/R:Civ), see dates: November 11, 1880, the other was: ANH/R:Cr: February 6, 1875. It does appear that women—both Indian and non-Indian—were more likely to bring cases against abusive husbands to ecclesiastical courts. Gladys Moscoso explores such cases in her essay “La violencia contra las mujeres,” in Martha Moscoso, ed., Y el amor no era todo..., 187-209. Gladys Moscoso mentions cases involving indigenous women on page 190, and refers to cases where plaintiffs and/or defendants had indigenous names on pages 192-193 and 195-196. What is not clear from this article is the extent to which indigenous women’s complaints were more or less prevalent than those of non-Indian women’s, if the nature of their grievances differed in any way, and what different patterns emerge in the countryside versus the city. Further research needs to be done to explore the cultural, regional, and class differences that shaped Ecuadorian women’s experiences of domestic violence in the late nineteenth century. For cases of sexual assault, see ANH/R:Cr: January 21, 1875, ANH/Q: June 21, 1873, and ANH/R:Cr: June 19, 1872. Also see G. Moscoso’s article, cited above, pages 196-200. 29 See ANH/R:Cr: February 25, 1870; ANH/R:Cr: January 9, 1865; ANH/R:Cr: January 30, 1908; ANH/R:Cr: February 25, 1870; ANH/R:Cr: October 27, 1870; ANH/R: February 28, 1873; ANH/R:Cr: March 19, 1870, ff. 44-47. This evidence is only available because marital problems did, in the long term, erupt into violent crimes, particularly homicide. Nevertheless, the earlier attempts to address the problem of domestic violence that appear within these cases suggest that Indian women regularly utilized kinship ties, flight, and new relationships when they found themselves in abusive marriages. Marital dynamics for Indians living on haciendas was somewhat different, as discussed in chapter 7. Ecuadorian indigenous women’s responses to marital conflict in the nineteenth century reflects the dynamics of “contested patriarchy” discussed by historian Steve J. Stern in his book, The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), chapter 4. Anthropologist Olivia Harris also noted that Indian peasant men in modern Bolivia tend to defend married sisters against domestic violence in her essay “Complementarity and
domestic violence case, the attorneys’ attitudes about domestic violence as proof of Indian barbarism, and their dispute over how to interpret and respond to such conduct, did mirror more general ideas about Indian savagery in the era.

Though Ecuadorian references to indigenous domestic violence were rare, United States official Friedrich Hassaurek’s 1867 travel account pointed to deeply embedded assumptions about Indians. He wrote that “The Indian is strongly attached to his wife, and very jealous, although he treats her cruelly; but the woman does not wish to be treated otherwise. If her husband should cease to beat her, she would be convinced that he ceased to love her.”

One must be careful using travel accounts as historical evidence, as their biases are particularly complex, written by first-world men (and some women) who viewed both indigenous peoples and “whites” in Latin America as “backwards” on many levels. However, they are still useful, especially if used to highlight attitudes of privileged Ecuadorians towards non-privileged members of their own society. Hassaurek (like Orton, quoted earlier on the supposed “need” to beat Indian servants) interacted mainly with high society in Ecuador, and he formed his own opinions about indigenous peoples based largely on those connections. His portrait of Indian marriages might not reflect the reality of Indians’ lives and views, but it did echo the prejudice of wealthy Ecuadorians. For the historian of Indian/state relations, Hassaurek’s statements on indigenous domestic violence suggest that Laso and Rivadeneira utilized deeply embedded racial stereotypes when they formed their arguments in the López case.

30 Friedrich Hassaurek, Four Years Among Spanish Americans, ((Cioncinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1892 [1867]), 132.
31 For an excellent discussion of how one can carefully comb travelers’ accounts for useful information regarding interethnic relations, see Jill Fitzell, “Teorizando la diferencia en los Andes del Ecuador: Viajeros Europeos, la ciencia del exoticismo y las imágenes de los indios,”
Another critical way that the López case mirrored broader ideas about aberrant Indian behavior was in its references to the link between alcohol and indigenous violence. Citing intoxication as a mitigating factor was a typical defense strategy in cases where Indian men were accused of violent crimes. As one lawyer proclaimed in another (superior court) case: “Our Indians surrender to intoxication and ignore the consequences...thus one can logically deduce that a cerebral congestion develops...” (emphasis added). Indian men were, seemingly, especially prone to alcoholism, which in turn made them violent. Pedro Fermín Cevallos, just after identifying Indians as timid and humble, continued his discussion of Indians by alleging that “When they are drunk it is another thing altogether, and they become talkative and valiant, and they would resign themselves to dying rather than ceding to something they did not want.”

Indeed, when discussing indigenous dances related to the celebration of Corpus Christi in Quito, Fermín Cevallos referred to a level of drunkenness that “if it is not a palpable profanation of that which is most sacred, we do not know how to qualify it.” Thus drinking transformed the timid, humble, cowardly Indian into a bold and even vulgar character.

Drunkenness helped to explain not only Indians’ violence towards each other, but also their violent behavior in rebellions. When Indians of the central highland province of Chimborazo rebelled in December of 1871, members of the central government identified


32 ANH/R:Cr: April 23, 1864, f. 69. It is interesting to note that lawyers also used widespread ideas about Indian male drunkenness to defend whites and mestizos accused of violence against Indians. Such lawyers would claim that the Indian plaintiffs were so drunk when the alleged crime occurred that they were confused about what truly happened. For examples of this second pattern, see, for example: ANH/R:Cr: August 16, 1870; ANH/R:Cr: October 31, 1870.

33 Fermín Cevallos, *Resumen*, 86 and 131, respectively.

34 This idea was not new in the nineteenth century. See William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), particularly chapter 2. The ways that men in power manipulated these ideas, however, did change with the advent of the Republican period.
alcoholic intoxication as a root cause for the brutality of the event.\(^\text{35}\) In García Moreno’s 1873 message to congress, he stated that the revolt was “...produced by drunkenness and vengeance, and marked with various acts of ferocious savagery...”\(^\text{36}\) Minister of the Interior, Francisco Javier León, concurred, when he reported that “…the rebels, stimulated by intoxication, committed repulsive excesses, killing and cruelly defiling the cadavers, burning and robbing not only in the civil parish [of origin], but also in those of Punín, Cajabamba, and Sicalpa.”\(^\text{37}\) Drinking, it seems, unleashed a savagery that lay just under the surface of the “socialized” and “docile” Indians of the highlands.

Even the diatribe against intoxication that appeared in the 1875 national newspaper titled “El Demonio Alcohol,” while it lacked any direct references to racial distinctions, contained an underlying suggestion that Indians were more vulnerable to the dangers of drunkenness than other members of Ecuadorian society. The author’s discussions of moderate versus heavy drinking habits intimated that Indians might be one of the groups more prone to alcoholism and the barbaric behavior associated with it. Moderate drinking, the article stated, did not undermine morals or steer a man away from his patriarchal obligations, and thus posed no threat to society. It was only the heavy drinker, the habitual drinker, who lost all rationality and lacked any moral

\(^{35}\) For a good, short analysis of this rebellion, known as the “Daquilema” rebellion after one of its leaders, see Hernan Ibarra, *Nos encontramos amenazados por todita la indiada: El levantamiento de Daquilema*, (Quito: CEDIS, 1993); another well-know, if problematic (because of unclear sources) discussion of this uprising is Alfredo Costales Samaniego, *Fernando Daquilema: Ultimo Guaminga*, (Quito: Llacta, 16:11, 1963). Historical analysis of the rebellion itself is difficult due to lack of sources (assumed lost), but one existing source does remain: ANH/R:Cr: December 18, 1871. A transcription of this document is also available in Ibarra’s book. Within the document itself, Indian witnesses focused less on the drinking or “savagery” that government officials noted, and instead remarked that the uprising began because rumors spread that a new sales tax had been announced—see testimony by Santiago Bueno, folios 15v-16 of the document cited above.

\(^{36}\) Polit, *Escrítos*, 292.

\(^{37}\) Francisco Javier León, *Exposición del Ministro del Interior*...1873, 4.
The author further asserted that some men were more vulnerable to heavy drinking than others:

> If alcohol can...enslave the spirit of one who is devoted to good sentiments, there is even greater reason that it will produce this enslavement when such sentiments are weak, *by nature or by lack of education*, or when they are altogether absent due to an inborn moral monstrosity in which the dark passions are naturally greatly active."39 (emphasis added)

The phrase “by nature or by lack of education” was highly suggestive since it alluded to characteristics frequently assigned to Indians within Ecuadorian society. Indians, with their coarse ways and ignorance, were at higher risk for chronic heavy drinking and all of the violent behaviors that accompanied it. Because habitual intoxication and patriarchal irresponsibility were thought to go hand-in-hand, Indian men were again defined as aberrant, and as undeserving patriarchs.

“Saving” the Indian from 1895-1925:

One distinguishing factor of Ecuadorian liberalism was that the relationship between Indians and the liberal state in Ecuador was generally positive, whereas most Latin American liberal governments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were frequently at odds with their indigenous populations (typically over land). Ironically, liberals were able to achieve this largely because their proclaimed enemies, the Garcian state builders that had come before them, had already privatized Indian communal lands. Liberal statesmen therefore did not have to identify “the Indian” himself as an obstacle to progress, since his communal lands were already long gone. Instead, liberals could proclaim to be “saving” the Indian from his traditional oppressors. As with the “woman question,” Indian oppressors were identified as coastal liberals’

38 *El Nacional*, Números 407, February 17, 1875 and 408 (February 20).
main competitors—priests and highland estate owners. To support their proposed mission of saving Indians by undermining the power that their economic and political adversaries had over indigenous peoples, liberals focused on building primary education and eliminating debt peonage (concertaje) as their main objectives. Specifically, the abolition of concertaje became the Liberal rallying cry against traditionally oppressive sierra authorities, making sierra hacendados into the most important “villains” in the quest to liberate Indians and bring them into the process of nation making, while conciertos were upheld as good and honorable workers. Instead of identifying Indians themselves as the cause of the nation’s continuing struggles with “backwardness,” liberals tended to blame hacendados for maintaining the sierra in a semi-feudal state; they thus had to be dragged into modernity by coastal liberals. They claimed that ending the old system would help to modernize sierra agriculture since wage labor would result in a more efficient indigenous workforce and encourage hacendados to make use of new technologies and methods. Such assertions also helped to justify the liberal takeover of the central state, since liberals could and did use them to argue that their regime aimed at finally making all citizens equal before the law, whereas they claimed that previous regimes had failed to do so by reinforcing oppressive hierarchies.

Liberal reformers equated the abolition of concertaje with the salvation of the nation itself and its continuation with slavery—which had been outlawed in the 1850s. In his 1899

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39 Ibid, Número 408, February 20, 1875.
30 Church officials and highland estate owners were not mutually exclusive groups. Especially in the north-central sierra, the Church owned a great many large estates, which were taken over by the state with the 1908 “ley de beneficencia.” For an example of conciertos as good workers, see ANH/Q:Cr: May 4, 1901.
41 For slavery references, see Alfaro’s message to the national convention in 1896, in Alejandro Noboa, Recopilación de Mensajes Dirigidos por los Presidentes de la República, Jefes Supremos y Gobiernos Provisórios a las Convenciones Nacionales Desde el año 1819 hasta nuestros días, Tomo IV(Guayaquil: Imp. De El Tiempo, 1907), 226; Agustín Cueva, “Nuestra organización social y la servidumbre,” Revista de la sociedad jurídico-literaria (Quito) 14:25 (1915), 37.
message to congress, Eloy Alfaro declared that concertaje “makes a mockery of justice and equality, and goes against the liberty that should rule over bilateral contracts in which the interest of the individual should be the only rule of conduct.” Alfaro also presented the abolition of concertaje as fulfillment of a debt that liberals had to the Indians that had helped them gain control of the national government in battles against their conservative opponents. He argued this point quite dramatically when he addressed Congress in 1896:

“I remember the impression that I got when, during the battle of “Gatazo,” a soldier came to me to tell me…more or less these words: “My General, I am going to fight for my freedom; after the victory you will give me a paper, and I will no longer be a concierto.” –I think that this brave soldier succumbed to combat, because he did not present himself to me the next day as I had suggested, in order to attend to his just demand.”

By helping liberals win the war against conservatives, Indians had helped to save the nation; liberals could do no less than to liberate the Indian by way of thanks. Further, the nation itself could not survive if they did not: advocates of “Indian rights” insisted that without abolishing concertaje, it would be impossible to create a true republic; to attempt to forge a nation while maintaining the system would be merely “building on sand.”

Opponents of the proposed reform argued just as vehemently that the abolition of concertaje was contradictory to the very principles that liberals held most dear and that it would devastate the nation. Noting that “Every person who works subordinates his freedom to his obligations,” supporters of concertaje used abolitionists’ own emphasis on equality before the law to argue that Indians had to be held accountable for the contracts they entered into, just as

42 Noboa, Tomo IV, 426.
43 This quote is from Alfaro’s 1896 message to congress, found in Noboa, Recopilación, Tomo IV, 225.
44 The first quote here is from Agustín Cueva, El concertaje de indios (Quito: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, 1912), 9; the second is from Belisario Quevedo, “El concertaje y...
any other Ecuadorian would.\footnote{Polvio C. Palacios, “El concertaje y el liberalismo,” \textit{Diario Meridiano}, No. 30, Nov. 5, 1915.} Conservative lawyer and politician L.F. Borja made some of the strongest political arguments against abolishing concertaje. Not only did he insist that the reform would undermine the republican value of equality before the law, but he also suggested that such reforms were not made for the love of Indians but rather out of the hatred of whites.

Furthermore, he warned that Ecuador had little cultivable land, and that those who had improved agriculture were always hacendados; thus their interests had to be upheld for the good of the nation.\footnote{L.F. Borja, “\textit{El indio ecuatoriano y la agricultura en la sierra}” (Quito: Tip. y Encuad. De la “Prensa Católica,” 1923), 13, 22-23.} Opponents of liberals’ Indian reforms did not, however, argue against the basic republican ideals or nationalism liberals espoused, nor were their descriptions of Indians terribly different. Catholic conservative Ricardo Delgado Capéans, for example, identified one of the most urgent problems facing Ecuador in the twentieth century as the mission to organize and educate the Indian in order to fully incorporate him in national life and civilization.\footnote{Delgado Capéans, \textit{El problema indígena}, 3.}

Using concertaje as proof that the sierra hacienda was unchanging and corrupt, liberals reinforced their argument that the sierra was, in general, backward and unchanging while the coast was modern and more developed.\footnote{Roque Espinosa, “Hacienda, concertaje y comunidad en el Ecuador,” \textit{Cultura} (Quito) Vol. VII: Número 19 (Mayo-Agosto 1984), 139.} Yet sierra haciendas were far from unchanging, and liberal reformers were not so progressive as they claimed to be concerning concertaje. This is evident when one considers the changes that took place in the late nineteenth century and the limits to abolition. While liberals declared that the sierra hacienda was static, feudal, and oppressive, it was only with hacienda expansion beginning in the 1860s that concertaje became a principal form of indigenous labor in the sierra. Rather than indicate sierra backwardness,
concertaje was linked to sierra hacendados’ initiatives to expand their production and potential markets in order to take advantage of new transportation routes the state had created during Garcianismo. Once hacienda expansion and concertaje had ensured some level of success, many hacendados of the north-central sierra were able to decrease their labor needs by means of modernized agricultural techniques and/or by switching to dairy (rather than grain) production. By the time that concertaje was officially abolished in 1918, many of these modernizing sierra hacendados had already eliminated the practice of concertaje on their own estates in favor of wage labor. Haciendas of the north-central sierra were, therefore, undergoing a constant process of change.49

In spite of liberal reformers’ stereotypes of highland hacienda owners as universal protectors of an oppressive status quo, not all highland estate owners opposed the abolition of concertaje. In particular, the hacendados who had shifted from grain to dairy products and/or who had modernized production began to need fewer workers by the first two decades of the

49 During the liberal era itself, highland landowners proved that they could handle modern crises with great skill. For example, when the coastal economy went into a tailspin due to trade disruptions from World War I combined with diseased cacao plants in the 1910s, the national government had to rethink its policies and practices regarding sierra food production. Until this point, partly because of poor infrastructure between the highlands and the coast, the coastal population had imported foodstuffs from other nations. With the crises of the 1910s, the national government tried to re-orient sierra agriculture in order to meet the needs of people living on the coast. In 1918, the government issued the “Ley de Fomento Agrícola e Industrial” (the Law of Agricultural and Industrial Development) in order to develop agriculture, livestock raising, and textile production that would meet the new national needs resulting from recent economic crises. Though this was a Liberal initiative, the law was based on recommendations and changes made previously by the National Agricultural Society, whose members were highland hacienda owners. In this way, though coastal and sierra elites had often been at odds over both labor needs and paths to modernization, the crisis showed that Liberal coastal elites did not always have “better” answers to the nation’s problems than sierra hacienda owners, and that, in fact, highland hacendados were not as “backward” as Liberals had often claimed. See Kim Clark, “‘El Bienestar Nacional’: Experiencias del mercado interno en el Ecuador, 1910-1930,” *Procesos* (Quito) No. 7 (1995), 62-64 and 66-68. Clark is one of the few Ecuadorianists who has explored the dynamics of the national economy during this period, and its relationship to both international and local transformations. Her work has shaped my own discussion of these issues.
twentieth century, and they were not opposed to ending traditional worker/owner relations. In fact, many of these modernizing sierra landowners had already switched over to wage labor since it proved cheaper for them. Furthermore, even though many other sierra hacendados resisted the abolition of concertaje, the reform was not as threatening to them as it might seem on the surface, since the 1918 “abolition” of concertaje was achieved by merely ending imprisonment for debts. This left most other aspects of hacienda social and economic relations intact, rather than changing the entire system of labor relations in the sierra.

At the same time, the elimination of Indian debt peonage was not as fundamental to the liberal platform as many social reformers claimed. While they criticized concertaje and called for its abolition from the very beginning of the liberal period, liberal politicians postponed abolition until 1918, largely due to the fact that they were more concerned with secularizing the state between 1896 and 1912 than they were with the plight of Indian conciertos. Additionally, concertaje was based on much more than hacendados’ ability to send indigenous workers to prison for the debts they owed. Instead, hacendados secured an indigenous labor force through a complex system of obligations and rights, coercion and persuasion, cruelty and benevolence.  

Since concertaje’s supposed abolition did not address issues of social control between hacendados and Indians, it left the most important aspect of the system intact while still making it possible for legislators to take credit for saving Indians from backward, oppressive hacendados. Social critic Pio Jaramillo Alvarado noted this when he discussed how difficult it was to address the problem of interethnic exploitation on landed estates because “…this form of slavery [concertaje] has been theoretically abolished. [Since] imprisonment for debt has been

50 See chapter seven for how the owner/worker relationship on haciendas was held together by hacendados’ multi-layered manipulations of of gender relations on their estates.
extinguished, concertaje has lost its greatest support! But is it true that this legal disposition is
even enough to extirpate this gangrene that has paralyzed...agriculture?“51

The other important arena of Indian-oriented social reform in the liberal period was
education, a topic that (unlike concertaje) generated little debate. In some ways liberal
educational proposals were similar to those supported under Garcianismo, given that both
regimes called for free, obligatory primary education had to be made available to all
Ecuadorians. The Public Education law of 1907 not only made primary schooling free and
obligatory, but it also stipulated that parents or patrones who kept children over six years old
from attending school would be penalized. To ensure that parents and estate owners were
sending children to school, they were supposed to register all children between the ages of five
and twelve with the local teniente político.52 Such penalties were deemed critical due to the key
role that education was supposed to play in addressing Ecuador’s Indian “problem.” Reformers
maintained that backward and ignorant Indian workers could only overcome their superstitious
tendencies if they were exposed to modern, enlightened ideas through education. They further
assured moderates and conservatives that by educating Indians, they would become better rural
workers and thus agriculture would be improved.53

As in earlier eras, reality rarely reflected rhetoric, and liberal reformers’ commitment to
Indians had clear limits. Despite repeated liberal rhetoric supporting the construction of primary
schools in all regions of the nation, new primary education facilities were built in rural areas

51 Jaramillo, El indio ecuatoriano, 3.
52 Ley orgánica de Instrucción Pública, Segunda Edición (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1907),
Capítulo I, Arts. 3, 77, and 78.
53 See, for example, Leonidas Plaza’s speech to congress in 1905 in Noboa, Recopilación, Tomo
IV, 292-293, where he claimed that “agricultural improvement should begin with the
improvement of the operator.” Also see Homero Viteri Lafronte and Pedro L. Nuñez, “La
escuela rural y los indios,” Revista de la Sociedad Jurídico-Literaria (Tomo XVI, no. 36, Mayo
where most indigenous peoples lived, suggesting that the concept of Indian education mattered to these reformers than the practical application of such theories. Moreover, the educational reforms were far from altruistic even in theory, since the Liberal state’s promotion of secular education simultaneously undermined the role of the Catholic Church in Ecuadorian society. Also, since new school facilities were built in several smaller cities and in towns, and were controlled by the government instead of the Church, they helped to strengthen state control over all areas of the nation. Finally, schools were arenas where Indians would be incorporated into the body of the nation through the obliteration of indigenous cultures and values. Agustín Cueva, a poet and politician from the southern sierra province of Loja, essentially admitted to this in a 1915 article in which he stated

And, above all, schools, schools, and schools, which will replace the Quichua language with Spanish, which will bring the necessary and practical understandings to a race that has a peculiar psychology…to extract from them their confused and atavistic notions…and leave them with the spiritual pearls of contemporary progress.

Ultimately, liberal reformers were proposing that education would solve the “Indian problem” by getting rid of the Indian altogether through a process of acculturation.

As with the above-mentioned educational objectives, the reform and eventual abolition of concertaje also had underlying motives that were far from altruistic. In particular, the push to eliminate imprisonment for debts stemmed from coastal estate owners’ desire to gain access to

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54 Patricia de la Torre noted that a school only began functioning on the hacienda “El Dean” in 1927, in spite of a 1910 law that required all estates with over 20 workers to provide educational facilities. See *Patrones y conciertos: Una hacienda serrana, 1905-1929* (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional/Abya Yala, 1989), 20. See chapter 8 regarding Dolores Cacuango, for further discussion of the contradictions between the proclaimed goals and actual practices of state educational initiatives.

indigenous laborers. Unlike the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when periods of
economic expansion (or crisis) alternated between the sierra and the coast, coastal cacao elites
and sierra hacendados experienced simultaneous economic growth in the late nineteenth century
which led to conflicts over the acquisition of Indian workers. As historian Yves Saint-Geours so
aptly put it: “…the Indian during this period is a [critical] factor in the struggles between sierra
hacendados and large property owners on the coast.” The abolition of concertaje also gave the
central state power to mediate disputes between hacendados and indigenous workers,
strengthening the power of the central state over highland elites. Like liberal reforms aimed at
“liberating woman,” liberals’ Indian reforms addressed very real forms of oppression, but in a
limited and contradictory way.

**Liberalsim: Democratic Patriarchy?**

Though liberals claimed to be modernizing Ecuador by eliminating previous backward
practices and social inequalities, their discourses on “The Indian Problem” reflected the gendered
assumptions of earlier regimes. In particular, their assessment of the relationship between
Indians and the state, as well as their assertions about Indian men’s patriarchal rights and duties
in their own homes, paralleled ideas from the 1850s during the debate over the abolition of
Indian tribute. Liberal evaluations of Indians’ child-like passivity also mirrored conservative
descriptions of Indians from the Garcian period, although blaming this unmanly behavior on
local highland elites rather than on Indians themselves. Liberals did add new layers to the
gendered relations between Indians and the state, of course; particularly important was the extent

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57 See Andrés Guerrero, *La semántica de la dominación: El concertaje de indios*, (Quito: Libri
Mundi, 1991), 82-83.
to which the numerous Liberal reforms and discourses masculinized Indian/state relations in ways that previous regimes had not.

Although liberals emphasized that Indians were legally equal to other Ecuadorians, their descriptions of Indians often included underlying assumptions about Indians’ gendered difference from other members of Ecuadorian society. Like presidents and congressmen of the early nineteenth century, liberal statesmen identified themselves as paternal figures that had to intervene and save Indians from oppressive conditions. The 1895 decree releasing Indians from the obligation to pay the contribución territorial and the trabajo subsidiario offers evidence of the interesting and complex liberal imagery regarding Indians:

CONSIDERING
1\textsuperscript{st} that the disgraced condition of the Indian race should be alleviated by public officers;
2\textsuperscript{nd} that the liberal Government has inaugurated Sir General don Eloy Alfaro, Supreme Chief of the Republic, who has the duty of protecting the descendents of the first inhabitants of the Ecuadorian territory;
3\textsuperscript{rd} that in the campaign for national honor the Indians provided great services to the Liberator’s army, thus demonstrating that they are disposed to adopt the practices of modern civilization…

Indians here were both child-like/backwards and manly/modern—with the latter being a much more positive interpretation of Indian manliness than Garcian officials, or even those during Urvina’s regime, had constructed in the nineteenth century. However, the role of the central state harked back to Urvina’s presidency, and even to the colonial period, when it was the paternal duty of central government officials to save helpless Indians. In the liberal era, however, there was a clear tension between state-sanctioned egalitarianism and (also state-sanctioned) interethnic paternalism. This strain was manifest in the 1897 constitution, which both asserted that “[All Ecuadorians] are guaranteed equality under the law” and maintained that
“public officers should protect the Indian race, in order to improve their place in national life.”

This tension did not necessarily work to liberal statesmen’s disadvantage; asserting that Indians were different in a nation that upheld equality before the law not only justified coastal liberals’ desire to reform the sierra, but it also gave reason to strengthen the presence of the central state in the countryside. Liberal discourse on Indian difference was clearly gendered, with the predominant image of Indian men’s low position in Ecuadorean society during the liberal period resting, as it had during Garcianismo, on the idea of these men’s child-like passivity.

Although both liberals and conservatives agreed that Indians were passive and humble before white/mestizo society, they certainly interpreted this “Indian characteristic” in profoundly different ways. Liberal officials and scholars either carefully avoided the previously prevalent images of Indian men’s barbaric brutality towards other Indians or, if forced to discuss the issues of indigenous drunkenness and violence, they treated these differently than nineteenth-century statesmen had. Agustín Cueva, in particular, dismissed ideas that Indians were either stupid or ferocious, stating instead that they were as capable of learning as anyone else, and that there was evidence indicated that they tolerated their victimization quite tranquilly, without violence. Cueva accepted other Indian traits as real, but instead of blaming negative qualities on Indians themselves, he blamed highland priests and landowners for Indians’ plight. If Indians were

59 Asamblea Nacional, Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 1897, as it appears in Federico Trabuco, Constituciones de la República del Ecuador (Quito: Editorial Universitaria, 1975), Arts. 30 and 138, respectively.
60 For other laws and decrees that related to Indian backwardness and child-like passivity, see: “Decreto declarando que la clase indigena está exenta del pago de todo contribución territorial [1898]” and “Decreto que crea Escuelas para la Raza Indígena [1912],” both in Freile-Granizo, ed., Sarance, pages 113 and 134, respectively; and Eloy Alfaro, Decreto Ejecutivo sobre concertaje de indíos (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1899). For Supreme Court cases where Indians’ rusticity and vulnerability were emphasized, see ANH/Q:Cr: March 13, 1916; November 25,
considered irreligious, it was because priests had abused them and failed to teach them the true
doctrine of Christ. If they were thieves, it was because they lived with constant hunger; if they
were eternal children, it was because they lived under tyranny; if they were indolent, it was
because their situation gave them no incentive to be productive. Liberal statesmen thus defined
Indian barbarism as a by-product of the actions of traditional sierra authorities, rather than as an
inherently Indian trait as state officials had during Garcianismo. Reluctance to identify Indians
as “aberrant” was not exclusive to liberals, however, as Ricardo Delgado Capéans’ discussion of
Indian society and education showed. Though a conservative and ardent supporter of
Catholicism’s role in the nation, Delgado Capéans, like his political adversary Cueva,
emphasized Indians’ inherent ability to learn, improve, perfect, and civilize themselves. In fact,
he proclaimed that “I do not see the reason for the contempt with which we look upon the
Indigene.” And he, like Cueva, dismissed the idea that Indians were more prone to vices than
non-Indians, make such statements as “If the Indian gets drunk, he gets drunk on the same
pretexts as the civilized man.” Therefore, even as they argued against many of the changes that
liberals were making, conservatives embraced the new Indian discourse that the liberals had set
forth.

This new and more positive impression of the Indian man did not apply to all
circumstances or all levels of the state structure. One distinguishing factor for how state officials
evaluated Indian men’s behavior was based on the geographical divide between Indians of the
sierra and those who lived in lowland regions. While even nineteenth-century scholars referred

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1896 (this case referred to a concierto, in particular, being coerced into making a false
confession); and August 20, 1918.
61 Agustín Cueva, *El concertaje de indios*, 14-15 (regarding religion), 21-26 (for all other
characteristics).
to Indians of the highland as “socialized” in contrast to the “savagery” of tropical Indians, they
did identify a strong tendency towards violence in both.64 Although liberal central state officials
consistently denied any inherent savagery in highland Indians, they did continue to define other
indigenous groups—particularly those they called the Jíbaro—as “savages” who lived outside of
the bounds of civilization.65 A Supreme court case against a Jíbaro man for double murder
includes defense arguments that:

The defendant is a jívaro, which is to say, a primitive man, a man
who does not participate in our moral [order]…[the jívaros] live
outside of society…how can we attribute bad intentions to a man
who lives on the margin of civilized society?…Joaquinto [the
defendant] is a good candidate as a scientific curiosity…it is
impossible for the savage to distinguish between good and bad.66

Though Garcian and liberal central state officials differed dramatically on the question of
barbarism for Indians of the highlands, the defense of this lowland Indian man was strikingly
similar to the defense made for sierra Indian Asencio López in 1874. The case therefore speaks
to the fact that, in spite of their rhetorical egalitarianism, liberals did continue to see some
Indians as far from redeemable. Further, while most central state officials carefully denied that
sierra Indians were violent, this attitude did not necessarily reflect the beliefs of state officials on
the local or provincial levels. Take the example of an assassination case brought to the supreme
court, where the provincial officials introduced the case to the court by writing that “The
barbarous assassination of Sir Manuel María Carrión Serrano, perpetrated by a gang of

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63 Ibid, 19-20 for his discussion of alcoholism, and other myths are dispelled on pages 20-24. His discussion of education itself begins earlier, on page 4, and appears throughout the essay.
64 A good example is Fermín Cevallos, Resumen de la historia del Ecuador, 160-167, on which
he discusses the gendered savagery of “savage” Indians like the Jíbaros, who practice polygamy
and bury wives with their husbands. He claimed on 167 that “the state of war is the natural state
for savages…for them, woman is a conquest, the spoils of glory.” García Moreno himself also
made such distinctions, as is mentioned earlier in this chapter; see footnote 21.
65 The indigenous peoples formerly known as the Jíbaro have discarded this pejorative label and
are now known as the Shuar.
Indians…caused horror in all of Cuenca society." The divide between the different tiers of the state structure also provided Indians’ defenders with opportunities, as some of them identified local authorities as inept, or as abusive of poor, honorable indigenous peoples. The latter claim, of course, also manipulated ongoing notions of Indians as vulnerable children in need of the central state’s paternal protection.

Liberal leaders, however, did not only evaluate Indian men’s manhood through discussions of their passive or brutal behavior, but they also focused on Indian men’s patriarchal rights as family authorities. While Liberal reforms for “women” failed to address the needs and experiences of Indian women, the gender ideologies at the foundation of reforms for women were critical to the shape that reforms for Indians, and more general Indian/state relations, took during the Liberal period. Because Liberals assumed that men were, normally, publicly active and women belonged to the private sphere, reformers of the time focused their attention on Indian men rather than Indian women. Even if Indian men could not gain full rights as citizens because of illiteracy, they could still be a part of the masculine, public sphere of the nation as breadwinners who ruled over their households.

According to members of the Liberal state, if Indian men were not authorities in their own households, then it was the fault of backward economic relations and oppressive hacendados, rather than of Indians’ own fault. Agustín Cueva wrote that this lack of masculine authority was one of the defining factors of the problem of concertaje:

The servant, unlike the slave, lives separated from the master, he governs himself; but this liberty and independence are ironic, because...his economic life is disposed to a manner such that neither is marriage spontaneous nor does the family belong to him; he remains shackled to the

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66 ANH/Q: Cr: July 15, 1918, folios 29-29v.
67 ANH/Q:Cr: December 21, 1918; for other reference to indigenous violence in cases brought to the Supreme Court, see ANH/Q:Cr: June 26, 1916.
68 Examples here are ANH/Q:Cr: April 9, 1921; January 21, 1897.
land on which he has to live and die as a perpetual debtor, as an eternally forced laborer.  (emphasis added)⁶⁹

According to Cueva, because hacienda owners controlled all social as well as economic relations on their estates, they robbed Indian men of their right to rule their own households, suggesting that Indian women and children should not belong to the hacendado but rather to the Indian man. While this assessment of hacienda social relations was not accurate (see chapter seven), it was a common assumption among liberal reformers who therefore considered it their duty to encourage and support Indian men’s patriarchal rights within their homes.

Sometimes reformers directly sanctioned male-headed households. When Eloy Alfaro decreed the first reforms of concertaje in 1899, he focused his attention specifically on Indian men. Most of the decree spoke generally of Indians’ rights on haciendas—regarding fair wages, entrance into concertaje by consent rather than force, education for the children of indigenous resident workers on the estates, etc. Yet one small part of the decree shows that Alfaro did not consider Indian women central to the debate over concertaje: he stated that hacendados could not require work of conciertos’ wives or children.⁷⁰ While this reference did in theory free Indian women from working for free on sierra haciendas, it was one of the least likely parts of the decree to enforce, since doing so would require constant supervision from local state authorities. Further, the mention of Indian women here made them even more invisible in the reform of concertaje than if they had not been mentioned at all. Had they been absent from the entire document, Indian women might have been able to argue to obtain the general benefits of the decree along with Indian men.

⁷⁰ Eloy Alfaro, Decreto Ejecutivo sobre concertaje de indios (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1899), Art. 6.
Indian women continued to be set aside by Liberal reformers when, in the 1910s, propagandists wanted to abolish, rather than merely restructure, concertaje. Belisario Quevedo—a politician, sociologist, and liberal reformer—defined the Indian man as a household authority by focusing on economic issues. He proposed that Indians could only be lifted out of debt peonage if “Wages...[do not] fall below that which is necessary, indispensable, for the subsistence of the worker and his family.”  

Since Quevedo, like many other proponents for the abolition of concertaje, understood the problem of servitude in economic terms, he presented an economic solution. Yet his solution also derived from the notion that women’s proper place was in the home rather than the workplace. He supported social change that would strengthen Indian men’s roles as patriarchs and simultaneously place Indian women in domestic, dependent roles in relation to Indian men.

Other reformers did not directly indicate a preference for dividing public and private spheres according to gender, but nevertheless used notions about proper gender roles as the foundation for their proposed social changes. One Liberal essay stressing the critical role that education could play in making Indians into excellent rural workers offers a good example of this phenomenon. Authors Homero Viteri Lafronte and Pedro L. Nuñez emphasized that since agriculture was the basis for indigenous life (whether in independent peasant communities or on haciendas), primary education in rural areas needed to focus on agricultural training. The authors did acknowledge that Indian women did not automatically fit into the private sphere when they wrote:

...in general, the Indian woman does the same work on haciendas as the Indian man; we should not forget that for one reason or another the Indian woman can also be left as the head of the household, and, finally, we must

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remember the power that a mother or wife can exercise over her children or her husband.\textsuperscript{72}

From this statement alone, one could surmise that Viteri and Nuñez, while they upheld Indian women’s cultural and moral influence as wives and mothers just as others did for white or mestizo women, recognized and respected Indian women’s distinct experiences in rural Ecuador. Other liberals associated concertaje with not only the enslavement of Indian men who contracted into debt peonage with hacienda owners, but with their wives and children also, noting that because estate owners got free work from a concierto’s family, the slavery affected “the entire family.”\textsuperscript{73} Belisario Quevedo also noted that this family enslavement often began with marriage itself, when an Indian man, unable to afford marriage, first became indebted to the hacienda owner on the estate where he grew up.\textsuperscript{74} Recognition of the impact of concertaje on the entire Indian family was not entirely new, though it was coming under closer scrutiny by the central government than it had ever been previously. For example, when discussing the plight of Indians in the late nineteenth century, Pedro Fermin Cevallos observed not only that Indian women worked alongside men on haciendas, but also that the increasing debts that a concierto incurred were often related to his wife’s and children’s needs.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72} Viteri and Nuñez, “La escuela rural y lost indios,” 281. In ANH/Q:Cr: January 25, 1908, Supreme Court officials, like Viteri and Nuñez, also recognized that “…peasant women work as much as the men…in all classes of work.” Indigenous women’s work was also recognized in practice; see ANH/Q: Cr: January 25, 1908, in which one of the lawyers noted that “…rural women work just as much as men…in all classes of labor.”

\textsuperscript{73} See, for example, Leondias Plaza’s message to the national congress in 1905 in Noboa, \textit{Recopilación}, 291-292. Also see Agustín Cueva, \textit{El concertaje de indios}, especially pages 5, 8, 11, and 16; to rectify the situation, Cueva—unlike other reformers discussed here—called for paying Indian women for their work on haciendas on page 45.

\textsuperscript{74} B. Quevedo, “El salario del concierto,” 72-73. Quevedo was correct that marriage was one of the ways that Indians succumbed to debt peonage; see chapter seven for further discussion of this aspect of hacienda socio-economic relations.

\textsuperscript{75} Fermin Cevallos, \textit{Resumen de la historia del Ecuador}, 144-145.
Yet when they mapped out a specific educational plan to teach young Indian boys and girls how to become good workers, their gender prejudices became evident. Indian boys’ education was to be primarily in agricultural techniques so that they would grow up to be good and knowledgeable agricultural workers. Indian girls, however, would learn domestic economics and hygiene, cooking, washing and ironing, sewing, and cheesemaking along with some minor agricultural training.76 Therefore even though Viteri and Nuñez gave momentary recognition to the differences between Indian women’s experiences and the Liberal ideal of womanhood, they still proposed to use rural education as a means of minimizing Indian women’s deviation from the stated gender norm.

By emphasizing Indian men’s roles as heads of households and Indian women’s responsibilities as wives and mothers, elites (both liberal and conservative) did more than simply assume what proper gender roles were. They were also making statements about the meaning of freedom and equality. If Indian men could not gain true citizenship through suffrage, then at least they could belong in a general way to the national community of men by participating in the public sphere while their wives (whether or not they worked outside the home) were relegated to the private sphere. To emphasize the potential for equality of men of all ethnicities and classes, in spite of glaring socio-economic inequalities that existed, liberal leaders accentuated differences and inequalities between men and women. In essence, a common patriarchal connection would bind subordinate men to the Liberal project.

Due to the secular democratic basis for the liberal project, there was also new pressure on statesmen during this period to de-emphasize Indian men’s child/parent relationship to members of white/mestizo society. Therefore while references to Indian men’s child-like passivity continued during the liberal period, they were balanced with referrals to Indian virility and

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76 Viteri y Nuñez, “La escuela rural y los indios,” 282.
potential for masculine achievement in the public sphere. The ultimate goal would be assimilation into white/mestizo society. Some elites pointed to Indians’ pre-conquest cultural achievements and claimed that if Ecuador’s indigenous peoples had been capable of relatively high cultural standards centuries before, then surely they were now capable of assimilation into a superior culture and finally becoming part of the Ecuadorian nation.  

Throughout the liberal period, social reforms focused on women or Indians tended to overlook the plight of Indian women. When liberal reformers did pay attention to Indian women, they were more concerned with restructuring economic and social conditions so that Indian women could come closer to meeting their ideal notion of womanhood than they were with addressing the grievances that Indian women might have about their own lives. These passing remarks could actually undermine Indian women’s abilities to utilize new reforms. Indian women therefore remained in the barely visible periphery of liberal debates because they were twice removed from the nation that liberal leaders sought to forge. Elite women were denied full citizenship because they were women; Indian men were denied it only because they were not literate. Indian women—both because of their sex and because the vast majority were illiterate—were twice removed from potential citizenship. Therefore the liberal government did not need to concern itself too much with either making Indian women into citizens or justifying why they were not allowed full participation in the political body. In their view, giving Indian women too much power vis-a-vis the state would even be dangerous, because it could undermine Indian men’s patriarchal control of the family and therefore their association with men of other ethnic and class backgrounds. Given their emphasis on Indian men’s dominance in the household, social reformers also assumed that any improvements in Indian men’s status would

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automatically benefit their dependent wives and children. The opposite, however, was often true: changes that either reinforced Indian men’s patriarchal rights or improved their bargaining powers with white authorities often disturbed the balance of power among the men and women of Indian communities.

Conclusion:

Liberal statesmen and scholars not only presented new ideas about Indian men’s patriarchal rights, but they also indicated a changed patriarchal role for the state than members of the government had under Garcianismo. Central to this change was the way that national officials discussed sierra hacendados. Garcian state officials viewed hacienda owners as members of the benevolent white patriarchy that, through their interactions with Indians, held civilization together. Liberalism, however, defined hacendados (and Church officials) as corrupt patriarchs who stood in the way of socio-political equality and economic modernization. The liberal state then had a duty to save Indians from these traditional oppressors. While both regimes maintained that members of white society needed to act as benevolent patriarchs who would civilize Indians, then, they indicated different groups within white society who would do so, which reflected their distinct economic and political aims.

Though members of the liberal regime accentuated their differences with Garcianismo through their discussions of Indians’ capacities for political participation if they were freed from the yoke of concertaje, the two regimes had a great deal in common, just as they had in regard to the “woman question.” Members of both administrations utilized similar gender ideologies as a way of shaping their relations with Indians and justifying their broader economic and political
motives. Differences in gender ideologies and Indian/state relations sprang from the distinct circumstances and goals of each centralizing project.

Elite gender ideologies had a powerful impact on both regimes’ Indian/state relations. More specifically, statesmen in both periods utilized ideas about patriarchal rights and duties in order to explain the reasons for Indian “backwardness” and to justify Indian men’s absence from national political participation. Members of the state under Garcianismo focused on Indian men’s abuse of their patriarchal authorities and powers to do this, while liberals later asserted that it was hacendados, not Indians, who had abused patriarchal powers and caused Indian backwardness. Again, the differences between the two regimes were based largely on their distinct goals and circumstances. Garcianismo encouraged hacienda expansion, therefore identifying Indian backwardness as inherent was a useful way to justify this state supported shift in sierra landholding. Coastal liberals wanted to lure male indigenous workers away from sierra haciendas, so they blamed hacienda owners for Indian backwardness. Additionally, Indian men no longer posed the threat to the central state in the early twentieth century that they had in the 1860s and 1870s. In the late nineteenth century, Indians’ peasant landholdings and autonomous local governments meant that Indians were a political power to be reckoned with at the local level. By the turn of the century there were fewer independent indigenous peasant communities and indigenous governments were no longer officially recognized by the state. These changes indicated that Indians were less of a potential threat to local extensions of centralizing projects during liberalism than they were under Garcianismo. Although Indian women were rarely mentioned under either political system they were important to the gendered relationships between Indian men and the state. Specifically, Indian women were a tool that central government officials could use to discuss the patriarchal implications of Indian backwardness.
This did not mean that Indians themselves accepted elite gender ideals or that Indian women were inactive in Indians’ interactions with state representatives at the local level. As the next chapters will show, Indian men and women were not merely pawns for elite objectives; rather, they adjusted to changing conditions and responded to protect their own interests. Yet the silence in both administrations over Indian women could have a detrimental effect on Indian women’s relationships with Indian men and with state representatives at the local level, as will be seen in chapters seven and eight.