

# MODERNITIES, SUBALTERNITY, AND ORALITY IN ECUADORIAN MOUNTAINEERING HISTORY (CA. 1900-1960)

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**Abstract:** Mountaineering has been studied as an activity that was a part of waves of different modernities. In the Ecuadorian Andes this activity was named *andinismo* by Ecuadorean pioneer Nicolás Martínez in 1904. So, how Andean was *andinismo*? This sport was characterised by changing values and practices, gradually becoming a leisure activity for a literate social class. In the Andes the practice initially had an important oral component. Attempting to understand what stories were told can initiate discussions on the representation of the subaltern, subjectivity of experiences, and personal and collective memory. The orality found in the history of Ecuadorian *andinismo* had many forms, and I propose my interpretation of listening to two particular stories from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two different accounts reflect the changing relationships with oral testimonies, indigenous subjects, and ways of legitimisation.

Regionally and historically, there have been many terms for mountaineering; a mountaineer could be called an *alpiniste*, *bergsteiger*, or *taternik*. Recently, French historian Patrick Clastres proposed looking into the emergence of neologisms such as *andinisme*<sup>1</sup>. In recent decades, Andean mountaineering has been studied throughout this mountain range, and much can be learnt from studying *andinismo*. It offers a wide range of approaches, from environmental to social and connected histories<sup>2</sup>. To open this discussion, I will briefly look at the introduction of the word *andinismo* by Nicolás G. Martínez (1874-1933), Ecuadorean scientist and mountaineering pioneer. This baptismal or foundational gesture leads to the question of what made

*andinismo* Andean<sup>3</sup>. Further, I will discuss two encounters between elite figures and indigenous, subaltern subjects, which are very symbolic in understanding how *andinistas* saw, treated, and positioned these subjects. These encounters lead to questions on how a modern activity such as *andinismo* was permeated with oral elements, and reproduced representations of subalternity. *Andinismo* literature and historiography constructed ways of legitimising this activity which were key throughout its history.

The two cases are both traversed by modernity in different ways, characterised by oral accounts. Both represented in some way subaltern figures, that is to say, figures mostly forgotten by mountaineering historiography. The

encounter in 1904 between Nicolás Martínez and Lorenzo Guiagua, who was Antisana's *Urcu-Cama*, is important on many levels. The *Urcu-Cama* was a guardian or a protector of a space, in the case of Lorenzo Guaigua he seemed to be also responsible for the cattle on the hacienda<sup>4</sup>. Guaigua claimed to have a memory of scientists Alexander von Humboldt and Jiménez de la Espada, who visited the region in 1802 and 1865, respectively. Nicolás Martínez quoted him literally in parts and estimated his age to be around 135 years. This case leads to questions on recollection, memory, orality, and subalternity. By 1951, José Sandoval, one of the founders of Quito's oldest mountaineering clubs, published a book, *En Pos de Nuevos Horizontes*<sup>5</sup>. This text is unique as it was one of the few publications on Ecuadorean mountaineering between 1930 and 1960, and it is also imbued with oral elements and encounters with subaltern figures. His encounter with Miguel Quishpe, an indigenous mule driver, is very different from the first one. Quishpe claimed to have scaled Mount Cotopaxi (5,897 m). Somewhat laconically, Sandoval did not hesitate to put this down as a mere rumour. The questions here become more about legitimisation and subalternity. Both Martínez and Sandoval operated under a hacienda logic, where porters, mule drivers, or guides could be hired in a hacienda. These relationships were characterised by an apparent master-servant relationship. Nicolás Martínez practised mountaineering as a positivist scientist; Sandoval's work is much more influenced by pervasive *mestizaje* narratives, which asserted the dominance of a particular socio-ethnic group, the *blanco-mestizo* elites<sup>6</sup>.

These two encounters illustrate how a new and modern practice, Ecuadorean *andinismo*, has since its foundation been permeated with interactions between indigenous subjects and *mestizo* elites and is characterised by an oral component. Here, I consider subalternity as elaborated by Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Spivak<sup>7</sup>. The subaltern, as a historic concept, stands in contrast

to social class, as it also responds to concepts of ethnicity and gender. Subalternity refers in this sense to the oppressed and the voiceless, but also to a positionality – in relation to the state or hegemonic structures<sup>8</sup>. Although I am attempting to listen to two particular encounters, I do not pretend to «speak for or about» the subaltern. Subalternity is a diverse and ample concept, but in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of Ecuadorean Andean mountaineering history, subaltern groups and subjects were in most cases indigenous and Quichua-speaking. Although mule drivers, or *arrieros*, played a crucial role, their contribution to mountaineering history has been understated by subsequent historiographies. I find the orality in these testimonies important as it offers a distinct perspective in understanding these encounters, a subaltern agency, while challenging the places of enunciation of both authors, Martínez and Sandoval. This leads to the possibility of questioning these official accounts and helps us to understand what made *andinismo* Andean<sup>9</sup>.

*Andinismo* symbolised the appropriation of high mountainous spaces through a scientific or a leisure activity by a particular social and ethnic group that wrote extensively about its own exploits. These texts gradually became an ample body of historical and historiographical writings. Both authors were part of a literate and intellectual *criollo* elite or *blanco-mestizo* social ethnic group<sup>10</sup>. Within Ecuadorean historiography, Nicolás Martínez symbolised the national re-appropriation of a foreign-led activity. Sandoval's texts are key to understanding the further development of a local *andinismo* historiography, where certain elements were starting to fade: the role and importance of indigenous subjects within this activity, and indigenous ways of seeing, perceiving, and living in high mountainous spaces. From the 1960s, Ecuadorean *andinismo* historiography tended to reproduce the same list of foreign scientists, along with Nicolás Martínez, who explored the

Ecuadorean Andes. As sources on indigenous subjects in Ecuadorean Andean mountaineering in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century history are relatively scarce, contemporary historiography has rarely addressed this absence<sup>11</sup>. The mountaineers themselves, who tended to reproduce these chronologies of foreign and national scientists, wrote most of the accounts. Although this short essay does not try to fill this particular gap, it tries to understand the complexities within the construction of modern Ecuadorean *andinismo*. This particular issue, where an ethnic element is prevalent, has been studied in Himalayan mountaineering by Sherry B. Ortner, where she addressed the inequalities between Sherpa porters and western expeditions<sup>12</sup>.

Lastly, mountaineering has been studied as a distinctly modern activity, and this discussion has been very fruitful<sup>13</sup>. An important distinction needs to be made between modernization and modernity. By modernisation, I understand an accelerated series of conceptual and material changes, of which the arrival of new ideas and practices such as mountaineering was a part. Modernity is in this sense the result of multiple encounters and changing cultural forms were the ensuing consequences<sup>14</sup>. *Andinismo* is certainly a product of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century European modernity, but, again, how Andean was *andinismo*? Why did some of the elements that we can find in Martínez' texts become blurred or even erased by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Why was orality so important for the construction of this activity? What place did these subaltern subjects have within this activity?

## 1. ***Andinismo*, an Andean practice?**

The relationships between the mountain range that is now known as the Andes and its inhabitants are ancient and complex<sup>15</sup>. Before the Spanish invasion, the Andes mountains were part of a spiritual world, places of devotion, or even part of a cosmovision<sup>16</sup>. Mountainous spaces were inhabited and had social, political,

and economic importance. During colonisation, the Andes around Quito were feared because of their unpredictable volcanic activity. *Hieleros*, icemen, climbed steep slopes to cut glacial ice to provide the major cities of the Sierra and coast with this important preservative, a practice that still exists today<sup>17</sup>. Throughout the country trade could be hazardous, as the journey from the coast to the Sierra was complicated and the many high mountain passes were difficulties in themselves for traders and mule drivers alike. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an incipient modern form of looking at these mountainous spaces initially had a scientific impetus and relied heavily on local knowledge and labour<sup>18</sup>. The many generations of indigenous porters are seldom mentioned, and if they are it is very often as a group, *peones*, referring to their position within the hacienda and late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ecuador<sup>19</sup>.

Nineteenth-century mountaineering in the Ecuadorean Andes had been practised by foreign travellers and scientists such as Alexander von Humboldt, Jiménez de laEspada, and Edward Whymper<sup>20</sup>. This new activity relied on a series of conditions but moving through and up mountains required a specific vocabulary. Edward Whymper, for instance, refers to this activity as «mountain-travel», «mountaineering», or even the «art of mountaineering». For steeper sections, he used the word «climbing»<sup>21</sup>. A few decades later, between 1904 and 1911, Nicolás G. Martínez, who was from a *criollo* family, used the term «alpinismo» several times in his texts to refer to this activity<sup>22</sup>. He most probably used this term because of his many encounters with foreign travellers and amateur climbers, such as Doctor Pierre Reimburg, member of the Club Alpin Français, or Paul Suzor, commercial attaché at the French embassy in Quito at the time<sup>23</sup>. A francophone influence seems thus to have been important. Nonetheless, Martínez introduced *andinismo* in a 1904 text about a climb up the Antisana volcano (5,758 m)<sup>24</sup>, where he invited young people to follow his footsteps in the sport of

*andinismo* because «it is the most brilliant of all [sports]; since it gives us the possibility to admire and study Nature, and at the same time it fortifies our organism».

He added that he hoped to see a community of «sportmen» in alpine matters<sup>25</sup>. In Martínez' time there was no mountaineering community, something that had changed by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This gesture, of naming this activity, was preceded by an abyss, a void where, without a specific designation, *andinismo* could not exist. Naming this activity symbolised a poetic, and very symbolic, invention<sup>26</sup>. Although seldom mentioned in Andean mountaineering literature, this could be considered a foundational or a baptismal gesture<sup>27</sup>. Martínez opened up new forms of seeing, practising, and giving

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meaning to the concept of *andinismo*. In short, he imagined ways of practising mountaineering in the Andes. Martínez elaborated in his texts on the construction of a modern Andean activity and a nascent Ecuadorean mountaineering historiography<sup>28</sup>.

Nicolás Martínez Holguín is still considered the national mountaineering pioneer – although he was not the first Ecuadorean to reach a snow-capped summit<sup>29</sup>. Martínez came from an aristocratic family from Ambato, in the highlands south of the capital city Quito, and grew up in La Liria, an important hacienda at the time. Many of Nicolás Martínez' brothers were also active in politics, science, literature, the arts, and practised some mountaineering<sup>30</sup>. In around 1900 Ambato was an industrial city, and the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous

in Ecuador. There was also an important indigenous population, especially in the countryside. The contrast between the wealthy literate elite, and the rural mostly illiterate indigenous population, characterised post-colonial and republican Ecuador. Martínez himself was a man of many trades: a scientist, a public servant, and at one point even a politician. He was concerned with meteorology, geography, botany, geology, and volcanology. He was a liberal thinker, a strong believer in progress and in the Ecuadorian Republic. His texts perhaps read more like travel diaries but were focused on scientific research as much as on mountaineering.

Whilst imagining *andinismo* as an intersection of science, sport, and health, he constructed a distinctly Andean type of modern mountaineering. Also, by envisioning a community, *andinismo* was part of a search for identity. Martínez thought of *andinismo* in an encompassing way; for instance, he suggested using the term *Andenstick*, as opposed to *Alpenstick* (sic)<sup>31</sup>, which was a piece of equipment used by mountaineers on glaciers and was a precursor of the contemporary T-shaped piolet or ice axe. The *Andenstick* was quickly replaced by the piolet, which became the symbol of this new activity<sup>32</sup>. By the 1930s, *andinismo* was in common use throughout the entire mountain range, it was symbolic of the place where it was practised and of the growing Andean mountaineering communities, who were in search of their own (national) identities<sup>33</sup>. *Andinismo* was shaped, imagined, and constructed through a word; it is important to note that it was also composed of territories, places and spaces, landscapes, legends, and people.

Nicolás Martínez did not climb Ecuador's major summits alone. He was accompanied by his brothers, female pioneers, friends, colleagues, students, mule drivers, and indigenous companions<sup>34</sup>. Martínez made a clear distinction between the *peones* (who were often anonymised) and his indigenous climbing partners. Most famously, during his climb up Chimborazo (ca. 6,265 m)

in 1911, the indigenous Miguel Tul had a leading role. Martínez described Tul as a very calm man, even under the most strenuous of circumstances, and with an enormous resistance to fatigue. Martínez observed that Tul was just as comfortable high up a mountain as in his own house<sup>35</sup>. Martínez scaled several peaks with him and recognised his part in their success on Chimborazo. Most revealing of Tul's agency is when he broke trail in deep snow and summited Chimborazo before Martínez, which made Tul the third Ecuadorean to reach the summit. Although briefly, their relationship of master and servant had changed. Through that performative act, Tul not only displayed his physical strength, he also briefly resisted serving his superior. Afterwards, their relationship was re-confirmed through several gestures, such as when Martínez asked Tul to leave «*one of the four pairs of trousers he was wearing*»<sup>36</sup> and when Tul warmed Martínez' feet during the climb. In later accounts from the 1950s, Tul was merely mentioned as Martínez' companion<sup>37</sup>. An *andinista* in those texts was never indigenous, and certainly not a mule driver or a *hielero*.

## 2. Encounters: orality and subalternity

### 2.1 Remembrance and the sciences

In Martínez' account on his climb up Antisana, he narrated his encounter with «*the famous Indian*» Lorenzo Guaigua, the «*traditional Urcu-Cama of Antisana*», as *Urcu-Cama Guaigua* was the protector or guardian of that mountain. His age at that point, in November 1904, was estimated to be 120 years, «*...unlike his advanced age, he is strong and traverses the highlands with the same agility and resistance as a youngster; he is small-bodied, broad-shouldered, fat and well muscled; he has a full dentition [...] his hair is mostly black and he wears a woollen hat like Santo Tomás Aquino.*»<sup>38</sup>

In a note, Martínez mentioned that 15 years after this climb he had heard that Guaigua was still alive, concluding that he must have been 135 years of age.

«*I do not believe this age is exaggerated, since Guaigua remembers the visit of Baron von Humboldt to the Hato of the Antisana, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and [...], the visit of Marcos Jiménez de la Espada in 1860, but remembering this last visit he was already a mature and old man.*»<sup>39</sup>

Lorenzo Guaigua is not the only subaltern figure Martínez' relied on. The same expedition was carried out with many local guides. Calixto Ortiz, who remembered Edward Whymper, Abraham Mosquera «*semi-civilised and jovial*», «*and three Indians*»<sup>40</sup>, but Martínez paid special attention to Guaigua because of his memory of those scientists<sup>41</sup>.

More than a simple anecdote that could depict Martínez as a trusting mountaineer, it leads to questions on memory and remembrance. We can explore how Martínez perceived Guaigua, and how Martínez assessed Guaigua's testimony. This story illustrates Martínez' subjective appreciation of this particular oral avowal. But, first of all, why did Guaigua claim to have remembered Humboldt and Jiménez de la Espada? And why did Martínez value this testimony so highly? What does this encounter illustrate about the relationships between elite people and their subaltern subjects?

For now, we do not know much about Lorenzo Guaigua, apart from this short portrayal by Nicolás Martínez. From these descriptions, we can deduce that Guaigua was well respected, and that he could count on a certain status and authority as the protector of Antisana, even from an upper-class *criollo* male such as Nicolás Martínez. Through this position, Guaigua was able to produce legitimising discourses. At that time, it was possible for subaltern forms of knowledge to prevail and to rise to the surface through the validating discourses of Martínez. We can speculate about Guaigua's age, but I believe Guaigua constructed his recollections of the European voyageurs in different ways. A key element is Guaigua's role as *Urcu-Cama*; he could have been a central figure in

his community. His father and grandfather may have had the same position, and it might have been included in Humboldt's expedition, or have been heard of. Guaigua could have picked up these stories from his family and/or community. This oral testimony could illustrate how Guaigua assimilated parts of the stories told within his community as his own, while Guaigua embodied in that sense the histories of his ancestors. An alternative explanation could be that, as *Urcu-Cama*, Guaigua was also a protector of a certain place and space<sup>42</sup>, whereby he embodied this territory and its history. Therefore, something in the present may have triggered Guaigua to adopt a narrative that he had some memory of figures from the past such as Humboldt. One of the visitors, such as Martínez, might have asked him questions about his recollections of those European travellers. Accordingly, as an *Urcu-Cama*, Guaigua was an intermediary between the past and present of that mountain, forming through his narratives and memories a space where the past and present were one.

As a man of science, Nicolás Martínez was a convinced positivist and very rigorous in his reporting and measurements. Mountains could be drawn on maps, heights could be measured, photographic evidence was key to documenting new findings, and geological layers could be studied with precision. This attitude might help to understand a part of why he seemed to believe Guaigua's age and the ensuing implications with such ease. Guaigua's account was for Martínez as precise as a thermometer measurement. In that sense, it responded to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century type of reporting, accounts needed to be as accurate as possible<sup>43</sup>. Also, the sense of the possibility of connectedness, or Martínez' wish for it, with this glorious scientific past seems to have fascinated him. Guaigua even claimed they had followed the exact same route as Jiménez de la Espada and Whymper, thus putting himself in a legitimising position. Martínez connected as a scientist

with this space, but he also found a way through Guaigua's memory. Through this embodied experience, by following Jiménez de la Espada and Whymper' exact tracks, he connected with the past. In this particular case, the history of a scientific past and historical space was represented in the route that Guaigua chose and became intertwined with his testimony and Martínez' appreciation of it.

Martínez mainly focused on his own experiences of his expeditions, but this leads to a new problem: how was Guaigua's oral testimony translated into Martínez' report in written language? Throughout the text, there seems to be a tension where Martínez was confronted with these testimonies, whereby he resorted to interpretations which were selective, mediated, and incomplete<sup>44</sup>. Martínez paraphrased Guaigua's words, and only once did he cite Guaigua literally, when he remembered Jiménez de la Espada's suffering during the summit attempt on Antisana: he was «*slaving on the summit like a vulture*»<sup>45</sup>. Jiménez de la Espada did not claim to have summited Antisana, but Whymper did. Due to the rather vulgar nature of this expression, a translation into conventional language was rather complicated, so he decided to quote Guaigua's expression literally.

The importance Martínez accorded to these accounts is a permeation of an indigenous heritage in scientific and mountaineering literature. In sum, Martínez was part of a republican modernity, where knowledge was constructed through norms in universities and intellectual circles by literate elites, although this modernity still included space for oral traditions. Martínez' positivist attitude may have made this possible, or his local Andean contexts were an appropriate ground for these types of permeations. *Andinismo* had an important oral component, despite late 19<sup>th</sup>-century and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century literary modernity.

## 2.2 The legitimization of *andinismo*

If Nicolás Martínez and his brothers were national pioneers in Ecuadorean mountaineering, the same could be said about Ambato, the city of their birth. Martínez himself mentioned two mountaineering clubs from Ambato: Club Ecuador and Club Andino – again, a sign of the reappropriation of the mountainous spaces in the Ecuadorean Andes<sup>46</sup>. After his death in 1933, only one club appeared to remain in Ambato, Club Nicolás Martínez. Throughout the Americas, large numbers of scouting and *excursionista* movements appeared between the 1920s and 1940s<sup>47</sup>. From these traditions, a group of friends founded the Agrupación Excursionista Nuevos Horizontes in Quito in 1944; one of the founders was José Sandoval Piedra (1917-1997). Nuevos Horizontes was an upper-class club, a distinct social marker, and a sportive sociability that was part of Quito's social fabric<sup>48</sup>. Many of its first-generation members were concerned with the sciences; they visited sites of historical and geographical interest. The exploration of the *Patria*, the mother country, remained of central importance in the 1940s and 1950s. By the early 1950s, Nuevos Horizontes was gradually becoming an amateur *andinismo* movement. Ecuadorean *andinismo* became structured through clubs such as Nuevos Horizontes, also becoming more and more institutionalised.

Following the tradition of great scientists such as Humboldt, Jiménez de la Espada, Whymper, and Nicolás Martínez, Sandoval wrote a book in 1951, *En pos de Nuevos Horizontes*, which reads like a traveller's journal but included a large amount of scientific data. Like Martínez, he measured temperature, altitude, atmospheric pressure, and distance, and added a description of the minerals that could be found on Ecuadorean territory. He included accounts of two climbs, up Cotopaxi and Chimborazo, and an expedition to the Quilotoa crater lake.

During the Cotopaxi expedition, Sandoval mentioned his encounter with a local indigenous porter, Miguel Quishpe. It was rumoured that Quishpe ascended Cotopaxi «*de pinganillo*»<sup>49</sup>. This expression indicates his lack of equipment, as he was only wearing one pair of trousers; according to Sandoval, Quishpe was too underequipped to have made such an attempt. Sandoval did not grant any importance to this testimony later on. This brief passage, again, leads to an important discussion. Sandoval clearly understated the possibility of Quishpe's climb, or the validity of his account, but what had changed since the early 1900s? Quishpe might not have enjoyed the same status as an Urcu-Cama like Guaigua, but this encounter is revealing of the changes in the perception of an indigenous figure and his testimony in Sandoval's society. As there were half a dozen expeditions to Cotopaxi in the 1930s<sup>50</sup>, it is plausible that Quishpe accompanied one of those parties. As the sources of the time are relatively scarce, we can only speculate. If Sandoval had any more interest in Quishpe's climb, he does not say so in his book. By treating it as a rumour and not a valid testimony, his interpretation was confined by the society he lived in and had thus no «truth effect»<sup>51</sup>. In that sense, the social distance between Sandoval and Quishpe seems to have been enormous, but this rumour appears to have been a form of negotiation between Quishpe and the existing power structures. Quishpe's claim could even be considered a subversive act, as he claimed to be a peer of the *andinistas*<sup>52</sup>.

During the 1950s and most of the 1960s, Nuevos Horizontes was the most important mountaineering club in Quito, it preached the legitimate ways of practising this activity and regulated access to Quito's mountaineering circles. A very small but distinct community had formed in the 1940s, this also meant a significant increase in ascents and expeditions, and an acceleration in the succession of notable

events within the mountaineering community. If Sandoval did not consider Quishpe's claim, it is because Sandoval was part of a small group that practised this activity that did not acknowledge outside participation. *Who* climbed *what* and *which* stories were told, was decided within Nuevos Horizontes. This case seems to illustrate how legitimisation worked within *andinismo* circles: accounts needed to be published and reports archived. In that sense, outsiders or subaltern indigenous figures such as Quishpe were at best represented briefly, but in most cases ignored.

Sandoval's attitude also exemplifies a different relationship with oral testimonies. If his role model, Nicolás Martínez, had indeed listened carefully to Guaigua, Sandoval did not listen to Quishpe. Written narrations from George Mallory or Francis Younghusband contained for him more value and truth, and oral testimonies became mere rumours<sup>53</sup>. As Sandoval encountered this particular testimony, he did not complete the effort of translating it into a passage in his book. Contradictorily enough, he digressed in great detail about his encounter with Johnny Lovewisdom, an ascetic who lived in the Quilotoa crater lake<sup>54</sup>. Orality was by that time limited by the legitimisation of an upper-class author in a written account, which was embedded in socio-political structures and reproduced narratives where indigenous populations did not play an important role.

The middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time when Ecuadorean literary fiction writers held in high esteem the written accounts of indigenous voices in *indigenista* literature. Orality was translated on paper and produced heavily essentialised and folkloric narratives of indigenous men and women<sup>55</sup>. In other accounts, Sandoval limited the presence of indigenous populations to «*their well-known misery and without a solution*»<sup>56</sup>, confining their condition to otherness and barbarism, reproducing the conceptions of the local *indigenismo* where indigenous

populations were restricted to marginalised spaces at the edges of society<sup>57</sup>. In part, this reaffirmed a series of exclusion processes that were reproduced within the Ecuadorean Andean mountaineering community that were echoes of Ecuadorean society at large.

Sandoval also included a strong patriotic narrative. His generation took flags to the summits and they sang the national anthem. Observing landscapes made them «*feel more Ecuadorean*»<sup>58</sup>. His language was heavily gendered and even militaristic, perhaps unsurprisingly, as the defeat against Peru in 1941 was still a lingering wound and Ecuador had experienced a significant social upheaval in 1944<sup>59</sup>. Although the Ecuadorian nation was built throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sandoval seems to legitimise mountaineering as a socially relevant activity by persuading the reader of the importance of this particular form of patriotic mountaineering. In weaving these narratives together, Sandoval also put together the ideal climbing body comprising white male upper-middle-class urban subjects. The *mestizaje* narrative employed at some points by Sandoval, where pre-Incan indigenous peoples could sometimes be glorious precursors of modern Ecuador, but their descendants, such as Quishpe, were seldom included in these patriotic discourses. This is revealing of the reproduction of a political agenda, where indigenous subjects needed to adapt to the *blanco-mestizo* society, and not the other way around<sup>60</sup>. At that point in time, Quishpe was indigenous and had no equipment, and for Sandoval it was inconceivable that he had climbed Cotopaxi.

Throughout his book, Sandoval had one hero in mind, Nicolás Martínez. He contrasted his narrative of foreign scientists and mountaineers (Humboldt, Whymper) with a national one (Martínez, and Nuevos Horizontes), and he positioned his climbing club (and himself) as the legitimate heirs of this grand scientific and mountaineering tradition. One of the most

important ways in which Martínez was remembered in Quito's mountaineering community was through Sandoval's work and in subsequent publications such as mountaineering magazines<sup>61</sup>. These narratives also gave a secondary position to subaltern figures such as Miguel Tul and made them fall between the cracks of a historiography under construction.

Equally important was the struggle to name places, especially mountain peaks. As a re-appropriation, Sandoval named the peak of Iliniza Sur (5,263 m) Nicolás G. Martínez, as he claimed that the previous climbers, all foreigners, had not claimed their right to baptize the summit. There was no question of asking if the summits already had a native name or not. As a mountaineering community was under formation in the 1950s and 1960s, these name suggestions often did not travel beyond the sphere of the mountaineering clubs. Also, any discussions were only held within a small urban mountaineering community that had legitimised itself.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Nuevos Horizontes remained the dominant climbing club in Quito, and to access it an applicant needed to be backed by two established members. The candidate then had two months to «prove his value»<sup>62</sup>. By the late 1960s, climbing clubs had appeared everywhere in the city, as access to Nuevos Horizontes was so restrictive. Some of those clubs embraced spiritual values, while others were slightly more working-class oriented. This was closely related to the institutionalisation of Ecuadorean mountaineering, where access to this activity was decided by mountaineering clubs. As much as Sandoval was a product of a more literate society, his focus on written records and social distance from indigenous populations, he seemed to be a part of a new type of modernity. If Martínez and Sandoval had different attitudes towards orality and oral history, modernity played a major role in those transformations.

## Conclusion

As a foundational act, by naming a modern form of mountaineering *andinismo*, Nicolás Martínez not only translated an existing concept, he also imagined what scope this new practice, and its historiography, could reach. It was not only scientific, it could also be sportive, and there were health benefits attributed to this practice. He hoped to see a growing community of mountaineers over the years. In his texts, he elaborated on his experiences, encounters, and observations in the high Andes of Ecuador. These encounters were first and foremost very revealing for the social construction of this activity, but they also reflected and reproduced values of the more ample early 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Ecuadorean society.

In these two case studies I hope to have illustrated how different forms of modernity affected social life and relationships in the construction of a local form of *andinismo*. Where Nicolás Martínez gave great importance to the oral testimony of Lorenzo Guaigua, Sandoval was more reluctant to believe Miguel Quishpe. Guaigua's testimony was carefully handled as he symbolised a bridge between past and present, and embodied a territory. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *andinismo* had become more patriotic, and in Quito an incipient community was being formed. Because of this process of institutionalisation, the activity had become increasingly restrictive. In light of this, the testimony of Quishpe became a mere rumour, as he was delegitimised by the author. Orality in both texts by Martínez and Sandoval expressed ways to understand thoughts, feelings, and values that sometimes fell between the cracks of historiographical narratives and the limits of written language. They are also both clear examples of different forms of orality: one with authority and another without<sup>63</sup>. These oral testimonies were ultimately legitimised or de-legitimised by the two authors.

In the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, subaltern indigenous figures such as Miguel Tul played key roles in the development of this activity. The texts of Nicolás Martínez and José Sandoval are vital to understanding the construction of this Andean historical subject<sup>64</sup>. This could be through their labour, acts, testimonies, or historical remembrance of particular places. Only a few decades later, the narratives about these figures had faded, and the historiography of Ecuadorean mountaineering had become more of a chronology of foreign explor-

ers and national heroes. Within this construction, oral testimonies had partially lost their importance. Subaltern figures were even further relegated to the margins through *mestizaje*-narratives by the *blanco-mestizo* urban upper social classes. Was *andinismo* Andean? This topic certainly needs more discussion. Subalternity and orality are only two components of how one Andean activity was formed, so further research on territory, landscapes, symbols, myths, and legends is mandatory to understand the scope of *andinismo* in the Andes.

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**Keywords:** *andinismo*, mountaineering, orality, modernity, subalternity, Ecuador, Andes.

**Résumé:** L'alpinisme a été étudié comme une activité faisant partie de différentes vagues de modernité. Dans les Andes équatoriennes, le pionnier Nicolás Martínez a qualifié cette activité comme *andinismo* en 1904. Mais à quel point l'*andinismo* était-il andin? Ce sport a été caractérisé par une évolution des valeurs et des pratiques, et est devenu progressivement une activité de loisirs pour une classe sociale lettrée. Dans les Andes, la pratique avait initialement une importante composante orale. La façon dont les histoires ont été racontées, peut ouvrir des discussions sur la représentation du sujet subalterne, la subjectivité des expériences et la mémoire personnelle et collective. L'oralité que l'on retrouve dans l'histoire de l'andinisme équatorien avait de nombreuses formes, et je propose mon interprétation d'écouter deux histoires particulières de la première moitié du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ces récits différents reflètent l'évolution des relations avec les témoignages oraux, les sujets autochtones et les modes de légitimation.

**Mots-clés:** *andinismo*, alpinisme, oralité, modernité, subalternité, Équateur, Andes.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> CLASTRES Patrick, «Conclusion: de l'histoire de l'alpinisme à l'histoire mondiale des ascensionismes», in: CLASTRES Patrick, DEBONS Delphine, PITTELOUD Jean-François & QUIN Grégory (éds), *Gravir les Alpes du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours. Pratiques, émotions, imaginaires*, Actes du colloque de Salvan/Les Marécottes des 22-24 septembre 2016, Rennes/Lausanne, PUR; ISSUL; SHSR, 2020, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance: ECHEVARRIA Evelio, *The Andes: The complete History of Mountaineering in High South America*, Augusta, Missouri, Joseph Reidhead & Company Publishers, 2018, 827 p.; LOGAN Joy, *Aconcagua: The Invention of Mountaineering on America's Highest Peak*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2011, 251 p.; CAREY Mark, «Mountaineers and Engineers: The Politics of International Science, Recreation, and Environmental Change in Twentieth-Century Peru», *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92 (1), 2012, pp. 107-141. In Ecuador the first thesis published on the subject was: AGUIRRE Patricio, *Montañas y sujetos: una aproximación a las construcciones simbólicas y sociales del andinismo en el Ecuador*, Bachelor's thesis, Quito, PUCE, 2013, 145 p.

<sup>3</sup> AGUIRRE Patricio, «La referencia de lo "más alto" y la fundación de los sujetos históricos del montañismo en los Andes ecuatoriales», [Unpublished], 2020, 8 p.

<sup>4</sup> SALZER Leonhard, NÖBAUER Anna, «(Auf) Humboldt's Spuren. Eine bauforscherische Untersuchung der „Casa Humboldt“ am Antisana in Ecuador», *HiN-Alexander von Humboldt im Netz. Internationale Zeitschrift für Humboldt-Studien* 22 (43), 2021, pp. 65-82.

<sup>5</sup> SANDOVAL PIEDRA José, *En pos de Nuevos Horizontes, Tomo I*, Quito, Ed. Mercedario Tirso de Molina, 1951, 65 p.

<sup>6</sup> *Mestizaje* is a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century political and cultural narrative that responded to the need to construct a unitary nation-state. Mainly white elites sought ways to create narratives that included an indigenous component, in practice this meant that indigenous people needed to become more «white» and not the other way around. See, for instance: SANTACRUZ BENAVIDES Lucy Beatriz, *Feminismo y mestizaje: Una lectura desde la Clase, el Género y la Raza en Ecuador 1910-1940*, Doctoral dissertation, Quito, UASB, 2018, 252 p., and BUSTOS LOZANO Guillermo, *La urdimbre de la Historia Patria. Escritura de la historia, rituales de la memoria y nacionalismo en Ecuador (1870-1950)*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2011, p. 309.

<sup>7</sup> SPIVAK Gayatri, «Can the Subaltern Speak?», in: NELSON Cary, GROSSBERG Lawrence (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271-313.

<sup>8</sup> RADCLIFFE Sarah A., «Pachamama, Subaltern Geographies, and Decolonial Projects in Andean Ecuador», in: JAZELL Tariq, LEGG Stephen, *Subaltern Geographies*, Athens (Georgia), The University of Georgia Press, 2019, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> VICH Victor, ZAVALA Virginia, *Oralidad y poder. Herramientas metodológicas*, Bogotá, Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004, p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> The construction of the *blanco-mestizo* dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was a hegemonic narrative which proposed that the populations of the newly formed Latin American nations were made up of the descendants of indigenous and white populations. Most often, this resulted in a «whitening» narrative, where the indigenous peoples needed to adapt to a white, modern society. It even became an official state ideology. See: SANTACRUZ Beatriz, *Feminismo y mestizaje...*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>11</sup> A considerable effort to understand the place and importance of mountains within pre-Inca cultures is: MORENO Segundo, «El Chimborazo: ancestro sagrado andino», *Antropología: Cuadernos de Investigación. Revista de la Escuela de Antropología* 7, 2007, pp. 87-107.

<sup>12</sup> ORTNER Sherry B., *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, 376 p. In a similar perspective for Peru see: WALTER Doris, *La domestication de la nature dans les Andes péruviennes*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003, 244 p.

<sup>13</sup> See for the Alps, for instance: KLEIN Kerwin Lee, «A Vertical World: The Eastern Alps and Modern Mountaineering», *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, n° 4, December 2011, p. 521. He suggests that mountains played a key role in shaping the modern world.

<sup>14</sup> I mostly follow Jorge Coronado's ideas on modernity and modernisation, see: CORONADO Jorge, *The Andes imagined. Indigenismo, Society, and Modernity*, Pittsburg, University Press, 2009, pp. 2-3. Reinhardt Koselleck understands modernity as the acceleration of times, see: KOSELLECK Reinhart, *Futures Past. On the semantics of historical time* (trans. Keith Tribe), New York, Colombia University Press, 2004, 317 p.

<sup>15</sup> ECHEVARRIA Evelio, *The Andes...*, pp. 37-52 and pp. 295-323.

<sup>16</sup> MORENO Segundo, «El Chimborazo...», pp. 87-107.

<sup>17</sup> A famous documentary on the matter was: GUAYASAMIN Gustavo & Igor, *Los hieleros del Chimborazo*, 1980. See for the case of the Cotacachi volcano (4,944 m), north of Quito: RHOADES R., «Disappearance of the glacier on Mama Cotacachi: Ethnoecological research and climate change in the Ecuadorian Andes», *Pirineos* 163, 2008, pp. 37-50.

For oral accounts on the *hieleros* in the 1950s and 1960s: DERKINDEREN Jeroen, MADERA Sara, *50 años de Montañismo en Ecuador*, Quito, Club de Andinismo Politécnico, 2018, pp. 51, 87, 89.

<sup>18</sup> Much has been written recently on the importance of local scientists to understand their influence on the works of foreign scientists such as Humboldt: CANIZARES-ESGUERRA Jorge, THURNER Mark, «Andes», in: THURNER Mark, PIMENTEL Juan, *New World Objects of Knowledge. A Cabinet of Curiosities*, London, University Press, 2021, pp. 217-224. See for the case of the Cordillera Blanca: CAREY Mark, «Mountaineers and Engineers: The Politics of International Science, Recreation, and Environmental Change in Twentieth-Century Peru», *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92 (1), 2012, p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> During most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and an important part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, labourers, or *peones*, operated within a *concertaje* system, whereby haciendas had access to cheap (indigenous) labour; this resulted in exploitative practices where *peones* were bound to a particular hacienda through debt. OLSON Christa J., «Contradictions of Progress: Visions of Modernity, Infrastructure, and Labor in Late Nineteenth-Century Ecuador», *JAC* 33 (3/4), 2013, p. 639.

<sup>20</sup> See: AGUIRRE NEGRETE Patricio Javier, «Edward Whymper y el Chimborazo: 'el arte del montañismo' y la autoridad científica (1880-1892)», *Anuario de Historia Regional y de las Fronteras* 25.2, 2020, pp. 75-103. For the impact of these narratives: FITZELL Jill, «Teorizando la Diferencia en los Andes del Ecuador: Viajeros Europeos, la Ciencia del Exotismo y las Imágenes de los Indios», in: MURATORIO Blanca (ed.), *Imagenes e imaginarios. Representaciones de los indígenas ecuatorianos, Siglos XIX Y XX*, Primera Edición, Quito, FLACSO-Sede Ecuador, 1994, pp. 25-74.

<sup>21</sup> WHYMPER Edward, *Travels amongst the great Andes of the Equator*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, John Murray, 1892, pp. 27, 225, 231 and 298.

<sup>22</sup> The *Criollo* were descendants of the colonial Spanish elites; they held a privileged position within 19<sup>th</sup> century Ecuador.

<sup>23</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, p. 151.

<sup>24</sup> 5,578 m is the current altitude. Martínez climbed a mountain that he believed was 5,766 m high, according to the trigonometric measurements of Wilhelm Reiss and Alphons Stübel, two German scientists, taken in 1871 and 1872. STÜBEL Alphons, *Las montañas volcánicas del Ecuador*, Quito, Banco Central del Ecuador/UNESCO, 2004, p. 7. It is important to note that one of the main sources for this paper is: MARTÍNEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores del Andinismo Ecuatoriano. Tomo I*, Quito, Abya Yala, 1994, 281 p. This publication uses several of Martínez original writings from 1915 until 1933, and it was curated by José Sandoval of Nuevos Horizontes.

<sup>25</sup> MARTÍNEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, pp. 7 and 103.

<sup>26</sup> See: THURNER Mark, *El nombre del abismo: meditaciones sobre la historia de la historia* (trans. Juan Carlos Callirgos), Lima, IEP, 2021, pp. 19-21.

<sup>27</sup> This is briefly looked at in: ECHEVARRIA Evelio, *The Andes...*, pp. 103 and 303. Echevarría claims the term dates from 1906, but the original text is dated 1904, see: MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, p. 7. A Swiss traveller visiting the Chilean Andes once employed the term *andiniste*, without any repercuSSION. Also: AGUIRRE Patricio, «La referencia de lo "más alto" y la fundación de los sujetos históricos del montañismo en los Andes ecuatoriales», [Unpublished], 2020, 8 p.

<sup>28</sup> This question came up during a seminar organised by the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar in September 2021, asked by my colleague Patricio Aguirre.

<sup>29</sup> On Whymper's second climb to Chimborazo in 1880 he was accompanied by Francisco J. Campaña from Quito and David Beltrán from Machachi. AGUIRRE Patricio, *Edward Whymper...*, p. 89.

<sup>30</sup> From the Martínez family most famously Anacarsis, Luis A., and Augusto N. Martínez also practised mountaineering. Augusto N. Martínez was a graduate from the Escuela Politécnica Nacional, while Luis A. Martínez is celebrated as a writer and romantic painter. ESTUPINAN-FREIRE Tamara, *Una familia republicana: los Martínez Holguín*, Quito, Museos del Banco Central del Ecuador, 1988. For part of their work: MARTINEZ Luis A., *Pioneros y precursores del andinismo ecuatoriano. Tomo II*, Quito, Abya-Yala, 1994 and MARTINEZ Augusto N., *Pioneros y precursores del andinismo ecuatoriano. Tomo III*, Quito, Abya-Yala, 1994. This collection was published by the editorial house Abya Yala, Nuevos Horizontes, and counted on the involvement of José Sandoval.

<sup>31</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> KLEIN Kerwin Lee, «A Vertical World...», p. 532.

<sup>33</sup> ECHEVARRIA Evelio, *The Andes...*, pp. 302-304. *Andinismo* was officially approved by the Spanish Royal Academy of the Language in 1942.

<sup>34</sup> Elsbeth Bolle Werner de Robalino was not only an Ecuadorean pioneer who scaled mountains in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also a Latin American one: ECHEVARRIA Evelio, *The Andes...*, p. 119.

<sup>35</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, p. 152.

<sup>36</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursores...*, p. 163.

<sup>37</sup> SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, pp. 21, 32, 34 and *Revista Montaña, Publicación del Grupo de Ascensionismo del Colegio San Gabriel 2*, Junio 1961,

p. 25. In a short historical overview by the Ministry of Sports Miguel Tul is not mentioned: MINISTERIO DEL DEPORTE, *Memorias del Deporte 2: Montañismo*, Quito, Ochoymedio, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursoros...*, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursoros...*, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursoros...*, pp. 9 and 11.

<sup>41</sup> See for Humboldt's voyage in the Americas: PRATT Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, 2008, 257 p., and for Jiménez de la Espada: LOPEZ-OCON Leoncio, «La comisión científica del Pacífico: de la ciencia imperial a la ciencia federativa», *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'études andines* 32, n° 3, 2003, pp. 479-515.

<sup>42</sup> I understand the concepts of place and space as presented in: JERRAM Leif, «Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?», *History and Theory* 52, october 2013, pp. 403-404: space is a physical and material location; place, on the other hand, is the system of «values, beliefs, codes, and practices that surround a particular location». The question remains of how Guaihua saw the Antisana, so perhaps the conceptual distinction of place and space needs to be approached differently.

<sup>43</sup> FITZELL Jill, «Teorizando la Diferencia en los Andes del Ecuador...», p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> See for instance: BURKE Peter, *What is cultural history?*, Cambridge, Polity, 2008, p. 212 and VICH Victor & ZAVALA Virginia, *Oralidad y poder...*, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursoros...*, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> MARTINEZ Nicolás, *Pioneros y Precursoros...*, pp. 16 and 131.

<sup>47</sup> See: FRANCH-PARDO Iván, SUNYER MARTIN Pere, URQUIJO TORRES Pedro Sergio, JIMENEZ RODRIGUEZ Diana Laura, «Excursionismo y geografía en el México posrevolucionario: el Club de Exploraciones de México», *Investigaciones Geográficas* 97, diciembre 2018, pp. 1-17.

<sup>48</sup> See for other sports, institutionalisation and social class: MACLEAN Malcolm, «A Gap but Not an Absence: Clubs and Sports Historiography», *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30(14), p. 1694.

<sup>49</sup> SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> DERKINDEREN Jeroen & MADERA Sara, *50 años...*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>51</sup> BEVERLEY John, «Theses on subalternity, representation, and politics», *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy* 1:3, 1998, p. 311.

<sup>52</sup> VICH Victor, ZAVALA Virginia, *Oralidad y poder...*, p. 107.

<sup>53</sup> Sandoval references both British mountaineer George Mallory (1886-1924) and British colonialist Francis Younghusband (1863-1942) throughout his text: SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, pp. 34, 36.

<sup>54</sup> Born as John Wierlo (1919-2000), this ascetic experimented with different types of diets and considered himself a Buddhist. See: [https://everipedia.org/wiki/lang\\_en/Johnny\\_Lovewisdom](https://everipedia.org/wiki/lang_en/Johnny_Lovewisdom), accessed on 10/11/2021.

<sup>55</sup> One of the most representative authors of the time was Jorge Icaza (1906–1978) with works such as *Huasipungo*, where, in an effort to give indigenous characters a voice, they become very essentialised. See: CORONADO Jorge, *The Andes imagined...*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> «... en donde el indio vive su miseria muy conocida y sin solución.», in: SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, p. 40.

<sup>57</sup> CARDOSO DE OLIVEIRA Roberto, «La politización de la identidad y el movimiento indígena», in: ALCINA FRANCH Jorge (comp.), *Indianismo e indigenismo en América*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1990, p. 150, and FITZELL Jill, «Teorizando la Diferencia en los Andes del Ecuador...», p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> See: CABRERA HANNA Santiago (ed.), *La Gloriosa ¡revolución que no fue?*, Quito, UASB-E/Corporación Editora Nacional, 2016, 270 p.

<sup>60</sup> SANDOVAL José, *En pos de...*, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Throughout the first editions of *Revista Montaña* (n° 1 1960 to n° 10 1969), we can see an important reproduction of these narratives. By the 1980s, this genealogy of scientists became a common narrative in the same *Revista Montaña* (n° 14 1983 and n° 15 1984).

<sup>62</sup> Archives of the AENH, *Carpetas Solicitudes de ingreso*, 1952-1962.

<sup>63</sup> RIVERA CUSICANQUI Silvia, *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible. Ensayos desde un presente en crisis*, Buenos Aires, Tinta Lomón, 2018, p. 124.

<sup>64</sup> AGUIRRE Patricio, «La referencia de...», p. 7.