Radio Education in the Andes During the Second Half of the 20th Century

Summary

In 1947, a Colombian priest, Padre José Joaquín Salcedo Guarín, established a small radio station in Sutatenza, Boyacá to provide basic literacy education for poor peasants. Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, Salcedo's pioneering example gave rise to hundreds of similar initiatives across the Andes. Amid widespread illiteracy, entrenched poverty, and a mountainous terrain that limited access to state institutions and the mainstream media, radio was seen as a technology of immense promise that could increase education levels and stimulate development. The *escuelas radiofónicas* (radio schools) were an innovative form of distance learning designed to be followed in groups within the home or in a community building. In other parts of the world, radio education was largely delivered by secular agencies, but in the profoundly Catholic Andean region they had a strongly religious character, being operated by priests and funded by international Catholic organizations. Although hailed by many for their transformative impact on rural communities, others criticized their "developmentalist" assumptions and tendency to spread anticommunism. Initially focused on basic numeracy and literacy, radio schools later included programs on agricultural techniques, health, family relationships, music, and spiritual guidance, which were accompanied by newspapers, pamphlets, and readers. Peasant leaders and so-called auxiliaries were recruited and trained to promote radio school attendance and reinforce new ideas and practices. As the tenets of liberation theology filtered out through the Latin American clergy in the 1970s and 1980s, radio education acquired a more activist tone and moved away from didacticism toward community participation, often having a cultural and political impact far beyond that intended in the 1960s. Cultural and economic changes of the

late 20th century brought an end to many such radio schools, but a number persist and radio continues to be vitally important among rural Andean populations.

Keywords

radio, literacy, Catholic, Andes, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cold War, liberation theology

The Social Function of Radio

The emergence of radio broadcasting in the Andean region followed a similar pattern to that in Europe and the United States. Initially, the preserve of amateur enthusiasts who assembled their own transmitters and receivers to access shortwave programming, by the 1930s radio was widely recognized as a communications technology with enormous potential. During the 1930s and 1940s, the number of commercial radio stations grew exponentially and Andean governments became increasingly keen to gain political control of both the content and profit-making capabilities of the radio industry. In the 1950s, attention shifted to the so-called social function of the medium, with growing interest in using radio for educational and religious purposes. At the center of educational radio efforts was the "radio school"—a method of distance learning that broadcast specially designed lessons to (primarily adult) listeners, who studied in groups with the aid of accompanying printed materials. The content of radio school programming ranged from basic literacy and numeracy to cultural programs designed to expand the horizons of rural populations.

Although there was some state involvement in Andean radio education initiatives, religious organizations assumed a much more prominent role in the Andes than in other parts of Latin America, and given the region's topography and social history, remote rural populations became a particular target of their activities. In the context of entrenched

illiteracy, limited circulation of newspapers and the virtual absence of state education, radio was seen as a medium of great promise that would help integrate rural populations into national society and enable them to tackle chronic problems of underdevelopment and extreme poverty. Focusing on examples from Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, this article charts the emergence, consolidation, and impact of radio education in the Andes during the second half of the 20th century. It is important to note that workers' associations and trade unions (particularly among Bolivia's mining communities) also played a part in developing radio with an educational or social focus.[1] However, given that the vast majority of the region's radio schools were directed by Catholic organizations, this article focuses exclusively on Catholic radio education.

Origins

The development of radio broadcasting followed roughly the same chronology across the Andean region, with the first national stations established in Colombia in 1923, Peru in 1925, and Bolivia and Ecuador in 1929. The 1930s and 1940s saw a steady increase in the number of radio stations and their broadcasting range. Unlike Europe, where the propaganda requirements of World War I provided the context for an early and lasting state monopoly on radio broadcasting, the growth of radio in the Andean countries was fueled by the commercial interests of national companies that were keen to take advantage of the advertising opportunities opened up by the new medium.

This was particularly true of Colombia, where the development of radio broadcasting coincided with the shift to import substitution industrialization in response to the Great Depression and, subsequently, the need to reduce the country's dependence on international imports during World War II. Whereas Colombia had seventeen radio stations in 1934, this

number increased to seventy in 1941.[2] The commercial character of these radio stations is reflected in the fact that many were named after a particular product or company, such as "Emisora Alhucema Carbonell" (a laboratory) and "La Voz de la Víctor" (producer of gramophones and records).[3] In addition, the demands of advertising prompted the reorganization of radio stations away from one-man management by an amateur enthusiast toward a professionalized structure comprising presenters, technicians, operators, and script writers. Partly as a consequence of professionalization and partly because of the energy costs of turning radio transmitters on and off, radio stations also switched from operating for a small number of hours each day to continuous programming from 6 AM until 9 or 10 PM.[4]

Radio's early development was thus driven by commercial interests and occurred primarily in regional economic hubs. However, national governments also took a keen interest in controlling the burgeoning radio industry and harnessing it for political ends. Peru's first national radio station, OAX, was inaugurated by President Augusto B. Leguía in 1925 on behalf of the state-owned Peruvian Broadcasting Company. Although the company went bankrupt two years later and was bought out by the British telecommunications firm Marconi, the state maintained its role as employer. Effectively operating as a state-subsidized commercial radio station, OAX maintained a ten-year monopoly on radio in Peru.[5] The Colombian state played a similarly interventionist role by requiring all those who wished to launch their own radio station to sign a contract with the state and pay the government 10 percent of the station's incoming revenue. In 1931, such contracts were replaced with a system of government licensing that charged each station a flat annual fee.[6] This removed much of the financial risk that had surrounded the launch of a new station, but it nevertheless gave the state a clear regulatory remit that could be exploited when deemed necessary.[7] The Bolivian government operated a similar system of radio licensing and in 1937 took control of the country's first commercial radio station, Radio Illimani, by executive decree, to use it for

propaganda purposes.[8] Maintaining good relations with the government of the day would continue to be a concern for educational radio stations for decades to come.

Nevertheless, important contrasts can be drawn between Andean radio—where the state's role was relatively limited—and the state-dominated radio industries of Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. As historian Joy Elizabeth Hayes comments, "Radio broadcasting came to maturity in Mexico at the same time that the postrevolutionary state achieved its modern institutional structure—during the early 1930s."[9] Following the passage of legislation in 1926 that declared the radio spectrum to be a national resource and mandated that only Mexicans could own or operate radio stations, the party of government (PNR, or National Revolutionary Party) launched its own station in 1931. Although not state owned, XE-PNR (later XEFO) became a key mouthpiece of official doctrine and by 1933 broadcast a range of daytime courses in language, history, and hygiene for schoolchildren, as well as evening programs of music and literature.[10] Such broadcasts provided an important means to articulate ideas about Mexican identity and the Mexican state in the aftermath of sustained revolutionary violence. Similarly, radio was central to nation-building efforts under the first regime of Getúlio Vargas (1930–1945) in Brazil, where educational radio provided an important tool for encouraging dispersed rural populations to identify with the Brazilian nation.[11] In the case of Argentina, Matthew Karush has demonstrated that the growth of radio throughout the 1930s played a crucial role in the development of populist politics that were then capitalized upon by Juan Perón. Once in power, both Perón and his wife Eva adeptly used the radio to consolidate their power and redefine Argentinian identity.[12]

In Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, the Catholic Church was much more influential than the state in shaping the content and style of radio broadcasting. The Catholic Church played a particularly important role in extending the presence of radio beyond major urban centers. Since the founding of Vatican Radio in 1930, the Church had made clear its

interest in using the radio to propagate the faith and act as a counterweight to so-called atheistic propaganda.[13] Within Latin America, this gave rise to a number of local radio initiatives led by Catholic priests who were inspired to use the radio to overcome the social problems they encountered in their parishes. One of the earliest examples was Radio Sutatenza, established in 1947 by Monsignor José Joaquín Salcedo Guarín in the Colombian village of Sutatenza (Boyocá). Responding to both the high rates of illiteracy and poverty in the parish he was sent to serve, and the fact that Colombia's existing radio stations were all located in major cities and did not reach the rural areas where 60 per cent of the population resided, Salcedo began broadcasting daily classes in basic education using a 100w radio transmitter.[14] Later consolidated as Acción Cultural Popular (Popular Cultural Action, or ACPO), a foundation that provided radio education, trained "campesino leaders," and coordinated development work in rural areas, Radio Sutatenza's humble origins were typical of the Catholic radio stations that sprang up across the Andean region during the 1950s and 1960s.

Radio as a Tool of Development

The emergence of radio education initiatives in the Andes formed part of a global trend that, from the 1940s onward, conceived of radio as a tool of development. As noted in the section "Origins," the nationalist Mexican and Brazilian governments of the 1930s played a pioneering role in developing educational radio. In Europe, radio's prominent role in mass public instruction and political messaging during World War II was further developed in peacetime to aid the goals of social and economic development. In the United States, sociologists and educational theorists argued that radio and television could have a substantial impact on social attitudes, political participation, and popular culture. In an

influential study published in 1940, Paul F. Lazarsfeld argued that if cultivated in the right way, radio could "develop [intellectual] needs which remained undeveloped so long as print had a monopoly of serious communication. . . . . Print did not raise the intellectual standard of living just because it was invented, but because it was used by educational institutions such as schools and promoted by cultural agencies such as libraries and publishers."[15] Lazarsfeld was particularly keen to understand how the design, organization, and distribution of radio programming might encourage intellectual curiosity and "serious responses."

At an international level, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) produced various studies throughout the 1950s demonstrating that radio could help overcome barriers of distance, geography, and limited resources in providing access to education.[16] Cultural arguments were also made in favor of using radio to generate social change. In his seminal 1958 book, US sociologist Daniel Lerner argued that by enabling isolated communities to imagine other ways of life, radio provided the intellectual basis for modernization.[17] By hearing about change and development occurring elsewhere, people could imagine doing things differently and would therefore eventually start to make changes in their own homes and communities. This argument was closely related to a key tenet of the modernization theory that was being propagated by Walt Rostow and others at the time: the idea that there was a strict division between "modern" and "traditional" societies, and that the failure to modernize was due to the refusal to abandon "outdated" ways of life.[18]

The Cold War formed an important backdrop to discussions on the relationship between radio and modernization. Both the United States and the Soviet Union invested in transnational radio broadcasting that aimed to promote their respective ideologies and development models abroad. For US modernization theorists, poor and uneducated populations were judged especially vulnerable to the appeal of communism and violent

insurrection. From that perspective, radio education served both to disseminate Western ideas about the "correct" path to development and as a pragmatic solution to the social and economic challenges that might cause foreign populations to succumb to the influence of international communism.

Radio was seen as a particularly potent tool for combatting long-standing underdevelopment, illiteracy, and rural poverty in the Andes. In a book published by ACPO in 1960, the sociologists Francisco Houtart and Gustavo Pérez highlighted the importance of radio in the organization's educational mission, describing it as a key "element of action" that "multiplies the teacher, provides information and recreation, makes itself present everywhere, permanently, whatever the distance, the topography, the circumstances."[19] In 1966, the Centro International de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina (International Centre of Higher Studies in Communication for Latin America, or CIESPAL) held a conference in Quito, Ecuador that brought together scholars and practitioners to discuss the role and responsibilities of radio and television in addressing Latin America's "cultural needs." The participants concurred in their belief that radio and television already played a key part in Latin American society and should be utilized further to address social and cultural needs. Yet in his presentation on the function and responsibilities of radio and television in mass education, Peruvian educator Dr. Juan Diaz Bordenave noted that "Latin America is 40 years behind in the use of radio broadcasting and 20 years [behind] in the use of television for the education of the masses."[20] He attributed this delay to three issues: Latin American elites took no interest in educating the masses, industrialists and commercial enterprises had already seized the initiative in using radio and TV to shape public attitudes, and Latin American governments were skeptical regarding educational media. On the latter point he noted that, on the one hand, governments had reservations about the efficacy of

using the media to promote development, and, on the other, they wished to avoid unleashing new aspirations and demands among the population.[21]

It was in this context of entrenched poverty and government inaction that organizations like ACPO, in Colombia, took on a key role in the design and delivery of radio education programs across the region (Monsignor Salcedo was a noted participant of the CIESPAL conference and he attended numerous such events throughout the 1960s). At the heart of ACPO's model was the *escuela radiofónica* (radio school), a term used to describe any home or community building in which listeners got together to follow Radio Sutatenza's educational programs. The radio programs were later complemented by a series of accessible books called the "Biblioteca del Campesino" (Campesino Library), a newspaper (*El Campesino*, established in 1958), and "readers" covering five "basic notions": health, spirituality, numbers, alphabet, and work and economy. These materials were actively incorporated into the radio classes. For example, the presenters instructed students to turn to a particular page of the reader and reflect upon the image or text found there.

Beyond the combined use of media—a strategy that was widely celebrated and commented upon at the time—it is important to consider the organizational structures that ACPO developed to embed radio education in rural communities. For example, parish priests played a key role in helping parishioners to acquire a radio (paid for through monthly installments) and set up a radio school in their home or local community. Of equal importance was the "immediate auxiliary," a voluntary position that could be taken up by any literate individual within the radio school. Immediate auxiliaries kept a record of attendance, assisted with any comprehension difficulties within the class and corresponded with ACPO to request materials. Following the inauguration of two campesino institutes in 1954 (for men) and 1956 (for women), auxiliaries were invited to attend a four-month long residential training course in agricultural techniques and leadership skills. Many participants went on to

work for ACPO as campesino leaders, who were sent off to remote corners of the country and tasked with encouraging communities to establish a radio school and adopt the ideas and practices that underpinned ACPO's vision for social progress.

A number of similar initiatives were subsequently launched in other Andean countries, many of which cited ACPO as a direct inspiration for their work. An early example is Ecuador's Fundación Escuelas Radiofónicas Populares del Ecuador (Popular Radiophonic Schools of Ecuador, or ERPE), which was founded in 1962 in the highland city of Riobamba by Monsignor Leonidas Proaño Villalba. According to the organization's statistics, 20,000 campesinos across thirteen provinces of Ecuador participated in ERPE's radio school program between 1962 and 1964. The foundation also published a newspaper, *Jatari Campesino* ("Awake Campesino" in Kichwa), ran a hostel for campesinos working in the city, and, from 1965 onward, provided a basic medical service. Reflecting the large indigenous population of highland Ecuador, ERPE broadcast in both Spanish and Kichwa (the Ecuadorian dialect of the Quechua language).

In the southern altiplano region of Peru, the bishopric of Puno acquired a license for the operation of an educational radio station in 1958. With financial and organizational input from the Maryknoll Fathers, an order of US Catholic missionaries, the station was formally inaugurated on May 13, 1958 as Radio Onda Azul (Blue Wave Radio, ROA) and reached the whole department of Puno via a 1kw transmitter.[22] Originally focused on religious broadcasting and local announcements, on April 1963 the station began operating a system of radio schools, with one school established in each parish of the department. In common with Radio Sutatenza, the radio sets that ROA distributed had a fixed dial, which meant they could receive ROA programming only; a clear indication that, like ACPO's founder, Monsignor Salcedo, the Maryknolls were similarly concerned about listeners being able to access alternative, potentially subversive or "immoral" content from other radio stations.[23] As in the

case of ACPO, volunteer auxiliaries played a key part in recruiting students and supplementing and explaining the content of radio broadcasts. Given the dominance of the Aymara and Quechua languages among these communities, the fact that the auxiliaries were recruited from the indigenous population was particularly important.

In October 1968, a military coup led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado heralded the start of the so-called Peruvian Revolution. Declaring its intention to redistribute power and wealth across Peruvian society, the Velasco government instituted a series of major reforms across agriculture, education, and industrial policy. As a key arm of the Peruvian revolution, the education ministry withdrew state subsidies and personnel from ROA and began its own nationwide literacy and "consciousness-raising" programs. The loss of state support combined with increasing complaints from the local population about the volunteer auxiliaries' work caused ROA to close its radio schools in 1969.[24] Although short-lived, radio schools played a key part in establishing ROA's listener base among the campesino population, who affectionately referred to it as "my radio school" and the radio set as "my teacher."[25]

In southern Bolivia, Acción Cultural Loyola (Loyola Cultural Action, or ACLO) followed a similar pattern of development to that of ACPO and ROA. Founded in 1966 by a group of Jesuit priests, ACLO operated initially within a small area of the Chuquisaca department, where its activities centered on radio schools providing basic literacy training. The following year, ACLO founded its first center for the training of campesino leaders and a model farm for developing agricultural skills. This was followed in 1970 by the establishment of a newspaper, *En Marcha.* Simultaneously with the expansion of its range of activities, ACLO also extended its base of operations to include the departments of Tarija (1973) and Potosí (1974).[26]

There are a number of reasons why ACPO's model was so widely disseminated and followed. As early as 1953, Vatican Radio lauded ACPO as a model to be followed across Latin America, and discussion of Colombia's radio schools at the inaugural meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Council in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 prompted interest from missionaries and lay educators in many parts of Latin America.[27] ACPO's director, Monsignor Salcedo, was highly adept at soliciting political backing and financial support from a wide range of stakeholders including US companies (the organization's first 1kw radio transmitter and 700 receivers were secured through a direct agreement with General Electric), the Colombian government, and international organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank. This support facilitated the further promotion of ACPO's work—through publications, reports, and international visits—and the expansion of its radio network. With radio transmitters located in seven different regions, Radio Sutatenza was able to reach the majority of Colombia's territory, and letters received from listeners in places as far-flung as the United States and New Zealand indicate the scale of its international reach.

Fundamental Integral Education

At the center of ACPO's approach was the concept of Fundamental Integral Education (EFI), a brand of nonformal education that stressed the value of education as both a source of technical skills (literacy, numeracy, agricultural techniques) and a means of self-realization whereby the "mentality" of the campesino could be altered. Both the content and pedagogical focus of EFI differed substantially from earlier educational radio initiatives such as the US-sponsored *Radio Escuela de las Americas* (Radio School of the Americas). Established in 1940, Radio Escuela de las Americas served primarily as a form of cultural diplomacy, with program topics that included US and international history and current events, music and

literature, and science and geography.[28] By contrast, ACPO intervened at a much more basic educational level and aimed to serve the most disadvantaged members of Colombian society. As one of the organization's leading figures commented in a retrospective account of the EFI philosophy, "This type of Fundamental Education has its roots and its sociological justification in the problems of the campesino man who suffers from a series of deficiencies and is obstructed by multiple barriers, which impede him from participating in social processes."[29] According to ACPO, these barriers included traditionalism enforced through conservative religious attitudes, the dominance of familial and village hierarchy, the lack of access to health information, and minimal exposure to formal education. By challenging this traditionalism and introducing new ways of understanding and interacting with the world, EFI could pave the way for individual and community-level progress.[30]

This interpretation of rural underdevelopment resonated with both lay educators and Catholic priests across the Andean region. Speaking at the 1966 CIESPAL conference, Monsignor Leonidas Proaño, founding director of the Fundación ERPE, described how "the brilliant initiative of Mons. Joaquín Salcedo, now extended to almost all the Latin American countries" was bringing basic education to the region's "closed and impenetrable masses."[31] The Bolivian organization ACLO similarly framed its version of "informal educative action" in terms of "the rupture of the magical attitude through the scientific explanation of nature," the "rupture of the campesino's isolation and the reevaluation of his human potential," and the "broadening of the narrow and unilateral vision limited to their own community."[32]

Yet beneath these commonalities, important differences can be discerned in the trajectories of nationwide programs and locally embedded radio organizations. As an avowedly community-based project, ACLO emphasized that the expansion of its radio schools beyond the department of Chuquisaca came as a direct result of requests for literacy training and community organization from the campesinos of the Pampas de Lequezana, who

"co-promoted the work of ACLO in Potosí." Its development in the early 1970s reflected the organization's strong interest in responding to the daily needs of the local population, with innovations such as the installation of a recording studio "so that the campesino might express himself" and the building of the Tambo Wasiyki, an accommodation service for campesinos newly arrived in the cities of Potosí and Sucre.[33] By contrast, Colombia's ACPO was highly centralized and reflected almost exclusively the vision of its director, Monsignor Salcedo. While ACPO shifted its attention toward regional diversity in the 1970s, its first two decades of rapid expansion were characterized by the desire to "roll out" a centrally devised system that would overcome the idiosyncrasies of particular regions.

There were also subtle differences in religious and political orientation. Radio Onda Azul in Puno (Peru) was born out of the sustained missionary campaigns of the Maryknoll Fathers, who arrived in the region in 1943. Dismayed at the level of religious knowledge among Puno's indigenous population and their tendency to incorporate indigenous beliefs and practices into Catholic worship, the Maryknolls implemented a catechetical system in 1954 that trained Aymara and Quechua catechists and paid them to teach basic catechism to remote, monolingual indigenous communities. In implementing its radio schools, the Maryknolls again turned to these catechists to distribute transistor radios and reinforce the content being broadcast from Puno city. They were tasked with teaching religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic in small schools that were stocked with a radio, crucifix, flag, and textbooks.[34] As such, ROA's radio schools were characterized by a paternalist, authoritarian approach that centered on "capturing souls" rather than generating social and economic change.

By contrast, ACLO (Bolivia) was to a large extent influenced by emerging currents of liberation theology and described its main objective as "the Liberation of the Campesino, in such a way that, motivated by the Faith, he is the effective agent of his own promotion and

development."[35] The organization expressly stated a commitment to "support and promote the campesino organizations and movements with greater capacity for mobilization and responsibility, to defend their class interests with full autonomy of action."[36] In Colombia, ACPO's rhetoric fell somewhere between these two positions, emphasizing the possibilities for social progress among rural communities but prescribing particular "modern" practices as the only means to achieve such progress. For example, the organization ran a series of campaigns to encourage campesinos to build a latrine, use fertilizer on their crops, and cook using a high-level stove. Whereas ACLO stressed the importance of class consciousness, ACPO talked about maintaining social harmony and argued that social progress necessarily began with the individual. Although there was widespread adherence to the EFI model, the ways in which this approach was articulated with the wider social context varied between radio stations.

Transnational Connections

A significant characteristic of the radio schools that proliferated across the Andes during the 1960s and 1970s was the extent to which they communicated among themselves, sharing ideas and methodologies and seeking to project their activities onto the global stage. An early step in this regard was the Latin American Congress of Radiophonic Schools, organized by ACPO in September 1963. This seven-day conference brought together 115 delegates from fifteen countries under the auspices of the Latin American Episcopal Council of the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television (UNDA-RIO). A summary of the conference proceedings noted the diversity of positions taken by the delegates, with the more conservative organizations stressing the role of the clergy, and more liberal approaches led by countries such as Venezuela, Mexico, and Chile focusing on the role of the laity and

businessmen and the need to use radio to build a sense of nationhood. The use of radio education to integrate Indian populations into national society was the primary concern of delegations from Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador.[37]

In a sign of the broadening of the delegates' activities—to include newspapers, libraries, and training centers for agricultural promoters alongside radio schools—the conference abandoned its initial plan to establish a Latin American Federation of Radiophonic Schools in favor of a Latin American Confederation for Fundamental Integral Education (COLEFI). ACPO's five concepts (health, reading, numbers, work, and spirituality) were adopted as the basis of a shared vision of EFI. The conference additionally approved the creation of an Institute of Mass Communication in Bogotá, with the aim of providing courses in mass communication for editors, program directors, and other higher-level leaders of educational programs in the COLEFI member countries.[38] This type of collaboration indicates how ACPO continued to consolidate its leadership position within the radio education community. It also shows that in contrast to the early development of radio in the Andean countries, which was dominated by the US commercial model, the growth of radio education initiatives during the 1950s and 1960s was fueled by contact and exchange within Latin America.

This trend was further strengthened in the 1970s, with the establishment of the Latin American Association of Popular Communication (ALER). Initially founded as a collaboration between eighteen Catholic educational radio stations, ALER continues to function and as of 2008 had 118 affiliates in seventeen Latin American countries.[39] In its early days, ALER operated principally as a means to connect institutions that were often quite isolated within their home countries and held a minority position within the radio industry. Through their affiliation to ALER, members benefited from a feeling of regional solidarity and gained access to information on funding opportunities, methodologies, and broadcasting techniques. Until the mid-1980s the association remained focused on delivering

education, both through targeted literacy campaigns or agricultural education and through programs designed to inform and "raise consciousness." By the late 1980s, it had shifted its attention to the development of community radio and emphasized popular participation. At the same time, ALER started to downplay its Catholic origins and express its mission in the secular terms of democratization and human development.[40] An exploration of the reasons behind these changes is beyond the scope of this article, but it should nevertheless be noted that the evolution of radio education across the Andes—and, indeed, Latin America as a whole—was reinforced through the transnational links and correspondence maintained by otherwise isolated, small-scale radio stations.

In addition to these networks of mutual support, Andean radio education programs were globally connected through their contact with international organizations such as UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank. ACPO (Colombia) was an early beneficiary of UNESCO support. In the 1951 edition of its internal magazine, UNESCO promoted ACPO as the paradigm to be followed by all educational broadcasting in Latin America. It also provided two of its own experts in radio education for advice on setting up ACPO's first training institute for campesino leaders.[41] Throughout the 1970s, UNESCO sponsored a number of studies on the use of radio for education and social change, and many of these drew on Latin American case studies. This scholarly attention provided a platform for radio stations to demonstrate their importance to international donors and solicit support from their own national governments.[42] As well as articulating with UNESCO's flagship program of "fundamental education," Andean radio education programs gained international recognition and support on the basis of their commitment to combatting communism and their ability to tap into widespread optimism—prevalent throughout the 1960s—regarding the prospects of success for "technical solutions" to underdevelopment. As historian Mary Roldán notes, in the context of Cold War fears about the spread of communism among poor,

"underdeveloped" populations, the global renown of development projects like ACPO's was based on the claim that "the problem they targeted and the approach they took to solve it, held *the key* to addressing larger, more intractable issues that impeded realizing the postwar Western ideal of stable, prosperous, capitalist democracies."[43]

Social, Political, and Cultural Impact

The need to report on their achievements to current and prospective donors led many radio education organizations to keep meticulous records of the number of radios distributed, the number of radio schools founded, and the number of students matriculated and their educational outcomes. In 1968, the Maryknoll Fathers reported that since 1963, the number of ROA radio schools in the Puno region had grown from 15 to 1,750; the number of students had increased from 120 to 8,701; and the number of auxiliaries had grown from 23 to 500.[44] Bolivia's ACLO recorded a similar growth in the number of adults registered on its literacy program, from 205 across two centers in 1967 to a peak of 2,675 across 108 centers in 1974.[45] Yet beyond such statistical reports, evaluating the social impact of radio initiatives proved to be both more difficult to quantify and a more contested field of research.

Following the euphoric embrace of radio education as a solution to underdevelopment in the 1950s and 1960s, more critical perspectives emerged. In 1968, ROA received a somewhat damning evaluation from Belgian communications specialist Ives Steinmetz. He called for "a restructuring of the programmes that are at total odds with the reality of the campesino" and criticized the radio school teachers for treating the campesinos like children, rather than recognizing them as a group of adults with their own knowledge and life experiences.[46] In Colombia, ACPO received a similarly critical assessment in a 1971 study produced by the German sociologist Stefan Musto. While celebrating the organization's achievements to date,

Musto asserted that ACPO had not adapted to the changed reality of Colombia's rural populations over the past twenty years and had increasingly become an end in itself and lacked an external perspective to challenge the vision of its charismatic founder.[47] A cautionary note had also been sounded some years earlier by US scholar Sister Vincent Marie Primrose, whose 1965 doctoral dissertation compared the reception and effectiveness of ACPO's radio schools in three different regions of Colombia. She found that ACPO's lay campesino leaders, rather than the radio programs themselves, had the greatest impact on determining whether campesinos adopted the ideas and practices advocated by Radio Sutatenza, and she argued that ACPO needed to decentralize and diversify its programming in order to appeal to audiences whose social and cultural reality varied markedly across the country.[48]

The 1970s therefore saw a recalibration of radio education efforts, as Catholic radio stations responded to external criticism and began to promote more active participation among their target populations. For example, Radio Sutatenza increasingly used listener input to shape program content, with programs such as "Ustedes hacen el programa" (You Make the Program) and "El Correo de Radio Sutatenza" (Radio Sutatenza Mail), in which listeners' letters were read aloud. ACPO also placed greater focus on asking campesinos directly for their opinion—through surveys and focus groups—and adapting program content accordingly. Similarly, in 1979 ACLO (Bolivia) published a detailed evaluation of all of its activities based on surveys conducted of its own staff, the target campesino population and the wider public.[49] This type of feedback exercise was designed to make radio education more relevant and responsive and compete with commercial radio, which had gained a much greater coverage of rural areas than had existed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Another important development of the late 1960s and 1970s that shaped radio education in the Andes was the emergence and spread of liberation theology, which came to the fore

following the 1968 Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín (Colombia). The conference called on the Latin American church to address structural inequalities and dedicate itself to denouncing social injustice. As Fitzpatrick-Behrens observes, this was a radical departure for an institution that had historically allied itself with the elite and the military, but it was also in keeping with ideas that had been growing among the Catholic grassroots since the mid-1960s.[50] Liberation theology caused many radio education organizations to question the national development ideas of the 1950s, sever ties with powerful countries and institutions such as the United States and the World Bank, and emphasize revolutionary change to the system rather than limited progress within it.

This influence is evident in ACLO's 1981 description of its activities as "work that promotes the development of all the capacities of the campesino as a human being, to free him from economic, social, cultural, religious and political oppression."[51] Liberation theology had a more muted reception within Colombia's ACPO, which retained a more conservative orientation, but on the whole, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Andean radio schools became more involved in addressing social inequality and challenging the status quo. This position continues to be reflected in ALER's advocacy for "the humble, the excluded, thinking always about their social and political organization [to achieve] the transformation of the structures of the [member] countries."

Radio education's social and political impacts can be discerned by examining the long-term legacies for campesino participants and its ripple effects in regional and national politics. In Colombia, gaining access to education through Radio Sutatenza had a particularly striking impact on rural women, in the context of deeply patriarchal social structures that had historically limited their life chances. As well as emphasizing the value of female leadership through the creation of a women's Institute for Campesino Leaders in 1956, ACPO's publications and campaigns emphasized the equal status of men and women in forming and

maintaining the household. In particular, the 1972 Responsible Procreation campaign explicitly stated that decisions about whether and when to have children should be mutually agreed on by the couple. This was a controversial campaign in part because it went directly against Catholic doctrine, which saw sexual reproduction as divinely ordained, but also because it challenged the patriarchal control of women's bodies. ACPO's status as a Catholic-affiliated organization enabled it to access rural populations and open up difficult questions in ways that would have been met with greater hostility if presented by a secular institution. Although somewhat difficult to quantify, Mary Roldán has argued that this dimension of ACPO's role allowed it to play a decisive part in the empowerment of rural women, some of whom went on to participate in female-led social movements during the 1980s and 1990s.[52]

In the case of Ecuador, ERPE played a key role in the 1990 indigenous uprising, when tens of thousands of indigenous people took to the streets to demand land redistribution, official recognition of indigenous nations and ethnic groups, and bilingual intercultural education. ERPE served as both a literal point of coordination for the protesters—allowing them to gather at the radio station's offices and use the radio station to broadcast messages about the strategic aims and daily plans of the protest—and a source of inspiration, given its history of providing a voice for the region's indigenous communities and articulating liberation theology's wider message of support for the poor and downtrodden.[53]

This turn of events is surprising, given the conservative outlook of ERPE's founder in the 1960s (in his remarks at the 1966 meeting of CIESPAL, Monsignor Proaño cautioned against the "irresponsible" use of the radio in "awakening primal instincts, threatening the dignity of man, the family, the harmony of civil society and human fraternity").[54] ERPE's participation in the 1990 uprising is a mark of both the ways in which it evolved as an institution over the course of the 1970s and 1980s and the political legitimacy it had acquired

among the indigenous population through many years of engagement in popular education and community radio.

A similar trajectory is observed in the history of ROA. While the Maryknoll Fathers first established ROA and its radio schools as a further arm of their missionary activities and emphasized the redemptive power of education for the "backward" Indians, in 1979 the station began reorienting its activities to engage with Puno's popular movements and defend campesino rights and interests. Maryknoll missionary Father Juan Moynihan was crucial to this transformation. An exile from political repression in Bolivia following the 1980 coup led by General Luis García Meza, Moynihan had previously directed Radio San Miguel in Riberalta, Beni (Bolivian Amazon). Founded in 1968 as the third branch of a station first established in a rural community of La Paz in 1955, from 1976 onward Radio San Miguel had adopted an explicitly sociopolitical commitment to serving the needs of the poor, pledging to "assume the liberator role of the radio, with an ideological orientation based on the social doctrine of the church."[55] The military coup of July 1980 interrupted the realization of this vision, but Father Moynihan brought with him to Puno a commitment to strengthening peasant organization and using the radio to address social injustice. Between 1980 and 1981 he served as adviser to the director of ROA, encouraging the organization to broadcast information about the actions and objectives of Puno's growing social movements and develop a more participatory style through the recruitment of peasant correspondents.[56] However, this shift in direction was made possible because of the community links and legitimacy that the station had already acquired in the region through its pioneering use of radio schools and sustained presence on the airwaves since the late 1950s.

Discussion of the Literature

Radio education first became a subject of scholarly research in the late 1950s, as governments and nongovernmental organizations sought to understand which models and uses of technology were most effective and how far they could be transferred between different contexts. The first study of this kind centered on Canada's farm radio forum, a program of educational broadcasts that began in 1941 and aimed to help rural families develop solutions to the economic challenges they faced.[57] The research looked at how the program operated, how widely it was accessed, and whether there were any particular characteristics that could not be easily reproduced elsewhere.

This type of policy-oriented research continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s but was also accompanied by more academic studies undertaken by sociologists and communications specialists, particularly those based at universities in the United States. Attention turned from an early fascination with radio technology itself to studying the social structures that mediated people's experience of radio broadcasting, and how these in turn determined radio's social and cultural impact. Scholars were particularly keen to assess the extent to which radio (and increasingly, television) could serve as drivers of social change and modernization (often rather narrowly conceived as a process of moving toward a Western way of life and living standards). Seminal work by Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers, and Wilbur Schramm laid the foundations for the development of a new field of research: development communication.[58] Scholars of development communication sought to advise governments and stakeholders on the most effective ways of using the media to achieve social and economic change (e.g., by encouraging the uptake of agricultural or industrial innovations). They viewed radio education as a particularly promising and cost-effective means to achieve such change.

Challenges to the "developmentalist" assumptions that underpinned much of this research came from Latin American researchers such as Luis Ramiro Beltrán and Alfonso

Gamucio Dagron, who argued that the use of mass communication to tackle social problems paid insufficient attention to entrenched structural inequalities.[59] At the same time, Paolo Freire's globally influential theories of critical pedagogy were changing understanding of and methodologies for adult education, including within the subfield of radio education and distance learning.[60] If education was to be understood as a mutually empowering dialogue rather than the unidirectional relaying of information, then radio education needed to become more participative and sensitive to local context—a theme addressed in much of the research conducted during the 1970s.[61]

In the 1980s, as grass-roots community radio stations emerged across much of Latin America, scholars became interested in the creative ways in which radio communication was being used to tackle local social problems, build solidarity, and articulate certain cultural or political identities.[62] Continuing into the 1990s, this research was predominantly qualitative and ethnographic in nature, contributing to the establishment of the now blossoming fields of media anthropology and sound studies.[63]

Throughout this time, the development of radio—and radio education in particular—received relatively little attention from historians. Partly due to the absence of accessible radio archives, the lack of historical research on radio was particularly marked in the case of Latin America. Nevertheless, studies published since 2000 have begun exploring radio's importance for state-building and nationalism in Latin American countries including Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina.[64] In the past decade, a number of innovative studies have emerged which aim to situate Latin America's experiences of radio within broader histories of transnationalism, gender politics, and the Cold War.[65] Research questions have included, How was the funding and design of radio education initiatives linked to anticommunist fears and objectives? What role did women play in the growth of radio and to what extent was radio a source of female empowerment? Where did radio education sit within the often

neglected networks of Catholic/Christian transnationalism? What was the relationship between radio and evolving perspectives on modernity?

Studies of radio in the Andes remain a small minority within this growing field of research, but there are reasons to be optimistic. As historian Christine Ehrick argued in a 2016 article, efforts to preserve and disseminate Latin America's radio archives advanced significantly in the first two decades of the 21st century.[66] As well as opening up new avenues for research within particular Andean countries (Colombia being a noteworthy example), it is to be hoped that greater awareness of, and access to, radio archives will lead to more comparative research that can transcend the case study approach and tell a larger story about Andean people's relationship with radio across the 20th and 21st centuries.

Primary Sources

The sources that can be used to study the history of radio education include a diverse range of materials, from the audio recordings, program scripts, study guides, photographs, newspapers, and posters produced by radio education organizations themselves to the correspondence that these organizations maintained with listeners, donors, and government bodies. Reports produced by academics, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations like UNESCO are also important historical sources.

Given the historically significant role that the Mexican and Brazilian states played in the development and use of radio, these countries have more extensive and developed radio archives. Efforts to preserve public memory of revolution and dictatorship in the Southern Cone have also led to renewed interest in radio archives as a means of recovering histories often marginalized during the Cold War era.[67] Among the Andean countries discussed in this article, Colombia's ACPO archive, held at the *Biblioteca Luis Angel

Arango[https://www.banrepcultural.org/bogota/biblioteca-luis-angel-arango]* in Bogotá, is the largest and richest collection available to historians focusing on radio education. In 2013, the archive was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register for Latin America and the Caribbean (MOWLAC), in recognition of its cultural and historical significance. Although still in the process of being catalogued, large sections of the archive are available to researchers (including over 300,000 letters between the organization and listeners, the curriculum vitae of ACPO's peasant leaders, as well as hundreds of program scripts and sound recordings from the 1970s onward). A substantial amount of material is also available online via the Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango's *virtual library[http://babel.banrepcultural.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p17054coll24]*.

The *Archivo y Biblioteca Nacionales de Bolivia[https://www.archivoybibliotecanacionales.org.bo/images/contenido/Archivo/Guia/01-GUIA-ARCHIVO.pdf]* in La Paz holds material on the extant organization Educación Radiofónica de Bolivia (Radiophonic Education of Bolivia, ERBOL; 1965–2002) and Radio Loyola (1969–1986), the station operated by ACLO. However, at the time of writing no detailed finding aids were available on the national archive website. For Peru, the most extensive records on radio education relate to the activities of the Maryknoll Mission, whose archives are held in New York.[68] Radio Onda Azul's documentary and sound archives are held in Puno and can be consulted with the permission of the station's current director.[69] Ecuador holds the institutional archives of *ALER[https://www.aler.org/index.php/]*, though no further information was available on the status of these archives on the organization's website. *Fundación ERPE[http://www.erpe.org.ec/]*, the Ecuadorian radio station discussed here, continues to function but no information could be obtained about its archive.

For those interested in the international dimensions of radio education in the Andes, significant holdings are available at the UNESCO archives in Paris, and via the

organization's *online repository[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/archives]*. A particularly promising development for the transnational and comparative study of Catholic radio broadcasting is the recent project to catalogue and describe the complete archive of the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television (UNDA) and its counterpart the International Catholic Office of Cinema (OCIC), both of which are held at the Kadoc Documentation and Research Centre on Religion, Culture and Society.[70] The published materials, correspondence, and photographs contained in these archives hold rich possibilities for understanding how ideas about radio education, and Catholic broadcasting more generally, evolved over time, and the nature of the relationship between Latin American Catholic radio stations and the Church institutions based in Europe.

Links to Digital Materials

ACPO digital archive at the Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango[http://babel.banrepcultural.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p17054coll24]

Kadoc Documentation and Research Centre on Religion Culture and Society[https://kadoc.kuleuven.be/english]

Radio Sutatenza: Una revolución cultural en el campo colombiano online exhibit[https://proyectos.banrepcultural.org/radio-sutatenza/es]

UNESCO Digital Library[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/archives]

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