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# Social Systems in the Dynamics of Development of the Agricultural Community of La Concordia - Ecuador

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the social macro-system that existed during the development of the Ecuadorian community of La Concordia during the twentieth century. It implements theoretical models that allow the analysis of the relevant social systems that were behind the rapid demographic and economic growth of the community of La Concordia, which, during the 20th century, went from being an isolated and inaccessible agricultural and rural town to an autonomous urban center and an important agro-industrial production hub. The research defines and uses concepts developed within cultural anthropology and systems theory to explain the state and configuration of the social micro-systems that ended up shaping the community of La Concordia as a social macro-system. The study establishes a diagnosis of the 3 most important social micro-systems for the historical configuration of the social macro-system: Migration, Colonization Dynamics, Corporatism. The study of the dynamics of interaction of the 3 micro-systems results in a social economic panorama that favors development, which is particularly associated with: 1) The relative economic uniformity of a large part of the economically active social layer in the primary and tertiary sectors, which is, for the most part, young. 2) The mobility in the social field and in the labor market, which allows the generation, adaptation and development of economic sectors that respond to population needs and productive potentialities generated in the social dynamics. Mobility is favored by and at the same time enhances the entrepreneurial attitude of the young economically active population. The social dynamics occurring in La Concordia yields a set of potentialities for development that are associated with each of the 3 social micro-systems described in the study.

**Keywords:** Economics, History, Models of Development, Colonization, Corporatism.

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## 1. Introduction

The region where the community of La Concordia is located has great potential for growth and development. Initially an unexplored and remote region, ignored by the economic and cultural centers of the nation [14]; It is now one of the richest agricultural and livestock regions, with a production that supplies national and foreign consumption, which in commerce occupies an important position as a contact and transit center between the Andean and coastal regions of the country [12].

The transition to this new economic position is a relatively

recent phenomenon, whose specific social causes of a systemic nature will be taken as the object of study in this article, not only for the interest of elucidating a historical-social phenomenon not previously elucidated, but also because the perspective that a study of this nature can uncover social systems present in the region that will require important attention for any future development project.

Particularly towards the second half of the 20th century (after the Second World War), the region occupied by La Concordia town experienced an accelerated demographic and economic growth, rapidly developing its agricultural and livestock resources, and becoming a vital center of commerce [10], but at the same time -and associated with the same

systematic process of development- a set of social problems were generated that had great affectation in the region, and that in some important aspects, still afflict the socio-economic dynamics of the town [8]. It is then appropriate to review what was the state of the social macro-system that, typical of the La Concordia town, led to the configuration of internal systems that favored the explosive growth of a geographic-social space initially abandoned by the traditional economic centers of the country., and what were the main problems and social conflicts that resulted from the intervention of these systems.

## 2. Methodology

When collecting relevant historical information for the purposes of this research, it is necessary to implement theoretical models that allow the analysis of the relevant systems that allowed the rapid demographic and economic growth of the community of La Concordia, which, in the course of In a few decades, it went from being an isolated and difficult-to-access agricultural and rural settlement to an autonomous urban center and an important axis of agro-industrial production, with the subsequent conflicts and difficulties associated with this rapid growth, and which will be a topic of discussion in this article. As a first step to carry out this analysis, the clarification of the notion of "system" that is used in the study is required.

The word system has a varied semantic field with contrasting meanings according to the theoretical discipline that makes use of it to achieve its research purposes. In the conceptual framework of the social sciences that corresponds to this research, a distinction is made between system and macro-system (set of systems). The concept of macro-system is understood as a totality, of a procedural and open nature, which is the result of the combination of smaller internal systems, whose internal relations in a certain time and space, produce a particular configuration of the macro-system. In the sense of open and procedural totality, the meaning of macro-system coincides with that of a social complex, which, by acquiring its own identity characteristics, leads us to speak of a nation, people or community. In formulating this concept we follow two theoretical traditions. The first, coming from the anthropological cultural materialism of Harris [3], assumes that human societies constitute a system (or socio-cultural system in Harris's terminology), which is made up of different structural variables. The investigation of the different internal structures, of the relationship between them, and how they connect with external influences, allows us to understand the social dynamics and ideologies that have a relevant impact on a society. It is a postulate of Harris's social theory, assumed throughout this article, that the predominant structural variable in the macro-social set is the infrastructural one, that is, the one linked to activities of production and reproduction of material-economic life. In search of terminological uniformity, in this article we identify the Harrisian notion of structure with that of internal social system. The other theoretical tradition used in this article is

that from Critical Theory, represented by authors such as Horkheimer [4] and Lukács [7], who consider human societies as dynamic and open wholes that are shaped because of a particular relationship between the structure of the productive forces, the structure of social institutions and the ideological superstructure [5]. The organization of work determines the construction of certain socio-economic categories, and the categories that mediate the relations between social groups lead to the establishment of the ways in which individuals interact with each other and the mechanisms in which significance of these interrelations is produced [1]. In this article we identify the Horkheimerian concept of Totality and the Lukácsian concept of Totality of the Social Being, used to determine a social unit made up of internal categories, with the concept of macro-system, applied particularly to the whole of La Concordia's society.

Once the meaning of macro-system is thus defined, the notion of "system" is deduced as one that corresponds to a certain configuration of social relations between the subjects and groups that make up a certain social community. In the vast field of community relationships, very different kinds of relationships are established on an intricate set of levels. In this investigation we proceed in the identification and categorization of this variety of relational systems, but with a concurrent orientation with the explicit purposes of the work: by placing the focus of the discussion on the demographic and economic development of the community formed by the citizens of La Concordia, the main discussion focuses specifically on the systems specifically associated with this development.

## 3. Results: Social Systems That Generated Rapid Growth in La Concordia in the 20th Century

For brevity reasons, we will not go into all the discussions associated with the notion of internal system (part of a social macro-system), although it is relevant to identify a distinction incorporated in the argumentation of this article. In the range of social research (sociology, anthropology, ethnology, etc.) when discussing the systems of interaction between groups, it is common to focus on an area dominated by economic relations (which constitute the basis of material culture), which serves as a point of reference to interpret the ideological processes that are carried out by the social groups present in a community, and that influence the way in which they relate. In line with this orientation present in the social sciences, in this work we talk about social systems that are visibly based on clear economic-material processes, seeking to obtain a broad overview of the elements that intervened in the previously mentioned rapid growth dynamics. This research analytically exposes the systems of social interactions found in this process, and discusses some of the important influences established between them, proving that these systems do not occur in isolation but rather affect each other throughout a complex historical evolution.

In this way, the present work is understood as a historical review about the growth of the community of La Concordia understood as a macro-system, establishing itself as a first attempt to clarify the social systems that intervened in it, so that it is visible to identify the potentialities generated and developed in the course of this process. Seen from a broader point of view, this analytical approach to the growth of the La Concordia community seeks to obtain and offer a clearer picture of the development dynamics experienced by the agricultural regions of Ecuador and South America in the second half of the 20th century.

### **3.1. Migration**

When we refer to the internal system of migration in the La Concordia town, we refer to a form of migration that occurred within the country, from the traditional population centers of the coastal and highland regions. The human groups that carry out this migration are mainly mestizo groups, of middle and lower social class, who aspire to improve their living conditions by colonizing a land not yet exploited for agriculture and livestock. Although at the time of the Spanish domination there was news about the natural potential of the region, the practical inexistence of good roads for access, the difficulties presented by the climate (easy means of diseases for the population of the mountains) and the leafiness of the subtropical forest, discourage any concerted project of colonization. It is in the first decades of the new and independent Ecuadorian nation (in the second half of the 19th century) when there are sporadic references to farms and farms established in the region, by some intrepid entrepreneurs, but without yet constituting any populated center [11].

The first considerable migration that receives the area currently occupied by the La Concordia town occurs at the end of the s. XIX. This first migratory wave is closely linked to two phenomena that make its manifestation possible. The consolidation of the access roads to the most interior places of the region, and the discovery and dissemination at the national level of the great agricultural potential of those interior lands, which initially attract investment capital oriented towards agro-export cultivation -in this case, formed by the elites of Quito and other cities of the Andean north who were already carrying out this activity in the northern highlands-, then a whole mass of workers and day laborers who seek to work on the large estates, and finally settlers who seek to establish themselves as small and medium land owners.

It is possible to intrinsically relate the advances in the development of the construction of roads that cross the region with the development of colonization and agricultural exploitation. The settlers arrive following the course of the roads progressively created to occupy the vast unexploited land that was in the region and thus initiate agricultural exploitation [17]. La Concordia, as a town located near the junction of the roads, benefited from all this colonizing work. At the end of the 1960s, with the migratory wave that arrived after the completion of the road to the town of Aloag, and

which took advantage of the important agrarian reform of 1964, basically the colonizing occupation with purely agricultural purposes was consolidated. The occupation of most of the land to be exploited in the following decades. As of the 70s, the population that arrives through the aforementioned routes will tend to settle in the incipient urban centers such as La Concordia, resorting as a strategy to the formation of cooperatives in order to occupy or negotiate the occupation of land. close to urban centers. This initiates the second period of migration and colonization, based on the trends established by the preceding agricultural colonization.

Attracted by the potential wealth of the region, the migratory mass that arrives in the region from the end of the s. XIX basically consists of two groups. Initially, the first migratory flow was directed towards the creation of large latifundiums. The owners of these haciendas, who rarely establish themselves in the sector and who entrust their management to third parties, are mainly national or foreign investors who pour capital into the purchase of large extensions of "wasteland" still to be used. These investments are intended to join the agricultural exploitation to which the coastal area of the country is subjected at the end of the s. XIX and beginning of the 20th century, to grow products for export abroad [8]. It is then that farms are created that, separated and isolated from each other, occupy considerable extensions of land, mainly dedicated to the cultivation of rubber, then cocoa, and finally African palm, to be exported outside the country according to the established agro-export model. by the Latin American elites in those decades. As a complementary aspect of these haciendas, individuals come to the sector who will dedicate themselves to work as day laborers, some also bringing their families, and associated with them, merchants are established who seek to satisfy the growing demand for goods and services required by day laborers and their families. families.

The other migratory group that arrives thanks to the consolidation of the great highways planned for the region and that will take advantage of the agrarian reform initiatives established by the government (the first in 1964, and the second in 1973) is made up of what we can call agricultural settlers, small and medium landowners. It is around the 30s of the 20th century when the presence of a sector of settlers who do not have large capital and who do not create large estates, but who arrive to produce with their own labor, or a small number of workers can be palpably distinguished [15]. Since this decade and the end of the war with Peru in the mid-1940s, the migratory distribution has undergone a visible change: there are some huge haciendas with national and foreign owners, who rarely live in the region, but most of the land that he owns is now owned by settlers who are small and medium-sized farmers. This relatively little-studied phenomenon, but which can be traced in owner records, can be associated with the vicissitudes faced by the agro-export model and the progressive fragmentation of large estates into parcels that are occupied and worked by new settlers, in addition to the fact that new arable land is incorporated and reclaimed from the dense subtropical forest. The

configuration of this distribution of the land has an important consequence, since, with the highways in operation and with the possible communication with the rest of the country, the region acquires renown at the national level as a space still full of "wastelands" that could be claimed by the settlers, in a process sanctioned by the state. It is in the 40s of the 20th century that the state establishes means to certify the adjudication of land, especially along the roads, and government colonization plans are established.

This is when the migratory boom that the region experienced from the Second World War until the end of the 1960s took place [16]. The migrants who arrive during this time form communities according to their places of origin, the most significant regions of origin being Manabi, Loja, Pichincha, Chimborazo and Cotopaxi. In the 60s and 70s, due to political and social conditions in the neighboring country of Colombia, a considerable community of Colombian migrants arrived, which motivated the need to establish a consulate. Although there are colonization plans directed by the state, and the region is an important enclave of the two agrarian reform processes that the country underwent (the one started in 1964, and the one started in 1973), most of the migration follows the scheme of what has been called "spontaneous colonization": in a process by which settlers arrive attracted by the agricultural potentialities of the region, and upon arrival create agrarian or urban cooperatives in order to reclaim the land where they settle and promote - through communal work and events- the construction of basic infrastructure to live.

It was the possibility of carrying out this type of migration promoted by corporatism and the occupation of uncultivated land or land that was presumed to have no owner, which would later be purchased from the state or recognized by deed, which led to the unparalleled settlement of the area. At the beginning of the decade of the 70s, the dynamics of corporatism, land occupation, and deed recognition programs by the state were already established. By the beginning of the 1970s, when the second agrarian reform was carried out, most of the agricultural land already had an owner, so that the subsequent migratory process leaned towards the urban area, seeking to own land in areas adjacent to the populated center. The final decades of the s. XX see the consolidation of this migratory process, which is associated with the problems resulting from rapid demographic growth, lack of order in urban planning, and poor access to basic services for the growing number of inhabitants.

### 3.2. Corporatism

Another social system closely linked to the phenomenon of economic and demographic growth in La Concordia, and therefore in the region, is corporatism. As we have seen, the first considerable movement of migration to the region occurred thanks to the creation of access roads and the interest of national and foreign landlords in exploiting the rich lands hidden under the subtropical forest and thus being able to grow products destined for the export. The arrival of day laborers for the large estates, and the arrival of merchants

seeking to provide goods and services to them, is not organized or planned. When an order in migration begins to exist, this results from a government effort, although only due to the needs of the time. Although the government recognized the need to build roads that would cross the region, from the beginning it had to face financing problems, and one of the means to obtain resources that was repeatedly used in the first decades of the 20th century was the sale of land on both sides of the roads created, in particular the road that came from the city of Quito. This first planning of the settlement on the sides of the roads was carried out without greater efficiency and without much success, changing on several occasions the state bodies in charge of putting it into effect, so that it can be said that its impact was reduced in the growth of the population and its economic activities.

Until the decade of the 30s, it can be affirmed that the population growth of the region was relatively discreet; but soon the demographic panorama begins to change and a clear acceleration in the rate of settlements is perceived, which will find its highest point from the mid-40s until the consolidation of the second agrarian reform, in the mid-1940s. 70s, this change is motivated by the rapid arrival of settlers who arrive not with the intention of being day laborers on the large estates, but rather seeking to work their own land, giving rise to the phenomenon of the fragmentation of the large estates oriented towards export and consolidation of medium and small agricultural properties. This decisive migratory wave is associated with the social organization of corporatism, and the peculiar problems faced by the new settlers that it allowed to solve.

A first problem was that of the possession and redistribution of land, sometimes promoted by the state, but always in an inefficient and limited way. Although the historical analysis shows that the government-maintained control over the granting of land and deeds from the beginning, the very process of colonization in the rural sector and the settlement of the urban sector in the new towns such as La Concordia was not a process in that greatly influenced the planning carried out by the state estates [14]. Starting in 1945, when the government openly promoted the need to populate the extensive areas that had not yet been claimed on the way to the coast (and among which was, as one of the main ones, the area of La Concordia), several entities dedicated to the promotion and sanction of colonization in the interior of the country establish themselves in the region or establish projects focused on the locality and its areas of influence [13]. As an example is the paradigmatic case of the so-called "Pilot Plan" established on the road that connects La Concordia with Santo Domingo, which, despite the commitment of the state in its realization and the enthusiasm of settlers from the sierra arrived to carry it out, fails to consolidate and quickly ends in failure. Specifically, the main role of the government is that of the sale of property titles; but this recognition acquires a particular dynamic, with the acceleration of the land claim that results from the arrival of settlers from all over the country, which does not require any prior site planning and is in fact primarily the result of a

private effort by the settlers. colonists; thus from the second half of the 20th century the government tends to limit itself to recognizing the results of the colonization process, rather than promoting it.

Given that the price of the land that the government handed over was historically excessively high, the mechanism that was established was the occupation of vacant land that was the property of the state or that was considered without an owner, and then entered a relationship with the state to recognition of occupation and colonization. Reports from the 1950s and 1960s show the feverish work that state agencies linked to colonization had to carry out to carry out continuous campaigns for the recognition of deeds and the sale of land that was already occupied by settlers in the form of rural cooperatives and urban [6]. This lax control of the government in the colonization process in fact favored the important wave of migration that the area suffered, by consolidating the dynamic that has been called "spontaneous colonization": the settlers arrived and settled in the region, formed cooperatives or they joined already established cooperatives, and began dealings with the state for the purchase of land and recognition of deeds. The work of transforming the land so that it is arable or exploitable for livestock, the construction of local roads, bridges, chapels, schools and clinics, is carried out not by the government but by the communal work of the settlers.

The greatest impact of state intervention is found in the opening given by means of the two agrarian reforms to sanction the legal possession of the land that is inhabited and cultivated by the agrarian settlers. The two agrarian reform campaigns established by the government, one in 1964 and the other in 1973, have two consequences: the first is that the extensive lands that do not have agricultural use are effectively divided and put up for sale, which drives the occupation of land by new settlers who, often grouped in the form of rural cooperatives, are mostly small and medium-sized farmers. The second consequence is that the agrarian reform campaigns allow the government to be willing to recognize the results of spontaneous colonization, and massively grant property titles to small and medium owners in urban and rural areas (the allocation range and land sales reached thousands per month at its peak in the second half of the 1960s; cf. Velastegui [17]). After the agrarian reform of 1973, population migration began to focus on the occupation of the urban area, which led to a great growth in the formation of urban cooperatives, which organized the settler effort in the new societies, and therefore the dynamics the distribution of the land becomes the responsibility first of the estates of the rural parishes, and then of the new towns.

Coupled with the land distribution and legalization projects, there are initiatives to give the new colonized areas a new geopolitical status. In the 1960s, and promoted by civil organizations such as cooperatives, the idea was born in the settler community of the need to obtain recognition from the state in the form of towns and parishes; even considering that the vastness of the area and its geographical unity merited the possibility of establishing a new province in the sector. The

effort to obtain a better political status is associated with the need to consolidate the results of colonization, since it would facilitate the processes of adjudication of land, sale and recognition of land, obtaining basic services, in addition to allowing the preservation and expansion of autonomy. of the region with its own economic dynamism. In view of the growth of the area from the central government, it was decided to establish in the 60s several improvement boards with local authorities that had the power to obtain and manage resources with greater autonomy with respect to Quito, and, finally, in In view of the establishment in the area of important population centers and its consolidation as one of the most relevant agricultural sectors of the country, the creation of new municipalities and rural parishes is sanctioned [12]. This effort for recognition at the political level led to the creation of the Concordia town in 2007, and in 2013 to its union with the new province of Santo Domingo.

The historical examination of the growth of the populations in the area allows us to affirm that, when the true boom in colonization began in the middle of the s. 20th century, most of the settler population does not follow plans established by the government, but what has been called "spontaneous colonization" takes place, a dynamic of migration and territorial settlement in which most of the management work of the land to be colonized, the obtaining of basic means of subsistence, the construction of facilities for the settlers, the creation of neighborhood roads, and the satisfaction of other needs, is managed by the settlers themselves. As we have seen, the most significant management modality of the settlers themselves in the La Concordia area takes the form of agrarian cooperatives and urban cooperatives [17]. The importance of these settler association liveries cannot be underestimated whether in rural or urban areas, because as we have stated, not only is the role of the state in planning colonization processes initially minimal – and later practically null - but the government is also ineffective and slow in creating material living conditions that make possible a minimum quality of life for the settlers [12]. In the first decades of migration and colonization, it is the civil organization, often in the form of cooperatives, that transforms the isolated jungle and subtropical lands of the region into arable and passable fields, where basic services gradually arrive following the path followed by settlers in their domain of the region; Chronicles and memoirs of the time show that the first schools, churches and hospitals established in rural areas were erected through the concerted work of settlers, who put resources and manpower that state agencies often do not find in conditions to provide. The work of cooperatives thus plays a central role in creating conditions of material well-being that assist growth driven by farming.

Another role played by the cooperatives is that they serve as a point of contact for urban and rural settlers with the state institutions, either to request the granting of necessary services by the ministries and the mayor's office, or to motivate and facilitate processes for obtaining property titles

for the members of cooperatives. Chronicles of the second half of the 20th century show that the social mobilization generated by the cooperatives, and the political pressure promoted by them, play an important role in the decision of the governments of the day in the establishment of the agrarian reforms of 1964 and 1975 [15]. The organization established by the cooperatives was an element considered by state institutions in the incessant process of recognition and legalization of rural and urban lands.

### 3.3. *Spontaneous Colonization*

The special conditions of migration and settlement that occur in the region occupied by the town of La Concordia, allow us to identify the existence of another social system that influences the rapid economic and demographic growth experienced in the second half of the 20th century. Colonization, which other sectors of the country experienced with the arrival of the Spanish in the first half of the s. XVI, is a relatively late phenomenon for the region, and occurs primarily as internal migration from other parts of the nation, to lands that were mostly uninhabited, and that is driven by economic and social problems suffered by other parts from the country. It is possible to recognize in the settlement process experienced by La Concordia, the particular dynamics of human groups that establish themselves in internal colonial regions, which has its maximum manifestation in the colonization boom that the region suffered until the beginning of the 70s -when it became the second agrarian reform came into force-, and that lays the foundations for the later migratory movement.

This typical dynamic of colonization can be better identified by distinguishing some of the elements that characterize the experience suffered in La Concordia. Unlike traditional cities where there is an established division of labor and land, and therefore a rigid social structure, colonial settlements such as La Concordia show greater mobility in the divisions of social groups and in the distribution of wealth. land. This becomes evident at the time that, thanks to the difficulties experienced by the agro-export model in the first decades of the 20th century, many of the large farms that populated the sector are divided into smaller farms that in many cases are reoriented towards internal consumption, while new lands are claimed from the subtropical forest, which makes the possibility of acquiring land real own and live as a farmer. In this transformation towards a region of settlers who will be small and medium-sized landowners, as we have seen, the work of the cooperatives plays a fundamental role. The social organization that emerges from this self-entrepreneurial colonization effort is remarkably fluid compared to other cities in the nation, where land was often concentrated in few hands and citizens had a very limited range of urban employment possibilities. This situation contrasted with a migratory reality in which the minimum conditions of subsistence of a society had to be created, and where roles and services required by the massive arrival of settlers had to be continuously filled.

When talking about the main motivators that promoted the

migration of colonizing groups to La Concordia, two whose influence was of great historical scope can be identified. First, there are the economic problems found in the areas of origin; problems such as prolonged droughts, which periodically affected the provinces of Manabí and Loja; unemployment in the urban populations of the sierra, in the provinces of Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and Guaranda; and the problem of displaced groups from southern Colombia, who in the 1960s and 1970s mainly had the need to move from their places of origin and found the need to find new sources of subsistence. Secondly, there is the motivation for the recognition of "spontaneous colonization" in the region of La Concordia as a valid mechanism to ensure a means of subsistence. Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, settlers from various sectors of the country routinely arrived in the town of La Concordia without major contacts or resources, but went on to settle in rural areas, working in the agricultural area or joining the process of colonization of state land or land that is considered vacant [16].

Another relevant phenomenon is the fact that, from the beginning of the colonization of the agricultural lands of La Concordia, migration to the area was characterized by the variety of places of origin of the human groups that moved towards the rural and urban sectors [14]. This had the result that La Concordia, like other sites that have suffered colonization throughout history, is ideologically a point of union of different cultures, ideas, worldviews, customs and rites [9], and that, once the region consolidated its process of colonization and the mechanics of settlement of human groups -a point that we have placed at the beginning of the 70s-, the population that lives in La Concordia faces the possibility of creating a new culture, fruit of the mixture of the different cultures of origin of the settlers, but that takes on its own characteristics over time.

A consequence of this syncretism that characterizes the history of colonization in La Concordia, is the cosmopolitanism of the society as a whole. In traditional communities that have already consolidated a structure of labor relations and sustained parameters of land distribution have been established, social groups tend towards conservatism in practices and worldviews, since they reproduce in thought and in practice a structure that has already been formed and launched. The change in group relations, and the entry of new groups is seen as an undesirable dynamic in these conservative societies. La Concordia, on the other hand, being a young culture resulting from the syncretism of various sources, reveals a less defined social structure, which is still malleable and open to external systems or the emergence of new conditions. This has as a consequence that the human groups that inhabit La Concordia have a more open cosmivision for the emergence and consolidation of social trends, and in turn, is more receptive to the emergence of groups that can integrate into the young culture.

Social mobility, cultural syncretism, and the needs created by the colonizing process, led to the disposition towards what can be called "colonizing entrepreneurship" of immigrant

groups arriving from all over the country, which allowed the creation of projects and processes that allow the economic and material development of the region. During the history of the colonization movement, the state at the local and national level conserved a mainly secondary role, focusing on the sale of land (most of it previously occupied by cooperatives, or already claimed by settler farmers), in campaigns to recognize possession of the lands for the granting of deeds, and in the granting of loans according to initiatives of the government in power [16]. Most of the work of adapting the subtropical forest to land for cultivation, the opening of neighborhood roads, the creation of facilities that met the primary needs of the settlers, and other activities that allowed the material advance of the region, were carried out by the settlers grouped in the form of associations and cooperatives. If La Concordia is a relatively successful example of what has been called "spontaneous colonization", this was so mainly due to the entrepreneurial desire of the agricultural settlers and later of the urban settlers who supplied their primary needs with work, and once settled in the area, they brought that same mentality in the exploitation of the natural resources that La Concordia possesses, and that soon made it the focal point of one of the most important producing regions of agricultural products and derived goods in the entire nation. When in the last decades of the 20th century, the massive wave of rural colonization ends, the entrepreneurial spirit of the inhabitants is manifested mainly in the gestation of economic activities, mainly in the great growth suffered by the commercial and services sector, which is established to meet the needs of a region thriving and with great economic potential.

#### **3.4. *Toward a Discussion of Social Factors***

When talking about the growth experience of the community, it is possible to identify two great moments. In the first place, the existence of a scarce and scattered population presence can be established whose economic activities are subject to what has been called the "agricultural export model" established in the first half of the 20th century. From this first stage, the emergence of an alternative model based on the ownership of small and medium farmers who produce for national consumption in the second half of the 20th century is identified. In this second stage, the main system of development is the so-called "spontaneous colonization" that the municipality of La Concordia received during the second half of the 20th century, which was accompanied by the establishment of the socio-economic organization known as "corporatism", as an alternative instrument for farmers to encourage production and generate adequate livelihoods, despite government neglect and lack of economic incentives.

In a study directed from Harvard University - where he held the chair of economics for several decades - theorist and economist John Galbraith identified and disseminated his own scheme on the characteristic growth and also the backwardness of Latin America subcontinent after the independence revolutions. The main interest of this scheme is

found in its approach to identify which have been the obstacles crossed by the Latin American countries to promote development. According to Galbraith, the main systems that have retarded economic and social growth in Latin America are: 1) the existence of a small social layer that retains great political power but does not have an active participation in the economy; 2) the conservative tendency of the dominant class that maintains its exclusive income with an inefficient exploitation of the land and natural resources, focusing on the export of a limited number of products (cocoa, bananas, coffee, etc.); 3) the excessive separation existing in the income level of the different groups in society, which makes the small dominant layer maintain -often fraudulently- control of economic power, while the extensive poor layer maintains a meager contribution to the dynamics of total production, both facts that end up denying the appearance of an important "middle class" actively linked to the economy, and which, according to Galbraith, must be identified as the real subject of development in Latin American nations [2]. When observing these systems analyzed by the American economist, and when comparing them with the material and social systems that we have identified in La Concordia during the second half of the 20th century, some inferences can be made.

The historical review shows that, when La Concordia was established as a receiving space for rural and urban migration in congruence with the social system that has been called "spontaneous colonization", this made possible the establishment of an economic dynamic of human groups that allowed place the region in a good position to address the regional constraints to growth that were identified by Galbraith. Historians have taken note of how the La Concordia area went from being a locality in which large landowners owned vast tracts of land in order to carry out agro-export activities in the 1930s, to a region whose majority population was small and medium-sized farmers, especially after the consolidation of the dynamics of spontaneous colonization in the 1960s.

The work of the cooperatives and the joint work of the settlers is essential in this transition, just as the willingness of the governments in power to at least recognize the results of colonization, granting titles and selling previously claimed lands, played an important role. This sanctioning work of the central government was seen by the two agrarian reform projects of 1964 and 1973. With the dynamics of spontaneous colonization firmly established in the second half of the 20th century, the population of La Concordia -like other neighboring localities- is made up of an economic layer that is considerably more uniform than in other regions of the nation: the rural and urban settler, grouped in cooperatives and associations, is positioned as a small and medium owner, and provides work to an important population layer that acts as a merchant of products necessary for the region or is a service provider. In this way, the problem identified by Galbraith of the extreme difference in the distribution of income and land, which makes it possible for a small layer of the population to control most of the natural resources and

exploit them inefficiently, was greatly reduced in the region. This fact was coupled with the greater social and labor market mobility that is associated with the dynamics of spontaneous colonization, which made it possible for migrant individuals from more traditional regions to move to occupy new types of jobs in the labor market. goods and services, as well as allowing the change of occupations according to the different needs created by the growth in production.

In the last decades of the 20th century, when the spontaneous colonization of the agrarian field reaches its end point, and there is a change of focus towards the occupation of land near the populated center such as the urban center of La Concordia, it is still possible to find the social and market mobility of the work, as well as the private enterprise of the settler, but the growth -reduced by the difficulties of an urban life with little structural development- is less explosive and more progressive. In these decades, the commercial and services sector became an important economic area for the local population, which was oriented towards satisfying the needs that appeared after colonization, and also took advantage of the privileged position of the region as a point of exchange between the coast and the mountains. If we consider the first decades of the twenty-first century, it is possible to affirm that the agricultural and commercial sectors are positioned in the foreground in the economic development of the inhabitants of La Concordia.

#### 4. Conclusion

The development of La Concordia provides the example of a particular experience in the economic and social history of the Ecuadorian nation. Strategically located in the natural area of contact between the Sierra region (particularly the Ecuadorian capital, Quito) and the coastal ports, the town is consolidated as a point of contact for important routes in the country. Unlike other coastal towns that experienced periodic droughts and floods, and the Andean communities in which the mountain range and the moorland limited agricultural exploitation, the vast extension of the geographical region occupied by La Concordia and its area of influence had great potential. that had been preserved little exploited. The communion of these aspects made it possible that entered the 20th century, while the development of the important roads that cross the region advanced, settlers arrived from various origins to take advantage of the vast amount of exploitable land.

This gave rise to a peculiar macro-social configuration that is reflected in the rapid change and development of the region. In the previous pages, the growth of the community as an event motivated by the confluence and interaction of various social systems (particularly: migration, spontaneous colonization and corporatism), which led to the transition from an initial "agricultural export model" (which is common for coastal agricultural towns in Ecuador, and in much of South America), to an alternative model based on the ownership of small and medium farmers who produce for national consumption; a phenomenon that is accentuated in

the second half of the 20th century. In this second stage, the research discovers the importance of the social system of "migration", which indicates a peculiar dynamic of relationship between the social groups from La Concordia associated with the colonization that the town received in the second half of the 20th century. This structure was accompanied and intimately linked by the establishment of the socioeconomic system of "corporatism", a special type of civil organization that allowed farmers to encourage production and generate adequate livelihoods, despite the abandonment of the government and the lack of incentives. economic.

With this, the system of "spontaneous colonization" is given birth, which includes the relations of groups established for the generation of basic means of material subsistence by the settlers and independently of the governmental bodies, whose peak goes from the middle from the 40s to the beginning of the 70s, and that is strengthened with the maturation of rural and urban corporatism. Spontaneous colonization creates social and economic potentialities that favor the growth of the area. Of which, the main ones are: 1) the relative economic uniformity of the economically active social layer in the primary sector: settlers who are small and medium owners, and 2) mobility in the social field and in the labor market, which allows the generation, adaptation and development of economic sectors that respond to population needs and productive potentialities. This dynamic of systems that promote growth is established safely and with its decisive trends in the second half of the 20th century.

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