

Citizens or Believers? Citizenship in Late-Nineteenth-Century Colombia

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## DEDICATION

To Lilibeth

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## ABSTRACT

### CITIZIENS OR BELIEVERS? CITIZENSHIP IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY COLOMBIA

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This dissertation is primarily a critique of nineteenth-century Colombian Liberalism and Conservatism with a specific focus on the historical period known as the Regeneration (1880-1899). More specifically, it exposes the contradiction of liberalism in the late nineteenth century Colombia through the notion of citizenship. Although the Regeneration has produced important intellectual analyses that concentrate on the economic and political realm, it has produced little understanding on the issue of citizenship beyond its political connotation. Through the analysis of legal and political evidence such as Constitutions, the *Diario Oficial*, and the Spirit of the Law against literary texts and popular non-official writings, this project argues that citizenship in the Regeneration not only reinforced the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizenship, but it also reinforced colonialist views of it deeply affecting both the private and public life of Colombians at the time and beyond. It also establishes whether such notions were



contested or adapted considering that citizenship was permeated by particular ideas of Catholicism, race, class and gender.

## INTRODUCTION

Citizenship represents perhaps one of the contradictory definitions to conceptualize in the modern world. As a cornerstone of Liberal ideology, citizenship stands as a fundamental mechanism that both hinders and fosters the limitation of state power, the granting, recognition, and protection of a number of individual rights, liberty, the protection of private property – and the notion of representative government. These liberal ideals, however, were plagued with contradictions and distinctions of class, race, and gender. These categories were crucial as they made the notion of citizenship limited and limiting.

Inspired in the French Revolution, in Latin America, the adoption of the modern notion of citizenship went hand-in-hand with the process of state formation after Independence the process of nation building. In the West, the legitimation of the territorial state led to the nationalistic fervor that intended to make the state coincide with a particular dominant nation. Therefore, the constitution of the modern political order was founded on the link between nation and state, and citizenship became a vital element in the expansion of state power and nation building.

In Colombia, during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a minority of intellectual-political elites, following the events in Europe and North America, sought to establish the criteria for citizenship despite the fact that not all of Colombian society welcomed the values of modernity and Liberalism. In fact, some argued that modern

ideas were the antithesis of civilization. Their reticence arose from the belief that those values worked against a well-established and widely popular Catholic morality.

Nonetheless, a new consciousness emerged which required people to respond to their own judgment and not to an external authority, much less to a divine one. These developments in Colombia did not take place in a vacuum and the adoption and adaptation of the notion of citizenship related directly to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* and the U.S. Constitution. This dissertation is set to critically analyze the liberal notion of citizenship both in the West and in Colombia in the nineteenth century, more specifically, in the important period in Colombian historiography known as *La regeneración*/the Regeneration (1880-1899).

The Regeneration was an authoritarian, centralist, ultraconservative and moral movement based in Bogotá, which goal was to achieve social, political, and economic order, led by the conservative elite, the Catholic Church, and a faction of disenchanted Liberals. Citizenship in this period was especially influenced by the Church, the institution that had the task of civilizing the nation through education and Catholicism. As a contribution to the understanding of nineteenth-century Colombia, this dissertation is set to analyze the intricacies of the notion of citizenship in the late nineteenth century and beyond. It argues that citizenship at that time in Colombia not only reinforced the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizenship, but it also reinforced colonialist views of it deeply affecting both the private and public life of Colombians at the time and beyond. Both instances entered into a dialectical relationship in which the colonial past constantly threatened the establishment of a successful liberal nation state.

Fundamentally, this dissertation will answer these questions: How did the Regeneration use the liberal notion of citizenship in order to impose its ultra-conservative views? What were the effects of the historical project of the Regeneration as it was contested in the 1990s?

The analysis that drives this project and the evidence that supports it require a Cultural Studies approach and its key coordinates. The complexities of citizenship in Colombia require a theoretical framework that captures the centrality of citizenship in the West and in Colombia both before and during *La regeneración* and, at the same time, establish the interconnections that exist between what Paul Smith calls the socio-economic and politico-cultural milieus (1997:60-1). Such interconnections are important as they help elucidate not only the contradictions within the liberal notion of citizenship but also the motivation behind the use of this notion in a period that partially accepted liberalism. In order to establish those interconnections and motivations, this dissertation departs from the premise that discourses on citizenship are not static because they are constantly determined and conditioned by a “thick web of relations” (Sábato, 2001:49) which form the social totality of Colombia at the time. Only by locating citizenship in this social totality, it is possible to understand how political, economic and social forces act upon the production, circulation and consumption of the notion of citizenship in the late nineteenth century Colombia and its impact in contemporary Colombia. By focusing on these interactions within which citizenship was understood and “applied,” the question of the use of liberal and traditional elements in the notion of citizenship to foment ever greater exclusion is more interesting and all the more comprehensible.

This project is set to determine who produced the notions of citizenship in late nineteenth century Colombia, who was included and/or excluded from them, and what their agenda consisted of. Furthermore, it explores who received those notions of citizenship, and whether such notions were contested or varied as well as the social, political, educational, religious, and economic effects of such contestation, considering that citizenship was infused by particular ideas of race, gender, and class.

In order to address these issues, this dissertation will closely read legal and political evidence (such as the Constitutions, the *Diario Oficial*, and the Spirit of the Law, school syllabi, the *Revista de Instrucción Pública*), against popular and non-official writings such as “foundational fictions” (Sommer, 1991) such as those of Tomás Carrasquilla’s *Frutos de mi tierra* and *Entre primos*. The project will also use non-official writings such as periodical publications written by the masterminds of the Regeneration, Liberal Rafael Núñez and ultraconservative Miguel Antonio Caro. This evidence allows for an understanding of the “official” notions of citizenship. It helps to determine the requirements for citizenship, the economic and political implications of this category, as well as to identify who produced the notions of citizenship, and to delineate the agendas of the elite groups that dominated the country during the Regeneration. In addition, non-popular writings represent an excellent source of information as they intended to contain violence, to civilize/educate the nation, to instill values, good manners, and even devotion. It has been argued that literature founds the nation, and since literary production was a fundamental social and cultural aspect in the period in question, novels will provide a valuable source of information about the kinds of knowledge produced locally and

internationally, the influence of such publications on the country's social and political landscape, and the notion of citizenship (Sommer, 1991:5-29). The concern of the elite with grammar and language correctness, for instance, impeded subalterns from having upward social mobility. Through a close reading of literary, moral, and political writings produced by Núñez and Caro, this project examines the contradictions that their ideals posed in relation not only to the Liberal notion of the citizen, but also with regard to their own Regenerationist program.

This evidence will be approached through the theoretical lenses of Karl Marx's critique of citizenship and class, Antonio Gramsci's conception of hegemony, Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). It will also follow Michel Foucault's genealogy of the workings of modern mechanisms of power, more specifically, pastoral power as an individualizing technique and Peter Wade's works on race, T.H. Marshall's understanding of citizenship as a membership in a political community, and S.N. Eisenstadt, Luis Roniger and Javier Auyero's understanding of *clientelismo*.

A fundamental aspect in the study of citizenship is the issue of private property as the latter helped determine access to the benefits and rights of citizenship. In the capitalist mode of production, as Karl Marx explained, the relationship between citizenship and property was marked by the distinction between private property that is based on labor of its owner and capitalist private property (Marx, 1977: Chapter Thirty-Two). Capitalism was successful in dismantling precisely private property based on labor of its owner because capitalism presupposes the separation of the majority of the population from

their material conditions of labor and therefore of sustenance. Without such base, most individuals could not have access to citizenship as they lost their private property to capitalism. Here lies precisely the incompatibility between capitalism and citizenship. The connection between property and citizenship in early liberalism was founded on the notion that an individual is autonomous and independent insofar as he could guarantee his sustenance, which is guaranteed by the possession of his own means of production. Also, private property was considered necessary for self-preservation and a manifestation of industriousness. As capitalism was growing and capitalist private property concentrated in a few hands, citizenship also became exclusive. The implication was that without a material base with which to support oneself, aspiration to independence and the autonomous exercise of any right could not be achieved.

As individual freedom was connected directly to civil independence that is with the required material conditions for the autonomous exercise of any right citizenship was then presented as the solution to reconcile capitalist private property with civil society. However, instead of guaranteeing access to property to all individuals, the upper classes only recognized as citizens already property owners. This is why Marx argues that the strive for citizenship rights encourages individuals to disregard other men, to live independent of society, and to be self-interested. This kind of man is the one who forms civil society in which every man sees in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it (2000:61).

Property was not only a key element in the construction of citizenship. It was also part of the foundation for a class society. Class or the conditions in which collective

identities are constituted in capitalism, represent yet another category through which it is possible to locate an individual and to explain the inequalities that occur within an economic, political, social or ideological order. Although the place of an individual in relation to the means of production is of great importance, it is not sufficient in determining their social class (*Communist Manifesto*, 1948: 22). Class, then, is also determined by an ideological and a political dimension in which individuals are conscious of both their interests and the conflicting interests of other classes. In this sense, a social class is defined by its place in the ensemble of social practices, as Poulantzas states, by its place in the ensemble of the division of labor, which includes political and ideological relations (1973). Based on this definition, the owners merely of labor-power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground rent, in other words, wage-laborers, capitalists and land-owners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production. (Marx. *Capital* Vol. III Part VII. “Revenues and their Sources” Chapter 52).

Race as an analytical category has been defined as a historically constructed identity (and not a biological category) that, like class and property, helps mark the difference between social classes in capitalist societies. Racial identifications, at least in the nineteenth century, used physical differences as signals, not only any physical difference but also those that became object of ideological manipulations in the history of colonial expansionism (Wade, 1997:17). Race was also used as an impediment or an open door to the advantages of citizenship. The race card has been used for economic and political gain and Colombia has not been the exception. Nonetheless, citizenship and race



were used hand in hand to achieve common goals, as Chapter two will show.

Even though gender, as the cultural practices and assumptions that govern the social construction of women, men and their social relations, is a crucial category in the study of the interconnections that exist between the cultural, political, social and economic milieu, this dissertation will only touch it tangentially as the richness of the subject deserves a whole dissertation for itself. However, there will be allusions the issues of gender and citizenship especially in Chapter 5.

Property and class are key elements in any hegemonic project. Hegemony refers to the *condition in process* in which a dominant class (in alliance with other classes or class factions) does not merely rule a society but leads it through the exercise of moral and intellectual leadership (Gramsci 1971:2). Following that thought, the institution of citizenship becomes a crucial part in the hegemonic project and can be applied to other cultural constructs. Citizenship plays a fundamental role in the hegemonic process because, as Florencia Mallon argues in *Peasant and Nation*, it assembles identities and controls power relations and political participation in the public sphere, where it is also contested through practices of everyday life (1995).

Since hegemonic projects are informed by particular ideologies, Althusser's theory of ideology, more specifically the role of "ideological state apparatuses" (ISAs) will also inform the critical analysis of this project. ISAs are institutions such as education, the churches, family, among others, which were formally outside state control but which served to transmit by means of ideology, rather than by force the values of the state, to interpellate those individuals affected by them, to maintain order and to reproduce

capitalist relations of production (Althusser, 1970). As an ideological instrument, citizenship raises a fundamental question for Cultural Studies, that of the “system of production and distribution” of discourses and practices, which are conditioned by the regime in power. This regime determines what sort of discourses will be produced, what limits there will be as to what can be said and published, and who consumes what, and if those discourses are contested. Michel Foucault’s analysis of the modern mechanisms of power and “pastoral power” help explain phenomena such as the disciplining of the subject/citizen and non-citizen in schools, church, the street, the private sphere of the home, and in public spaces.

T.H. Marshall’s understanding of citizenship is based on the argument that there exist contradictions between the liberal principles of citizenship and capitalism as the latter inevitably involves inequality between social class divisions. Citizenship as an evolving institution proposes the more fair distribution of resources and the respect for the rights that are inherent in all individuals. For Marshall, in capitalism citizenship is composed of three different types of rights that developed in three different historical periods. First, there are civil rights, which are necessary for individual freedoms and are institutionalized by the law. Second, there are political rights, which guarantee the right to participate in the exercise of political power in the community, either by voting, or by holding political office. And, third, social rights which guarantee participation in an appropriate standard of living; this right is embodied in the welfare and educational systems of modern societies (Marshall, 1950).

Considering that the Colombian State did not have the capacity to integrate the nation through universalistic claims of citizenship or economic progress, the institution of *clientelismo*, in many instances, substituted the State in this fundamental task. Following S.N. Eisenstadt, Luis Roniger and Javier Auyero's understanding of *clientelismo*, which refers to the way in which the exchange of votes for favors developed before and during the Regeneration, and how *clientelismo*, although illegal, has become legitimized through its practice. More importantly, this project will pursue the question of whether *clientelismo* was the reason for the contradictory notions of citizenship that arose in twentieth century Colombia.

What follows is the outline of the chapters. The questions that drive this dissertation will be answered in the six chapters. Chapter One will provide a critical overview and analysis of the origin, tenets and contradictions of the modern notion of citizenship that traversed the Atlantic and inspired Colombian elites to gain independence from Spain and to found a new nation state. It will begin with an overview of the origins of citizenship, its role in the Absolutist State and the incidence of the French Revolution in that notion. It will also include a Marxist critique of the liberal notion of citizenship and its implications in the capitalist mode of production alongside an examination of the role of the Catholic Church in defining citizenship in the West. This chapter closes with an overview of Citizenship in Spanish America and the influence of the Catholic Church in molding that notion.

Chapter Two addresses the understanding and application of the notion of citizenship and the complications the notion imposed such as party formation, Church

and state relations, partisan violence, race, land ownership and class. The chapter argues that these issues not only proved the failure of liberalism but also paved the way to experience the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizenship and to reinforce colonialist views of it deeply affecting social life that transcended the nineteenth century. Chapter Three will follow the theoretical approach of Antonio Gramsci's notion of the "role of the intellectual," this chapter critically presents the intellectual biographies of two Radical Liberal, Rafael Núñez and ultra-Conservative Miguel Antonio Caro. The analysis will help understand how the intellectual and political work of these two men influenced the history of Colombia in the last decade of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century. They will also help reinforce the argument of this dissertation that these intellectuals used the liberal notions of citizenship in order to reinforce a more colonial notion of it. Chapter Four critically analyzes the failure of Liberalism in Colombia. It also takes up the issues behind the phrase "*Regeneración o catastrophe*" and the implications for governance in these convoluted times in Colombia. In addition, it explains the contradictions in the spirit of the Regeneration Constitution of 1886, its implications in the institution of citizenship. Moreover, it takes up the question of whether the notion of citizenship, although described in terms similar to those outlined by previous Constitutions, contradicted or was congruent with the Regenerationist type of government; and whether or not the constitution differentiated between citizens on this basis. The chapter argues that rhetorically and factually, the Liberal or Catholic notion of citizenship helped create a feeling of integration into the nation. However, the illusion of equality and freedom was undermined by an ideology whose principles benefited only the

few. The chapter will discuss briefly on how the Regeneration reinforced traditional Colombian power structures through *gamonalismo* and *clientelismo*.

Chapter Five explores how citizenship is strengthened or weakened by the practices of various social actors, who either appropriate [the state's] notion of citizenship or contest it outside the legal framework (Annino, 1999:65). In this sense, this chapter will explore the phenomena and social groups that accompanied and shaped both official and non-official discourses of citizenship. It also explores the contradictory relationship between divine will (represented by Catholicism), the state (free will), and the Liberal/modern notion of citizen expressed in the Regenerationist National Constitution of 1886. The chapter argues that the establishment of "order" fostered the formation of a new type of citizen through the imposition on the Liberal bourgeois type of citizen of a "virtuous Catholic one" from whom charity, morality and obedience were expected. Chapter Six is set to respond to the question of whether the Regeneration project succeeded or failed and whether or not the kind of cultural and social model imposed by the Regeneration modified the liberal notion of citizenship that nineteenth century Colombian liberalism tried to implement. It argues that the Regeneration achieved culturally and socially what the elites intended for the general population but failed to refound a modern nation-state. In this sense, the Regeneration fostered the formation of citizens who were grammatically competent, well-mannered and fearful of God, but who contradictorily, deepened discrimination, tolerated corruption, promoted *clientelismo*, and disobeyed the law. The chapter will also relate to the brief but interconnected period that preceded the Regeneration in order to ask about the notion of citizenship during the twentieth century.

Most of all it is interested in the following questions: was the Regenerationist notion of citizenship varied and/or contested in the twentieth century? What were the effects of the historical project of the Regenerationist notion of citizenship? Second, how do these effects resonate in the ongoing political violence, social conformism, and economic instability in Colombia today?

## **CHAPTER 1: The Liberal Notion of Citizenship: Origin and Critical Analysis**

The notion of citizenship is no doubt one of the cornerstones of Liberal ideology and a powerful “political practical tool” (Wittgenstein, 1953; Hilmy, 1987; Janik and Toulmin, 1996; Peters and Marshall, 1999, cited in Robert Shaw, 2003). Nonetheless, the use of the term “citizen” has a long and controversial history because it has had different and at times convenient meanings in different historical periods. Since any discussion that depends on generalized notions such as citizenship runs the risk of being overstated, oversimplified, or under-explained, a historical and analytical location of the term is fundamental. Therefore, this chapter will provide a critical overview and analysis of the origin and tenets of the modern notion of citizenship that traversed the Atlantic and inspired Colombian elites to gain independence from Spain and to found a new nation state. The second part will include a Marxist critique of the liberal notion of citizenship and its implications in the capitalist mode of production. The third section briefly presents an overview of how citizenship developed in Latin America and the influences this notion received as nation-building and state formation processes were taking place throughout the region.

The overview and analysis provided here will help elucidate the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizen in general and of the notion of citizenship envisioned by the Liberals during nineteenth-century Colombia. This chapter argues that citizenship at the

time in Colombia suffered not only from the contradictions inherent in the liberal tradition but also from the effects of a strong legacy of colonialism.

### **Origin of the Liberal Notion of Citizenship and Critique**

Liberalism can be dated from the seventeenth century but the liberal concept of citizenship has roots in the Roman Empire and ancient Greece. The idea of the individual as a political being comes from Aristotle and the idea of rights and obligations from Roman law, which was based on the concept of “natural law.” The latter law was based on the idea that “all humans belonged as subject to the law of nature” (Pocock, 1998: Chapter 2). This law implied that human beings are equal before that law and that this law applied to every human being. Christian thinkers and early liberals such as John Locke also made use of the notion of natural law. Liberals, however, embraced the idea of equality under the banner of reason calling it natural rights while for Christianity human reason was imperfect therefore the understanding of natural law could only be achieved through divine law. These broad earthly and Christian notions of citizenship required, however, a more precise system to determine more accurately, what it meant to be a citizen. The ultimate judge of natural law for Christianity was God and for liberals the nation-state.

From the beginning, however, citizenship was exclusionary. For Greeks, for instance, the attributes of the citizen were well defined: a male who owned property, a person owner of someone else’s labor, a warrior. These attributes suited not only the ideological project of liberalism but also its economic one as well, capitalism. In this



sense, for instance, the right to own property became a natural right (as John Locke claimed) and was one of the requirements for citizenship. It has remained one of the most important tenets of liberalism as private property is directly linked to the development of the individual potential and liberty. Early liberals also believed that property ownership was fundamental for citizenship because property seemed to have the capacity of assigning virtue to its owner. Therefore, only virtuous citizens backed by ownership could build a republic. That republic with its property owners, however, could only succeed with the strengthening of the division of labor thanks to which, following Engels, property was increased and at the same time society divided into classes (1972: 72, 227-8) and class antagonisms solidified.

In the West, this utopian understanding of citizenship was almost erased by feudalism and medieval Christianity. During feudalism—a system in which production was based on the institution of serfdom that served as a mechanism of surplus extraction through exploitation and political-legal coercion (P. Anderson, 1979:19) —individuals were tied to a secure hierarchical order of reciprocal duties and obligations, valuing political community, order and salvation (Warren, 1989:516). Nevertheless, that tie weakened gradually as a result of the political and economic oppression of the peasantry (primarily through rent dues). The class power of the feudal lords was thus directly at stake in the course of the sixteenth century, with the gradual disappearance of serfdom giving rise to the “displacement of politico-legal coercion upwards towards a centralized, militarized summit” called “the Absolutist State” (P. Anderson, 1979:19).

The modern notion of citizen/ship was, as has been argued, not foreign to the emergence of the Absolutist State and capitalism. In fact, it preserved some of its most intrinsic characteristics. During feudalism, part of the notion of citizenship was the connection of citizens to a particular territory. In feudal France, in particular, thinkers were concerned with what it meant to be a true French nation from which French citizens were conceived as members of a national corporation, analogous to the position of the bourgeois on the local level. Despite its intentions, this notion of citizenship was not inclusive and egalitarian (in the modern sense) because not all citizens had equal rights, and because there were excessive limitations on voting rights (Wells, 1999). Locating citizenship at the heart of national consolidation, as in the case of France, represents a challenge to many of the contemporary theorists of nation building and its periodization. In this respect, it challenges, for instance, Benedict Anderson's (1983) claim that nationalism first emerged in Spanish America.

The transition from feudalism to the Absolutist State in France was tainted by the Religious Wars prompted by the Reformation, as well as by the radicalization of cities and peasants in the countryside. However, it was precisely a Protestant monarch, Henry of Navarre, who ended the Religious Wars and reunited the nobility, turning the political and economic ideology towards republicanism. This is how the rule of the Absolutist State became that of the feudal nobility in the era of the transition to capitalism. The end of the Absolutist State signaled the crisis of feudal nobility, whose power opened the door to the advent of the bourgeois revolution, and the emergence, and soon after the consolidation, of the capitalist state (P Anderson, 1979:42).

Once consolidated, the Absolutist State repressed the lower strata as much as feudalism did because the State preserved the core feudal relation of exploitation (P. Anderson, 1979:18) or what Marx calls “extra-economic” coercion (Marx Vol. III:106) by consolidating the units of feudal property. The Absolutist State also respected the right to hold and inherit property without interference. However, this right was separated from the right to participate in government office. The latter right was confined exclusively to those with wealth, education, and leisure. The inviolable right to property postulated an emotional bond between the citizen and his homeland, and the duty of serving the country because of that tie. In other words, the right to control property was at the heart of the notion of citizen. So important was this right to French citizens’ vision of themselves that it passed virtually unaltered from the juristic theorists of the sixteenth century to the revolutionaries of the eighteenth century (Wells, 1995: 49-50, 82).

Nevertheless, as feudalism gave way to the Absolutist State in an inevitable move from village to nation, the notion of *citoyen*/citizen appeared less often. Instead, it was replaced with discourses of the apparently unstoppable power of the monarch. The *citoyen* seemed to have lost political strength, becoming more of a synonym for the term “subject,” which did not mean “residents of subordinate territories but rather citizens as seekers of favors from their government or in obedience to the laws they have, whether they directly or indirectly helped to make [them]” (Wells, 1995:7-9). In this sense, “citizen” and “subject” are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but simply two different

views of human beings acting in a political capacity.<sup>1</sup> The shifting use of *citoyen* after the consolidation of the Absolutist State arguably reflected a positively changing attitude towards the monarchy as it enforced “civic pacification, accompanied by official care for agricultural recovery and promotion of export trades” (P. Anderson, 1979: 94). A move by the Absolutist state in dealing with its citizens was reflected in the way in which the monarchies sought to resolve moral conflicts: Which was by distinguishing morality from politics; and subordinating morals to religious beliefs which in turn was subordinated to politics, by granting the State the power to do what was necessary to maintain order. In this way, public order was the supreme good, and private conscience and morality were subordinated to it (Walter C. Opello, Jr. and Stephen J. Rosow, 1999).

The Absolutist State also saw the advent of the Enlightenment, whose culture was citizenship. The dominant view of citizenship since the Enlightenment maintains that people are “candidates” for the benefits and obligations of citizenship. According to Enlightenment philosophy, people are capable of the rational self-governance that citizenship requires. Citizenship has functioned as an expression of Enlightenment culture and its successor, Liberalism, since the latter supports universalist principles such as the primacy of the individual and the exercise of individual will (Curtin as cited in Isin and Turner, 2002:293-304). This conception of citizenship coincided with the *raison d’être* of governments and the type of laws proposed by the Enlightenment. The State had the task of guaranteeing liberty, security, and the enjoyment of property and individual

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<sup>1</sup> Wells (1995:xvii, 8, 27) takes this notion from Italian Baldus de Ubaldis, who was a citizen theorist in the fourteenth century. His theories, according to Wells, seemed to have served French thinkers as a foundation for their own theories of naturalization and citizenship. For Baldus, the essential element of citizenship is commitment to the state.

goods. This new function assigned to the State became legitimized and later reinforced by a nationalistic fervor that intended to make the state coincide with a particular dominant nation-- as occurred in the case of France with regard to the question of what it meant to be a French national.

In France, the developing fiscal crisis of the 1780s demonstrated that the deficiencies of privilege implemented by the Absolutist State had failed as a principle and instrument of government, and were detrimental to the interests of the state. The French Revolution in the 1780s emerged out of this conjuncture. French revolutionaries were inspired by the North American formalist and instrumental perspectives of modern constitutionalists such as John Locke and James Madison.<sup>2</sup> For Madison, for instance, a constitution should consider its economy its first and elemental concern, as every government should (Madison in Beard, 1941:156). In this view, the constitution

... is an instrument by which the fundamental powers of the government are established, limited and defined, and by which these powers are distributed among the several departments for their more safe and useful exercise, for the benefit of the body politic... it declares those natural rights and fundamental rights of individuals for the security and common enjoyment of which governments are established (Miller in Beard, 1941:10-11).

A fundamental point in this definition is that the constitution establishes nothing that interferes with equality and individuality (Bancroft in Beard, 1941:12). In fact, Thomas

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance, John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Peter Laslett ed., Cambridge U. Press 1988) and Alexander Hamilton et al., *The Federalist Papers* (Modern Library n.d.).

Jefferson's Declaration of Independence contained not only a statement of the legitimacy of revolution, but also the principle that all men are created equal and possess certain inalienable rights, namely "the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."<sup>3</sup> In other words, Liberalism became the "long-run response" to consolidate the desires for an all-encompassing notion of citizenship. In order to make effective the Liberal dream of suffrage, redistribution of land, and nationalism,<sup>4</sup> the French National Assembly, inspired by the North American Declaration, took its first steps towards a constitution through the 1789 *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. This Declaration was a pledge to French society intended to replace the hierarchization and privilege that dominated society with the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, in addition to the notion of citizenship. The *Declaration's* main purpose was to "try to make individual men into citizens of a moral collectivity" (Jay, 1984:42) by granting rights such as freedom-of-thought, press, religion, and equality. These principles inspired not only the French, but also other states that were in the process of formation, identifying citizenship as a universal category. In the first stages of the French Revolution, many revolutionary acts were passed by the National Assembly that reflected the Liberal principles of the Enlightenment. One of the debates derived from the Revolution brought to question the idea of nation, and associated it with the idea of citizen as counterweight to privilege. To be a citizen was once again to share responsibility in political governance in a community of political "equals" but this time, cities were no longer the main site for developing a

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<sup>3</sup> From: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/Documents/Doc-FrenchRightsOfMan.html>

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Immanuel Wallerstein's *After Liberalism*. 1995

sense of self-governance. Rather, it occurred within “nations,” which had substantially larger populations that could not possibly have face-to-face knowledge of each other, only through some form of “imagined community” (B Anderson, 1983). These “communities” could only engage in self-governance through systems of representation (R.M. Smith, as cited in Isin and Turner, 2002:107).

The citizen, then, became “subject to laws of nature, of reason and of his country and who desires only the general well-being of the nation” (Saige as cited in Waldinger, et al. 1993:29-41). This notion of citizen/ship lacked an inherent social dimension, since it did not imply social or political equality; rather, it was a state of mind characterized by civic-minded disinterestedness and a primary concern for the well-being of the nation. The French National Assembly was created in the name of the nation. In its intent to construct a polity that redefined the concept of the citizen, the National Assembly abandoned privileges of all types and opened up a fraternal sense of unity through the nation. In this way, there was a total suppression of privilege, which entirely destroyed the political and social structure of the Old Regime. The polity had to be built anew, and with the destruction of privilege, each individual now had an equal role and place in the state. Membership in the nation, rather than a privilege maintained through the monarch, became the basis of rights for the polity. Citizenship then referred to rights accorded to members of the state. The nation became an all-encompassing entity and a source of deep unity and equality. At this particular time, the term “citizen” came to be invested with its connotations of equality and fraternity. Power was transferred from the monarch to the nation. The destruction of privilege thus left a vacuum in governance that was filled by

law. The law not only emphasized the sovereignty of the nation, but also the unity and equality of all, but it did not necessarily include political equality (Fitzsimmons as cited in Waldinger, et al. 1993:29-41).

News of the outcome of the French Revolution rapidly spread throughout Europe and North America, and thereby reinforced Enlightenment and Liberal ideas. The advent of Liberalism and the subsequent consolidation of capitalism prompted a significant change in the economy, the political, cultural, and social landscape of the region, as well as spurring an “unprecedented extension of citizenship” (Meiksins Wood, 1988). The appealing sense of Liberalism, contrary to feudalism, was that Liberalism sought to depoliticize community, on the assumption that once endowed with political liberty individuals would forge other kinds of communal ties through civic, political, cultural associations, and division of labor.

The French Revolution transformed the mass of the population known as “subjects” into citizens (Wallerstein 1997). The State had become, theoretically, more than responsible for a large group of persons with constituted political claims. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the implementation of these political claims had been inconsistent, but rhetorically they had triumphed. It was clear as well that once there were citizens, there were also non-citizens. The transformation of subjects into citizens was the consequence of pressures both from above and below, due to limitations (of gender, class and race) to the participation in the public sphere that the proclaimed universalism of the Enlightenment posed. Jürgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, conversed about the needs of society and the state. Ideally, the public sphere is



the source of public opinion needed to legitimate the authority of the state. Nevertheless, the discussion was mostly carried out among equals in a common space (for instance, the public square). In the eighteenth century, public opinion was independent from any economic ties. However, the rapid development of capitalism transformed both the private and the public sphere, and the forms of political power that derived from it. In the second half of the nineteenth century, large corporations and the media began to control the State, giving way to an even more partial public sphere. Citizenship shifted from political participation toward individualized, economic interests (Habermas, [1962] 1989: 55 and ff).

### **Critique of the Liberal Notion of Citizenship**

Considering that in constitutions, (instances of social but primarily economic control) rights and citizenship are tightly linked to political economy, since they were created on the basis of property forms and class interests, a political economy of citizenship may well relate to “what economic arrangements are hospitable to the qualities of character of self-governance” (Sandel, 2000). A telling example of how these “arrangements” are made official can be found, for instance, in the U.S. Constitution. Charles A. Beard, in his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, states that the bourgeoisie elaborated the Constitution in order to protect its own economic interests disregarding those of the larger citizenry. The Constitution, Beard points out in his conclusions, was based upon “the concept that the fundamental private rights of property are anterior to government and morally beyond the reach of popular majorities”

(1914:324). In addition to this, there was a limited sense of democracy as the “property-less mass was ... excluded from participation ...in the work of framing the Constitution” (Ibid). Therefore, what Alexis de Tocqueville calls the “equality of conditions” and access to citizenship, with its specific “economic arrangements,” could only be rhetorical. As Paul Smith argues, reminiscing the central contradiction of capitalism that Marx described between social production and private ownership, what is at stake here is "the dialectic between the ideal of a public realm founded in economic rights and the ideal of a private realm founded in an ideology of individualism" (Smith, 2007:22-24).

Following Michael Denning’s criticism of de Tocqueville, the dialectic found in constitutions –the Liberal notion of citizenship, and the rights they promulgate – has long been linked to “social, political, cultural and economic divisions based on property, race and gender” (Denning as cited in Smith 2007:11). Paradoxically, according to Paul Smith, the ideological acceptance of the equality of conditions can lead to a dangerous concentration of political power and at the same time to the evolution of the relationship between the individual and the state as a chronic political problem—just as de Tocqueville feared for American democracy (Smith, 2007:10-12). This problem certainly is not likely to disappear since the more powerful and influential the state is, the weaker the individual democratic community becomes (de Tocqueville, [1835] 2002:443-4). In the end, despite the claim of fundamental social equality of all individuals endowed with equal rights proclaimed by the American and the French Revolution, the bourgeois construction of the Liberal state, and the development of capitalism, brought juridical, political, economic, and cultural obstacles to the realization of the Liberal ideals of

equality and citizenship. Interestingly, however, is the fact that, at the same time, the political function of the state “no longer seemed to exist apart from the lives of the people [citizens]” (Morris, n.d.) In this sense, as Daniel Morris explains, public affairs became the affair of each individual; this is true, but the particular activities and situations of people did not rise to any universal political occasion, despite the fact that the affairs of the people achieved a higher value once they were considered universal matters belonging to everyone. This is precisely one of the main points of contention that Karl Marx analyzes and criticizes of Liberalism and the Liberal notion of citizenship.

The claims of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* promulgated by the French Revolution intended to create a new conception of citizenship that would have to respond, as Wallerstein puts it, to the question of “how to reconcile the theoretical embrace of equality with the continuing and increasingly acute polarization of real-life opportunities and satisfactions that has been its outcome” (2003). However, the notion of citizenship continued with the polarization inherited from feudalism and the Absolutist State. These contradictions within the Liberal state prompted the emergence of other movements and ideologies such as nationalism, socialism, and communism. Marx’s radical criticism is one of the most prominent criticisms. Marx’s analysis of the French Revolution and the notion of citizenship that emerged from it can be found in his well-known 1844 essay “On the Jewish Question.” Here he criticizes the abstract, universal principles of Liberalism, especially the four most “natural and imprescriptible” rights: equality, liberty, security, and private property, which were expressed in the most radical version of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1793) (Marx, 2000:60).

The critique of citizenship and the necessity of its “overtaking” or “abolition” is what drive Marx’s argument. In responding to Bruno Bauer’s article “The Jewish Question,” in which Bauer analyzes the attempt by the Jews to achieve political recognition and emancipation, Marx takes the most advanced modern Liberal democratic state, the United States, as a model for his criticism of Liberal ideology. Marx shows that despite its advancement, this modern state still preserves some transcendental features—in a secularized form—of the Old Regime whose ideology it claims to leave behind. This transcendence is expressed in a juridical universalism, which, as Stathis Kouvélakis explains, is abstract and truncated, blind to its own presuppositions and impotent to resolve the questions it poses (2005).

In his essay, Marx claims that the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* comprises a hidden, abstract universalism, one that the same document promises to erase. It is possible to say that, for Marx, this abstract universalism rests on an anthropological figure that defines the subjects of the rights to private property, liberty, and equality according to a “principle of hidden exclusion” (Tosel as cited in Kouvélakis, 2005). The exclusion starts with the fact that “the rights of man as distinct from the rights of the citizen”, as Marx points out, are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society – i.e., the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community (Marx, *Ibid.*). In “On the Jewish Question,” Marx affirms that man, as member of civil society, inevitably appears as an un-political man, or a natural man. Man as a member of civil society is taken to be the real man, a man distinct from the citizen, since he is man in his sensuous, individual, and immediate existence, whereas the

political man [the citizen] is simply abstract and artificial, and an allegorical, moral person. Therefore, the “actual man” is acknowledged only in the form of the egoistic individual and true man only in the form of the abstract citizen. The egoistic man is a passive object and given the results of the society, which has been dissolved, an object of immediate certainty, and for that reason a “natural” man with merely “natural” rights (that is, non-political rights) instead of a political individual with political rights. In this respect, Paul Smith argues that the division of the political from the civic, and the division of the arena of political rights from natural rights, is what warrants and authorizes [state] abuses since it makes clear the logic whereby certain subjects in certain circumstances can be denied access to rights (Smith, 2007:100-1). The distance between natural and political rights resulted, for Marx, from the fact that the political revolution dissolved civil society into fragments and did not in fact produce a true revolution. On the contrary, it immersed various segments of society in an ideology that hinders criticism.

When referring to “rights,” even the ones that separate man from other men become “natural rights.” Such is the case of the right to private property as expressed in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. This right contends, “Every citizen has the right to enjoy and dispose, at his discretion, his goods and income as well as enjoy the fruits of his labor and industry” (Article 16, *Declaration* 1793). According to Marx, this right encourages individuals to disregard other men, to live independent of society, and to be self-interested. This kind of man is the one who forms civil society in which every man sees in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it. For Marx, “none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as he

is a member of civil society, namely an individual withdrawn into himself, his private interest and whims and separated from the community.” Therefore, in the rights of man, society appears as a framework exterior to individuals, a limitation of their original self sufficiency” (Marx, 2000:61).

If, in order to be an active member of civil society, a man has to own property in a selfish way, as stressed by Marx, then citizenship becomes yet another harmful artifice reinforcing the separation of “man from other man.” For Marx, “the right to property is thus the right to enjoy and dispose of one’s possession as one wills, without regard for other men and independently of society.” In this process, there is necessarily a conflict with values of the egotistic man such as equality and freedom. In the exercise of his freedom, men find in other men not the realization but rather the limitation of his own freedom (Marx, 2000:61). This moral critique of bourgeois society rests on the fact that for him, the anthropological figure of man-as-property-owner results from exclusion, from a fundamental separation between man and his “generic essence” that is, man considered in constitutive multiplicity of his relations with other men and with social activities (Kouvélakis, 2005). The institution of citizenship, with its “universalist” of rights, is the one called upon to guarantee the formation, consolidation and justifiable permanence of the figure of “man-as-property-owner.” Here lies a fundamental contradiction in the Liberal notion of citizenship. Citizenship establishes equality before the law. In practice, however, equality is questioned because private property can only exist at the expense of inequality of conditions as not all men have the capacity to own property. It is not surprising, then, that Marx argues that if the “man” of the *Declaration*

is the property owner, then, a property less man is ... a bit less than a “man”. If access to citizenship is subjected to property ownership, the property-less man has no place in the *Declaration*. Why use “rights of the man and of the citizen” if in bourgeois society a man is not a man if he is not property owner? Why does it matter to have a notion of citizenship at all?

In this sense, citizenship, according to Marx, reduces the political community to a mere means for the conservation of the so-called rights of man, and the citizen is therefore proclaimed the servant of egoistic man. Besides, the sphere in which man behaves as a communal being is degraded to a level below the sphere in which he behaves as a partial being, and finally, it is man as bourgeois, i.e., as a member of civil society, and not man as citizen who is taken as the “real and true man” (Marx, *Ibid.*). Understood by Marx as a non-real, non-authentic man, the citizen cannot be a true revolutionary. True revolutionary practice is in “flagrant contradiction” to citizenship as the instance in which man is granted a handful of rights. Marx argues that bourgeois citizenship created an artificial separation between politics and society; he condemned the continuity of class inequality in Liberal capitalism, and claimed that citizenship was a mask used to hide economic exploitation.

In the twentieth century, there emerged a tradition that intended to reconcile socialism and democracy. An example of this tradition is the welfare state, which was based on the idea of “social citizenship.” In his well known, yet criticized essay “Citizenship and Social Class” (1949), T.H. Marshall expanded the notion of citizenship as the possession of rights. For Marshall, citizenship occurs when everyone is treated as a

full and equal member of society, when people are accorded an increasing number of civil, political, and social rights. While civil citizenship ensures the right of equality before the law, political citizenship involves rights and responsibilities of participation in the political system through acts such as voting. Both the rights to equality and the responsibility to participate are often seen along with Liberal notions of citizenship based on individualism. In contrast, social citizenship involves a set of rights that enables members of a society to share equally a basic set of standards within their community. Social rights such as education, welfare and health care would be guaranteed by the welfare state. These systems represent institutions or social entitlements that seek to equalize social participation for all members of society as these become the fullest expression of citizenship required by a Liberal-democratic welfare state (Marshall, [1949] 1977: 71-134).

Marshall has been criticized for oversimplifying the role of the state and politics and for assuming that rights are homogeneous when in fact they operate differently in bourgeois struggles and in socialism or working class struggles (Giddens as cited in Garay, 2000). Moreover, civil and social rights are not equivalent nor do they have the same integrative functions. In this respect, individualistic civil rights directly correspond to the 'individualistic phase of capitalism' (Marshall, 1992:26). What is still controversial is that it is not clear in Marshall's theory whether social rights are in a relation of tension, opposition or contradiction to the economic basis of capitalist societies (Goldthorpe 1978; Hasley 1984; Lockwood 1974 as cited in Turner, 1990:193).



The issue of citizenship became central as newly independent territories started processes of state building in Spanish America. The implementation of the Liberal notion of citizenship, no doubt, encountered serious problems as the presence of the Catholic Church and class interests constantly threatened the formation of a Liberal, modern citizen.

### **Citizenship in Spanish America**

In Latin America, the adoption of the modern notion of citizenship went hand-in-hand with the process of state formation after Independence and, arguably, the process of nation building. Certainly, at least in the West, the legitimation of the territorial state led to the nationalistic fervor that intended to make the state coincide with a particular dominant nation. Therefore, the constitution of the modern political order was founded on the link between nation and state, and citizenship became a vital element in the expansion of state power and nation building. Theorists and comparative historians of nationalism such as Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner maintain that the conception of the nation as a natural, God-given way of classifying groups of people is a myth. For them, nationalism turns preexisting cultures into nations, but that it can also destroy them or invent new ones altogether (Gellner, 1983:48-49). Gellner equates nations to buildings or works of art, in the sense that they are created and are both real and imagined. In using Spanish America as an example in his *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson criticizes Gellner's "invention" of nations as a masquerade in which "invention" is really "fabrication" and "falsity," rather than "imagining" and "creation." In fact, Anderson

explains that communities are to be distinguished not by their falseness/genuineness, but by the style in which they are “imagined.” Communities see themselves as occupying the same territory and sharing the same cultural background, making their nation into “an imagined political community — imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (B. Anderson, 1991:6). Some Latin Americanist critiques of Anderson view his idea of the nation as a cultural rather than an ideological construct, highly suggestive in relation to the societies they study, where states are historically weak (Miller, 2006:201).

Applying these Western notions to the understanding of Colombian or Latin American nation-building processes and nationalism is complicated precisely because Latin America, as Nicola Miller asserts, does not “really 'fit'” those notions completely and neither have these notions modified or accommodated their frameworks to try to explain the region's experiences significantly. The difficulty of nation-building and nationalisms in Latin America, for Miller, may be explained by the fact that “everything *partly* applies.” Moreover, nationalist elements exist, but mixed with different elements that complicate its understanding. In this sense, Latin America has always been an anomaly in the history of nationalism because nations in Latin America have been regarded as “incomplete nations” and historically weak states. They have been considered incomplete and weak because unlike their counterparts in Europe and North America, Latin American nations have not achieved the same economic success or in the case of Colombia, partisan peace. Once the parties presented themselves as elements of social cohesion and identity, according to Fernán González, they hindered the emergence of a direct relationship between the state and its citizens. The deteriorating events of both the

nineteenth but also of the twentieth century testify to the weak role of the political parties and along with it the state (1997). There are arguments that contend as well that Latin America is incomplete because of its much less committed citizenry. It is undeniable that Latin American nationalism was weak in the 19th century, and it was weakened primarily by its desire to achieve a European kind of Liberalism and to import its culture.

Nevertheless, nation building in Latin America is strongly associated with state formation. Nationalism, on the other hand, according to Benedict Anderson, seems to have been known in Latin America before Independence. The first wave of nationalism (during the first three decades of the nineteenth century) that led to Independence proved ineffective, as Anderson explains, because of “local” colonial economic and technological practices relating to the administrative stretch of the empire (B. Anderson, *Ibid*). The “incompleteness” or “backwardness” with which both Miller and Anderson have characterized Latin America, it can be argued, has to do with the fact that the “political or ruling class” has been much smaller, less efficient, and more restricted than in the US or Europe.

Anderson’s assertion that it was in Spanish America that nationalism was first born has been widely criticized. Claudio Lomnitz, for instance, insists that nationalism did not first emerge in Latin America, because ideas about popular sovereignty and citizenship originated in Western Europe. Ideals such as liberty, equality in Liberator Simon Bolivar’s “Jamaica Letter,” for instance,<sup>5</sup> are indicative of the influence of European ideas in Spanish America. A similar case can be noted in José de San Martín’s modern

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<sup>5</sup> See also Sara Castro-Klaren. “Framing Pan-Americanism: Simón Bolívar's Findings.” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3.1 (2003) 25-53.

idea of liberty. De San Martín's advocacy included ideas such as individual liberty for Indians and slaves, and the recognition of such individuals as "Peruvians" or "citizens of Peru" (Turner, 1995:291-318).

Another strong critic of Anderson's theory of nationalism is Florencia Mallon, for whom nationalism is the combination of intellectual and political practices that make sense of events, objects, and relationships. For Mallon, Anderson's theories of Latin American nationalism are problematic because Anderson focuses only on the story of the economic and political elites, and does not incorporate the agency of subaltern populations in the formation of the national community. The study of nationalism in Latin America, as Mallon explains, is challenging, first because it is necessary conceptually to separate nationalism and the nationalist consciousness from the politics of the triumphant nation-state, although they are historically connected. Second, it is also essential to debunk the "nationalist story told by the winners of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who scramble for world power". This story "has been served up as objective truth." Moreover, since the "truth" is contingent on those loyal to it, "nationalism as such cannot be demonstrated to exist because there is no single "real" version of it" (Mallon, 1995:4-5).

Considering that every notion of nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements, the growth of a sense of political and legal community is accompanied by a sense of equality among the members of that community. In other words, nationalism operates at the social level by encouraging the mobilization of the "people," their legal equality as citizens, and their participation in public life for the "national good" (A. Smith,

1991:116-118). Citizenship, then, does not simply define membership in a nation in which “we” are differentiated from “them,” but is also as a means to outbid other competing allegiances and identities. Ultimately, even concepts of nationalism presuppose the active participation of all citizens (A. Smith, *Ibid*). The next section of this chapter deals with the understanding and development of citizenship in Latin America. This region, despite its European influence, followed a different process to citizenship development. Instead of following the time line of civil rights in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth century and social rights in the twentieth century described by Marshall (1949), Guillermo O’Donnell holds that political rights coexisted with civil rights and later with social rights creating what he calls a “citizenship of low intensity” in which despite the possession of political freedoms proper to democratic regimes, many civil, social and political rights were denied (2001: 601). In Argentina, for instance, “first was the granting of some social rights” which, like in most countries, have been “cancelled or sharply curtailed”. Later, political rights were acquired. Third, even today, civil rights are implanted in a biased and intermittent way (603). In Colombia, as Chapter Four of this dissertation will explain, political rights came first and civil and social rights followed. As the last chapter of this project will show, rights in Colombia have been the “Achilles’ Heel” of a country that proudly defends its democratic tradition.

In spite of the exclusionary nature of the constitutions in Latin America, according to Hilda Sabato, access to power and its effective exercise were not simple reproductive processes, and nor were they the exchange of one elitist group for another;

rather, power was mediated through the crucial relationship between the masses and the elites. This relationship fostered the formation of new political communities and parties in which, surprisingly, party leaders were not always interested in recruiting an ever-increasing number of voters. Moreover, although leaders employed a rich rhetoric about participation, citizenship, and the development of the public spirit, in most cases they did little to encourage the mobilization of the electorate (Sábato, 2001:16). For Sábato, this fact represents a puzzle for historians and political historians because there is no simple answer to the question of what role elections play in the formation of citizenship--especially considering that most scholarship contends that elections are violent and corrupt.<sup>6</sup> However, Antonio Annino and Raffaele Romanelli argue that in Peru, electoral practices were not mechanisms for ignoring and distorting the norms, but rather a way to process them in specific situations. Either way, elections played an important part in the effective formation of citizenship (Sábato, 1999:21).

How and when the notion of citizenship arrived in Latin America is still debated. For Roland Anrup and Vicente Oieni, the institution of citizenship developed slowly from colonial to modern forms. Citizenship appeared as imposed by the state in a top-down process imposed on “immature communities.” They were essentially unable to assimilate, by themselves, the new forms of representation that emerged with the French Revolution (Anrup and Oieni, 1999) and the model presented by the North American Revolution. Sábato argues that citizenship became the bulwark of the new state, which

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<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Sábato, Hilda. *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires*, 2001; Valenzuela, S.J. “Building Aspects of Democracy before Democracy: Electoral Practices in nineteenth century Chile,” 1996; Warren, R. “Elections and Popular Political Participation in Mexico, 1808-1836.” 1996; in: Taylor, Lucy. “Client-ship and Citizenship in Latin America” 2004.

was no longer based on divine right, but on the principle of political representation of autonomous citizens (Sábato, 1999:18).

In Latin America, the state took the Liberal assertion to the citizens'/individual's rights of universality, equality, and individuality (Sábato, 1999:18) and reduced it to the possession of a new identity: American, national, patriotic. As Rodolfo Stavenhagen suggests, this was the ruling nationalist ideological guide in the search for legitimation (Stavenhagen, 1992). In opposition to Stavenhagen, José Luis González argues that the creation of a nation-state [and a citizenry] as in the case of Puerto Rico, was not intended to express an already fully-formed national identity as much as to provide the most potent and effective means of stimulating and completing the creation of that non static identity (González, 1990:54, 56). In any case, citizenship was not only introduced in the rhetoric, but it also served to fulfill the function of uniting forces guaranteeing the triumph of Spanish America over Spain. The rupture with the colonial order and the "imposition" of Liberal citizenship produced consequences in the ethnic, economic, and political landscape of Spanish America.

Emerging nations embraced a theoretically color-blind legal system. In principle, everyone was equal before the law. In practice, however, citizenship was exclusionary from the very beginning. The creation of citizenship aimed, at first, to integrate Indians, Africans, mulattos, and even Spaniards who were willing to become members of the new independent Latin America (Anrup and Oieni, 1999). However, the illusion of equality and freedom was overshadowed by an ideology whose principles benefited only the educated and the wealthy.

It is important to note that before Independence, the conception of citizenship, as Francois Javier Guerra explains, was an ideal that competed with other more extended and traditional colonial concepts such as those of *pueblos*, *comunidades*, *súbdito*, and the *vecino* (neighbor or resident) (F.X. Guerra, 1999:40-41). These traditional conceptions, along with the modern notion of citizenship, were stipulated in most nineteenth century constitutions in Latin America (Annino, 1999:62-93). As the following chapters show, Colombia was not the exception. In fact, in the Regeneration period, for instance, the modern coexisted with the traditional, reinforcing even further the already present exclusion. The rest of Latin America experienced similar outcomes. In this sense, despite broadening to a degree the meaning of citizenship, Liberal ideology, alongside constitutionalism, is said to have failed because Liberalism did not resolve the contradictions between this ideology's two main tenets: the defense of individual liberty and the creation of strong states that would control "any corporate groups that threatened individual liberty" (Bushnell and Macaulay, 1994:34). These contradictions and complications require further study in order to elucidate the extent of the diffusion of secularized languages and values in the nineteenth century, its influence in the notion and exercise of citizenship, and its relationship with the elite. This dissertation contributes to this understanding through the study of the particular period known as the Regeneration in the late nineteenth century.

Citizenship in Spanish America and later in Latin America was deeply influenced by the Catholic Church. The Church's economic strength came with great political power. The relationship between Church and state and the involvement of the clergy in



mundane affairs has been controversial in the West, but it has been even more critical in Latin America, where allusion to the Church mostly refers to the Catholic Church. In Latin America, the Church has played a fundamental role in state formation and citizenship construction both before and after independence despite the anticlerical (mostly anti-Catholic) sense sentiment in the mostly liberal century. Such anticlerical feelings were made official in the liberal constitutions of, for instance, Uruguay (1830), Colombia (1863), Mexico (1833 and 1870) and Venezuela (1870). Despite legislation and the love-hate relationship between Church and state, the former continued to successfully exercise control over the population through education, social assistance, and confessional practices. The bulk of the population both in the countryside and in the city remained deeply religious. After all, the Church provided services for the body and the soul that states was unwilling or fiscally unable to provide. In many countries at the end of the nineteenth century, Liberalism dominated the economic and political landscape of the region. The exception was Colombia where the Church became a vital force for government control, as this dissertation will show in the next chapters.

In the twentieth century, the Latin American population remained under the spiritual protection of the Church, although with lesser intensity than in the previous century. In the mid-twentieth century, Latin America was mainly characterized by a faltering populism that, in Laclau's terms, was developed by a class whose antagonism to the power bloc was less radical than the revolutionary one of the 1960s and 1970s in the region, and which did not lead to the suppression of the State as an antagonistic force with regard to "the people." This particular circumstance, along with the mobilization of

peasant and labor unions, the failure of Dependency Theory,<sup>7</sup> and the new progressive tone of the Catholic Church, first gave way to a Marxist-oriented politics of the 1960s and 1970s, and second, to the mobilization of the lower classes. Consequently, Latin American states received demands for land, income redistribution, higher wages, and social programs, while seeing threats against the property rights and accumulation potential for the dominant coalitions (LeGrand, et al., 1998). While most of South America was under the siege of dictatorships, Nicaragua was living its own revolution in which the role of one segment of the Church was crucial. The “preferential option for the poor” and the social commitment of the Church to strengthen previous trends encourage the creation of Christian Based Communities (or *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* - *CEBs*<sup>8</sup>) giving birth to Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology, successful at the beginning but later attacked by the Vatican (Levine, n.d.), made an explicit commitment to social justice by helping empower the poor and adapting the Catholic message to the socio-economic reality under which the oppressed lived in Latin America and the Third World (Kay, 1989:14).

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<sup>7</sup> Dependency Theory appealed to populists since it provided the awakening of an appeal to nationalist sentiments blaming foreign capital for the state of underdevelopment and, more specifically, for the shortcomings of Latin America’s industrialization. According to Joseph L. Love, this theory resulted from the crisis of Marxism and Latin American structuralism, the latter associated with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), whose director Raúl Prebisch, first introduced in 1949 the notion “Center” and “Periphery” and the notion that the two elements were related by a process of unequal exchange (Joseph L. Love, 1996). The ECLA was also concerned with social issues in particular the “growing radicalism of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.” In response to these concerns, Prebisch called for social reform especially in agrarian structure and income distribution. The Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model only deepened the crisis (See also A. Hoogvelt, 2001:329-257) probably because, as Ankie Hoogvelt argues, it did not in the end address the issue of class and income distribution, real wages did not rise sufficiently quickly to stimulate domestic demand; and unemployment grew acute and industrial production concentrated more in products consumed by elites (See also Alvin Y., 1990; C. Kay, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> The CEBs were organizations that promoted a fundamental reorientation of the Church with a strong commitment to work with the poor by helping them realize their potential for the Church and for society.

The new role of the Church –Catholic progressivism– manifested itself in its opposition to authoritarian repression. To show solidarity with the popular sectors, bishops publicly denounced the economic policies and repressive tactics associated with military regimes. During the 1980s, certain countries of the region had varied relationships with the Church. In the years of re-democratization, the role of the Church was important because, as Terry Lynn Karl notes, this institution took an active role in opposing authoritarian rule, discrediting the argument about the so-called “anti-democratic bias” of Catholicism. Furthermore, through the Church’s active promotion of “base communities,” contemporary Catholicism contributes to the creation of a unique democratic culture by encouraging participation among previously unorganized groups of the urban and rural poor (Karl, 1990:1-21).

In the particular case of nineteenth-century Colombia, as the chapters ahead will study in depth, the clergy and its followers posed a constant threat to governmental stability. At the same time it filled the deficit in the state in social assistance programs and education. The Catholic Church in Colombia also played a part in the violent outbreaks throughout that century. With these considerations in mind, it is undeniable that the social, economic, and political influence of the Church played a fundamental role in determining what citizenship meant not only to the conservative elites, but also to the masses under the protection of the clergy throughout the country.

There is material to explore in terms of the relationship between Church and State in the nineteenth century, when there was a generalized tendency toward secularization. What was the role of the Church in those regions of constant political conflict? It is also

important to elucidate the connection between the Church, citizenship, and nation, since the Church had, almost since Independence throughout the nineteenth century, the task of educating citizens.

### **Conclusion**

The Liberal promise of equality, liberty, and universal citizenship did not go beyond the rhetoric expressed, for instance in constitutions. The Liberal notion of citizenship was exclusionary, in that only propertied men were considered citizens. Furthermore, society was structured in different segments based on race and gender distinctions. The differentiation of citizens presented yet another way to continue the already existing exclusion through the creation of antinomies that justified it. Private property, for instance, became the prerequisite for active citizenship. Distinctions of rank, class, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and virtue, as well as the binary of barbarian and civilized, were used also to justify the categorization of individuals as citizens or non-citizens (Wallerstein, 2003).

Nineteenth-century Latin America was not foreign to the contradictions of European and North American Liberalism and the Liberal conception of citizenship. Nonetheless, Liberalism and citizenship in the region were adopted and adapted yielding substantially different forms and results from their European and North American counterparts. There were, however, similarities in the implementation of the notion of citizenship, as new nations also embraced a theoretically color-blind legal system with equality before the law as their main tenet. Yet in practice, citizenship was exclusionary

by emphasizing land ownership, literacy, age, marital status and gender, as a prerequisite to citizenship.

The influence of the Catholic Church in Latin American processes of state formation, nation building, and citizenship construction has been strong as the ecclesiastic institution presented itself as the only road towards civilization. It has also been perceived, as in the specific case of Colombia, as an element that promotes social cohesion and as an entity that can exercise a civil role.

## **CHAPTER 2: Party Formation, Catholic Church-State Relations and Race and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia**

Nineteenth-century Colombian historiography has attributed the multiplicity of problems that emerged after Independence from Spain in 1810 to either economic or political factors. However, land ownership and the desire for capitalist development was more politically driven. The notion of citizenship under these circumstances was complicated by the following issues: party formation, Church and state relations, partisan violence, race, class, land ownership (in the figure of *resguardos*). These issues, as this chapter argues, not only proved the failure of liberalism and capitalist development but also paved the way for the experience of the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizenship and the reinforcement of colonialist views of it to deeply affect both the private and public life of Colombians during the nineteenth century and beyond.

Colombia's failure to incorporate into the international market, the lack of means of communication and transportation, and the hereditary hatred between the two most important political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, are some of the most common reasons offered for the country's widespread violence and poor economic development. However, limiting this complex problem to only economic or political factors does not help explain the causes and consequences of religious, educational, racial, or regional conflicts much less to the almost discretionary nature of the notion of citizenship.

For most of its postcolonial history, Colombia has been characterized by a democratic system dominated by the Liberal and Conservative parties, which were consolidated in the mid-nineteenth century as public opinion began to take shape in favor of or in opposition to government reforms. The international ideological, political, and economic trends deeply influenced the life of the country, insofar as the interpretations of those trends divided the ideological landscape of the nascent Colombian state. Despite its tradition of democracy, which is suggested by the absence of dictatorships, the realization of regular elections, and representative government, Colombia suffered an intense partisan violence in the nineteenth century, which was caused by the different economic interests and inherited, adapted, ideological positions of the century's two major political players. In this sense, the ideals of the first French Revolution, the French Revolution of 1848, and the subsequent fall of the monarchy, the overwhelming economic impact of the Industrial Revolution in England, as well as the fall of various caudillos in South America, were all events crucial to the formation, and later consolidation of the two main Colombian political parties.

Colombian Independence was achieved in 1810 thanks to the revolutionary fervor of a group of people considered "Liberal" by the Spanish Crown. By extension, they formed the Liberal Party, which as José María Samper affirms, were "exclusively patriotic and national." The Conservative Party was composed by armed forces, Spaniards and employees of the crown who fought to preserve the *status quo*. This Liberal Party encountered many difficulties as they began to define the nation with regard to public liberties and individual rights, as well as the administrative form the republic

should take. The latter, as Samper explains, indicated the degree of decentralization that could be granted to the popular effort and the action of the law and politics (Samper, 1873 as cited in Melo, 1978). The disagreements concerning these issues, plus the differing reactions to and interpretations of the events in Europe, South America, and North America led the party to split. There were points of contention regarding “modern” notions of race and ethnicity, the secularization of the state, free trade, the international division of labor, and the notion of citizenship, as well as Church and State relations. In other words, Liberals were reacting to what it meant to be a civilized state, but not necessarily in “modern” terms. The split produced the Liberal and the Conservative parties, which were consolidated and legitimized in the late 1840s.

Since the economic activities and class basis of the Liberal and Conservative parties’ members bore more resemblances than differences, the cause of the political violence between the two parties has yet to be explained. Throughout the nineteenth century, Colombia experienced unprecedented violence: The country went through at least twenty-three civil wars, five of which are considered of major relevance not only for the number of deaths they caused, but also for their clear partisan connotations (1839-1842, 1854, 1859-1862, 1876-1877, and 1885-1886). Apart from the civil wars, numerous upheavals kept the country in a constant state of unrest. One of the ways in which historians have tried to explain this phenomenon is by showing the political divisions between the two most important political parties and emphasizing their differing economic interests. However, there is evidence that supports the idea that the economic interests of those who formed the parties’ elites were similar. In this respect,



despite the implementation of pre-capitalist measures such as “primitive accumulation,”<sup>9</sup> with its use of force and violence to open new spaces for capital to flow, the scope of the state of unrest and conflict in nineteenth-century Colombia cannot be attributed exclusively to this kind of predatory economic practice.

The economic measures taken during the *Revolución Liberal* and the *Olimpo Radical* strengthened the emergence of the country onto the international market. Nonetheless, as Cristina Rojas (2002) comments, regional conflicts and civil wars run parallel to the entrance of the country into the world economy (36). Rojas argues that ideological motivations concerning religion, education, the law, citizenship, and what she calls the “ways to channel the civilization desire,” were determining factors that ignited conflict (Ibid). The desire to civilize the masses was common to both parties. However, their ideological and practical means to achieve this could not be more different from one another. For instance, Conservatives argued that the road to civilization was Catholicism and the preservation of Catholic and Spanish traditions, while for Liberals civilization meant the imitation of European models of economy, governance, and an educational model that privileged modern thought. There were a number of issues that hindered and/or fostered the implementation of the civilizing desire and of the formation of a modern citizen, which included the “homogenization” of the country in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and morality, education and economic development. As the century went on, the desire for economic advancement was supported by positivist ideas of “progress.”

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<sup>9</sup> The Marxian phrase “primitive accumulation” is used here to indicate the idea of a historical process that was a fundamental part of the pre-capitalist stages of the European and North American modern states.

Seen from this complex perspective, the formation and consolidation of citizenship in this century was influenced by a combination of factors such as race, class, the establishment of two main political parties: Conservative and Liberals, and the role of the Catholic Church. Following this line, this chapter examines the origin of the political parties, their markedly ideological, political, and economic differences. It will relate the conflicts that these differences originated and the effect they had in the formation of Colombian citizenship. Since race and class played a significant role in the formation of citizenship, this chapter analyzes the diminished role of Indians, blacks and artisans played compared to artisans and commercial and upper classes.

### **Liberals and/vs. Conservatives**

In nineteenth-century Spanish America, struggles for Independence produced the fall of the Spanish monarchy and gave way to the formation of new nations. This transition provoked civil wars, revolutions, and violence in many regions, but a common desire was clear: the formation of republican nation-states. This alternative, as Sábato comments, entailed a radical change in the principles for legitimizing political power, and brought about the foundation of new political regimes. At the dawn of the Spanish American republic, there was “fertile ground for the circulation of different ideologies, social theories and political doctrines” (Sábato, 2001), which promoted the formation and later, consolidation, of the party politics of the Liberal and the Conservative parties. Despite profound regional differences, the ideology that separated the two (in relation to the role of the Church in the state, education, the notion of citizenship, and intra- and interclass

alliances) was for the most part similar throughout the region.<sup>10</sup> The Colombian party politics dynamic is no exception.

In Colombia, the failures or successes in nation-building and state formation were significantly influenced by the agenda of both the Liberal and the Conservative parties. The parties were comprised not only of particular political and economic agendas, but also had plans to civilize the nation through modern rationality, as in the case of the Liberal Party, and through Catholic morality as the foundation of political power, in the case of the Conservative Party.

The origin of party politics in Colombia has been a controversial matter especially because it cannot be separated from the confrontational dynamic between the national, the regional and the local—despite the elite’s rhetoric of territorial unification and social integration after Independence. In this sense, Richard Stoller contends that sometimes state-regional power can become the mortal enemy of local powers in a federal regime, while the centralism of an inefficient and “foreign” state can represent a guarantee for the development of local autonomy (Stoller, 1998: 12-13 as cited in González, 2004). Territorial unification proved to be a difficult goal to achieve in Colombia because rulings on land distribution to Indians and blacks, and the empty promises of citizenship (especially in relation to equality before the law) could hardly be enforced. On the governmental level, most of the legislative body continued to implement colonial legislations until mid century, which proved to favor the already privileged social groups and diminish the possibilities for others. As if these issues were not enough, as Miguel

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<sup>10</sup> See for instance studies on Mexico and Peru of Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Ángel Centeno contends, Independence wars played havoc with the economy and plunged the country into debt, making the rise of the structural equivalent of a national bourgeoisie much more difficult (Centeno, 2002:136).<sup>11</sup> Social integration could not be achieved because of the contradictory racial and class attitudes that elites adapted in order to “homogenize” of the nation.

Historians such as Jorge Orlando Melo assert that the tensions between different social groups (Indians, blacks, *mestizos*) and the influence of “economic Liberalism”<sup>12</sup> gave way to the consolidation of the Liberal and Conservative parties that took place in the late 1840s. Others contend that the outcomes of the conflict between federalists and centralists produced an ideological break between emancipators, opening up a space for party formation. Other historians affirm that the parties emerged due to the divergences between the two main players of the emancipation process in Colombia, Liberator Simón Bolívar and Francisco de Paula Santander. Bolivar advocated strong and interventionist government while Santander voted for a more civil and lawful kind of government (Samper, 1873 in Melo, 1978: Chapter 2). Although there is no definite explanation for how the parties originated, a combination of the factors just mentioned may have not only produced them, but may also have perpetuated the very causes that originated them. Racism, the “desire for civilization” that contributed to violence,<sup>13</sup> inconsistent economic policies, and the controversy over the type of government to be implemented, were all

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<sup>11</sup> For foreign debt in Post Independent Colombia see Alvaro Tirado Mejía. *Introducción a la historia económica de Colombia*. Bogotá: El Ancora, 1988; Roberto Junguito Bonnet. *La deuda externa en el siglo XIX*. Bogotá: Tercer Milenio y Banco de la República, 1995

<sup>12</sup> Economic Liberalism, as Brooke Larson explains, refers to a corpus of ideology, theory, and policy that sought to relax institutional constraints on economic activity, allowing it to be governed by the free play of market forces. Larson, 2004:Chapter 2.

<sup>13</sup> According to Rojas (2002), the desire for civilization went hand in hand with civil wars (xxvi).

sources of resistance among the different social groups (attached to the Liberal or Conservative parties) that composed the nation's political landscape.

The interest groups in this political landscape played an active or a passive role depending on their position in relation to the means of production and their social origin. McGreevey (1971) uses a four category classification scheme. First, the elites were comprised of large landowners, clerics, intellectuals, politicians, and merchants. Political affiliation, economic relations, and particularly, social origin determined relations within the elites. Second, the urban middle class was composed of artisans and petty bureaucrats. Their interests varied from tariffs to public administration and little with land tenure. Third, we have the rural peasantry, who were involved in the market economy mainly through land rent. Fourth, the communal Indians were concerned with *resguardos*/reservation lands and subsistence activities (74-75). Although a small fraction of the total population, slaves were crucial for land exploitation. By mid nineteenth century, the political situation of the country prompted these social groups to form alliances around particular ideologies. In this sense, there were two distinct social groups that Nieto Arteta (1996) called revolutionaries (liberals) and reactionaries (conservatives). The former were merchants, artisans, slaves, and farmers. The latter were large landowners, the religious communities and congregations (which were also large landowners) (115).

The consolidation of the political parties in Colombia prefigured the Liberal Revolution in the late 1840s, coinciding with revolutionary events in Europe. In Colombia, there was a concern with the low cost of producing of goods, a banking

system, trade, and means of communication, land distribution and agricultural production, as well as the political consolidation of the bourgeoisie. General José Hilario Lopez inaugurated the Liberal Revolution in 1849, which it included an “Indian integration” that, as Larson comments, propelled policy makers to hammer out the specifics of economic and cultural reform (Larson, 2004:86). This Creole mobilization was considered revolutionary because in a brief period, the newly consolidated Liberal Party proposed, and soon implemented, radical economic, political, and social measures that intended to finally modernize Colombia. Such measures included, among others, the abolition of *resguardos* (common lands), the abolition of slavery, and the separation of Church and State, all of which would be accompanied by the consolidation of the bourgeoisie.

Despite the differences in the interpretation and application of theories such as free trade, the Creole experience differed greatly from that of Europe. In Colombia, the concern over progress was a discourse that emphasized a questioning of the colonial structures and institutions imposed from Spain. In this discourse, the colonial heritage appeared an impediment to the development of internal markets (Ramírez Gómez, 2004). Nonetheless it fostered the implementation of European economic, political, and social ideas, with mixed results. No doubt the abolition of slavery, *resguardos* and clerical privileges, as well as the insistence on “absolute” freedom of expression, religion, education and industry, universal male suffrage, the separation of Church and State, the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the decentralization of the government, derived from the rational ideals of the Enlightenment.

Colombia's historiography in the second half of the nineteenth century emphasized the Liberal and Conservative parties' positions in relation to the structure of production, the international division of labor, and the import-export economy. In 1850, Colombia opened the doors to international commerce, abolished some *estancos*, *resguardos*, monopolies and slavery, and freed Church lands—all institutions that impeded the circulation of rural property and free labor from Indians and freed slaves. Undoubtedly, the events of mid-century Europe had a political and economic influence on the proponents of these Liberal reforms. The Industrial Revolution, the emergence of the proletariat, and the wide acceptance of socialist ideas, as well as end of the French monarchy, deeply influenced certain portions of the populations such as artisans and radical Liberals. Nonetheless, Liberal measures concentrated more on issues of private property and land distribution.

Traditional historical accounts maintain that the national fortunes of the Liberal and Conservative parties, as well as the fate of Liberalism, paralleled the fortunes of export agriculture. These accounts also argue that the two parties had marked different economic agendas before the Liberal Revolution in the 1850s: The Liberals were identified with the export economy, and the Conservatives with the nationalist tendency oriented toward domestic problems<sup>14</sup> and protectionism of the national economy. But also important were the divergent economic interests of the parties in relation to two fundamental issues: First, Conservatives who favored slavery, and Liberals who defended abolition. Second, the issue of property, especially in relation to land distribution and the

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<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Nieto Arteta (1975: 27-29, 31), Arrubla (1969:71-72), Mejía (1971:119-121), Londoño y Velázquez (1974: 114-115), Dix (1967: 246-247), and Klein (1983: 35-36) and Charles Berquist (1986).

implementation of property ownership (privatization of *resguardos*) claimed by Liberals, and large land ownership, as defended by Conservatives.

This analysis has been strongly criticized, especially in the last three decades. One of the strongest criticisms comes from Colombianist Frank Safford. Safford criticizes traditional interpretations of the nineteenth-century because they contain mostly socioeconomic interpretations of politics. These analyses intend to explain political behavior and political alignments as expressions of antagonistic or divergent economic interests. Nevertheless, according to Safford, the most common explanation, which was at the same time a “convenient simplification of the historical fact,” sustains that the Liberal party was considered the party of merchants and industrialists, while the Conservative party was viewed as the party of the traditional landed elite, who protected and were supported by the Church.

Even though evidence exists concerning the differences between the Liberal and Conservative parties, Reinhardt has argued that the class basis of the two parties has never been clearly defined (1986:78), and that, according to Safford, the economic interests of the upper classes tended to be complementary rather than contradictory. Both merchants and landowners joined the ranks of Liberal and Conservative parties (Safford, 1972:348-349, 356-357; Safford, 1985-1986:130, 138). For Safford, it is also problematic to argue that Colombian elites had a substantial economic capital in comparison to their



North American or Latin American counterparts (Bergquist, 1978:13 as cited in Safford, 1985-1986:125; Safford, *Ibid*: 135; Jaramillo Uribe, 2000:243-248).<sup>15</sup>

Nola Reinhardt agrees with Safford's interpretation and adds that the party differences ultimately reflected disagreements over how best to achieve common economic goals, rather than differences over economic strategies (Reinhardt, 1986:78). This argument, however, could only hold true for the period after the Liberal Revolution where Conservatives, for instance, saw their ownership rights of slaves threatened. Even though both the Liberal and Conservative parties had in common the search for an economic growth strategy, Liberals more than Conservatives intended to overcome the legacy of colonialism while maintaining class privileges and the existence of the laboring classes. A clear example of this difference is that during the Regeneration, at the end of the nineteenth century Conservatives reestablished relations with the Church and established important economic protections, a strategy that directly conflicted with Liberals.

To a certain degree, both parties agreed with free trade and approved the idea of the international division of labor, in which Spanish-American ex-colonies produced raw materials (agricultural and mineral) and consumed cheap commodities from developed countries (Reinhardt 1986:95; Jaramillo Uribe, 2002:244). However, Reinhardt suggests that this argument leaves unanswered the question of the causes for the political differences that led to violence between the two parties and that spanned the nineteenth

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<sup>15</sup> See also Frank Safford. "Social Aspects of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: New Granada, 1825-1850," *Journal of Social History*, 5, no. 3, (Spring 1972): 344-370; Jaime Jaramillo Uribe. *Historia, sociedad y cultura*. Bogotá: CESO, UNIANDES, 2002:243-248.

century. Both Reinhardt and Safford's arguments have shed new light on party politics and party economics in nineteenth century Colombia. They suggest a kind of hybridization in the economic front in which certain degree of feudalism and capitalism was achieved.

The violence throughout the nineteenth century more than the elimination of one party or the other, suggests that the parties strove to eliminate the system of production that the contender represented. In the end, neither system prevailed in its entirety. What appears clear, however, is that the party in power certainly imposed its particular mode of production and acted accordingly. In that sense, during the *Olimpo Radical*, for instance, a laissez faire economy proclaimed by the capitalist mode of production was what radical Liberals tried to impose. In the end, however, despite the violence and instability, the elites of both parties did not lose their economic or political status. They both remained economically sound and politically active. Their supporters were mostly left empty-handed.

Certainly one of the points of contention between the parties was agrarian reform and the issue of private property in relation to the elimination of *resguardos*, the abolition of slavery, and the secularization of Church lands, as we will see later. Combined with these debates was the issue of identity construction (race, class, and secular or religious beliefs), which, for Rojas (2002), was also a crucial component of the "civilizing project." The concern with identity was intimately linked with the social and ideological structure of the country, which provoked in Liberal and Conservative elites alike what

Fabio Zambrano (1989) calls *miedo al pueblo*/fear of the people that is, fear of Indians, freed or manumitted slaves, and poor *mestizos*.<sup>16</sup>

According to traditional historiography, large landowners, the Catholic Church, and wealthy aristocratic families content with the colonial order made up the Conservative Party. Manufacturers, artisans, and small merchants formed the Liberal party (Safford, 1985-1986).<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, recent analyses over exactly who composed each political group have been controversial. At the economic level, for instance, the interests of the upper classes tended to be complementary rather than contradictory. Industrialists, merchants, and landowners appeared in the ranks of both the Liberal and Conservative parties (Safford, 1972:348; Jaramillo Uribe 2002; Sanders 2004b:282). No doubt, as Reinhardt argues, “the leaders of the two parties shared a class basis and an economic goal but were divided by disagreement over the best policies to achieve that goal (1986:79). The class base of each party has never been clearly defined, given that the cultural capital represented in the civilization ideal was, in most cases, a more valuable asset than economic capital. Although the classes in power were predominantly of elite descent, both parties moved beyond their closest class and racial affiliations, and through what traditional historiography calls authoritarian relationships, such as *clientelismo*, the parties achieved increasing loyal and durable mass support (Peeler,

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, Conservatives who opposed abolitionism feared the manumitted blacks and considered them a threat to the white population. Ideologically, there was a debate amongst elites regarding the convenience of British Liberalism as a model for identity construction and as a model for modernization. For Conservatives, civilization could only be achieved through religion and morality. As Rojas sustains, these two approaches towards achieving civilization were an important source of conflict, and were fundamental elements in establishing the “foundational myths of the nation, the state, and the constitutions” (2002:xxvi-xxvii).

<sup>17</sup> See also Helen Delpar 1981; German Colmenares 1966.

1976). *Clientelista* relations, nonetheless, were not necessarily authoritarian. *Clientelismo*, understood as “the particular exchange of votes and support for goods, favors, and services between the poor and the elites” (Auyero, 2000:19) although informal, permanent, and pervasive, has permeated all instances of social life in unprecedented ways. Through *clientelismo*, organized popular groups sought to “bypass traditional mechanisms of political cooptation” (Cardoso, 1992 and Escobar, 1994 as cited in Auyero, 2000:21) as in the case of Indians and freed blacks in the Cauca region (Sanders, 2004). The upper class formed alliances at different times with Indians, blacks, peasants, and artisans. Economic, social, and political interests motivated such alliances. This does not mean, however, that each social group did not work independently to obtain economic, political, and cultural power.

### **Catholic Church-State Relations**

Race, ethnicity, and the organization of society into political and social groups such as the *Sociedades Democráticas*, contributed to the formation and consolidation of political parties in Colombia. The differing ideological positions of the elites and the *pueblo* in almost all aspects of social life were expressed in terms of party identity (Liberal or Conservative). Making use of such commitments and identities, the relationship between the Church and the State was highly confrontational. Throughout the nineteenth century the Church’s role was key not only in the social, cultural, and economic realms, but also in the political sphere. Similar to other parts of Latin America, discrepancies between Liberals and Conservatives arose over the relationship between Church and State

(Knowlton, 1969:387-ff). In this respect, Liberals were generally associated with masonry. For them the role of the Church was limited to a purely spiritual role in society, while for Conservatives, the Church, as an element of social cohesion, played a key role in society and the state.

The power of the Church before Independence and up to the mid nineteenth century was almost unquestioned. After Independence, Colombia was ostensibly a “free and sovereign” state. However, it only appeared so in the rhetorical minds of the country’s emancipators. The new state’s economy was precarious because despite its attempts at entering the import-export economy, the colonial structure persisted: a combination of self-sustaining agricultural and manufacture production. The Church, on the contrary, “enjoyed a solid economic situation,” “wide social acceptance” (especially among the popular masses, whose religious syncretism and fanaticism could be contrasted with the elites’ austere practice (Plata Quezada, 2004:182), and a strong presence in both the urban and the most remote regions of the country (Gonzalez, 1997:140-156). Despite its internal organization, the emancipation movement also divided some Church members in the newly independent countries. In Colombia, for instance, certain Church factions advocated Enlightenment ideals while other sectors preferred the Colonial order. This internal division in the Church also created difficulties between the clergy hierarchy—the defender of Church supremacy—and the elites who favored emancipation, European immigration, Masonry, and Protestantism. Immigration would “bring people with capital, education and technical skills that would aid Colombia’s economic development.” Through the Bible Society, whose aim was to

spread knowledge of the Holy Scripture, as well as through the consolidation of Masonry, Creole elites advocated religious tolerance (Safford, 2002:114-115) and the importance of opening new frontiers of knowledge. The Church condemned and attacked these practices and ideas. Education was a major point of disagreement, because despite the attempts to present modern ideas to the public, the general population continued to follow the Catholic “ideology of domination” in moral and religious matters (Díaz Díaz, 1989:197-122). Moreover, the Church contended that civilization could only be achieved through Catholicism. Any idea foreign to the faith was condemned.

Apart from the wide social acceptance of the Church among the popular masses, thanks to its social assistance programs, the Church derived its economic power from land tenure. During the Colony, the Church had devised an impeccable organizational structure whose “specific inheritance laws [...] promoted the enlargement of its real estate, in particular land” (Lal, 1998 and Goody, 1983 as cited in Frankema, 2006:7). Since the Church was the major supporter for extending Colonial power in the conquered territories, the Spanish Crown, in return, granted the Church “its” land. The Church also had “the right to trade sacraments and salvation in return for land grants of its members” (Van Oss, 2003; Bakewell, 2003 as cited in Frankema, 2006:8) and their liquid capital came from the moneys collected from tithes. The Church usurpation of Indian communal land and the subjection of Indians to the Church can be seen as further methods by which the ecclesiastic institution effected its “primitive accumulation.” Through these economic means alongside the protection from the Spanish crown, and the unyielding support of Conservative Creole elites, the Church, in the late nineteenth century, regained social

control. The ecclesiastic institution, during the Regeneration, was presented as an element of social cohesion that would guarantee certain degree of stability and between the dominant classes and the general population both at regional and local levels. Nevertheless, such cohesion proved impossible due to the “difficult integration of the regions and regional oligarchies into a national project” (Gonzalez, 1997: 140-156) In fact, this disintegration or regionalism produced fragmentation and violence throughout the nineteenth century.

Liberal factions were also discontent about the privileged position of the Church *vis-à-vis* the state, and were disgruntled about the Church’s reluctance to welcome all things modern and its refusal to submit itself to the new state. In the first decades after Independence, the state, unlike the Church, “lacked legitimacy, its fiscal situation was uncertain, and its administrative apparatus was precarious” (Ibid). This disparity of power provided fertile ground for the confrontations between Church and state, which were evident throughout the century. Conflicts such as the *Guerra de los Supremos* or the “War of Convents” (1839-1842) were the first in a series of violent events that brought to the fore differences between various regions and the central government.

Following the “War of Convents,” government measures addressing the “religious question” further complicated Church and state relations. In matters related to the expulsion of the Jesuits to free the country from “Catholic education,” the “law of tuition” which prohibited the exercise of any religious activity without explicit government authorization, as well as the expatriation of bishops. These measures came with the Liberal Revolution of the mid century. The expropriation of Church lands, or

what radical Liberals called the disamortization or secularization of Church lands, was one of the most important measures against the Church implemented during the Olimpo Radical (1863-1880). This primitive accumulation strategy was only a symptom of the unhealthy relationship between the state and the Church throughout the century. The rationale for disamortizing Church lands was to fix the “economic error” the Church had committed for centuries. Such an “error” contributed to the stagnation of property, impeded the establishment of a unified tax system, and hindered the development of industries (Knowlton, 1969) by concentrating on sustenance agriculture. In addition, it alienated Indians, free blacks, and the rural masses from the land. The profits from the sale of expropriated lands were expected to help solve the grave fiscal crisis of the country. It also promised to open the doors to land ownership for popular sectors. Nevertheless, Church property was “given away to rapacious royal favorites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens” (Marx, 1976:881). In other words, land passed from the clerical-elite to the secular-elite, leaving the masses empty handed and those sectors that “worked” for the Church unemployed and thrown into the “proletariat.” In the end, the Liberal claim of equality was only effective among those already considered equals. The lesson for the Church was that it was a victim of its own strategy: protected by constitutional law, the Church expropriated land from Indians and Radical Liberals, and expropriated the once expropriated lands.

A civil war with religious and educative motives arose in 1877, marking the end of the Olimpo Radical. The Church claimed political sovereignty on issues regarding education, contending that it was the ecclesiastic institution and not the state that had the



legitimate right to educate. Such claims emerged as Liberal educational reforms failed to achieve the goal of implementing a public system of secular education without the collaboration of the Church (Palacios, 1995:43-47). Despite the Liberal victory, some sectors of the radical group were disenchanted by the failure of Liberalism in general. The conservative movement, called the Regeneration, grew out of this disappointment. The Church restituted most of its privileges during this period (1886-1899), in which it regained its social, economic, and political power. So strong was its power that it stripped the people of their rights and imposed conformism, as Chapters Four and Five will argue.

### **Federalism and partisan violence**

Another fundamental political reform implemented as part of the Liberal Revolution, and later in the Olimpo Radical, was the replacement of a central state with a federal one. The idea of federalism was not new to this period, but had already emerged after Independence in 1810. Federalism, as Kalmanovitz (2004) describes, was one of the pillars of the separation of powers that explained the structure of the Liberal state, proclaimed respect for citizenship and the protection of individual liberties, and instated equilibrium between villages, provinces, and the central government. Historically, federalism helps to explain the difficulty that England, Holland, and the U.S. had in expropriating wealth from their citizens in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The question that arose from such remarkable outcomes was in relation to the conditions for the existence of a strong government that would be able to expropriate citizens' wealth, but also at the same time advocate for the defense of citizens' property rights and their

accumulation of capital (North, 1993:148 as cited in Kalmanovitz, 2004). The interesting aspect of the implementation of federalism, as Kalmanovitz points out, was that it allowed the pioneers of capitalism to assemble/construct a system of political negotiation that evaded and solved the issue of internal conflict. In the U.S. and Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the federalist system helped build consensual and solid political orders.

Inspired by the success of federalism in developed countries, Colombian elites sought to implement their type of government, regardless of the evident social, cultural, economic and political differences between the north and the south. For Colombia, the question was whether the president and the central government should have more power, or whether more power should be given to regional governments. Both the Liberal and the Conservative Parties supported Federalism. Liberals did so because they saw this measure as an opportunity for development, and for Conservatives, it was a way to preserve their regional power. During the federalist years, which began unofficially during the Liberal Revolution, there was a reduction in the president's power and the establishment of representation through permanent elections. The parliament received supreme power. These measures only contributed to deepening the already strong regionalism and localism as well as to *caudillismo*, a political and war entrepreneurship that was supposed to remedy, among other things, the "deterioration" of the new states, the failure of constitutionalism, and the lack of capitalist development in the ex-colonies. *Caudillismo* could prevail in the absence of a strong army, which in the Liberal period was condemned to disappear. State protection was substituted for legal militias organized

and paid for by private individuals. Regions became autonomous government entities. Unlike other reforms that caused civil unrest, federalism promised to solve the problem of the absence of a unified and homogeneous dominant class that had a national character. According to Alvaro Tirado Mejia (2001), the implementation of federalism was altogether appropriate for salvaging and protecting particular political and economic interests. Through federalism, elites from both sides of the political spectrum could distribute amongst themselves the national patrimony *por la via regional* (Kalmanovitz, 2004). They could also, following Max Weber, easily distribute power (Weber, 1991:180) making federalism a more political than economic strategy, as they were struggling over how to monopolize, refine, and develop that power. Politically, the Liberals carried out the federalist project, because their political base was “geographically concentrated, whereas the Conservative base was more dispersed throughout the nation.” Having followers scattered all around the national territory would have increased the Conservatives’ chances of “challenging Liberals in the national assemblies” (Reinhardt, 1986:88).

Despite the benefits promised by federalism, the federalist regime also produced an intra-class conflict due to questions over regional identity, in which political strength and the defense of the Church were at stake. Even though economic factors played an important role in federalism, the conflict was not necessarily spoiled by it, because political elites from both parties stood to benefit. The result of federalism was the reinforcement of regional differences; and within each region, localism gained more strength. Localism was particularly damaging to Liberal ideas about political

participation and representation, and to the development of a strong economy. Localism also increased the already existing tension between the capitals of provinces and the countryside. The elites from both parties sought to monopolize power by allying themselves with local caudillos, which at the same time exercised their power over regional and national elites. The chain of command was clear and the distribution of power and the benefits that derived from it formed a highly refined structure that was constantly threatened, but which, in the end, benefited the caudillos as it was the *pueblo* who suffered from poverty and violence.<sup>18</sup>

Regional identification also prefigured the defense of patronage and *clientelismo*—the particular exchange of votes and support for goods, favors, and services between the poor and the elites (Auyero, 2000:19)—with the use of force where necessary. Patronage and *clientelismo* were common practices during the colony and only grew stronger in the nineteenth century, not only in Colombia but also throughout Latin America. Disappointed with Liberal reforms that ended with the lack of a means of communication, increased regionalism and localism, hindered competition both in the national and international markets, and delayed the expansion of capitalism, independent Liberals and Conservatives responded to the crisis in the early 1880s with the implementation of a new government plan: the Regeneration. This conservative regime emerged as a reaction to that failure (Reinhardt, 1986:91). This new regime promised to centralize the state and the economy, protect the Church, and centralize education. The Regeneration's program would have a lasting effect in twentieth-century Colombia.

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<sup>18</sup> Weber, 1946, quote in Gerth and Mills, p. 180

## **Race**

As a historically constructed identity, race helped mark the difference between the upper ruling class—the literati—and the rest. It also, as Sanders (2004) maintains, helped divide subalterns (lower class, the poor, the pueblo, the popular or plebeian) from one another. These divisions, however, were not strict as upper classes and lower classes, pursuing political and economic gains engaged in powerful alliances (8). Moreover, as Tulio Halperin (1993) contends, the caste system of the late colonial years had lost legal sanction and, rhetorically, promised *mestizos* (mixed blood of Spaniards and Indians) and mulattos (mixed blood of whites and blacks) fewer obstacles to their social mobility after Independence (Halperin Dolghi: Chapter 3).

By the 1850s, Latin American independence had resulted in more than the substitution of one segment of the dominant (white/Creole) elite for another. In this transition, the ruling class used race and class to promise freedom to slaves and the enhancement of social opportunities for Indians and those of mixed race who joined their cause (Anna, 1978, Bonilla, 1972, Lynch, 1986 as cited in Lewis, 1999). In Latin America and elsewhere, power, economic and social relations were institutionalized based on particular kinds of practices, discourses and representations, more specifically of racial and class identities. In the nineteenth century, race and class were determining factors in the struggle for Independence and later in state formation and citizenship construction. Nevertheless, they were also at the core of political decisions, the establishment of social hierarchies and the consolidation of economic relations.

Paradoxically, nineteenth-century Latin-American intellectual and political reflections on race were heavily influenced by Spencerian positivism, the Comptean view of society, and Darwinism, in which society was seen as an “organism.” For Latin-American intellectuals, Latin America was “afflicted by a serious illness...and the ‘cures’ ranged from ‘extermination’ and ‘genocide’ to ‘natural selection’” (Martinez-Echazábal, 1998:25) to *mestizaje* with the European race. For the elite literati, Indians and blacks were to blame for the backwardness and underdevelopment of the country. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, for example, considered that *mestizaje* among and with the “inferior races” was an obstacle for “economic Europeanization” or “progress.” This kind of *mestizaje* would “nurture the barbarism and fanaticism that already characterized “our America” and lead to degeneration, disease, and/or madness (Martinez-Echazábal, 1998:24). Nevertheless, the solution would be to integrate Indians into the new nations through genetic assimilation.

*Mestizaje*, Peter Wade affirms, as the phenotypical and cultural mixture of Indian, black, and white, intended to attenuate the “inferiority” of non-whites. In this way, that which was associated with Indians and blacks became a phenomenon of the past. Indians and blacks and their specific cultural and social demands were made invisible as ethnic categories (Wade, 1990 as cited in Friedemann, 1992). According to Friedemann (1992), Indians and blacks, through whitening, would disappear from the specific panoramas of identity and from the national identity landscape. In political and social terms, the promise of “universal” citizenship for blacks and Indians made them even more invisible as requisites to obtain citizenship were made difficult to fulfill.

The Colombian Creole elites were familiar with Spencerianism and Darwinism. For them, as Nina Friedemann contends, the ideology of genetic and cultural assimilation implicitly carries with it the *mestizaje* process. Such process implies a social and political action that in the end was discriminatory. In the imagination of the elites, the racial and social order should have continued to preserve its rigid colonial legacy. Spaniards, creoles, Indians, blacks and women is the descending line along which society was to be divided since the blood that resulted from the mixture of any of these groups was considered “other,” impure, even deviant. Not surprisingly, then, that society in the nineteenth century continued to be seen pyramidally in which the highest point is composed of “whites” and in the inferior points or the base “blacks” and “Indians” (Wade 1997:52).

The racial distribution in 1851 Colombia was as follows: whites, 17.0%, Indians, 13.8%, blacks, 3.8% and *mestizos*, 65.4% (Safford and Palacios, 2002:485). Colombian Creole elite José María Samper mapped out the ethnographic and class composition of the country according to how far each group was from “civilization.” For Samper, the “*literati*” which were all Creoles, were located at the top not only of the racial but class scale. Lawyers, physicians, and academics comprised this group. The next level comprised “the low clergy” born of poor or plebeian families. At a lower level, there were young soldiers who enlisted in Spanish schools, military districts or engineering headquarters. The lowest in this scale were city artisans and small proprietors (Samper, 1861 as cited in C. Rojas 2002: 28). For Samper, this scale was directly proportional to the capacity of each group to act, for instance in the war of Independence. In that sense,

the rest of the population, that is blacks, Indians and mestizos were given a lower status because there were considered mere instruments that the *literati* would use for their causes (Ibid).

Citizenship in some instances made blacks and Indians more invisible. This phenomenon was evident in some regions of the country. Nevertheless, studies such as that of James Sanders show that in the southern department of Cauca, blacks and Indians defended their citizenship rights (Sanders, 2004:47). *Mestizaje* did not solve the racial question since, instead of appearing to erase “primordial categories of race and culture,” the mixing of races “continually reconstructs them... [and] reestablishes the basis of racism” as race is constantly alluded to when comparing the traits of one people with another (Wade, 2004:356). In this dynamic, the “white” trait was predominant, thanks to “egalitarian” legislation that involved discriminatory laws and values intended to relegate “non desirable” sectors of the population to invisibility. The law concerning access to citizenship rights, for instance, was one of the most ambiguous of laws. Citizenship was one of the fundamental aspects the ruling and popular classes took into account when defining certain types of political, economic, and class identity such as party affiliation, access to property, upper class identification through wealth and tradition. Chapters Three and Four focus on the differing notions of citizenship that emerged in nineteenth century Colombia. Those chapters argue that citizenship was a universalizing concept that was attached not only to racial categories, but also to economic and class ties and to ideological inclinations. This argument is based on the transformation that this notion underwent throughout the century, when citizenship was transformed from a republican



to a radical Liberal concept, and later to a Conservative, Regenerationist, and traditional Catholic notion.

Gender was also crucial category in spite of the fact that women were excluded from the political realm. Samper's classification scheme inscribes gender alongside race and class from the perspective of the masculinist literati. In nineteenth-century Colombia, women were located in the least prestigious of Samper's categories because "women do not understand the philosophy of revolutions, not do they have the moral or intellectual strength to take care of political issues" (Samper, 1861 as cited in C. Rojas 2002: 28). Women were excluded from the public sphere, could not aspire to the title of citizenship, much less the right to vote. In this dissertation, gender will be touched upon if only tangentially. This category will not be addressed in depth not because it lacks importance but because it would require a project in itself to elucidate the role of women in nineteenth-century Colombia and more specifically in the Regeneration.

Suffice it to say now that evidence suggest, however, that women did play a crucial role partisan conflicts, elections and in demands to governments (Sanders, 2004:63). They also were crucial to the nineteenth century political, economic, social and cultural milieus as reproducers of the social forms in accordance with the times.

What follows presents a reflection of how the notion of race and class as represented in Indians, blacks and artisans influenced the perception and understanding of the different sectors of the *pueblo*, with a focus on the categories of Indian, black and artisan.

## **On Indians**

The project of state formation and nation-building that Colombian Creole elites proposed, as Frank Safford explains in his account of elite attitudes and the Indians in Colombia, hoped to homogenize the population “through miscegenation, into something corresponding to a European phenotype,” as a way to achieve progress and civilization. The “transformation” process, however, was complicated because “AmerIndians [who by the end of the colonial period made up 20% of the population] in Colombia did not correspond to a single category” (Safford, 1991:3). The geography of race cannot be disregarded “for if society is constituted spatially (...) this tends to occur by means of creating ‘pockets of local order’” (Hagerstrand, cited in Gregory 1989:84, both as cited in Wade, 1991:43) which are concentrations of certain social interactions, or in Anthony Giddens’s words, “the zoning of time-space in relation to routinized social practices” (Giddens, 1984:119, as cited in Wade, 1995:53). For Wade, “the relation between space and society thus leads to a consideration of how society must constitute itself in a spatially differentiated or regional way” (1995:53). In Colombia, discourses of race were associated with specific places: some Indians were “distant from the nodes of Hispanic society, spatially and culturally” (Safford, 1991:3) while others, especially in the eastern mountains, were apparently more integrated into the Hispanic culture.

The spatial “structuring” of race has historical roots, and land distribution played a major part in it. During the Colony, Colombia was an economic “archipelago” in which

the different regions behaved as independent and isolated “*estancos*,”<sup>19</sup> composed of a number of separated territories with minimal interaction among them. During the Conquest and colonization, the Spanish crown declared itself the owner of the conquered lands. The Crown distributed the land and protected “tribal lands” but Indians could not dispose of them at their will. Despite the Crown’s control, there was unofficial land usurpation, which was later legalized through titles and dues to the Crown. Shortly thereafter, wealthy Spaniards and the Catholic Church claimed and appropriated large amounts of “unused” land, or what John Locke would call “[un]improved land.” Even if Spaniards or the Church in Spanish America “seized” Indian property with the Lockean idea that it was “permissible if that property was not cultivated or improved to benefit the larger society” (Locke, 1967:313, 409-410 as cited in Henry , 1999), the outcome of such usurpation did not lead to modern development. Certainly, land was a potential resource. However, overall, it remained underexploited, and direct profit from it was minimal compared to agricultural productivity in more developed countries. Agriculture was not used in order to implement an export economy, but for self-sustenance. Just as lands were unevenly distributed, the geographical location of Indians, blacks and whites was uneven as well. Temperate highlands were for the Indians, Spaniards were located in the cordilleras or mountain range so as to exploit Indian labor and take advantage of better climatic conditions and better salubrity. The lowland coastal areas had politically less stratified, and often more dispersed, hostile indigenous groups. Slaves were used

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<sup>19</sup> Estanco is the monopoly in the production and/or sale of a commodity. Estanco is the monopoly in the production and sale of certain products by the state or private individuals who would pay taxes to the state. The most common products protected under the Estanco in Colombia were tobacco and to this day, it continues to be alcohol and liquor.

especially along the pacific coast for gold mining. The initial distribution of racial elements was uneven, and the progression of processes of race mixture was very varied (Wade, 2000:40).

This kind of social and land distribution was first institutionalized through the *Encomienda*, a colonial system of land and labor distribution in which an *encomendero*, designated by the Crown, was assigned a certain number of Indians to work the land in exchange for food, clothing, and a Christian education. The *encomienda* resembles the European feudal system. However, there is an important difference. In Europe, the end of feudalism brought the expansion of trade, the consolidation of private property, the development of public opinion, and advances in technology to make production more cost-efficient. In Colombia, the end of the *encomienda* brought with it the establishment of the *hacienda*, an institution that marked the consolidation of large landownership. The *hacienda* contributed even further to the fragmentation of the territory, the lack of communication, and poor interregional trade (Torres Triviño, 2005:258), and represented yet another crucial condition for capitalist underdevelopment.

In addition to the concentration of Indians in *encomiendas*, Indians were also forcibly relocated in larger towns, as Frank Safford and Marco Palacios suggest, and had the advantage of “removing the indigenes from the plots they had formerly occupied, thus freeing up large amounts of land for Spaniards [or Church] to claim.” The rationale for such a procedure was that the “declining numbers of Indians” required “reduction of their land.” According to Safford and Palacios, the amount of land distributed to the peasant population and the division of land among heirs resulted in plots insufficient for

sustaining families, but certainly facilitated the developing disparity between small numbers of latifundia owners of Spanish descent and large numbers of peasants with tiny plots of land.” As Safford and Palacios explain, “this exaction put Indians under great pressure to enter the labor market,” especially because they had to leave their plots for long periods of time and make tribute payments out of their already low wages (Safford, 2002:41-42). The result was a significant amount of Indian labor, which Indians could sell only once they had bought their way out of the *encomienda*. During the first half of the nineteenth century, small landowners continued to implement a self-sustaining economy. In order to attract men, especially poor *mestizos*, peasants, and Indians to fight against Spain, the emancipators used both citizenship rights and land as compensation. Unfortunately, the land offered ultimately ended up in the hands of large property owners. Only a small minority could have access to the luxuries offered by citizenship.

The attempts to instill modern ideals (economic Liberalism, citizenship or equality) in the newly independent country posed a threat to the Indian population. For instance, for Liberal revolutionaries, there was an “economic logic” surrounding “el problema indígena” (the Indian question). This racially motivated logic, as Brooke Larson (2004) suggests, moved elites to produce a “rhetorical argument that pinned the country’s economic backwardness squarely on the concept of racial inferiority.” Liberals blamed the inferiority of blacks and Indians on Spanish colonial oppression, but in their rhetoric, insisted on the theory that associates whiteness with civilization and progress. Most importantly, the “social construction of race,” a project of geographers, ethnographers, and essayists, “charted the moral topography of race,” which, “located

Colombia's diverse "racial groups" in geographic space and in hierarchical relationship to an economic activity and to each other" (76-77)<sup>20</sup> In other words, as Wade asserts, "race became regionalized" (Wade, 1995:45). Region and race, for Larson, "served as the organizing principles of knowledge." Therefore, the country was geographically divided into the "civilized highlands" inhabited by "white and *mestizo* types" and the "savage hinterlands" populated by nomadic tribes and blacks who shared "the torpor of the tropics" ... [and] "indolence, superstition, and volatility." Highland Indians were located in the middle of this divide. Their docility made them perfect candidates for "cultural improvement and eventual assimilation" (Larson, 2004:77) or in other words, made them "civilizable," in accordance with the Bolivarian dream of making Indians full citizens of the nation.

The "economic logic," more specifically, had to do with the Liberal concept of individual property in nineteenth-century Colombia, which was never consistent, and was strongly influenced by national and international economic and political developments, as well as by the understanding that any economic decision for the country would require political agreements. As in North America and England, nineteenth-century Colombia implemented measures such as land expropriation and the elimination of Indian communal lands or *resguardos*, because radical Liberals could not conceive of the country's entrance into the world market unless land was freely negotiable. The problems of *resguardo* lands in Colombia were not far from England's proceedings with communal property. In England, as Marx describes it, "the law itself now becomes the instrument by

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<sup>20</sup> The phrase "moral topography" is coined by Michael Taussig in his book *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. 1987:253.

which people's land is stolen" (1976:884). In Colombia, constitutional reforms of the mid-nineteenth century legitimated the commercialization of *resguardo* lands. Both in England and in Colombia, "primitive accumulation" strategies were implemented: the worker and indigenous populations were dispossessed of their means of subsistence.

In Colombia, proponents of the law argued that this measure would favor the general production of raw materials for export and the production of commodities for the domestic market. Paradoxically, the purpose of the elimination of *resguardos* was to give Indians and the *pueblo* the opportunity to become property owners, but ultimately, *resguardo* lands ended up in the hands of large landowners as those lands were sold in auctions to *latifundistas*—the only people who could afford to buy them. This measure greatly benefited merchants, since it forcibly increased the market of land and labor force. Indians, now dispossessed of their land, had no recourse but to rent land, colonize new territories, or work as day laborers. They were forced to sell their labor, to enter into the money economy, and to be consumers of goods they once produced for their subsistence. The conditions of existence for Indians under these circumstances deteriorated quickly, making the number of poor and dispossessed people even larger.

The elimination of *resguardos* was not a straightforward process because, as Larson explains, there were legal complications, lack of surveyors, and major indigenous resistance to Liberal policies in certain regions of the country. According to anthropologist Joanne Rappaport, the lack of political homogeneity in nineteenth-century Colombia profoundly affected policies towards Indians. Immediately after Independence in 1810, Indians became full citizens, and with that status came the replacement of

*resguardos* with private property (1998:90-ff). The Indians resisted the official measures (Bushnell, 1954:176-177, Friede, 1972:106 as cited in Rappaport, 1998:90) of cultural homogenization and economic Liberalism that insisted on the dissolution of *resguardos*.

Indian resistance was most evident in the Southern state of Cauca, where local elites constantly disregarded national law, claiming that the dissolution of *resguardos* was costly for both communities and the state (Helguera, 1983 as cited in Rappaport, 1998:92). In this region, one of the strongholds of localism, the alliances (mostly military) between Indians and politicians, as Rappaport comments, forced local elites to meet the needs of their indigenous population, such as giving them land to establish *resguardos* instead of following national policy (92). Indians also resisted the ambiguity in the understanding and implementation of citizenship rights. Willingly or not, they were participants in the market economy, but their political participation was constantly shattered. The Liberal regime, according to Larson, conveniently implemented this “double standard of citizenship” (Larson 87-8). It is not surprising, and then, that in order to gain support from Indians and blacks against the Spaniards, Creole elites masked their disdain for Indians and blacks [or the masses] under the banner of citizenship.

Because of the disadvantaged position of Indians during most of the century, it is possible to hypothesize that Indians accepted the advent of the conservative period called the Regeneration (1880-1899) “opportunistically and effectively” because the reforms of this period were not as threatening and advocated a “slower, more mediated route to modernity.” Such reforms included the “protection and tutelage” of Indians, since they were considered “minors” in need of constant supervision (Larson, 2004:99). Here the



Church, which during the Regeneration regained its status as a force of social cohesion, undertook the task of catholically civilizing Indians not only through the Gospel, but also through social assistance programs, as it had done in the past.

This particular population of Indians partially fell into what elites called the civilizable type because despite its contact with the local elite, it still lacked what elites identified as a civilized character: “money, commerce, comfort, hygiene, Christianity, and the cultural values associated with such things” (Larson, 2004:99). Indianness as well as blackness was associated with “poverty and sloth” (Ibid). There was little interest, if at all, in understanding Indian cultural, social, economic, or religious traditions, much less Indian agency. The major concern of both Conservative and Liberal elites was to speed the already evident disappearance of Indians via *mestizaje*, and from there, “by degrees, into whiteness” (Ibid:84). In addition, Liberal and conservative reforms sought to linguistically, culturally, and racially homogenize the nation by converting Colombians into a “single ‘race’ [white *mestizo*?], that [spoke] a single tongue [*Castellano*] and [believed] in a single God” [the Catholic God] (Arocha, 1992:29). In other words, elites intended to culturally reconstruct a “national community” in which Creoles, Indians, and blacks “imagined” themselves occupying the same territory and sharing the same cultural background, “rendering their nation what Anderson terms ‘an imagined political community’” (B. Anderson, 1991:6). This desire worked rhetorically but in reality, the landscape of that imagined nation was as broken culturally as it was geographically (Wade, 1991:41). This was the case with regard to Indians, but it became even more evident with the Black communities.

### **On “Afro-Colombia” or “*la cultura negra*”**

Content with the idea that highland Indians were more easily able to assimilate than Indians or blacks in other parts of the country, those elites “attributed” the “race problem” to blackness (Larson, 2004:83). Colombia was not foreign to slavery, another “idyllic” (Marx, 1976:893) instance of property and primitive accumulation. In fact, the double standard applied to blacks as opposed to Indians in terms of forced labor and moral standards so typical ever since the dawn of colonialism in the New World, when the Spanish crown and the Church sanctioned African but not Indian slavery (Larson, 2004:83).

The double standard continued as it became imperative in the mid-nineteenth century to free slaves in order to free a substantial labor force as a precondition to finally develop capitalism and to enter the international market in a competitive manner. Capitalism, it is necessary to remember requires, on the one hand, of the formation of a class of “free laborers”, and on the other hand, the accumulation of a considerable amount of capital (Marx, Vol. I Chapter 25: The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation). The process of abolition was not easily achieved, especially because the economic compromise Colombia would have to make in order to reach an agreement on freedom of slaves. This process proved to be a driving force of conflict with both words and arms. Freedom, in this particular context meant, for instance, that only children of slaves conceived after the conclusive break with Spain in 1819 would be free; the rest

would continue to be treated by whites as “torturable and mutilatable merchandise,” as if colonial laws were still in force (Arocha, 1998:76).

The independentist movement in Colombia, as well as other Latin American countries at the time was inspired in the events in Europe and North America and in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*. The new nation proclaimed liberty for all and along with it the promise to respect to uphold the right to private property. In this respect, the *Declaration* establishes in its Article 2 “The purpose of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression” (Article 12); and in Article 17, “Property being a sacred to and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless illegally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.” After Independence in 1810, lawmakers in Colombia and other slave holding states such as Venezuela and who advocated abolitionism faced an immediate contradiction between “the right of slaves to freedom versus the right of slave owners to property” (Lohse, 2001).

This contradiction was not easily solved as politicians and the intellectual elites constantly sacrificed the freedom of blacks to their own political and economic agendas while advocating the protection of national interests. Since slavery, a kind of “movable property,” in Marx’s terms, and large landownership, that “feudal landed property” (Marx, 1970:79-81), were “fraternally united,” the Liberal measure for the abolition of slavery was mostly an “anti-large landownership measure” rather than a concern for human liberty or equality. Abolitionism was first considered in Colombia in 1812 and

only until 1852, after numerous rhetorical and violent confrontations between slave owners and abolitionists, and the indemnity to slave owners, blacks were finally free.

Contrary to the U.S. for instance, where abolitionism was achieved through civil war and which result was the destruction of feudalism and the imposition of the capitalist mode of production, in Colombia, the battle over abolition was not necessarily to destroy feudalism and impose capitalism. It was a power struggle between the Liberal and the Conservative parties. The Liberal Revolution of the 1850s was significant but it could not did not have the strength or the scope of the revolutionary movement of the time in Europe or the U.S.

Abolitionism in Colombia was not solved theoretically or on the basis of a philosophical discussion on freedom and rights, but merely on economic basis in which liberty could be bought. The transaction responded well to 1850 Liberal president José Hilario López's claim of "*ser generoso con los esclavizados sin dejar de serlo con los propietarios*"/generosity with slaves without disregarding property owners either (Hilario López as cited in Romero Jaramillo, 2007). The Manumission law was approved on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1851 but enter into full effect in 1852 when approximately 16,000 slaves were freed (Romero Jaramillo, Ibid). The number of slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century declined considerably due to disease, war, individual manumissions and law of free birth. Between 1825 and 1835, the Colombian slave population declined by more than 17%, from 46,829 to 38,840 (Fernando Gómez, 1970 as cited in Lohse, 2001:204).

Despite the perception that blacks did not organize themselves politically or socially to contest the discrimination, invisibility, and abandonment they were subjected

to before and after abolition came into fruition, recent research has shown that, in fact, some black communities were particularly active in the Cauca region through, for instance, the *Sociedades Democráticas de Artesanos*. The *Sociedades*, which originated around mid-nineteenth century with the Liberal Revolution, were organizations created as educational instruments to transmit the ideas and reforms proposed by the Liberal Party among the popular classes (Romero Jaramillo, 2005:134).

As artisans gained strength in the political sphere, the *Sociedades* became “clubs” of political agitation in which artisans would demand the government to issue a law that would protect their factories and jobs.<sup>21</sup> Conservatives also created *Sociedades*, but they were mostly Catholic in character also with a strong political agenda. According to James Sanders, the most politically active and largest black community in Colombia was located in the Cauca Valley and along the coast, where, by the mid-nineteenth century, blacks and mulattos made up 34.8 % of the region’s population. In this largely slave-holding and conservative region, as Sanders explains, Liberal elites allied with “subaltern Liberals.” Both groups allied with the intention of “bargaining over the social, economic, and political structures of the region,” and for the Afro-Caucanos’ military and political support in civil wars, and lastly, for the confluence of the Liberal conception of citizenship with Afro-Colombians’<sup>22</sup> appropriation of that identity (Sanders, 2004b:279). Abolition would serve various sectors: the Liberal Party, artisans, merchants, and Afro-

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<sup>21</sup> Partido Liberal Colombiano. “Las sociedades democráticas y la insurrección de los artesanos contra el librecambio.”

[http://www.partidoliberal.org.co/root/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=129&Itemid=127](http://www.partidoliberal.org.co/root/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=129&Itemid=127)

<sup>22</sup> It is very likely that James Sanders coined the term “Afro-Colombian” [culture] from the earlier anthropological work of Thomas Price and Jose Rafael Arboleda Llorente. Nina Friedemann, in alluding to the same concept refers to “*la cultura negra*”.

Colombians. For the Liberal Party, despite the modern ideal of freedom and equality, the motivation for Colombian Liberals was the ballot box. For liberal artisans, it meant enormous economic gain enslaved workers did not represent economic competition anymore. Merchants looked ahead to the growth blacks as a wage-earning consumer sector” (Lohse, 2001:210-11). For blacks, the interest was to become full members of the national community. The acceptance of Afro-Colombians into the nation was only rhetorical, despite abolition. The historical baggage imposed on the black communities had already left the mark of intolerance on the rest of the population.

Before and after Independence, blacks located in the most isolated regions of the country, contrary to Indians, were feared for their “banditry, endemic crime, ‘natural fecundity’ and proclivity to ‘insurrection’” (83). This “moral topography” was typical of the colonial period and was reinforced during the nineteenth century. Not only because of such fears, but also in order to be consistent with the modern proclamation of equality and liberty, Liberator Simón Bolívar and other Liberal emancipators expressed their desire to free slaves through legislation. For emancipators and non slave-owner Liberal elites, slavery was an assault on the modern right to freedom. Nonetheless, only until mid-century, when there were about 16,468 slaves who made up the 0.7% of the population of the country (Gómez, as cited in Safford and Palacios, 2002), president José Hilario López in 1851, set free all slaves living in Colombia. Conservative landowners saw the abolition of slavery as an assault on property rights. For this reason, they launched an unsuccessful war to protect their property rights in the late 1840s after the manumission law, passed by the *Congreso de Cúcuta* in 1821, was about to take effect.

They claimed that, as David Bushnell explains, for “free children of slaves to serve their mothers’ masters until age eighteen was insufficient compensation” (Bushnell, 1993:97). After abolition, former slave owners found ways to continue exploiting black communities.

Since slavery and large landownership were “fraternally united,” the Liberal measure for the abolition of slavery was mostly an “anti-large landownership measure” rather than a concern for human liberty or equality. The legislation, according to Nieto Arteta, intended to create an unsustainable economic situation for large landowners. However, the land reform of 1850 did not directly attack *latifundismo*. It only intended to create an unsustainable situation to landowners by destroying enslaved labor. Despite a brief crisis, landowners reemerged more invigorated after they realized that the Liberal reforms required an economic arrangement away from slavery. The new approach was advantageous for the landowner as their expenses (sustenance and housing of slaves) in the exploitation of the *latifundio* decreased. Given the scarcity of jobs, *latifundistas* benefited more from cheaply paid labor because they did not have to feed or clothe laborers (Nieto Arteta, 1996: 156-159).

In order to recover the economic losses caused by abolition, landowners implemented new forms of exploitation. Since 1851, “hiring” practices such as *concertado* and *terraje* controlled the relations of production. If established on, a *concertado* (an agreement) in return for a small plot, former slaves would work a certain number of days on the hacienda. In the system of *terraje*, blacks were given a plot in which they could cultivate for themselves and the hacienda. They had to pay rent dues

(*terrajés*) by clearing virgin forests for five to ten days each month. Safford suggests that this “authoritarian conservative style” was the product of landowners’ fear of newly freed blacks. However, in cattle ranches of the plains, a relatively more democratic culture created “an environment congenial to Liberalism” (Safford, 1972:18). The practices of *terraje* and *concertado* not only impoverished Afro-Colombians even further, but also pushed them to live in the periphery. The geographical location and moral topography of Afro-Colombians' existence supports Wade’s notion that location is a language of “racial differentiation” (Wade, 1995:43). Blacks during pre- and post-Independence were mostly located in the coastal areas (Pacific and Atlantic), regions that were characterized as “peripheral, poor, dependent, uncultured, and with a tendency to deviate from standard patterns of religious, family and sexual practice” (Wade Ibid 46). This racial differentiation supported, by a difficult geography eliminated any hope of state presence along the Pacific Coast. In the end, the abolition of slavery, as Cristina Rojas comments, was discouraging, if anything: it caused soil exhaustion, a revival of the old hacienda system, and anarchy (C. Rojas, 2002:126-129). Socially, blacks were pushed to the periphery and they have remained there in isolation and poverty, accompanied only by violence and disease. Ironically, Afro-Colombians live on one of most fertile and rich soils in the world, yet they have been mostly forgotten.

### **Class**

Property was not only a key element in the construction of citizenship; it was also the part of the foundation for a class society. Like race, class or the conditions in which collective



identities are constituted in capitalism, form another category through which an individual is socially located which also help explain the inequalities that occur within an economic, political, social or ideological order. In Colombia, the place of an individual in relation to the means of production was fundamental in determining social class. As Chapter Five will show, in the Regeneration, property was an important determinant of class and citizenship. Nonetheless, social practices, and more specifically intellectual practices could stretch those boundaries and give access to an individual to a higher social class on the basis of his knowledge, manners and grammar correctness.

Marx and Engels pointed out that society as a whole is more and more splitting up into bourgeoisie and proletariat (1948:9). They were referring to industrial England in the nineteenth century. In Colombia, despite arguments to the contrary, there was only a small incipient bourgeois class and an almost nonexistent proletariat, as the country did not achieve significant levels of industrialization despite some efforts. In nineteenth century, for the elites, as previously mentioned, Indians and blacks were considered the *pueblo*, the majority of who were located at one end of the social spectrum. Liberal radicals after mid century, inspired by the events in Europe, dared to refer to the *pueblo* as the “proletariat” despite the agricultural and not industrial nature of the country. Their interest was precisely to create an industrial society, and along with it a working class—a proletariat (Sabogal Tamayo, 1995:37 as cited in Ramírez Gómez, 2004—in order to have not only a labor market, but also a consumer class of imported products.

In his attempt to divide society into classes, Marx speaks of a “lower middle class” who includes “the small manufacturers, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant”

(Marx and Engels, 1945:27). In Colombia, there was two groups that neither belonged to the traditional upper class nor the profile of the *pueblo*: merchants and artisans. Merchants became the most successful economic entrepreneurs in their ventures with foreign and national markets. They commercialized with products such as tobacco, *quina*/cinchona bark and *añil* (indigo dye) were great beneficiaries as intermediaries in gold commerce. Even though they succeeded in the market, their social and economic standing was located below gold producers and mine explorers, who were positioned in the upper class. These activities represented an important economic capital at the time. Even though merchants were not as wealthy or powerful as the European bourgeoisie, they certainly made up the nucleus of the Creole bourgeoisie. As Gerardo Molina contends, some merchants allied themselves with the old order through marriage or the acquisition of large extensions of land. Others set the task of implementing a capitalist economy (Molina, 1988-1989) through political power and radical Liberal economic measures mentioned earlier. Artisans, a group that neither belonged to the upper class nor to the *pueblo*, but that cannot be considered a middle class for its limited economic power, played a fundamental role in nineteenth-century Colombia. Artisans became crucial to the political and economic development from the late 1840s to the late 1890s because they represented a radical change in the form of “political sociability” in that they opened the possibilities of political participation for some segments of the *pueblo*.

## **On Artisans**

As it has been pointed out previously, in nineteenth century Colombia, the division between classes was not strict because different social groups pursued political and economic gains through interclass and interracial alliances. Artisans represent precisely a group that socially and economically is difficult to locate given the fact that some owned the means of production, others were owners only of their labor but that together promoted a kind of “petty industry” (Marx, Vol. I, Chapter 32).

In Europe, artisans played a key role in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. In the industrial North, an artisan was a capitalist, a “petty bourgeois,” a “master of his craft” (Marx, 1977:1029), possessing skills that required “long and specialized training” (Gouldner, 1983:521-532), organizationally competent. In Europe, artisan organizations inaugurated a new, rational set of communicative practices, prompted the development of the private realm and civil society, and marked the transition from traditional to modern forms of social organization. European artisans were the owners of the means of production, had political strength, played crucial roles in the “revolutions” of the mid-nineteenth century, had a sense of responsibility to society, and were organized around associations that later led to union formation. European “utopian socialism” expressed the concerns of a social group that refused to disappear, was a manifestation of a class against proletarianization, and denounced the disastrous effects of capitalism.

Artisans, who occupied a position “somewhere between the upper class and the mass of poor and illiterate unskilled workers” (Safford and Palacios, 2002:199), initially,

entered the political scene as an active force with the leadership of Bogotá's almost 4000 artisans (Samper, 1853:513). This wide social location of artisans would pose a problem if we attempted to conceptualize the notion of artisan. Unfortunately, there is no ideal type of artisan that would provide the basis for a universally acceptable definition applicable to any historical process (Vega Cantor, 1990). In this respect, to think of nineteenth-century Colombian artisans in a European pre-capitalist or capitalist sense would be to fall into the trap of a "mechanical" and "deductive" notion of artisan (Vega Cantor, *Ibid*).

The social composition of Colombian artisans was more complex than that of their European counterparts, because they were divided into various strata that ranged from journeymen in a master's shop to the masters themselves. There were lawyers, plumbers, carpenters, seamstresses, tailors, small shop owners and shopkeepers, engineers, journeymen, physicians, teachers, and housekeepers (*Diario Oficial de Bogotá*, 1850 as cited in Jaramillo Uribe, 1976). Craftsmen played a political role in order to protect their craft. An important number of craftsmen participated in the coup that overthrew President Jose Maria Obando, who in 1853 had introduced reforms that directly affected artisans' interests, such as low custom tariffs to import goods. According to Jaramillo Uribe (1976), artisans also brought to light the problem of artisan labor and local manufacture protection in order to guarantee production and circulation for national commodities. Artisans defended protectionism through high import taxes. They also organized themselves in the so-called *Sociedades Democráticas de Artesanos*, which had different purposes depending of their particular political and economic interests.

Before the consolidation of political parties in the late 1840s, as mentioned before, Colombia saw the formation and consolidation of formal political entities called *Sociedades Democráticas*, which advocated for the interests of the middle class, and which was formed mostly but not exclusively by artisans. However, it cannot be said that every *Sociedad Democrática* was a synonym for an artisan organizations. This was true only for cities or provinces where there were a large number of artisans, especially in major cities (Vega Cantor, 1990). Some of the *Sociedades* with an important number of artisan members became *Sociedades Democráticas de Artesanos* both in rural and urban areas of the country. According to an 1870 census, the labor force of Colombia was 1.5 million people, over half of its 2.9 million total population. Artisans were the second group of importance after those employed in the agricultural sector. There were 350,000 artisans (23% of the labor force) (Gomez as cited in Kalmanovitz, 1986:130).

According to historian Jaramillo Uribe, these *Sociedades* were the first form of social organization in Colombia. They were also the social and psychological means that gave shape to the political and social influences of the French Revolution of 1848, especially in its romantic and utopian tendencies. They were also reminiscent of the events in England and Germany, in which artisans were key revolutionary players.

In Colombia, the *Sociedades Democráticas de Artesanos* were more than associations; they were also a vehicle of political action for the young intelligentsia<sup>23</sup> of

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<sup>23</sup> This young intelligentsia was formed by one of the factions that emerged from the internal division of the consolidated Liberal Party: a sector of the party supporters, the merchants (called *Gólgotas*) favored economic policies such as free trade. The *Gólgotas* were a group of radical landowner Liberals who were in tune with socialist ideas. Their inspiration was based on a primitive equalitarian Christianity. Some popular sectors equated these ideals with Jesus' sacrifice in the Golgotha. The *Gólgotas* were landowners' theoreticians and doctrinaires who favored a *laissez-faire* economy. The other faction of the party, artisans

the nascent middle class and the “bourgeois class” represented by merchants. These two incipient classes briefly joined the *Sociedades de Artesanos* for strategic political purposes, given that the *Sociedades* could reach the “masses” and a large electorate through their programs. Years later, this new intelligentsia would become the masterminds of the most radical Liberal period in the history of Colombia known as the *Olimpo Radical* (1863-early 1880s).

The nearly seventy *Sociedades Democráticas de Artesanos* around the country were committed to defending the principles of Liberal republicanism, the Constitution, private property, and the state. Concerned with the lack of “order,” they pledged to respect the laws of the Republic. For them, exercising the republican principle of free association honored the nation and instilled in the members a sense of patriotism and service to the nation. This principle is more evident in the support that the *Sociedades* gave to the alliances between elite Liberals and Afro-Colombians in the Cauca region, where the *Sociedades* pledged to make citizens out of black males who supported the Liberal cause (Sanders, 2004b:277). Their defense of Catholicism, (which would otherwise seem to identify them more with the Conservative party) is combined with a profound religious faith which does not conflict with faith in scientific or technological advances.

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and manufacturers (*Draconianos*) were in favor of protectionism. The *Draconianos* were experienced, pragmatic military and artisans in search of state protectionism. *Draconiano* alluded to the Greek legislator “*Dracón*.” Paradoxically, the *draconianos* were closer to the Conservative Party in their ideology. Similar ideas about the protectionism of merchants and the Church brought together *draconianos* and Conservatives on more than one occasion against the *Gólgotas*, producing civil wars and constant partisan violence. This division within the Liberal party is important because later in the century it helped put an end to the Liberal radical period in the early 1880s. For more on *Gólgotas* and *Draconianos* see Alvaro Tirado Mejía. *Colombia: siglo y medio de bipartidismo*.

The *Sociedades* pledged to defend the modern principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity along with the Christian values of love and obedience. They were committed to teaching the population their rights and civic duties, as well as to read and write. They also defended the government against speculators and monitored the behavior of public corporations, employees, and public servants. They were committed to protecting humanity and free it of egotism. Artisans believed in the power of industry and labor as a source of wealth. They advocated the importance of constancy at work. The emphasis on the importance of “labor” relies entirely on Jeremy Bentham’s idea that labor is the basis for the acquisition of wealth. However, the artisans’ efforts to limit import products, as well as their insistence on the importance of opening technical artisanal schools mostly failed, due to the speedy free market measures adopted by the Liberal party in the revolutionary years (Hermes Tovar, 1986:389-95).<sup>24</sup>

Despite artisan’s economic and political advances, historical investigations have demonstrated the historical impossibility that artisans would convert into a fully fledged bourgeois class capable of promoting economic advances as they did in Europe. The reasons offered for this failure are namely the slow technical development of artisan factories, the local or the regional character of the market, and the social division of labor in the factories. Furthermore, artisan workshops were located in the countryside or maintained strong attachments to household activities (Kalmanovitz, 1985:120-1).

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<sup>24</sup> Hermes Tovar P as cited in *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, Número 22. Volumen XVIII, 1990. <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/publicacionesbanrep/boletin/boleti5/bol22/Liberalis2.htm>. See also in Hermes Tovar P *Sociedades’ objectives postulated in the Resolution of the Sociedad de Artesanos de Bogotá of December 31, 1849.* in: *Reglamento de la Sociedad de Artesanos.* Imprenta de Nicolás Gómez. Bogotá: 1848 as cited in Jaramillo Uribe, Jaime, "Las sociedades democráticas de artesanos y la coyuntura política y social colombiana de 1848", en *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, núm 8, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1976:9-14.

Despite these differences, we can conclude that artisans in both parts of the world had much in common; however, the influence of European “utopian socialism” on nineteenth-century Colombia is undeniable. Further research is necessary to establish the actual incidence of this ideology on artisan organization.<sup>25</sup> These similarities, however, are not enough to understand the specific situation of Colombian artisans—a “class” of workers whose economic interests went hand-in-hand with a Catholic morality and the defense of private property, yet were determined to diminish the adverse outcomes of foreign trade such as unemployment and increased poverty.<sup>26</sup> In the end, artisans were an “organized group in some cities whose level of production, although limited, continued despite foreign competition” (Tirado Mejia, 2001). Many of the *Sociedades* did not last long and by the early 1880s they were virtually nonexistent.

## **Conclusion**

A permanent state of unrest, unsuccessful economic reforms, contradictory ideas about civilization, and the involvement of the Church in state affairs are only a few of the problems that Colombia faced during the nineteenth century. Class or economic interest alone did not motivate the constitutional, religious, educational, and racial struggles. The political and social conflicts can also be explained when ambivalent notions of civilization and morality are taken into account. If we follow this argument, we can confirm the idea that the elite’s power to govern did not necessarily arise from its

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<sup>25</sup> For Utopian Socialism in Latin America see Carlos Rama, “El utopismo socialista en América Latina”, en *Utopismo socialista (1830-1893)*

<sup>26</sup> Renan Vega Cantor in his article “Liberalismo económico...” acknowledges the lack of research on the influence of utopian socialism in artisan organizations in 19<sup>th</sup> century Colombia.



position in relation to the capitalist production, but rather from the belief that the elite were the ones called upon to govern, based on their position as Creole men of letters. Despite all the rhetorical and practical claims of modernization, neither the Liberal nor the Conservative Party achieved significant economic or social change. The elite took socio-economic measures that only benefited their immediate circle, while the rest of the population continued to live in poverty, ignorance, and violence. The outcome of the implementation of the abolition of *resguardos*, the disamortization of Church lands, and the abolition of slavery did not contribute to production or industrialization, much less to the import-export economy that Liberals had planned. These outcomes were not surprising, given that Colombia lacked the economic and social conditions of, for example, North America or England at the time of abolition. In those countries, profits from slavery were central to primitive accumulation and paved the way for English industrialization (Marx, 1976:874). In Colombia, prospects for economic progress and industrial development were limited by two factors, both of which were related to the colonial past: First, colonial expropriation meant that hundreds of years of surplus value had been shipped off to Europe to fuel the industrial revolution there. And, secondly, Colombia's racial geography meant that "free labor" was far removed from sites of potential development.

In Colombia, the geographic conditions of the country did not facilitate the development of any particular large industry, much less communication between regions. There was no industrialized region, for instance, that would absorb the new labor emerging from abolition (Jaramillo Uribe, 2000). Most of the country was dedicated to

agriculture, and in very limited regions, to mining and cattle raising. Furthermore, if there had been an industrialized region that required black labor, the mobilization of that labor force from one region to the other would have been nearly impossible, because the channels of communication in most of nineteenth-century Colombia did not exceed “mule or river” (The New York Times, 1891). In the end, abolition did not result in the expected economic results, because there was a lack of coherence between rhetoric and practice; between, for example, the proclamation of the right to citizenship, the principles of equality and liberty stated in the constitutions, and the pueblo’s actual access to the means of production. Politically, however, the promises of abolition helped to put Liberals in power, and later, blacks became a major player in future elections and partisan conflicts.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the Regeneration, a Conservative movement that intended to save the country from the catastrophe brought about by Liberal ideas. The next chapter will study the advocates of the Regeneration. The project’s masterminds are controversial in that each represents one set of alliances typical of the country’s political landscape: radical Liberalism and fervent traditionalism.

### CHAPTER 3: A “New Good Order:” Alliances and Promoters

The Liberal Revolution and the *Olimpo Radical* had a wide range of contradictory effects. Despite numerous proposals and the application of various laws, the promises of the Liberal period were not fulfilled due to, among others things, the failure of liberalism, the divergent opinions about what it meant to be civilized, the racial and class implications of civilization, the role of the Church, the agrarian nature of the country vis-à-vis industrialized nations, and the constant state of unrest. By the end of the 1870s, the failure of Liberal reforms and the disillusionment with the Liberal project of civilization led a group of “independent” Liberals and some former Radical Liberals to join forces with Conservatives to “re-establish” the ailing state.

Just as founding the nation had been the task of intellectuals, re-founding it was also the task of intellectuals and along with it, the task of civilizing the nation and of forming the citizen the nation required. In Colombia, key intellectual figures acted as politicians, ideologues, statesmen, poets, grammarians, and even as “regenerators” of society. Following Antonio Gramsci’s notion of the “role of the intellectual” (Gramsci, 1957:118), this chapter critically presents the intellectual biographies of two “president poets,” Radical Liberal, Rafael Núñez and Conservative Miguel Antonio Caro. These biographies will help elucidate how the intellectual and political work of these two

influential men determined the history of Colombia in the last decade of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century. They will also help reinforce the argument of this dissertation that these intellectuals used the liberal notions of citizenship in order to reinforce a more colonial notion of it. The ideological union of key intellectuals in Colombia affected important aspect of social life in Colombia and within which citizenship was especially handled.

Despite the failure of the Regeneration project led by Núñez and Caro and which intended to civilize and modernize Colombia following under the close supervision of Catholicism, their lives and works will help explain not only the particular period of the Regeneration but also how Núñez and Caro's legacy was imprinted in the life of the nation on the particular economic, political, social, and cultural life of Colombia. In other words, they carried out what Gramsci would call a "hegemonic project" with their "intellectual and moral leadership" of an "historic bloc" –between liberals and ultraconservatives - of very distinct social classes, in order to refund Colombia. It will also help explain how Núñez and Caro represent a typical example of the defense of class and economic interests, which were determining factors in the events that took place during the Regeneration and after. It is important to remember that there were many key intellectual figures with important roles in the project of the Regeneration. Nonetheless, Núñez and Caro present a particular case because despite their opposing political views, they formed an alliance through which the Regeneration movement was conceived and consolidated.

According to Gramsci, intellectuals are crucial to the process through which a major new culture, representing the world-view of a class or emerging social group, comes into existence. Intellectuals transform into a coherent account the previously incoherent and fragmentary “feelings” of those in a particular class or oppressed position (Gramsci, 1971, 418). In the case of Colombia, Núñez and Caro effectively represented the world-view of a small social class (the intellectual and political elite) who attempted to transform, the fragmented landscape of the country into a centralized nation-state with a relatively coherent political, economic, social, and cultural project.

Despite the fact that for Gramsci “all men are intellectuals,” “but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals,” that is, everyone has an intellect and uses it, but not all are engaged in an intellectual social function. Gramsci identified two types of intellectuals: “organic” and “traditional.” Organic intellectuals, who mostly emerge from the working class, are the organizing and thinking elements of the counter-hegemonic class and its allies. Traditional intellectuals, on the other hand, are those intellectuals who fulfill the scientific, philosophical, religious, literary, and legal functions in society. In most cases, traditional intellectuals emerge from the elite and become part of the reproducers of those ideologies constitutive of hegemonic projects that become part of everyday life and are taken as common sense.

In the specific case of Colombia, Núñez and Caro can be described as “traditional intellectuals.” Their role developed out of their affiliation and commitment to their own social, economic, political, and cultural class, which was the minority of the Colombian elite. They belonged to a select, privileged social class that created “within itself,

organically...a group of intellectuals who give it homogeneity and consciousness of its function not only in the economic field but in the social and political field as well” (Gramsci, 1957:118). As traditional intellectuals, Núñez and Caro not only spoke for the ruling class to which they belonged, but they also offered themselves as model citizens and the saviors of the country’s complicated political and economic situation. Although they were prominent poets, journalists, and essayists, their role in the Regeneration coincided with Gramsci’s idea that intellectuals are also influential political agents (Gramsci, 1971:5-27). In this sense, Núñez and Caro concentrated mostly on the political sphere, where their authority as intellectuals procured them the space, support, and means to set in motion the nation’s political, economic, social, and cultural centralization.

It is important to note that the hegemonic project that Núñez and Caro set out to achieve was not separable from the European modern project, in which the exercise of power particularly in terms of citizenship and cultural authority cannot be separated from formal education and literacy, as John Beverley suggests, precisely because the values and information required to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship are available primarily through print media (Beverley, 2001:53).

Núñez and Caro, as representatives of the same class but opposing political, economic, and cultural views, formed an alliance for which Núñez was highly criticized by his party affiliates, and which put not only his political ambitions at risk, but also his life. Historical accounts of Núñez and the Regeneration contend that he “rectified” his radical Liberal views for more Catholic and conservative ones, making an alliance with conservatives possible. It is the contention of this chapter that neither Núñez nor Caro

“rectified” or changed their political views in order to make the Regeneration project come to fruition. Instead, national and international circumstances and experiences led the two leaders to find common ground, ally, and reinvent the nation on the basis of their different political, intellectual, and social experiences.

As the fathers of the nation, Núñez and Caro intended to take Colombia on the road to civilization, on the basis of traditional values and ideas, and modern values and practices. Their political and ideological work not only represented their particular interests, but it also spoke of the clear class interests. This contributed the country’s already complicated situation. Especially notable at the time were precarious conditions in which the majority of the population lived, the political intolerance that led to constant violence and conflict, religious fanaticism, and the reluctance of colonialism to give way to modernity. The following intellectual biographies of Núñez and Caro cover their early years, political ideas, and activities, intellectual engagement, and each other’s role as president.

### **Rafael Núñez**

Rafael Núñez (1825-1894), born of a distinguished Cartagena family, was one of the most influential and controversial intellectuals and politicians in Colombian history.

According to traditional historiography, Rafael Núñez is considered to have had one of the most brilliant minds in Colombia’s public sphere. It is undeniable that his political life testifies to his passion for politics and a profound desire for change, civilization, and modernization of Colombia. His entrance into the world of politics was facilitated by the

fact that he belonged to one of the wealthiest families in Cartagena. He had access to the best educational institutions, which shaped his Liberal political thought. Loved by some and hated by others, Núñez has been called an “opportunistic politician,” a “*renegado*,” and even an “unstable man” (de la Espriella, 1978). His intellectual growth in the political, economic, cultural, and social spheres were greatly influenced by the Enlightenment and the French revolutionary fervor of 1848, by philosophers and thinkers such as August Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Alexis de Tocqueville, and by his later experiences as a diplomat in the United States and Europe.

### **Political Activity**

Núñez’s love for power and politics led him to participate actively in the Liberal Revolution of mid-nineteenth century Colombia. A journalist, a lawyer, and a connoisseur of utopian socialist ideas, as well as of European political romanticism, he was an active member of the *Sociedad Democrática de Cartagena*, presided over a revolutionary club in that city, wrote columns for a local newspaper, and served as a judge in Panama in 1848. He was appointed to the Panamanian Congress in 1853. He also founded the Liberal newspaper *La Democracia* in Cartagena. His official political career began when he became secretary of the Cartagena government in the mid 1850s, then governor of the Department of Bolivar. Soon after, he became the minister of property and eventually, the minister of war. During these first years in positions of power, he published *La Federación*, a collection of political essays.



Before Congress, Núñez attacked the Liberal project of absolute individual rights, the separation of church and state, and the federalist type of government. He believed that federalism and absolute individual freedom would take the country straight to anarchy and dictatorship.<sup>27</sup> In the 1850s, Núñez advocated free trade and helped organize the state by creating, for instance, a national statistics bank that helped measure the extent of the state's problems. After the civil war of 1860-1861, despite his disagreement with some Liberal ideas he considered too advanced for a society such as Colombia, he participated in the Convention that created the *Olimpo Radical* Constitution of 1863 and which remained in effect until 1886. Núñez's participation in the Radical government was most evident in the disamortization of Church lands. The disamortization law, which intended to both attack the church and to promote private property, as noted in the previous chapter, failed in its purpose, because land owners bought off most of the Church lands, defeating the Liberal purpose of the promoting private property.

After helping draft the 1863 Radical constitution, Núñez left for North America and Europe on a diplomatic mission, and remained abroad until 1876. His experience overseas was documented in newspaper articles, which he later compiled in his *Ensayos de crítica social*, published in Rouen, France in 1874, at the end of his stay in Europe. He wrote for a wide variety of Colombian and foreign magazines and newspapers such as Lima's renowned *El Nacional*.<sup>28</sup>

Back in Bogotá in 1876, Núñez continued his involvement in the political sphere with renewed ideas and energy at a time when yet another wave of political instability

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<sup>27</sup> [http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa\\_new/historia/rafanu.htm](http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/historia/rafanu.htm)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa\\_new/historia/rafanu.htm](http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/historia/rafanu.htm)

prompted yet another civil war. His allegiance to the Liberal Party was solid; however, he held reservations against radicalism for its failure to achieve stability and economic “progress” (Núñez, 1885), but above all for its political and religious intolerance. Radicalism, for Núñez, was infested with an “intransigent materialism that invades it all that respects nothing, and pretends to rove around vulgar politics” ((Núñez, 1944:88). During the inauguration speech of “independent” Liberal president Julian Trujillo in 1878, Núñez, then president of Congress, pronounced his famous words: “The country expects from you a different kind of politics, because we have arrived at a moment in which we are confronting this precise dilemma: *Regeneration administrativa fundamental o catástrofe.*” From that moment, Núñez launched the construction of a new political order. His pragmatism and knowledge of Colombia, his desire for a new type of government, his desire to take Colombia on the road to economic progress, the lack of a real Radical commitment for peace, the economic and political backwardness of the country, and its constant state of unrest, led him to propose the Regeneration project, which was a rhetorically profound political reform that would permeate Colombia’s social, economic, and political life.

Núñez won the presidential election for the 1880-1882 term. During those two years, he defended the purported democratic idea of a strong state. That is why he strove for a strong centralized government and a centralized economy through the creation of the *Banco Nacional* within the federalist system. Imitating the positivist trend among Latin American nations, he initiated railroad and road construction, the protection of national industry, and favored foreign investment. Due to the restriction of his two-year

term limit, he could develop only a few of these projects. What he did manage to achieve was the reestablishment of religious education; and he authorized priests to return to the country.

Despite the growing opposition of Radicals and other Liberals to Núñez's alleged alliance with Conservatives, he was elected president for a second two-year term in 1884. In a failed attempt to overthrow Núñez, Radical Liberals attempted to instigate a civil war in 1885. Radicals' distrust of Núñez grew deeper as Conservatives supported Núñez in order to defeat the opposition. In this convoluted period, Núñez, disappointed with Radical Liberals, lost faith in the Liberal institutions he once defended and began to consider authoritarianism and a strong presidentialism, ideas that went against his Liberal political views. These ideas were widely accepted by the Conservative party, which actively and almost exclusively participated in the *Consejo Nacional de Delegatarios*. The *Consejo* had the task of drafting a new constitution, for which Núñez relied heavily on ultraconservative Miguel Antonio Caro. The *Consejo* would declare, in Núñez words, "the Constitution of 1863 has ceased to exist." From 1878 to 1888, Núñez wrote regularly the political reform in different newspapers. His analysis and proposals were compiled in his *La reforma política* in 1885 and 1888, published in eight volumes.

In 1886, the new Constitution was sanctioned and the history of Colombia changed in unexpected ways. This new Constitution ordered the centralization of the state, the unification of the legislative branch, the reestablishment and defense of the relations between Church and State, increased the presidential period from two to six years, and decentralized the administration. Chapters Four and Five will examine the

implementation of these reforms. The actual development of Núñez's Liberal ideals or Caro's constitutional thought did not achieve the purpose of taking Colombia to a new political, social, or economic level. Old ills took center stage and other concerns such as *clientelismo* were used as a means for consolidating the power of the Regeneration, especially between the central government and the regional *caudillos*.

Núñez was elected to a third term between 1886 and 1892. Due to health problems, he remained mostly absent from Bogotá. His vice presidents were the *encargados*—literally, those in charge—of the presidency for most of his term. One of the most important events of this period was the approval of the Concordat by the Vatican in 1887. The Concordat (an agreement between the Vatican and the state) helped the Catholic Church to design Colombia's moral, social, cultural, and educational coordinates.

Even though Núñez had learned of religious tolerance during his stay abroad, his personal relationship with Rome was not too clear. Núñez had married Dolores Gallegos in a Catholic wedding, then divorced and married Soledad Roman through a civil union.<sup>29</sup> Conservative biographer Arturo Abella comments that Núñez was called “the bigamous” amongst radicals (1986:22) because Catholicism rejects divorce and he chose to remarry without the consent of the Church. When Núñez was elected president in 1880, the Church was pleased with his appointment as president because of his “new not decidedly anti-Catholicism.” Despite his evident non-rejection of Catholicism, the Church disapproved of his civil union with Soledad Roman. Since his public life was

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<sup>29</sup> For more information on the legal issues concerning his “domestic situation,” see Alfonso Romero Aguirre. *Historia de la Regeneración*. Tomo I, Bogota: Iqueima, 1949:48-60

affected by his marital status, Núñez needed to make the divorce proceedings official with Rome, and at the same time, legitimize his civil union. When his first wife died, Núñez could finally “rectify” his civil union with a Catholic blessing (Delpar, 1981:50-51). Núñez’ petition of divorce was rejected by the Church despite the fact that this institution had long been struggling to reestablish relations with Colombia. Núñez sent a mediator to Rome to solve the issue. This mediator, to Núñez’s discontent, did not solve Núñez’s private matter, but rather, without presidential consent, reestablished relations between Rome and Colombia, which had been broken off during the *Olimpo Radical* (Abella, 1986:27). During Núñez’s last presidential term, 1892-1894, Vice-president Miguel Antonio Caro acted as president until 1898. After his active political life, Núñez retired in Cartagena, where he died in 1894.

### **Núñez’s Alleged “Ideological Transformation”**

Although Núñez’s projects were fundamental for the development of the radical period, what was more controversial and what garnered support and opposition from both the Conservative and the Liberal parties was his apparent ideological shift (which apparently influenced his notions of morality, religion, and the relationship between the Church and the state, a *laissez-faire* economy, and issues of citizenship) in which, allegedly, “he recognized and sacralized what he before abhorred” (España, 1986:Prologue). Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, in his biographical work *Rafael Núñez*, suggests that Núñez’s ideological shift was a “painful but fundamental rectification” (1960:102-103) of the ideas and beliefs he held sacred in his youth: a *laissez-faire* economy, the separation of

Church and state, disamortization, secularism, but most of all, Liberalism's commitment to defend people's rights and combat inequality (Núñez, 1944:151). Liévano Aguirre's argument concerning Núñez's "rectification" falls short in explaining Núñez's hopes for change and progress when it came to defending his own class interests.

In the late nineteenth century, Núñez was accused of being a traitor of the Liberal cause and of selling the state to Conservatives in the name of political ambition. Nonetheless, Núñez's political decisions during the difficult years of the Regeneration deserve a deeper analysis and understanding. It is the contention of this chapter that his apparent transformation occurred beyond the scope of local politics, and beyond the difficulties and threats to his life in the years preceding the issuance of the 1886 Constitution. It can be argued that Núñez's decision to side with Conservatives responded also to his experience and his analysis of the events that had taken place and were taking place in the Union and in Europe at the time. In this respect, in the United States, Núñez witnessed the Civil War and how Abraham Lincoln financed the war by issuing paper money, disregarding objections of bankers and economic theorists (Palacios, 2006:26) and the subsequent strengthening of the Union. But certainly two of the most recurring issues that held Núñez's attention were religious tolerance and economic progress. In the Union, Núñez saw that religious tolerance was one of the factors that promoted peace, the development of society, the economy and democracy. In matters of religious tolerance, for instance, he was influenced by French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* (Vol. I, 1835 and Vol. II, 1840) Núñez and other Colombian Radical Liberal intellectuals had read years earlier. For Núñez, the principle of tolerance

in the Union he admired was constantly tested through the everyday practices of religious freedom, the compatibility of religion with democracy, and by extension, economic progress.

Despite his alliances with the Conservative Party, Núñez did not consider his alleged ideological shift a betrayal to Liberalism; neither did he consider himself a Conservative. On the contrary, he was trying to reclaim the root of Liberalism so misunderstood by radicalism. It is not clear that Núñez's Regeneration did not necessarily follow the principles of Liberalism.<sup>30</sup> His answer to Radicals' accusations of treason led him to write in his *Reforma política* that he admired from Conservatives their "incontrastable lealtad con su doctrina, superior a todo interés pasajero" (incontrastable loyalty to their doctrine, which was superior to any superfluous interest) (Núñez, 1944:223). Furthermore, similar to other Independents, Núñez believed that the "Regeneration was an advanced form of Colombian Liberalism" (Safford and Palacios, 2002:245). In the next chapter, we will have the opportunity to confront Núñez's claims of Liberalism through the analysis of the drafting and the implementation of the 1886 National Constitution, the core of the Regeneration project.

Based on his observations abroad (1863-1874), Núñez's *Ensayos de crítica social* present what he held to be the "social truths" that not everybody dares to accept but which are, nonetheless, "*principios incontestables*." Such principles helped reshape his thinking in relation to his system of beliefs mainly in relation to issues of morality,

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<sup>30</sup> Laissez-faire, the "unfitness and harmfulness of state intervention," the principle of individualism which made the needs of the individual and not the needs of the state the basis of economic policy, and the utilitarian principle of "greatest happiness for the greatest number." For more see Eli Heckscher. *Mercantilism*. Translated by Mendel Shapiro. Vol. I, New York: McMillan, 1962:469-471.

economic, political, and social relativism, as well as tolerance. In other words, these articles showed his most important political ideas and his commitment with political, philosophical, economic, and social thought, and as Jaime Jaramillo Uribe suggests, present him as one of the few Colombians of his time to objectively reflect on the complexities and the magnitude of the modern capitalist society.

For Núñez, the separation of Church and State was not the focus; rather, he believed that religion was the one institution that, once united with the state, could lead to economic and social progress, and to the strengthening of democracy. Núñez was deeply impressed by the religious freedom of the Union. There, he encountered a respectful and enriching environment in which the major religions and different modes of worship coexisted respectfully. For Núñez, such freedom was fundamentally possible with tolerance and with a clear understanding of the limits of individual freedom. But such tolerance in the Union was not born in a vacuum. Núñez's argument is valid. It is unclear whether or not he considered the fact that such level of religious tolerance was only achieved among peoples who had suffered themselves religious intolerance in Europe. Those communities migrated west to start anew in a place where they would not be further persecuted for their religious beliefs. How could Núñez overlook the fundamental importance of the separation between Church and state that took in the Union?

In the case of Catholicism, for instance, Núñez saw an element of social cohesion because religion could help achieve “moral development,” which is the “final synthesis of progress in all its forms” (Núñez, 1874:ix)—similar to the conclusion reached by de Tocqueville, for whom “Roman Catholic religion makes the most progress” (de



Tocqueville, 2003:519). Religion, and specifically Catholicism, represented a principle of authority that could provide elements of moral order (Núñez, 1874:4). It is possible to suggest that Núñez came back to Colombia and saw no possibility of reconciliation between the parties and that the Catholic Church separated from the state simple contributed to deepen the never-ending political unrest. It could be suggested that Núñez decided then to side with the Church and the Conservative Party not only for the personal protection (radical liberals planned to assassinate him) but also in order to consolidate his regenerationist project as his liberal project had failed altogether. With not much alternatives on sight, he saw in the Church not only a possible element of social cohesion, but also a faithful institution that would protect him and his project. Núñez's position could be summarized in the following assertion in which he was predicting this kind of alliance when he said: "*Profesamos la creencia de que no hay en política verdades absolutas, y que todo puede ser malo o bueno según la oportunidad y la medida*" /we profess the idea that there are no absolute truths in politics, and that something can be good or bad according to opportunity and measure" (Núñez, 1998 as cited in Sarzosa, 2008:10).

Núñez argued that religion that does not practice true charity<sup>31</sup> is not morally strong and its force is condemned to disappear (Núñez, 1874:27-31). In agreeing with de Tocqueville, Núñez saw Catholicism, as the institution that due to its history, trajectory, knowledge and scope could become the element of social cohesion Colombia so

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<sup>31</sup> In Christian theology, true charity is understood as the most important of all principles and it is translated into love.

desperately needed; and could help it to achieve order, peace, economic progress, and most important of all, morality.

Núñez hoped that Catholicism would not hinder economic, democratic, moral, and social progress; but rather, that it would strengthen the role of the state and the development of democracy, just as it had provided moral stability in the political sphere of de Tocqueville's America (2003:56, 336-339), making governability possible. As in de Tocqueville, religion in Colombia would also provide moral guidance so that Colombians, especially those tempted by materialism and individualism, would pursue "higher" purposes in life (Ibid:21). Religion would play the fundamental role of defending democracy and "equality" against individualism and materialism. Núñez hoped that the success of "democracy in America," for which American Catholicism was compatible with democracy (de Tocqueville, 2003:519-520), would be achieved in Colombia thanks to the moral authority of the Catholic Church. Equality of conditions<sup>32</sup> and social distinctions would be resolved at "the foot of the same altar" to use de Tocqueville's words (2003:337). Núñez hoped that religion would lead Colombians to believe not only in the promise of salvation, but also in the promise of economic progress, which would instill in the population a desire for material possessions and, importantly, moral betterment.

Núñez maintained that all in religion that is not charity lacks a permanent, effective, moralizing force. What is interesting about this comment is that in his Radical years, Núñez fiercely defended anticlericalism and demonstrated his rejection of the

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<sup>32</sup> That is how people see their economic potential and the opportunities to develop such potential.

Church by supporting laws that economically and politically affected this institution.

What is not clear, however, is if Núñez rejected religion altogether, if he was disaffected only with the Catholic Church, or if the Church itself was not the problem, but its economic strength. In Colombia Catholicism was the religion of the majority, and so religious tolerance was not at stake. Religion mixed with partisanship disagreements was a different matter.

No doubt Núñez's direct experience in the Union gave him a more comprehensive view of politics and governance, tolerance, and economic progress. It is here where his radical Liberalism, especially in issues of Church and State relations, the role of religion in the nation, and individual liberty, became more moderate and where, as Jaime Jaramillo Uribe points out, he understood that de Tocqueville was not analyzing the U.S. as a whole as if it were "united," but that the latter had described only the few northern states of the Union (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:39).

In the case of religion's role in governance, Núñez affirmed, again, inspired by de Tocqueville, that religious and moral values were the basis of any constitutional order, and that religion was the major guarantee of any State's peace and the security of its citizens (Núñez, 1944:576-577). It is also possible to argue, following Harold Eugene Davis, that Núñez's more moderate views were inspired by the ideas of Spanish Catholic philosopher Jaime Balmes (1810-1848), to which we will refer later, who inspired other Latin-American Liberals to join Conservatives as they "[evolved] into positivism" (Davis, 1979:341-351). For Núñez, popular religiosity was an instrument of popular integration and social cohesion. Therefore, the anticlerical rhetoric of earlier radical

Liberalism was obsolete (Safford and Palacios, 2002:245). He considered that since Colombia was in essence a Catholic country, to fight against the Catholic Church would be detrimental to a well-established tradition. Without this tradition, Colombia could not be built nor stability achieved. In this respect, according to Núñez, the government would have to acknowledge, accept, and respect the Church.

Upon his return to Colombia, Núñez found more intolerance, political immaturity, anarchy, and destruction. His intellect, his experience abroad, his writings on politics, governance, and economics, and the aura around his public and private persona all increased his prestige and gave confidence to his followers, the *Nuñistas*. *Nuñistas* saw in their leader someone who would salvage the degrading situation of the country.

Unhappily, he acknowledged that the French-inspired “liberty” had not been a means to achieve civilization in Colombia, since order, the premier agent of welfare, had not been established (Núñez, 1944:252). The lack of order had many root causes, one of which was that radicalism became a caste, an aristocracy that positioned itself to govern, perverting the very principles that gave rise to the federalist regime of the *Olimpo Radical*. In this sense, Núñez considered that the governing practice of Radical Liberals, based on injustice and violence, as well as on the negation of the soul and of God, had produced a bitter harvest (Núñez, 1944:183). A possible solution to these grave problems could only arise from the implementation of preventive measures in order to destroy criminality. Among those preventive means, education, fair salaries, and a “good example” were key. Religion, for Núñez, would play a fundamental role in moralizing and educating the nation. His personal relationship with the Catholic Church, however,

was complicated by the fact that he had been excommunicated for drafting and implementing the disamortization law during the first years of the *Olimpo Radical*. Nonetheless, his experience in the Union had shown him that Catholicism could render more benefits than harm in the Colombian situation. That he considered the Church a fundamental actor in the development of the country was a position viewed by radical Liberals as an ideological transformation, and ultimately, a betrayal.

Radical Liberals considered Núñez's understanding of the Colombian political situation a threat to their economic and political interests. Instead of siding with Núñez and his economic and political Regenerationist plan, Radical Liberals hindered his government plans by trying to overthrow him and even murder him. One of the most cited reasons for Radical Liberals to distrust Núñez was his alleged new position of "not decidedly anti-Catholic[ism]". Núñez uttered this phrase when his disappointment with Liberal Radicalism was growing and he saw in the Conservative party a viable way to fulfill his political and economic agenda. J.O. Melo contends that Núñez offered Conservatives key positions within the government as well as university autonomy and a federalist measure in which individual states would manage religious and educational affairs autonomously (1986). Convinced that Catholicism was the "religion of the nation," an element of social cohesion, and a potential for economic progress, Núñez did not feel that he was betraying his Liberal ideals. Quite the contrary, he was applying religious tolerance and the sociological fact that Catholicism was the religion of the great majority of Colombians (Melo, *Ibid*). Núñez's move of relying on Conservatives made him a *traitor* for Liberals. Núñez did not see in Conservatives any indecision. By

contrast, Independent and Radical Liberals became for him erratic and uncertain--groups that resisted political evolution (Melo, *Ibid*), a required element for development in all aspects of social life.

To think that Núñez was looking for reconciliation with the Catholic Church, *per se*, or that Catholicism would become a way of life for him personally was a naïve perception of a man whose main goal was to take Colombia on the path of modernity and economic progress. In the end, Núñez expected that with economic progress and tolerance, morality would flourish.

Apart from the evident influence that de Tocqueville had in Núñez's political life and his alleged ideological transformation and rectification, it is also crucial to keep in mind the great influence of Herbert Spencer's positivist ideas on religion, and the development of the sciences in Núñez' thought. The attraction of this philosophy, as Jaime Jaramillo Uribe explains, is Spencer's defense of industry and commerce in the expansion of modern capitalism (Camacho Roldán as cited in Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:348), which would result in the evolution of the political system (Camacho Roldán, *ibid*:349).

In the late nineteenth century, European positivist ideas concerning "order" and "progress" quickly spread throughout Spanish America. Positivism is the key to much of the social and political as well as intellectual history of Latin America in this period. This philosophical trend satisfied the needs of Latin American intellectuals, who had rejected Spanish and Portuguese culture and were trying to prove their independence by adopting French ideas. Comte's positivism promised progress, discipline, and morality, together with freedom from the tyranny of Catholic theology (Hilton, 1973-4). Another attractive

side to positivism was the development of the notion that the government had a moral responsibility for the well being of the people—which would be achieved by means of social engineering (Veliz, 1994 as cited in Vargas Llosa, 1998). According to Dolghi Halperin, Liberal ideas about free trade gained wide acceptance and prestige among the ruling class, providing an ideological justification for the neocolonial order that ultimately served Europe more than Latin America. Despite the political conflicts of the time, the fundamental elite/landowning consensus in favor of “progress” was unaltered (Halperin Dolghi, 1993:Chapter 4). Progress through immigration and the division of labor also fostered state reforms in Latin America. European immigrants, especially in the Southern Cone, consolidated the transition to wage labor and contributed to the emergence of mutual societies, and despite national antagonisms, the emergence of various forms of collective action in urban areas (Spalding, 1977 as cited in Lewis, 1999).

In response to the promises of positivism, important intellectual proposals, criticism, and responses to this trend emerged throughout the continent. Mexico and Argentina, as well as Peru and Colombia, showed important positivist influences. In the case of Mexico, for instance, Gabino Barreda (1818-1881), a student of August Comte’s, introduced positivism in that country. He planned and implemented educational reforms and the creation of the Escuela Preparatoria Nacional during Benito Juárez’s government. Barreda designed a “*fondo común de verdades*,” a common fund of truths or presuppositions shared by all Mexicans. This common vision, which originated at the school level, would make order economic progress possible, according to Barreda (Quintanilla Pérez-Wicht, n.d.).

Another case is represented by early positivist and romantic Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888). He attributed the faults of the Spanish American “colonial mentality” to cultural *mestizaje*, a theory that he expressed in *Facundo, o civilización y barbarie* (1845). *Facundo* is the theoretical construction of the dialectic of civilization and barbarism, in which Sarmiento purports that barbarism is epitomized by the gaucho culture that dominated Argentina. *Facundo* manifests a faith in “human progress and a tendency to provide deterministic accounts of social phenomena that is plainly positivist in spirit” (Nuccetelli, 2002:181). Sarmiento’s commitment to education was praised and also contested years later because instead of promoting a cultural identity proper to Latin America, he promoted the Europeanization/North Americanization of the Latin America masses. His positivist ideas, which contained a markedly racist ideology, implied that the only way to become civilized was by whitening the population.

Another important nineteenth-century positivist was Argentine Juan Bautista Alberdi. Alberdi, according to Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, incarnated one of the purest tendencies towards “*desespañolización*” of the Americas. This was despite the fact that he did not contrast the figure of Hispanic with the Anglo-Saxon but instead the European (Spain included) as the barbaric. Following Spencer, Alberdi considered that progress and peace could only be achieved through the development of *homo economicus*. For that reason, in his *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (1852), Alberdi writes, “our youth has to be educated in the industrial kind of life, and for that, they have to be instructed in the arts, sciences and industry ... in order to oppress the enemy of our progress: the desert, material backwardness, the primitive and



ignorant nature of our continent” (Alberdi, 1852 as cited in Jaramillo Uribe, 1994:20-21).<sup>33</sup> Alberdi advocated a radical attitude change, a “transformation of the spiritual being, a transformation both biological and racial” (Jaramillo Uribe, 1994:20-21). In this respect, his admiration for the Anglo-Saxons led him to propose the repopulation of American lands with Anglo-Saxon blood as the only redemption of Spanish American (Ibid:22).

In Peru, Jorge Polar wished to reconcile positivism and theism. This fact made Peruvian positivism more widespread than in any other country in the region. It also helps explain the displacement towards spiritualism at the beginning of the twentieth century (Quintanilla Pérez-Wicht, n.d.). In Peru, as Pablo Quintanilla explains, the popularity of positivism was short lived. At the end of the nineteenth century, philosophers who had believed in the positivist promises of order and progress and a definitive scientific explanation of the universe began to question this model, considering it excessively diminishing. Spiritualism provided an answer. The most influential philosophers of this period were Henri Bergson and Emile Boutroux. In Peru, the most prominent representative was Alejandro Deustua (Quintanilla Pérez-Wicht, 2005).

Positivism promised to help change the structure of the countries in different ways, but as Jean Franco maintains, “the elite disregarded the fact that progress could not be achieved in nations where a feudal and oligarchic structure predominated” (Franco, 1967). Therefore, positivism was received differently from country to country, and was adapted in various ways, depending on the specific characteristics of each country. It

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<sup>33</sup> My translation of Alberdi.

pervaded the cultural and social landscape of Latin America and was mostly associated with strong political affiliations. In addition, it influenced the fields of education and religion through educational and governmental institutions (Ardúa, as cited in Nuccetelli, 2002 :151).<sup>34</sup> The interpretation of positivism in Latin America left most of the continent with a sense of “political inferiority” that derived from a failure to develop institutions of democratic government such as those of the North. From here, there evolved a view of Latin American politics as “pathological” (Davis, 1974:105), despite efforts to achieve modernization, to establish democratic governments and to stop corruption.

Núñez was not unfamiliar with the urgency to respond, like other Latin American politicians and intellectual did at the time, not to the question not “who are we,” but “who should we be?” (Nuccetelli and Seay, 2003:143-149). European Positivism provided an answer<sup>35</sup> because it “addressed the needs of that age” (Gracia, 1986:13). In the case of Colombia, politicians and statesmen received the British concept of progress in material development, scientific education, and evolution as a solution for the country’s long-standing social, economic, and political problems.

Despite the economic and social ailments of the country, what preoccupied the Colombian elite was its political instability. Spencerian positivism was welcomed precisely because the idea of evolution and the intention to make sociology an experimental science would help found politics on a scientific basis, even if it was an experimental one (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:349). Jaramillo Uribe comments that although

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<sup>34</sup> An example of the influence of positivism in Latin America was the authoritarian regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) in Mexico that led to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920).

<sup>35</sup> European positivism most important proponents were Auguste Comte (1793-1857), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). See Nuccetelli, *Latin American Thought: Philosophical Problems and Arguments* Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002:181

Núñez was influenced by different nineteenth-century currents of thought, he insisted on positivist ideas because he saw in the historic study of social phenomena in evolutionary stages not only an appropriate method for the study of society, but also an educational instrument through which tolerance and political civilization could be achieved (Ibid).<sup>36</sup> Javier Ocampo López argues that Núñez's first presidential period was heavily influenced by positivism (Ocampo López, 1968 as cited in Williams Park, 1985:214-215). In this period, Núñez initiated important railroad projects, opened communications with the world through submarine cables, and stimulated navigation. Later, he created the Banco Nacional, implemented import tariffs, and reduced state interference in the Church. This latter issue was only the transition to finally approve the Concordat with Rome in 1887. The Concordat helped the Colombian Catholic Church to design the moral, social, cultural, and educational coordinates of the nation regardless of the liberal ideas that some sectors held and defended.

Inspired by Spencer, for instance, in his essay *La Sociología*, Núñez acknowledged that he venerated "the Supreme Creator," but that that did not mean that the human race was advanced enough in the discovery of the truth, since all knowledge is "relative." This relativism implied that it was difficult to establish absolute, universal rules, or absolute truths such as the ones claimed by religion. In political and social subjects, the exactitude of principles is not mathematical, rather approximate and relative. This relativism shows an evolution in his thought, because in his youthful years Núñez contended that the law, institutions, and even habits of certain epochs had to be destroyed

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<sup>36</sup> Other important politicians influenced by positivism in Latin America were Porfirio Diaz in Mexico, and Antonio Guzmán Blanco in Venezuela.

instantaneously and new ones transplanted as soon as they emerged in order to attain the “pursuit of happiness” (Núñez, 1944:255). For Núñez, the evolution of a people takes place in stages, in which the previous ones have more impact than revolutionary knowledge. Here it is possible to see in Núñez a subtle defense of tradition, which was a typical attitude of some Conservatives. Nonetheless, his defense of tradition was supported by the acknowledgment that not all things foreign could be imitated (as Conservatives did with all things Hispanic) because they were not always convenient for the country. For Núñez, transplanting ideas and institutions instead of progress in “young” countries would lead a nation such as Colombia into anarchy and destruction (Liévano Aguirre, 1977:131). For this reason he advocated national solutions for national problems, invoking patriotism. This nationalist invocation was echoed by Miguel Antonio Caro, who saw nationalism as the “great cause of the Regeneration” (Caro, 1979:17-18). This belief contributed to the alliance between Núñez and the Conservatives.

The acknowledgement of relativism with regard to social and political issues helped Núñez break with Colombian radical Liberalism. Núñez also welcomed the Spencerian idea that the culmination of historic evolution had to be complete liberation (“liberty in equality”) and the perfection of the individual. For Spencer, this state of perfection required the defense of individual rights; that is, respect for the indispensable external conditions for the individual’s self-assurance. Only at this point, according to Spencer, can morality, individual perfection, and a perfect life be conjointly realizable in the definite man (Núñez, 1944:323,329-230; Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:233). Núñez

understood that for Spencer, only through love for others (or Christian charity proper) could the perfection of man be achieved.

Núñez claimed that principles such as security, justice, order, stability, freedom, and progress should lead to one end: moral unification. In fact, moral development was, for Núñez, the final synthesis of progress in all its forms. For him morality was one of the key elements of progress and civilization. In *Reforma política* Núñez comments that the progress of moral sentiments, which are inseparable from religious sentiments, are the cause and effect of civilization. He contends that the indissoluble link between morality and religion (which prevents religion from falling into fanaticism) projects religion into the infinite, and sets in opposition to materialism (Núñez, as cited in Valderrama, 1981:16, 537-539). His most profound source of frustration, nonetheless, is anchored in the realization that the causes of economic decadence in Colombia were complex because they were not simply economic but more importantly, they were moral in nature (Núñez, 1944:274). Material decadence was due not only to failures of economic policy, but also because government officials would “abandon their sacred duty of conscience, loyalty and patriotism” in exchange for “gifts” (Núñez, 1944:269-270). In fact, Núñez rejected the long-standing institution of *clientelismo* and advocated morality as a cure for Colombia’s failed attempts at state formation and nation-building. For Núñez, the abolition of privileges and bureaucracy was a key element in the progress of humanity (Liévano Aguirre, 1977:132). However, Núñez himself persuaded Conservatives to protect him and join him in re-founding the nation, by offering them key government positions.

Núñez's reflections on morality and the role of religion, which gave political adversaries the idea that he had undergone an "ideological transformation," meant that Núñez's experience abroad opened his world view in terms of the process that led to the advent of modernity (capitalism, the Reform) and what it meant to the processes of state formation, nation building, church and state relations, industrialization, economic progress, morality, tolerance, the emergence of revolutionary thought, and ideas of citizenship. The Reform, for instance, claimed individualism as a fundamental right, which beyond Catholicism was key to the achievement of modernity and the development of capitalism. In that sense, when the Reform postulated that Catholicism had no right to impose intermediaries between men and God, individualism became a religion (Protestantism), which took hold throughout Europe. Millions of Protestants had to flee to North America in order to save their lives. Protestantism was widely spread and the immigrants that arrived in the Union were willing not only to make America their home, but also to prevent further religious intolerance or persecution. Pacts between the different denominations of Christianity took hold so that freedom of worship, belief, and individual initiative would be respected. Most of all, the outcome of these pacts resulted in economic prosperity. Such prosperity could only be achieved when individual initiative and economic opportunity were encouraged and certain economic practices such as the usury were allowed. Protestantism openly permitted such practices. Under these conditions, capitalism could grow and consolidate. Núñez painted a different landscape in Spain, where the industrial backwardness of feudal-Catholic Spain was attributed to "the lack of individual initiative." The population of Spain was impregnated

by an exaggerated belief in the supernatural. For this reason, Spaniards “lost confidence in their own strength.” It was precisely the miracles of human effort that have founded modern industry and which are the same time are incompatible with the “mystic order” (Núñez, 1944:155).

No doubt, Núñez’s decision to follow the Conservatives despite his criticism of Mother Spain was influenced by the important events in Europe. In the Old Continent, he witnessed the development of crucial events that changed the landscape of the West and Latin America in the late nineteenth century: The opening of the *Concilio Vaticano I*, the French-Prussian war, Napoleon III’s abdication, the unification of Germany, the reconstruction of the French republic, the formation and consolidation of the British empire, and the expansion of the Russian empire (Dangond Uribe, 1988:74). In this respect, Núñez witnessed the causes and effects of class struggle, impoverishment—in which the worker was valued not as a human being but by his labor—and the potential revolutionary power of the working class so eloquently described by Karl Marx in *Capital* and his other socialist writings. At the same time, Núñez accepted a “realist political [nation-specific] solution that intended to establish a synthesis between what was fair and inevitable in socialist movements and the Christian tradition of the Western world” (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:225 and ff).

The specificity of Colombia’s political and immoral situation, according to Núñez, called for a mode of production different from that of capitalism. The Industrial Revolution gave Núñez an idea of what capitalism does to the working class, and he did not envision modernizing Colombia at the expense of the *pueblo*. He rejected the idea of

the Colombian people as proletarian. His experience in England gave him the impression that capitalism posed the same danger that European and Colombian Conservatives saw in modernity: the strengthening of the *pueblo* and the inevitable acceptance of socialism or other revolutionary ideas that for which the *pueblo* was their *raison d'être*. Núñez was aware of the impact of socialism, for instance, on the French proletariat, a social group that carried out the Revolution of 1848 and the events that occurred in the 1871 Paris Commune. Some of the economic and social measures he proposed and later implemented during the Regeneration testified to Núñez's reproach to capitalism, such as protectionist economic measures intended to guarantee the stability and the political support of local artisans. At the same time, he disagreed with attempts to establish socialism in Colombia in the 1890s. The 1893 revolt in Bogotá indicated that socialism was emerging in the capital.

Despite Núñez's acknowledgement that transplanting modernization ideas and projects into Colombia could lead to failure, Núñez's "ideological transformation" seemed to have motivations beyond the political, touching on economic and class interests and protections. In this sense, despite being considered one of the greatest interpreters of the limitations of Colombian capitalist development and of European and North America success, the failure of Núñez's Regeneration project was mostly evident at the economic level. As the following chapter will show, the Regeneration project did not solve the issue of poverty despite a certain degree of progress. Inflation was high and the external debt almost unpayable. In the ideological milieu, however, the project triumphed thanks to the inclusion and protection that the Regeneration offered the



Church. Núñez conceded the ideological project of the Regeneration to Miguel Antonio Caro because the former concluded, thanks to his observations abroad, that religious and political tolerance was a prerequisite to economic progress. However, Núñez did not take into account the fact that Colombia was not intolerant in religious beliefs because the country was eminently Catholic; and he did not acknowledge the importance of the separation of Church and State. The privilege assigned to the Church during the Regeneration certainly did not contribute to the economic progress of the country, and, in fact, socially, it decreased as the country's paternalistic and protectionist economy was maintained and as education continued to be a privilege of a very small minority. In addition, the Church influenced the Colombian private and public spheres in unprecedented ways. Núñez's hope that the Catholic Church would foster economic progress contradicted, yet again, the idea that he understood Colombia's social reality. It was impossible for him not know that the Church's motivations were in direct opposition to materialist development and advocated, rather, the establishment of a hierarchical order, in which the divine authority of the Church and its representatives on earth would prevail.

Núñez's interests in joining the Conservatives and the Church were related more to economic and class factors than ideological ones. Furthermore, the fact that neither democracy nor economic progress has been achieved in Colombia since then contradicts the conventional view of Núñez, which hails him as one of the best interpreters of Colombian reality. Núñez' idea that the country was ready to implement certain aspects of the capitalist mode of production in Colombia did not coincide with the actual

situation of the country, especially in matters related to infrastructure, transportation, much less a competitive industry.

One ideological transformation that Núñez seemed to have undergone was accepting that Liberalism (which was concomitant with North American conservatism) was not the doctrine according to which the majority rules, but the justification of the minority's rights (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:225 and ff). Following the analysis of de Tocqueville, Núñez agreed that if taken to its ultimate consequences, the idea of popular government could lead to the majority's absolute dominion, annihilation of the minority, and with it, absolute freedom. It is important to remember that in the Union, the majority did not refer to the general population, but to groups of people of a similar class or with similar economic aspirations and possibilities. In other words, the majority was not the masses. In Colombia, the concept of the majority was transplanted from the Union, but it had different characteristics since there were various majorities, for instance artisans, merchants, industrialists, and exporters. In the Union, the minority groups were drawn along racial, ethnic, economic, and political lines, but they were not considered a minority in social terms.

For Núñez, the concept of the majority in Colombia is particularly clear, since the scope of economic progress among the alleged Colombian majorities was small compared to that of the Union. How could Núñez attempt to apply de Tocqueville's concept of the majority if in Colombia there was not a clear and strong dominance of the minority over that majority or over the masses? The exclusionary nature of the

Regeneration confirms that access to the club of the majority was only granted to members of a class who had real economic and political aspirations and potential.

Despite his doubts about with the outcomes of the implementation of Liberalism in Colombia and elsewhere, Núñez did not elaborate a different conception of the state because, according to Jaramillo Uribe, he did not possess a social philosophy distinct from Liberalism itself (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:226-228). What Núñez did, as supported by Miguel Antonio Caro, was to oppose a democratic state founded on the universal suffrage and replace it with a “corporatist or organicist conception of society” that would charge institutions or what Louis Althusser calls “ideological state apparatuses” such as the school, the family, or the Church with the task of achieving social cohesion and instilling moral values. As a consequence, Núñez attempted to establish a strong, centralized, economically and judicially efficient state in which individual rights were limited for the benefit of society. Núñez maintained that centralism could not create *hombres verdaderos y autosuficientes*/ true and self-sufficient men that do not need to ask anything from the government besides true liberty. In fact, centralism, as the next chapters will show, was one of the key reforms Núñez introduced during the Regeneration.

In order to realize his Regeneration plan, as Alejandro Valencia Villa noted, Núñez needed an “*artífice*”/autor (1992:29) and he found one in Miguel Antonio Caro. At the same time, the Conservative Party saw in Núñez the political figure the Conservative Party lacked (Abella, 1986:22). Núñez’s justification for joining forces with Conservatives was expressed in his newspaper article more than ten years before the Regeneration was conceived. For Núñez, “in all political societies, as in everything else,

a conservative element is indispensable as a principle of existence and of progress” (Núñez, 1874:32-40). Clearly, Núñez did not ally with Conservatives out of desperation, but rather out of his understanding of the importance of the opposition in any political regime.

Núñez admired Miguel Antonio Caro’s intellectual and moral standing. No reproach could be made against Caro, because he practiced what he preached. Núñez considered Caro “*la primera ilustración y la primera virtud del país*” (Núñez as cited in Altamar Altamar, between 1970 and 1976) and was a critical reader of Miguel Antonio Caro’s newspaper *El Tradicionista* (1871-1876). According to Carlos Valderrama Andrade, Núñez grasped Caro’s Conservative message in relation to the achievement of social cohesion and order in a country torn by violence, poverty, and moral decay. Nonetheless, it was not until Núñez’s second presidential term (1884-1886) that they consolidated their political, intellectual, and personal relationship. What did Caro bring to the “re-founding” of the Colombian republic in late-nineteenth- century Colombia?

### **Miguel Antonio Caro**

Miguel Antonio Caro (1843-1909) belonged to one of the few families that constituted Bogotá’s traditional political, social, and intellectual elite. Economically, however, he and his family lived modestly. Caro was of the opinion that morality and Catholic belief had more value than material possessions. Following his famed ancestors’ example, he valued learning and intellectual work over any other activity. The Latin poet, Aníbal

Caro, the celebrated sixteenth-century translator of *Aeneid*, numbered among his extended family.

### **Political Life**

Caro had an intense life as a journalist and politician. From 1871 to 1876 he ran the polemical newspaper *El Tradicionista*, a publication intended to promote Catholicism, conservatism, and attack Colombian Radical Liberalism. In many of the articles he published there, he wrote about the relation between religion and politics. Between 1876 and 1881 Caro was politically persecuted by the presidents of the period and was ultimately left bankrupt. His political activity decreased, and he devoted his time to poetry and philology. The period between 1882 and 1891 corresponds to the creation and initial implementation of the Regenerationist project. In these years, Caro returned to his previous political life in pursuit of what he believed to be the solution to the problems of the nation. The Constitution of 1886 reflects his political and religious inclinations. From 1899 to 1909, and after the devastating effects of the War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902), Caro decided to refrain from participating in public life, although he occasionally wrote against governments that opposed his ultra-conservative ideology.

In the political landscape of Colombia, Caro was persistent, and a champion of traditionalism, all things Spanish, hierarchical, and Catholic. Once he became president in 1892, he made clear his relationship with those he considered his friends: “*como hombre público no tengo amigos personales sino políticos*” (as a public man, I do not have personal friends but political friends). Rejecting the *clientelista* or nepotistic

relations that he would nevertheless later employ, Caro insisted that the “forced candidacy or the recommendation of unknown people or those with doubtful credentials ...are apolitical proceedings of old school, that damage the dignity, divide opinion, and debilitate the party” (Caro, 1991:4).

He transferred his ultra-conservative ideology to the political sphere when he was asked to participate in the *Asamblea Constituyente* and write a constitution that would put an end to the *Olimpo Radical*. After this task was completed, Caro served in various public offices, such as director of the National Library in Bogotá; he was also a senator, president of the State Council, Vice President of Colombia and from 1892 to 1898, and was elected president following Núñez’s illness and subsequent death in 1894. As president of the troubled republic, Caro made ample use of the discretionary presidential powers stipulated by the Constitution of 1886. According to historian Charles Bergquist, Caro proved to be “an effective administrator, iron willed politician” (Bergquist, 1976:11). He became a fearless defender of Regenerationist economic policies, which included the printing of paper money and the tax on coffee exports. He defended industrial monopolies but at the same time abhorred “individualist Liberalism.” Protected by the Constitution, Caro, limited freedom of the press during his administration, repressing “what he considered potential threats to the established political and social order” (Ibid:13). In one of the many speeches he gave during his political career, Caro said that the government had the legal capacity to repress disorder even if “the law explicitly did not explicitly say it.” For Caro, appealing to “the law of conservation by natural law” (1991:41) was enough reason to proceed.

Caro's presidency was difficult because he had to deal with the opposition of Liberals; but more complications came from members of his own party, who reproached both Núñez and Caro for betraying old allegiances and traditions. After the Constitution of 1886 was sanctioned, many nationalists, conservatives, and independent Liberals broke apart from the alliance and returned to their old party traditions (Valderrama, 1981:lxii). Under the banner of political historicism, some Conservatives demanded regional independence, because they saw limitations imposed by the central government, impeding them from accomplishing their political and economic projects. During his presidency, Caro also had to face the political agitation of artisans (waving red and black flags reminiscent of the Parisian commune revolt) in Bogotá in 1893. One of his ministers solved the problem. Caro's rejection of socialism or any kind of revolutionary ideology is reflected in his response to the crisis with artisans. Caro contended that the Regenerationist state was set "over solid ground." However, as Caro himself acknowledged, "incidents like these only demonstrate that the revolutionary epidemic can reemerge and we should take preventive measures against its spread" (1991:46).

In 1895, there was yet another civil war promoted by Liberals which Caro himself could not solve; but General Rafael Reyes did. Caro did not understand the violent reaction of the opposition since for him, "the Regeneration... [with the] serene impartiality of its politics ...far from disarming the unfair opposition, irritates it and ignites it even further" (Caro, 1991:46).

Later, in an attempt to overthrow Caro, Guillermo Quintero Calderón, in charge of the government in Caro's absence, decided to seize power. But his reign only lasted

five days. Thanks to the strong arm of General Manuel Casablanca, order was reestablished. In 1897, the electoral process for electing a new president was not peaceful. Nationalists Manuel Antonio Sanclemente and José Manuel Marroquín won the elections, and the outcome could not be more disastrous: the War of the Thousand Days, the *coup d'état* of 1900, and the loss of Panama in 1903 (Valderrama Andrade, 2004).

The intricacies of Caro's political persona have been traced in a nine-volume compilation of his writings, titled *Escritos Políticos*. This collection was published by the Instituto Caro y Cuervo in Bogotá and edited with preliminary works by Carlos Valderrama Andrade, an academic dedicated to studying Caro and his legacy. Caro's intellectual persona, more than his political persona, has been of more interest to scholars, historians, and more recently to culturalists as his writings became a kind of guide to Colombian life during the twentieth century, for its language use and beliefs about education, religion, and social comportment, as Chapter Four will explain.

### **Intellectual Life**

Like Núñez, Miguel Antonio Caro belonged to what Angel Rama calls the "*ciudad letrada*/lettered city." The lettered city is the geographical and symbolic space of the dominant modern regime of power and knowledge. In the case of Colombia, Bogotá was the city that through the knowledge of Latin and Spanish, the classics, history, literature, and poetry, as well as European fashion, manners, and entertainment, necessarily



distanced itself from the *pueblo* (Rama, 1984:86-87).<sup>37</sup> Different from other members of the *ciudad letrada* who advocated Liberal ideals, Caro longed for Mother Spain and everything Hispanic, including the monarchy. His doctrinarian life was not casual and did not develop out of an opportunistic antagonism against Liberal radicalism. On the contrary, as Ruben Sierra Mejía maintains, Caro's thinking and actions were keeping with his dogmatism, whose fundamental principle was the concept of authority, and certain modes of argumentation that allowed him to transgress the laws of logic, especially for the purpose of imposing his political or religious ideology (Sierra Mejía, 2002:9 and ff).

Caro's intellectual ancestry was also important because it dominated the scope of his work on the political, poetic, and personal levels. Caro was proud of "Rome and Latin, Spain and Castilian." This helps explain why he could not conceive a *patria* /motherland without a language. For him, the purest essence of *patria* was language. In other words, "*la patria es la lengua*" (Hernández de Mendoza, 1943:15).<sup>38</sup> Caro's beloved *patria* was Rome because, as Sacconi Rivas explains, it represented his *latinidad* and his Christianity, two convergent elemental conditions that regulated his life (Sacconi Rivas, 1993:13-15). It can be suggested that Caro wanted Bogotá to become Rome, a "lettered city" for the immense minority, where knowledge exchange would only serve the few male minds called upon to govern the immense and "immature" majority.

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<sup>37</sup> Angel Rama shows how since the Colony state power has depended and has produced groups of literate men or letrados who are in charge of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. These men also created ideological visions of the past, present and future.

<sup>38</sup> In the following verses, Caro expresses his profound devotion to both Rome and Latin. Caro wrote: *Mi patria no es breve comarca;/Objeto de culto y amor,/Mi patria dos mundos abarca/Y siglos de inmenso esplendor.*

Caro's passion for Latin was such that in nineteenth-century Colombia, Latin recaptured its image as the language of high culture: the language of the Roman classics, of the Renaissance, of men of science. Latin was important for Caro and other Latinists because it was the "expression of a people" that left footprints in the history of humanity—a manifestation of a culture and a civilization that endured. For Caro, as Jose Manuel Sacconi Rivas comments, Latin was an instrument of scientific exchange that adapted to all ideas and served as a means of communication among lettered men, thanks to its universality that transcended time and place (1993:xviii). Latin, however, gave Caro an advantage not only over the *pueblo*, but also over his ideological or political opponents, especially at a time in which he was presenting and defending moral arguments to other illustrious men in the Church, Senate, or even his living room.

Caro's translations from Latin were praised by the most rigorous poets and translators in Colombia and Spain. His role as a "translator-legislator" (Caro was a self-taught legislator) not only displayed his mastery of Latin and knowledge of the classics and carried on his ancestors' traditions, but also allowed him to "write his own texts while pretending that he [was] rendering foreign ones into his native language." In this sense, Caro "arbitrarily connects his literary-legislative acts in the present to shifting signifiers (the 'Spanish Empire', [liberator] 'Bolívar', 'tradition,' 'morality,' 'Catholicism') whose traces [were] alternately made invisible and invisible as best befits the project at hand" (Rodríguez García, 2004:153). In other words, Caro used the source text and primary text only as a pretext for his own work. Rodríguez García suggests that it was through his role as a translator-*legitimador* that Caro,

[...] implemented a style of government in which his main assumptions about the transmission of culture informed his understanding of how the faculties of empire and dominium (the main attributes of sovereignty) are legitimated and made into a tradition (Rodríguez García, 2004:151).

Caro's concern with language did not stop with Latin, but extended to the scientific study of Spanish grammar. It was interesting however, that Caro's emphasis on grammar and the cultivation of the mind and the spirit coincided little with the amount of money spent in war and in detriment of education. The following numbers tell the story of illiteracy in Colombia as well as the national interest for education. The amount of students attending elementary school in 1874 was only 2.7% of the entire population of the country, during the Regeneration, the percentage declined to 2%. The situation improved slightly to 2.6% in the period between 1898 and 1903 (Ramírez and Salazar, 2007). These percentages are not surprising given that the national budget for war related expenses was higher than for education. For instance, during the *Olimpo Radical*, the national budget for war was 10% while for education was 5%. From 1883 to 1884, 6% was dedicated to education and 18% to war. At the end of the Regeneration, the expenses for war exceeded the 26% while education continued to have only 6%. Education was a privilege and only a few could have access to quality education. The disregard for education during the nineteenth century contradicted the desires of elites and intellectuals to live in a country of which

they could feel proud. Nonetheless, the quality of the very few men of letters seemed to have been enough for the immense minority to feel in a civilized nation.

Caro was a fervent follower and admirer of the Catholic Venezuelan poet, philologist, philosopher, Latinist, and jurist, Andrés Bello (1789-1865). Amongst Bello's most important ideas lay what Caro called the fundamental elements of the constitution of Hispanic American society: historical traditions and social customs, Catholicism Roman law, the Spanish legislation, and the Castilian language (Torres Quintero, 1952:204 as cited in Valderrama Andrade, 1981: xxxvii). Bello believed that political independence achieved from Spain was a desire to pursue political self-determination, but which did not imply that all traditional cultural, spiritual, juridical values had to be forgotten or disregarded (Valderrama Andrade, 1981:xix). Because Bello detested irreligion and anarchy, despite his Liberal ideas and conciliatory tone, detractors argued that Bello represented the "symbol of the colonial spirit." Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, for instance, considered that the Venezuelan perverted the public spirit of the young generations by giving more importance to *form* than *content* on a continent that strove for new, modern ideas (Valderrama Andrade, 1981:xxv).

Caro agreed with Bello that grammar was "a foundational discourse of the modern state" since it had "the task of establishing a rationalized master-code which he considered an irreducible condition for the implementation of modern law" (Ramos, 1994:25-46). For Caro, grammar and language had the important role of assisting in the management of the nation. The correct use of language leads to a "grammatical order" and, Caro insisted, to a "divine order," morality, and the governing of the people (der

Walder Uribe, 1997). Language and grammar would also serve a fundamental task in late-nineteenth-century Colombia: Unification after a long and unsuccessful period of federalism, fragmentation, and dispersion. It is also possible to argue that Caro concurred with Bello's suggestion that linguistic centralization was necessary in order to maintain the cultural and economic ties among the newly independent nations. Bello's grammatical project, which contributed to the language standardization throughout Spanish America meant to establish a communication network for the "brotherhood" of all Spanish America (Ramos, 1994:28). In other words, Bello intended to consolidate, through language, what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities" (1991). Even though Caro contributed to the understanding of the Spanish language on the continent, his purpose was not as altruistic as Bello's. For Caro, grammar became the tool through which he and other *letrados* would impose authority—divine and otherwise—to set themselves apart from the *pueblo* and make Bogotá the prime and most important *ciudad letrada*, the center of intellectual and political activity.

In Caro's view, his traditional ideology was legitimate because he believed he had a certain intellectual and moral authority. Following Gramsci, Caro, as journalist, regarded himself as a "true" and moral intellectual. Caro was an eloquent intellectual, and as such he participated in public "practical life" as a "conductor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' (Gramsci, 1971:10) and "the most convincing of orators." He portrayed himself as a man whose life was based on respect for reason and faith (Valderrama

Andrade, 1991:xix-lxvii). His extensive intellectual production,<sup>39</sup> as well as his committed defense of Catholicism and Catholic moral values, gave him the confidence and support of various social groups and allowed him to pursue the moral sanitation of the nation. In his role as part of the delegation to consolidate the Regeneration project and create the 1886 Constitution (by Núñez's invitation), later as a Vice President for several terms and ultimately, as president of Colombia (1894, 1894-1898), Caro had the perfect opportunity to "transmit" the "ultramontane orthodoxies enforced by the old regime in Spain" (Rodríguez García, 2004:144). Such orthodoxies, Caro believed, would help solve Colombia's social, political, economic, cultural, and especially moral problems. His conservatism contemplated, as Sierra Mejía tells us, among other things, the role of the Church as a perfect society and a model to follow, the need to preserve social hierarchy and the privileges it implies. For Caro it was imperative to respect the divine origin of authority to which freedom and rights would have to yield. More importantly, social or political circumstances required "*un espíritu restaurador*" to build the perfect society (Sierra Mejía, 2002:27.) In this society, it was urgent to bring the Church back to the state in order to form a nation of "Catholic citizens."

Caro's philological and poetic strength were admirable. Nevertheless, his philosophical and political life caused controversy because he was, as Javier Arango Ferrer says, "invincible in the polemic of his philosophical, political, religious, and

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<sup>39</sup> Caro's works include: translations of Virgil's entire body of poetry (1871-76) and other classic poets and encyclics; author of: *Gramática de la lengua latina para uso de los que hablan castellano* (1876), *Estudio sobre el utilitarismo* (1869); *La unidad católica y la pluralidad del culto* (1873); *Apuntes sobre crédito, deuda pública y papel moneda* (1892); article collection called *Libertad de imprenta* (1890); *Artículos y discursos* (1888) *Manual de elocución* (1888). Anthologies, among which more important ones are *Romancero colombiano* (1883), *Victor Hugo en América* (1889) and his father's *Obras escogidas de José Eusebio Caro* (1873).

academic and language rigors” (Arango Ferrer, 1965:162-171). His conservative doctrine was based on the “Hispanic vision of life, society and the world” (Castro-Gómez, n.d.) In fact, Caro was the promoter of a cultural movement called “*hispanismo colombiano*” (1865-1905), an ideology that, according to José María Rodríguez García, was understood as “a movement based on the assertion of the spiritual unity of Latin culture in Europe and America and the doctrine that Spain is destined to control Latin America” (Rodríguez García, 2004:157). *Hispanismo* was not unique to Colombia, but Caro was one of its finest defenders across the continent.

Caro’s “restoration” project included teaching the humanities and restoring traditional values in the, to him, hostile environment left by Liberalism. For Caro, Colombia had forgotten and perhaps never understood its cultural history because the country had been immersed in an intellectual, political, and literary anarchy that made it prone to lose the benefits of civil life. He believed that Liberalism, utilitarianism, and socialism had had a dangerous impact on Colombian political and intellectual elite. Caro, who incarnated the revival of tradition, the synthesis of the Colony, the republic, and the reestablishment of order after many trials (Sacconi Rivas, 1993:416-417), was committed to rescuing the country from ignorance, confusion, and the loss of the great values that fed and ornate a person. For Caro, ideologies such as liberalism or utilitarianism could only have a pernicious effect on morality and contradicted Catholic principles.

Among all of Caro’s intellectual production, it is in the *Estudio sobre el utilitarismo* published in 1869, the *Informe sobre los "Elementos de Ideología" de Tracy*, and the *Cartas al doctor Ezequiel Rojas* that Caro presents his strongest opinions in

relation to Bentham's philosophy. In Colombia in the first part of the nineteenth century, the teachings of Bentham became the subject of heated debate between liberators Francisco de Paula Santander, a pro-utilitarianist, and Simón Bolívar, for whom the ideology of Bentham opposed the tranquility and morals of Spanish American nations (Castro-Gómez, n.d.). Caro voiced the same concern and contributed to the debate with a strong criticism against Benthamism. According to Caro, for whom "philosophy [was] the exercise of reasoning and [was] seen in the knowledgeable use of facts through the effective use of polemics and elegant oratory elements" (Caro, 1962:547), Bentham's "principle of utility" is not only founded on denial of the relationship between God and man (according to religious fact), but also degrades men to the condition of animals because when man is reduced to the narrow circle of his own sensations, he is placed in the plane of the *brutos* (the ignorant) (Caro, 1962, T. I:295-351). In that sense, Caro adds, utilitarianism is the enemy of progress because it presupposes the struggle, the effort to overcome a certain form of suffering, punishment, and pain which Bentham identifies with evil and which should be avoided at all costs (Caro, *Ibid* as cited in Valderrama Andrade, T. I:xxix). For Caro, evil seduces the senses. It was also true for Caro the idea that goodness can at times be difficult but that it is compensated once it is understood that the bigger the challenge, the bigger the triumph (Caro, [1869] 1962, T.I:104).

Equally important, Caro finds that the contradictions and false doctrines of utilitarianism can lead to social anarchism or political absolutism (Caro, 1884:145-146). In general, as Santiago Castro-Gomez maintains, the pillars of utilitarianism, for Caro, are immoral because they introduce relativism and proclaim worldly well-being as the



supreme goal of man. For Caro, if all knowledge is based exclusively on sensations, it is not possible to achieve valid universal truths in the scientific field, much less in morality. The result of such impossibility is egotism and atheism and man's conversion into a slave of his passions. For Caro, Benthamism harms and corrupts young minds, separating them from the "*savia vitalicia*"/the vital sap transmitted by the Catholic Hispanic culture. In this culture, the utilitarian principle of "searching for one's self" (Parra, 2002:97-99)<sup>40</sup> completely opposes the Christian principle of abnegation or "denial of one's self" (Caro, 1962, T. I:80, 159 and ff, 286-292).

Caro rejected Bentham's principle of striving for the "greatest happiness of the greatest numbers." He proposed instead a political theory based on the religious culture of Colonial Spanish America. Caro was convinced that only through Catholicism would it be possible to achieve eternal happiness, civilization, and progress (more spiritual and moral than material) in Colombia.

Caro's criticism of utilitarianism was deeply inspired by the sociology of Spanish political traditionalist Jaime Balmes (1810-1848). Balmes's thought imbued Caro's political project with the former's traditionalism. Caro insisted on a Christian state whose

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<sup>40</sup> Parra explains that for Jeremy Bentham's and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism became the bible for Colombia's nineteenth-century Liberals and radicals in their desire to modernize the state, make legislation more efficient, and implement an economic system that would allow the country to finally participate actively in the international market. Colombian Liberals believed in Bentham's principle of utility, which approves of an action insofar as that action has an overall tendency to promote "greatest happiness of the greatest numbers." As for morality, the latter does not intend for itself "proof" other than that based on the idea that all men, or almost all men search for happiness. Utilitarianism conceives of the search for happiness as that goal that can reasonably be expected for the majority of men. Most of all, this principle refers to happiness for all, that is, social happiness, which at the same time implies individual happiness. Equally, utilitarianism requires that in order to achieve happiness, men need to construct their own system of needs because happiness is not necessarily the satisfaction of every type of desire or tendency for there are "preferable pleasures." This reflection teaches individuals that it is worthwhile to sacrifice some desires for pleasures that are considered higher.

basic tenets would be “order,” “justice,” and “perfection” (Valderrama Andrade, 1991:xxxvi). In this sense, the moral and the religious state are interchangeable (Caro, 1962, T. I:78). According to Harold Eugene Davis, Balmes’s rejection of utilitarianism was formulated on the grounds that society was moral and that this morality derived from individuals in accordance with the tradition of the Church (1979:349). Hence, the improvement of society could come only through the improvement of individuals, and though man lives in society and in family structures, morality is not merely social (Balmes, as cited in Davis, 1979:329). The fact that Caro agrees with Balmes does not imply that the former was not concerned with the happiness of all people. He did, but with the kind inspired by the heavens. Happiness and morality were connected, according to Caro, in such a way that they were the reason for governments’ success or failure. In fact, he believed that Colombia’s lack of morality and subsequent unhappiness was due to the kind of governments that had been unable to provide happiness to the governed. Caro insisted that this failure occurred because there was no human power that could force statesmen to “behave well” under any circumstance, particularly when they themselves did not have faith (Catholic or otherwise). For this reason, happiness and well-being can only come from moral statesmen who are able to govern, while they themselves are guided by the authority that comes from the law and fear of God (Caro, 1962 T.I.:723).

Like Balmes, for whom the moral and religious basis of civil law (law and politics) had a natural (divinely revealed law) *raison d’être* so too for Caro, authority in any field of thought (theological, philosophical, scientific, or political) should carry the voice of the Catholic Church (see Balmes, 1948 as cited in Davis, 1979:345). As Sierra

Mejía comments, all these areas, for Caro, covered every mental activity of men, especially those that touched upon moral problems. In this respect, Caro did not doubt that he possessed the truth, and he felt he had the responsibility to impose it using any rhetorical argument possible. He rejected doubt and criticism as elements for revising knowledge because they could affect the allegiance men should have with the Catholic Church (Sierra Mejía, 200:12).

Caro conceived of the state as existing under God, whose authority was invested in a few moral men, the *letrados*. The state for him was not defined by society, but by Catholic doctrine, with which all morality resided. The function of the state would continue to be the pursuit of happiness for all people, but not through the promotion of certain economic or political practices; rather, through the promotion of laws and educational reforms based on Christian morality. In this respect, Santiago Castro-Gomez concludes that it is not surprising that Caro so fiercely attacked Benthamism and the idea of the separation between law and morality. For Caro, religion and morality were inseparable because there could be no morality without religion, nor law without moral content. For that reason, Caro explained, positive law had to be based on divine law (Castro-Gómez, n.d.). In this aspect, he followed Balmes' notion of the state, which contended that "civil law considered as simply a means of organization and without any relevance for moral principles, is a body without a soul" (Balmes, 1948 as cited in Davis, 1979:345). His insistence on a Catholic state is based on his understanding that diversity in belief presupposes an error and that when that error disappears, the truth recovers its "natural unity." In this respect, Catholicism was the only religion to call for unification.

For Caro, religious tolerance was unacceptable above all because it “was an announcement of weakness and an omen of the destruction of the nation” (Sierra Mejía, 2002:12). Just as it was important to have one national religion, it was also fundamental to preserve one single language and through it, the people’s cultural cohesion.

The unified state, nonetheless, would not have the characteristics of a socialist or a communist state, because for Caro, following Balmes, such a state would only be materialistic, with no moral basis (González, citing Balmes as cited in Davis 1979:350). Through the respect of natural inequalities, which for Balmes were founded upon the nature of man and society, that is, upon Christian natural law, inequality cannot be abolished but the differences may be lessened. The only equality possible is “in the eyes of God” (Ibid)—Catholicism carries out its unification project in the individual since he or she is born in order to achieve a “uniform [moral] perfection” (Caro, 1962 T.I.:90). If the achievement of “perfection” was based on a confessional state, the Liberal aspects of the state would be at stake. According to Caro, individual freedom was not important, since such freedom could not be the end goal of civil society; and neither was it the will of the majority. In Caro’s view, the Liberal doctrine that the state must conform to the needs of the majority is contradictory to both the idea of natural or divine law and to the possibilities of human reason. As Castro-Gomez comments, Caro never had much sympathy for the principles of democracy, because he believed that man was an imperfect being that errs if left alone. Man therefore needs moral [and divine] guidance (Castro-Gómez, n.d.) and the Church would be the institution called upon to achieve that end through education and by imposing a doctrine treating both the private and public

spheres. By believing in “naturally” occurring inequalities in society—in terms of gender, race, class, intellect—Caro and other *hombres letrados* in Colombia and Latin America were able to take upon themselves the “moral” duty to govern the nation. The [Regeneration Constitution of 1886 drafted by Caro and approved by Núñez was an example of that commitment.

Núñez and Caro agreed that the economy could be divorced from the moral question. However, unlike Núñez, who saw a dialectic relationship between morality and the economy, Caro viewed this relationship in simple “natural” terms. For Caro, “*el oro ni mejora la raza, ni regenera la sangre, ni puede sostenerse por su propia virtud*”(gold neither improves race nor does it regenerate blood, nor support itself by its own virtue). He contended that the positivist exclusivism--represented by wealth and accumulation as the only good--produced pernicious effects in the imagination of a people (Caro, 1979:134).

Caro’s own ideas of order and progress, in vogue in late-nineteenth-century Latin America, differed from that of his Liberal counterparts. For him, the ideas of order and progress belonged to the same realm because progress results from “*el orden en el tiempo*” (order in time). Order, he claims, is an “extended staircase... which, rising towards the heavens, we call progress.” In this respect, Catholicism, for him, is the perfect realization of the spirit of order and progress (Caro, 1979 T. I:101). Caro saw the essence of civilization not in industry, technical advancements, free trade, the separation of Church and state, individual political freedom, free press or universal suffrage (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:65-77), but in a practical Christianity, of which Catholicism was

the essence (Caro, 1979:724). Catholicism was also the essence of the nation, which could not be destroyed after Independence from Spain. So strong was Catholic civilization in the ex-colony that the immature ideas of mercantilism and industrialism could not replace it and “civilizations cannot be improvised.” In the case of Colombia, and Latin America, by extension, Caro argues, “we have not invented ... religion, language, habits, and traditions.” Instead, “we have received them from generation to generation, from hand to hand” since “the Conquest and it will continue to be transmitted to our children and grandchildren as a precious depository and rich patrimony of civilized races” (Caro, 1952:101-103).

Caro intended to keep the Spanish tradition going not only through the Regeneration project, but also through grammar and Catholicism. His success was undeniable. Caro inspired Colombia (or better yet Bogotá) with language refinement unlike any other Latin-American country. However, language refinement was not sufficient compensation for the nation’s core problems. Economic stagnation, partisan rivalry, corruption, *clientelismo*, exclusion, and intolerance did not end with appropriate language use or with the laws and programs implemented by the Regeneration. They continued to gravely affect everyday Colombian life for generations to come. Caro was well aware of the moral problems affecting the nation; however, through his longing for perfection, he only accentuated racial, economic, political, cultural, and social intolerance and exclusion. In fact, as William Ospina (2004) asks, “how could a man like that [Caro] understand an equatorial country, with rivers full of crocodiles and splendid forests, whose exotic trees had to be named with indigenous words?” Further, “how could the

importance of the native peoples and their cultures be understood by someone who, even in the nineteenth century, continued to think like the conquerors, that the indigenous communities were backward and barbaric, and must be entrusted to the pious but destructive care of the Church?" (11).

Given the clear ideological differences between Núñez and Caro, how could they form an alliance, reinvent the nation, implement important economic changes, as well as impose and reinforce a traditional culture based on Catholicism, *clientelismo*, and intolerance? The next section will argue that Núñez's change of heart was not due to a rectification in his system of beliefs; and that Caro ideologically accepted certain aspects of Liberalism. The alliance between the two masterminds of the Regeneration project was motivated by the complex ideological phenomena that were taking place in the West, especially in Europe. Another motivation was the desire to end the intense internal conflict provoked by political rivalry.

Miguel Antonio Caro, despite his affiliation with the Conservative Party, held Rafael Núñez in high regard. Caro identified with Núñez in some aspects of his reform for considering that the latter's ideas were beyond the habitual and improvised manner in which other politicians of the time addressed the fundamental problems of the nation.

According to Caro, in *La Reforma política*, "in the art of government, Núñez rejects all absolute imposition, and he does not resolve anything a priori without looking into the traditions proper to Colombia, its particular needs and its legitimate interests." According to Caro, "[Many] statesmen have been ordinarily a thousand miles away of our carton politicians, servile followers of a Liberalism that they have not understood and

of a liberty that they have not loved” (*Epistolario*, 1977:195 as cited in Isaza Calderón, 1982:47). A true politician, a true Colombian, a true citizen, was for Caro that good-willed person, following “God’s plan,” who accepted and followed the law of God and loved the motherland (Caro, 1979 T. 9:4, 367). It was Colombia who inspired in him such verses as the following:

Motherland! I adore you...  
I fear to profane your sacred name...  
Motherland, I am a piece of your essence.

### **Núñez and Caro: The Alliance**

I established earlier in this chapter, the alliance between Núñez and Caro did not necessarily occur because the former had an ideological transformation in which he replaced his radical ideas for more conservative ones or because Caro openly accepted some Liberal economic ideas that Núñez brought to the Regeneration project. Their alliance had motivations beyond the political, were more focused around Núñez’s understanding of the role of religion in economic progress. Their alliance also coincided with an international trend in which Liberalism and its revolutionary ideas (for instance, universal suffrage or equality), the separation of church and state, the problems of the proletariat, and the increasing presence of socialism were being strongly criticized and opposed by powerful conservative and traditionalist forces around Europe. Such forces were more evident in Spain and France, where anti-revolutionary ideas were inadmissible and where a monarchical order was preferred and defended. As Jaime Jaramillo Uribe points out, thinkers from different political, social, economic, and cultural trends such as



traditionalists Jose de Maistre and Louis Bonald in France, Edmund Burke in England, and Donoso Cortes in Spain; revolutionaries such as Karl Marx or socialists such as Saint Simon; positivist philosophers such as August Comte and Stuart Mill; historians such as Alexis de Tocqueville; and the Catholic Church, in the hands of Pope Leo XIII, all found commonalities in evaluating the results of the social, economic, and political revolutionary impulse of Europe and the U.S. in the nineteenth century (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:201).

In this respect, following Jaramillo Uribe, one of the major concerns was the organization of a coherent and fair social and political order. Since representative governments instituted through elections figured as tainted processes, tradition, faith, and reverence could become the solid ground on which social cohesion could be achieved. Therefore, the principle of the will of the majority was under scrutiny, and it became evident that it did not coincide, for instance, with liberty or equality for all, much less coincide with the ideal of democracy (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:202).

Núñez's particular intention to modernize and civilize Colombia did not blind him or other intellectuals from evaluating of the effects of Liberalism in the West. In fact, according to Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, Núñez and other intellectuals of his generation tried to "investigate the incapacity, the chronic imbalance between the Spanish, Colombian, and the South American impulsive spiritual structure and the juridical institution that intended to give shape to their political activity. In addition, their analysis included the incompatibility between Liberalism and Catholicism. In other words, as Uribe suggests, Núñez and his contemporaries tried to understand the motivations and contradictions of

Liberalism within the specificity of the Colombian and Latin American context ((Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:204-5). Despite these efforts, many of the economic measures Núñez implemented during the Regeneration imitated foreign models in a country that was not equipped to respond to such demands.

Following de Tocqueville and J.S. Mill, Núñez agreed –not necessarily rectified – that the threat to personal liberty was constituted precisely by the demands and willpower of the masses. Equally, he agreed that democracy, as a system that protects minorities, as well as the right to oppose the government and to exercise political opposition, would soon enough have to defend itself against such “omnipotent” will (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:202). In terms of the limited political decision-making power of the Liberal state, the evolution of the implementation of Liberalism could only advocate for a stronger state that should play a “continuous” and “intense” role in politics and the economy (Ibid). This is precisely what Núñez promulgated upon the establishment of the Regeneration regime: A strong centralist state that would control the economy and politics.

In Europe, in the delicate matter of religion and its relationship to the state, as Jaramillo Uribe maintains, the so-called moral and religious neutrality of the Liberal state only managed to further oppress the individual’s spiritual life. The political solution to this matter then transformed the role of the state not by eliminating its overwhelming power, but by bringing morality and religion back to the state (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:202). This understanding, plus the example of the U.S., in which religion was separate from the state, but economic progress could be achieved thanks to the incentives

that motivated individual initiative, and which obviously had repercussions on the strengthening of capitalism, led Núñez to hope that religion, would help bring morality back to the state and the nation, as well as encouraging economic progress.

Added to the evaluation of Liberalism, the role of religion in the economy is the scrutiny of the contradictions of what de Tocqueville sees as the “dialectics of Liberalism,” which prompted the alliance between Núñez and Caro. These contradictions offer further explanation for Núñez’s change of heart, which definitely seems to have responded more to these contradictions than to a call from the heavens. They also show why ultraconservative Caro joined forces with Núñez in the making of Colombia/Bogotá as the “*Atenas Suramericana*.”

According to de Tocqueville, nineteenth-century Liberalism exploited the rights of the individual at the expense of the demands of society. As Jaime Jaramillo Uribe explains, Liberalism was criticized for underestimating the moral function of the state. Nonetheless, critics of Liberalism could not accept a coercive force from the state in the name of morality. Critics of Liberalism tried to reinforce the functions of the state without risking the individual and his personal initiative. Moreover, they proclaimed the quality of society and a conception of society which was supportive of the relations between the different aspects of labor, but they had to avoid mechanical equality, the uniformity of taste, attitudes, and forms of expression if they wished to circumvent massification. They hoped to reform classical economics and subtract labor, property, and wealth from the domain of the market’s mechanical laws, but they could not risk private property, freedom of occupation, and consumption. In other words, they had to find

equilibrium between the tensions and oppositions in modern society: Between the individual and the community; individual liberty and social rights; organization and spontaneity. Although nineteenth-century Colombia was less complex than what Tocqueville described, important theoretical and historical problems accompanied Colombian Liberalism (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:202-205). In this respect, the Liberalism that intended to become a political science, with the state and society as its main object of study, found significant resistance in Colombia not only within the Liberal party but also from conservatives.

The historical problems of Liberalism were, in the particular case of Colombia, the strength and scope of the Conservative influence on the life of the nation. Despite the certainty that “the Spanish conception of political life” would not necessarily lead to economic and social progress, the influence of this force in Colombia after Independence in 1801 did not diminish. In other words, the powerful colonial structure continued to inhabit the political, social, cultural, and economic landscape of the nation. Núñez was one of the few intellectuals to analyze the incompatibility of Liberalism and Catholicism, and to locate it in its broader scope (Jaramillo Uribe, 1997:204). These reflections led him to make the political and economic decisions that pervaded the Regeneration (Ibid) as the next chapters will show. In the end, Núñez and Caro partially achieved modernization without modernity. Núñez and Caro were indeed the principal agents in the articulation and definition of social change that partially worked. As Gabriel Restrepo explains, a certain level of modernization was achieved because the Regeneration adopted some elements of the modern world, such as technical and industrial

development. There was, however, an absence of modernity, because such “progress” was only admissible as long as it did not conflict with Hispanic and Catholic traditions and beliefs (Restrepo, 1994).

## **Conclusion**

Núñez and Caro undoubtedly correspond to the category of what Antonio Gramsci calls “traditional intellectuals” (Gramsci, 1971). These two Colombian intellectuals fit Gramsci’s description in that they acted as economic entrepreneurs, but most importantly as journalists, poets, politicians, educators, and intellectuals who offered themselves as examples of the ideal citizen: moral examples in a “backward” nation. They took upon themselves the “essential [‘social’] function” of making decisions for the oligarchy and the *pueblo* alike regarding economic production, politics, education, social formation, and religion. Besides, these regenerators were “independent” and “autonomous” and formed a social group around them in order to bring to fruition their political and social plans. This autonomy and independence, as Malcolm Deas suggests, gave Núñez and Caro the opportunity to exercise influence beyond the Regeneration period (Deas, 2006:52).

Núñez and Caro, as intellectuals who became direct participants in the complex political life of Colombia were, as Gramsci would say, more than persons of letters, or producers and transmitters of ideas. They became mediators, legitimators, producers and reproducers of new and old ideas and practices, performed a political, social, and cultural role. In this sense, they became representative of this period in Colombia as they became the propagators of traditionalist and moralist ideologies and values. These “regenerators”

themselves became the status quo that opposed previous forms of governance. As members of the ruling and intellectual class, they designed rationales for economic, political, and ethical formations based on morality, progress, order, and liberty. The product of their alliance, the Regeneration project, influenced Colombian society profoundly during the decades that followed. What follows is an analysis of the most important aspects of Núñez's and Caro's life and works, and how their beliefs, even when at odds, gave rise to the Regeneration.

Though sometimes antagonistic, Rafael Núñez and Miguel Antonio Caro agreed on fundamental points that allowed them to work together on the project of the Regeneration. They coincided on issues such as centralism and unification, the importance of morality, and the role of Catholicism in the state and in education. They believed in the importance of the Church despite its well-known ineffectiveness and intolerance of the "colonial politics of exclusion" (Jaramillo Uribe, 1964:71). It was clear to them the Church's faulty economic structure, and its contradictory understanding of "order," "progress," and civilization. Following Gramsci's notion of the role of the "traditional intellectual" as members of the ruling and intellectual class, they designed rationales for economic, political, and ethical formations based on morality, progress, order, and liberty. They became independent and autonomous through the design and implementation of an authoritarian regime. These "*presidentes poetas*" as Santiago Londoño (1986) calls them, took a paternalistic attitude toward the subaltern classes, essentially attempting to ensure the domination of the uneducated majority of the population by a small, hyper-educated elite (Deas, 1993:25-60 as cited in Rodríguez

García, 2004:144). It was of very little help for the social, economic, and political development of the country that Caro “tried to speak only in Latin under the flowering caper bushes of the savannah of Bogotá” (Ospina, 2004:11) or that he was a fervent and devout Catholic—a position he defended vehemently. Neither Núñez’s statesmanship nor his apparent rectification bring the modernization, order, and progress that he so passionately desired in his prolific writings and speeches.

## CHAPTER 4: “*Regeneración o Catástrofe*”

The period known as the *Olimpo Radical* (1860-1884) represents the maximum expression of nineteenth-century Colombian Liberalism. Radical Liberals advocated absolute freedom in relation to religious and philosophical beliefs, the press, written expression, and education. At the same time, they promoted secular education, the separation of Church and State, the decentralization of state finances, and a *laissez-faire* economy. They decreed the abolition of the Church’s privileges and the expropriation of Church property. During this period, Colombia made its first attempts at modernization with the creation of a railroad system, the telegraph, and commercial banks. These efforts did not stop the inevitable breakdown in the import economy, beginning with the lack of paper money in circulation. Private bankers, both national and international profited from high interest rates and the circulation of their own currency while the rest of the population was paying the price of high inflation and high interest rates.

Rafael Núñez was the mastermind behind the Regeneration reforms, alongside the conservative Miguel Antonio Caro. One of the more notorious reforms they proposed was the consolidation of a strong centralist state. Within this reform, the issue of liberty and individuality varied by federal states, since each had a particular arrangements in this respect. This chapter critically analyzes the failure of Liberalism in Colombia. It also takes up the issues behind the phrase “*Regeneración o catastrophe*” and the implications



for governance in these convoluted times in Colombia. In addition, it explains the contradictions in the spirit of the Regeneration Constitution of 1886, its implications in the institution of citizenship. Moreover, it takes up the question of whether the notion of citizenship, although described in terms similar to those outlined by previous Constitutions, contradicted or was congruent with the Regenerationist type of government; and whether or not the constitution differentiated between citizens on this basis. What did the elites think of the different social groups? To whom did they consider granting citizenship? Which qualities did elites dictate as citizenship requirements? Each of these questions will be addressed in turn, followed by a brief discussion on how the Regeneration reinforced traditional Colombian power structures through *gamonalismo* and *clientelismo* as these informal venues directly affected social, political and even cultural relations in the country.

### **Failure of Liberalism in Colombia**

Why did Liberalism fail in Colombia? Even though Colombian liberals set themselves to end the legacy of colonialism and to create a modern state, they failed for various reasons: First, Colombian liberals could not counter or abolish the existing strong traditional practices such as *clientelismo*, localism and regionalism. In this sense, Colombian Liberalism failed to diminish local power, which dominated the political and the economic landscape throughout the nineteenth century. Instead, liberals themselves strategically used regional and local political intermediaries for political and economic purposes in times of war and elections. These practices enhanced *clientelismo* over the

institution of citizenship and presented the former as the instrument through which individuals would relate to the government.

Second, Liberalism in Colombia failed as Liberals radicalized their views against one of its strongest opposition force, the Catholic Church. In a Catholic country such as Colombia, an attack on the Church was perceived as a direct attack on the population itself. The disamortization of Church lands did decrease its economic power. Most of the land owned by the Church, however, had not only earthly value but a spiritual one as well given that landowners would exchange piece of land for eternal salvation. It also guaranteed the payment of a Christian funeral and other Christian expenses brought up by death. Despite its economic downfall, the ecclesiastic institution continued to display overwhelming power not only over and with conservative elites but also over the majority of the population. The loyalty of the population with the Church responded to the fact that unlike the radical government, the Church had been the only institution that responded, even if minimally, to the needs of the population through charity and other programs.

Third, during the time that liberals were in power, they failed to establish a Liberal democratic state despite their efforts to eradicate the strong economic, political and social influence of centuries of colonialism. At the end of the *Olimpo Radical* period, the liberals were unable to eradicate existing feudal relations of production. For instance, the process to eradicate feudalism required, as in Europe, an Industrial Revolution, the predominance of capitalist relations of production and the modernization of agribusiness. In the international division of Labor, Colombia remained in the

periphery as a producer of raw materials while Europe and the U.S. were the industrial centers in which these raw materials were assembled and then re-imported at higher prices to Colombia.

Fourth, the monopoly of land by the Church and large landowners impeded the commercialization of land and the emergence of small and medium-size agribusinesses that could have helped achieving progress. In addition to that, the lack of implementation of the agrarian reform, although Liberal reforms after 1850 issued decrees to redistribute land, also hindered the so desired progress and modernization. For instance, between 1870 and 1871 out of 1,479,277 of laboring population, only 14,371 were property owners, making it 1% of the population owning the means of agricultural labor (Urrutia and Arrubla, 1970:85 as cited in Kalmanovitz 1985:69).<sup>41</sup>

Fifth, Liberalism failed in Colombia as the country could not achieve a minimum degree of social cohesion, fundamental element that leads to peace and progress. The reasons behind this failure, as Palacios Rozo points out, lie in the lack of leadership, which resulted from the absence of a politico-moral discourse that would support republican ideals (2005). For Liberals, such ideals could be achieved through secular education. Education, then, became the means to achieve social cohesion, economic progress, political stability, but most importantly, a republican way of life. Their strife (with “blood and fire” against Conservatives and the Catholic Church) failed because, on the one hand, the everpresent fiscal crisis impeded the construction of an adequate educational infrastructure. On the other hand, it is questionable how much the elites were

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<sup>41</sup> Miguel Urrutia, Mario Arrubla. *Compendio de estadísticas históricas de Colombia*. Universidad Nacional, Bogotá, 1970:85 as cited in

indeed interested in educating the population. After all, elites always protected their own class interests in detriment of other social classes whom they considered inferior and undeserving. In such unequal conditions to speak of a politico-moral discourse that was inclusive was close to impossible.

Last but not least, the implementation of the liberal notion of citizenship in Colombia, as one of the cornerstones of Liberalism also failed in Colombia. Not only did it fail because as Marx clearly establishes, the liberal notion of citizenship contains within itself profound contradictions but also because Colombian liberals wanted to implant in the Colombian people the principles of Liberalism (as established in the *Declaration of 1793*) in the figure of the citizen. The citizen's most "natural and imprescriptible" rights of equality, liberty, security, and private property were beautifully crafted in the liberal constitutions. However, similar to the politics of the Old Regime, Colombian Liberals continued and consolidated the colonial tradition of equality among equals. The analysis provides a clear example of the contradictions of the liberal notion of citizenship in nineteenth century Colombia.

The equality of conditions, for instance, implies the disappearance of class privileges. However, in the West and in nineteenth century Colombia, class privilege was protected by an array of conditions imposed on a population who could not fulfill the all the requirement needed for access to citizenship such as literacy, gender, race, or good economic standing. As noted earlier in the Marxist critique of citizenship, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* comprises a hidden, abstract universalism which the same document promises to erase. Liberal constitutions in

Colombia followed the same “principle of hidden exclusion” in which, as Marx explains, the rights of man are distinct from the rights of the citizen”... of man separated from other man” and from the community (Marx, 2000:60). It appears that as “liberal” as Colombian liberals were, they still continued to believe that their privilege was a natural right; therefore, they did not perceive themselves as “egoistic man” but as men with the mission to civilize the non-citizens. The elites which comprised not only Liberal but Conservative men thought of themselves as the “actual man,” the “true man” in the form of an abstract citizen, a member of society who could only exist at the expense of other men to maintain his privileged status. Considering this contradictions, it is not surprising that Marx believed in the need of the “overtaking” or “abolition” of the liberal notion of citizenship. The failure of Liberalism in Colombia led a group of intellectuals/politicians, concerned over the decrease of the export sector, partisan violence, and general fiscal hardship to delineate a proposal for re-founding the nation. The Regeneration emerged out of the need to consolidate a strong central government, to achieve social cohesion and to create a national market.

### ***“Regeneración o catástrofe”***

The *Olimpo Radical* (1863-1886) and its 1863 Constitution did not bring political stability or progress. The internal divisions within the Liberal ranks, the separation of Church and State, the federalist regimes’ failed economic measures, and the secularization of education, among other factors, produced a sense of sovereignty loss,

one civil war (1876), twelve revolutions, two coups d'état, and further political convulsion (de la Vega, 1952 as cited in Meyer Loy, 1971:275).

In 1876 the internal disagreements were evident as radical Liberals and independent Liberals (who were more moderate in their views) nominated their presidential candidates for the 1876 elections. Núñez, still a consul in England, was nominated by Independent Liberals, but lost because of election fraud. The weakness of the government led by Radical Liberal Aquileo Parra prompted Conservatives to promote change, for they took up arms in response to some government measures such as secularizing religious education in public schools. After the conservatives were defeated, both factions of Liberalism agreed to nominate Julián Trujillo for the 1878 presidential elections. Trujillo was a general whose inclinations were more independent than radical. It was during the Trujillo's inauguration that Núñez first spoke the phrase "*Regeneración administrativa fundamental, o catástrofe.*" This phrase, with time, was shortened and now it is known simply as "*regeneración o catástrofe*". This phrase was significant at the time as it meant the absolute need to change the course of the nation and it also implied the need for a strong hand to save the country from anarchy and to return it to the path of salvation, both politically and morally.

By the late 1870s, the situation in the country as a whole, according to Núñez's speech, required a religious revival, that is, "regeneration" after the "anarchy" experienced under Liberal Radicalism. There was a "historical necessity" for "spiritual rebirth," since the nation's moral, political, and material conditions of existence had fallen in "irremediable decadence" due to the constant "conflict of sovereignties between

the public and the private. This rebirth was only possible through alliances and compromises made between the different elite sectors: that is, between the Liberal and the Conservative Parties as well as the Catholic Church. Convinced that he could help bring a “true and scientific peace”, that is a thoroughly thought-out peace, to the battered country, Núñez organized a new political party called the National Party. This party was composed of a group of dissident Radical Liberals, or *independientes*, and the Conservative Party. The idea of forming a “national” party had profound implications not only because it involved actors from the two most important political parties, but also because the name “national” revealed a desire to centralize and unify the country. In other words, as María Teresa Uribe de Hincapié (1987) notes, there was a desire for the initiation of a kind of “national legality” or a “new juridical order that would recuperate the national sovereignty of the public sphere.”

Contradictorily, as Uribe points out, the federal regime that emerged out of regional differences fostered the political project that allowed the unification of those differences into a national project: The Regeneration. In this way, the Regeneration emerged out of the specificities of the Colombian situation and was not an imposition of foreign models (Uribe de Hincapié and Álvarez, 1987). This reemergence of “nationalism”--the “combination of intellectual and political practices” that helped explain the “events, objects, and relationships,” as Florencia Mallon understands it (1995:4-5)--would bring a sense of national identity to a nation known for its strong regional differences, and for whom the pride in party identification was a mark of being “Colombian.”

The Regeneration project was a “curious and unique program by Latin American standards” (Palacios, 2006:27). Colombia shared with other Latin American countries the political conflict between Liberals and Conservatives, as well as the struggle for individualism, *laissez-faire*, federalism, and the need to “limit the Church to a purely spiritual role in society” (Knowlton, 1969:387). However, the extent and consequences of the measures against the Church in federalist Colombia, although comparable to other Latin American countries, such as Mexico, were harsher measures produced more profound reactions and effects. Both Mexico (1857) and Colombia (1863) passed laws to disamortize Church lands. While the Mexican government allowed ecclesiastical corporations to obtain property, in Colombia, the federal government nationalized Church lands at once. In Mexico, these corporations supported the opposition to federalism with their resources, while the Colombian Church was completely dispossessed and could only support the opposition from the pulpit. Colombian Radical Liberals understood that the power of the Church exceeded the economic realm. They disamortized Church property in order to counter the Church’s “reactionary power.” In other words, as Sajid Alfredo Herrera Mena suggests in relation to El Salvador, Radical Liberals understood the scope of the psychological, political, intellectual, and cultural power of the Church over the population (Herrera Mena, 2008). Following Max Weber, it is possible to suggest that Radical Liberals conceived of the Church as an institution of “hierocratic domination,” that is, an institution that “establishes a comprehensive ethic-religious reglamentation of all spheres of conduct” by disposing of “very considerable means of power” such as “excommunication” (Weber, 1978:1165). For a Catholic individual, excommunication



directly leads to the most terrifying of spiritual states: eternal condemnation. Thus, Radical Liberals criticized the Church's arrogate of granting or denying spiritual gifts and punishments through symbolic violence or psychological coercion. Despite the fact that they acknowledged the influence of the Church in the population, Colombian Radical Liberals, did not measure the consequences of their decrees against the Church in a highly Catholic country. For this reason, the Regeneration decision to bring the Church back to center stage made the nation feel as if it were back on course.

Furthermore, while in Colombia there was no mediation or lenience towards the Church, the Mexican radical Liberal Constitution of 1857 managed to follow the ideas of "the moderate faction" that "tempered some of the demands of the radicals so that the Constitution represented a compromise" (Knowlton, 1969:387)." This lack of compromise with the Colombian Church during the *Olimpo Radical* laid the ground for the Church's strong come back during the Regeneration period.

It is important to recall here that the end of the nineteenth century, Latin America saw an important increase in population and the consolidation of civil society. In this period, European positivist ideas regarding "order" and "progress" quickly spread throughout the continent. Positivism satisfied the needs of Latin American intellectuals who had rejected Spanish and Portuguese culture and were trying to prove their independence by adopting French ideas. Comte's positivism promised progress, discipline, and morality, together with freedom from the tyranny of [Catholic] theology (Hilton, 1973-1974). Another attractive side of positivism was that it encouraged the notion that the government had a moral responsibility for the well-being of the people--

which would be achieved by means of social engineering (Veliz, 1994 as cited in Vargas Llosa, 1998:37). The adoption of positivism brought Latin America a kind of “neo-colonialism” that was possible thanks to the international division of labor and the elite—a long-term relationship forged between Latin America and Europe. Latin America became a producer of primary goods for European markets, while Europe traded its manufactured products in return. According to Halperin, Liberal ideas about free trade gained wide acceptance and prestige among the ruling class, providing an ideological justification for the neo-colonial order that ultimately served Europe more than Latin America. Despite the political conflicts of the time, the fundamental elite consensus in favor of [scant] “progress” was unaltered (Halperin Dolghi, 1993:119). Progress through immigration and the division of labor also fostered state reforms throughout Latin America. European immigrants in Argentina, for instance, contributed to the formation of a wage labor force. They also contributed to the emergence of mutual societies and, despite national antagonisms, to various forms of collective action in urban areas (Spalding, 1977 as cited in Lewis, 1991). Mass migration also triggered further debate about nation, society, and citizenship. Hegemonic processes in the Southern Cone, for instance, attempted to transform workers into class-less citizens (Karush, 2002:4).

In Colombia, Núñez also saw Spencerian positivism as an appropriate method for studying society and for use as an educational philosophy. Through it, tolerance and political civilization could be achieved. With these ideas in mind, Núñez initiated a new political order—a *Regeneración fundamental*—that would avoid the *catástrofe* that seemed inevitable under Radical Liberalism. The Regeneration required the assistance of

already well-established institutions such as the Catholic Church, the Conservative Party, and the army. The Regeneration, first mentioned in 1878, became outlined more clearly during Núñez's second presidential period (1884-1886). It was finally legitimized in the National Constitution of 1886. After the Núñez's administrative triumph against Radical Liberals—who intended to not only overthrow but assassinate Núñez for having allegedly betrayed Liberalism—in the 1885 civil war at La Humareda, Núñez, declared that the Constitution of 1863 had ceased to exist, and set the task of solidifying his Regeneration program by proposing reforms to the 1863 *Olimpo Radical* Constitution. In order to achieve that end, Núñez called upon two *delegatarios* of each sovereign state who brought their allegiance to the *Partido Nacional* to draft the new constitution, following Núñez's guidelines. Núñez claimed that *delegatarios* were citizens chosen among the most “distinguished for their knowledge, social position, and civic virtues” (Núñez, 1885 15.109-110) yet they did not necessarily represent their places of origin, nor the particular needs and desires of those places. For instance, Miguel Antonio Caro was a representative from two states, one of which was the sovereign state of Panama—a place he never even saw.

### **The Spirit of the Constitution of 1886**

In his inaugural speech before the *Consejo Nacional Constituyente*, Núñez presented what became the “spirit of the [Regeneration] law,” arguing that the new constitution had

silently been elaborated in the “*Alma del pueblo colombiano*”<sup>42</sup> (the soul of the Colombian people), who were tired of “enervating particularism” and needed to change it into “vigorous generosity.” Núñez, following his pragmatic vision used the idea of the “*alma del pueblo*” as a synonym of “nation.” With this term, the conservative tendency to associate between political culture and other cultural expressions was a manifestation of the most profound feelings of the people, that is, “the character of the Colombian people, free of any rationalization” (Giraldo Jiménez, 1995-1996). Since Núñez and Caro believed in the good character of the Colombian people, the 1886 Constitution intended to “condense” that Colombian “soul” as purely Catholic (Ibid). In that sense, Núñez claimed to be modeling the feeling of the majority of the Colombians, who trusted him in his “patriotism and sincerity”, and trusted his measures against those who tried to challenge his legitimacy and authority. Because the *Regeneración fundamental* intended to reflect “*el alma del pueblo*,” Núñez affirmed that it would not be a copy of foreign models, or the result of the “isolated speculations of febrile brains.” Instead, it would be natural and easy codification of the nation’s thoughts and desires (Núñez, 1885:15, 109-110).

In general terms, the project of the Regeneration represented for Núñez a liberalization of the economic, political, social, and moral life of the nation and the state. In order to achieve this liberalization, Núñez insisted on six interrelated principles. 1) It

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<sup>42</sup> Rafael Núñez’s use of the expression “*el alma del pueblo*” was inspired by Edmund Burke’s idea of the “soul of a people”. For Burke, as Fabio Humberto Giraldo Jiménez explains, the “spirit of the people” is conceived as the unitary creative principle of the multiple manifestations of existence of each people as well as their political and cultural institutions, their political and cultural values, that only have normative value in relation with the individual and irreducible spirit of the people that has produced them. See Giraldo Jimenez, 1995-1996

was fundamental to seek a stable and harmonious equilibrium between political power and individual liberty, without eliminating the latter, but requiring more discretionary competence from the “*directores del estado*”/managers of the state and local political authorities. 2) There would be a special, alternate electoral mechanism through a system intended to “liberate the suffrage.” This system would eliminate the dangers of anarchy and decomposition inherent in an extended ruling of the same political party. 3) In order to achieve objective number two, there would have to be a modification of the political customs and habits so as to eliminate electoral corruption and the tremendous administrative negligence that afflicted the nation. 4) The previous changes could only be achieved if there was a sincere attempt to moralize public life and the Administration. 5) In the Regeneration, tolerance, justice, peace, and tranquility should be the conditions for the reorganization of the nation’s public life. 6) These virtues could only come from a national unification that would absorb the violence of the political party struggle (Nieto Arteta, 1996:376).

The basic premise of these principles was the replacement of “anarchy” for “order,” which would lead to “concord and progress” (Núñez, 1944 Vol. 2:67). Order became the central concept for the organization of society. The achievement of order would also have to reflect the definite elimination of a “vertiginous and fraudulent suffrage” and replace it with a “reflexive and authentic election,” that defended religious/moral sentiments. In concordance with those “sentiments,” the educational

system should have the guidance of the Christian morality, which allegedly for Núñez and undoubtedly for Caro was at the core of civilization.<sup>43</sup>

Justice was also important in this project because it played a fundamental role in the creation of the law (“natural” and otherwise). For Núñez, quoting Pascal, “the heart had reasons that reason does not understand”, and the heart (of a Christian) is full of the sentiments of charity, piety, and magnanimity, which are not part of the law’s cold rationality, much less the atheist’s impious heart (Núñez as cited in Giraldo Jimenez, 1995-1996). In other words, for Núñez the rational metaphysics of the French Revolution’s legacy of “liberty, equality, and fraternity” had to be transformed into a kind of Catholic metaphysics of “charity, obedience and morality” (Urrego, 1997). As will be discussed further on, this transformation deeply influenced Caro’s view of individual rights, liberties, and the conception of citizenship when he drafted the Constitution. Justice was also tied to freedom in that, as Núñez insisted, the principle of freedom required that “we are just.” For Núñez, this principle required that one understand that “each individual’s scope of action compulsory requires a limit in the scope of action of other individuals based on the pre-communal interest” (Núñez, 1885 15.109-110). For this reason, it was imperative to set a regulatory entity -Supreme Court- with representation from across the country, and which would be capable of protecting individual freedom and rights (Nieto Arteta, 1996:385).

Núñez’s principles also advocated the implementation of a “radical centralization of state power, the strengthening of executive power, the support to the Catholic Church

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<sup>43</sup> The latter claim, as observed in the previous chapter, was influenced by Jaime Blames’ traditionalism

and the use of religion as an educational force and as an element of social cohesion” (Melo, 1989:48 and ff). In this sense, Núñez, Caro, and other *delegatarios* proposed the “*centralización política*” and “*decentralización administrativa*” that signified the strengthening of the presidency. The president was invested with the extraordinary power to appoint governors and other officials at will, although they had traditionally been elected through “popular” vote. Also, the presidential period was increased from two years to six. Centralization was political, but it had serious effects on the economy of the nation. The Regeneration implemented radical economic policies to strengthen the revenue of the already diminished state finances.

Contradictorily, the economic reforms implemented during the Regeneration combined economic Liberalism with “bourbonic” measures. Economic Liberalism, according to Marco Palacios, was expressed in the opening to foreign investment, the development of mining and railroads, and the privatization of state lands to export agriculture interests (Palacios, 2006:28-29; LeGrand, 1994). In 1881, for instance, out of 1,301,122 hectares of state land, only 6,066 were distributed among settlers—only 0.05%. Meanwhile, 152,650 hectares were granted on “special concessions.” In the Southwestern region of Cauca, in 1877, one man alone, Lorenzo Gallón, received 60,000 hectares. According to Kalmanovitz, radical liberals gave away land titles to a handful of individuals (1985:115-116).

Bourbonism, on the other hand, was expressed in measures to raise government revenues, modernize the army, create a central bank with the exclusive power to issue paper money, and protect artisanship within a paternalistic framework (Palacios, *Ibid*).

Some of these measures encountered resistance from the opposition, but others were less threatening because they continued the economic models of previous regimes such as free trade. For Palacios (2006), the Banco Nacional, for instance, was not organized to create political tensions; however, it was used by the Regenerators to “neutralize, co-opt, or reduce the opposition of merchant elites in the provinces, and later to defeat armed Liberal uprisings” (29). The creation of the Banco Nacional in 1880, and the “paper money initiative,” that is, the implementation of the “forced acceptance of paper money” (*moneda de curso forzoso*) were Regenerationist “tools for increasing the ruling group’s power. According to Palacios, they also marked the “renunciation of pure laissez faire” through the increment in import duties to protect urban artisans” (30). The right to issue paper money was officially concentrated in the Banco Nacional, but it was soon extended to already existing and new private banks that would permit transactions with the Banco Nacional currency. In 1887, however, the emission rights of private banking expired, thanks to the overwhelming concentration of power that the 1886 Constitution allowed the central state.<sup>44</sup>

The protection of urban artisans, according to Palacios, was largely about the government raising revenues, since by the time of the Regeneration there was relatively little to protect. Duties were not readjusted for inflation, and they did not compensate for the long-term fall in the prices of imported manufacturers, especially cotton textiles. In the end, these measures and others such as the nationalization of the production, distribution, and commercialization of cigarettes, the monopoly in the production of

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<sup>44</sup> El papel moneda en Colombia-Ayuda de tareas sobre economía. Biblioteca Virtual del Banco de la República. 2005 <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/ayudadetareas/economia/econo88.htm>



matches, and a failed export tax on coffee did not contribute to increase state revenue. If anything, they produced inflation and more debt (Palacios, 2006:28-31).

In addition to these factors, Núñez increased government expenses when he became President. Since his first administration, as Jorge Orlando Melo explains, the state had spent extravagant amounts on diplomatic services, strengthening the armed forces and the judicial system, paying for important public works and private initiatives, as well as covering the costs produced by the three violent outbursts of 1885, 1895 and 1899-1902.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the measures implemented during the Regeneration in order to alleviate political and the economic problems, there was little faith and trust in state officials, much less in the Banco Nacional authorities. For this reason, the issue of money of the Banco Nacional did not contribute to a stable market. The Banco was used as a machine to produce bills that fed the constant violence.<sup>46</sup>

The Regeneration's principle of "*centralización política*" and "*decentralización administrativa*," it can be argued, intended to reenact the French revolutionary idea that, in Benedict Anderson's words, imagined the nation as an abstract and homogeneous entity constructed on the basis of its citizens' political will (B. Anderson, 1991:6). The Regeneration, despite its constitutional efforts, could not compete with the political landscape of the country, in which political and economic power were "handled" at a local level. The intended *decentralización administrativa* was based on Caro's idea that

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<sup>45</sup> For a comprehensive view of the economic measures implemented during the Regeneration, see Jorge Orlando Melo. "Las vicisitudes del modelo Liberal (1850-1899)." In: Ocampo (Ed.). *Historia económica de Colombia*. Bogota: Presidencia de la Republica.1997:Chapter 4

<sup>46</sup> El papel moneda en Colombia-Ayuda de tareas sobre economía. Biblioteca Virtual del Banco de la República, 2005 <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/ayudadetareas/economia/econo88.htm>

such political and economic reorganization would not be different from previous political and administrative arrangements. On the contrary, Caro argued that *decentralización* would be in perfect harmony with municipal liberties that, in accordance with the Constitution, had a sphere of action on their own (Caro, [1888] as cited in Caro, 1951:294).

Localism was not exclusive to nineteenth-century Colombia. As François Xavier Guerra argues, most of Spanish America suffered from the same political and economic illness because “in the insurgent America, the sovereignty of the people was not yet conducive to national sovereignty” (Guerra, 1994:126 as cited in Colom, 1999; Annino, 1994:219 and ff). The “political centralization” that was intended to achieve Núñez’s “scientific peace,” was more formal than real, Palacios argues. What was real, however, was the resentment generated among the economic and political elites of the provinces, which had been mostly autonomous. The long-term effects of centralization and its economic measures are still a matter of controversy. Certainly, the level of economic intervention during the Regeneration was modest compared with that of Mexico or Chile. The cause of this deficient economic progress has its roots in the long-lasting political conflict, the weakness of the state, and the instability of Colombia’s export composition and revenue in the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite the poor results of these measures, economists agree that the Regeneration did increase direct foreign investment, and for a short period, coffee growers and exporters experienced a significant profit and a long-lasting international recognition of the quality of Colombian coffee (Palacios, 2006:31).

Although large landowners had been growing coffee in the Eastern part of the country (the Santander region) since mid nineteenth century, by the end of the century other regions became important coffee producers. According to Marco Palacios, the incentive of coffee exports prompted the spread small cultivators along side already well established large producers. The social origin of coffee landowners was mostly of the merchant kind who in the haciendas implemented different labor systems, for instance, in Santander, for instance, sharecropping and in Antioquia *agregados*.<sup>47</sup> Palacios also notes that the relations of class and race in the coffee haciendas comprised owners and workers of different “race” in central region and in the Antioquia region the owner and worker were racially homogeneous (Palacios, 1980:79).

The centralization project of the Regeneration did not concentrate exclusively on the economic or political spheres, because for Caro and Núñez, economic progress did not necessarily lead to a country’s moral progress. For this reason, the Regeneration influenced the sentiment of nationalism, extending its scope to the cultural milieu and the private sphere, and more specifically, to the realm of faith and religion. In this sense, the reason for the intromission of the Regeneration state in matters of faith came from Núñez and Caro’s conviction that the solution to the Colombian society’s ills was a strong, moral Catholic reform (Giraldo Jiménez, 1996). This is how the Regeneration brought the Church back to center stage. Besides, Núñez agreed that the soul of the Colombian people was Catholic and, as such, the Catholic Church was the only institution capable of creating social cohesion through education and morality. Therefore, for Caro’s relief, it

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<sup>47</sup> Persons who live in someone else’s property at exchange for small jobs, small rent or for free.

was necessary to protect the ecclesiastic institution and give it back the privileges it had “lost” to the “intolerance” of Liberalism.

Undeniably, the Liberal American and French Constitutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inspired Núñez in his political, moral, and administrative goals for the nation. This influence can be noted in his insistence on issues such as national sovereignty, the supremacy of the law over the Constitution, the disregard of human rights, and the Constitution<sup>48</sup> and centralization. Nonetheless, it was Miguel Antonio Caro’s ideas and dogmatism--inspired by all things Hispanic--that prevailed in the drafting of the Regeneration Constitution of 1886.

Despite the various drafts and rejected proposals presented by different members of the *Consejo Nacional de Delegatarios*,<sup>49</sup> Caro dogmatically defended what became the final draft of the Constitution in 1886. Caro’s constitution indeed included some of Núñez’s propositions; however, the fundamentals of this document were Caro’s doing, and were inspired by the Spanish Constitution of 1876 (Malagón Pinzón n.d.; Palacios, 2006:27). Even a cursory reading of the latter Constitution reveals significant similarities between the two texts. This influence is not surprising. Spain—much to Caro’s satisfaction—had been slowly but steadily “re-colonizing” Colombia since the early 1870s by sending emissaries to exchange intellectual accomplishments with the Colombian intellectual elite, especially with relation to grammar, poetry, literature, and translation. Spain’s ultimate intention was to improve and consolidate relations between

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<sup>48</sup> This particular issue is characteristic of the nineteenth-century Liberal state, in which individual rights depended on the law.

<sup>49</sup> For some of the proposals and discussions on the Regeneration constitution see Valencia Villa, 1992:99-117

the “*madre patria*” and Colombia (Martínez, 2001:456). The foundation of the *Academia Colombiana de la Lengua* in Bogotá in 1872, promoted by Caro, became a landmark of such relations. This *Academia* had the purpose of helping its Spanish counterpart to “preserve the beautiful unity of the Spanish language in both continents” as well as to celebrate the memory [and works] of Colombian “*varones insignes*”/notable men who had honored and cultivated the Spanish language (Caro, 1952:93-94). This academy also became the preparing ground for future presidents of the republic.

Caro’s most important political tribute to the “*madre patria*” was the 1886 Constitution, which in the end responded to his most profound religious beliefs and orthodox political views. In order to impose his beliefs, as Rodríguez García (2006:152) maintains, Caro made use of the “letrados’ monopoly interpretation,” which “is legitimated by their technical expertise...of highly literate experts.” Caro believed that many of his fellow delegates were “*letrados* with a hypertrophied flair for erudition and rhetoric,” and therefore not prepared to interpret his writing, much less his “authorial intention” in the *Bases de la Reforma* (1885) and in the last draft of the Constitution. Besides, many of the legal terms he used required expert translation, putting into not only his expertise but that of the other *delegatarios*. Furthermore, given his vast philological knowledge, he could not accept the “numerous emendations” to the documents since “every single suggestion contained grammatical and semantic errors” (Caro as cited in Rodríguez García, *Ibid*). Caro’s concern with the “perfection” of the documents he drafted had to do not only with his fascination with language itself, but also with his view in relation to the power of language. By using Latin in his writings and Latin allocutions

before the *delegatarios*, he manipulated meaning and reinforced his world-view, as seen in his idea that “laws had to express universal interests rather than particular ones, and so all citizens had to abide by consecrated traditions even when these went against their conscience” (Ibid:152).

Caro’s draft of the constitution responded in a traditionalist, conservative way to Núñez’s most critical concerns, including protectionism, paper money, and the constitutional reform. However, it is still unclear whether Núñez wholly agreed with Caro’s constitution or not. In that sense, as Jacobo Perez Escobar (2000) argues, there were two constitutions produced by the *Delegatarios*. The first one was Caro’s masterpiece and the second was represented by the Transitory Provisions, which were added to “please Núñez,” since he was disappointed in some of the articles Caro had proposed (167). An example of this is the Transitory Provision K, which states that the “Government shall be empowered to prevent and punish abuses of the press until the law on the subject has been enacted.”<sup>50</sup> The fact that there were provisions added to the Constitution does not change what Núñez intended for a constitution with a national character that would be free from the hegemony of either the Liberal or the Conservative party. In the end, the Constitution of 1886 consecrated the unified character of the nation, which was sovereign and transformed the sovereign states into *departamentos*. It also ordered the nationalization of civil, penal, commercial, and educational legislation. It eliminated the election of regional executive functionaries, who would be replaced by

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<sup>50</sup> In this dissertation we will use the translation to the 1886 and other Colombian Constitutions provided by William Marion Gibson in his *The Constitutions of Colombia*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1948

direct appointments from the president. Governors would also elect local officials (Palacios, 2006:27-28).

These measures were expected to diminish the power of local political forces that might revolt against the central government. In this respect Francisco Colom suggests that the doctrinaire component of constitutions was to instill in the population the civic virtue whose lack Liberator Simón Bolívar blamed for the political incapacity of the liberated people of the Americas. Moreover, it seems that Caro and Núñez agreed that it was necessary to institutionalize a strong and central power that would be able to inspire the moral conditions of liberty in its citizens (Colom, 1999:11-19).

In the Constitution of 1886, Caro included several articles protecting the Church and assigning it a civil role. The Constitution devoted an entire Title (IV, Articles 53-56) exclusively to the “Relations between Church and State.” It established regular relations between the Vatican and the Colombian state, especially after the Concordat of 1887. Through the Concordat the Church took control of the civil registry, the supervision of education, and control of cemeteries; there was a reinstatement of the *fuero eclesiástico*, which was a separate legal sphere that provided partial immunity for clergy (Palacios, 2006:18). In addition, Colombia promised to pay Rome an indemnization for the disamortization that previous regimes had imposed on the Church.<sup>51</sup>

Some of these *Artículos* are complementary and at times contradictory: For example, Art. 38 states that “the Apostolic, Roman Catholic Religion is the religion of

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<sup>51</sup> More concrete details on these issues can be found, according to Röthlisberger Ernst in Law Number 35 of 1888, which confirmed the agreements with Pap Leo XIII. Also Law Number 153 of 1887, which acknowledged the Church’s absolute freedom and equality with civil legislation. Röthlisberger Ernst. *El Dorado*. Bogotá, Editorial Presencia. 1993.  
<http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/historia/eldorado/eldo12b.htm>

the nation,” which “public authorities shall protect and cause it to be respected as an essential element of social cohesion.” The Constitution, nonetheless, also mandated (in Art. 39) that “No one shall be molested because of his religious opinions or compelled by the authorities to profess beliefs or observe practices contrary to his conscience.” And, as a contradictory dictum, Caro codified his belief that Christian civilization sets the moral, social, and cultural standards for humanity, stating that (Art 40) “the practice of all cults not contrary to Christian morals or laws is permitted.” The imposition of Catholicism as the religion of the nation was related directly to other regulations and limitations imposed on individual liberties by the Regeneration project.

Education also fell under this spell. For the *Olimpo Radical*, the expansion and improvement of public education became a priority. The Organic Mandate of November 1, 1870 was created for the purpose of tackling educational problems for the first time in the country’s republican life. The situation of the school system was precarious. A census taken in 1870 showed that of the nation’s 563,000 children, only 32,000 attended school of any kind (*Memoria al Congreso de Colombia*, 1871:37). Moreover, in the countryside, only three or four residents could read a newspaper. Since any problem became a political issue, education was not an exception. As Jane Meyer Loy comments, education produced a heated debate in which political and religious factors played a decisive role (Meyer Loy, 1971:293) --despite the non complacent attitude of many state officials and some sectors of the clergy.

Regardless of the opposition, the federalist regime achieved considerable progress in the first five years of the Organic Decree. By 1876 there were 1,646 schools and



79,123 students, which was an increase of 327 schools and 27,177 students over the figures reported in 1872.<sup>52</sup> Not surprisingly, as the Olimpo Radical was losing its ground, and so were the reforms they proposed and implemented. The Núñez administration of 1880-1882 tried once more to reorganize primary instruction, but failed. There was wide criticism of the precarious conditions of schools and education, but officials offered no solutions to this problem. This official silence and lack of initiative are to blame for the following official records: in 1884, there were 1,291 schools and 68,291 students in Colombia—a decline of 349 schools and 10,289 students from the totals of 1876.<sup>53</sup>

As the problem of education worsened, Núñez and Caro decided that the Church ought to take on the role of improving the system. In this respect, the 1886 Constitution established (Art. 41) that “public education shall be organized and directed in accordance with the Catholic religion”. The reason behind this statement was Caro’s idea that public education should be in accord with the religious sentiment of the nation. Since that sentiment was essentially Catholic, and since “secular education was pernicious,” religious education would benefit believers and non-believers (Caro, 1885 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:112-113). The ordinance that “public education supported by public funds shall be gratuitous and not compulsory” (Art 38-41) had to do with the Liberal idea that “parents had no right to deprive their children from their moral nourishment.” The only way in which children would escape the Catholic system would be if parents exercised their “reasonable liberty” to choose whether they sent their children to school.

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<sup>52</sup> Informe del Director General de Instrucción Primaria de la Unión. Bogotá, 1876, as cited in Jane Meyer Loy, 1971:288

<sup>53</sup> Memorial del Secretario de Instrucción Publica correspondiente al año de 1883. Bogota, 1884, as cited in Meyer Loy. 1971:293.

In matters of the private sphere of the home, the state had no say. Nonetheless, the imposition of Catholicism as the religion of the nation and as the core of the educational system seemed to respond to Núñez's idea of the "harmonious [Catholic] equilibrium between political power and individual liberty." In it, individual liberties would contribute to "the reorganization [by the "*directores del estado*"] of the nation's public life." The Church's guidance in the public sphere of the school [not to mention the use of the pulpit for pedagogical purposes] would promote the achievement of "tolerance and justice, peace and tranquility."

The reliance upon religion to solve the problems of the nation led to a nationalism that differed from the nationalisms of other parts of Latin America at the time. Almost everywhere else, nationalism operated at the social level by mobilizing the pueblo, assuring their legal equality as citizens, and involving their participation in public life for the "national good." Under Regeneration, nationalism did not "prescribe the mobilization" of the pueblo (except for religious purposes), nor did it advocate for the *pueblo's* legal status as "equal" citizens; nor did it ensure their participation in the public sphere for the "national good." The nationalism advocated during the Regeneration was Catholic in nature, backed by an authoritarian [Marxian] "repressive state." Inspired by the life and works of Bolívar, and in the name of Colombian nationalism, Núñez, Caro, and their followers, implemented coercive and material forms of repression (such as the death penalty and exile) sanctioned by the Regeneration law—especially against the opposition. For Miguel Angel Urrego (1997b), the Regenerators' call for order resulted in the return to medieval notions of subordination to spiritual power and to its

representatives (51). For Urrego, the clergy became the political and administrative mediators between the state and the *pueblo*. Furthermore, the law was subordinated to morality. In this sense, the norms characterized crimes as not only unlawful, but also “immoral”. For the Regeneration, Liberalism was considered an “error,” it was the struggle between “good and evil” (Ibid). In order to guarantee order, the state also used ideological forms of penetration (Catholicism) into the social network of elites who supported the Regeneration and of the *pueblo*. The state accomplished this via what Louis Althusser calls, “ideological state apparatuses.” The Regeneration did not mobilize the *pueblo*. It intended to limit any kind of manifestation against the state, the Church, and the laws. The state created the means and conditions to guarantee the safety of the activities of the Catholic believers. But most important of all, the Regenerators’ notion of order called for the transformation of the Liberal citizen into a “virtuous Catholic” (Urrego, Ibid) or a Catholic citizen.

The Regeneration reinforced the already deep inequality that existed between the *pueblo* and the elite by appealing to “natural law,” which insisted on the superiority of a few and the inferiority of the majority. The “national good” would only be achieved if Colombians followed the traditionalist perspective: a perspective that contended that participation in public life would be effective only if the “enlightened” participated and decided for the “immense minority.” In terms of individual rights, for which citizenship was key, the Regeneration consecrated basic individual guarantees similar to those of previous constitutions. However, in the Regeneration Constitution, these liberties were what Jacobo Perez calls “a mere expression of a literary sentiment,” a “theoretical and

inefficient thing,” because its *Artículos Transitorios* stripped it of its “legitimacy and effectiveness” (Pérez Escobar, 2000:167).

The Regeneration period ended with the One Thousand Day War (1899-1902). The economic and political measures of the Regeneration did not put an end to political conflicts, nor did it improve the conditions of existence for the majority of Colombians. After the war, despite the apparent failures of Caro and Núñez’s reforms, there was a three- decade period of Conservative hegemony in apparent harmony. The influence of the 1886 Constitution, however, was long lasting in the country’s political and cultural life. Citizenship was one of the institutions and tools that the Regeneration used in order to impose not only a Catholic order, but also a repressive, “conformist,” and exclusionary one. How did the Regeneration law apply to the notion of citizenship? What were the political repercussions of the concept?

### **Citizenship in the Regeneration**

As mentioned earlier, the establishment of “order” fostered the formation of a new type of citizen through the imposition on the Liberal bourgeois type of citizen of a “virtuous Catholic one” from whom charity, morality and obedience were expected. Obedience rememorizes the kind of relationship that a monarch would expect from his subjects. In order to understand this imposition, it is important to briefly mention the notions of citizenship that had operated in nineteenth-century Colombia, because such notions indicate some of the most important contradictions that would emerge throughout the century in all spheres of social, political, cultural, and economic life. As has been

discussed in previous chapters, the differences between the Liberal and Conservative Parties were not only of the economic order, since both parties had many interests in common. Their differences lay also in the manner in which they hoped to achieve their political, cultural, and social goals in the public and private sphere. Nevertheless, the parties' understanding of citizenship did set them apart (Palacios, 1983:29), despite the recognition of this notion by both Liberals and Conservatives as a "political practical tool" after Independence in 1810. Nonetheless, each Party adapted the notion of citizenship that best fit its particular agenda at an official level, through Constitutions, and informally, through catechisms; as well as through clerical and secular periodical publications and school curricula, among other means.

Constitutionalism in nineteenth-century Colombia is complex, since from Independence in 1810 to 1886, the *letrados* drafted and implemented ten constitutions, six of which were centralist, and four of which were of federalist leaning. Reforming constitutions was not an exclusive phenomenon of nineteenth-century Colombia; rather, it is found across most of Latin America. The reason for high hopes about constitutions, as Francisco Colom argues, lay in the conviction that constitutions embodied the political structure of society and regulated its development (1999). Colombian drafters of constitutions, however, did not understand the fact that "there was no guarantee of pluralism that does not find support in the material structure of society itself. The violence instigated by Liberals and Conservatives and the constant change of constitutions throughout the nineteenth century is a reflection of that perception" (Ibid). Nonetheless, the idea persisted that constitutions, as modern state mechanisms, could

protect social institutions from political coercion and could help establish the “social connections of life as a whole.” Furthermore, that same principle promoted an intricate relationship to the modern notion of citizenship. Constitutions established the institution of citizenship, which was used as a mechanism to differentiate between social groups, and to delineate the characteristics of those who would be awarded the title of “citizen” based on such “qualities” as gender, wealth, race, and literacy.

In the ten constitutions drafted in the nineteenth century, the political notion of citizenship changed only slightly. In general, citizenship was determined by the categories of gender, race and class. In this sense, most of the constitutions agreed that only those males who were married or who have been married, and were required to be at least twenty-one years of age were considered citizens. Literacy was also a mandatory qualification. Private property and class were also key elements in the hegemonic projects of the elites in which citizens could preferably only be those individuals with private property or those engaged in a profession other than menial or domestic servitude, or day laboring. Men could also qualify if they had an annual income and paid direct tax. In other words, only men of certain class stature whose hands would not get dirty could be citizens. These men were citizens, and therefore were capable of electing and being elected to public office. It was the duty of all Colombians to serve the nation in the manner prescribed by law, sacrificing life itself if necessary in the defense of national sovereignty.

Contrary to the United States or France, where citizenship was originally based on private property,<sup>54</sup> in Colombia, citizenship was more inclusive. In the early 1800s, inspired in the *Social Contract*, Independentists established in constitutions such as that of 1811 Constitución de Tunja, that “*la soberanía reside originaria y esencialmente en el pueblo. La universalidad de los ciudadanos constituye el pueblo soberano.*” In the same document, however, it contended that there were various classes of citizens when it referred to access to public instruction: “*el pueblo tiene derecho a que el gobierno favorezca ... los progresos de la ilustración pública, facilitando la instrucción a todas las clases de ciudadanos*”/ the people has the right that the government favors ... the progress of public illustration, facilitating instruction to all classes of citizens. As can be observed, the constitution vaguely defined what it meant by *pueblo soberano* or *universalidad de los ciudadanos* in the political or economic scene as citizenship was associated more with patriotic, intellectual, and moral categories (Konig, 1994:394). The last two categories were inherited from Spanish colonialism, a period in which Colombia was socially and economically structured around the local community, and the collective was predominant over the individual. This “local community” came before the “political community.” Culturally, however, instead of promoting republicanism, this community promoted affective, paternal, patronage, and local identities—though not necessarily of a political kind. The consequence of this kind of community arrangement was a strong localism that characterized most of nineteenth-century Colombia and was blamed for most of that century’s violence; and was held responsible for the strain it put on the

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<sup>54</sup> As Charles Austin Beard shows in his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*.

economic and the political spheres at the time of nation and state formation (Uribe de Hincapié, 1996:67-76). Equally characteristic of this kind of arrangement, despite the trend toward the imported notions of autonomy and liberty, the “citizen” of the Colombian republic was not an autonomous individual, a possessor of rights, or a man committed to a social contract. The first “citizens” in Colombia were those with economic independence, who possessed intellectual knowledge and owned land or houses particularly in urban areas. Citizens were also those male individuals who could hire servants, or journeymen, or own slaves. In other words, citizenship depended on social, economic, and geographical location.

It was difficult to locate in constitutions the criteria or conditions for access to citizenship in the early republic, because citizenship was handled at a local level. The result was a combination of modern, rational, and Liberal ideas (such as literacy as a requirement for election), as well as economic independence (payment of taxes and dues), with citizenship representing virtues, dignity, honesty, and morals (Guerra, 1999:47). Therefore, assigning citizenship based on these qualities required knowledge of the people requesting citizenship. The designation was subjective and access to citizenship was lax and discretionary. In that sense, decisions over who was or was not a citizen depended, in some instances, on who could control voters. Paradoxically, this discretionary management of citizenship rights gave way to new forms of citizenship, and allowed groups outside the “*sociedad pensante*”/thinking society to have access to citizenship rights, especially the right to vote (Uribe de Hincapié, 1996:67-76).



Citizenship was one of the cornerstones of Liberal ideology, which represented the limitation of government power; the granting, recognition and protection of a number of individual rights; the protection of private property, one of the fundamental principles of Liberalism; and the notion of representative government. Elite Liberals of mid-century Colombia concurred with the European notion that citizenship was a new, universal identity that would supersede other relations in society: An identity they could use to shape the lower classes into disciplined, orderly workers under elite leadership (Singh Mehta, 1999 in Sanders, 2004b:304). For them, rational thought determined citizenship. In some regions of the country, however, willingness to support the Liberal cause was sufficient to grant citizenship rights. In that respect, free blacks and Indians could also achieve the status of citizens—with restrictions on voting rights. Popular Liberals reacted to racism and exclusion by embracing the notion of citizenship (Alaix, 1850 in Sanders, Ibid:282) -- although equality and inclusion did not always result from their advocacy.

For Conservatives, citizenship depended on history and social location. They believed that for society to achieve order and peace, it ought to follow the perfect organizational model of the Church with its order, authority, and hierarchy (Sanders, 2004:article 307). Their followers, mostly *mestizos* from the prosperous and traditional Antioquia region, took advantage of the Liberal alienation of Indians--whom they viewed as too barbarous and religious for an alliance (Sanders, 2003:67; Sanders, 2004:69) --to enlist them under the close “supervision” of the Catholic Church. For Conservatives, “blacks” were “ignorant men” who only plotted rebellion and did not “merit the title of

true Granadans” (González, 1855 as cited in Sanders, 2004b:304) much less the title of citizens. This notion of citizenship was echoed in the Regeneration.

Similar divergences were present in nineteenth-century Latin America as well. In El Salvador, for instance, radical Liberals favored the formation of free, equal, and rational citizens, in opposition to Catholic Liberals, who believed that the citizen and the nation had to be founded on religious values (Herrera Mena, 2008). In any case, as in the other countries in the region, Liberal or “Catholic” ideas of citizenship were imposed by the state or the pulpit in a top-down process over “immature communities” that were unable to assimilate, by themselves, the new forms of representation inspired by the French Revolution (Anrup and Oieni, 1999). Rhetorically and factually, the Liberal or Catholic notion of citizenship helped create a feeling of integration into the nation. However, the illusion of equality and freedom was undermined by an ideology whose principles benefited only the few. In this respect, Florencia Mallon’s *Peasant and Nation* shows the role of peasants in state and nation building in Mexico and Peru, and how different conflicts (with regard to ideas of race, class, and gender) shaped local politics and its relation to the elite ruling class (Mallon, 1995). In spite of the exclusionary nature of Spanish American constitutions, access to power and its effective exercise were not simple reproductive processes, nor were they the exchange of one elitist group for another; rather, power was mediated through the influential relationship between the masses and the elites (Sábato, 2001:16). This relationship fostered the formation of new political communities or parties in which, surprisingly, party leaders were not always interested in recruiting an ever-increasing number of voters. Moreover, although leaders

displayed a rich rhetoric about participation, citizenship, and the development of the public spirit, in most cases they did little to encourage the mobilization of a significant electorate.

In spite of their conflicting political interests, Colombian elite Liberals and Conservatives encouraged an electoral culture based on “universal” suffrage, with its own plethora of institutions, formal and informal (Posada-Carbó, 2003), including representative bodies such as Congress, local city councils, and departmental assemblies. Citizenship, however, did not have an exclusive political connotation. Liberals and Conservatives saw citizenship as part of what Cristina Rojas calls the “civilizing will.” Nonetheless, “civilization” meant rather different things for each political collective. For Liberals, civilization was associated with the modern principles of the French Revolution: “Liberty, equality and fraternity.” This slogan was present in Liberal constitutions throughout the nineteenth century. However, the understanding and application of the notion of “citizenship” proved problematic. The notion of universal equality posed particular problems, because most of the population, for a variety of reasons outlined by the elites, did not fall into the category of “citizen.” Equality only meant equality amongst equals. For Conservatives, civilization meant following the mandates of the Catholic Church.

During the *Olimpo Radical*, the “enlightened” notion of citizenship had rational thought as its fundamental premise. On that basis, citizenship was founded on individual liberties and guarantees such as the inviolability of human life, the freedom to own private property, individual freedoms, the right to protection, the freedom of the press,

freedom of enterprise, nonconfiscation of property, the right to equality and liberty in receiving instruction, and the freedom to own and sell weapons in times of peace. No less important was the freedom to profess any religion, and the right to participate in elections through the implementation of universal suffrage for married men above the age of twenty-one who owned private property (Molina, 1973). The rights that appeared in the Radical Constitution of 1863 were not always granted. This failure could be attributed to the lack of state resources or the willingness to guarantee them, or to the fact that the *Olimpo Radical* could not reconcile the theoretical embrace of equality with the continuing and increasingly acute polarization of real-life opportunities and satisfactions (Wallerstein, 2003) that had been called for during the French Revolution.

The change of the political order from radical Liberalism to conservative-Catholic traditionalism also influenced the notion of citizenship. Rafael Núñez was a defender of individual freedoms and tended toward a Liberal constitutional reform. At the same time, he proposed a “philosophy of order,” an ideology of harmony instead of an ideology of conflict. The Regeneration intended to guarantee the unity of society and neutralize the separatist tendencies imposed in the 1863 Constitution (Giraldo Jimenez, 1995-1996:173). In this sense, the search for a “stable and harmonious equilibrium between political power and individual liberty” represented one of the most relevant and effective projects of the Regeneration, which can be grasped in the notion of citizenship expressed in the Constitution of 1886. For instance, it used rhetoric in its formulation of “natural and fundamental rights of individuals” (Miller 1891:71 as cited in Beard, 1941:10-11) that was similar to that of other modern Liberal constitutions. However, the achievement

of such “equilibrium” proved difficult because of limitations on individual liberties. Limitations were set on the grounds that every citizen was free but had to be responsible for his actions. Therefore, the constitution had to set reasonable expectations in terms of individual freedoms.

The Regeneration recreated the Conservative notion of citizenship, which had been used as a mechanism of social control in previous constitutions in order to grant voting rights to a few people and protect private property from the less privileged social groups. It is important to remember that in privatizing public lands, the state employed laws and policies to facilitate access to land to already large property owners.<sup>55</sup> Such measures which in the end only benefitted already large property owners, actually hindered access to citizenship, and thus impeded access to polls under a regime that honored the *voto indirecto*/indirect vote. In this sense, the Regeneration implemented an election system in which all citizens could vote for municipal council and department assembly appointees. However, only those literate males with property or a certain income could vote to elect representatives and electors. These “electors” would vote to elect the president and vice-president of the republic (Melo, 1989). The Habermasian explanation of the justification of Liberal constitutionalism that lies in the image of a naturally developing set of social relations, embodying, and cultivating the freedom and autonomy of individuals (Warren, 1989:516) had a limited place during the Regeneration both in theory and in practice. This was particularly the case considering that *clientelismo*

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<sup>55</sup> For more on the way in which public land were handled “privately”, see Catherine LeGrand. “De las tierras públicas a las propiedades privadas: acaparamiento de tierras y conflictos agrarios en Colombia. 1870-1936.” *Lecturas de Economía*, 13, Medellín, Enero-Abril 1994

was solidly established and certainly violated the liberty of political participation. Besides, with the *Reforma Constitucional* in the hands of the *Delegatarios*, and especially with Caro, Núñez's Liberalism was transformed into Spanish traditionalism. In that sense, Núñez accepted the discussions that led to the final draft of norms and laws that imposed strong limitations on individual liberties. The reason for Núñez's transformation was that such limitations were necessary for the moral reform of the country.

The use of the political notion of citizenship under the Regeneration was limited and limiting. Articles 19-52 of the 1886 National Constitution revealed the little attention paid to fundamental rights in this official document and in the Regeneration as a whole. A study conducted by Rodolfo Arango reveals that the words "*libre*" (free), "*libertad*" (liberty) and "*igualdad*" (equality) appear only three or four times each, whereas the word "*autoridad*" appears at least twelve times in the same Articles. This is not surprising given that the text of the Constitution was written by Caro, who had free rein to design the project as he saw fit.

In the Constitution, the anti-enlightenment spirit is present insofar as the document does not refer to the fundamental rights of man. It only referred to the requirements for citizenship, but not to the legal mechanisms that guarantee the exercise of such rights (Arango, 2002:149-150). Similarly, the Regeneration continued to use the notion of citizenship and its civil component to establish the rights necessary for individual liberty, such as the right to property and equality before the law. Despite having been stipulated as norms in the Constitution, these rights were hardly respected.

Nonetheless, restrictions on political rights and other “Liberal rights” were strictly limited in order to achieve Núñez’s desired “scientific peace.”

Following Colombian constitutions of the nineteenth century, the Regeneration constitution also incorporated the individual in the canons of Liberal ideology in its Title II. In it, the Constitution of 1886 establishes the conditions of nationality, the requirements for citizenship, and the requirements and obligations inherent to the quality of citizenship. The Regeneration constitution defined citizenship in terms of the conditions for the exercise of power. Besides, citizenship, as in previous constitutions and in other countries, was used as a mechanism to differentiate between social groups and delineate the characteristics of who would be awarded the title of “citizen” based on such highly discriminatory “qualities” such as gender (male), wealth (economically independent), race (white), class (upper) and literacy (grammatical knowledge, literary expertise). In this sense, as Caro maintains, citizenship is the sum total of the most crucial conditions that give a minimum degree of acceptance to exercise political rights (Caro, 1886:765-766).

The limited access to citizenship in the Regeneration was justified in the purportedly laxities that the *Olimpo Radical* had in understanding and applying individual freedom. Most of all, regenerators blamed “liberty” as the cause origin of moral, political, and economic problems in Colombia. For them, such mistakes left a vacuum in governance that had to be corrected by law, order, and Catholic morality. Under the Regeneration, “law,” for instance, not only emphasized national sovereignty, but it also reinforced the privileges of a lettered class for which inequality [political,

cultural or social] was “natural” law. By establishing limitations on individual rights, the Regeneration state imposed its regulatory power on society and the individual. By reinforcing this imposition, the Regeneration sought to put an end to the *Olimpo Radical*. This measure also made official the intervention of the Church in society and the sphere of the individual. This is one of the most important reasons for the limitations of individual liberties and the notion of citizenship. The link between “restricted” citizenship, the Church, and the state, intended to produce a new pattern of social and economic organization that would achieve order (understood by Caro’s scholastic inclination as “harmonious exercise of duties” (Caro as cited in Galvis, 1986:146), but most importantly, it was intended to bring moral progress. Economic and social progress, Regenerator Rafael Núñez contended, could only be achieved through the moral reform of the nation.

The centralism of the Regeneration, its strong presidentialism, and the Church’s participation in the political sphere gave Regenerators the elements necessary to limit if not eliminate the Liberal principle of popular participation and respect for the population’s will. For that reason, the restriction on participation in the public sphere was even stricter than in the *Olimpo Radical* in that it required, for instance, literacy to participate in elections. By establishing this requirement, only a small minority would have the responsibility and privilege of direct political participation. According to Núñez, this minority was the only social group capable of guaranteeing equilibrium in society (Núñez, as cited in Galvis, 1986:156). Only these *letrados* could successfully implement a democracy with a strong presidentialism, a kind of semi-authoritarian regime, or what



Núñez called a “*democracia dirigida*” (directed democracy). In this kind of democracy, the notion of citizenship that best suited the Regeneration comprised “the right to vote and the right to hold any public office of authority or power” (Constitution of 1886, Art 18).” In this respect, Samper and Caro acknowledged that suffrage was a public and constitutional “*función*” (function, which the state grants or denies at will).

The consequence of this function was that he who elects does not impose obligations on the candidate; neither does he confer power. In the electoral system, the citizen is an elector and his management of the state ends after he deposits his vote. For Ligia Galvis in her study of the nature of the 1886 National Constitution, this reality is expressed in the submissive conscience that [has] characterized the relationship between the individual and the state in everyday life<sup>56</sup> and that has been a constant characteristic of the political behavior of most of Colombia’s republican life (Galvis, 1986:177,187, 233).<sup>57</sup> In their search for a harmonious equilibrium in all spheres of social life, Regenerators distanced themselves from the Liberal notion of citizenship to restore instead subject-like relations as if Colonial Spain was back with all its glory. This move is reminiscent of the transition from feudalism to the Absolutist State in which the figure of the citizen was losing relevance to give way to an obedient “subject.” This subject was not to think for himself, not to debate or disrespect the authority of more knowledgeable individuals. Through the Constitution and the Concordat, Regenerators intended to achieve what Perry Anderson called “civic pacification” (1979: 94). Nonetheless,

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<sup>56</sup> See also Miguel Antonio Caro and José María Samper’s discussion about the suffrage in *Diario Oficial*, Agosto 14, Sesión del 2 de junio de 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-146.

<sup>57</sup> For more on the origins of these attitudes, see Miguel Antonio Caro and Jose Maria Samper’s discussion about the suffrage in *Diario Oficial*, Agosto 14, Sesión del 2 de junio de 1886, In: Valencia Villa, 1992:141-146.

contrary to Europe, where such pacification was accompanied by the implementation of government programs, in Colombia, such pacification and submission of the subject would be achieved through the order, respect for authority and fear of God. In this way, morals would be subordinated to religious beliefs and religious beliefs to politics by granting the State the power to do what was necessary to maintain the supreme good of order.

The restrictions imposed by the Regeneration in terms of political citizenship implied that a high percentage of the population was excluded from political participation and the exercise of power. It also negated the Liberal principle of participation. Only those with access to education, wealth, and a high dose of what the Regeneration called morality, obtained the right to decide the country's future. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that not only in Colombia but in the rest of Latin America, Liberalism was highly exclusive, and as Matthew Karush points out, it also made accommodations with *clientelismo*, electoral fraud, suffrage limitations. Moreover, even the Regenerationist notion of moral reform is present in many Liberalisms, which inherited from nineteenth century French philosophers such as Rousseau, a pronounced anxiety about the civic virtues required for the responsible exercise of citizenship.

The fact that the Regeneration tried to impose a particular notion of citizenship is not surprising. After all, the regime was trying to find mechanisms to establish order and peace. What is bothersome, however, is that it used some liberal elements, reinforced them and added traditional elements deepening ever further the already existing exclusivist social, political and economic distance between the elites and the rest.

It is not surprising, then, that the Regeneration announced that the regulatory power of the state should mediate between the individual and society. This is the reason for the limitations of individual liberties and the notion of citizenship. The link between citizenship rights and the state did not help to produce a new pattern of social and economic organization, which intended to bring order (of the moral kind) and progress (not necessarily a capitalist one). The 1886 Constitution promised to maximize freedom by limiting the state and protecting social institutions from political coercion. For Regenerators, these measures would not only allow for the nation's moral reform and social and economic consolidation, but it would also enhance liberty in relation to local self-governance and the principle of "political centralization and administrative decentralization." Nonetheless, these policies, norms, and laws were effective only in "times of peace." What Mark Warren calls "the maximization of freedom" encountered major obstacles to the point of conditioning individual freedoms (1989:115). Citizenship rights and liberties were conditioned or limited in the name of the rule of law. The following chapter will provide examples of how rights and liberties were conditioned by the state.

The ultimate goal of the Regeneration was to reconstitute the reign state-Church alliance in a supranational entity. The reach of this new alliance was manifested in the freedom of religion. Although the Constitution guaranteed the freedom religion in practice it was denied. Since the Catholic Church run the school system Protestants and evangelicals were forced to pray, study and follow all the norms established by Catholicism. More importantly, the Catholic Church rigorously imposed its creed from

top to bottom as an element of social cohesion and “catholization” (Saldarriaga, 2005)<sup>58</sup> of the nation.

Freedom of worship and conscience was written in the Regeneration Constitution. However, the state never guaranteed this particular citizenship right. This practice contradicts what modern law understands as freedom of religion. As jurist Leon Duguit explains, for religious freedom to exist, the individual has to be entirely free to practice any form of religious worship. Additionally, Duguit insists that nobody can be questioned directly or indirectly about the form of worship required by his religious beliefs. At the same time, no individual can be forced, directly or indirectly, to practice a particular religion (Duguit as cited in Pérez Escobar, 2000). In practice, the power of the Catholic Church was such that under the Regeneration, the individual who expressed ideas contrary to the doctrine of the Church was considered a heretic and was condemned to prison by the clergy.

Freedom of conscience was also expressed in the Constitution, but in practice it was gravely limited by the *Concordato*, which made it compulsory that at universities, high schools, elementary schools and other educational institutions, public education had to be organized according to Catholic dogmas and morality. Religious education was mandatory in those public institutions, which at the same time had to observe the pious practices of the Catholic faith (Tascón, 1948-1949: 179): Charity, obedience, and morality. According to Duguit, the right to learn is equivalent to the right to express

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<sup>58</sup> Neotimism is a Catholic Latin renewal of the supernatural revelation and its acceptance of the natural world, of natural reason, of a natural justice. This “naturalness” is the connection of civilization, one that rejects modernity.

opinions, beliefs, and the right to communicate freely to others what one knows, believes, and thinks. The state should not profess a particular doctrine; it must respect them and protect them all (Ibid:184-185). Following Duguit's ideas, the Regeneration's approach to teaching and learning was contrary to the freedom of teaching and learning that a state should uphold.

The Regeneration Constitution mandated that elementary education should be free and non-compulsory (Art. 41). This mandate was related to the argument concerning who should be a citizen. By eliminating compulsory education, the population of illiterates would have even less opportunities for social mobility. At the same time, mandate would require that the *letrados* establish themselves as the social group called upon to govern the nation without much interference from the ignorant majority. Interestingly enough, despite Caro's elitist intellectualism and his proposition to eliminate compulsory elementary education, his idea of access to citizenship was more inclusive; but it had a moral basis and was consistent with his idea of the state's responsibility as a moral entity. For Caro, literacy (in the realms of literature and science) and wealth were not moral principles, and nor were they intrinsic titles of citizenship; they only had value insofar as they were subordinated to the superior criteria that demanded the citizen to have fair judgment and independence to vote. By conferring the right to vote only to property owners was a way to transform juridical criteria into mercantile criteria. The state would become a stockbroker instead of a moral entity. For Caro, attributing citizenship to literate men only, as if that quality was of a "secretive nature", was to fall into superstition (Caro, 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-145). It could be said that

Caro's religiosity did not blind him in the particular matter of literacy and citizenship. For Caro, linking literacy to the right to vote, for instance, could only mean that those who advocated such requirements were falling into the trap of irrationality and lack of reflection. As a devout Catholic and considering how close religion and superstition can become at times, Caro, ironically, separated politics from the matters of the soul. Given his Catholicism and his passion for the letter, it becomes somewhat paradoxically that he defends the right to vote to illiterate people when the conception that illiteracy was equated with irrationality, limited reflection, and barbarism.

Liberal *delegatario* José María Samper's proposition prevailed over Caro's moral proposition. For Samper, "universal suffrage" was the root cause of most of the country's violence. Samper contended that granting citizenship and the right to vote to the illiterate majority would pave the way to the triumph of the "*montoneras*" (masses) over "*la gente sensata*" (sensible people). For him, reading and writing distinguished the "civilized man from the savage man" (Samper, 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-145), and since the act of voting was an "intellectual and free act," conditions of intelligence and independence were required (Samper, 1886, as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-145). Despite his Catholicism, Samper was afraid of the power of local priests over the *pueblo* in political and electoral matters. Securing citizenship and electoral rights for literate people would guarantee a "good election" (Samper, 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-145). The power of the clergy, nonetheless, as Urrego maintains, was evident as the clergy became the judge of civil authorities. The Church assigned itself the role of mediating between candidates of political parties, leaving no grounds for the "excesses of

political passions.” In the same way, the clerical institution gave back to the state and to society individuals [non-citizens] that were not interested in the exercise of politics. Much less were these individuals interested in the presence of the state or its functionaries, because priests were in charge of carrying out civil duties such as birth registration and education, and presiding over matrimony, sickness, and death. The Church overall, as Urrego concludes, became the guardian of social order (Urrego, 1997).

As the guardian of Colombia, the Church did not fulfill its duty to see all the children of God as equal. Instead, the Catholic Church, following its long tradition, concentrated its greatest efforts to reproduce a class based society by privileging the elites more than *pueblo*. In order to achieve that end, the ecclesiastic institution established alliances, in a clientelist vein, with the Conservative Party in order to maintain or increase its power. In a complicit relation with Conservative national, regional and local elites, the Church became one of the most important political instruments in the nineteenth century Colombia.

### ***Clientelismo***

Clientelismo was not a phenomenon proper to Colombia. Patron-client relationships emerged in Latin America, as Shmuel Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger explain, due to the hierarchical arrangements established in the colonial period and the localization of power in central organizations (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980:101). These factors led to the development of a certain type of politics in the region, where state presence was weak or nonexistent. It was yet another expression of the failure of Liberalism as representative

government, the institution of citizenship and participation first passed through the filter of formal and informal institutions such as *clientelismo*. In the case of Argentina and Mexico, for instance, conventional arguments suggest that the liberal ideology embraced by some sectors of the elite, in spite of its emphasis on legality and universal rights, was incapable of changing traditional ideas and practices. José Antonio Aguilar and Gabriel L. Negretto argue instead that these institutions were reinforced by the liberal elite in the process of consolidating national unity and lowering the levels of conflict in the competition for power (2000:362).

In the case of Colombia, patrons emerged from the *gamonales* and/or *caciques*. The Indian expression “cacique” was used pejoratively to indicate persons with certain power or preeminence. From the mid nineteenth century on, this term was used to refer to persons who “owned” local power and who used it to manipulate the population and control local politics through the distribution of goods and contracts of different kinds (Melo, 2005).

*Caciquismo* and its by-product, *clientelismo*, were not simple political machines. They were complex apparatuses that advocated identity, if only to a local community, and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, “familial ties, friendship and even *padrinazgo* or patronage/god-parentage” (Palacios, 2006:21) were behind the most salient and powerful networks that supported not only “the particular exchange of votes and support for goods, favors, and services between the poor and the elites” (Auyero, 2000:19), but exchange among the elites as well. Despite political or ideological grievances, the Bogotana elite,



for instance, exchanged votes and favors in the name of parentage, marriage, or economic enterprises.

There has been controversy surrounding the idea of the benefits and pervasiveness of *clientelismo*. For Guillermo O'Donnell, *clientelismo* was an extremely important "informal institution" (O'Donnell, 1996:160-168) because it helped organize popular groups seeking to "bypass traditional mechanisms of political cooptation" (Cardoso, 1992 and Escobar, 1994 as cited in Auyero, 2000:21) as in the case of Indians and freed blacks in the Colombian Cauca region<sup>59</sup>. Certainly, the power of *gamonales* lay not only in the manipulation of electoral results, but also in the strategies implemented to attract potential voters. After the emergence of the political parties in the late 1840s, there was a consolidation of powerful political machines that specialized in violating electoral guarantees by manipulating electoral results. From the 1850 on, as Miguel Alonso Sarzosa suggests, the Conservative Party used the Church in order to dominate the lower classes using the influence priests and Catholicism over the *pueblo* (2008:8-9). During the *Olimpo Radical*, such machines became even stronger. It is precisely in this period that the infamous phrase pronounced in the 1870s by radical Liberal Ramón Gómez "*el que escruta, elige*" (he who counts the votes, chooses the winner) became the unofficial motto that gave way to a continual manipulation of electoral results and the strengthening of the clientele that made possible such violations.

In the Regeneration, the alliance between Church and state and their strict Catholicism did not eliminate *clientelismo*. Morality, which was the platform that helped

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<sup>59</sup> James Sanders explains the workings of these mechanisms in his book *Contentious Republics*.

consolidate the program of the Regeneration, could not counter *clientelismo*. On the contrary, this alliance facilitated the formation of a large clientele of Indians, blacks, artisans, peasants or poor *mestizos* by local and regional authorities and opportunists who would exchange votes for favors from the government or who would look to achieve social, political or economic mobility.

It is understandable that the lower classes use *clientelismo* to obtain benefits from local or regional officials or gamonales since the central government was unable or unwilling to secure the well-being of its population. The *clientelist* relations among the elites, however, could only respond to personal or party ambitions. As certain level of modernization was being achieved (through the incorporation of Colombia within the world economy, the modernization of the state, the strengthening of the armed forces, the creation of the police as well as the creation of a precarious financial apparatus (Jaramillo Uribe, 1994:64)), the alliances within the upper classes proliferated. They justified *clientelismo* on the premise that the Regenerationist government imposed unfair restrictions and obsolete laws in the adjudication of contracts that for them only hindered progress. An example of how clientelismo worked from the top is the use of the presidential seal of President Manuel Antonio Sanclemente (1898-1900). As his poor health forced him to remain outside of Bogotá during most of his mandate, his seal was used in Bogotá by his vice-president and other officials as a negotiating tool in the adjudication of contracts that only benefitted their class and their alliances with regional *gamonales*.

In the nineteenth century, it was typical to find that wealthy entrepreneurs became politicians and vice versa. Moreover, as Alfonso Fernández Villa maintains, political power was reproduced within the families of particular group for whom the state was seen as a resource as valuable as capital or land (2005). One such case can be exemplified by the *Compañía de Navegación por el Dique y el Magdalena*, in the North coast of the country. This company was supported by the state ever since its creation in 1883 as his owner was not only a fervent supporter of Núñez and the Regeneration project but also the half-brother of a prominent conservative, Joaquín F. Vélez. Vélez served as a minister of Colombia in Rome and his name is intimately linked to the signature of the Concordat in 1887 (Fernández Villa, Ibid). The state was the most regular client of the *Compañía* given that the former used its services to transport state employees, troops and goods to different parts of the Coast.

The political flexibility of clientele can be observed in the following example which show that in their ambitions, clientele did not remain static (Sarzoza, 2008:8-9) and their loyalty was contingent upon the reliability of the *gamonal* or the official. Pedro Ramírez Bustos found, for instance, that in 1873, in the state of Santander, North East of Bogota, presidential candidate Julián Trujillo only received 233 votes. Four years later, he won that state with 3,426 votes (Ramírez Bustos, 2002 as cited in (Sarzoza, 2008:9).

During the Regeneration, the centralization of the state prompted a kind of state “*empleomania*”/employmentmania, an activity that elite politicians considered a less desirable form of employment. Although elites aspired to higher positions in the

government, they certainly used their influence to secure their families within the bureaucracy of the state and to pay back favors to political allies and clientele.

The centralization of power and the strong presidentialism of the Regeneration also served the purposes of clientele. Since the presidents of the regime could directly appoint governors and mayors, they used their power to pay back and support those local and regional clientele who favored the regenerationist project.

*Clientelismo* under the Regeneration was both pervasive and beneficial. Pervasive because, following Daniel Pécaut, it led to “institutional precariousness,” which can be measured by the actual lack of state presence, the lack “acceptance [and respect] of institutional rules,” and the absence of a secular “symbolic national unity” (Pécaut, 2003:97-100), which would have opened up public sphere to a much larger population. *Clientelismo* was beneficial in the Regeneration years precisely because the lack of state presence made localities and regions assemble around a *gamonal* in order to obtain what the state was unable, unwilling, or incapable of procuring.

## **Conclusion**

Rafael Núñez’s Regeneration project and his desire to achieve “scientific peace,” order, and progress was no more than a dream. Despite the long-lasting effects of the Regeneration, the expected progress and morality that did not occur due to the failure of economic and political groups to control the state or design and implement laws and norms that would benefit the nation both economically and politically. Political centralization did increase state power, but the traditional local power structures were

stronger and more efficient in their political control of the population. The predominance of *clientelist* relationship during this time can only speak of the political failure of the Regeneration to achieve true order, peace, and progress. Even though some economic progress was achieved, the centralization project failed to integrate the fragmented nation.

The only institution that seriously benefited from this project was the Church, which, protected by the state, regained the hierarchy and influence it had lost under the Liberalism of previous decades. At the same time, as Marco Palacios suggests, the state made use of the Catholicism of the majority in order to guarantee social, economic, and political conformism.

The notion of citizenship during the Regeneration was congruent with Conservatism, for which citizenship was based on tradition, class, gender, and race differences. In this sense, the Constitution of 1886 established the right to citizenship using similar modern vocabulary, but added important limitations to it. The decisions concerning the kind of citizen the country needed were reached in accordance with the Catholic morality, which insisted more on forming “Catholic citizens,” but was not necessarily interested in creating politically informed citizens. Furthermore, citizenship rights were directly related to the distribution of gender roles in the private and public sphere. Under these conditions, the Regeneration did not consider the development of the “public” without being of governmental concern claiming that restrictions, limitations, and even punishment were necessary to restore “*el alma del pueblo Colombiano*.” In addition, such measures were necessary in order to reinstate old values, as well as to

“civilize” economic and political practices. The following chapter will elucidates the notion of citizenship that was created under the Regenerationist order, with its moralist values as its *raison d’être*. More specifically, I will explain the connection that existed between Divine will (represented by Catholicism), the state, and the principles of Liberal citizenship, through the reading of the materials used to “indoctrinate” the population such as catechisms, manuals of manners,<sup>60</sup> school syllabi, and novels.

The consolidation of *clientelismo* during the Regeneration made it possible for this institution to outlive the regime, despite the moral grounds on which it might have been banned from the political landscape of the country. The unequal social, political, and economic relations so prevalent in Colombia cannot explain the success of *clientelismo*. Here, political and economic opportunism seems to have permeated all spheres of social life, and was accepted as the sole means of receiving benefits from the state. Not in vein the idea that in all spheres of social life in Colombia, “there are no rights but favors and there are no duties but loyalties” (Gómez Buendía, 1984:91-95). It can be concluded that *clientelismo* contributed to the convenient use of the status of “citizen” as the basis for state legitimation and as an institution that privileged a handful of propertied, literate Creole and white males. Despite certain advancements in the allocation of the values of citizenship, *clientelismo* freely moved around the requirement for citizenship and used and abused this notion to protect class and political interests.

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<sup>60</sup> In this dissertation, manuals of manner refer to more than etiquette books. In Spanish America and in Latin America, the *manuales de maneras* are both moral and social codes of behavior.

## **CHAPTER 5: Citizenship: Between Free Will and Divine Will**

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, most Latin American countries began modernization projects that affected all aspects of private and public life: From Liberal education, secularization, public works, and hygiene projects to the improvement of the bureaucratic engine, the strengthening of democratic structures, and the development of literary modernism. Colombia, conversely, was mostly closing its doors on modernity, especially in terms of ideology and culture.

The “particularity” of the Colombian case within the Latin American context, however, needs to be seen from a broader perspective since, as historian Marco Palacios maintains, a “liberal eclipse” and a conservative reemergence were taking place in Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth century. In the UK, for instance, the Liberals fell from power in 1885, giving way to a conservative era that lasted until the 1920s. In France, Republicans rose to power from 1880 to 1898. A strong presidentialism which was characterized by the reinforcement of bureaucracies (Palacios, 2002:271-273) was evident during these conservative regimes. Certainly, Colombian elites were faithfully following the development of these events.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Regeneration project was paradoxical because it was at the same time invoking traditionalism, Hispanism, neo-

bourbonism, a defense of the Catholic Church, an anti-modernist discourse, and a clientelist-type of economic protectionism of certain sectors, and it was also inviting foreign investment and implementing a liberal import-export economic model. Unlike other countries in the region, where a certain degree of modernization was achieved by promoting “production and exchange” between the “lettered city” and the “real” world, the measures implemented in Colombia widened the gap between the country and the city, the *pueblo* and the “lettered city,” secularism and Catholicism, the “moral” citizen and the “immoral” liberal/modern. Colombia during the Regeneration did not escape the contradictions between the theory and practice of citizenship delineated by Immanuel Wallerstein. Several important analyses address political citizenship in the period, focusing for the most part on the official discourse (Uribe de Hincapié, 1996:67-76) and on the requirements for and limitations on citizenship. There remains, however, the task of identifying the social phenomena and social groups that accompanied and shaped both official and non-official discourses of citizenship and the use of class to determine access to citizenship. Therefore, this chapter explores how citizenship is strengthened or weakened by the practices of various social actors, who either appropriated [the state’s] notion of citizenship or contested it outside the legal framework (Annino, 1999:65), accentuating even further the already well-established class distinctions.

Despite the movement away from Liberalism during this period, the notion of citizenship—in a modified version-- still served the upper classes as a mechanism of political and social exclusion legitimized by the state, corroborated by the Church, and reinforced by everyday practices. By locating the individual within official and



unofficial discourses on citizenship, there emerges a need to determine if the notion of citizenship was necessary to the success of the Regeneration; how the notion of citizenship fit within the Regeneration; what the concept of citizenship did to make it important, and how citizenship was resisted and contested in the Regeneration, if at all. Within the framework of these questions, it is also crucial to examine *clientelismo*, an institution that gained strength during this conservative regime and proved to have advantages and disadvantages. To address these questions, this chapter will discuss the “political citizen,” the Catholic and philanthropic citizen, the well-mannered and grammatically correct citizen, and the “opposition” citizen, given that these models comprise the complex social web of relations in nineteenth-century Colombia, and the social groups that most actively accompanied and incarnated the period’s notion of citizenship.

### **On Citizenship: Generalities**

Similar to the claims of the National Assembly in Revolutionary France, the Regeneration acknowledged that all citizens had the right to freedom and property ownership, but also asserted that only a select group could be active citizens: only those individuals who contributed to the public sphere and were the “true stock brokers of the great social enterprise of the nation” could enjoy the privileges of the title (Galvis, 1986:179-180). The Regeneration supported a “selective” universalism, but differed from liberalism in that primacy did not rest with the individual and the exercise of his will, but rather with “divine will”: That is, the will of God and the Church in the name of divine

authority. Far from advocating the implementation of the liberal notion of citizenship by promoting equality, political participation, and free will, the Regeneration promoted religious responsibility towards God and the state. There was an expectation that the political being would evolve into a more spiritual being. The class location of the individual would hinder or foster such evolution. “Divine will” and “*virtú*” replaced political participation and free will, thus converting citizens and non-citizens into Catholic individuals at the same time, as they became Colombians. The Constitution of 1886 did not officially establish this “replacement,” despite the fact that, as Article 38 proclaims, “The Apostolic Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the nation.” Rather, Catholicism became a “compulsory reference” for the exercise of freedom of belief (Galvis, 1986:204). Miguel Antonio Caro was convinced that those who were not devout Catholics and who did not fear the divine code instituted by the Catholic Church were not morally equipped to serve an electoral function, much less suitable to hold any official post. Caro’s disdain for non-Catholics did not differ from that against the illiterate masses, which for him were a “*clase social inferior*”/an inferior social class (Caro, [1888] 1890:114) whose fanatic Catholicism was at odds with the more sophisticated devotion of the upper classes.

Heavily influenced by traditionalist thinkers, Caro supported a return to divine sovereignty, with the state sovereignty subordinate to God. Furthermore, under God’s protection, the state, as an intermediary between God and the individual, could impose the liberal rights of the individual into Catholic duties (Galvis, 1986:146). This move allowed the Regenerationist state and the Church to have better control of the population,

and to guarantee the existent class divide, since “it was easier to govern over a submissive conscience than to prepare consciousness for autonomy and liberty” (Galvis, 1986:177).

Interestingly enough, despite Caro’s rejection of Liberalism, the notion of citizenship as a “political tool” did not entirely conflict with the project of the Regeneration. Liberal rights such as freedom of speech, thought, or religion--indeed any manifestation of liberal thought--was considered sinful and a direct attack on religion or Regenerationism. Liberalism, for Caro and other Regenerators, was the primordial cause of chaos, anarchy, immorality, and poverty. Nonetheless, the Regeneration appropriated the notion of citizenship, slightly modifying the liberal ideal of membership in a society of equals, guaranteed through the possession of individual rights, into a notion of a society bound by a set of standards imposed by the state and the Church. In fact, both the Liberal and the Regenerationist political projects had similar objectives: Mainly to control the population, and to preserve and maintain elite power and status over other elites and over the *pueblo*. It is clear that the Regeneration saw citizenship as part of Enlightenment culture, in which men are “candidates” for the “benefits” and “obligations of citizenship.” Those candidates, nonetheless, were called upon not only based on “rational self-governance,” but also and most importantly, on Christian “qualities” and “commitments.” For Regenerators, Colombia required a virtuous Catholic citizen from whom charity, obedience, kindness, temperance, and morality (Urrego, 1997:651-662; Sáenz et al., 1997:177-179) were expected, as well as more mundane qualities that became sacred such as urbanity and manners, philanthropy, and proper grammar.

One of the most important contradictions of the Regeneration lies precisely in the use of apparently Liberal vocabulary to reframe the notion of citizenship and individual liberties. The discretionary use of Liberal vocabulary can be noted in the Regeneration's use of the scholastic idea that the human conscience is 'free' to choose the best ways to reach God; but it is submissive conscience in the determination of the ends (goals) because for Christianity the ultimate goal is God (Galvis, 1986:233). Since "liberty" could carry one to perdition, submission to the authority of the Church, and by extension to the authority of God, was the only way to salvation.

The promulgation of the "virtuous Catholic citizen" was not officially constituted under the Regeneration. Nevertheless, Catholicism became a reasonable expectation for those who could afford the status of citizen. In this sense, not only political participation, but also charity, manuals of manners, and guides to grammar became powerful tools for the formation of the much desired, "Regenerated" citizen and the imposition over the "immoral" liberal citizen of a Catholic one. The catholicization of the citizen and of Colombians in general, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, was comprised of mechanisms that intended, as Miguel Ángel Urrego maintains, to reorganize people's everyday life and to make Catholicism the only legitimate creed. In order to achieve such goals, the state and the Church, through schools, *beneficencias*/charities, and the family, created mechanisms such as spiritual retreats, Catholic societies, catechisms, religious festivities, manuals of manners, and instated the police force as a moral agent. Following this idea, this chapter will relate to the catholicization—or in Urrego's words, the

sacralization (Urrego, 1997:275-314)—of the Regenerated citizen from the perspective of philanthropy, grammar, and discipline (manners).

### **The Catholic, Charitable, and Philanthropic Citizen**

The inclusion of “colonial” Catholic traits such as charity, obedience, kindness, temperance, and morality within the new definition of citizenship corresponded in part to the reemergence in Colombia of Neo-Thomism. This philosophical and theological movement, developed at the Université Catholique de Louvain, entailed a comparative analysis of medieval and modern thought (as opposed to the orthodox and anti-modern Scholasticism imposed by Rome at the time). Neo-Thomism found its most faithful Colombian exponent in Monsignor Rafael María Carrasquilla.<sup>61</sup> The monsignor, following the most progressive view of this philosophical trend, argued that individual liberty and the power of the state should be limited by divine authority—whose primary representative is the Church, due to its divine origin, remains in time, and quality of experience (Carrasquilla as cited in Galvis, 1986:147-148).

Émile Durkheim sees religion as a “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things ... which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to it (1995:44).” According to Durkheim, religion provides more than the bond between the individual and a “higher being,” it offers a set of values that influence an individual’s behavior and the way he or she relates to others.

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<sup>61</sup> Oscar Saldarriaga Vélez has comprehensibly studied the Neo-Thomist manuals that arrived in Colombia especially after the Concordat was signed in 1887. See for instance his doctoral dissertation “Nova et vetera, o de cómo fue apropiada la filosofía Neotomista en Colombia 1868-1968 (Catolicismo, Modernidad y Educación desde un país poscolonial latinoamericano),” Université Catholique de Louvain, 2005.

Durkheim's sociological perspective on religion can be applied to the context of the Regeneration, given that this regime considered religion an element of social cohesion. Regenerators agreed that no political, cultural, or social activity could be realized without consideration of the religious sentiments of the population. Since the Colombian population was mostly Catholic, the institution of citizenship would necessarily but unofficially be tied to and conditioned by Catholicism. In this sense, the manner in which the majority of the elite and the *pueblo* related to the state and acted in the public sphere "[was] also determined by the religious order" (Moyser, 1991:9-11).

Religion and politics, then, became part of the same ensemble. According to George Moyser, "the religious order has a preeminent claim over the believer and the social order of everyday life, thus extending its influence over the political domain." For Moyser, there existed in non-modernized societies "the undistinguishable, at times, overlapping relationship between religion and the state," which thus produced the almost inevitable effect that "religious beliefs and practices underpinned and entered into the heart of the political process, maintaining and supporting the exercise of power" (Moyser, 1991:9-11). The Regeneration did not escape this effect. In fact, it promoted an open and profound participation of the Church in politics, culture, and the education of the rich and poor. Education, of course, differed in quality depending on the social class of the student. In other words, all aspects of social life in Colombia were touched by the marriage that existed between politics and religion.

It is controversial and contradictory that during the Regeneration Scholasticism and Neo-Thomism coexisted despite their differences. Neo-Thomism was the "official"

philosophy of education during the period, particularly in terms of educational organization and testing at high school and university levels (as established in the Concordat of 1887), but Scholasticism predominated in other areas of social life, such as the family and the pulpit. With the Church directing different aspects of political and social life, the Regenerationists could more effectively and comprehensively control the population as a whole as well as individual conscientiousness. Twentieth-century analysts have argued that the influence of the Church throughout Colombian history, especially during and after the Regeneration, has on the whole been counterproductive. Rubén Jaramillo Vélez insists, for instance, that Catholicism, along with the censorship of certain liberal and scientific writings and theories, is to blame for what he calls the “*modernidad postergada*” (delayed modernity). Given the highly restricted access to liberal beliefs and scientific writings in educational institutions, the low literacy level in Colombia (which by 1870 did not cover more than 5.6% of the infant population) (Gordillo Restrepo, 2003) and the censored circulation of books and newspapers (a topic that will be addressed later), it is indeed likely that Colombia’s modernity was “delayed.” Efforts to increase and improve the level of education during the Regeneration were made, however insufficient: There was an increase from 71,070 children registered in public schools in 1881 to 129,682 in 1897 (Silva, 1989:72).

During this period, Catholic philosophical and psychological disquisitions about the soul as substance were confronted with the modern notion of the soul as a function (Sáenz et al., 1997:104-106). This “scientific hypothesis,” as J. Sáenz et al. explain, prompted the Church to strengthen its dogma by invoking philosophy and theology. From

this point of view, and contradicting Rubén Jaramillo Vélez, J. Sáenz et al. argue that the Catholic Church participated as a protagonist, in allowing philosophical and scientific modernism to enter Colombia. In this protagonism, at the same time, the Church lost its own footing, because it could not reconcile the idea of bringing together the body and the soul. The extraction of the soul from the body (a Neo-Scholastic move) to recuperate its autonomy implied, among other things, the philosophical acceptance of the idea that human comportment required more than a logical theory of truth and error, and more than a theory of conscious will as the path to morality. Seen from this perspective, the principle of the Church's doctrinaire authority was reevaluated and supported by a new approach, which intended to intertwine the scientific with the divine. In Regenerationist Colombia and beyond, this move was complex and was perceived both as secularization and as anti-scientific, because it was explained superficially as a strong "clerical" movement struggling to adapt and guarantee its permanence (Sáenz et al., 1997:104-106).

Citizen formation within the Regenerationist educational system was imbued with Catholic teachings and emphasized the existent polarization between the "sacred and the secular," the "apologetic and the doctrinal," the privileged and the disenfranchised, as well as the upper classes and the lower classes. Nonetheless, following Neo-Thomist principles, the formation of the individual in general, and the citizen in particular, emphasized catechist normatization of doctrines and conduct that relied on investigations of the soul and the body (Sáenz et al., 1997). This tendency was aimed to consolidate the "profound mechanisms of social control" for Colombia's future (107-108).



Despite some differences, the Regeneration used many of the same mechanisms employed by Liberal regimes to limit political citizenship. God and the state became one in order to “create” the political citizen of preference, one that would know and restrict itself to the impositions of their class.

Outside the legal framework and the association of citizenship with nationality, however, there remains the task of identifying the social phenomena and social groups that helped shape the non-official cultural discourses of citizenship. Here, citizenship implies the way in which the individual is involved with the nation’s cultural milieu. The following section deals with the question of how citizenship fits into the Regeneration. The section will show that ideological apparatuses that supported Regeneration such as the Church, the family and schools, or saw it as their duty to moralize the nation and create the ideal citizen. These apparatuses adhered to the mandate of Núñez’s Secretary of Instruction Ricardo Becerra that schools must concentrate on teaching religion, urbanity, and civility (the appropriate behavior of the inhabitants of the city) as a means to improve the culture of the pueblo—above all in a country exposed to vices, disrespect, disorder, dirt, and laziness (Becerra as cited in Vanegas, 2005).

Despite their apparent distance from European and Colombian Liberals who saw citizenship as a “universal identity,” as noted in the previous chapter, Regenerators shared their belief that individuals of the lower classes could be shaped into moral, “disciplined, orderly workers under elite leadership.” However, the divergent paths to this ordered world demonstrate the distance between the Regenerators and the Liberals. For Regenerators, rational thought did not determine citizenship. Faith, morals, and charity

were more important than reason. Therefore, the role of the Church would be crucial to the formation of the “virtuous Catholic citizen.” More important than any economic gain was intellectual and moral formation. Education in urbanity and manners, together with grammatical expertise, would help assure entrance to the exclusive circles of the “lettered city.” The formation of the ideal citizen of the Regeneration was contingent upon Catholicism, philanthropy, urbanity and manners as well as grammatical knowledge, and respect for authority. This section will refer to the ways in which philanthropy, Catholicism, education, and urbanity—at times mixed, at times separate—helped shape the citizen of the Regeneration. Once the notion of citizenship was slightly modified politically, the task remained to transform the citizen at an individual level, so that he could perform socially in accordance with the Regenerationist project.

Religion played a fundamental role in the Regeneration in such a way that the Church’s “pastoral power,” as Michel Foucault ([1979] 1999) calls it, went further than mere unification. As Foucault describes it, pastoral power is an individualizing technique, which, before the sixteenth century, was concerned almost exclusively with eternal salvation, but as states took form, its concerns shifted towards the satisfaction of individuals’ earthly interests (135-152). The goal of pastoral power is to unify society, using “individualizing power” as a means of guiding the public “in a continuous and permanent way” (136). Interestingly enough, pastoral power has adapted over time to different forms of government. Its individualization technique (for instance, of confession) was certainly appealing to the Regeneration, whose overall project does not fall far from the “tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization

techniques and of totalization procedures or what Foucault (1982) calls “governmentality” (213). Despite the clerical inclination of the Regeneration, the alliance between the state and the Church resulted in a kind of semi-secularized form of “pastoral power,” which at the times appeared to be a logical step in “imposing” commonalities (religion, manners, language) through rhetoric and certain everyday practices. At the same time, however, this “tricky combination” also reinforced existing differences, such as those between citizens and non-citizens.

The Regeneration intended to bring the Church back to central stage in a similar move reminiscent of neighboring Ecuador, where Gabriel García Moreno established a kind of “theocratic dictatorship” (Gómez de Souza, 2007:5, 29) between 1861 and 1871. Interestingly enough, during this period, there was progress, which was evident with the construction of railroads (Halperín Donghi, 1993:143-144) and increasing exports. The García Moreno strengthened the role of the Catholic Church by, for instance, handing over complete control of the educational system and by imposing Catholicism an official requirement for citizenship (Williams, 2001). After his assassination in 1875, his authoritarian regime lasted for almost two more decades. Despite its unofficial tone, the Regeneration regime in Colombia indicated that religion was one of the commonalities of not only the Colombian citizen, but any Colombian individual. It would seem that “moral aptitudes” of the Regeneration, as J. Sáenz et al. (1997) explain, encouraged individuals to pursue and note that these aptitudes or qualities fit well into the “Catholic confessional pedagogy” (177). The Colombian citizen of the Regeneration had to be Catholic and display four essential conditions of character: Justice, prudence, strength, and

*templanza*/strength of the soul” (Ibid). These conditions, for pedagogues Martín Restrepo (1892), are the “seeds of natural virtues of these men [citizens] and they are determined and developed by the repetition of their actions” (Restrepo Mejía 1892 as cited in Sáenz et al., 1997:177).<sup>62</sup>

The Regeneration was seeking the salvation of the soul and the reinforcement of the idea of divine authority, and the “virtue” of obedience to God and His representatives on earth. The regime was trying to regain authority and impose obedience, a move that was clearly inspired in colonial hegemony where the King and the Catholic Church represented not only human but also divine authority. The insistence on obedience had the purpose of maintaining the already strong social hierarchical order. Institutions such as the schools and the family easily helped achieve that goal. Apart from Catholicism, the Regeneration found also fertile terrain on which to build its project of socialization and confessional individualization in the realms of grammar and manners.

Similar to the modern citizen, the Regeneration citizen had to be educated with “habits of discipline and hard work.” However, unlike the modern (i.e. Liberal) citizen whose slogan was “liberty, equality, and fraternity,” the Regeneration citizen was invited to pursue “obedience, charity, and morality” (Urrego, 1997: 651-662). These qualities and virtues would guarantee the citizen not only a place on earth, but also in the heaven. Despite the top-down design, the project for the formation of the “regenerated” citizen/individual resonated with many of the elites and those who belonged to the growing “middle class,” who would see themselves as models for the popular classes.

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<sup>62</sup> My translation. This model was presented by Catholic pedagogues Luis y Martín Restrepo Mejía, in their popular book *Elementos de pedagogía*, 1892:90.

Both the elites and the middle class believed, as Caro did, that “the inequality of conditions is necessary in society...because if all had equal power, equal fortune, and equal faculties, there would be no harmony or equilibrium...there would be no progress.” Furthermore, in Christian societies there exists inequality, but there is no “*lucha*”/struggle, therefore, for Caro *lucha* is not necessarily the by-product of inequality of conditions.” In other words, “inequality is the work of God’s will” (Caro, 1990:245-250). Caro here was only reinforcing the views on own privileged class. Access to citizenship continued to be a mere illusion for the poor, whose lack of morality and resultant “mendacity, idleness and vagrancy” (Froysland, 2002:93), rather than their economic condition, was seen as the cause of their ills. Class, in other words, as Aronowitz would say of the evasion of Americans to talk about class, was given other names: homelessness, crime, hunger, unemployment (1992:71). Nevertheless, the same virtuous behavior was expected of them. As a reward, they would become morally acceptable and virtuous individuals. From the poor, Caro expected “resignation”: That is, “the contentment of each with the labor that ...God has designated to him (Caro, [1888] 1890: 247-248).”

The Radical Liberal period certainly contributed to the Regeneration in as even at the peak of the radical period, public schools had to use the human and infrastructural resources of the Church to fulfill its liberal educational reform. The Radical regime was heavily impregnated with the values and mores inherited from the colony. In fact, even if they were not fervent practitioners, many Liberals were Catholic. Therefore, for them,

too, the pressure of behaving in a certain way, or performing certain activities was always passed through the filter of Catholic morality.

The desire to implement Liberalism in the *Olimpo Radical* through labor, private property, and autonomy, Radical Liberals limited this implementation to a small portion of the population. The Regeneration was more successful in implementing its programs and values to a larger portion of the population; however, the economic and social benefits only reached a few. In the end, both Radical Liberalism and the Regeneration applied deep exclusionary practices in the name of “individualization.”

Within the Regeneration vision, the Catholic virtue deemed most honorable was charity. In this respect, the Regeneration sought to legitimize the emphasis on charity, while distancing itself from socialist and communist notions of wealth sharing (notions spreading throughout Latin America at the time). In fact, the appeal of these revolutionary ideologies for the masses, (as will be shown discussed later with regard to in Bogotá in 1893) frightened Colombian elites. At the same time, the elites’ aversion for the poor increased as the former believed themselves to be morally and intellectually superior. Despite the fear and contempt, the elites continued their political projects with little concern for the *pueblo*’s conditions of existence. After a century of bloodshed, the *pueblo* had been left economically and socially disadvantaged. The unhealthy conditions of the poor and the fear of the spread of disease, however, forced the central state to “evaluate Bogotá’s infrastructure and its impact on public health and social well-being” (Noguera, n.d.).

The Catholic regime of the Regeneration welcomed Pope Leo XIII's *Encyclical Rerum Novarum on Capital and Labor*, since it presented itself as the solution to the problems posed by socialist and communist ideas. By concentrating on the "social dimension" of charity, the *Encyclical* called Catholics to assume a more active social and political role and to "utterly" reject socialism since it was "directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind" (Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, 1891). By concentrating on charity, the papacy sought to reinforce traditional power structures, and at the same time align itself with the bourgeoisie, given that both institutions found socialism a threat to their particular interests, especially in matters of private property. In this respect, the *Encyclical* was drafted on the principle of natural law, which in the case of nineteenth-century capitalism, placed the bourgeoisie in a privileged position and required the poor to "be content with frugal living" and "[keep] out of the reach of those vices that devour not only small incomes, but also large fortunes..." (Ibid).

The Colombian state, but mostly the Church and the upper classes, had already been responding to the Pope's call to demonstrate "great heroism of charity," "devotedness and self sacrifice," and to "give heart to the unfortunate" through the foundation and funding of *beneficencias* or institutions "for help and mercy." The moral citizen of the Regeneration testified to this commitment.

Contrary to the Venezuelan situation, where the "diabolic others" had to be modernized to make them "the beneficiary agents of modern wealth" (González-Stephan, 1996:22), the Regeneration managed the poor in ways that did not necessarily foster the latter's economic improvement or social standing. Instead, and as a way to maintain the

economic status quo of both the elites (across the political spectrum) and the poor, the former established a wide array of charitable organizations in the name of morality and health—although not necessarily with the goal of modernization. It can be argued that this philanthropic spirit was motivated by their “*miedo al pueblo*” (fear and scorn for the poor), which grew during this period as greater numbers of the poor migrated the city in search of better conditions, away from partisan violence and poverty.

The poor were seen as the carriers of physical and moral diseases and were perceived as requiring elite assistance and tutelage to become morally and socially acceptable individuals. In the end, the Regenerationist “social” programs and projects only served to reproduce the cycle of poverty typical of Bogotá and replicate it in other parts of the country. In other words, as historian Mario Aguilera Peña comments, such institutions were the instruments that the state, the church, and the elites used to exercise power and to incorporate the poor masses into the social body of the nation (Aguilera Peña, 1996:230), while the poor—the objects of this beneficence—continued to live with the same social and economic conditions.

The Regeneration state and the elites were far from implementing what T.H. Marshall called “social citizenship,” in which the welfare state emphasized the right of individuals to economic and social security (Marshall, 1963:74). Instead, the Regeneration, through its *beneficencias*, established itself as the protector of the poor, creating a paternalistic relationship between the poor and the state. Furthermore, through this charitable network, according to historian Haley Susan Froyland, the state could paternalistically create a consensus of values, and preserve order and hierarchy—



especially considering the dangers posed by socialism. Poverty was also seen as “divinely ordained.” The poor were placed on earth so that the rich could exercise charity in order to achieve salvation” (Froysland, 2002: 301-302). Equality was not possible, nor even desirable.

It can be argued that charities became workshops for the production, reproduction, circulation, and implementation of what Foucault calls pastoral ([1979]1999:123) technologies (1988:18) that influenced religious institutions, but mostly the social body. The citizen of the Regeneration, as well as those who did not possess the title, but who supported the Regenerationist state (such as upper-class women who were not eligible for citizenship, but worked in the good name of their families, their “citizen” husbands, fathers, and brothers), found in philanthropy a means to fight their *miedo al pueblo*, as well as their fear of ideologies that would threaten their social and economic position. The Regeneration citizen and his entourage had to fight poverty, which, as Froysland contends, they saw not only as a necessary ill, but also as the result of the lack of moral and work habits. The elite needed to fight the moral causes of poverty because the problem was the poor themselves, and not the conditions in which they lived. Therefore, there was an insistence on the idea that economic wealth and accumulation were the result of primarily moral development: That is, good moral conduct and the Christian virtues of self-restraint, honor, and hard work (Delpar, 1981:76).

For Regenerators such as Núñez, the role of the elites was to act as examples of moralization, which included self-restraint with regard to [Catholic] virtue and wealth.

Self-restraint was to be exercised in regard to sexual temptation, dress, and speech. Courtesy and frugality were expected and heavily appreciated. With the moral example from above acting as a guide, Núñez and others hoped that the middle class, and eventually the poor, would follow. Núñez's emphasis on self-restraint and hard work recalls Foucault's analysis of the way in which nineteenth century elites appointed themselves as the arbiters of what was "normal" and "abnormal" in sexuality in their search for control of the lower strata. At the same time, the elites applied on themselves the rules they tried to impose on the population (Foucault, [1978] 1990). With the Church as a collaborator in the Regenerationist project, there is no doubt that sexuality fell into the category of self-restraint and silence. According to Urrego, sexual practices were considered a race, class, and even geographical issue. Periodical publications, for instance, avoided the topic of sexuality, which was mostly associated with prostitution. This activity was not only regarded as immoral and prohibited, but it was also considered another illness proper to the lower classes. The upper classes located themselves outside of prostitution because their good morals, manners, and cleanliness were enough to protect them from such sinful behavior. Besides, the temperate climate of Bogotá protected them from the [sexual illnesses] of *tierra caliente* (lower, hot lands). Also, following the bourgeois model of society, love was not a requirement for matrimony; rather, it was crucial to make a "good marriage."

In the economic milieu, self-restraint became a widely addressed issue. The incursion of Colombian coffee into the world market also opened the door to the importation of all sorts of foreign goods, most of which only elites and the nascent

middle class could afford. The excessive spending of the elites was heavily criticized. Denouncing the spending habits of the “new rich,” for instance, ex-president Mariano Ospina (1805-1885) claimed that their spending habits did not correspond to their place on the social ladder. He attributed it to their vanity, weakness of character, infatuations, idleness, and selfishness (Ospina, 1878 as cited in Froyland, 2002:88).

Since the elite women of the Regeneration saw themselves as the most moral and virtuous of individuals, they wished to establish a “tribunal” of morality, by following the example of their Argentinean counterparts and promoting a crusade against luxury and excessive expenditure on imported goods. Following Caro’s call for a “return to tradition,” these guardians of family values requested that their men to stay away from club houses, and to participate instead in domestic parties and family gatherings, which were more appropriate for people of their moral, intellectual, social, and economic standing.<sup>63</sup>

Beneficial or not, charities played a fundamental role in the Regeneration, since they provided a certain amount of relief to the poor and ailing. Nonetheless, they did not substantially contribute to improve the economic or social conditions of the poor. As Miguel Samper maintains, such organizations, some of which had existed before the Regeneration, were the reason for Bogotá not to have productive citizens but citizens who had to depend on the rich for their charity. In Samper’s words, “Convents were inexhaustible sources for the subsistence for the poor... and the same way honey attracts

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<sup>63</sup> “Una palabra a nuestras damas.” *El Correo Nacional*. Abril 16, 1891.

flies, alms distributed without discrimination [could only] nurse mendacity” (Samper , 1867).

Alongside philanthropy, grammar, literature, poetry, and manners were other “unofficial” requirements that guaranteed access to citizenship and helped shape the nation’s identity in terms of its culture and civilization. Under the Regeneration, as was the case in Colombia throughout most of nineteenth century, the elite used manners, “letters,” and the media as a weapon, a sign of “distinction,” and a “differentiating” tool.

### **The Lettered Citizen**

As previously mentioned, grammar was for Miguel Antonio Caro not only markers of “distinction,” but also part of the “soul” of the nation. The emphasis on grammar does not only lie in the “authority it has in the project of national consolidation by generating a standard code for national and international commerce, or by substituting the authority of the local, consuetudinary conventions with centralized written law, and through literary example,” as Andrés Bello argued. It also provided the authoritative ground to define the law-abiding citizen (Ramos, 1994:29; González-Stephan, 1996). The letter facilitates the “invention” of the citizen as a subject of rights, and assigns him a “homogeneous identity” (Catholic, lettered, virtuous) that would facilitate “order” and “progress.” Those located outside of the legitimizing power of rhetoric and grammar were considered minors and individuals [such as women, children, Indians, blacks, and the poor] in need of the benefits of a Catholic-type civilization.

The lettered man was not necessarily a property owner or the owner of the means of production, much less of someone else's labor. Even though the place of an individual in relation to the means of production is fundamental in a capitalist system, in Colombia is not sufficient in determining the social class of an individual. Here, class was also determined by an ideological and a political dimension in which the letter occupied a more prominent position than property or material possessions. In this sense, class division in late nineteenth century Colombia was defined by its place in the ensemble of social practices circumscribed by the letter.

Caro argued that grammar had the important role of assisting in the management of the nation. The correct use of the language leads to a "grammatical order" and, Caro insisted, to a "divine order," morality, and a government of the people (von der Walder Uribe, 1997). Contrary to what nineteenth-century Colombian grammarians thought, language was not entirely successful at achieving the fundamental task of unification, at least not in unifying citizens with non-citizens, or the "lettered city" with "barbaric" spaces. The emphasis on grammar did contribute to the centralization of language (Spanish), religion ("one nation under God"), and culture "*bien decir*" (appropriate use of the language). It also contributed to the intervention of elite citizens in political and legal spaces, and in the configuration of the citizen. Nonetheless, it also separated citizens and non-citizens in the political sphere and contributed to the population's continued social fragmentation and dispersion, because the pueblo was excluded from the "symbolic capital" and therefore from participation in power structures. In other words, grammar became the tools through which *letrados*, that is, "citizens," imposed authority and set

themselves apart from the rest. These citizens were located in the city of Bogotá, which in the late nineteenth century became the “*Atenas Suramericana*”/South American Athens, or what José Luis Romero sees as the “*hidalga*” city.<sup>64</sup> Bogotá became the center of intellectual and political life for the nation and the Spanish American continent.

Despite Bogotá’s developmental distance from other Latin American capital cities, it also became the center of the nation’s modernization projects. These advances may well speak of how liberal these Colombian Catholics were. Such projects involved the creation of public services such as public transportation, the telephone system, electric energy, aqueduct and sewage systems, and the development of the manufacture of textiles, glass, beer, and chocolate. These projects significantly altered everyday life and the symbolic representations that the inhabitants of the city had in relation to the codes, symbols, and criteria that governed Bogotanos” (Urrego, 1997:67-108). In this sense, for instance, there was a modification in the working and living conditions of artisans and other wage laborers; there emerged also questions surrounding the role of women in the industry, and discussions over ideologies different from the Regeneration. At the same time, the Church, the state, and the political parties designed different strategies to gain control of the population (Ibid). The Regeneration, as a regime that privileged intellectual and spiritual life over materialism and worldly comforts, could not

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<sup>64</sup> The term “hidalgo,” as Romero uses it, indicates a person or a place that is distinguished and has a noble class thanks to lineage José Luis Romero. *Latin America: Its Cities and Ideas*. INTERAMER, No. 59, 1999. Chapter 3.  
[http://www.educoas.com/Portal/bdigital/contenido/interamer/interamer\\_59/chap5/struggle.aspx?culture=en&navid=221](http://www.educoas.com/Portal/bdigital/contenido/interamer/interamer_59/chap5/struggle.aspx?culture=en&navid=221). For more on Bogotá as the “*Atenas Suramericana*” see, for instance, Fabio Zambrano Pantoja, “De las Atenas Suramericana a la Bogotá moderna. La construcción de la cultura ciudadana en Bogotá.” *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, No. 11. <http://res.uniandes.edu.co/view.php/216/1.php>. The city as “*civitas*” see Santiago Castro-Gómez. “Ciencias sociales, violencia epistémica y el problema de la “*invención del otro*,” <http://www.clacso.org/wwwclacso/espanol/html/libros/lander/7.pdf>

escape the call of modernity as the import-export economy was consolidating. The location of high culture in this city responded to a need to locate the citizen in a certain physical and cultural space within the nation. The “citizen” was located in the city, the only place where civilization [modern or Catholic] could take place. Bogotá, which was at the center of cultural, political, economic, and social power during the Regeneration, reinforced itself as Ángel Rama’s “*ciudad letrada*” par excellence, or what Santiago Castro-Gómez calls the *civitas*, or the legal space that modernity requires that epistemological, moral, and aesthetic subjects live. Participation in the city’s intense, high cultural life was as important as the preservation of manners, civility, decorum, etiquette, and elegance (all of which were reminiscent of Europe). Bogotá was the ideal place to become the “ideal citizen,” and to exercise citizenship rights. Nonetheless, Bogotá was not the *ciudad letrada* for all the inhabitants of the city. It was an exclusive “city within the city” protected by the walls of distinction constructed by the power of the letter. The rest of the city, free of citizens, remained a “barbaric” space, and therefore in need of care, protection, and civilizing. The literate population also remained small, and the book industry was limited, compared to places such as Mexico City.<sup>65</sup>

Writing on literacy theory, Wlad Godzich argues that literacy in the late eighteenth and all of nineteenth century Europe was associated with reason, judgment, and the independence to vote. It became only one of the many relations that individuals had to language. Yet, there existed, contradictions within the modern “culture of literacy”

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<sup>65</sup> By 1870 Bogotá only had 40,000 inhabitants compared to Mexico City, which had 200,000. See Andrés Gordillo Restrepo. “Una minoría letrada.” In: *Elites y modernidad en Colombia*. Institut Pierre Renouvin Bulletin No. 17. Accessed Feb. 4, 2008 <http://ipr.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article215>.

in the sense that it did not respond to the desire for “linguistic universalism.” The emphasis on literacy, in fact, “impeded access to all spheres of the polity” (Godzich, 1984:27-35). Godzich’s understanding of the role of literacy certainly helps illuminate the situation in late nineteenth-century Colombia. In this period, the country did not escape these contradictions, not only because of the numerous failures of the *Olimpo Radical* in their educational programs, but also because literacy was politically used and culturally charged.

A contradiction that is latent in Caro’s thought lies in the fact that for him, it would be immoral to award citizenship to literate men only as if literacy came naturally or was demanded by “natural law” (Caro, 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992:141-145). Caro’s emphasis on eliminating literacy as a requirement for citizenship suggests that he was positing a “universal” path to citizenship open to all males who owned property or had a salary and who were over twenty-one. Paradoxically, the defense of “universal” citizenship came from a man who helped deepen the divisions between the lettered city and the rest of the population through the Constitution of 1886 and through his intellectual and political work. Interestingly enough, the man who dedicated his life to the understanding of language and who presented himself as the ideal citizen, at the same time became opposed to “universalism.” Caro and the Regeneration helped attribute even higher value to language, grammar, and literacy. Such emphasis at the expense of the *pueblo*, as it is clear that the latter did not have access to education.

It is clear that education and literacy were important for the Regenerators. However, the educational system in Colombia during this period failed to continue the



reforms that Radicalism had implemented, despite budget deficits that were lowering the country's illiteracy rates. In this sense, it is possible to suggest that in the Regeneration, public education and the spread of literacy was important but not a priority. The failed economy, corruption, and the constant threat of political violence, proved more important to control in order to consolidate the state into one that was mostly illiterate, but unified. In the end, since literacy carries political and cultural consequences, to Caro's disappointment, literacy became an official requirement for citizenship.

It was established that only "citizens"—that is, intelligent and "independent" individuals—could exercise the free and independent act of voting (Samper, 1886 as cited in Valencia Villa, 1992: 141-145). This requirement was a response to two of the Regeneration's goals: First, to the project of unification and centralization; and second, to the emphasis Caro placed on his own intellectual work, despite his belief that literacy was not a moral force, nor an intrinsic element in the title of citizenship.

It can be argued, then, that the Regeneration elite used grammar and literacy to reproduce its conditions of existence, to limit access to citizenship, and to set itself apart as the only social group fit to govern over the illiterate. The emphasis on literacy and the development of grammar manuals and the idea of *el bien decir* only intensified this development. Nonetheless, the emphasis on grammar and literacy curtailed access to the delights of the lettered city and its political life for the majority of the population. Access was limited due to the lack of state funds and the ruling class unwillingness to implement serious education programs. The problem of illiteracy continued despite the increase in school enrollment: From 71,070 registered students in 1881 to 137,482 in 1898. These

numbers are quite low for a country with a population of more than 4,000,000 inhabitants (Rueda, 1989:358).

Clearly, the relationship between language and citizenship presupposes the intervention of authority in the different spheres in which individuals interact with others or with the Divinity. Additionally, this presupposition implies a rejection of linguistic, religious, civil, and cultural practices that threaten harmony and morality. Despite the little interest in turning the poor into citizens, the Regeneration, mainly through the educational system, did aim to correct the “defective language” of the popular classes so that one day they could aspire to the benefits of citizenship, such as the participation in the public sphere and the right to vote. Since the educational system was deficient and desires to improve it were not as important as the desire to impose order, the elites could rest assured of their preeminence in power. The result of the Regeneration’s Catholic education and cultural program would only be observed after conclusion of the Thousand Day War (1899-1903) that put an end to the Regeneration per se, but not to its core projects.

### **The Well-Mannered Citizen**

In Latin America, the discursive power of manuals of manners and urbanity has become a topic of study in fields such as sociology and cultural studies.<sup>66</sup> In relation to citizenship, it is clear that the “[imagined] ideal modern citizen” was a construction reinforced

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<sup>66</sup> See for instance, Santiago Castro-Gómez and “the invention of the Other,” Beatriz González-Stephan and the formation of the citizen in the nineteenth century; Norbert Elias and the “process of civilization”; Foucault and the disciplining of the body, among others.

throughout the nineteenth century in Europe and Latin America by the production and extensive distribution of these “disciplinary writings.” These “technologies,” which were part of the “civilizing process,” following Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, were crucial to the construction of the modern subject, and are related to self-control and the repression of instincts in order to “appear” more socially suitable and more culturally advanced (Elias, 1978:3).<sup>67</sup> Respecting the “norms” carefully described in these technologies was also a sign of “distinction.” In late nineteenth-century Latin America, the implementation of these writings coincided and complemented the pursuit of modernity and modernization. During the Regeneration, the implementation of such technologies differed in that they mostly set aside the moralistic Catholic tone taken by the Catholic regime. In Colombia, manuals of manners and urbanity set the parameters within which the citizen of the Regeneration was measured. Throughout that century, manuals and republican catechisms (also known as *pedagogía cívica*), some of which acknowledged Christian inspiration, had the task of contributing to the construction of a new social order in which individuals, converted into virtuous citizens, were capable of rational behavior both in the private and the public spheres (Alarcón, 2000:1-15). In the Regeneration, where the “culture of literacy” imposed itself over other forms of culture, good manners and urbanity were considered important bases for citizenship formation. Miguel Antonio Caro maintained that even though writing was not part of “natural [divine] law,” the [written] prescriptions of manuals of manners and urbanity were “essential” for the formation of the Regeneration citizen. At the same time, Caro

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<sup>67</sup> Norbert Elias’ “Civilizing Process” is used here to refer to the level of technology, education, religious ideas, scientific discoveries, type of dwelling, or ways in which men and women live together.

acknowledged that good manners did not belong exclusively to the realm of the letter, but to the more “oral tradition” of “good [Catholic] counsel” (Caro, 1986:172). This Regenerationist attitude also justified the lack of interest in truly intensifying literacy programs that would have increased the number of potential citizens.

The Regeneration, despite its disagreements with modernity, shared the idea that urbanity represented the moment before entering modernity. This idea referred to the disappearance of the seigniorial society and the displacement of the body towards the modern notion of it that is, “the strengthening of the soul as a way to educate the body,” and to “dominate it through education (hygiene, sports, nutrition)” (Pedraza Gómez, 1999:12, 23). This claim applies as well to the European countries where the transition from feudalism to modernity took place. However, as Claudia Marcela Vanegas explains, Colombia had not yet entered modernity in the nineteenth century, and yet there is extensive evidence of the presence of “urbanity” used as an educational tool for transforming the social and moral conduct of the republic’s future citizens (Vanegas, 2005:26).

Despite its dissatisfaction with the modern notion of society and the “free” individual, the Regeneration paid great attention to the education of the body, because it was considered the “temple of the [Catholic] soul.” Such an approach would define many of the educational goals of the period, among which cleanliness and the repression of the body were at the top. Nonetheless, it was important to have in mind that a “healthy body

would contribute to the health of the spirit ... and vigor of intellectual capacities.”<sup>68</sup> The notion of cleanliness, for instance, made dirt an affront to moral and physical integrity (Pedraza Gómez, 1999 as cited in Bermúdez, 1999).

In the private sphere of the home and the school, manuals of manners and urbanity were followed faithfully because in these spheres there was a concern for the “search for distinction among individuals ... which helped facilitate the internalization of behavioral codes” (Shilling, 2003:137). Schools, the church, the family, and the street became the places where manuals were faithfully learned and applied.

The Regeneration elite were not exceptional in establishing ways to distinguish themselves from other classes. In this respect, the upper classes, similar to their counterparts in the West, attempted to “distinguish themselves through manners and deportment, and establish their standards as norms which others were obliged to follow” (Shilling, 2003:138). At school, manuals were widely implemented for the purpose of transforming the students’ immoral behavior.

Manners and urbanity were not exclusive to “citizens,” then, for this type of “conduct” was widespread and expected from rich and poor, or from what Suzy Bermúdez calls “hegemonic individuals” and “non-hegemonic” ones. In this sense, manuals exercised a kind of “pastoral power” whose main purpose is first to “tame” the individual and, eventually, the totality of society, as the manuals’ precepts were incorporated into a broader scope of population management. Nonetheless, such writings

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<sup>68</sup> Sala de Prensa. Universidad de Antioquia. *Periódico la Escuela Normal de Instrucción Pública*. Tomo IV. Folio 127. Abril de 1873 Bogotá. Quoted in: Carmen Emilia García Gutiérrez, Sandra Maryory Pulido Quintero and León Jaime Urrego Duque. “Influencia de las ideas modernas en la educación del cuerpo en el ámbito escolar de los discursos de la educación física del siglo XIX en Medellín”. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*. <http://www.rieoei.org/deloslectores/542Garcia.pdf>.

most strongly influenced the upper classes, for which manners and urbanity were as important as wealth, and were as measures of virtue and morality.

Some of the characters of nineteenth-century Colombian *costumbrista* novels<sup>69</sup> such as Tomás Carrasquilla's *Frutos de mi tierra* (1898) express concern for good manners and the constant desire for upward social mobility. *Frutos de mi tierra* is a novel that reflects the customs, habits, language usage, and in general the socio-cultural landscape of Antioqueño society in the late nineteenth century. Carrasquilla contrasts, for instance, the way in which people from Bogotá behave toward people from the province who, despite having certain economic capital on their side, lack class and "distinction."

In the novel, when a young *Bogotano* man named César visits his aunts in Medellín, the women cannot get enough of the young man's refined manners and cultivated language. One of his aunts thinks to herself, "Qué manera de mascar, de cortar el pan, de levantar la copa! Carreño en persona" (the way he chews, cuts the bread, and raises the wine glass! He is Carreño himself!) (T. Carrasquilla, [1898] 1997:192-3). As will be discussed shortly, Carreño was the emblem of good manners and urbanity all over South America. These good manners and refined speech fooled the "province" women who were unaccustomed to being around "well-educated" people. But behind the mark of his looks and manners, César thought of himself as a "sirena con pantalones" (a mermaid with trousers). He considered his "countryside" aunts "*un poco menos que animals*" (a little less than animals) (Ibid:194-5), despite the fact that he was almost illiterate. However, his demeanor and a pretense of class demonstrate the façade of civilization

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<sup>69</sup> Novels that, according to Colombia utopian Liberal writer Eugenio Díaz (1804-1865) are "not invented but copied" from reality.

represented by a “*cachaco*” (a person from Bogotá). It is clear that Carrasquilla’s novel reflects both the differences between city and province as well as class differences but most importantly, the hypocrisy behind refined urban behavior as César is pretending to be refined, and his aunts too dull to see his inauthenticity. Manners in this context are depicted by Carrasquilla as an artifice to gain used by César to obtain economic benefits.

This depiction of the *cachaco* is symptomatic of the widespread Regeneration notion that civilization could only be possible in Bogotá, and that the rest of the country was no more than a barbaric space. César, filled with ambition, marries one of his aunts, and shortly after abandons her, taking all her money. She dies heartbroken, sick, and poor.

What Carrasquilla portrays in his novel coincides with Elias’ analysis of status competition, which is first manifested in the lower classes’ attempt to achieve at social mobility through imitation of the upper classes. Never completely successful in their imitations, the lower classes hopelessly carried with them the marks of their unsophisticated behavior, revealing the immense effort that individual social advancement requires (Elias, 1983:186 as cited in Shilling, 2003:139). Also in terms of manners, when the social power of the lower class rises at the expense of the upper class, there is a tendency for groups to exaggerate their differences and for each to claim those differences as marks of superiority (Elias, 1982:311-312).

Manuals of manners were widespread in Britain and North America during the Victorian era. In these countries, which were rapidly evolving and where the middle class was expanding significantly, it is understandable that the upper classes tried to discipline not only their own class but also other classes through disciplinary writings in order to

control the formation of the modern citizen. Even though the social and the economic context of Latin America in general and Colombia in particular differed significantly from that of modernized courtiers, disciplinary writings were widely used by the upper classes not necessarily to educate barbaric population but precisely to mark a difference from them (Melo, 2004).

Aside from aiding in the republic's task of forming the citizen, these disciplinary texts were also successful in establishing separate gender and class roles. The bourgeoisie followed more complex disciplinary technologies than the lower classes, whose technologies focused on basic elements of civility and Catholic morality (Benso Calvo, 1997 as cited in Vanegas, 2005:18). It can therefore be argued that the Regeneration did not encounter much difficulty in reinforcing the idea of a Catholic citizen as part of its platform. Civility and Catholic morality were easily implemented, because they did not encounter significant resistance from elites, the aspiring middle class, or the lower classes. The intensity of the Bogotano moralistic sentiments, for example, can be seen in the 1893 revolt, in which artisans violently protested against a newspaper article questioning their morality.

One of the most successful manuals of nineteenth-century Latin America, rigorously followed in nineteenth-century Colombia, was Manuel Antonio Carreño's aforementioned *Manual de urbanidad y buenas maneras para el uso de la juventud de ambos sexos/Manual of Urbanity and Good Manners for Young Adults of Both Sexes*, 1857. This text became a compulsory reference for the study of urbanity, civility, and good manners in the public and private spheres. The *Manual*, which combines



morals, manners, and rules of everyday conduct,<sup>70</sup> teaches the reader that the body, along with any sensibility deemed “barbaric,” is to be mastered and controlled in order to achieve social success and become a good Christian and a good citizen. For Carreño, good manners and cleanliness reveal, for instance, *templanza* (strength of the soul), prudence, and tolerance, and above all, the importance of consistently pleasing others and “never” being disliked by a person. Such agreeable behavior emanates from the knowledge of God, the principle of Christian charity, and the [natural] law that leads to happiness (Carreño, 1857:5-8). In other words, for Carreño, “without the knowledge and practice of the laws prescribed by morality [carefully explained and exemplified in his *Manual*] there can be neither peace nor order nor happiness” (Ibid).

Carreño’s *Manual* was only one of many that were produced and widely circulated in late-nineteenth-century Colombia. There were also Colombian manuals that had multiple editions, such as Rufino Cuervo’s *Breves Nociones de urbanidad, extractadas de varios autores, y dispuestas en forma de catecismo, para las señoritas del Colejio de la Merced de Bogota* (1833); José Manuel Marroquin’s *Lecciones de urbanidad, acomodadas a las costumbres colombianas* (1866); Manuel María Zaldúa’s *Maximas y preceptos de moral, virtud y urbanidad*, and *Pequeño tratado de reglas para conducirse bien el católico en el hogar, en la calle, en la iglesia* (1891); and Lucio Milciades Chávez’s *Elementos de educación: o sea moral, higiene, urbanidad economía doméstica, para uso de las escuelas y familias* (1896). Like Carreño’s, these manuals of

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<sup>70</sup> For instance, duties of the individual with God, society, and fellowmen, the self; hygiene, conduct in and out of the house, in trips, at school, leisure, at the table, and in letter writing. For more, see, Patricia Londoño Vega. “Cartillas y manuals de urbanidad y del buen tono: catecismos cívicos y prácticos para un amable vivir.” *Revista Credencial Historia*, Edición 85, Enero de 1997.  
<http://www.banrep.gov.co/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/enero1997/enero2.htm>

manners and urbanity intended, according to Beatriz González-Stephan, to “urbanize” their readers and to make the transition from private to public individual less traumatic. They intended to “domesticate and docilize” any trace of Hispanic inheritance through the education of the body and the mind, so that individuals could become disciplined citizens with a bourgeois work ethic (González-Stephan, 1996:17-48). Manuals were written for the “lettered city,” the urban lifestyle, and the bourgeois citizen (who was quite familiar with “the theater of etiquette, the rigidity of appearance, the mask of contention” (González-Stephan , 1995:434-439), and became the law of the “good citizen.” The manuals were required knowledge in order for Colombia to enter the world of civilized nations. Carreño claimed that “without the observance of rules of conduct ... according to the degree of civilization of each nation...it would be impossible to cultivate sociability, which is the principle of conservation and progress ... and the existence of a well-organized society” (Carreño, 1857 as cited in González-Stephan, 1995:436).

School, home, and church were the ideal sites for learning, rehearsing, and implementing the precepts of the manuals. These spaces, in the liberal frame of mind, intended to impose discipline over the mind and the body so that the individual would become a “useful patriot” and a productive individual. For those of a less Liberal persuasion, such as Conservative statesman Rufino Cuervo, manners and the control of affections and feelings in the presence of others also had paramount importance. As he reminded his children, Ángel and Rufino José in the mid-nineteenth century: “[Our father taught us the] manners ...of civilized people ... and also how to show happiness in the presence of visitors, even if we had our souls pierced by the sorrows of life” (Cuervo y

Cuervo, 1892:140-160). For that reason, as González-Stephan contends, education was important because it would regulate a child's behavior and impart knowledge, values, virtues, and cultural and social models that would transform individuals into ideal citizens. In this sense, to create citizens meant to "reduce individual singularities, accommodating them to a functioning rhythm; establishing forms of certain occupations and routinize the cycles of activity and conduct." (1995). Manuals of manners and urbanity became, then, the perfect written technology for allowing regimes to control the population, create the "ideal citizen," and achieve hegemony. In other words, it was the perfect instrument to implement pastoral power.

The *Manual de Carreño* recommended that in private, for instance, "a good deodorant applied to the underarm after one's daily shower was essential to all adult human beings. This rule is inflexible for every person who does not wish to offend others" (Chapter 8, "On Cleanliness"). In public, for instance, "As parents, never scold the children or students in their school. Failure to comply is prejudicial to moral education and shows a lack of respect for the educational institution where the children are being educated" (Chapter 26, "How to Behave in and out of the Home and in Schools"). Adhering to the prescriptions of manners and urbanity was important to the preservation of order and discipline. The acceptance of "modern forms" of living that focused on hygiene, education (even if mostly conducted by religious institutions), and infrastructural works that improved the conditions of existence of city dwellers testifies also to how liberal Catholics were in the Regeneration.

Despite the partial difference of opinion that the Regeneration had with the liberties assigned to the liberal citizen, the regime welcomed these manuals as the most effective moral and disciplinary tools. Nonetheless, the morality that the Regeneration demanded of this kind of literature had to do more with moral Catholicism, in which the strength of the soul, love for order, justice, and fellow men prevailed over any other modern value such as productivity, liberty, or the work ethic. At any rate, the precepts instilled by this disciplinary literature were not necessarily based entirely on Catholicism; but neither were they exclusively modern.

Carreño's illusion of order and harmony, and his image of the ideal citizen, although simply "imagined" in such uneven societies as nineteenth-century Latin American, coincided with the exclusionist Regeneration project. In order to achieve "scientific peace," "order," and "progress," the Regeneration required a special kind of citizen: One who abided by the "moral laws" delineated in the manuals. According to González-Stephan (1996), these texts were widely accepted in late- nineteenth-century Colombia because they used specialized technologies and institutions that regulated the movement of the body with docility to make it a domesticated subjectivity. This text also enabled the "neutralization" of undesirable agents (22-6, 32-3). This aspect was particularly applauded by the Church, since manuals were invaluable technologies for reinforcing traditional Christian moral values as the basis of moral (and social) education and civility, because they provided the guidelines for the "surveillance of the bodies" and souls of both rich and poor, citizens and non-citizens.

These non-official technologies “paralyze” and “capture” individuals, because it is only after being subjected to such a repetitive type of “discipline” that one can become a citizen. Manuals and their *pedagogía cívica* served as the basis for inventing the ideal citizen. They achieve the “civilizing process” through an emphasis on embarrassment and shame (Elias, 1978:130).<sup>71</sup> From this perspective, the body was given, an unprecedented “symbolic value,” as Pierre Bourdieu explains, which varies according to differences in social class. Therefore, these disciplinary technologies were aimed at the body, and by extension, the social body, in search of the “good citizen” capable of interacting in the earthly *civitas*. These technologies also intended to infuse “an adequate dose of fear in each individual” and at the same time to guarantee certain degree of exclusion and marginalization from the public sphere (González-Stephan, *Ibid*). The “regenerated” citizen—as a good Catholic who feared falling into temptation and “capital” sin (gluttony, lust, sloth, pride greed, envy, or anger)—was required, following González-Stephan’s Foucauldian analysis of Carreño’s *Manual*, to remain quiet, not argue, not stare, not overindulge in eating or drinking, not acknowledge his own body or the bodies of others, to be imprisoned by his ego and to shielded his affections (González-Stephan, 1995:447).<sup>72</sup> These categorical negations, written in a commandment format that facilitated memorization, interestingly enough, were also expected of citizens in already constituted modern societies or in societies striving for modernization.

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<sup>71</sup> For Symbolic Value see Bourdieu, 1984. In his theory of “distinction,” Bourdieu places the body at center stage. He analyzes the formation and the reproduction of practices and explains their significance as subtle social markers.

<sup>72</sup> For more specific explanations see Carreño’s *Manual* (1857), especially pages. 105, 145-8, 236, 237, 248-9, and 295-6.

During the Regeneration, the *leitmotif* was respect for divine authority, and the authority of God's representatives; "social" and individual sins could be overcome with practice and most of all with "obedience." Obedience, then, became the norm. In the upper classes, failure to comply with these social norms would jeopardize an individual's reputation. In the lower strata, it would stain their relationship with God. It would also continue to give the elites' reasons to despise "the other," to reproduce their longstanding ignorant discourse about "the other," and yet hypocritically, use that "other" to maintain their social and economic standing by profiting from their labor, silence and obedience.

In the end, the Regeneration project and the project of modernity both required a "docile," repressed citizen, a prisoner beneath a mask of the urbanity of good manners. In other words, behind the "morality of appearances" the Regeneration seemed to agree with Carreño's idea that "manners and urbanity were important to preserve harmony, the foundation of order, content, and well-being" (Carreño, 1857:3).

Since home and school were the places where the "education" of the body and soul would take place, the family, and more specifically, women, played a crucial role in creating the "ideal citizen" of the Regeneration, despite the fact that the political, economic, and social conditions of women of all social strata worsened considerably during the Regeneration. As historian Susy Bermúdez argues, the family served as an instrument for the reproduction of values and relations that helped perpetuate the status quo: patriarchy, racism, and classism, institutions of both the Regeneration and the capitalist state (Bermúdez, 1987). According to Magdala Velásquez Toro's analysis of nineteenth-century Colombian civil legislation, once a woman entered the institution of

matrimony, she became juridically incapacitated; that is, her condition became similar to that of children and the mentally disabled. The husband, as the head of the family, would represent her. As a married woman, she lost rights, such as property ownership, the right to contract civil obligations or acquire economic commitments, accept an inheritance, or be a witness for a trial. The indissoluble Catholic marriage (the only legally accepted marriage under Regeneration law) economically benefited the husband, since he acquired and administered his wife's assets (Velásquez Toro as cited in Bermúdez, 1993:34-51).

Relegated to the home (and charitable institutions run by upper-class women) and stripped of her political or economic rights, married women became the administrators of the home and the safeguards of Christian morality, good taste, and charity; and the “trainer” for perfect future citizens of the republic. Therefore, the feminine only had value in the space of the home, where it could be “of use.” Despite not being considered citizens, and with their “official” and direct political role overshadowed by a patriarchal, bourgeois society, women became the main judges of what González-Stephan calls “small tribunals set up to judge the trifling matters of everyday life” (González-Stephan, 1996:32). They were aided by manuals, catechisms, and literary productions that reinforced moral Christian values. Periodical publications of the time directed exclusively towards upper-class women emphasized the woman's role in society. According to Patricia Londoño (1990), these publications (at least thirty in nineteenth century Colombia), included poetry, novels, short stories, articles on morality and religion, home economics, European fashion and life style, beauty secrets, and social events. For Londoño, these publications intended to entertain and teach, but most importantly, to

“elevate the category” of wives and mothers” (Ibid). Some of these publications, which were mostly produced by men, even ventured unsuccessfully into proposing the political, economic, and social equality of women (Lavrín, 1985 citing Hahner, as cited in Londoño, 1990). The idea of the equality of women was rejected during the Regeneration, because for a regime which based its ideology on respect for authority, tradition, and natural law, women had already been assigned a place: the home.

There were also publications produced by women such as Soledad Acosta de Samper (1833-1913). Acosta de Samper is one of the few “learned female[s]” who, through her literary production insured the “reproduction of the social body and its inherent values,” by depicting women as “necessary counterparts of the male” as well as bringing together concerns regarding race, gender, and class <sup>73</sup> not only as an intellectual but also as an upper-class woman.

But not only women were the reproducers of this type of order in the sphere of the home. *Varones* (men) were also judges of character, class, or behavior; they became key players of the “invisible” yet unofficial powerful “surveillance” apparatus that intended to control even the most intimate aspects of life (González-Stephan 1996:32). A man’s participation in the public, economic, and social spheres were directly related to his marital status. In this sense, a man’s opinion was even more valuable if he was a “married man.” Colombian national constitutions such as those of 1821 and 1830 established

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<sup>73</sup> For an interesting approach to Acosta de Samper’s novels see Marta Jimena Cabrera. Doctoral Dissertation : *Writing Civilization: the Historical Novel in the Colombian National Project*. University of Wollongong. 2004:265 <http://www.library.uow.edu.au/adt-NWU/uploads/approved/adt-NWU20050307.143257/public/02Whole.pdf>



marriage (civil or Catholic) as a requirement for citizenship. Later in the century, the age requirement for citizenship was replaced by that of marital status.

### **The Conflicting Citizen**

The Regeneration state strongly emphasized respect for authority—divine and statal—making spiritual and civil power interchangeable. The opening of the National Constitution, an earthly document inspired in the heavens, demonstrates this dual authority as seen in its front-page motto: “In the name of God, supreme source of all authority.” The insistence on [repressive instead of respectful] authority, the lack of accountability of the state, and the “public function” of the suffrage (which eliminated the possibility of a true democracy), as Galvis argues, led large sectors of the population towards a kind of “submissive resignation” and “conformism.” (Galvis, 1986:187). There were, however, other sectors of Bogotá’s society that contested the highly moralistic connotation of citizenship.

Since the Regenerationist discourse was produced by conservative, Catholic men of letters whose major concern was the moralization of the population, the discourse of the era frequently condemns, criticizes, and disparages those outside the lettered city and those who opposed the economic policies, political repression, and social exclusion that were part of Regeneration. Opposition to Catholicism, for instance, was socially punished as severely as political opposition, despite the fact that the Constitution established tolerance of worship because true civilization could only come from Catholicism. This tolerance did not necessarily mean “freedom” of worship. For this reason, the state

granted religious expression as a concession, not as a right in itself (Tascón, 1948-1949:179). This attitude is not surprising given that theoretically, the Regeneration accepted the equality of individuals before the law. In everyday life, however, inequality and arbitrary discourses from the state and groups sympathetic to it abounded.

Corroborating the tendencies of the traditional elites, whose tendency was to invoke “*pretendidas formas de distinción*” (supposed modes of distinction) (Aguilera Peña, 1996:97) such as race, profession, wealth, or Europeanized manners, the Regeneration saw the formation of a Bogotano “middle class,” thanks to the protectionist economic measures that particularly favored coffee growers (Delpar, 1976; Delpar, 1981:136),<sup>74</sup> exporters, importers, merchants, bankers, and industrialists (Froysland, 2002:48). Artisans (who owned their own workshops or who were employed in the sector) also dominated production in Bogotá. This group, according to David Sowell, occupied a middle level in *Bogotáno* society because of its “relative economic independence.” Besides, many craftsmen were literate, which together with income and occupation at times gave them the right to citizenship (Sowell, 1989). As artisans improved their social and political standing, they also “became increasingly stratified and weak as a group” during the Regeneration (Froysland, 2002:49).

The criteria for determining who was an artisan were inconsistent, however. For this reason, as Malcolm Deas suggests, “artisan” became a term of self-identification. In that sense, many people who were not manufacturers or who worked in workshops and were not personally affected by tariffs, called themselves “artisans” in support of this

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<sup>74</sup> Coffee after 1886 emerged as a leading export. Exports went from 107,509 bags of 60 kilos each in 1880 to 475,358 in 1896. Coffee made up for about 55% of all coffee exports.

group. For Deas, this “embryonic sense of national solidarity” with this class can be observed in the formation of a network of publications or clubs (Deas as cited in Aguilera Peña, 1996:101-102). At the same time, there was a loss of coherence within the artisan groups was evident, as they became involved in partisan rivalries mainly due to tariff rates. Núñez’s protection of artisans, no doubt, led the latter to support the project of the Regeneration.

Not entirely welcomed in Bogotá society because they did not have the traditions, the wealth, or the intellectual baggage supporting them, artisans were perceived as morally questionable. Therefore, they did not possess the credentials to become citizens. This perception was openly expressed, for instance, in the pro-government publication *Colombia Cristiana*, by José Ignacio Gutiérrez Isaza. Gutiérrez Isaza argued that the social vices of the working classes (artisans included)—especially alcohol abuse and gambling—were the principal causes of the “family deterioration and mendicancy prevalent in Bogotá” (Aisthesis, 1893:342 as cited in Sowell, 1989) Gutiérrez described the working class of the city as “artisan,” “immoral,” “thievish,” and “deceitful” (Gutiérrez Isaza as cited in Delpar, 1981:156). Gutiérrez Isaza’s reluctance to apologize resulted in a violent outbreak in Bogotá in January of 1893. There were also reactions against the publication from different sectors, even from the most conservative sectors of the capital. Artisans demanded that the government punish Gutiérrez Isaza for promoting antagonism among social classes, a behavior prohibited under the press laws of the Regeneration. As Sowell explains, the government did not take immediate action, even though it had frequently used the legislation to silence political opposition. Later on, a

number of artisans were deported, alongside Liberal dissidents such as Alfredo Greñas. As a result of the outbreak, and for the remainder of that decade, the government placed under close supervision all the organizations that offered a base for potential collective action (Sowell, 1989). For Núñez, the disorders were a “socialist scourge,” despite the fact that Colombia lacked an aristocracy or a well-established economic monopoly or trusts similar to those found in the United States (Núñez, 1950:52-56). In this sense, any manifestation of discontent would be punishable by those who constantly suffered from *miedo al pueblo*. Non-conformism was simplistically associated with socialism, a “disease” that had to be contained.

This is only an example of the exaggerated measures of the Regeneration to prevent the pueblo from voicing their concerns, demanding respect, and defending their interests. Clearly, artisans demanded inclusion in the social relations of citizenship. The 1893 revolt was a constestation against normative prescriptions of citizenship and “unofficial” Catholic prescriptions of this notion, for which morality was a more important requisite than a reason. Artisans responded initially as Catholics and as modern citizens, since they organized themselves in clubs and used the press to form opinions about economic, political, religious, and social issues that concerned their class. No doubt, there was pressure on this “middle class” to become morally and culturally accepted by the closed circles of Bogotá. For this reason, craftsmen, threatened as a class by imported manufactured goods,<sup>75</sup> attached considerable significance to their public

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<sup>75</sup> Coffee production and export generated wealth on an unprecedented scale which impact would be felt in all instances of society. Nonetheless, the gap in the conditions of existence between the poor and the elite became even wider. The poor which were the immense majority did not benefit from the bonanza.

image not only as moral men, but also as the adequate citizens the nation—and more specifically the Regeneration—required.

But criticism fell not only on the lower classes and their apparent lack of morality. Harsh measures were taken by the state and the Church to avoid more moral depravity and criticism of the state or the highly politicized ecclesiastic institution. For this reason, the circulation of books and other publications was a political and a moral affair: on the political level, because the conservative regime intended to stop the circulation of radical ideas or any other idea that would go against the government or the Church. On the moral level, the simple explanation was that certain publications should not be read by good Catholics. Organizations such as *El Apostolado de la Oración* greatly contributed to determine what made up “good readings” and what kinds of reading should be avoided. In that sense, one of the missions of the institution was to “extirpate” bad books in exchange for instructional religious and moral books and *obras* (works) and writings on faith.<sup>76</sup> Another example of censorship is present in Jesuit priest Pablo Ladrón de Guevara’s book *Novelistas Buenos y malos (Good and Bad Novelists)*, published in the early twentieth century. This book was symptomatic of the kind of criteria the Church used to scrutinize and censor certain kinds of literature. Ladrón de Guevara uses the “*código de la ley de Dios*” (code of God’s law) to determine if a novel was ideologically or morally acceptable. Contending that some novels contributed to the reproduction of good manners and morals and others would lead to the ruin of faith, this Jesuit used adjectives such as impious, blasphemous, provocative, dishonest, immoral, good, or

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<sup>76</sup> “El Apostolado de la Oración,” en *El Orden*, No. 49, Bogotá, 7 de septiembre, de 1887, pags. 386-7. Quoted in: Urrego, 1997: 336.

acceptable (Ladrón de Guevara , 1998) to criticize novels produced in Colombia and abroad. Criteria such as these had implications not only in school (elementary, high, and university) curricula, but also in the sphere of the home and the street, where these texts were banned or had limited or no circulation. The good citizen of the Regeneration was to avoid certain texts of authors such as Diderot, Balzac, Hugo, or Ruben Darío, or Colombian ones such as José María Vargas Vila or Jorge Isaac (author of the “foundational” novel *María*) for considering them blasphemous, impious, clergy-phobic, and immoral. He recommended instead authors along the lines of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Miguel de Cervantes, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, or Soledad Acosta de Samper for being “good” and for promoting Christian values.

The denunciation of these writers coincided with Caro’s interest in defending those who shared with him not only the pleasure of the knowledge and use of language in poetry and prose, but also the moral and political values that he upheld throughout his life. For Caro, the main function of poetry had to be of a supernatural order; it had to elevate the soul to the level of [religious] truth (Jiménez, 2002:239). This is precisely what Núñez did when he wrote the National Anthem. This epic, religious poem is “not good poetry” (Bermúdez Cujar, 2001), but Caro defended it for containing the elements that he considered precious. The defense of this kind of poetry also indicates the denial of the country’s growing interest in modernism.

Despite these drawbacks, the Church, with its organization and solid pedagogical knowledge, not only responded to the social goals of education proposed by the Regeneration, but also to the formation of the kind of man—subject and citizen—the

Regeneration required (Silva Olarte, 1989:61-86). The citizen formed in Catholic schools would respond to Núñez's desire for a "harmonious [Catholic] equilibrium between political power and [limited and reasonable] individual liberty." Only these [free] individuals would direct the public life of the nation. Following similar concerns, in the name of divine authority and the preservation of order, in 1881 the Regeneration established the "*Ley de los Caballos*" (Law of the Horses) or "Ley K" (Law K), in which the president could prevent and repress crime against the state and punish trespassers with prison, exile and/or loss of political rights. The population most affected by this measure was the opposition to the Regeneration. Many important political figures and journalists suffered the consequences of that law. For instance, writing against the government, as Beatriz González comments, was equivalent to commit suicide (1999) because the government did not respect freedom of speech.

One of the most notorious cases of censorship and violation of the liberal principle of freedom of expression was against radical Liberal graphic journalist Alfredo Greñas, who denounced the abuses of the Regeneration, particularly in relation to individual liberties and freedom of expression. Nonetheless, through religious, "*costumbrista*," symbolic elements, and satirical explanatory comments, Greñas also criticized Núñez' "scientific peace," Caro's Hispanism, as well as the Concordat, the corrupt electoral system, inflation, and the desperate conditions of the *pueblo*. Greñas was one of the most fervent "dissident citizens" of the period. His most well-known caricature is *El escudo de la Regeneration* (Fig. 1) published in his periodical publication *El Zancudo* (the mosquito). This particular caricature represented, in his own words, the

“splendid moral photography of the Regeneration.” In Greñas’s *Escudo*, which mocks the official one, the eagle, whose “official” wings are supposed to be open to symbolize freedom, appear closed and its talons are chained. Attached to the talons and waving on each side of the eagle there is a ribbon with the slogan that instead of declaring “*Libertad*” y “*Orden*” reads “*Ni Libertad Ni Orden*” (neither liberty nor order); and the bones and skulls (which were drawn in honor of the Liberals fallen in the 1885 conflict) (González , 2002:294) speak of the failures of “scientific peace.” The official shield proudly portrays Panama as the liaison between worlds; but in Greñas’, the snake, which is eating Panama, is a premonition of its loss to Colombia. The giant of the North would take advantage of the political and economic weakness of the Colombia after the end of the century’s useless wars.

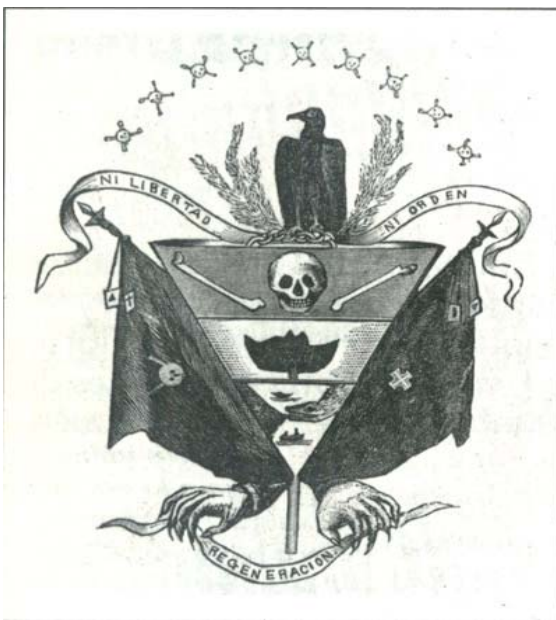


Fig 1. Alfredo Greñas. El escudo de la Regeneración. *El Zancudo*, julio 20 de 1890. <http://www.lablao.org/blaavirtual/todaslasartes/cari/cari2a.htm>.



While in exile in Costa Rica, Greñas continued to fight against the repressive Regenerationist state. Other Liberal journalists and press owners from around the country suffered as much repression, but continued to contest the regime with extensive editorials, articles, and caricatures.<sup>77</sup> The Regeneration instituted the death penalty. However, the regime did not execute any journalists. The strongest punishment was exile. Regardless of questions of censorship, the fact is that illiteracy predominated during this period. Access to education and high culture during the Regeneration was limited to a slim minority, due to the scarcity of schools and resources, but most of all, due to the lack of interest in educating the social classes beyond the “*ciudad letrada*.”

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<sup>77</sup> See for instance a compilation by Carlos Mendoza y Vicente Stamato. *Periódicos panameños de Oposición 1892-1899*. Panamá: Biblioteca Popular Shell, 1996; and Esther Parra Ramírez y Eduardo Guevara Cobos. *Periódicos Santandereanos de Oposición a la Reneración 1889 – 1899*. Bucaramanga, Universidad Autonoma de Bucaramanga, 1952 [2000].

## CHAPTER 6: Colombia after the Regeneration

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the Regeneration sought to achieve social, political, and economic control by allying the Church with the state, by creating a national banking system, by reinforcing the preeminence of the Spanish language and relying on law to produce order as mechanisms to bring cohesion to the country. In the case of church and state relations, not surprisingly, the alliance of Church and state made it difficult to distinguish, as Oscar Saldarriaga (1993) contends, that what was religious was politically charged, and that such indefinable line worked collectively and individually to invent the social through mechanisms of exclusion and hierarchical order. Considering the restrictions and limitations set on society by the Regeneration, this chapter intends to respond to the question of whether the Regeneration project succeeded or failed and whether or not the kind of cultural and social model imposed by the Regeneration modified the liberal notion of citizenship that nineteenth century Colombian liberalism tried to implement.

In order to answer this question, the chapter draws on material from recent statistical analysis, current newspapers and weekly periodical publications alongside reports from international organizations interested in peace in Colombia, to demonstrate that the Regeneration achieved culturally and socially what the elites intended for the

general population but failed to refound a modern nation-state. In this sense, the Regeneration fostered the formation of citizens who were grammatically competent, well-mannered and fearful of God, but who, contradictorily, tolerated corruption, promoted *clientelismo*, and disobeyed the law. The regime also reinforced the racial and class divide already in place. These factors permeated every instance of society and impeded the formation of a committed citizenry not only during the regime but throughout the twentieth century. The different but interrelated historical periods in twentieth-century Colombia such as the “*hegemonía conservadora*”<sup>78</sup> (1902-1930), the Liberal republic (1930-1946), the *Reacción conservadora* (1946-1953) and *La Violencia* (1948-1958), The National Front (1958-1974), it can be argued, testify precisely to the advances and setbacks in political culture, modernization efforts, and peace and violence that accentuated during the Regeneration. The analysis of these periods will also help respond to the following questions: what happened to the notion of citizenship during the twentieth century? Are there traces of the Regeneration in this institution? Was the Regenerationist notion of citizenship varied and/or contested in the twentieth century?

The farewell to the Regeneration Constitution came with the 1991 National Constitution. This constitution was written not only as a contestation to the Regeneration “culture” but also to respond to a wide range of problems that had troubled Colombia throughout its history, but which had worsened in the late 1980s. The 1991 Constitution brought with it its own array of problems, which further complicated the existing

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<sup>78</sup> Germán Colmenares named the conservative regimes of the first three decades of the twentieth century “*hegemonía conservadora*” and in historical circles, it continues to be called so. Colmenares in “Ospina y Abadía: la política en el decenio de los veinte,” in Tirado Mejía, *Nueva historia de Colombia*, 1:243; or Malcolm Deas. “Miguel Antonio Caro and Friends: Grammar and Power in Colombia.” *History Workshop Journal*. 1992; 34: 47-71:49.

complex situation through government instability, political violence, economic backwardness and a reinforced “laissez faire” attitude. As we will see unfold here, such an attitude has, on the one hand, promoted a kind of conformity on the part of citizens from demanding government accountability; it has also reinforced a culture of tolerance for corruption and *clientelismo*. On the other hand, the 1991 Constitution has opened up spaces for citizen participation and has provided legal instances that protect citizens from state abuses. Apart from these instances, has this constitution achieved to change the Regenerationist notion of citizenship? Has the notion of citizenship in the last two decades been varied or contested?

### **The Regeneration after the Regeneration**

The tragic ending of the Regeneration period produced by the *Thousand-Day War* (1899-1903) did not mean that the Regenerationist project failed altogether. Even though certain parts of the project failed, the elites certainly succeeded in implementing a strong and all encompassing cultural and social program under the supervision of the omnipresent Catholic Church. Many policies, attitudes, habits, survived the period and/or were reinforced in the following decades. But what were the perceivable effects of the Regeneration regime? Did the project succeed or fail? Did the kind of cultural and social model imposed by the Regeneration (manners, obedience and respect for heavenly and earthly authority) have any effect in the liberal notion of citizenship that nineteenth century Colombian liberalism tried to implement? The outcomes of the Regeneration are deeply marked by the contradiction that emerged from the desire of the Regeneration to

achieve social cohesion and progress and the imposition of a traditional, Catholic, conservative view of the world. The constitution of 1886 is representative of this desire.

As chapter four of this dissertation showed, the notion of citizenship under the Regeneration was limited and limiting. For this reason, the 1886 Constitution set reasonable expectations in terms of individual freedoms. Since citizenship was used as a mechanism of social control liberties were subjected to order, Catholicism, and natural law. It is not surprising either that in the 1886 Constitution individual rights were not emphasized or that the “mechanisms” necessary for guaranteeing the exercise of the “rights of man” (Arango, 2002:149-150) were clearly delineated. Such a guarantee would have meant concessions that elites were not willing to make, as they would be in detriment to their political, economic, and class-based interests. In that sense, the Regeneration succeeded in keeping each social group in their place. The upper class was protected by the state and the group of artisans received some protections from it but they could not aspire to upward social mobility as they lacked the cultural capital required to enter that circle. It was more convenient to preserve citizenship as a mechanism for differentiating between social groups based on such qualities as gender, class, wealth, property ownership, race, and literacy, than to make access to citizenship more open and inclusive. For the coercive Regeneration state, it was clear that individual liberty only applied to certain spheres of society and those liberties had to be handled responsibly. Furthermore, the political power they could exercise had to be tightly controlled. How could a regime strive for “scientific peace” without considering the very people that would guarantee its permanence in power? Moreover, how could a regime promise moral

and material progress when the government itself played only by the rules that most conveniently benefited the elites (of both political parties) and their local and regional *clienteles*?

The Regeneration regime and its Constitution of 1886 did away with some of the fundamental principles it had intended to follow from the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* adopted by the National Assembly of France in 1789. Using a similar liberal rhetoric in its formulations of the natural and fundamental rights of individuals, the Regeneration set limits on individual rights and liberties in order to achieve a “harmonious equilibrium.” Limitations were set on the grounds that every citizen was free but had to be responsible for his actions. In this sense, *The Declaration’s* attempt, to “try to make individual men into citizens of a moral collectivity” (Jay, 1984:42) by granting them rights such as the freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and equality before the law were all granted under the Regeneration as well—that is, in times of peace and in the name of order and a Catholic morality.

During the regime, the notion of citizenship contained a civil component. It established the rights necessary for individual liberty such as the possession of property and equality before the law. But despite their stipulation as law, these “rights” were hardly respected. The discriminatory “qualities” for citizenship were justified by the failure of previous regimes that had left out the dream of equality and other rights for the immense majority. Given this context, the future of citizenship in the twentieth century was not promising.

The Regeneration, with its comprehensive social, economic, political, and cultural project, managed to penetrate the inner structures of social life under the pretense of national moral reform, order, and progress. But how could a nation be reformed morally when its political and economic structures were discriminatory and the state had no accountability? The immorality of the upper classes in the handling of the state could not be more egotistic, particularistic, or clientelistic. How could they demand from the lower classes morality, decency, and all those Catholic virtues that most of them claimed to possess, but in truth did not?

It is unfair, however, to blame Regeneration regime for all the failures of governance, poverty, and the lack of access to citizenship. Nor can it be blamed for fervently believing that the words stamped in the Constitution would suffice to take the country on the road of civilization. Political corruption, *clientelismo*, violence, tolerance towards crime and poverty were typical of Colombia even before Independence in 1810. However, the Regeneration made the mechanisms that promoted exclusion, inequality, and the estrangement of the citizen from the public sphere even more obvious. The Catholic Church played a crucial role in producing and reproducing such social exclusionist scheme from the altar to the intimacy of the household.

Colombian liberalism had limited instruments to achieve economic and social progress, under any definition due to the strength of ever present colonialism and its geographic and race and class segmentation. Unleashed freedom tended to foster conflicts. As partisan these conflicts had no end on sight, what seems to have genuinely frightened elites was not so much how these civil wars enervated society; rather,

unending conflicts raised the specter of lower-class rebellion, disaffection, and succession. For this reason, both the success (subordination of the population) and failure (achievement of modernization and progress) of the Regeneration can be tied to the *miedo al pueblo* of the elites. This *miedo* underlies the Regenerationist project and can be said to be the reason for the harsh imposition of the project and this is the reason that regenerationists exalted order but impeded at the same time popular participation.

There is no doubt that the Regeneration with its emphasis on grammar, manners, obedience and respect for heavenly and earthly authority had important repercussions in the formation of the Colombian citizen. The regime did foster the formation of citizens who were grammatically competent, well-mannered and fearful of God, but who at the same time, promoted and tolerated the very defects that regenerationists said to abhor such as corruption, *clientelismo*, nepotism, and disobedience of the law. The regime had to be truthful to itself therefore it was not interested in reinforcing a culture in which citizens were not aware of their rights much less did they have regard for their duties as citizens. Such attitude could only leave a deep gap between theory and practice, between justice and impunity, and morality and immorality that certainly permeated all aspects of social life for the generations to come.

The intromission of the Church in the state or the state in the Church could only reinforce the culture of good manners, obedience, and submission to clerical and parental authority. Nonetheless, this intromission did not impose a culture of respect for the law. Alongside the emphasis on the adequate use of language and grammar, the fear of God and sinful nature of modernity, the regime promoted a culture of silence and tolerance



towards crime as well as a high level of conformism (God will provide, it is god's will), and a feeble acknowledgement of the duties that the institution of citizenship required.

The idea that during the twentieth century Colombia had Catholic (although not always moral) citizens can be attributed to the way in which public education was handled since the Regeneration. The school system, both private and public, was the perfect “ideological state apparatus” to start fulfilling their hegemonic (Catholic) project. Through education the project intended to subordinate private conscience and “secular” morality to Catholicism and the ecclesiastic institution. This way, education served the Catholic Church as yet another instrument to immerse itself, as Ana María Bidegain maintains, into the totality of society (1987:168). As education was supervised and control by the Church not only established and reinforced what José David Cortés Guerrero calls the “*régimen de cristiandad*” but also it consolidated the idea that education without Catholicism was not education at all. The importance of promoting and preserving Catholic education was that children would learn respect, obedience, and submission to civil and ecclesiastic authorities. It was also expected that instructors would behave similarly to set an example. Moreover, Catholic education taught children “in the name of God, to believe what was true; to love what is good, to admire what is pure.” Also, “to respect and love the authority of parents; to be pure and chaste; to love and forgive one another; to preserve good manners and habits; to be laborious, faithful, conscious; to prioritize duty over pleasure” (*El Institutor*, 1894:451 as cited in Cortés Guerrero, 1997). These binary elements such as “good and evil” which represent a “two world vision” were strictly enforced and influenced the everyday life of children and

adults for decades. There was, as Cortés Guerrero suggests, no room for the acceptance of “multiple social shades” (Ibid). With a limited worldview like this, the lack of respect and acceptance of anything that did not conform to Catholicism was not tolerated.

Despite much insistence on good vs. evil, and forgiveness, generations of children were educated hearing messages in the classroom and from the pulpit on the evil nature of a certain political party, on the sinful religious fanaticism of Indians, or on the immoral lives of blacks. Children did not cultivate a “learned know-how” (Althusser, 1971) to analyze the world around them or how to be tolerant, but to memorize disconnected contents and to discriminate and abhor certain behaviors but at the same time to tolerate other practices such as corruption. It is true also that these practices had already been taking place in Colombia even before Independence, but the Regeneration did officially and unofficially reproduced not only the existing discriminatory order but imposed an even stricter one. These order lasted with its force until about mid twentieth century. Under these conditions, what kind of citizen could emerge from this conjecture?

By following the traces left by the Regeneration and its imposition of Catholicism in the educational field, it can be argued, the regime, instead of curing the immorality of the nation, left a “lack of consistency between cultural regulation of behavior and its moral and legal regulation, a lack of consistency that is expressed as violence, delinquency, corruption, and illegitimacy of institutions, weakening of the power of many cultural traditions and a crisis or weakness of individual morality,” as Antanas Mockus argues (2004). These regimes, with their particular agendas, helped bring the political structure of society into being and regulate its development (Colom, 1999). In most cases,

this was to the detriment of society itself. Twentieth-century Colombia, with its various periods of peace and violence, economic consolidation and poverty, as well as institutional illegitimacy and rampant impunity, witnessed the “divorce between the law, morality and culture” (Mockus, 2004) under the eye of the Regeneration Constitution of 1886. Therefore, the discussion of issues such as individual rights, citizenship and participation, and the acknowledgement of the citizen as a decision-maker in matters of state and community, was almost a hundred years overdue. These outcomes only testify to the failure of the Regeneration project. This regime is also reminiscent of the Absolutist State, as described previously, in that it distinguished morality from politics, and subordinated morals to Catholicism, by granting the state the power to do whatever was necessary to maintain order.

Regeneration society and schools succeeded in producing a population whose citizens were not always aware of their rights much less did they have regard for their duties as citizens. It also reproduced the racial, gender and class divide by providing little opportunities for lower classes, the *pueblo*, to gain social mobility. Equally the lack of recognition of blacks and indigenous populations as part of the nation speaks only to the deep racist conceptions of the time that saw in these populations a burden more than an asset. Education provided by the Catholic Church equipped the *pueblo* with the skills and knowledge appropriate to the lower classes: rudimentary communicative skills, and the values necessary to be a good Catholic who would be obedient, non-critical participant in the public life of the nation, powerless, and disenfranchised citizen.

The fact that the Church and the elites failed to produce law abiding, participating

citizens, or to raise the social and economic status of the majority of Colombians was evidence of the Regeneration's success, since the elites and those in power work best with an easily controlled and subordinated *pueblo*. The reproduction of this cycle of entrapment served to perpetuate class divisions and also to reinforce the elite supremacy. The ideal of popular sovereignty was lost to the Regeneration and even though amendments were made to the 1886 Constitution, popular appeared to be a sin against the principles of Catholicism. With deep concern and not in vain did the Archbishop of Bogotá in 1871 admonish would say: "*si el pueblo es el único soberano, no hay nadie superior a él, ni en el cielo, ni en la tierra, y él no debe estar sometido a otras leyes que a las que él mismo haga...él manda siempre, y no debe obedecer jamás...*". If the people are sovereign, there is no one superior to it, nor in heaven or on earth, and it is not subjected to other laws other than their own...they will always rule, and is not bound to ever obey (cited in Urrego, 1997: 662)

### **The Long Twentieth Century.**

The twentieth century brought with it its own array of problems some of which were directly inherited from the Regeneration and others since even before Independence from Spain. Distinctions of race, class and gender continued to prevail and citizenship would take various forms that not necessarily fostered inclusion or participation of the great majority of the population.

Considering that the Regeneration in part set a new course in the cultural but also in the social realm of Colombia, it is relevant to ask for the traces of the Regeneration in

the institution of citizenship throughout the twentieth century. Given the eventful century that awaited Colombians, was citizenship attached to party identification and the conflicts that these identities brought with them? Also, was the Regenerationist notion of citizenship varied and/or contested? As a regime, the Regeneration ended in 1899 with the beginning of the Thousand-Day War (1899-1902). Its influence, however, it has been argued, survived the eventful twentieth century.

Faith in the omnipresent and omnipotent power of the Constitution of 1886 started to fade months after its promulgation. However, the three-year partisan war at the turn of the century proved that the Constitution was created for a country with other realities. The War of the Thousand Days had many root causes among which lie the fact that the Regeneration regime attacked the political opposition of Liberals by limiting the latter's participation in Congress or in any government post. In this sense, *clientelismo* and electoral fraud facilitated the Regeneration's domination of the political landscape and hindered Liberals from attaining power or participating in the Regeneration government. Liberals encountered even stronger resistance from the regime as they proposed changes to the authoritarian Constitution of 1886. "Lettered" liberal citizens proposed the effective respect of individual liberties and social guarantees, the independent judgment of the judicial branch, and presidential responsibility. They also proposed the establishment of a system of fiscal control on government actions, the limitation of presidentialism, the exemption of import tax on imported goods and basic goods, the prohibition against government issuance of "forced acceptance of paper money" (*moneda de curzo forzoso*), but most importantly, the implementation of a new law that would end

the corruption of the electoral system (Santa, 2001:242-243). The rejection of this proposal, alongside high inflation resulting from Regenerationist economic measures, prompted Liberals from the Department of Santander, Bogotá and other parts of the country to take up arms. Such despotism could only be stopped with “blood and fire.” Equally important was the fear by regional and local elites of both parties of losing their autonomy to the centralization called for by the Regeneration.<sup>79</sup>

The war left more than eighty thousand people dead, the country in economic ruins. In addition to this, Colombia faced the loss of Panama (aided by the U.S. because of its interest in the construction of the Canal<sup>80</sup>) alongside an enormous external and internal debt, unemployment, internal migration and forced displacement. It also left the notion of citizenship relegated to party identification as the Regeneration regime failed to put an end to the conflicts between Liberals and Conservatives. Clientelismo was also reinforced as elites of both parties achieved to consolidate their political base from either side of the social spectrum: from elites to the pueblo. Conservatives, however, duplicated their base which granted the party hegemony for over thirty more years. (Delpar, 1981).

The loss of Panama, however, unlike any other consequence of this war, caused the conservative and the Liberal parties to stop the war. After 1902, Conservatives ruled for the next three decades with little opposition. Despite the achievement of a certain degree of state modernization and peace during the *hegemonía conservadora*, for Marco

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<sup>79</sup> For more on the causes of the Thousand Day War see for instance, Nancy P. Appelbaum, 2003:115 ff;

<sup>80</sup> Alfredo Camelo wrote an illustrative essay on the way the United States had its eye on Panama long before they helped Panama won its independence from Colombia. Alfredo Camelo. “La tragedia de la Guerra de los Mil Días y la Secesión de Panamá.” <http://deslinde.org.co/files/La%20tragedia%20de%20la%20Guerra%20de%20los%20Mil%20D%C3%ADas.%20Alfredo%20Camelo%20Bogot%C3%A1.pdf>.

Palacios, the period that “masks the regime’s weakness in dealing with the legislature, its complex relationship with the Catholic church, and its adaptation to the values of liberal capitalism” (Palacios, 2006:48 ). Citizenship also continued to be tied to party identification as social cohesion was elusive. Certain degree of modernization was achieved in the 1920s with the moneys paid by the US for its intromission that led to the loss of Panama (Bushnell, 1993: 154,165,169). In this decade, Colombia became the world’s second largest producer of coffee, after Brazil (Ibid). The textile and oil industry, as well as banana exports, also flourished. There were German economic and education missions to help organize the banking system (Safford and Palacio, 2002:283) and promote educational reforms (Rojas de Ferro, 1982).

Semi-feudal and mainly agrarian Colombia seemed a thing of the past. However, in the late 1920s, the conservative government overlooked the potential harm of excessive expenditure, despite the signs of a world-wide faltering economy. According to Herbert Braun (2003), during the five years preceding the Great Depression, almost \$200 million entered Colombia in loans, and the nation’s capacity to import almost doubled (30).

Despite its claims of centralization and unification in the name of religion, language, and morality, the Regenerationist project was fragmented and weakened at the end of the *hegemonía conservadora*. The causes of this fragmentation can be found in the fact that, as Fabio H. Giraldo (1995-1996) suggests, the Regeneration was constructed more on the basis of a desire for civilization, not always sincere, than on the idea that the law demands more commitment to socio-political realities. In the name of that desire, the

Regenerationist law was no more than a set of norms that did not necessarily represent all sectors of the population. Unification could not be achieved because the exclusionist nature of the project kept the majority of the population from receiving the benefits of modernization. Furthermore, how could a culture of tolerance (political or otherwise) and respect for differences emerge in a country where dissent was not allowed and where the opposition was punished? The debilitating process of the once strong Catholic state came with the eruption of the “*república liberal*” (1930-1946) that resulted from the divisions over political and economic issues within the Conservative Party (Abello, 2005).

The moral education of the population was yet another desire that was incompatible with actual political and social practices, as corruption abounded and the state did not set an example of honesty and commitment for the population to follow. In that sense, both citizens and non-citizens, following Giraldo Jiménez, saw no social commitment or responsibility for realizing individual or communal goals. As the Regeneration insisted on the social implementation of natural law, the fear of God and respect for the authority of the state, the population felt no need to take on the responsibility for their own communities. This detachment from the state and the collective produced a culture of lawlessness, impunity, and indifference toward others.

In 1930, the liberal hegemonic period started in relative calm despite the fact that the Depression was taking hold of the country. Unlike other countries in the region, Colombia did not suffer political and social turmoil caused by fall of the economy. Colombia transitioned from a conservative term to a liberal one without trauma. The change of government prompted important changes for the institution of citizenship. In



order to achieve this end, the Liberal government reformed the 1886 Constitution's view of citizenship. Citizens were required to fulfill their social and political duties. The liberal state promised to guarantee electoral transparency and institutional accountability. As Posada Carbó (1997) comments, the state promised clean elections, no fraud, force or arbitrariness. Liberals revised electoral legislation in which universal male suffrage (even if only for participation in local elections) was fundamental. Additionally, there was important support for unionism. For Herbert Braun, in this period, the masses became increasingly mobilized "around the individualizing and competitive values of market structures" (Braun, 1986:7).

In the late 1940s, after the great electoral mobilization of 1946 that resulted in the election of a Conservative as president, there emerged a new, Liberal, and more democratic discourse. As Palacios (1996) explains, it comprised a positivist critique of social morality and an interventionist critique of political economy in which the most important argument was that civil rights such as property ownership as a social function and form of labor, as well as new "socialist" rights such as education and unionization, ought to be constitutional. The proposal was widely accepted by the immense majority of Colombians, who until that point had not been taken into account. Opposing the Catholic and conservative conception of citizenship of the Regeneration, this new discourse called for the "construction of citizenship" through active participation in the public sphere. Nonetheless, the strength of the political machine that had long been consolidated, and which operated in a top-down process in order to protect the interests of a small minority, prevailed. It also worked almost independently from the new electoral laws and norms.

The Catholic Church, as it had done in the nineteenth century, influenced the political sphere in the name of moralization, tradition, and Catholicism. The clerical institution vehemently intended to put a halt to the educational changes that the Liberal government was trying to implement. The Church considered such changes detrimental to the nation's morality. Therefore, the Church reinforced its commitment to limiting individual autonomy. The Church opposed various Liberal reforms as it portrayed itself as the defender of social order in the legitimation of the cultural field. In addition, according to Renan Silva (2007), despite general disputes with change, there were also members of the Church who supported the creation of libraries, the diffusion of books, the expansion of education, and literacy programs as preferable to (although no less important than) hygiene at school restaurants, female education, the development of cinema, and radio. The few changes proposed by the always-willing-to-mediate Liberal state were not necessarily revolutionary, but certainly innovative in terms of citizenship, the separation of the private and the public spheres, and the separation of Church and state.

Against a background of growing dissatisfaction with poverty and corruption emerged Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a petty bourgeois, who mounted a political movement on the promise that Colombia's rhetorical democracy could become a reality. Gaitán had a large appeal to the masses with his promise to end electoral fraud and corruption. Most importantly however, as Leonardo Ferreira Vélez explains, Gaitán intended to make Liberalism's promise of the benefits of production to reach all spheres of society. Gaitán understood that, the greatest problem of classical Liberalism was that it had transformed

production in a social phenomenon while profit [“appropriation”] was individual. In this respect, Gaitán rightly asked: “is not here where the root cause of the social conflict lies?” (Gaitán as cited in Jorge Mario Eastman, 1979:65 as cited in Ferreira Vélez, 2007:31). His dream died with his assassination in early April of 1948. Although his killer died within a few minutes after of Gaitán’s death, the motivations behind the crime remain a mystery.<sup>81</sup> On the sixtieth anniversary of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán’s assassination, major Colombian online newspapers such as Eltiempo.com, elespectador.com and the weekly magazine semana.com speculated about the causes and implications of his death. Some even suggested resurrecting Gaitán himself to ask him about the current situation of the country.

After Gaitán’s assassination, the country entered into yet another spiral of violence that lasted a decade. After 1948, the Liberal party abandoned its leadership and with it, as Marco Palacio argues, the cycle in which Colombian liberals represented the ideal of modernity ended. Liberalism had failed once more but not necessarily because of its opposition to the Church, but in part because, following Palacios, Colombian liberals decided, yet again, to mind their own interests, to abandon their followers and to set their minds to achieve modernization without modernity in the name of avoiding an inevitable

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<sup>81</sup> The crime has not been solved because at that time, Bogotá was the center of power struggle between The U.S. and the Soviet Union. Days before his assassination, Bogotá was hosting two important events: the Latin American Youth Congress (organized by Cuban Fidel Castro and sponsored by Argentine Juan Perón) to oppose the 9<sup>th</sup> Pan American Conference presided by U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall. Gaitán was in the middle of a controversy because he was called to clarify his position in relation to the Conference and the allegations that Communists would blame his party for any disruptions at the Pan American event. Talking to El Tiempo newspaper Gaitán assured that “no Liberal may participate in such acts” (Airgram from US embassy in Bogotá, March 24, 1948 <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/gaitan/beaulac24mar1948.htm>). According to one theory, Joseph Stalin was to blame for Gaitán’s death since the Russian had decided to interrupt violently the Conference not by killing Marshall but Gaitán, the charismatic and popular leader of the Liberal party (Iriarte, 2005).

civil war (1997). The “construction of citizenship” was an illusion of a few minds that, in the end, could not separate citizenship from party identification as the conflict between Liberals and Conservatives remained unresolved despite important advances in this respect. Even though twentieth century Liberals managed a more conciliatory discourse than Radical Liberals in the previous century, they had similar results to the Regeneration. The country was at war; the citizens identified themselves by color (conservatives wore blue and liberals red); the Catholic Church continued in a privileged position; the elites of both parties look from afar how the people in the countryside torn each other apart. Neither Colombian Liberalism nor the Regeneration could achieve the so desired social cohesion nor peace or progress.

*La Violencia* (1948-1958) represented one of the periods in which citizenship was almost exclusively attached to party identification as the conflict between Liberals and Conservatives deteriorated everywhere in the country. The more than a century old hatred was more alive than ever. Violence started right after Gaitán’s death which provoked riots in Bogotá known as *el Bogotazo*. This moment signaled that, for a moment, the pueblo controlled the city, “turning on its head” the old social and political order (Braun, 1986:196, 7, 204). This reversal of roles “shattered the relationship between leaders and followers” in the country eliminating the possibility of a pacific “*convivencia*” (cohabitation). Unsure of how to proceed, political elites simply allowed violence to run rampant. Around 200,000 people died during the period but the bulk of the killing, took place in rural areas. *La Violencia* took place in Bogotá, a city that had grown from 235,000 in 1928 to 628,000 in 1951 (Braun, 1986:31), and throughout the rest of the

country, where old partisan rivalry came to the fore, leaving death, displacement, and poverty in their path. As historian Mary Roldán states, the cruelty of the war is insufficient to distinguish the particularities of *La Violencia* from the rest of Latin America. The subcontinent also lived through political conflicts, personal feuds, agrarian unrest, and clientelist competition but during the nineteenth or early twentieth century and the reason behind their violence involved war with other nations or occurred in the context of suppressing an indigenous population. It is apparent that Colombia's *La Violencia* was fought in terms of mid-nineteenth century political partisanship away from modern or social objectives (Roldán, 2002:12).

The semi-fascist Laureano Gómez (1950-1953) held the presidency for most of the *Violencia* period, without Liberal support. No significant change in tolerance, inclusion, social or political progress--much less improvement in political participation--could come from a politician and intellectual who had no hope for a civilized Colombia. For Gómez, a black or indigenous heritage was a “[mark] of inferiority” (Gómez as cited in Wade, 2000:33). The *mestizo* did not carry the key to salvation either as in them, according to Gómez, this group incarnated the psychological aberrations of the “razas genitoras” (1970:47).

No doubt, Gómez embraced the racist ideology deep-rooted in the elites of both parties, whose only concern lay in the defense of their economic and political interests. This period strongly recalled the Regeneration particularly as Gómez also conceived of Indians and blacks, for instance, as non-citizens due to their “perpetual infantilism” (Ibid:48). Paradoxically, as Juan de Dios Mosquera points out, the black communities of

that time massively supported Gómez, despite his disdain for them. Advocating a kind of “white supremacy,” “*la raza colombiana*” did not include second-class citizens: that is, blacks or Indians (2000:Chapter 4). These views strongly coincided with the widespread stereotype of Colombian elites, but also of Latin America in the first decades of the twentieth century.

After a coup d'état, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla held control of the government from 1953 to 1958. The period of *La Violencia*, but more specifically during Rojas' dictatorship, Colombia improved its rates of health and literacy, and the provision of clean water and sewer systems. At the same time, there was pacification of certain regions of the country, another coffee bonanza, successful control of inflation, the flow of international loans, and a steady fight against communism.<sup>82</sup> Like other dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere, the Rojas regime received Church support in its first years. However, the Church ended its support for the regime after Rojas Pinilla use of the name of God and a crucifix during the inauguration of his political party. The massacre of the Plaza de Toros in Bogota in 1956 forced the Church to definitely cut relations with Rojas Pinilla's regime. In the last years of his dictatorship, the Church exercised powerful opposition to the regime until it fell. According to Juan David Giraldo, important labor unions also opposed Rojas (Safford and Palacios, 2002:319-322). In this period, guerrilla movements started to emerge and helped organize peasants who opposed official agrarian measures that harmed them (Ibid:323).

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<sup>82</sup> For more on Rojas Pinilla dictatorship see, for instance, Marco Palacios and Frank Safford (2002), David Bushnell (1993), Jorge Orlando Melo (2007)

Citizenship in this period had important developments. One of the most significant achievements of this dictatorship-populist regime was that women obtained the right to vote in 1954 and were able to exercise it in the elections that gave rise to the National Front in 1958. Rojas Pinilla also incorporated women into the police force and appointed women as governors and ministers for the first time in Colombia's history (Safford and Palacios, 2002:324). Women had been striving for their rights for some time, but the patriarchal order only heard the demand when the U.N. itself urged Congress to approve the amendment to the 1886 Constitution, based on the argument that women were important for democratization, modernization, and capitalist projects. Despite the new laws, which allowed women to participate more in the public sphere, in reality, their participation was heavily limited by gender discrimination and overpowering patriarchal relations. *La Violencia* ended in 1958 after a partisan pact called the *Frente Nacional*.

The *Frente Nacional*, which was in effect from 1958 until 1974 (hereafter FN), was a pact between Liberals and Conservatives, according to which the presidency and all the positions in the three branches of government would alternate between the two parties. The FN denied other political identities any participation in the state. The consequence of this arrangement was the consolidation of groups outside the mainstream such as communist guerrillas who started to fight against the interests of large landowners and their political interests. This phenomenon only contributed to the already strong country's regionalization and fragmentation. Banditry, which had been a constant

source of government concern ever since Independence, was rampant during *La Violencia* and became even stronger during the FN.

Even though the FN became the solution to partisan violence, at the same time it elicited other types of violence, especially from the guerrillas. The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) emerged out of this conjuncture in the early 1960s. They had the support of some important sector of the population as they defended peasants against large landowners' abuse and exploitation, and attacked the state for never accomplishing an agrarian reform that would protect peasants.

*La Violencia* produced an important migratory movement from rural to urban areas. During the FN, however, migration declined from an annual percentage of 4.45 in 1960 to 3.44 in 1974,<sup>83</sup> despite some advances in modernization and industrialization. The protection of peasants by leftist guerrillas inspired by the Cuban Revolution also prevented the movement of people to the city. The Church, which so far had been in charge of education, yielded ground to secular education. Liberation Theology, which was strong in Brazil and some parts of Latin America, barely touched the Church in Colombia. The few priests who followed the calling of "the church of the poor" joined or helped create guerrilla groups such as the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), the FARC, or the *Movimiento 19 de abril* (M-19).<sup>84</sup>

After *La Violencia*, the political elites were [apparently] concerned with the rural poor and proposed a *Reforma Agraria* that never consolidated (Safford and Palacios,

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<sup>83</sup> Records found on [www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_urb_pop_gro_ann-people-urban-population-growth-annual&date=1960) [http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo\\_urb\\_pop\\_gro\\_ann-people-urban-population-growth-annual&date=1960](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_urb_pop_gro_ann-people-urban-population-growth-annual&date=1960)

<sup>84</sup> The M-19 emerged as a response to the allegedly fraudulent presidential elections of April 19, 1970



2002:327), due to the “*miedo al pueblo*,” and because the state was incapable and/or unwilling to facilitate efficient mechanisms of taxation that would control property ownership and to extract revenue. According to Marco Palacios, the agrarian reform aimed for the redistribution of land, wealth, income, and power. The motivation behind the reform was the idea that migration to the city, large, unexploited landownership, and very small landholdings were obstacles to capitalist accumulation, agricultural productivity, and rising living standards. In the end, the FN ended without an agrarian reform, because of the land that was part of the *Reforma*, only 1% had been redistributed (2006:183). The failure of the reform was also due to the lack of democratization of a process that should have involved the interested elites, the peasantry, and small landowners. No doubt, the lack of political commitment, alongside the overwhelming power of large landowners, increased peasant discontent. As a consequence, the sixties and seventies saw frequent peasant mobilizations and protests. There was, however, a lack of political organization and strength, as Álvaro Acevedo Tarazona and Salomón Castaño Álvarez contend, that would lead peasants to invade and appropriate state lands (2001).

One of the most remarkable outcomes of the FN was the nationalization of *clientelismo*, in which the state became the main source of patronage (Safford and Palacios, 2002:324-26).<sup>85</sup> Initially, the plebiscite favoring the FN was supported by a majority of the population (95.2%). Nonetheless, abstentionism grew to 50 % in the

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<sup>85</sup> An example of the workings of clientelist networks at the local level, the *Juntas de Acción Comunal*, one of the first social programs of the FN created in order to organize and co-opt the urban poor became important clientelist instruments (Safford and Palacios, 2006:326).

following presidential elections (Palacios, 1995:219), as disappointment with the political landscape increased. Not surprisingly, the population's reaction was to abstain from participating in elections, since electoral fraud and vote manipulation were evident. In other words, legitimacy was circumscribed within the electoral ritual and *clientelismo*. The strong partisan identification that had caused numerous upheavals throughout Colombian history diminished as the population lost faith and respect for the parties they once supported. Unfortunately, the FN did not manage to "create a democratic political culture," nor did it implement the necessary social reforms (Palacios, 1996) to alleviate poverty and end *clientelismo*. Certainly, a moderate level of modernization was achieved, but it only broadened the gap between social groups, regions, and urban and rural areas (Ibid).

The title of citizen had not been handled at the local level since the last decades of the nineteenth century, much less had it addressed morality or manners since the early twentieth century. Without unification in any front, citizenship also remained a very fragmented institution. In this respect, the FN did not achieve to consolidate a project of citizenship that exceeded party identification. From the perspective of the political parties, following Miguel García Sánchez, it is possible to argue that the FN did achieve a fusion of the two political collectivities under a single citizenship project. Nonetheless, the parties were not the equivalent of the nation as a whole neither were they the ground for a national citizenship. The FN did achieve a certain degree of peace and granted rights to both Liberals and Conservatives. This idea only led to the understanding of citizenship as membership to the Colombian nation and as a guarantor of rights only within each of

the political parties (2000). The limited understanding of citizenship as party identification implied that individuals that did not belong to either the Liberal or the Conservative Party were simply excluded from the privileges of citizenship. It also produced more fragmentation of the population into those who actively and some violently opposed both parties and the governments they represented and those who remained indifferent. Therefore, what the FN brought was not a new phenomenon represented in a kind of “fragmented citizenship” (Ibid). The FN was not the cause or the effect but simply the continuation of the ever existing process of national fragmentation. National unification could not be achieved by the *Olimpo Radical*, or the Regeneration, much less by the different regimes of the convoluted twentieth century. The FN was another example of the impossibility of nation to come together as it reinforced old political practices and motivated new pervasive ones. The FN, in the end, was symptomatic of the lack of consciousness in relation to the responsibilities of citizenship (autonomy or rights) and also reconfirmed that elites continued to defend their economic, social, and political interests.

The late 1970s were characterized by poverty and social inequality. The guerrillas had consolidated and there emerged drug trafficking that transformed the nation’s economic, social, and political landscape. Economically, narco-trafficking provided an easy and secure avenue of wealth in an unprecedented way. As illegal dollars and pesos kept pouring in, new businesses were created in order to launder money, and the real estate market flourished as small landowners and homeowners sold their property at inflated prices. Drug lords became the new *latifundistas*. This new class made it even

more difficult to consolidate an agrarian reform and transform peasants into landowners. Drug trafficking was not unique to the late 1970s or the 1980s. This phenomenon has not been eradicated today, despite some progress. Drug traffickers continue to outsmart, bribe, and “reward” police and the agencies that fight against this illegal activity. Politically, the dirty money of the illegal trade highly rewarded the cooperation and silence of a large number of politicians and government officials. For this reason, state legitimacy has constantly been contested. Citizens abstained from participating in elections or other public affairs, as many important political candidates and state officials were tainted by drug money. Journalists and opposition leaders constantly brought to the fore the consequences of the alliance between certain members of the state and drug lords.

Socially, drug trafficking created a class of *nouveaux riches*/new rich that many Colombians simultaneously deplored and envied. The *nouveaux riches* immersed themselves in a powerful consumerist mode in which art, real estate, land, designer clothing, jewelry, and sports cars were purchased in great quantities. At the same time, private armies were created to protect drug lords such as Pablo Escobar. Money laundering was the name of the game. As in any other business, competition soon emerged, and power struggles among drug traffickers provoked yet another wave of violence amongst them and against state agents that worked against them in certain regions of the country. This was the national landscape at the beginning of the 1980s.

The constant violence, political instability, economic underdevelopment, social inequality, corruption, guerrillas, and drug trafficking of the 1980s testified to the

constitutional failures not only of the Regeneration but of all other subsequent regimes, which did not manage to moralize the nation or bring economic prosperity, social responsibility, or a culture of tolerance and responsible citizenship.

During this period, the strengthening of guerrilla groups responded to these developments and to the monopolization of political power imposed by the Liberal and Conservative parties. This decade also proved difficult because of the consolidation of the drug market and its overwhelming corruptive power in all spheres of the state, not to mention the spread of terrorism against the judicial system and any person or entity that defended extraditions connected to drug trafficking. Paramilitary groups also emerged to combat guerrillas. In the name of combating the guerrillas, they committed innumerable tortures, *desaparecidos*/disappeared peasants, union leaders, political opposition, and anyone else who tried to resist them. There were many massacres and tortures. In these years a “*guerra sucia*” (dirty war) began, with the establishment of semi-official groups such as the Muerte a Secuestradores (MAS) (death to kidnappers), the paramilitary groups such as Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá (ACCU) (peasant self-defenses of Córdoba and Urabá), the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), and the CONVIVIR (Melo-Pinzón, 2004). The latter organization is only one example of this kind of private army financed directly by the state. Álvaro Uribe, the current president of Colombia, legitimized the CONVIVIR after his father was assassinated by a guerrilla group.

The inevitable institutional crisis was only fully appreciated when violence perpetrated by guerrillas, drug lords, paramilitaries, corrupt military and state officials,

and common delinquency were taking hold of the nation in an unprecedented manner. The partisan violence of the past could not be compared to the conflict initiated by the conjunction of these forces that were taking the country on the road to perdition once again. It was evident that the citizen was marginalized both by his or her antipathy (produced by the recurrent failures of the political and economic system) and also by the menacing and damaging influence of drug lords and corrupt officials' *clientelismo*, bribery, and force.

Alongside the devastating effects of drugs, guerrillas, and state corruption, neoliberalism arrived with its discourse on privatization, efficiency, freedom, its policy of “reducing labor costs, reducing public expenditures, making work more flexible,” and implementing “the politics of financial deregulation” (Bourdieu, 1998). It also introduced privatization, advocated by the U.S., the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

During the 1980s political elites, industrialists, and other interest groups that intended to diversify the economy gradually eliminated protections on industry in order to make it more competitive and effective in the international market. The financial liberalization process was designed to weaken labor and strengthen capital, especially finance capital. At a macroeconomic level, the process seemed to have worked. At the microeconomic level, however, the process was failing because poverty was rampant and along with it, violence and corruption. This situation can be summarized in the infamous phrase pronounced by the president of the *Asociación Nacional de Industriales* (ANDI)

in the mid 1880's: "*la economía va bien, el país va mal*"/the economy is going well, the country is not (Pizarro and Bejarano, 1994:12).

The financial liberalization process that took place in this decade particularly benefited the banking system which had, through corrupt practices, amassed an important amount of capital—producing high inflation and more inequality. Moreover, the interest rates paid on foreign loans created an acute industrial crisis, capped by a great state deficit. Part of the solution was the reduction of public expenditure and the devaluation of the peso. The housing sector, along with education and the labor market, suffered important budget cuts (Safford and Palacios, 2002:334). These were the initial effects of the implementation of neoliberalism in the country.

The unfair rules of the “free market” prompted political leaders, social organizations, minority groups, demobilized guerrillas (Unión Patriótica, M-19), and consolidated economic groups to form an *Asamblea Nacional Constituyente* in order to re-establish the nation through a new constitution that would be more in accordance with the times, and which would put an end to the traditional Catholic ideas of the Regeneration. During the drafting of this new constitution, the discussion concentrated on rights, tolerance, participation, transparency, citizenship, and democracy. More important, however, was the economic agenda, which, by bringing about decentralization would adapt to new international economic interests.

### **The 1991 Constitution: In Search of Citizenship as Process**

The strength of the Catholic citizen was deeply felt in the last decade of the nineteenth century. However, many features of this citizen remained in place as the Catholic Church

from the pulpit and the classroom was committed to the reproduction of the inclusion-exclusion social order that this institution helped maintain over time. For instance, for decades, children and adolescents had to pray prior to class time, their critical thinking skills were overshadowed by compulsory memorization of contents, and the questioning of a “superior” was taken as a major offense. The particular historical circumstances of the 1980s brought the population on onto the streets to demand participation and actual solutions to the overwhelming problems of the nation. The hegemony of the Catholic citizen was soon to change.

The armed conflict, drug trafficking, banditry, state corruption, political party weakness, the almost irremediable separation of the state from the people and economic backwardness testify to the failure of the Liberal project in Colombia. However, citizens reclaimed their space and in the late 1980s, there emerged a university student movement that inspired fundamental constitutional changes. This movement originated out of its discomfort with a failed government reform that intended to widen citizenship participation in politics and to eradicate government corruption, during the general elections of early 1990 proposed a “*séptima papeleta*”/seventh ballot paper. In it, voters were asked to include an additional, non-official paper along with their ballot sheets in the legislative elections of March 11, 1990, declaring their support a call for a National Constitutional Assembly. Despite the fact that the “*séptima papeleta*” was an unofficial referendum, the support of two million voters to the initiative forced the government to make those votes official in the presidential election. In December of 1990, Colombian voters elected the members of the *Asamblea Nacional Constituyente* who had the task of



reforming the Regeneration Constitution in its entirety (Hernández Becerra, 2003). The Assembly was formed by different citizen organizations, traditional parties and the recently demobilized and now a fully constituted political party, guerrilla M-19. By August 1991, Colombia had a new constitution. This new charter had to respond not only to the Colombian people but also to economic and political international pressures that were demanding the restructuring of the state in order to facilitate free trade and globalization. In this sense, the Assembly had to bear in mind that the type of economic relations that the country had used until then was obsolete in the new historical conjuncture.

Apart from the important economic reasons behind the Constitution there were other fundamental aspects to it such as the location of the citizen in a central stage. The enthusiasm for bringing the modern notion of citizenship to the fore responded to increasing interest as the re-democratization processes and instatement of neoliberalism were taking place elsewhere in Latin America and other parts of the world since the late 1980s. The rediscovery of citizenship not only included a debate about this modern notion, but it also linked citizenship to a wide variety of problems (Sábato, 1999:11) and social causes around the world, such as social justice in the 1970s and political participation instead of dictatorship in the 1980s. Fundamental to this debate was a discussion of the qualities and attitudes of citizens in democratic societies. Colombia was no exception. In fact, citizenship became the backbone of a constitutional reform that intended to solve the country's long-standing problems.

The overwhelming participation of the population with the “*séptima papeleta*” was symptomatic of the demand of the people for participation in matters of the state. In the early 1990s, the idea of citizenship as belonging to the exclusive realm of party identification was contested. The notion of citizenship needed to vary and be extended beyond the electoral booth to become a “framework of ideas about human roles and relationships around which people can weave their own beliefs, opinions and strategies” (Taylor and Wilson, 2004). The notion of citizenship contested the resistance from the centralized state to open up spaces of participation and which fenced itself off against any civil intrusion. This new conception of citizenship signaled a shift of focus away from a view of politics as the domain of elite groups. The Constitution of 1991 precisely reflected the aspirations of ordinary people to take on new identities as political actors.

Linked to this, in Colombia, as in most of Latin America at the time ideas of citizenship were a) embedded in a human rights discourse that dominated the mobilization of many against the guerrillas, narco-traffickers, and state terrorism; b) mirrored the re-establishment of Liberal democratic structures and principles in the formal, political realm; and c) reflected the ideological shift of some “opposition” forces away from Marxism-Leninism, and the [unfortunate] intellectual dismissal of class analysis for a greater focus on issues of subjectivity, cultural practices, and everyday life (Taylor and Wilson, 2004). Thus, citizenship as a meaningful idea, made sense to the people, to new political practitioners, and to academics in the post-1991 Constitution era.

The 1991 Constitution intended to subvert what Ligia Galvis calls “the introspection of culture” promoted during the Regeneration as Colombian society, in

virtue of the effects of the ecclesiastic control of education, became impermeable to positivist and socialist ideas. It is important to remember that in this ultra-conservative regime, the Enlightenment conscience was subjected to cultural marginality and a “culpable conscience” (Galvis, 1986:236). The result of such introspection was a submissive conscience that has influenced negatively the relationship between the individual and the state. Moreover, the Regeneration intended to guarantee the unity of society by dreaming of balance between political power and individual freedom. This vision meant limited access to citizenship, equality amongst equals, and restricted liberties on the grounds of individual moral responsibility. The 1991 Constitution was revolutionary because it contested the centralized, Catholic, conservative hegemony of the 1886 National Constitution. With new constitutional tools, the notion of citizenship held a more inclusive, egalitarian meaning which, it can be argued, provided Colombians not only with the legal tools to demand respect for their rights, but most importantly, it also helped develop a new sense of citizens’ responsibility to the state and to their fellows. How was the regenerationist notion of citizenship contested with the new constitution?

The 1991 Constitution intended to contest this vision of citizenship in different ways as it would become the preferred institution to help establish social connections through the formation of civic solidarity among a plurality of subjects. This principle contests the Regeneration, which had given elites the tools necessary to limit the Liberal principle of popular participation. The 1991 Constitution strove to guarantee higher levels

of civic participation by giving citizens a voice in decision-making processes. In other words, at least on paper, there was transference of power from the state to the people.

The establishment of different citizenship rights and duties, strong citizen participation, and decentralization were some of the ways in which the 1991 Constitution contested Miguel Antonio Caro's Catholic constitution. A few examples can show how the 1991 Constitution had important advances in the issues of rights as they notoriously increased in number and scope.

While the Constitution of 1886 in its Article 45 established that everybody has the right to respectfully present a petition to the public authorities and to expect a swift response, it did not establish the mechanisms to guarantee that individuals will in fact be heard and their rights respected. This article is symptomatic of the lack of accountability of public officials before the general population. In order to solve this flaw, the 1991 charter established several mechanisms such as the *Acción de tutela* (writ of injunction) and other judicial actions in its Article 86 to guarantee equality and accountability.

Another example of how the 1991 charter varies from the 1886 Constitutions is represented in the number of "responsibilities" that each constitution established. While the Constitution of 1886 established that the individual had only two responsibilities (to submit to the Constitution and the law and to respect authorities (Article 10) and, when required, to the individual has the responsibility to yield his particular interest for public ones (Article 31), the 1991 established 11. Among the responsibilities described in the latter, there is a change in attitude in relation to respect for authorities as Article 95 considers that is the duty of the individual to not only respect authorities but to support

them. Another responsibility is to act according to social solidarity. This latter responsibility exceeded the regenerationist connotation of charity and implied a stronger commitment with the social.

In relation to voting rights, the two constitutions manage different approaches. On the one hand, for the Regeneration constitution, literate males who own property or an annual rent of 500 pesos have the right to elect Electors and directly elect Representatives (Article 173). On the other hand, the 1991 Constitution sees elections as opportunities. In this sense, the constitution uses the notion of “right-duty”, that is, participating in elections is both a right and a responsibility (Article 95). Peace is another such “right-duties” (Article 22). Everyone has the right to live in peace and in order to achieve so it is the responsibility of each member of society not only to foment peace but also to not act violently and to look for pacific ways to solve conflicts. Neither the Regeneration nor the 1991 Constitution have been able to free the country from this scourge.

“Differentiated citizenship” (Kymlicka 1995) was essential to the Constitution of 1991 because “identity politics” had been exclusively limited to the domains of Liberalism and Conservatism, but had never been considered in terms of the political inclusion of minorities in the public sphere. In this sense, indigenous and black communities, as well as women and the disenfranchised, found new spaces to express their concerns and to propose solutions to their own problems. It is worth remembering that the nineteenth-century Liberal and Conservative exclusivist idea that Indians and blacks were too barbarous, religious, and/or immoral for them to become citizens was

reinforced in the Regeneration, confirmed in the early 1950s, and persisted until 1991, when these groups were finally granted full citizenship.

Contrary to the nineteenth-century constitutions and more specifically the 1886 Constitution, the 1991 Constitution was drafted to erase the discriminatory difference before the law between social groups, and to establish mechanisms that would guarantee respect for the differences between social groups based on gender and ethnicity. Article 13 precisely establishes “right to freedom and equality before the law”. For this constitution, citizenship was not granted on the basis of gender, race, wealth, or literacy, but on the recognition that all Colombians were citizens. In order to vote, the only restriction imposed was age (eighteen years old). The word “equality” and “respect for the difference” finally found a place in a Colombian constitution—even if only rhetorically.

“Differentiated citizenship” in the Colombian context partially applies as important sectors of the population such as Indians or blacks remained alienated. Blacks, for instance, were cordoned off on the Pacific Coast despite the fact that the 1991 Constitution in its Transitory Article 55 declared that blacks from thereon were to be called Afro-Colombians and that they were part of the nation Afro-Colombians were part of the nation. Their rights were consecrated in 1993 under Law 70 of that year. This Law would guarantee Afro-Colombian communities the right to delimit their territory and to use, preserve and manage their natural resources. Despite the juridical support, the conditions of existence of this population have not improved. In fact, their very existence is constantly at risk not only because their basic needs are not covered but also because

new aggressions are exercised against them on a regular basis. Drug traffickers, paramilitaries, guerrillas as well as national and multinational corporations that have set their eyes in the region for its natural resources but also because of the limited presence of the state that facilitates all kinds of illegal businesses to prosper. The negligence of the state can be felt, for instance, in what was one of the most important ports in Colombia Pacific, Buenaventura, where in 2004, the level of unemployment was 28.8%; poverty was 80.6% and homelessness was 43.5% (Mina Rojas, 2008). Other regions of the country in where Afro-Colombians live face a similar reality.

The Constitution of 1991 also recreated the modern mechanisms for civic participation that had been neglected for most of the republic's life. Article 40 establishes the "right to participation." Through this right, this charter intended to step away from representative democracy typical of the Regeneration to a participative democracy. This right was written following the lines of liberal constitutionalism, which for Habermas meant "to order not only the state as such and in relation to society but the system of coexistence in society as a whole"(Habermas, 1991:223). The promises of the 1991 Constitution were important in order to allow social relations to germinate and consolidate in a society that thrived on intolerance impunity, and inequality. As noted earlier, despite some progress in the twentieth century, the majority of Colombians remained excluded from participation in the public sphere and the minority in power at the local and national level handled elections and issues of public concern. The new Constitution set out to respond, contest, and recreate mechanisms for the protection of the right to participation, and in general, for the free exercise of citizenship that had been

denied for most of Colombia's constitutional life. In other words, it sought to promote and reinforce civic presence in public affairs, as a fundamental condition for democratizing the nation. In a country where *clientelismo* has been the norm, participation can only take place if citizens are politically and socially responsible.

Through the decentralization process, the state and the citizen were brought into closer alignment leading to a formula for success in the new political culture emanating from Bogotá. The premise behind this process was twofold: to eliminate the closed nature of the Colombian political system and also to transfer power to the people (García Sánchez, 2000). In this way, the Constitution sought to depoliticize community by appealing to political liberty so that individuals would forge other kinds of communal ties through civic, political, and cultural associations. In this respect, the constitution started with the individual, but emphasized the collective. In fact, the constitutional text often uses phrases such as “collective interest” (Art. 88), “public interest” (Art 58, 118, 335), and “common good” (Art. 133, 333). These inclusive phrases invite “*pluralismo*” and “*solidaridad*” and “the promotion of general prosperity” (Art 1); but most of all, the text mandates that the state “facilitate the participation of all in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the nation” (Art 2). The “common good” that was expressed in the form of social, cultural, and economic rights (Title II, Chapter 2) “imply the provision of services, by the state and therefore economic outlay that generally depends on political decision.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Constitutional Court, Judgment T-570/92. In: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Organization of American States. Chapter 3 <http://www.cidh.org/countryrep/colom99en/chapter-3.htm>.



The 1991 Constitution facilitated the implementation of the program called “*Cultura Ciudadana*”/civil culture in Bogotá. This program was created in 1995 by Professor Antanas Mockus. In the late 1980s Bogotá, the largest city in Colombia, was not ready to forge new “heterogeneous” forms of belonging, much less to promote a consumerist, neoliberal culture, since the lack of safety, crime, and an engrained absence of civic culture permeated pervaded its history. Nonetheless, the transformation of Bogotá after the Constitution of 1991 speaks of a slow but steady process that responds to the demands of the market. The new model also responds to a crucial need to give the city back to its inhabitants and to transform it into a real public sphere in which citizens could exercise their rights and duties, and where they could develop socially, culturally, and economically. It is in this sphere that citizenship rights and duties were a priority, and where the enjoyment of individual liberty was protected and regulated by other citizens and by the state. It is also here that Colombia, represented in Bogotá, started to reconcile the “law, culture, and morality,” by decentralizing the state and transferring power to the people--and by using gratification instead of punishment as an educational tool. Such an approach was supported by a notion of citizenship as an assembling of “habits, activities and shared minimum rules intended to create a feeling of belonging, facilitate coexistence in the urban space and lead to respect collective goods and to recognize citizens’ rights and duties” (Mockus as cited in Rojas, 2002). This notion responded, as mentioned earlier to the rediscovery of the institution of citizenship as re-democratization process were taking place and as a response to the many social problems (Sábato, 1999:11) that affected not only Colombia but Latin America in general.

The promotion of rules for coexistence in Bogotá had a profound pedagogical effect: The self and mutual regulation of everyday conduct was used instead of coercion. In a country where violence, intolerance, corruption, and *clientelismo* are part of everyday life, the results achieved through programs such as *cultura ciudadana* have been positive. Thanks to them, alcohol consumption, traffic accidents related to alcohol or carelessness has decreased, and crime has been reduced. Although violence has long been an everyday affair, the number of violent deaths in Bogotá decreased in the last fifteen years, from 80 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1993 to 17.6 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2007 (Velázquez, 2008):27. The city is also cleaner; the people are becoming more respectful, more amicable, and more responsive to the city and to others.<sup>87</sup> The use of humor as well as symbolic and daring actions to teach citizens to reflect on the consequences of their behavior in urban life (Montezuma, 2005) had a positive effect on Bogotanos, as *Cultura Ciudadana* showed citizens that there are peaceful ways to solve problems and to participate actively in public life.

Today Bogotá is a global city and as any other major city, it represents the localization of global forces such as forced or willing migration, the internationalization of capital, as well as the intensification of rights discourse. Bogotá has challenged the premises for a national citizenship. It has also reinforced the premise that “cities remain the strategic arena for the development” (Holston and Appadurai, 1999:2), and constant renegotiation of the political and practical tool that is the notion of citizenship. Through

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<sup>87</sup> Antanas Mockus provides a statistical and comparative analysis of the categories that were taken into account in order to design the *Cultura Ciudadana* program . Antanas Mockus. “Cultura ciudadana como política pública y la medición de sus avances.” Febrero 5 de 2008  
[http://www.semana.com/documents/Doc-1571\\_200827.pdf](http://www.semana.com/documents/Doc-1571_200827.pdf)

this tool, citizens can demand respect for their rights and state accountability, form associations and new political parties, and participate in state decision-making processes.

Nonetheless, when the opportunity came to transfer power to the people through decentralization processes, for instance in Bogotá, the selfish political interests of a few politicians continued to prevail, because “our political reality still maintains a deep relation with the past that it intended to bury under a layer of laws and constitutional changes” (Gutiérrez Sanín, 1996) as cited in García Sánchez, 2000). This phenomenon, however, is not exclusive to large cities like Bogotá. The reality in the countryside and in small urban areas does not differ substantially from the same intricacies of power relations and self-interest. It promised to put an end to the historical failure of state consolidation and social, economic, and political ills. It decentralized the state by creating autonomous entities, while maintaining the figure of a unitary national state.

### **Citizenship and Neoliberalism**

The impetus of neoliberalism in Colombia had profound effects not only in the economic front but also on the citizenship front. As the state opened up space for a neoliberal agenda, it contradicted itself in terms of the protection of rights, and gave way to exactly the opposite. There seems to be no reconciliation between the need to consolidate a market economy through the internationalization of their economies and the citizens who see their livelihoods affected by state decisions. In order to effectively participate in the internationalization of the economy the Colombian government implemented major reforms in terms of capital, public policy and also in labor laws. Based on the Transitory

Article 20 of the Constitution, the state reformed 80 state institutions under the figure of restructuring. These reforms intended to reduce the size of the state and its intrusion both in the economy (through privatization, for instance) and policies that affected citizens (reduction of state social programs and decadent labor laws) (Nieto, 1993). The result of these reforms led the country to high levels unemployment, increasing poverty and the transformation of the consecration of the citizen into a consumer. This consecration responds to the need governments have to accommodate to the demands of the international market as directed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Under these circumstances, the premise of the 1991 Constitution of Colombia as “*un Estado social de derecho*” is more rhetorical than practical. Article 1 established that Colombia is a state “*social de derecho*,” that is a state founded in the principle of respect for human dignity, labor and solidarity among its people, and the prevalence of common interest. According to María Bedoya (2003), the *Estado social de derecho* implies that there exist mechanisms of participation, political and juridical control in the exercise of power. Equally, it requires the existence of a catalogue of principles and fundamental rights that inspire the interpretation and functioning of the political organization represented in the state. Under the requirements imposed by neoliberalism, could the Colombian state hold true to its promise of an “*estado social de derecho*”?

As the following example shows, the 1991 Constitution set out rights that were never granted and protections that were never applied. Had they been considered, the level of poverty in Colombia 15 years later would not be so alarming. According to the

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) and the Misión para el Diseño de una Estrategia para la Reducción de la Pobreza y la Desigualdad (MERPD), in 2005, in a country of 43 million people, 31.4 million Colombians lived in poverty (2006). In another case, worker and consumer rights were violated when the state overlooked the constitution especially in its Article 60. This article establishes that sale of the State holdings in an enterprise should be completed in two phases, the first for the "solidarity" sector (comprised of cooperatives and workers associations) and the second for the general public which includes foreign investors.<sup>88</sup> The state privatized certain areas of the economy without giving primary participation, for instance, to worker associations. Many of these services and institutions ended up in the hands of large private investors. For instance, the state sold 50% of its holding of the State Coal Company (Carbocol), the world's largest open-pit coalmine, Cerrejón Zona Norte, on Colombia's Caribbean coast to an international consortium.<sup>89</sup> Economic measures such as these have not contributed to improve the economy in the microeconomic level. On the contrary they have widened the already immense gap that exists between the rich and the poor. These transactions are also symptomatic of the desire of powerful political and economic groups inside and outside the country to dismantle the already weak "*estado social de derecho*".

Even though Colombian citizens since 1991 are more aware of their rights and responsibilities and more involved in issues that affect them and their communities, the pressures from internal and external forces condemn them to silence and an apparent

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<sup>88</sup> Investment Climate Statement – Colombia. *Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs* February, 2009

<http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2009/117429.htm>.

<sup>89</sup> The full news report on the LATimes at <http://articles.latimes.com/keyword/carbocol>

conformism. To complicate matters, many disenchanted citizens respond to the situation in a way that agrees neoliberalism, that is, as citizen-consumers exercising their agency [that is their “individualism”] through economic mechanisms (Nozick 1974; Canclini, 2001).

Fragmentation appears when consumerism takes hold of the neoliberal citizen, who understands, if at all, limited conceptions of *estado social de derecho* or citizen rights and obligations. According to Sonia Álvarez and Evelina Dagnino (2001), on the one hand, neoliberalism maintains a reduced conception of citizenship in which the individual is integrated into the market. On the other hand, it systematically operates in favor of the elimination of consolidated rights, transforming citizens, the carriers of those rights, into “the villains of the nation, privileged enemies of political reforms oriented towards the reduction of the responsibilities of the State” (79). The citizens that emerge from this process, as Nestor García Canclini argues, are inhabitants of the city more than of the nation, because they feel rooted in their local culture rather than in the national culture. For García Canclini (2001), the juridical notion of citizenship, then, is replaced by new heterogeneous forms of belonging and their networks are interwoven with the circuits of consumption (29-30).

In this respect, it is possible to say that the 1991 Constitution and the governments that swore to abide by it missed the opportunity to deregulate not just the “economic rules, but also the very nature of the subject and its individualism” (Smith 2007:24) as it responded to the mandates of the economy. The new constitution was drafted in agreement with and as a response to the international market—that is, to the Washington

Consensus, whose neoliberal program advocated deregularization and privatization and reinvented the ideology of individualism. In Colombia, then, as Paul Smith argues on the U.S., “individual rights must be permanently and routinely subordinated to economic interests” (Ibid). Similar to U.S. citizens, Colombian subjects are “interpellated under the banner of equality at the expense of an elision of their own concrete economic realities and the history of those realities” (Ibid). The indexes of poverty in Colombia described earlier, show that the fundamental rights (to private property, liberty, and equality) are neither respected nor protected. In other words, these indexes prove that the Constitution of 1991 functions according to what Marx called a “principle of hidden exclusion” Tosel (1995:20-26) as cited in Kouvélakis, 2005:711). Such exclusion is evident mainly from the market and from the benefits and protections of the state.

## **Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, traditional Colombian power structures that were reinforced during the Regeneration at the local and regional levels remain active today. The 1991 Constitution has been unable to establish an effective mechanism that would eliminate the prejudicial influence of the self-interested local community over the political community. The result of such inability is that instead of promoting a committed sense of community in which the greater good is sought, *clientelismo* and patronage have continued to be pervasive, and have impeded a true sense of participation and individual autonomy. It is also important to note that in most instances, individuals or entire communities rely more on their *clientelista* ties than on the effectiveness of the government to provide services. This

does not mean that the public works carried out by the *clienteles* are of impeccable quality and durability. Quite to the contrary, in many cases, these public works become a fallible.

Even though the highly discriminatory “qualities” of gender, wealth, race, class, and literacy, in addition to good manners and Catholicism<sup>90</sup>, were mostly abandoned throughout the twentieth century, discrimination and lack of respect for differences remained mostly unchanged. Women continued to be relegated to the space of the home or the factory, the poverty of blacks hidden by the Andean mountains, the rainforest, and the Pacific Ocean; Indians became the target of violence for defending their land, traditions, and lives; and peasants have become landless, jobless, and without hope.

Despite the fact that the 1991 Constitution is mostly clear in its legal mechanisms and intention to uphold universalism and equality, the same Constitution makes no substantial contributions regarding how to achieve such ideals. In other words, the fact that there was a constitution did not erase discrimination, exclusion, or *clientelismo*. No doubt Bogotá achieved some progress in this respect. But regardless, if city officials are not consistent and committed to the continuation of programs that involve citizens directly, the engagement of citizens is significant but short-lived.

The drafting of the 1991 Constitution brought with it the expectation that the nation would finally become an all-encompassing entity and a source of deep unity and equality. In theory, power was transferred from state and the traditional parties to the people. But

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<sup>90</sup> Which according to Caro comprised the sum total of the most essential conditions, which provide the minimum necessary for exercising political rights Miguel Antonio Caro. *Diario Oficial*, año XXII Bogotá, 20 de Julio de 1886:765-766.



from 1991 onward, the law that emphasized the sovereignty of the state failed to protect the people. Displacement, corruption, delinquency, state violence, the relationship between paramilitaries and politicians (“para” politics) or politicians and the guerrillas (“FARC” politics), deficiency in public services, and social inequality are only some of the signs of this failure.

## CONCLUSION

The Regeneration, far from promoting equality, political participation, and free will, promoted religious responsibility, grammatical correctness, good manners, and a Catholic morality that extended well into the twentieth century. In this respect, the Liberal conception of citizenship in the context of Colombia only existed on paper and the unclear division between Liberal and conservative ideologies was the main cause for the notions of citizenship shifting from Liberal to traditional-conservative at the end of the nineteenth century. In this sense, the postulates of modernity became even more ambivalent, leaving subordinate groups uncertain as to what or who a citizen might be.

The Regeneration, important as it was, did not provoke structural changes the way other countries have experienced with revolutions (Mexico). Instead, the Regeneration was only a symptom of a disease that had long been part of Colombia from even before Independence from Spain. Because the Regeneration was not the solution to the problems of the nation and it did not represent a real breakthrough in governance, the events of the twentieth century only testify to this inadequacy. It failed as radical liberalism had failed in the nineteenth century.

Intellectuals and elites were only interested in producing, consuming, and circulating the notions of citizenship that were in accordance with their own interests. This fact shows that ultimately, Colombian elites and intellectuals were not interested in

promoting the modern sense of the social, much less creating a modern citizen endowed with rights, equality, and freedom. Instead, during the Regeneration, they were interested in forming Catholic believers because they considered it pointless to civilize Colombians who were not their equals, such as Indians, blacks, and poor *mestizos*. For this reason, the sections of the country inhabited by black or indigenous people were left aside by the state. Furthermore, the idea of “order and progress” for the intellectual elites and the Church was more in tune with a colonial order than a capitalist order. The civilizing project, then, consisted of disciplining the population by instilling the idea that divine will reigned over free will, and good Christians over politically and socially committed individuals. Citizenship—which is characterized by its principle of equality and close relationship to capitalism and industrialization—in non-industrialized, non-capitalist Colombia of the late nineteenth century, was linked more to intellectual achievement than private property. Catholic morality regarding citizenship during the Regeneration did not make inequality disappear. On the contrary, it became a conservative and even more exclusionary concept, in which grammar and literacy dominated.

The socio-economic and politico-judicial function of constitutions is to invent citizenship; that is, to create homogeneous identities that make the project of modernity viable (González-Stephan as cited in Castro Gómez, n.d.). However, as this dissertation shows, the Regenerationist constitution, far from homogenizing the nation, marked differences between citizens and non-citizens on the basis of ethnicity, gender, income, age, and literacy. The only homogenization process that was reinforced by the Regeneration was a type of catholicization of the population. The constitution of 1886

proclaimed rights and reinforced them to a certain extent, but failed to inculcate the duties and responsibilities that ought to have accompanied the modern notion of citizenship. The consequences of that failure had specific outcomes for the development of Colombian political, social, and quotidian life since the Regeneration. This produced a culture of carelessness, impunity, complicity, and a weak civil society. Catholicization is responsible for the lack of interest in contesting or varying notions of citizenship. Colombians accepted and internalized the mandates of the Church, which wished to cultivate Catholic believers instead of citizens. The Catholic moral discourse contributed to the already existing distance between the intellectual elite and subordinate groups. The return to the traditional notion of the citizen as “good man” and “good husband,” during the Regeneration was an attack on the Liberal notion of citizenship and modernity. Liberal and Regenerationist notions of citizenship present theoretical difficulties because one part of it is political and another is cultural. The universalizing tone of the Liberal notion of citizenship is problematic. From the beginning, citizenship implied inequality and exclusion reinforced by the elite, who continuously played the race and class cards to justify the exclusion of the majority and the dominance of the minority. Formally, the state can impose what citizenship means in a particular space at a particular time, but *clientelista* and “divine” relations prove that there are other forces stronger than the state or overlooked by the state. Colombia is a clear case of this kind contradiction: This deeply Catholic country presents a high rate of state corruption. According to Transparency International (2008), in 2008, Colombia ranked 70 among 180 countries.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2008](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2008)

The devotion of the majority of the population, instilled by state-ordained, Catholic education, has had profound repercussions on the country's political, social, moral, economic, and cultural life.

The expectation was that with the 1991 Constitution, the nation would finally become an all-encompassing entity and a source of unity and equality. In theory, power was transferred from the state and traditional parties to the people. But contrary to revolutionary France, where “the destruction of privilege left a vacuum in governance that was filled by law,” from 1991 onward, the law that emphasized the state's sovereignty and supported the ideals of unity and equality, failed to protect the people. The old and new social problems that affect the country today are only some of the signs of this failure.

The country's current constant “state of emergency” produced by the internal civil war, which most politicians jokingly call “*violencia*,” narco-trafficking, paramilitaries, delinquency, corruption, and dispossession, are not phenomena of the recent past. They are the result of a long history of denial, unclear government programs, the protection of elite interests and land. The 1991 Constitution, then, similar to those of nineteenth century Europe set out to “protect the power of the political state, while simultaneously producing a “universal secular contradiction between the political state and civil society” (Marx, *Collected Works* 3:159 in Smith, 2007:100)

Citizenship, which is ultimately a site of struggle between those who have access to it and those who do not, has been used to signify a territorial boundary more than an identity or a sense of belonging. Not even the efforts to decentralize the state, or the

appearance and strengthening of social movements and programs that promoted civic participation such as Bogotana *cultura ciudadana* were successful in building a more committed and peaceful citizenry, which is indispensable for the country's democratic development.

Compromised powerful political and economic groups, alongside violence, poverty, corruption, narco-trafficking, weak state institutions, impunity, and a lack of accountability, render impossible the development of a real democracy in which citizenship would be fully exercised. The example of Bogotá, nonetheless, suggests that if there is commitment and continuity in the design and implementation of programs that involve the community and promote civic participation and democratization, then it may be possible that all hope is not lost. The creation of institutions such as *Consejos de Planeación* (Planning Councils), *Cultura, Juventud y Paz/culture*, (Youth and Peace), and *Veedurías Ciudadanas* (Citizen Oversight) testify to the need for open spaces where citizens can participate, oversee, plan, propose, complain, and serve the community and by extension the state. Unfortunately, these organizations sufferer from inefficiency and others continue the *clientelista* practices that the constitution set out to eliminate (García Sánchez, 2000). According to Armando Novoa García (2005), it would seem that “the mechanisms developed for citizen participation were ill-designed because there is still the need to create functional entities that guarantee the operation of these institutions.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Armando Novoa García in an interview with *Punto de Encuentro*. “¿Qué pasó con la Constitución de 1991?” Jueves 30 de junio de 2005. (accessed March, 25 1009) <http://www.polodemocratico.net/Que-paso-con-la-Constitucion-de>

The previous examples deal mostly with the urban areas of the country. In rural areas, the Constitution of 1991 has also failed its citizens. Colombia is no foreign to the long standing dialectic between feudalism and capitalism. This phenomenon is appreciated not only in the types of political affiliations from which different groups and families have benefitted but also in a more tangible aspect: land ownership.

The inviolable right to own property, for instance, which represents an emotional bond between the citizen and his or her homeland, the Constitution has posed many challenges—especially when a low percentage of Colombians enjoy the right to own a piece of land. Much worse is the fact that in the last twenty years, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups, in the name of re-founding the nation, have expropriated vast amounts of land from peasants, indigenous communities, and other landowners. Despite the apparent consolidation of the nation-state, Colombia seems to have gone back to colonial times in which only a few latifundistas exercised authority. Paramilitaries with “blood and fire”, to use historian Mary Roldán’s phrase (Roldán, 2002), have forced hundreds of thousands of peasants from their land. Recent estimates suggest that in the last twenty years almost seven million hectares were expropriated by the paramilitaries and narco-traffickers.<sup>93</sup> During the paramilitary expansion that started in the 1980s, millions of hectares violently changed owners displacing between three to four million people (Betancourt, n.d.:101 as cited in Guzman and Moreno, 2007:171).

For instance, in an editorial, *Revista Semana.com* (2008) reported, that in *Urabá*, the banana region, there were six hundred landowners in 1986. In 2000, there were only

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<sup>93</sup> ¿Qué le pasa al alma de un país de desterrados? Lunes 15 Septiembre 2008  
<http://www.semana.com/noticias-nacion/pasa-alma-pais-desterrados/115543.aspx>

fifty.<sup>94</sup> A large extension of this land is used in coca crops and the production and trade of cocaine. What was the role of the state in this while these developments take place? Recent judicial and academic investigations have concluded that the expansion of paramilitarism in the country could not have taken place without state complacency. In fact, many congressmen, mayors, and other elected officials were elected thanks to the coercive measures imposed by paramilitaries in different regions of the country under the pretense of “*refundar la nación*.” In the name of this “ideal,” paramilitaries, narco-traffickers, and guerrillas coerced citizens into giving away their property and citizenship rights. Rural citizens were deprived of their right to vote or voice their concerns. Property is highly valued and highly concentrated as well. There are 2,428 property owners (0.06%) who hold 53.5% of the country’s land, while drug dealers and paramilitaries control at least 50% of land suitable for cultivation (Archila Neira 2006, 15 cited in C Rojas, 2006). With land competitors of this caliber, silence and migration for the poor and threatened were their only possibility for survival.<sup>95</sup> Any possibility of recovering their land is unthinkable and a land reform that benefits peasants and small landowners has no possibility in the current conditions.

Paramilitarism, according to current president Álvaro Uribe, is over. However, there is evidence indicating that old and new paramilitary groups have allied with guerrillas and narco-traffickers continue to operate, leaving a trace of blood, fear, and

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<sup>94</sup> ¿Qué le pasa al alma de un país de desterrados? Lunes 15 Septiembre 2008  
<http://www.semana.com/noticias-nacion/pasa-alma-pais-desterrados/115543.aspx>

<sup>95</sup> Political analyst Claudia Lopez and analyst León Valencia have written extensively on paramilitarism and its effects. The latter, for instance, created a corporation (see <http://www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co>) dedicated not only to the analysis of this phenomenon, but also to providing aid and support to the victims of paramilitaries.



poverty in their wake. The wide-spread wave of violence perpetrated by illegal actors only confirms that the Colombian state has provided very limited protection against human rights violations. Paramilitarism alone has left millions of citizens in refugee conditions. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNCHR/ACNUR), the internal displacement in Colombia is the second largest in the world, with around 3 million people displaced. NGOs and other organizations contend that there are approximately 4 million displaced Colombians, while state officials argue that there are only 2.6 million “registered” refugees. The majority of refugees “[lives] in urban areas, often in very deprived neighborhoods, and experience great difficulties finding employment.”<sup>96</sup>

It is possible to conclude that in Colombia citizenship has been understood as a combination of modern, rational, and Liberal ideas (which included, for instance, the payment of taxes and dues) with a notion of citizenship that represents virtues, dignity, honesty, and morality (F.X. Guerra, 1999:47). However, honor, dignity, honesty, and morality have long worked in mysterious ways: Those virtues that compel the citizen to do what is right for him or her and his or her community in Colombia have led to very particular outcomes. Those devalued virtues became malleable concepts, which prompted elites to support *clientelismo* and corruption, and benefit from endless violence.

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<sup>96</sup> Marie-Hélène Verney 2008 from <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/47fcda5b4.html>. See also <http://www.acnur.org/crisis/colombia/desplazamiento.htm>

### **How Can the Vicious Cycle Come to a Close?**

The task ahead is how to change the Colombian cultural belief that the well-being of all must necessarily be filtered through the selfish, intermediary interests of politicians or illegal armed groups. How will it be possible to encourage political accountability, transparency, and the consolidation of a more autonomous and participative citizenry in a country in which traditional political values and vices predominated? How might it be possible to destroy the particularistic, limited, and conditioned notion of citizenship, considering that it has immersed citizens into nets of political intermediation that prevent them from exercising their rights and fulfilling their duties as members of their political community? How can the ingrained notion that citizens' rights have to be negotiated instead of respected be undone? How can the complicit silence of citizens who do not seem perplexed by everyday injustice come to an end? How can the long tradition of what Miguel García Sánchez calls "shameful citizenship," in which the king of all is *clientelismo*, with its virtues and vices, be eradicated? Moreover, how can Colombia cultivate a democratic and participatory citizenship? How can democracy be achieved if nowadays the ideal citizen resembles what Cristina Rojas calls the "vigilante citizen" (2006) who sells his or her citizenship duties for money?

The answers to these questions are not easy. It has been proven repeatedly that the political, economic, and social machineries that have run the country during its two hundred years of republican history have left a legacy of inequality, poverty, and violence. Unlike the Regeneration, which saw religion as an element of social cohesion (generating a spiritual hegemony that instilled fear of God and fearful, conformist, docile

respect for authority), and exclusion, *clientelismo*, violence, and corruption as the only ways to achieve progress, Colombia, at this current historical conjuncture, requires a new element of social cohesion. Citizenship could be that element. Younger generations should strive for a notion of citizenship that creates not only a feeling of belonging to the nation and the globe, but that also offers spaces for political participation, guarantees equality of opportunities, respect for divergent opinions, respect for rights, and the fulfillment of responsibilities. A notion like this can inspire new generations of young citizens to seek real change, as they become the main actors and facilitators of such change. In this sense, the new generation of leaders should strive for a kind of activism that exceeds nationalistic tendencies, that is critical of past models, and that is critical of its own accomplishments and shortcomings. Younger generations have in their hands the task of transforming the nation, if they do not want the generations after them to be left disillusioned and without hope. In order to manage this, the younger generations have to be less disaffected by the civic culture and take responsibility for re-establishing a nation that is less unequal, more responsible, and more committed to its citizens. These new citizens would need to participate in governing themselves, and not simply replace their elders in their traditional roles. Instead, they must challenge and change the ideas and ideals of their predecessors. They need to propose and implement new channels of communication in which justice, popular participation, and respect for differences, are their leitmotif.

The defense of democracy and citizenship, the reorganization of the state, and the creation of a new nation are not a mission for political parties or for the state. This is a

mission for the present generation. With the streets filled with multiple threats and insipid political discourses, this is the greatest opportunity for young people to speak with their own voice, because they have the energy and the capacity to do it. Those young people can defy consumerism and take upon themselves the long-forgotten mission of creating a truly democratic citizenship. Certainly it is not an easy task to achieve under the shadow of neoliberalism and its constant bombardment of commodities and vague ideas. This generation has the task to challenge the long-standing, fearful and complacent silence instilled in the population by the enemies of institutions that were created to guarantee peace and promote prosperity. Hope is found in latent, incorruptible, and natural leaders who, despite the temptations of easy money or the thirst for war, are waiting for the opportunity to demonstrate that Colombia can still give birth to honest individuals who know how to approach the most delicate problems brilliantly and unselfishly.

There is no doubt that many young leaders have the capacity to instill awareness in order to transform public opinion and the collective mindset. It is true that they have an enormous challenge ahead. The lack of opportunity and political space have injured Colombia, so that these new leaders will first have to change the political culture, organize a cohesive movement, and unite what traditional politics has destroyed. The creation of this movement will require time, but this is the moment for this generation to declare how they imagine their future. This is the moment for them to challenge the status quo, not in order to obtain a public career, nor to become *caudillos*, but because the future is their best bet. Today more than ever, members of this generation need to end the long tradition of “shameful citizenship.” In its place, they must promote a notion of

citizenship in the line of what Antanas Mockus calls “the sum of habits, behaviors, actions and minimum common rules that generate a sense of belonging, facilitate harmony among citizens, and lead to respect for shared property and heritage and the recognition of citizens’ rights and duties.” With motivation, optimism, creativity, and an understanding of the past that isn’t bogged down by it, new generations can reinvent the nation for themselves and for generations to come. Colombia depends on this to survive.

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